Eaton Road and State Route 99 Southbound Ramps Project

Initial Study / Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

CAPITAL PROJECT NO. 50488

CITY OF CHICO
INC. 1872

Lead Agency:

City of Chico, Public Works Department
411 Main Street
Chico, CA 95928

April 2026

Prepared By:

City of Chico Department of Public Works – Engineering
Consultant: GHD

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This document has been prepared by:

City of Chico
411 Main Street
Chico, CA 5928

In collaboration with:

2235 Mercury Way
Santa Rosa, CA 95407, United States
T +1 707 236-1532 | **E** brian.bacciarini@ghd.com | **ghd.com**

April 03, 2026

Contents

Table Index

Figure Index

Appendices Index

1. Project Information

Project Title	Eaton Road and State Route 99 Southbound Ramps Project
Lead Agency Name & Address	City of Chico 411 Main Street Chico, CA 5928
Contact Person & Phone Number	Tracy R. Bettencourt, Senior Planner (530) 879-6903
Project Location	The Project is located in the City of Chico, Butte County, California. The site is located at the intersection of Eaton Road and the State Route (SR) 99 southbound ramps between Post Miles 36.1 and 36.6.
General Plan Land Use Designation and Zoning	Eaton Road and SR 99 are located within City and Caltrans right-of-way and are designated for transportation uses, therefore, they do not have assigned land use and zoning designations. Properties adjacent to the site are designated and zoned as “Neighborhood Commercial”, “Office Mixed Use”, and “Office Commercial” with an airport overflight zone (AOD).
Project Description	The City of Chico proposes to transform the current intersection of Eaton Road and the SR 99 southbound on/off ramps into a modern, four-legged multilane roundabout. The Project is designed to enhance safety for all travel modes and accommodate future mobility requirements.

1.1 CEQA Requirements

The Eaton and SR 99 Southbound Ramps Project (Project) is subject to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it would cause a direct physical change in the environment and involves the issuance of discretionary approvals, permits, and entitlements. The City of Chico (City) will serve as the lead agency for CEQA compliance because it is the public agency which has the principal responsibility for approving the Project. The City has prepared this Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) to provide the public, responsible agencies, and trustee agencies with information about the potential environmental effects of the Project.

This IS/MND is intended to satisfy the requirements of CEQA (Public Resources Code, Div 13, Sec 21000-21177) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Sec 15000-15387). Section 15063(d) of the State CEQA Guidelines summarizes the content requirements of an Initial Study as follows:

1. A description of the project including the location of the project;
2. An identification of the environmental setting;
3. An identification of environmental effects by use of a checklist, matrix, or other method, provided that entries on a checklist or other form are briefly explained to indicate that there is some evidence to support the entries;

4. A discussion of the ways to mitigate the significant effects identified, if any;
5. An examination of whether the project would be consistent with existing zoning, plans, and other applicable land use controls;
6. The name of the person or persons who prepared or participated in the Initial Study.

1.2 Project Location

The Project is situated in the northwest part of the City of Chico, Butte County, California. It is located at the intersection of Eaton Road and the SR 99 southbound ramps between Post Miles 36.1 and 36.6 (see Figure 1, Regional Location Map, and Figure 2, Project Area). The site falls within Section 9, Township 22 North, Range 1 East, of the Mount Diablo Base and Meridian.

1.3 Environmental Setting

The Project site and surrounding land uses are shown on Figure 2, Project Area. The area includes single-family residential homes, commercial and office spaces, and a theater company. Two commercial properties on the north side of Eaton Road are accessed by driveways approximately 425 feet west of the existing SR 99 southbound ramp intersection.

Regional access to the site is provided by SR 99, with local access from Eaton Road. SR 99 is a north-south highway that spans the Central Valley, starting at Wheeler Ridge near the Grapevine in Kern County and ending at Red Bluff in Tehama County. Near the Project site, SR 99 is a divided highway with two lanes in each direction, running from northwest to southeast, with a posted speed limit of 65 mph.

Eaton Road is a two-lane east-west arterial extending from the western City limits to East Avenue/Wildwood Avenue, approximately 4.5 miles east of the Project site. The posted speed limit in the Project Area is 35 mph. On the east side of the SR 99 interchange, the northbound on and off ramps are served by a recently constructed five-legged roundabout. A drainage channel, owned and maintained by the Shasta Union Drainage Assessment District, is located in the area and passes beneath Eaton Road via an existing box culvert. Photographs of the Project site are provided in Figure 3, Site Photographs.

1.4 Project Description

The purpose of the Project is to address multimodal circulation, operational deficiencies, and safety concerns, as well as make intersection controls consistent in all directions. Currently, the SR 99 at Eaton Road southbound ramps intersection possesses atypical ramp intersection controls, leading to high collision potential as well as increased sensitivity to peak hour volumes and future growth. Additionally, the intersection controls do not facilitate safe and comfortable nonmotorized transportation due to the narrow sidewalk and crosswalk widths and high operating speeds. The long-term growth in traffic volumes forecasted to use the intersection is anticipated to exacerbate the existing deficiencies, further disincentivizing multimodal access and leading to further decay in intersection safety and operations.

The proposed Project would replace the existing intersection of Eaton Road at the SR 99 southbound on/off ramps with a roundabout designed to handle the Design Year traffic forecast volumes projected for 2046. This Project would enhance safety for all travel modes at the SR 99 southbound ramps intersection with Eaton Road, improve operations, reduce delays, and enhance mobility for all travel modes at the study intersection. By introducing a traffic-calming circulation pattern, the proposed Project aims to alleviate traffic congestion and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety within and around the intersection. Local circulation and access would remain unchanged.

The proposed Project would include:

- A yield-control roundabout with modified lane geometrics, curb, gutter, ramps, sidewalk, and streetlights.
- Widened and realigned intersection approaches for roundabout entrances and exits.
- A widened portion of Eaton Road near Constitution Drive to accommodate traffic lane reconfigurations, including the extension of an existing box culvert beneath Eaton Road.
- Removal and replacement of existing mainline hot mix asphalt (HMA) pavement within the roundabout limits.
- HMA overlay on the approaches to the roundabout and within the roundabout limits.
- Restriping of Eaton Road.
- Realignment and reconstruction of the Southbound on/off ramps.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant curb ramps and two-stage pedestrian crossings with pedestrian refuges.
- A buffered 10-foot wide pedestrian and bicycle shared use path through the new roundabout and along a maintenance path north of the roundabout.
- Adjusted utility vaults and manholes to match final pavement surface elevations along Eaton Road.
- Modified existing drainage facilities and post-construction trash capture controls.

Eaton Road/SR 99 Southbound Ramps Intersection

The intersection geometrics for the proposed roundabout would be consistent with the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 672 entitled "Roundabouts: An Information Guide, 2nd Edition" (2010). For constructability, the roundabout would be shifted north of the existing ramp intersection and designed to align with the existing and potential future overcrossing profile, which Caltrans may adjust according to their Master Corridor Plan. The roundabout would feature an Inscribed Circle Diameter between 115 and 125 feet, accommodating Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) and 45-foot buses, with a design speed of 25 MPH.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

A 10-foot wide shared use path would be incorporated throughout the new roundabout, buffered by at least 2 feet of landscaping from the roadway or by a barrier at the overcrossing. This path would accommodate both pedestrian and bicycle traffic through the intersection and connect to a north-south trail along a Shasta Union Drainage Assessment District drainage ditch, located adjacent to the north side of Eaton Road within the City right of way. Pedestrian crossings would be positioned at least one car length from the circulatory roadway, and the pedestrian refuges at the splitter islands would be at least 6 feet wide, consistent with the NCHRP Guide. These two-stage crossings are designed to minimize the time pedestrians are in potential conflict with motor vehicles by shortening each crossing and limiting it to one direction of vehicle travel at a time.

Utilities

Existing utilities would be safeguarded in their current locations. One PG&E electrical vault will be relocated laterally to accommodate the realigned edge of pavement on Eaton Road. Other utility vaults, manholes, and valve covers along Eaton Road would be adjusted to align with the final pavement surface elevation. The proposed drainage system would preserve existing flow patterns as much as possible, and would consist of a series of inlets, pipes, manholes, outfalls, and ditches. The Project would widen Eaton Road and extend an existing box culvert by approximately 5 feet to accommodate the traffic lanes near Constitution Drive.

Lighting and Signs

The Project would include safety lighting to enhance intersection visibility for drivers during nighttime hours. Approximately 12 lights are expected to be installed at the new roundabout intersection and its approaches, as well as in areas where conflicts between different users may occur or where a raised median is being constructed. Additionally, Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons would be installed at pedestrian crossing points. The lights would be mounted on cast-in-drilled-hole concrete piles, typically 2.5 feet in diameter and 5 feet in length. The lights would be either powered or solar. New conduits, trenching, and power service connections (for powered lights) would be necessary. Standard guide signs would be installed according to the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD). No overhead signs are anticipated for the Project.

Landscaping

The construction of the Project would necessitate the removal of up to approximately 15 trees. Removed trees would be replaced in-kind with similar native trees and plants. Tree replacements would occur on-site where feasible, or off-site with the City's approval. The center island of the proposed roundabout, splitter islands, and sidewalk buffers would feature landscaping or hardscaping, with proposed plantings consisting of drought-tolerant and low-maintenance materials.

Right of Way

To construct the new segment of Eaton Road and the shared use path connecting to the existing sidewalk and bike lanes along Eaton Road west of the intersection, a minor frontage easement to one adjacent parcel may be necessary. This work would primarily be conducted through a Temporary Construction Easement, (see Table 1-1, Anticipated Easement Acquisition). The project could also require re-designation of land owned by the City for an adjacent drainage channel for use as roadway right of way.

Table 1-1 Potential Easement Acquisition

Assessor's Parcel Number	Approximate Acreage of Easement
006-210-108	0.02 acre pedestrian easement

Project Construction

For the purposes of this Initial Study, it is assumed that construction would begin in 2027 and take approximately nine months to complete. Construction would utilize conventional equipment, with staging occurring within the Project limits and roadway shoulders. Expected construction equipment includes, but would not limited to, excavators, backhoes, front-end loaders, scrapers, graders, concrete saws, rollers, asphalt pavers, compactors, air compressors, generator sets, and pneumatic tools. Various trucks, such as cement mixers, haul trucks, and water trucks, would also be needed. Site access for construction and hauling activities would be provided via SR 99. The maximum excavation depth during construction is expected to be less than 10 feet below the ground surface.

Before construction begins, the City would coordinate with the Caltrans Resident Engineer, the Caltrans Traffic Management Center, and the contractor to arrange necessary staged lane closures and/or roadway closures and to ensure the use of appropriate traffic control devices throughout the Project, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications. This IS/MND conservatively assumes a full or partial closure of the SR 99 southbound on/off ramps at Eaton Road, as well as the segment of Eaton Road between the SR 99 northbound ramps and Constitution Drive. The full or partial closure is conservatively expected to remain in place for the duration of construction activities.

The approval of a Traffic Management Plan would ensure implementation of a signed detour route and maintenance of adequate access for emergency responders, local businesses, and residents. The detour route would utilize existing public roadways capable of accommodating diverted traffic volumes and would be clearly marked with temporary signage. Emergency responders, businesses, and residents in the Project area would receive advance notification of construction activities and any lane closures and detours.

In the event of a full closure, the anticipated detour routes would include the following:

– <u>Eaton Road Westbound (toward Esplanade)</u>: Westbound traffic would be detoured east on Eaton Road, south on Cohasset Road, west on Lassen Avenue beneath SR 99, and then north on Esplanade. While some traffic from nearby collector streets (Godman Avenue, Morseman Avenue, and Burnap Avenue) could access Lassen Avenue directly, the designated detour route would avoid these collector streets to minimize traffic impacts on adjacent local properties. Traffic intending to access the southbound SR 99 interchange would be directed south on Cohasset Road to the SR 99 interchange.
– <u>Eaton Road Eastbound (toward SR 99 and Hicks Lane)</u>: Eastbound traffic on Eaton Road would be detoured south on Esplanade and then east on Lassen Avenue to access the east side of SR 99.
– <u>SR 99 Southbound Exit Ramp</u>: Southbound SR 99 traffic intending to exit at Eaton Road would be detoured to exit at either Garner Lane or East Avenue.
– <u>SR 99 Southbound Entrance Ramp</u>: Traffic intending to enter southbound SR 99 at Eaton Road would be rerouted via Esplanade and directed to the southbound entrance ramp at East Avenue.

1.5 Operation and Maintenance

Following construction, routine operation and maintenance would be necessary, including periodic street sweeping, roadway repairs, and maintenance of stormwater facilities. Vehicle trips for the operation and maintenance of roadways and utilities within the City already occur under current conditions. Therefore, the Project would not directly result in new daily vehicle trips on local roads.

The geometric design of roundabouts generally requires drivers to slow down to 15-25 mph within the intersection. Due to these reduced speeds and the anticipated decrease in crashes, the Project is expected to eliminate the most severe types of collisions. Travel behavior beyond the immediate Project Area is not expected to change, and local circulation and access would remain the same.

1.6 Required Agency Approvals

As the CEQA Lead Agency, the City of Chico would consider approval of the Project. Additionally, the following agencies may serve as Responsible or Trustee Agencies under CEQA and may need to issue approvals for the Project:

– California Department of Transportation - Encroachment Permit
– State Water Resources Control Board - General Construction Permit
– Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board – Statewide General Waste Discharge Requirements for Dredged and Fill Discharges Outside Federal Jurisdiction (if needed)

1.7 Tribal Consultation

Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1 requires that prior to the release of a CEQA document for a project, an agency begin consultation with California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the project if:

1. The California Native American tribe requested to the Lead Agency, in writing, to be informed by the Lead Agency through formal notification of proposed projects in the geographic area that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the tribe; and,

2. The California Native American tribe responds in writing, within 30 days of receipt of the formal notification, and requests the consultation.

On August 22, 2024, the City invited the Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria to provide early project input prior to release of the IS/MND. A 30-day period for the request ended without formal comment. For a summary of the cultural resources review and the mitigation measures related to cultural and tribal cultural resources, please refer to Section 3.5 (Cultural Resources) and Section 3.18 (Tribal Cultural Resources).

1.8 Compliance with Existing Regulations and Standard BMPs

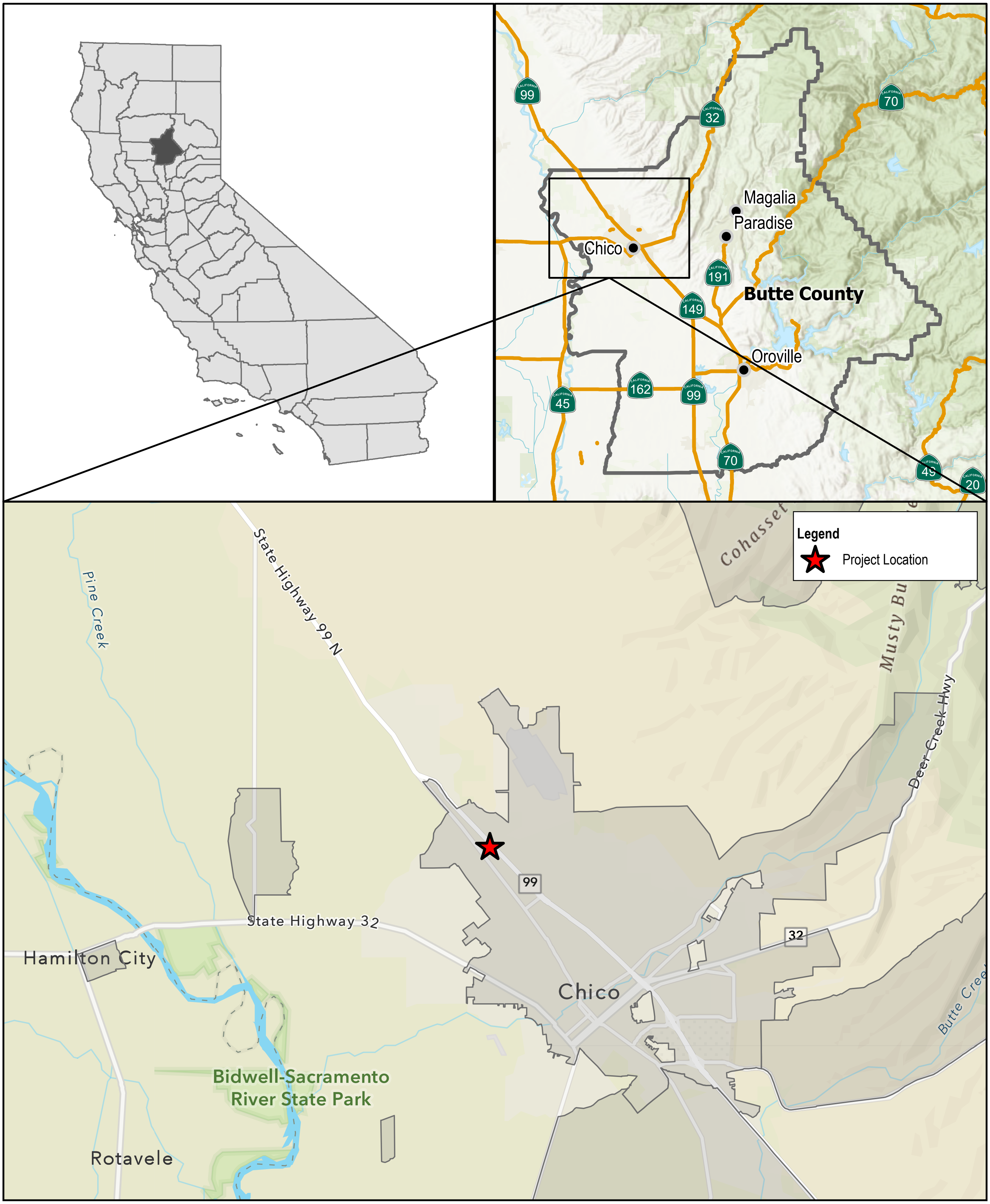
The Project would comply with relevant regulations and industry-accepted Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize or prevent potential adverse effects from construction or operation. Additionally, the mitigation measures identified in Section 3. Environmental Analysis would further reduce potentially significant environmental impacts to below significant levels. These actions will be included in the Project's Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program to ensure they are implemented.

Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)

The Project is required to obtain coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board Construction Stormwater General Permit (Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ). The City of Chico or its contractor would submit the necessary permit registration documents, including a Notice of Intent, risk assessment, site maps, SWPPP, annual fee, and certifications, to the Water Board. The SWPPP would address pollutant sources, BMPs, and other requirements specified in the Order. It would include measures for erosion and sediment control, dust control to prevent wind erosion, sediment tracking, and dust generation by construction equipment. A Qualified SWPPP Practitioner would oversee implementation of the SWPPP, conducting visual inspections, sampling and analysis, and ensuring overall compliance.

Implementation of Geotechnical Design Recommendations

The Project would be designed and constructed following the site-specific recommendations outlined in the Project's Report of Geotechnical Investigation. This would include adhering to guidelines for earthwork, such as site clearing, cut/fill slopes, subgrade preparation, fill materials, compaction requirements, trenches, and foundations. The geotechnical recommendations would be integrated into the final plans and specifications for the Project and would be implemented during construction.



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City of Chico
Eaton Road and SR 99
Southbound Ramps Project

Project No. **12620341**
Revision No. **-**
Date **Oct 2024**

Vicinity Map

FIGURE 1

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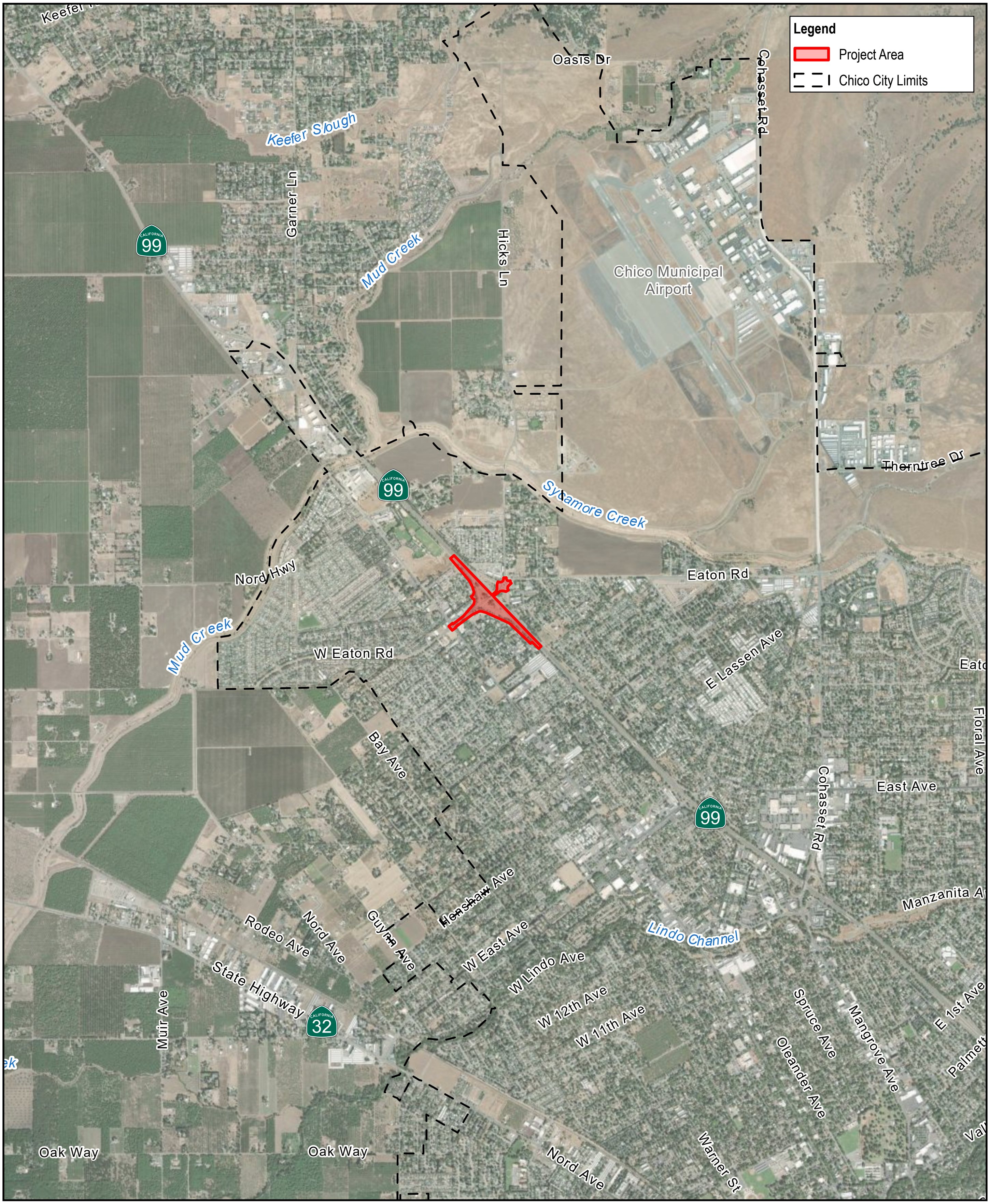

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City of Chico
Eaton Road and SR 99
Southbound Ramps Project

Project No. **12620341**
Revision No. **-**
Date **Oct 2024**

Project Area

FIGURE 2

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City of Chico
Eaton Road and SR 99
Southbound Ramps Project

Site Plan

Project No. **12620341**
Revision No. **-**
Date **Feb 2026**

FIGURE 3

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2. Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The environmental factors checked below could be potentially affected by this project. However, due to the inclusion of specific mitigation measures, the impacts will be "Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated," as indicated by the environmental checklist on the following pages.

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

DETERMINATION (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

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

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

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

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

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect: (1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (2) has been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Tracy R. Bettencourt

Tracy R. Bettencourt – MPA, AICP, Senior Planner
(for Brendan Vieg, Community Development Director)

Date April 3, 2026

3. Environmental Analysis

3.1 Aesthetics

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

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? (No Impact)

The Chico General Plan identifies scenic resources such as the transition between the Sierra Nevada foothills to the east and the Central Valley to the west, the agricultural landscape, the foothills and rising elevations east of Chico, and major creeks. The Project would not negatively impact any federally, state, or locally designated scenic or visual resources. The Project site is not situated along a state-designated scenic highway, and there are no areas of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance within the Project Area. Additionally, the Project site is not located on a prominent ridgeline, would not alter a ridgeline, nor obstruct the scenic views of the surrounding foothills. Therefore, no impact would result.

b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway? (No Impact)

The California Scenic Highway Program lists officially designated and eligible state scenic highways. SR 99 through the City of Chico is not a designated state scenic highway (Caltrans 2025). No impact would result.

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

The Project site is situated in an urbanized area. There are no designated scenic resources, farmlands, significant waterways, heritage trees, or otherwise notable visual resources that would be adversely affected by the Project. SR 99 through the City of Chico is not a designated state scenic highway, and Eaton Road is not classified as a scenic roadway.

Construction activities along the Project corridor would temporarily alter the visual character of the area. During the approximately 9-month construction period, motorists and pedestrians would encounter heavy construction equipment, temporary traffic control features (such as signage and orange cones), construction materials, and construction workers. As part of the Project, efforts would be made to preserve vegetation as much as possible, though the project may result in the removal of up to approximately 15 trees. However, areas temporarily disturbed by construction would be reseeded and replanted with native trees and shrubs. Construction lighting would be minimized and controlled. Since the construction disturbance would be temporary and disturbed areas would be restored, the temporary construction impact would be less than significant.

The overall visual character of the Project site, after construction, would be compatible with the existing character of the Project Area. The proposed roundabout and pedestrian improvements would enhance the project area with a modern roadway and highway interchange design that replaces the existing intersection with a more visually appealing, better functioning, and safer infrastructure project. The Project improvements would be built on an existing developed arterial roadway and highway interchange, mirroring the roundabout on the northbound side of SR 99 in both style and form. The Project would include necessary striping and signage to comply with California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices standards. Existing directional and safety signage would be upgraded and replaced to reflect new traffic patterns resulting from the roundabout.

While there would be visual changes to the Project corridor compared to current conditions, the overall viewscape surrounding the Project Area would not be obstructed or altered by structures or other Project elements. The roadway improvements would feature black asphalt with a smooth texture, similar to the existing road. Landscaped and hardscaped areas would introduce different colors and texture to the roadways, potentially enhancing the aesthetics. The proposed Project elements would generally replicate the form, line, color, and texture of the existing road in the Project Area, and would be minimally visible from public view. Thus, the operational impact would be less than significant.

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

The Project would enhance lighting to improve nighttime roadway visibility for drivers. Lighting would be installed at ramp merges and diverges along the shoulders of SR 99, at conflict points in and out of the roundabout, and at pedestrian crossings. Additionally, lighting would be provided at intersection approaches to improve visibility of the changing roadway features. To minimize light pollution, the new lights would be shielded and downcast, in compliance with Caltrans standards. The lighting would be typical for this type of project, and the impact from new sources of light or glare would be less than significant.

3.2 Agriculture and Forest Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				✓
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				✓
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?				✓
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				✓
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				✓

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use? (No Impact)

There are no lands designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance within the Project Area (DOC 2025). The Project site is mapped as “Urban and Built-Up Land.” No impact would result.

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? (No Impact)

The Project site is not zoned for agricultural use and is not subject to a Williamson Act contract (City of Chico 2023b, DOC 2025). No impact would result.

c, d) Conflict with Forest Land Zoning or Convert Forest Land? (No Impact)

The Project site is not zoned for forest land, timberland, or Timberland Production and there are no timber-producing properties in the vicinity. No forest land is located within the Project Area. (City of Chico 2023b). No impact would result.

e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? (No Impact)

The Project site is a developed roadway and highway interchange and surrounded by single-family residential homes as well as commercial and office land uses. The Project does not involve changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impact would result.

3.3 Air Quality

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

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? (Less than Significant with Mitigation)

The Project is located in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin, within the jurisdiction of the Butte County Air Quality Management District (BCAQMD). The current air quality plan covering the Project area is the Northern Sacramento Valley Planning Area 2024 Triennial Air Quality Attainment Plan (Attainment Plan). Butte County is currently designated as nonattainment for the Federal 8-hour ozone standard and the State 24-hour PM10 standard. The County is also designated as nonattainment-transitional for the State 1-hour and 8-hour ozone standards, and is in attainment for the Federal 24-hour PM2.5 standard with an approved maintenance plan in effect.

The Attainment Plan contains air pollutant reduction strategies based on growth forecasts from the California Department of Finance Demographic Research Unit, and VMT growth data from the California Air Resources Board (CARB). As described in Section 3.14, Population and Housing, the Project would not directly or indirectly cause population growth or new vehicle trips. Therefore, the Project aligns with the growth assumptions in the Attainment Plan.

The Project would adhere to applicable air pollutant regulations set by the BCAQMD, including Rule 205 (Fugitive Dust Emissions) and Rule 231 (Cutback and Emulsified Asphalt). Compliance with these rules is mandatory. Rule 205 limits emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from the use of cutback and emulsified asphalt in paving, construction, and maintenance of streets and highways. It requires the implementation of Best Available Control Measures (BACMs) to reduce fugitive dust emissions from outdoor sources, including construction. Table 3.3-1 lists the BACMs applicable to the Project.

Table 3.3-1 BCAQMD Rule 205 Best Available Control Measure

Source Category	Control Measure	BCAQMD Guidance
Clearing and Grubbing	02-1 Maintain stability of soil through pre-watering of site prior to clearing and grubbing; and 02-2 Stabilize soil during clearing and grubbing activities; and 02-3 Stabilize soil immediately after clearing and grubbing activities.	- Maintain live perennial vegetation where possible - Apply water in sufficient quantity to prevent generation of dust plumes
Cut and Fill	05-1 Pre-water soils prior to cut and fill activities; and 05-2 Stabilize soil during and after cut and fill activities	- For larger sites, pre-water with sprinklers or water trucks and allow time for penetration - Use water trucks/pulls to water soils to depth of cut prior to subsequent cuts
Demolition – Mechanical/Manual	06-1 Stabilize wind erodible surfaces to reduce dust; and 06-2 Stabilize surface soil where support equipment and vehicles will operate; and 06-3 Stabilize loose soil and demolition debris.	- Apply water in sufficient quantities to prevent the generation of visible dust plumes.
Disturbed Soil	07-1 Stabilize disturbed soil throughout the construction site; and 07-2 Stabilize disturbed soil between structures.	- Limit vehicular traffic and disturbances on soils where possible - If interior block walls are planned, install as early as possible - Apply water or a stabilizing agent in sufficient quantities to prevent the generation of visible dust plumes
Earth-moving Activities	08-1 Pre-apply water to depth of proposed cuts; and 08-2 Re-apply water as necessary to maintain soils in a damp condition and to ensure that visible emissions do not exceed 100 feet in any direction; and 08-3 Stabilize soils once earth-moving activities are complete	- Grade each project phase separately, timed to coincide with construction phase - Upwind fencing can prevent material movement on site - Apply water or stabilizing agent in sufficient quantities to prevent generation of visible dust plumes.
Importing/Exporting of Bulk Materials	09-1 Stabilize material while loading to reduce fugitive dust emissions; and 09-2 Maintain at least six inches of freeboard on haul vehicles; and 09-3 Stabilize material while transporting to reduce fugitive dust emissions; and 09-4 Stabilize material while unloading to reduce fugitive dust emissions; and 09-5 Comply with Vehicle Code Section (cvc) 23114	- Use tarps or other suitable enclosures on haul trucks - Check belly-dump truck seals regularly and remove any trapped rocks to prevent spillage - Comply with track-out prevention/mitigation requirements - Provide water while loading and unloading to reduce visible dust plumes.

Source Category	Control Measure	BCAQMD Guidance
Landscaping	10-1 Stabilize soils materials, slopes.	- Apply water for materials to stabilize - Maintain materials in a crusted condition - Maintain effective cover over materials - Stabilize sloping surfaces using soil binders until vegetation on ground cover can effectively stabilize the slopes - Hydroseed prior to rain season
Stockpiles/Bulk Materials Handling	13-1 Stabilize stockpiled materials 13-2 Stockpiles within 100 yards of off-site occupied buildings must not be greater than eight feet in height; or must have a road bladed to the top to allow water access or must have an operational watering apparatus that is capable of complete stockpile pile coverage.	- Add or remove material from the downwind portion of the storage pile - Maintain storage piles to avoid sleep sides or faces
Traffic Areas for Construction Activities	14-1 Stabilize all off-road traffic and parking areas; and 14-2 Stabilize all haul routes; and 14-3 Direct construction traffic over established haul routes.	- Apply gravel/paving to all haul routes as soon as possible to all future roadway areas - Barriers can be used to ensure vehicles are only used on established parking areas/haul routes
Trenching	15-1 Stabilize surface soils where trencher or excavator and support equipment will operate; and 15-2 Stabilize soils at the completion f trenching activities.	- Pre-watering of soils prior to trenching is an effective preventative measure. For deep trenching activities, pre-trench to 18 inches soak soils via the pre-trench and resuming trenching - Washing mud and soils from equipment at the conclusion of trenching activities can prevent crusting and drying of soil on equipment
Truck Loading	16-1 Pre-water material prior to loading; and 16-2 Ensure that freeboard exceeds six inches (cvc 23114)	- Empty loader bucket such that no visible dust plumes are created - Ensure that the loader bucket is close to the truck to minimize drop height while loading
Turf Overseeding	17-1 Apply sufficient water immediately prior to conducting turf vacuuming activities; and 17-2 Cover haul vehicles prior to existing the site.	- Haul waste material immediately off-site

1. Full listing of BACMs are provided in Rule 205 Table 1.

Because the Project is consistent with the growth projections in the Attainment Plan and would implement required BACMs in accordance with BCAQMD Rule 205 and Rule 231, it would not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of Attainment Plan. With implementation of the measures identified in Mitigation Measure AIR-1, the impact would be less than significant. Additionally, as summarized in impact “b” below, the construction-phase emissions calculated for the Project would not exceed established thresholds for ozone precursors or PM.

Mitigation Measures

Implementation of Mitigation Measure AIR-1 would reduce the impact of construction-related dust and criteria air pollutants by implementing specific BCAQMD measures to minimize construction impacts.

Mitigation Measure AIR-1: Implement Air Quality Control Measures during Construction

The following Butte County Air Quality Management District control measures shall be included in construction contract specifications for the Project and implemented during construction:

- Reduce the amount of the disturbed area where possible.
- Use of water trucks or sprinkler systems in sufficient quantities to prevent airborne dust from leaving the site. An adequate water supply source must be identified. Increased watering frequency would be required whenever wind speeds exceed 15 mph. Reclaimed (non-potable) water should be used whenever possible.
- All dirt stockpile areas should be sprayed daily as needed, covered, or a District approved alternative method will be used.
- Permanent dust control measures identified in the approved project revegetation and landscape plans should be implemented as soon as possible following completion of any soil disturbing activities.
- Exposed ground areas that will be reworked at dates greater than one month after initial grading should be sown with a fast-germinating non-invasive grass seed and watered until vegetation is established.
- All disturbed soil areas not subject to re-vegetation should be stabilized using approved chemical soil binders, jute netting, or other methods approved in advance by the District.
- All roadways, driveways, sidewalks, etc. to be paved should be completed as soon as possible. In addition, building pads should be laid as soon as possible after grading unless seeding or soil binders are used.
- Vehicle speed for all construction vehicles shall not exceed 15 mph on any unpaved surface at the construction site.
- All trucks hauling dirt, sand, soil, or other loose materials are to be covered or should maintain at least two feet of freeboard (minimum vertical distance between top of load and top of trailer) in accordance with local regulations.
- Install wheel washers where vehicles enter and exit unpaved roads onto streets, or wash off trucks and equipment leaving the site.
- Sweep streets at the end of each day if visible soil material is carried onto adjacent paved roads. Water sweepers with reclaimed water should be used where feasible.
- Post a sign in a prominent location visible to the public with the telephone numbers of the contractor and District for any questions or concerns about dust from the project.

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

Butte County is currently designated as nonattainment for the Federal 8-hour ozone standard and the State 24-hour PM10 standard. The County is also designated as nonattainment-transitional for the State 1-hour and 8-hour ozone standards, and is in attainment for the Federal 24-hour PM2.5 standard with an approved maintenance plan in effect.

The BCAQMD's CEQA Air Quality Handbook (CEQA Handbook) provides guidance for assessing air quality impacts for projects in Butte County. It includes adopted and recommended thresholds of significance, screening criteria, and assessment methodologies.

Construction criteria pollutant emissions for the Project were calculated by using CalEEMod 2022.1.1.29 **(Appendix A – Emissions Modeling Output).** Emissions for the Project were calculated using the model default parameters for linear roadway widening, and the Project-specific timeframe and footprint. Details regarding the source equipment inventory, assumptions, and data used to calculate the emissions are available in Appendix A, Emissions Modeling Output.

As shown in Table 3.3-2 and Table 3.3-3, the Project's estimated construction emissions would not exceed the BCAQMD's significance thresholds. Therefore, the impact from construction-related emissions would be less than significant.

Table 3.3-2 Construction Air Emissions – Daily

Parameter	Maximum Daily Emissions (lbs/day)		
	ROG	NOx	PM10
Project Construction Emissions	3.70	30.3	3.08
Threshold of Significance	137	137	80
Threshold Exceeded?	**No**	**No**	**No**

Table 3.3-3 Construction Air Emissions – Annual

Parameter	Annual Emissions (tons per year)	
	ROG	NOx
Project Construction Emissions	0.24	1.96
Threshold of Significance	4.5	4.5
Threshold Exceeded?	**No**	**No**

In addition, because the Project is located within a PM2.5 maintenance area and involves changes to a roadway facility, federal transportation conformity requirements were considered. A Project level PM2.5 hot spot conformity assessment was prepared and reviewed through the Interagency Consultation Review (ICR) process administered by the Butte County Association of Governments (BCAG). Consistent with federal transportation conformity requirements, ICR meeting notice and agenda materials were posted on the BCAG website. A meeting was conducted on February 10, 2026.

The ICR Group, including representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Caltrans, reviewed the Project level conformity assessment and concurred with the City of Chico's determination that the Project is not a "Project of Air Quality Concern" (POAQC) for purposes of federal transportation conformity (BCAG 2026). Documentation of the ICR review and agency concurrence is provided in **Appendix B – Interagency Consultation Review Memo**. Because the Project was determined not to be a POAQC, it would not cause or contribute to localized PM2.5 hot spot concentrations within the PM2.5 maintenance area.

Following construction, the Project would include the routine operation and maintenance activities as detailed in Section 1.5, Operation and Maintenance. Such activities would be consistent with existing conditions, and the operational impact would be less than significant.

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? (Less than Significant)

Sensitive receptors are facilities or land uses that include members of the population that are particularly vulnerable to air pollutants, such as children, the elderly, and individuals with illnesses. The nearest sensitive receptors to the Project site are residences on Tonea Way, approximately 320 feet northwest of the Project area's geographical center. Additionally, Shasta Elementary School is located approximately 0.60 miles northwest of the Project area.

Construction equipment and heavy-duty truck traffic generate diesel particulate matter (DPM) exhaust, which is a known toxic air contaminant. DPM and PM2.5 from equipment exhaust can pose health risks to nearby receptors if those receptors have prolonged exposure to substantial emissions. As required by the California airborne toxics control measure (Title 13, Section 2485 of California Code of Regulations), construction contractors must minimize idling times for trucks and equipment to five minutes and ensure that construction equipment is maintained in accordance with manufacturer's specifications. Given the short duration of construction (9 months), limited daily activity, continuous shifting of the construction activities within the Project area, distance to receptors, and the rapid dissipation of emissions with distance, prolonged exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations would not occur. Therefore, the impact of construction-related emissions on sensitive receptors would be less than significant.

The BCAQMD has identified areas within the County that contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos (NOA)-bearing rock formations. The Project site is not situated in such areas, therefore, disturbance of NOA is not a concern for the Project.

Following construction, the Project would not include any stationary sources of air emissions or new mobile source emissions that would result in substantial long-term operational emissions of criteria air pollutants. Therefore, Project operation would not expose nearby sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant levels. The operational impact would be less than significant.

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

The Project would not result in major sources of odor, as it is not the type of facility typically associated with odor production (e.g., landfill, coffee roaster, wastewater treatment facility). During construction, there may be short-term odors from diesel exhaust and asphalt paving. Such odors would be temporary, only occurring during the construction period, and would dissipate quickly.

Therefore, construction would not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people, and the temporary impact during construction would be less than significant. Following construction, the Project would not include any features that would generate new sources of odors. The operational impact would be less than significant.

3.4 Biological Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?		✓		
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?				✓
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?				✓
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?				✓
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				✓
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				✓

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

Special-Status Plants

The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) developed the California Rare Plant Ranks (CRPR) as a system to define, rank, and categorize rarity of California flora. During a reconnaissance site visit, no special-status plants as ranked by the CNPS were found within the Project Area. However, the gravelly roadsides and volcanic soils in the disturbed land cover type of the Project Area were identified as potential habitats for the following four special-status plants:

– Butte County calycadenia (*Calycadenia oppositifolia*), CRPR 4.2
– Spicate calycadenia (*Calycadenia spicata*), CRPR 1B.3
– Red-stemmed cryptantha (*Cryptantha rostellata*), CRPR 4.2
– Bidwell’s knotweed (*Polygonum bidwelliae*), CRPR 4.3

There are no recorded occurrences of these species within five miles of the Project Area according to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), and they were not observed during the reconnaissance-level field assessment. However, protocol surveys for special-status plants have not been conducted. Therefore, the impact is considered potentially significant. To mitigate the impact, Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would be implemented, requiring pre-construction surveys by qualified biologists in applicable habitats and compensation for any loss of habitat for special-status plants, thereby reducing the impact to a less than significant level.

Special-Status Wildlife

The Natural Environment Study – Minimal Impacts report prepared for the Project (**Appendix C – Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts) for the Eaton Road and State Route 99 Southbound Ramps Project, November 2024**) identified potential impacts and mitigation measures for the following special-status wildlife species:

<u>Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)</u>

The Swainson's hawk is classified as a threatened species under the California Endangered Species Act. Its foraging habitats include open grasslands, savannahs, low-cover row crop fields, and livestock pastures. There is a recorded occurrence of a Swainson's hawk within 5 miles of the Biological Study Area according to the California Natural Diversity Database. The Project Area contains suitable nesting and foraging habitats, and the removal of trees and construction noise could negatively impact these hawks, if present. The impact is considered potentially significant. However, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2, this potential impact would be reduced to a less than significant level.

<u>Other Nesting Birds</u>

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act protects most birds in the region. Trees within the Project Area offer suitable nesting habitats for several passerine bird species, such as Nuttall's woodpecker (*Dryobates nuttallii)*, yellow-billed magpie (*Pica nuttalli*), Bullock's oriole (*Icterus bullockii*), and oak titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*). Direct impacts on these species and active bird nests are prohibited. Consequently, the potential impact on nesting birds during construction is considered significant. However, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-3, this potential impact would be reduced to a less than significant level.

<u>Special-Status Bats</u>

Certain trees within the Project Area offer suitable day-roosting habitats for special-status bats, such as the pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) and the western red bat (*Lasiurus frantzii*). Both species are classified as California Species of Special Concern (SSC) by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The potential impact on these special-status bats during construction is considered significant. However, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-4, this potential impact would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measures

Implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-4 would reduce the impact on special-status plants, Swainson's hawk, nesting bird species, and special-status bats by implementing specific efforts to minimize construction impacts.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Avoidance and Minimization Measures to Protect Special-Status Plants

If construction activities may impact special-status plant habitat, floristic plant surveys shall be conducted during the appropriate blooming period. All suitable habitat shall be surveyed within the work area plus a 25-foot buffer according to accepted USFWS, CDFW, and CNPS protocols prior to construction. If no special-status plants are found within the Project site, no further measures pertaining to special-status plants are necessary.

If special-status plants are identified within 25 feet of the Project impact area, they shall be avoided, if feasible. Caltrans and appropriate regulatory agency (CDFW or USFWS) shall be notified, and an avoidance zone for special-status plant occurrences shall be established and clearly demarcated prior to construction. The avoidance zones shall include the extent of the special-status plants plus a 25-foot buffer, unless otherwise determined by a qualified biologist in consultation with the appropriate regulatory agency and shall be maintained until the completion of construction. A qualified biologist/biological monitor shall be present if work must occur within the avoidance buffer to ensure special-status plants are not impacted by the work.

If avoidance is not feasible, appropriate mitigation measures for impacts shall be determined in consultation with the appropriate regulatory agency and may include measures such as restoration or permanent preservation of on-site or off-site habitat for special-status plants and/or translocation of plants or seeds from impacted areas to unaffected habitats.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2: Avoidance and Minimization Measures to Protect Swainson's Hawk

If Project activities are scheduled during the Swainson's hawk nesting season (March 1 to August 31), then prior to beginning work on the Project, a qualified biologist shall survey for Swainson's hawk nesting activity. The survey area shall include a 0.25-mile distance surrounding the Project Area. The qualified biologist shall conduct surveys according to the Recommended Timing and Methodology for Swainson's Hawk Nesting Surveys in California's Central Valley (Swainson's Hawk Technical Advisory Committee 2000) or, if proposing an alternate survey methodology, shall submit the proposed survey timing and methods to CDFW for review and written approval prior to initiation of surveys. If Swainson's hawk nesting activity is observed during the survey, then the survey results shall be submitted to CDFW for review prior to starting Project activities.

If the qualified biologist identifies nesting Swainson's hawks, then they shall recommend a no disturbance buffer in coordination with CDFW, and the contractor shall implement the buffer under the supervision of a qualified biologist. Project activities shall be prohibited within the no disturbance buffer between March 1 to August 31, unless otherwise approved in writing by CDFW. The buffer shall be kept in place until after the qualified biologist confirms the young have fledged, are foraging independently, and the nest is no longer active for the season. If the qualified biologist determines that avoidance measures are insufficient to avoid take of the birds, their nest, or their eggs, all specific project activities shall cease, and Caltrans shall immediately consult with CDFW pursuant to California ESA.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3: Avoidance and Minimization Measures to Protect Other Nesting Birds

If Project activities are to occur during the nesting season (generally February 1 through August 31), the City shall ensure that a qualified biologist conducts a pre-construction nesting bird survey of all suitable nesting habitat within 14 days of the commencement of Project activities. If there is a lapse in Project-related work of 14 days or longer, then an additional survey shall be conducted prior to resuming Project activities. The survey shall be conducted within a 500-foot radius of Project work areas for raptors and within a 100-foot radius for other nesting birds. If any active nests are observed, these nests shall be designated a sensitive area and protected by an avoidance buffer implemented by the contractor and under the supervision of a qualified biologist until a qualified biologist has determined that the young have fledged, are foraging independently, and the nest is no longer active. A Pre-construction Nesting Bird Survey Report shall be prepared by a qualified biologist for the City that includes surveyors' names and qualifications, dates and times of surveys, methods, results, and recommendations.

Mitigation Measure BIO-4: Avoidance and Minimization Measures to Protect Special-Status Bat Species

Prior to construction activities between February 1 and September 1, the following measures are recommended to minimize potential impacts to special-status birds:

- If trees are scheduled to be removed or trimmed, then a qualified bat biologist shall conduct a bat habitat assessment for suitable bat roosting habitat prior to any construction activities. The habitat assessment shall be conducted one year prior to the initiation of construction activities, if feasible, and no less than 30 days prior to the initiation of construction activities. If no suitable roosting habitat is identified, no further measures are necessary. If suitable roosting habitat and/or signs of bat use are identified during the assessment, the roosting habitat shall be avoided to the extent possible.
- If avoidance of the identified bat roosting habitat is not feasible, then a qualified bat biologist shall prepare a Bat Management Plan that will include specific avoidance and minimization measures to reduce impacts to roosting bats. The Bat Management Plan shall be submitted to the Caltrans biologist for approval prior to the removal of trees. The Project-specific Bat Management Plan shall include the requirement for an emergence and/or pre-construction survey for roosting bats, roost removal timing and methodology; and will include as necessary and appropriate the inclusion of acoustic monitoring, no disturbance buffers, methods and materials for passive exclusion of bats, species-specific habitat replacement mitigation, and/or post-construction mitigation monitoring.
- Emergence surveys shall not be conducted during the bat inactive/hibernation period (typically October 15 through March 1, or when nighttime low temperatures are 45 degrees Fahrenheit or lower and rain is not over 0.5 inch in 24 hours), as bats are not detectable using emergence survey methods during their inactive period. If a maternity roost is located, that roost will remain undisturbed until after the maternity season (maternity season is typically April 15-August 31) or until a qualified biologist has determined the roost is no longer active.
- If tree removal/trimming occurs outside of the bat maternity season and outside of bat hibernation season, tree removal during the weather parameters described shall be

conducted after bat exclusion has been installed and left in place for no less than three days prior to removal/trimming, or using the two-step tree removal methods described below:

As much as feasible, vegetation and trees to be removed within the area that are not suitable for roosting bats will be removed first to provide a disturbance that may reduce the likelihood of bats using the habitat.

Two-step tree removal shall occur over two consecutive days under the supervision of a qualified bat biologist. On Day 1, small branches and small limbs containing no cavity, crevice, or exfoliating bark habitat on habitat trees (or outer fronds in the case of palm trees), as identified by a qualified bat biologist are removed first, using chainsaws only (i.e., no dozers, backhoes). The following day (Day 2), the remainder of the tree is to be felled/removed. The intention of this method is to disturb the tree with noise and vibration and branch removal on Day 1. This should cause any potentially present day-roosting bats to abandon the roost tree after they emerge for nighttime foraging. Removing the tree quickly the next consecutive day should avoid reoccupation of the tree by bats. If bats are observed during the two-step removal process, the biologist shall be immediately notified, the tree shall be left until the next day, and the biologist shall inspect the tree to ensure the tree does not contain bats prior to disturbance. If bats remain the following day, CDFW shall be notified and measures will be submitted, such as methods for passive bat exclusion, for written acceptance prior to implementation and tree disturbance. If bat roost mitigation is required, roost mitigation shall be installed as far in advance of the bat maternity season as possible, but no less than 30 days prior to roost removal.

b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service? (No Impact)

No Sensitive Natural Communities (SNCs) were observed within the Biological Study Area for the Project. No impact would result.

c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means? (No Impact)

No jurisdictional wetlands or other waters were identified within the project limits. A constructed stormwater drainage ditch flows parallel to southbound SR 99 within the Biological Study Area and then through a culvert beneath Eaton Road. The Project would require widening the existing culvert crossing beneath Eaton Road, which is anticipated to require replacement of the culvert.

The drainage ditch is concrete lined before passing beneath Eaton Road, and is earthen after it passes Eaton Road. The drainage ditch continues flowing south off-site parallel to northbound SR 99 before turning east toward Godman Avenue and eventually entering a storm drain inlet at Godman Avenue. The drainage ditch does not exhibit an Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM), does not exhibit three parameter wetlands, and is not expected to be considered a water of the U.S. or State. No impact would result.

d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites? (No Impact)

According to the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project maintained by CDFW and Caltrans, the Biological Study Area for the Project lacks wildlife movement corridors and Essential Habitat Connectivity areas. Additionally, the study area does not contain suitable habitats for native resident or migratory fish, nor does it include any essential fish habitat. No impact would result.

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? (No Impact)

Site planning and general development standards in the City's Municipal Code include criteria for tree removal (Municipal Code Chapter 16.66). While the Project would involve some tree removal, Municipal Code section 16.66.040.B exempts tree removal within public rights-of-way. Additionally, the Project Area is not designated as sensitive habitat in the City's General Plan. Grading would be necessary for the Project, which could lead to erosion into surface waters and storm drains. The Project must comply with the California Building Code and the Caltrans Highway Design Manual, which outline specific design, engineering, and development standards for areas with unstable soils. Furthermore, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, as detailed in Section 1.8 of this Initial Study, would be required for the Project. With these project requirements in place, there would be no conflicts with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. No impact would result.

f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan? (No Impact)

The Project site does not overlap designated critical habitat for listed species and is not located within the boundaries of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. As such, the Project would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted habitat conservation plan. No impact would result.

3.5 Cultural Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?				✓
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?		✓		
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?		✓		

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5? (No Impact)

A Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR) was conducted for the Project by ECORP Consulting Inc. (ECORP 2024) (**Appendix D**). On May 1, 2024, ECORP requested a records search from the Northeast Information Center (NEIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) at California State University, Chico. This search was completed to identify any previously recorded cultural resources within the Project Area and within a 1-mile radius. Additionally, ECORP consulted the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD) for Butte County. This search included resources eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), as well as California Historical Landmarks and Points of Historical Interest. A letter was also sent to the Butte County Historical Society on May 1, 2024 to solicit comments or obtain historical information regarding the Project vicinity.

The record searches did not identify any historical resources within the Project Area. The closest property listed on the NRHP is the former Bidwell Mansion, located within Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park, approximately 3.1 miles southeast of the Project. According to Caltrans Bridge Local and State Inventories, the Eaton Road bridge over SR 99 is designated as Bridge No. 12-0160, was constructed in 1966, and is classified as a category 5 bridge (ineligible for NRHP listing). No impact on historical resources would result.

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5? (Less than Significant with Mitigation)

An Archaeological Survey Report (ASR) (**Appendix D**) was completed for the Project, evaluating the potential for both surface and subsurface archaeological and historical resources within the Project Area (ECORP 2024). The ASR included a records and literature search at the Northeast Information Center, along with a review of relevant publications, files, and maps related to ethnographic, historic-era, and prehistoric resources. Additionally, on May 1, 2024, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was contacted to review the Sacred Lands File. On May 7, 2024, the NAHC responded that the search did not identify any known Native American cultural resources within the Project Area. The NAHC also provided a list of Native American contacts for the Project, who were subsequently contacted on June 27, 2024. Follow-up emails and phone calls were also made. The following Native American Tribes were contacted:

– KonKow Valley Band of Maidu
– Mechoopda Indian Tribe
– Mooretown Rancheria of Maidu Indians
– Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe
– Redding Rancheria
– Round Valley Reservation/Covelo Indian Community

The Mooretown Rancheria of Maidu Indians responded, indicating they were not aware of any resources within the Project Area, but requested to be notified if resources are discovered during construction. The Mechoopda Indian Tribe responded, requesting information on the anticipated depth of soil disturbance during construction, which was provided. The KonKow Valley Band of Maidu also responded, stating they would defer their response to the Mechoopda Indian Tribe. No other responses were received.

On May 31, 2024, qualified archaeologists conducted a pedestrian survey of the Project Area in 15-meter transects. The survey did not identify any archaeological resources. The review of records and the area's geology indicated a low potential for intact buried pre-contact resources (ECORP 2024). Aerial photographs show the surrounding landscape has been heavily modified by agriculture, the construction of SR 99 (including the realignment of Eaton Road), and ongoing development since the 1960s. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that any intact pre-contact or historic-era cultural resources will be uncovered during the Project (ECORP 2024).

Although no recorded archaeological sites were found, the proposed Project involves excavation, which has the potential to uncover previously unrecorded archaeological resources. If such resources are identified during construction and qualify as historical resources under CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5, or as unique archaeological resources under PRC § 21083.2(g), the impacts could be significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-1 would reduce the potential impact to a less than significant level by outlining procedures to be taken in the event of inadvertent discovery of unrecorded resources consistent with appropriate laws and requirements.

Mitigation

Mitigation Measure CR-1 would minimize potential impacts on archaeological resources to a less than significant level by outlining the necessary procedures to follow in case of an inadvertent discovery.

Mitigation Measure CR-1: Protect Archaeological and Tribal Cultural Resources if Encountered

If, during ground disturbing activities, any potential paleontological, prehistoric, protohistoric, historic cultural resources, or tribal cultural resources are encountered, the supervising contractor shall cease all work within 25 feet of the find (100 feet for human remains) and notify the City of Chico Public Works staff at 879-6900. A professional archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for prehistoric and historic archaeology and who is familiar with the archaeological record of Butte County, shall be retained by the City of Chico to evaluate the significance of the find. Further, City Public Works staff shall notify the local tribe(s) on the consultation list maintained by the State of California Native American Heritage Commission to provide local tribes the opportunity to monitor evaluation of the site. Site work shall not resume until the archaeologist conducts sufficient research, testing and analysis of the archaeological evidence to make a determination that the resource is either not cultural in origin or not potentially significant. If a potentially significant resource is encountered, the archaeologist shall prepare a mitigation plan for review and approval by the City, including recommendations for total data recovery, Tribal monitoring, disposition protocol, or avoidance, if applicable. All measures deemed appropriate by the City of Chico, in collaboration with Tribal representatives, shall be implemented pursuant to the terms of the archaeologist's report. The preceding requirement shall be incorporated into construction contracts and plans to ensure contractor knowledge and responsibility for proper implementation.

c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? (Less than Significant with Mitigation)

No evidence has been found to suggest the presence of human remains within the Project Area. While the discovery of human remains is not expected, there is still a possibility, and such a find could have significant impacts. Mitigation Measure CR-2 would reduce this potential impact to a less than significant level by specifying the procedures to follow in the event of an inadvertent discovery, in accordance with relevant laws and regulations.

Mitigation

Mitigation Measure CR-2 would minimize the potential impact on human remains to a less than significant level by outlining the required procedures for inadvertent discoveries, in accordance with relevant laws and regulations.

Mitigation Measure CR-2: Protect Human Remains if Encountered

If human remains, associated grave goods, or items of cultural patrimony are discovered during construction, work shall stop immediately within a 100-foot radius of the discovery and any nearby area suspected to contain additional remains (PRC, Section 7050.5). The County Coroner shall be contacted to determine if an investigation into the cause of death is necessary. If the remains are determined to be of Native American origin, the Coroner shall notify the NAHC within 24 hours. The Commission shall then inform the Most Likely Descendant (MLD), who has 48 hours to provide recommendations to the landowner regarding the disposition of the remains. A qualified archaeologist, the City, Caltrans, and the MLD shall collaborate to develop an agreement for the respectful treatment of the remains and any associated or unassociated funerary objects. This agreement shall address the appropriate excavation, removal, recordation, analysis, custodianship, and final disposition of the remains and objects.

3.6 Energy Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impacts due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?			✓	
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?				✓

a) Result in potentially significant environmental impacts due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation? (Less than Significant)

Project construction activity would require the temporary use of fossil fuels (gas, diesel, and motor oil) for excavation, grading, and vehicle use. Construction of the Project would not require a comparatively large amount of fuel or energy usage because of the limited extent and nature of the proposed improvements and the relatively short construction duration required for a project of this scale. Such energy use would be temporary and would not require expanded energy supplies or a large amount of fuel or energy.

The proposed Project does not add travel lanes on SR 99 or Eaton Road that increase the operational capacity of the roadways, nor structures that would require substantial direct or indirect energy use. Project energy consumption would be limited to the electricity needed to operate new lights at the roundabout intersection and approaches. The amount of electricity utilized by the lights would not be substantial as they would be in conformance with the City of Chico standards and would be required to meet energy efficiency standards. Additionally, the lights would only operate at night, therefore use of the new lights would be an efficient and necessary consumption of energy resources.

The installation of a proposed roundabout would limit the idling of vehicles that would frequent the intersection, resulting in a more efficient use of gasoline when compared to a signalized intersection. Operational fuel consumption would be limited to that utilized by routine maintenance workers as they traveled to and from the site during periodic street sweeping, roadway and water line repairs, and maintenance of stormwater facilities. Vehicle trips associated with operation and maintenance of roadways and utilities within the City currently occur under existing conditions and the Project would not directly result in new daily vehicle trips on local roadways.

Therefore, neither Project construction or operation would result in the use of large amounts of fuel and energy in a wasteful manner. The impact would be less than significant.

b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency? (No Impact)

The Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a state plan for energy efficiency, such as the State Energy Action Plan or the State Alternative Fuels Plan that have been adopted by the California Energy Commission and the California Public Utilities Commission. Project construction activities would not require a large amount of fuel or energy usage because of the limited extent and nature of the proposed improvements. No conflict with strategies for state or local renewable energy or energy efficiency would result. No impact would result.

3.7 Geology and Soils

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

a.i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42. (No Impact)

The Project site is not located within a designated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone, and no other active or potentially active faults have been mapped passing through the Project area or the City of Chico (DOC 2025). Consequently, the Project would not increase the risk of loss, injury, or death due fault rupture. No impact would result.

a.ii) Strong seismic ground shaking? (Less than Significant)

Strong seismic ground shaking within the Project area could result from earthquakes on faults both within and outside of Butte County. The design and construction of the Project will be required to adhere to engineering standards of the California Building Code, as well as local and state standards. By applying geotechnical techniques and appropriate engineering practices, the potential damage from seismic ground shaking would be reduced. Additionally, as outlined in Section 1.8, the Project will follow site-specific recommendations from a design-level geotechnical study. Therefore, because the Project will be built according to these standards and recommendations, the impact from strong seismic ground shaking would be less than significant.

a.iii) Seismic related ground failure, including liquefaction? (Less Than Significant)

The potential for liquefaction at the Project site is generally moderate (Butte County 2019). The design and construction of the Project would comply with the California Building Code and local and state standards, including the Caltrans Highway Design Manual seismic standards, which account for soil properties like liquefaction. As detailed in Section 1.8, the Project will follow site-specific recommendations from a design-level geotechnical study. These recommendations would cover site preparation, grading, stripping, excavations, fill quality and placement, pavement sections, asphalt overlay, compaction, moisture barriers, retaining walls, and other factors. These geotechnical recommendations would be integrated into the final project plans and specifications and implemented during construction. Therefore, the geologic and soil impacts related to seismic ground failure, including liquefaction, would be less than significant.

a.iv) Landslides? (Less than Significant)

The likelihood of landslides occurring at the Project site is considered low to none (Butte County 2019). The Project area does not contain slopes or natural features that would promote slope instability. Therefore, landslides in or near the Project area are unlikely. The impact would be less than significant.

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil? (Less than Significant)

Construction activities would disturb soil in the Project area, potentially causing erosion. The areas affected during construction would primarily consist of previously disturbed and graded soils that have been substantially altered from their natural state. As discussed in Section 1.8, because the Project would disturb more than one acre of land, it would require coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board Order for Waste Discharge Requirements related to storm water runoff from construction and land disturbance activities. This includes developing and implementing a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to address pollutant sources, non-storm water discharges from construction, best management practices (BMPs), and other specified requirements. Mandatory compliance with these regulations would further reduce the potential for soil erosion during construction. Additionally, the City's General Plan mandates the use of BMPs to control runoff from all new developments, thereby further limiting erosion. Following construction, there would be no exposed soil areas vulnerable to erosion. Therefore, the overall impact related to soil erosion or loss of topsoil would be less than significant.

c, d) Unstable or expansive soils? (Less Than Significant)

The Project, which involves operational improvements to an existing facility, would not destabilize the area or cause landslides, lateral spreading, collapse, or subsidence. Figure S-3 of the Chico 2030 General Plan identifies areas within Chico known to have expansive soils. The Project site is located in an area mapped as having moderate to highly expansive soils (City of Chico 2017). As detailed in Section 1.8, the Project would be designed and constructed following site-specific recommendations from a design-level geotechnical study. These recommendations aim to reduce the potential for differential movement caused by on-site soils to acceptable levels through specific earthwork practices. The geotechnical recommendations would be integrated into the final plans and specifications and implemented during construction. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater? (No Impact)

The Project does not include the use of septic tanks or other alternative wastewater disposal systems. No impact would result.

f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? (Less than Significant with Mitigation)

Paleontological resources are typically found in sedimentary rock formations such as sandstone, siltstone, mudstone, claystone, or shale, which are usually buried beneath surface soil deposits. The Project does not involve altering unique geological features, and the maximum excavation depth during construction is expected to be less than 10 feet below ground level. While it is unlikely that paleontological resources would be encountered during Project excavations, there remains a potential for such discoveries. If encountered, this could result in a potentially significant impact. Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would reduce the potential impact on undiscovered paleontological resources to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would reduce the impact of construction activities on potentially unknown paleontological resources by ensuring that any unanticipated discoveries are addressed and that such resources are preserved and/or documented in accordance with relevant laws and regulations.

Mitigation Measure GEO-1: Protect Paleontological Resources if Encountered

If fossils are discovered during construction (such as bones, teeth, or notably well-preserved invertebrates or plants), construction activities shall be halted within 50 feet of the find. A professional paleontologist shall be notified to document the discovery, evaluate the potential resource, and assess its significance. Depending on the scientific value or uniqueness of the find, the paleontologist may either record the find and allow work to continue or recommend the salvage and recovery of the material if it cannot be avoided. The paleontologist shall provide recommendations for any necessary treatment in line with current scientific practices. Any fossils collected shall be deposited in an accredited and permanent scientific institution for proper curation and preservation.

3.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?			✓	
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gasses?			✓	

a,b) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment, or conflict with an applicable plan adopted for the purposes of reducing greenhouse gases? (Less than Significant)

The BCAQMD has not established a specific threshold of significance for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Rather, the BCAQMD recommends compliance with a Lead Agency's qualified Climate Action Plan or consistency with a qualified greenhouse gas reduction strategy, such as the most recent State Scoping Plan.

The City of Chico adopted a Climate Action Plan Update 2021 (2021 CAP), which provides a path to reducing GHG emissions consistent with the State goal of reducing such emissions 40% below 1990 levels by 2030, as established by Senate Bill (SB) 32, and making substantial progress towards the State's long term goal of carbon neutrality by 2045, as established by Executive Order (EO) B-55-18.

Of the GHG reduction strategies identified in the 2021 CAP, the following is applicable to the Project:

> **MEASURE T-1:** Improve active transportation infrastructure to achieve greater than 6% bicycle mode share by 2030 and 12% bicycle mode share by 2045.

As detailed in Section 1.4, Project Description, the Project would improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and safety within and around the intersection. The Project enhances the bikeway network by adding new routes, improving wayfinding, safety, and comfort. It upgrades the intersection for pedestrians and cyclists, introduces multi-use pathways, and strengthens a safer east-west connection across SR 99. The Project aligns with the City's CAP. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

3.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

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

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials? (Less Than Significant with Mitigation)

Construction activities would involve the use of common materials such as fuels, lubricants, paints, solvents, concrete, and asphalt, which are not acutely hazardous and would be used in small quantities. The storage, handling, and transportation of these materials must comply with local, state, and federal laws, including regulations enforced by Cal/EPA and Cal/OSHA. Worker safety would be ensured through hazard communication regulations, training, and safety plans.

Project specifications require compliance with all relevant laws and regulations for managing hazardous materials. Contractors must contain hazardous materials to prevent exposure to workers, the public, and the environment, and dispose of any hazardous waste legally. Specific Caltrans provisions would be followed for managing lead-containing materials and other hazardous residues.

In addition to routine construction materials, an Initial Site Assessment (ISA) (**Appendix D – Initial Site Assessment – Eaton Road and State Route 99 Southbound Ramps Project, Chico,**

California October 2025) conducted for the Project identified the potential to encounter hazardous substances such as aerially deposited lead (ADL), asbestos-containing pipe, treated wood, and yellow thermoplastic or paint striping during excavation and demolition activities (GEOCON 2025). The ISA also noted the possibility of encountering undocumented subsurface features such as underground storage tanks (USTs), septic systems, or water wells, as well as isolated areas of apparent soil contamination. These conditions could pose a hazard if not properly managed, and the potential impact is considered significant.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-1 requires pre-construction soil sampling to evaluate the presence of ADL and determine the suitability of excavated soil for reuse near sensitive land uses. It also mandates the proper handling and disposal of hazardous materials encountered during construction, including regulatory oversight and coordination with the Butte County Environmental Health Division (BCEHD) when necessary.

The regulatory framework, BMPs, construction protocols, and implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-1 would mitigate potential risks, ensuring the Project does not pose a significant hazard to the public or the environment. Post-construction, the Project would not involve the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials, and routine maintenance would not create operational impacts. With mitigation, the overall impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation

Mitigation Measure HAZ-1 would minimize potential impacts related to disposal of hazardous materials during construction to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measure HAZ-1: Hazardous Materials Management During Construction

Prior to construction, the City shall ensure that shallow soil sampling and analytical testing are conducted in unpaved highway and roadway shoulders within the Project area to evaluate the potential presence of aerially deposited lead (ADL) at regulated concentrations. Screening-level soil testing shall also be performed to determine the suitability of excess excavated soil for reuse near sensitive land uses. If asbestos-containing pipe, treated wood, or yellow thermoplastic/paint striping is encountered, these materials shall be handled and disposed of in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

Any undocumented subsurface structures, including underground storage tanks (USTs), septic systems, and domestic or agricultural water wells, encountered during construction shall be properly removed or abandoned in compliance with Butte County Environmental Health Division (BCEHD) permitting requirements. If apparent soil contamination (e.g., odor, staining, debris) is observed during excavation or grading, the affected soil shall be isolated, stockpiled separately, and disposed of at a permitted landfill. The City shall notify BCEHD for regulatory oversight if significant contamination is encountered. These measures shall be incorporated into the construction specifications and implemented throughout the duration of ground-disturbing activities to minimize potential hazards to public health and the environment.

b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment? (Less than Significant)

The Project would not involve materials or conditions that would result in risk of an upset or accident that would release hazardous materials into the environment. Examples of such project types include refineries, fuel storage, and tanker transportation, where accidents could result in catastrophic environmental or human consequences.

Proper use of hazardous materials, in line with local, state, and federal regulations, would minimize the risk of accidental releases during construction. Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol regulate hazardous materials transportation, while Cal-OSHA enforces worker safety and hazard communication standards. Additionally, Project construction activities would implement storm water best management practices as required by the State Water Resources Control Board General Construction Storm Water Permit and City of Chico Municipal Code. These practices include proper material delivery and storage, spill prevention, and waste management.

Although there is a possibility of small quantities of hazardous substances being inadvertently released during construction, such spills are unlikely to pose a danger to the public due to the nature and quantity of the materials used. Because contractors would be required to comply with existing and future hazardous materials laws and regulations addressing the transport, storage, use, and disposal of hazardous materials, the potential to create a significant hazard from accidental conditions during construction would be less than significant. After construction, the Project would not involve any new stationary sources of hazardous emissions or the handling of acutely hazardous materials or waste. The overall impact would be less than significant.

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

The Project is not located within a quarter-mile of any existing or proposed schools. The nearest school, Shasta Elementary School, is located approximately 0.64 miles northwest of the Project site.

Construction activities would involve the use of common hazardous materials such as fuels, lubricants, degreasers, paints, and solvents, which are not acutely hazardous and would be used in small quantities. Existing laws and regulations would ensure the safe transportation, use, storage, and disposal of these materials (see Impacts 'a' and 'b' above). Although there is a possibility of small quantities of hazardous substances being inadvertently released during construction, such spills are unlikely to pose a danger to individuals at a nearby school due to the nature and quantity of the materials used and the distance of the schools from the Project area. After construction, the Project would not involve any new stationary sources of hazardous emissions or the handling of acutely hazardous materials or waste. The overall impact would be less than significant.

d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment? (No Impact)

Government Code Section 65962.5, commonly known as the 'Cortese List,' was reviewed to identify any known hazardous waste sites on or near the Project site. The review included the following lists:

- Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor database;
- List of Leaking Underground Storage Tank Sites from the Water Board GeoTracker database;
- List of solid waste disposal sites identified by the Water Board with waste constituents above hazardous waste levels;
- List of "active" Cease and Desist Orders and Cleanup and Abatement Orders from the Water Board; and
- List of hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action pursuant to Section 25187.5 of the Health and Safety Code.

Based on the review, the Project site is not a current or former hazardous waste disposal site or solid waste disposal site, and is not located on or adjacent to any parcels identified under Government Code Section 65962.5. No impact would result.

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

The Chico Regional Airport (CIC) is located approximately 1.8 miles northeast of the Project area. The Project area is located within Zone D of the Airport Influence Areas (AIA), which consists of areas commonly overflown by aircraft during takeoff and landing. The Project would not result in land use incompatibilities with the current Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan for the Butte County Airport Land Use Commission (Butte County 2017). Additionally, the Project would not result in an airport-related safety hazard as defined in Table 3A of the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. The impact would be less than significant.

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

During construction, the normal functionality of Eaton Road in the Project area and the SR 99 southbound on/off ramps would be altered to accommodate construction activities. As described in Section 1.4, before construction begins, the City would coordinate with the Caltrans Resident Engineer, the Caltrans Traffic Management Center, and the contractor to arrange necessary lane closures and detours and to ensure the use of appropriate traffic control devices throughout the Project, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications.

The approval of a Traffic Management Plan would ensure implementation of a signed detour route and maintenance of adequate access for emergency responders, local businesses, and residents. Emergency responders, businesses, and residents in the project area would receive advance notification of construction activities and lane closures or detours. The detour route would utilize existing roadways capable of accommodating diverted traffic volumes and would be clearly marked with temporary signage. These measures would minimize disruptions and maintain adequate emergency access during construction. Therefore, the construction-related impact would be less than significant.

Following construction, the Project would transform the current intersection of Eaton Road and the SR 99 southbound on/off ramps into a modern, four-legged multilane roundabout. The Project is designed to enhance safety for all travel modes, improve operations, and reduce delays. The Project would not alter land use patterns nor impair actions for the coordination of operations, management, and resources during emergencies under either the City of Chico Emergency Management Plan or the Butte County Emergency Operations Plan. No operational impact would result.

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

The Project site is located in a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) and in a designated non-very high fire hazard severity zone (CALFIRE 2008). The Project site is not located within or adjacent to a State Responsibility Area (SRA) or areas classified as very high fire severity zones (VHFHSZ) (CALFIRE 2023). The site is relatively flat, located in an urban area, and lacks factors that would increase the risk of exposing occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire. The impact would be less than significant.

3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

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

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

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB) sets water quality standards for surface and groundwater in the Project area, including beneficial uses, water quality objectives, and an Antidegradation Policy. Temporary construction activities could degrade water quality through erosion or accidental release of hazardous materials to the local storm drain system. As discussed in Section 1.8, the Project would require coverage under State Water Resources Control Board Construction Stormwater General Permit (Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ), including a SWPPP to address pollutant sources, non-storm water discharges, best management practices, and dust control. A Qualified SWPPP Practitioner would oversee implementation of the plan, including visual inspections, sampling and analysis, and ensuring overall compliance.

The Project is located in the Sacramento Valley – Vina Groundwater Basin 5-021.57 and would not decrease groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater management. During roadway construction, isolated and short-duration groundwater dewatering may occur as needed and would be small in scale and limited to shallow groundwater only. Any necessary dewatering during construction would adhere with CVRWQCB requirements, ensuring no violation of water quality standards. The Project would not create large impervious surfaces that would hinder groundwater infiltration, nor would it involve direct additions or withdrawals from existing groundwater. Consequently, the Project would not adversely impact the designated beneficial uses of groundwater.

Based on the 2025 State Highway Management Plan inventory, the Project falls within a designated State Transportation Growth Area. Upon completion, the Project would create approximately 6,075 square feet of new impervious surface area within the State right-of-way, which is below Caltrans' 10,000 square foot impervious surface threshold for requiring permanent water quality treatment. Therefore, permanent treatment is not required for the Project. The Project design would comply with Caltrans Standard Specifications and include post-construction trash capture controls, as required.

The new impervious surface area within the City right-of-way would be less than 5,000 square feet. The proposed drainage system would preserve existing flow patterns as much as possible and would include a series of inlets, pipes, manholes, outfalls, ditches and bioretention methods.

Because the Project would be constructed in accordance with applicable waste discharge requirements and the CMC, and would implement necessary erosion, sediment, and pollution control measures during and after construction, the potential impact on water quality degradation would be less than significant.

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

The Project is located in the Sacramento Valley – Vina Groundwater Basin 5-021.57, which has a SGMA Basin Priority of High but is not listed as Critically Overdrafted (DWR 2025). Groundwater use is not anticipated during Project construction. Similarly, the Project would not reduce groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater management. During roadway construction, any necessary groundwater dewatering would be isolated, short-term, small in scale, and limited to shallow groundwater. Therefore, construction-related impacts on groundwater levels would be less than significant.

After construction, the Project would not use groundwater and would not lead to an increase in population or employment that could indirectly increase groundwater demand. The Project would not affect groundwater recharge, or cause a deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of water levels. The operational impact would be less than significant.

c.i) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site? (Less than Significant)

As described under Impact 'a' above, the Project would be constructed in accordance with applicable waste discharge requirements and the CMC. Erosion and sediment control measures would also be implemented during and after construction. Best management practices would be to control on-site and off-site erosion and sedimentation. The potential impact related to erosion or siltation would be less than significant.

c.ii-iii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site, or create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff? (Less than Significant)

As described under Impact ‘a’ above, the new impervious surface within the State right-of-way would be below Caltrans’ 10,000 square foot impervious surface threshold for requiring permanent water quality treatment. Therefore, permanent treatment is not required for the Project. The Project design would comply with Caltrans Standard Specifications and include post-construction trash capture controls, as required. The new impervious surface within City right-of-way would be less than 5,000 square feet.

Upon completion, the proposed drainage system would maintain existing flow patterns and would consist of a series of inlets, pipes, manholes, outfalls, ditches, and bioretention methods. The Project would be required to comply with applicable waste discharge requirements and the CMC, and would implement necessary erosion, sediment and pollution control measures during and after construction. Consequently, the Project would not exceed the capacity of planned stormwater drainage systems or create substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. The impact would be less than significant.

c, iv) Impede or redirect flood flows? (No Impact)

The Project site is not located within a designated 100-year floodplain or any other regulated special flood hazard zone (FEMA 2025). No impact would result.

d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation? (No Impact)

The Project site is not located within a designated floodplain, tsunami zone, or seiche zone. No impact would result.

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

The Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento River Basin and the San Joaquin River Basin (Basin Plan) addresses both surface and groundwater quality within the basins (CVRWQCB 2019). The Project would not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of the Water Quality Control Plan or a sustainable groundwater management plan.

Compliance with construction provisions and precautions outlined in the required National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits would be maintained, and best management practices would be implemented to prevent violations of water quality standards, waste discharge requirements, or water quality degradation (see Impact ‘a’ above). The operation of the Project would not impede sustainable groundwater management, as it would not use groundwater, interfere with groundwater recharge, generate growth, or increase water demands. The impact would be less than significant.

3.11 Land Use and Planning

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?				✓
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?				✓

a) Physically divide an established community? (No Impact)

The physical division of an established community typically involves the construction of a physical barrier or removal of a means of access that impairs the mobility within a community or between a community and surrounding areas. The Project aims to alleviate traffic congestion by introducing a traffic-calming circulation pattern, enhancing connectivity between existing and planned neighborhoods, and improving pedestrian and bicycle safety at and near the intersection. Local circulation and access would remain unchanged. The Project is designed to best meet the safety objectives for all modes of travel while addressing future mobility needs. The Project would not physically divide an established community. No impact would result.

b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect? (No Impact)

Eaton Road and SR 99 do not have assigned land use or zoning designations (Chico 2023a, 2023b). In the Project vicinity, adjacent properties are designated as Neighborhood Commercial (NC), Office Mixed Use (OMU), and Low Density Residential (LDR), with associated zonings of Neighborhood Commercial (CN), Office Commercial (OC), and Low Density Residential (R1). Additionally, land uses and zoning designations in the Project vicinity include the Airport Overflight overlay (AOD).

The Project would not require changes to existing land use or zoning designations. The Project would align with various policies from the City of Chico 2030 General Plan, including Policy CIRC-2.1 (Complete Streets), CIRC-2.2 (Circulation Connectivity and Efficiency), CIRC-3.4 (Bicycle Safety), CIRC-4.1 (Pedestrian Master Planning), and CIRC-4.2 (Continuous Network). Additionally, Chico General Plan Policy OS-2.2 (Creek Corridors and Greenways) aims to expand creekside greenway areas for open space and additional pedestrian/bicycle routes. The proposed pathway would be consistent with the Chico General Plan and the CMC. Furthermore, the Project would not result in land use incompatibilities with the current Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. No impact would result.

3.12 Mineral Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				✓
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?				✓

a, b) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state, or a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan? (No Impact)

The Project would not impact locally available minerals or mineral resources valuable to the region or the State. The Project is not located in an area known to contain regionally significant mineral resources, such as lands classified as State mineral resource zones, nor is not located in an area identified as a locally-important mineral resource recovery site (City of Chico 2017). No impact would result.

3.13 Noise

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Result in generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?			✓	
b) Result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or noise levels?			✓	
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the Project Area to excessive noise levels?			✓	

a) Result in generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies? (Less than Significant)

Construction

City of Chico Municipal Code Chapter 9.38.060 exempts certain noise-generating activities, such as construction and alteration of structures, from the City's Noise Chapter. These activities are allowed between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Sundays and holidays, and between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. on other days, provided that no individual device exceeds either 83 dBA at 25 feet, or the noise level outside the property plane does not exceed 86 dBA.

During construction, the Project would temporarily increase noise levels in the immediate vicinity due to the use of construction equipment. Pile driving is not anticipated during any stage of construction. Construction activities would adhere to Municipal Code Chapter 9.38.060, which restricts construction hours to between 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and between 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sundays and holidays.

Construction noise levels would vary daily and would be sporadic rather than continuous, as different types of equipment would be used throughout the construction process. Hourly average noise levels from standard construction equipment would range from 77 to 83 dB Leq at 50 feet (equivalent continuous level, Leq). Sound from a point source attenuates at a rate of -6 decibels for each doubling of the distance to the receptor. For example, a noise level of 83 dBA Leq as measured at 50 feet would attenuate to 77 dB Leq at 100 feet and to 71 dB Leq at 200 feet. Sensitive noise receptors near the Project include residential housing, with the nearest residence on Tonea Way approximately 320 feet northwest of the Project area. At this distance, construction noise levels would attenuate to less than 68 dB Leq.

The Project’s construction activities would generate noise levels below the established standards in the Chico Municipal Code, as the noise level at any point outside of the property plane of the Project would not exceed eighty-six 86 dBA Leq, and construction activities would be limited to the allowable hours specified in Municipal Code Chapter 9.38.060. Additionally, construction noise would be temporary and intermittent, and further controlled by Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 14-8.02 Noise Control. The impact would be less than significant.

The temporary detours would result in short-term increases in traffic volumes on certain local roadways, including Esplanade, Garner Lane, East Avenue, Cohasset Road, and Lassen Avenue. These increased volumes could lead to minor, temporary increases in traffic-related noise levels along segments of these roadways. Traffic noise increases associated with detours are expected to be incremental and intermittent, occurring only during the interchange closure period and varying by time of day. Because the detours would not substantially alter vehicle speeds and the duration of the closure would be limited, any increase in noise levels would not be substantial and would represent a temporary inconvenience. Once the interchange was reopened, traffic patterns would return to existing conditions, and associated noise levels would similarly return to baseline levels. Therefore, detour-related noise impacts would be temporary and less than significant.

Operational

Chico General Plan Action N-1.4.1 (Roadway Project Significance Criteria) establishes that a roadway improvement project would have a significant impact if it caused a +5 db Ldn (day-night average sound level) increase in noise levels in areas where existing traffic ranges between 65 and 70 db Ldn. The Project does not generate growth, new vehicle trips, or new stationary noise sources. Roundabouts help reduce approach speeds and improve traffic flow, and have been shown to typically lower noise levels by approximately 4-5 dB compared to standard intersections. The Project would not increase roadway noise levels. The operational impact would be less than significant.

b) Result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or noise levels? (Less than Significant)

Construction activities can cause varying levels of vibration depending on several factors. The use of heavy equipment, such as excavators, backhoes, pavers, and paving equipment, may generate perceptible vibrations near sensitive receptors. Vibration levels depend on soil conditions, construction methods, and the equipment used, with the highest levels occurring close to the source and decreasing with distance.

The primary concern with construction-induced vibration is the potential to damage adjacent structures, either cosmetically (e.g., minor cracking) or structurally. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) recommends a vibration limit of 0.5 inches/second (in/sec) Peak Particle Velocity (PPV) for new residential and modern commercial/industrial structures, 0.3 in/sec PPV for older residential structures, and 0.12 in/sec PPV for historical buildings. For this study, a conservative threshold of 0.3 in/sec PPV has been selected for assessing vibration impacts.

The Project would not involve pile driving, structure demolition, blasting, or similar techniques. Typical construction vibration levels for public works roadway projects range from 0.003 to 0.21 PPV at a distance of 25 feet, which would not exceed Caltrans' significance thresholds. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

Following construction, operation of the Project would result in groundborne vibration and noise consistent with current use. The Project would not generate new sources of vibration, except during larger road repairs as part of operation and maintenance, which would be short-term and temporary (lasting from one to several weeks depending on the extent of damage or other circumstances). The impact would be less than significant.

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

The Chico Regional Airport is located approximately 1.8 miles northeast of the Project area. The Project area is located within Zone D of the Airport Influence Areas (AIA), which consists of areas commonly overflown by aircraft during takeoff and landing. The Project area is beyond the 55-CNEL noise contour identified in the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan for the Butte County Airport Land Use Commission (Butte County 2017). Additionally, the Project does not involve residential development and would not increase the population in noise sensitive areas surrounding the airport. Construction workers would not be exposed to aircraft noise levels exceeding those produced by the construction itself. The impact would be less than significant.

3.14 Population and Housing

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?				✓
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?			✓	

a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)? (No Impact)

The Project does not involve the construction of new housing or businesses, nor extension of roads or other infrastructure into new areas not already served by the City of Chico. The Project does not add vehicular travel lanes on Eaton Road and would not directly or indirectly generate population growth or new vehicle trips. No impact would result.

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

The Project may require temporary construction easements in order to conform the new shared use path to existing sidewalk and bike lanes along Eaton Road to the west of the interchange. City right of way agents would work directly with property owners. The easements would not result in the removal of housing or displacement of residents. The impact would be less than significant.

3.15 Public Services

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?				✓
Police protection?				✓
Schools?				✓
Parks?				✓
Other public facilities?				✓

a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for public services? (No Impact)

The Project area is currently served by the Chico Fire Department and the Chico Police Department. As discussed in Section 3.14 (Population and Housing), implementation of the Project would not affect population growth. While the Project would modify the Eaton Road and SR 99 intersection, the changes would not increase the demand for public services in the Project area.

The Project would enhance public service capabilities in the surrounding area by improving connectivity and safety. The Project would not require an increase in staffing, create new hazardous conditions, or alter the road system in a way that would restrict emergency service access. Consequently, the Project would not require expanded fire or police protection facilities to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives.

Because the Project does not involve residential development or new employment generating land uses, it would not lead to increases in population and students. Therefore, no additional public services would be needed to serve the Project. Additionally, the Project would not increase park usage to a level that would require new or expanded parks. No impact on public services would result.

3.16 Recreation

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?				✓
b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				✓

a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated? (No Impact)

The proposed Project would enhance safety for pedestrians and cyclists by creating new shared use paths. DeGarmo Park and Peterson Park, located approximately 0.4 mile north and 0.7 mile southwest of the Project area respectively, are established parks. The Project does not involve residential development or new employment generating land uses. Consequently, it would not lead to increases in population that would substantially increase park usage to a level that would lead to physical deterioration. No impact would result.

b) Include or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment? (No Impact)

The Project does not involve residential development or new employment generating land uses. Consequently, it would not lead to increases in population that would increase the use of recreational facilities in a manner that could negatively impact the environment. As a result, there would be no need for new or expanded recreational facilities. No impact would result.

3.17 Transportation

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

a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities? (No Impact)

The Project would transform the current intersection of Eaton Road and the SR 99 southbound on/off ramps into a modern, four-legged multilane roundabout. The Project is designed to enhance safety for all travel modes, improve operations, and reduce delays. The Project improvements would be built on an existing developed arterial roadway and highway interchange, mirroring the roundabout on the northbound side of State Route 99 in both style and form. The Project would include necessary striping and signage to comply with California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices standards. Existing directional and safety signage would be upgraded and replaced to reflect new traffic patterns resulting from the roundabout.

The proposed modifications align with the City of Chico's circulation-related programs, plans, ordinances, and policies. They support the City's goals of enhancing pedestrian and bicycle connectivity in a safe, convenient, and efficient manner for all modes of travel. The Project aligns with several policies within Chico's General Plan, including Policy CIRC-2.1 - Complete Streets; Policy CIRC-2.2 - Circulation Connectivity and Efficiency; Policy CIRC-3.4 - Bicycle Safety; Policy CIRC-4.1 - Pedestrian Master Planning; and CIRC-4.2: Continuous Network. These policies aim to develop a multimodal circulation system that enhances connectivity, efficiency, and safety for all transportation modes, including transit, bicycles, and pedestrians, while reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and ensuring continuous, accessible pedestrian networks in both existing and new neighborhoods.

Additionally, the Project aligns with several goals within the City's Active Transportation Plan, including: Goal 1 – Encouraging active transportation within Chico; Goal 3 – Increasing safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-motorized users; Goal 5 – Providing a connected network of comfortable facilities for walking, biking, and rolling; and Goal 7 – Enhancing mobility throughout Chico to meet the needs of all users, including commuters, local business visitors, and recreational users (Chico 2023c).

During construction, the normal functionality of Eaton Road in the Project area and the southbound on-off ramps would be altered to accommodate construction activities. Before construction begins, the

City would coordinate with the Caltrans Resident Engineer, the Caltrans Traffic Management Center, and the contractor to arrange necessary lane closures and detours and to ensure the use of appropriate traffic control devices throughout the Project, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications. During construction, temporary detours and traffic control measures would be implemented in accordance with City and Caltrans requirements for temporary lane closures and detours, including appropriate signage and public notifications.

Temporary closure of the SR 99 Eaton Road southbound interchange would result in localized changes in traffic circulation as vehicles are rerouted to nearby interchanges and roadways. The proposed detour routes rely on existing arterial and collector streets, including Esplanade, Garner Lane, East Avenue, Cohasset Road, and Lassen Avenue, which are designed to accommodate relatively higher traffic volumes and already function as primary connectors in the Project vicinity.

During the closure period, increased traffic volumes would be expected on Esplanade, particularly between Garner Lane and Eaton Road, as southbound freeway traffic and local movements are redirected. Similarly, Garner Lane and East Avenue interchanges would likely experience temporary increases in turning movements and queue lengths during peak travel periods. These effects could result in short-term delays and reduced levels of service at select intersections, particularly during weekday peak hours.

The impacts on traffic flow are anticipated to be temporary and localized, given that the detour routes do not require traffic to travel substantial additional distances, multiple alternate access points to SR 99 are available in close proximity, and no permanent lane reductions or long-term capacity constraints are proposed. With implementation of appropriate traffic control measures, including advance notification, temporary signage, and coordination with Caltrans, overall traffic operations are expected to remain acceptable. As a result, the closure and detours would not result in a substantial degradation of traffic conditions.

Transit service in the City of Chico is provided by Butte Regional Transit (B-Line), a regional transit system operated by the BCAG. No existing B-Line fixed routes use the Eaton Road overpass over SR 99 or the SR 99 southbound off-ramps at Eaton Road. Therefore, construction activities would not affect existing transit services. No conflicts with plans, ordinances or policies addressing the circulation system have been identified. Therefore, no impact would result.

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

CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3 (Determining the Significance of Transportation Impacts) specifies that Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) is the primary metric or measure of effectiveness for determining the significance of transportation impacts across California. VMT refers to the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) has published a Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA (OPR 2018) which contains guidance on methodology and recommendations for establishing screening criteria and thresholds for VMT evaluation, which is used to evaluate impacts in this Initial Study. OPR's Technical Advisory specifies that transportation impact analysis be based on either a project's VMT per capita (or other efficiency metric like VMT per household, per employee) or total VMT change (before and after project). Under the OPR guidance, construction traffic is not considered a feature of a project and is temporary, therefore the Technical Guidance does not consider construction traffic in the analysis.

For transportation projects, the CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3 state that transportation projects that reduce, or have no impact on, VMT should be presumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact. The Project is not a capacity expansion project. Travel behavior beyond the immediate Project vicinity is not anticipated to be affected. The proposed Project would not increase vehicle traffic or vehicle miles traveled because the Project does not increase vehicular capacity or result in traffic-generating land uses. Additionally, the Project would enhance safety for pedestrians and cyclists by creating new sidewalks, crosswalks, and shared use paths. Consequently, the Project would not conflict with or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b). The impact would be less than significant.

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

During construction, the normal functionality of Eaton Road in the Project area and the southbound on-off ramps would be altered to accommodate construction activities. As described in Section 1.4, before construction begins, the City would coordinate with the Caltrans Resident Engineer, the Caltrans Traffic Management Center, and the contractor to arrange necessary lane closures and detours and to ensure the use of appropriate traffic control devices throughout the Project, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications. The approval of a Traffic Management Plan would ensure adequate traffic access for all businesses and residences. The community would receive advance notification of construction activities and any detours. Trucks, buses, and cyclists would be accommodated through the construction zone during all construction stages, with signage and striping provided to alert drivers. The construction-related impact would be less than significant.

Upon completion, the Project would slightly alter the geometry of the existing southbound off- and on-ramps of SR 99 to accommodate the new roundabout configuration. Additionally, minor adjustments would be made to the geometry along Eaton Road to integrate the roundabout. These modifications would consolidate traffic intersections, minimize sharp curves entering the roundabouts, and enhance safety within the Project area.

Between 2010 and 2020, several vehicle collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists occurred at the Eaton Road and SR 99 intersection (Chico 2023c). The proposed roundabout would include improvements such as roundabout aprons and splitter islands. Splitter islands on Eaton Road would also serve as pedestrian refuge islands and connect with new crosswalks. Additionally, a 10-foot shared use path would be provided throughout the new roundabout, buffered by at least 2 feet of landscaping from the roadway or by a barrier at the overcrossing. Pedestrian crossings would be positioned at least one car length from the circulatory roadway, and the pedestrian refuges at the splitter islands would be at least 6 feet wide. These two-stage crossings would be designed to reduce the time pedestrians are in potential conflict with motorized vehicles by shortening each crossing and limiting each crossing to one direction of vehicle travel at a time.

The Project is being designed in accordance with the Caltrans Highway Design Manual, 7th Edition (2023) and the NCHRP Report 672 entitled “Roundabouts: An Information Guide, 2nd Edition” (2010). Additionally, the Project would adhere to other relevant standards, including the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (Caltrans 2021), the Department of Justice 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, the 2019 California Building Code, and portions of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, 7th Edition (2018). As a result, the impact would be less than significant.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access? (Less than Significant)

During construction, the normal functionality of Eaton Road in the Project area and the SR 99 southbound on/off ramps would be altered to accommodate construction activities. As described in Section 1.4, before construction begins, the City would coordinate with the Caltrans Resident Engineer, the Caltrans Traffic Management Center, and the contractor to arrange necessary lane closures and detours and to ensure the use of appropriate traffic control devices throughout the Project, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications.

The approval of a Traffic Management Plan would ensure implementation of a signed detour route and maintenance of adequate access for emergency responders, local businesses, and residents. Emergency responders, businesses, and residents in the Project area would receive advance notifications of construction activities, lane closures, and detours. These measures would minimize disruptions and maintain adequate emergency access during construction. Therefore, the construction-related impact would be less than significant.

Upon completion, the Project would have no long-term impacts on emergency access. Eaton Road and the SR 99 southbound ramps would be restored and fully functional following construction. The Project is designed to enhance safety for all travel modes, improve operations, and reduce delays. The Project would not reduce the width of travel lanes and would continue to adequately accommodate fire protection and police vehicles. No operational impact would result.

3.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American Tribe, and that is:				
i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources, or in a local register of historic resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k)?		✓		
ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of the Public Resources Code section 5024.1? In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of the Public Resources Code section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American Tribe.		✓		

a.i-ii) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource? (Less than Significant with Mitigation)

Assembly Bill (AB) 52 requires CEQA lead agencies to evaluate the potential impact of a project on tribal cultural resources. Such resources include sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American Tribe that are eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources or included in a local register of historical resources. AB 52 also grants CEQA lead agencies the discretion to determine, based on substantial evidence, whether a resource qualifies as a tribal cultural resource.

Further, the City of Chico and the Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria entered into the ‘Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Principles for the City of Chico Consultation with the Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria’ (MOU) on August 8, 2008 to ensure continued communication and coordination regarding proposed City infrastructure projects. In accordance with this MOU, the City formally notified Tribal representatives about the Project on August 22, 2024. Specifically, the City invited the Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria to provide early input prior to release of the IS/MND. A 30-day consultation request period ended without any comment.

Additional coordination with multiple Native American Tribal representatives was conducted as part of an Archaeological Survey Report for the Project (ECORP 2024). This included review of the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) Sacred Lands File for the Project area, which did not identify known Native American cultural resources. Letters were also sent to each tribal representative on the NAHC contact list on June 27, 2024, including the following:

- KonKow Valley Band of Maidu
- Mechoopda Indian Tribe
- Mooretown Rancheria of Maidu Indians
- Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe
- Redding Rancheria
- Round Valley Reservation/Covelo Indian Community

The Mooretown Rancheria of Maidu Indians responded, indicating they were not aware of any resources within the Project area, but requested notification if any resources are discovered during construction. The Mechoopda Indian Tribe responded, requesting information on the anticipated depth of soil disturbance during construction, which was provided. The KonKow Valley Band of Maidu also responded, stating they would defer their response to the Mechoopda Indian Tribe. No other responses were received.

Based on the City's coordination with Tribal communities and the findings of the Archaeological Survey Report, which indicates a low potential for intact buried pre-contact resources, it is considered unlikely that intact pre-contact tribal cultural resources would be uncovered during the Project. However, although no known tribal cultural resources have been identified, there is a possibility of encountering unanticipated resources during construction. If such resources were encountered during construction, a potentially significant impact could result. Implementation of Mitigation Measures CR-1 and CR-2 would reduce the potential impact to a less-than-significant level by outlining procedures to be taken in the event of inadvertent discovery consistent with Tribal considerations and appropriate laws and requirements.

Mitigation

Mitigation Measures CR-1 and CR-2 would minimize potential impacts on tribal cultural resources to a less-than-significant level by outlining procedures to be taken in the event of inadvertent discovery consistent with Tribal considerations and appropriate laws and requirements.

Mitigation Measure CR-1: Protect Archaeological and Tribal Cultural Resources if Encountered

For the full details of this mitigation measure, please see Section 3.4, Cultural Resources.

Mitigation Measure CR-2: Protect Human Remains if Encountered

For the full details of this mitigation measure, please see Section 3.4, Cultural Resources.

3.19 Utilities and Service Systems

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

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

The Project is not anticipated to require relocation of existing utilities within the Project footprint. However, if utilities were required to be relocated, the City would work directly with utility providers to coordinate the relocations.

The Project would create approximately 6,075 square feet of new impervious surface area within the State right-of-way, which is below Caltrans' 10,000 square foot impervious surface threshold for requiring permanent water quality treatment. Therefore, permanent treatment is not required for the Project. The Project design would comply with Caltrans Standard Specifications and include post-construction trash capture controls, as required. The new impervious surface within City right-of-way would be less than 5,000 square feet. No additional off-site storm water facilities beyond those evaluated in this Initial Study would be necessary to serve the Project.

The Project would not generate wastewater or result in a substantial long-term increase in water demand. No new or expanded water, wastewater, storm water, or other utility facilities would become necessary to serve the Project. The impact would be less than significant.

b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years? (No Impact)

Project construction, including the establishment of new trees and landscaping, would require a minimal amount of water use. Such water use would be sufficiently accommodated by existing water supplies. The Project would not induce population growth or result in land uses that would increase demand for water supplies. Therefore, no new water supplies would be required. No impact would result.

c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments? (No Impact)

The Project would not result in the generation or discharge of wastewater. No impact on wastewater capacity would result.

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

North Valley Waste Management (NVWM) is the solid waste provider for the Project area. During construction, contractors would be responsible for controlling and disposing of solid waste in accordance with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations. Construction waste with no practical reuse or that cannot be salvaged or recycled would be disposed of at a local landfill. Solid waste generated during construction of the Project would represent a small fraction of the daily permitted tonnage of local landfill facilities and would be sufficiently accommodated. Following construction, the Project would not generate solid waste. The overall impact would be less than significant.

f) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste? (No Impact)

California's Integrated Waste Management Act mandates a reduction of solid waste disposal and establishes an integrated framework for program implementation, solid waste planning, and solid waste facility and landfill compliance. During construction, solid waste would be required to be disposed of in accordance with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations. Only construction waste with no practical reuse or that cannot be salvaged or recycled would be disposed of at a local landfill. Following construction, the Project would not generate solid waste. No impact would result.

3.20 Wildfire

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

a-d) If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project exacerbate wildfire risks? (No Impact)

The Project site is located in a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) and in a designated non-very high fire hazard severity zone (CALFIRE 2008). The Project site is not located in or contiguous to a State Responsibility Area (SRA) or lands classified as very high fire severity zones (VHFHSZ) (CALFIRE 2023). The Project site is located approximately 7 miles from the nearest SRA. As such, the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist section for wildfire is not applicable to the Project. Additionally, the Project would not impair implementation or physically interfere with an established emergency response or evacuation plan. The site is relatively flat and located in an urban area, and there are no obvious factors that would increase the risk of this site to exposing occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire. No impact would result.

3.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

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

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

Potential impacts of the Project on biological and cultural resources are discussed in Section 3.4 (Biological Resources), Section 3.5 (Cultural Resources), and Section 3.18 (Tribal Cultural Resources). With implementation of the recommended mitigation measures identified in this Initial Study, the potential for Project-related activities to degrade the quality of the environment, including wildlife species or their habitat, plant or animal communities, or important examples of California history or prehistory, would be reduced to less-than-significant levels.

b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)? (Less than Significant)

Cumulative impacts are defined as "two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over time.

A project is generally considered a probable future cumulative project once its environmental review process has begun or there is evidence indicating that the project is feasible, probable, or sufficiently certain to occur. Efforts to identify cumulative projects included review of local and state public infrastructure projects, as well as development projects in the area.

Two cumulative roadway improvement projects are proposed by the City near the Project site. The Garner Lane Reconstruction Project would add sidewalks, parkway strips, and pedestrian facilities along Garner Lane, with construction anticipated in 2026. The North Esplanade Reconstruction Project would upgrade a segment of Esplanade to a Complete Streets design, including roadway widening, bike lanes, sidewalks, landscaped medians, and street lighting, along with undergrounding overhead utilities under PG&E's Rule 20A program. Construction is expected in 2027–2028. Additionally, the PG&E Undergrounding Project along Esplanade / Nord Highway is planned in 2027. Finally, the Chico Aquatic Center project is currently underway with completion planned in Fall of 2026.

Based on the review, construction of the proposed Project is not anticipated to overlap with construction of the cumulative roadway projects in the immediate area, but would potentially overlap with construction of the PG&E Undergrounding project. However, the Project would not add appreciably to any existing or foreseeable future cumulative impact. The Project along with the cumulative projects are infrastructure upgrades that would improve multimodal connectivity and safety along roadways. As summarized in this Initial Study, the Project would not result in impacts on agriculture and forest resources, land use and planning, mineral resources, public services, recreation, or wildfire. Therefore, implementation of the Project would not contribute to any related cumulative impact on those resources.

If the Project's temporary construction activities overlap with those of a cumulative project in the immediate area, a slight increase in dust generation, exhaust emissions, construction noise, and construction vehicles accessing the area could result. However, the impacts summarized in this Initial Study would not appreciably add to a foreseeable cumulative impact, as the impacts of the Project would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level, and incremental impacts, if any, would be very small. The cumulative impact would be less than significant.

c) Does the project have environmental effects which would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? (Less than Significant with Mitigation)

With implementation of the recommended mitigation measures identified in this Initial Study, the potential for Project-related activities to cause substantial adverse effects on human beings would be reduced to less than significant levels.

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5. Report Preparers

5.1 City of Chico

Tracy Bettencourt, Senior Planner

Jesse Hudson, Associate Planner

5.2 GHD

Brian Bacciarini, Senior Environmental Scientist

Christian Hernandez, Environmental Scientist

Chryss Meier, Environmental Scientist

Appendices