ATTACHMENT F

NEPA CE

CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM (rev. 06/2022)

Project Information

Project Name (if applicable): Gold Rush Multi-Use Phase I Project

DIST-CO-RTE: 10-TUO-49 **PM/PM:** 17.2-17.9

EA: 10-1S350 **Federal-Aid Project Number:** 1024000070

Project Description

The project proposes construction of a 1.5-mile multi-use trail, beginning in the city of Sonora at State Route 49 and South Green Street, extending south down State Route 49 to an existing trail located near the Motherlode Fairgrounds. See continuation sheet for further details.

Caltrans CEQA Determination (Check one)

☐ **Not Applicable** – Caltrans is not the CEQA Lead Agency
☒ **Not Applicable** – Caltrans has prepared an IS or EIR under CEQA

Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the project is:
☐ **Exempt by Statute.** (PRC 21080[b]; 14 CCR 15260 et seq.)
☐ **Categorically Exempt. Class** Enter class. (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15300 et seq.)
  ☐ No exceptions apply that would bar the use of a categorical exemption (PRC 21084 and 14 CCR 15300.2). See the SER Chapter 34 for exceptions.
☐ **Covered by the Common Sense Exemption**. This project does not fall within an exempt class, but it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment (14 CCR 15061[b][3].)

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

N/A		
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager

N/A		
Print Name	Signature	Date

Caltrans NEPA Determination (Check one)

☐ **Not Applicable**

Caltrans has determined that this project has no significant impacts on the environment as defined by NEPA, and that there are no unusual circumstances as described in 23 CFR 771.117(b). See SER Chapter 30 for unusual circumstances. As such, the project is categorically excluded from the requirements to prepare an EA or EIS under NEPA and is included under the following:

☒ **23 USC 326:** Caltrans has been assigned, and hereby certifies that it has carried out the responsibility to make this determination pursuant to 23 USC 326 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated April 18, 2022, executed between FHWA and Caltrans. Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:

☒ **23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c)(3)-**Construction of bicycle and pedestrian, paths, and facilities

☐ **23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)()**

☐ **Activity Enter activity number listed in Appendix A of the MOU between FHWA and Caltrans**

☐ **23 USC 327:** Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under 23 USC 327. The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 USC 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated May 27, 2022, and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Jonathan Coley		08/27/2026
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

Sridhar Kidambi		08/27/26
Print Name	Signature	Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable): 8/27/26
Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: n/a

Briefly list environmental commitments on continuation sheet if needed (i.e., not necessary if included on an attached ECR). Reference additional information, as appropriate (e.g., additional studies and design conditions).

Continuation sheet:

Project Description

The project proposes construction of a 1.5-mile multi-use trail, beginning in the city of Sonora at State Route 49 and South Green Street, extending south down State Route 49 to an existing trail located near the Motherlode Fairgrounds. In addition, a trail junction will be constructed at the State Route 49/Woods Creek Drive intersection, forming a T in the trail. The project can be broken into three sections: South Green Street to Woods Creek Drive, Woods Creek Drive to Motherlode Fairgrounds, and Woods Creek Drive to Snell Street. Project-wide improvements will consist of construction of a Class I pedestrian and bicycle path, Americans with Disabilities Act improvements, and restriping portions of State Route 49 to narrow and shift the existing lanes. Two build alternatives were present to the public for review and comments. After closing on the environmental review period, the Project Development Team selected Alternative 1 as the preferred alternative on August 17, 2026

Build Alternative 1 will consist of constructing the Woods Creek Drive to Snell Street segment of the trail, discussed above, through the edge of the existing baseball field in Woods Creek Rotary Park. This will include shifting the existing baseball field fencing into the field, to allow enough room for the Class I path to be constructed adjacent to Woods Creek.

Air Quality

Per the Air Quality Memorandum, dated May 15, 2026, the project will not have any adverse effects to air quality. With the implementation of the following best management practice and standard specifications, any adverse effects will be minimal. For further information, please see the Minor Level Visual Impact Assessment, dated May 15, 2026. For further information, please see the Air Quality Memorandum.

- **AIR-1**: Implement Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 14-9.02 Air Pollution Control where applicable to avoid and minimize criteria pollutant emissions.

- **AIR-2**: Implement Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 10-5 Dust Control where applicable to avoid and minimize the generation of dust and particulate matter.

Aesthetics

Per the Minor Level Visual Impact Assessment, the project will not have any adverse effects on a scenic resource or to the surrounding aesthetics. With the implementation of the following best management practice, avoidance and minimization measures, the effects to aesthetics will be minimal. For further information, please see the Minor Level Visual Impact Assessment, dated Ma 22, 2026.

- **AES-1**: Landscape architecture considerations shall be implemented as directed by the Caltrans Highway Design Manual, Chapter 900, and the Caltrans Landscape Architecture PS&E Guide. As such, any highway planting, lighting plans, and aesthetic treatment will be incorporated into the project as appropriate.

- **AES-2**: Caltrans Standard Specifications (2022) "Erosion Control" will be followed during construction. At the conclusion of construction, areas of bare soil shall be hydroseeded with native seed mix to prevent or at least minimize erosion. Hydroseeding will follow Standard Special Provision 21-2.03D for Erosion Control (Hydroseed).

- **AES-3**: Vegetation clearing will only occur within the delineated project boundaries in an effort to minimize impacts. Trees located in areas along the edge of the construction zone will be trimmed whenever possible and only those trees that lie within the active construction areas will be removed.

- **AES-4**: All disturbed areas including staging of vehicles and equipment will be restored to pre-construction contours and revegetated, either through hydroseeding or other means, with native species.

- **AES-5**: Where feasible, construction lighting will be limited to within the area of work.

- **AES-6**: The contractor will be required to maintain good housekeeping in and around construction sites, staging areas, and equipment storage areas.

Cultural Resources

Per the Archaeology Survey Report, Historical Property Survey Report, and Historic Resources Evaluation Report, the project will not have any adverse effects on Cultural Resources. With the following standard measures, best management practices, avoidance and minimization measures any adverse effects will be minimal. For further information, please see the cultural documents in Volume 2.

- **CR-1:** If an inadvertent discovery of cultural materials (e.g., unusual amounts of shell, animal bone, bottle glass, ceramics, structure/building remains) is made during project-related construction activities, ground disturbances in the area of the find will be halted, and a qualified professional archaeologist will be notified regarding the discovery.

- **CR-2:** In the event human remains are discovered during excavation, work must stop immediately within 100 feet (30 meters), and the county coroner must be contacted immediately. At the same time, a professional archaeologist shall be contacted to evaluate the discovery. If the human remains are identified as

Native American origin, the coroner shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission within twenty-four hours of such identification.

- **CR-3:** A qualified archaeologist shall designate Environmentally Sensitive Areas for the protection of cultural resources within or near the project's area of potential effect.

- **CR-4:** An Archaeological Monitoring Area has been established for a portion of the project area. This monitoring area requires a qualified archaeological monitor and/or Native American monitor to observe all ground disturbing activities within the monitoring area boundary.

Noise

Per the Construction Noise Technical Memorandum, dated February 17, 2026, the project will not have any adverse effects from construction noises. With the implementation of the following best management practices and standard specifications, and any adverse effects will be minimal:

- **NOI-1**: To avoid and minimize potential construction-related noise effects, the project will comply with Caltrans Standard Specification and Construction best management practices for Noise. The following best management practices will be implemented during project construction:

  • Project-related noise-generating activities at, or adjacent to, the construction site shall comply with the Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 14-8.02. "Control and monitor noise resulting from work activities. Do not exceed 86 dBA at 50 feet from the job site from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m."

  • Generation of construction-related noise shall not be allowed between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, nor between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Sunday.

  • All internal combustion engine driven equipment shall be equipped with the appropriate intake and exhaust mufflers, which are in good condition.

  • Unnecessary idling of internal combustion engines shall be strictly prohibited.

  • Avoid staging construction equipment within 200 feet of residences and locate all stationary noise generating construction equipment as far as practical from existing noise receptors. Construct temporary barriers to screen noise generating equipment when located in areas adjoining noise sensitive land uses.

• Quiet air compressors and other stationary noise sources shall be used when applicable.

• All construction traffic shall be routed to and from the project site via designated truck routes. Construction-related heavy truck traffic shall be prohibited in residential areas where feasible. Construction truck traffic shall be prohibited in the project vicinity during non-allowed hours.

• The businesses and residents in the project area shall be notified in writing by the County of the construction schedule.

Biological Resources

Per the Natural Environment Study- Minimal Impact (NES-MI), dated March 7, 2026 the project will not have a significant adverse effect on biological resources. Per the NES-MI, the project has a No Effect Section 7 determination for Unites States Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries.

With the following mitigation measures incorporated, the project will have less than significant effects to Biological Resources:

• BIO-11: Compensatory mitigation will be provided for any riverine habitats that will be permanently impacted by the project, resulting in no net loss of aquatic resources or habitat. Mitigation will be provided using an agency-approved mitigation ratio via one of the following compensatory mitigation options:

- Payment of an in-lieu fee or mitigation credits to an agency-approved mitigation site.
- Compensatory off-site mitigation at an agency-approved mitigation site.
- Compensatory on-site mitigation.
- A combination of the above compensatory mitigation options.

Consultation efforts with the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife through Section 404, Section 401, and Section 1602 permitting processes will determine final mitigation ratios for permanent impacts to Waters of the United States and Waters of the State.

Section 4(f)

Per Section 4(f) Memorandum, the project identified 3 Section 4(f) resources, within the project area: Woods Creek Rotary Park, Dragoon Gulch Trail and pre-historic archaeological site. It was determined there is “No Use” of the pre-historic site, so Section 4(f) does not apply. For Woods Creek Rotary Park and Dragoon Gulch Trail, *De minimis* determinations were made for the impacts to the resource. The agency with jurisdiction (City of Sonora Community Development Dept.) concurred with the *De minimis* determination. For further information, please see Appendix A in the Final

Environmental Document, Initial Study-Mitigated Negative Declaration dated August 2026.

Community Impact

Per the Community Impact Assessment, dated May 2026, the project will not have any significant adverse effects on Land Use, Growth, Community Character and Cohesion, Traffic and Transportation and Bicycle Facilities. There are no proposed relocations for this project.

Hazards and Hazardous Waste

Per the Phase I Initial Site Assessment, dated August 26, 2025, the project will not have or create any adverse effects to the public. With the implementation of the following standard measures and best management practices will be incorporated into the project features to reduce and control the potential for environmental impacts relating to hazards and hazardous materials during construction.

- **HAZ-1**: If planned demolition and/or construction activities involve impacting concrete structures, concrete should be evaluated for asbestos.

- **HAZ-2**: Soil adjacent to the roadways within the project alignment where excavation is planned should be evaluated for lead concentrations that exceed hazardous waste limits.

- **HAZ-3**: If work is to be done to move painted hydrants or work in soil surrounding painted hydrants, the paint should be tested for the presence of lead.

- **HAZ-4**: If chemically treated wood is to be removed from the project alignment, it must be handled and disposed of as treated wood waste (TWW).

- **HAZ-5**: If traffic striping material is to be removed by planing, grinding, or sandblasting, the traffic striping material must be tested to determine whether hazardous concentrations of heavy metals are present.