Rio Vista Platform Design – Phase II Project

Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

Prepared for:

MTS Metropolitan Transit System

1255 Imperial Avenue, Suite 1000
San Diego, CA 92101

Prepared by:
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September 2025

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DRAFT MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Project Title:	Rio Vista Platform Design – Phase II Project
Project Location:	North of San Diego River: Mission Valley East community in the southern portion of the City of San Diego
Assessor Parcel Numbers:	438-362-11-00 and 438-362-12-00
Lead Agency:	San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) 1255 Imperial Avenue, Suite 1000 San Diego, CA 92101
Project Proponent:	San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS)

The Lead Agency, having reviewed the Initial Study of this proposed project, having reviewed the written comments received prior to the public meeting of the Lead Agency, and having reviewed the recommendation of the Lead Agency's Staff, does hereby find and declare that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment. Brief statements explaining the reasons supporting the Lead Agency's findings are as follows: The proposed project is located north of the I-8/Texas Street/Qualcomm way Interchange in an urbanized area primarily dominated by residential and open space uses. The project proposes to retrofit infrastructure at the Rio Vista Station on the MTS Green Line in the City of San Diego. The project would be consistent with local and state policies aimed at reducing air pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions, as proposed project would not result in any new or increased emissions. The Initial Study identifies potentially significant effects to biological resources (impacts to habitat of special status species), cultural resources (unknown subsurface archaeological resources), land use and planning (Multiple Habitat Planning Area), noise (construction noise at adjacent habitat and surrounding property lines), and tribal cultural resources (unknown subsurface tribal cultural resources) for the proposed project. The implementation of mitigation measures identified in the Initial Study would ensure potentially significant impacts are reduced to less than significant levels. All other environmental impacts would be less than significant, or no impact would occur. Therefore, the project would not result in significant impacts to the environment.

The Lead Agency hereby finds that the Mitigated Negative Declaration reflects its independent judgment. A copy of the Initial Study is attached.

The location and custodian of the documents and any other material which constitute the record of proceedings are as follows:

MTS
1255 Imperial Avenue,
Suite 1000 San Diego, CA
92101

On the basis of the Initial Study, it has been determined that the proposed project would not

result in a significant effect on the environment with implementation of mitigation measures identified in the Initial Study and agreed upon by the project proponents.

_____ _____

Brent Boyd, Director of Planning, MTS Date

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Assembly Bill
Act	Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act
ADT	average daily traffic
ALUCP	Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan
APN	Accessor's Parcel Number
Attainment Plan	2020 Plan for Attaining the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ozone in San Diego County
BSA	biological study area
BMPs	best management practices
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standard
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire
Protection CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBC	California Building Code
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
cfs	cubic feet/foot per second
CH_4	methane
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level
CO	carbon monoxide
CO_2	carbon dioxide
CO_2e	carbon dioxide equivalent
CRHR	California Register of Historic Resources
CTAC	Clean Transit Advancement Campus
CWA	Clean Water Act
dBA	A-weighted decibel
DOC	California Department of Conservation
DPM	diesel particulate matter
EO	Executive Order
ESL	Environmentally Sensitive Lands
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FMMP	Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
FSDRIP	First San Diego River Improvement Project
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GHG	greenhouse gas

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS (cont.)

HFCs	hydroflourocarbons
HRA	health risk assessments
IS	Initial Study
IS/MND	Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
kWhr	kilowatt hours
L_{EQ}	time-averaged noise level
L_{MAX}	maximum noise level
LOS	level of service
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MHPA	Multi-Habitat Planning Area
MLD	most likely descendant
MMT	million metric ton
MRZ	Mineral Resource Zone
MSCP	Multiple Species Conservation Program
MTS	San Diego Metropolitan Transit System
N_2O	nitrous oxide
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NO_X	nitrogen oxides
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
O_3	Ozone
OEHHA	Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
PAL	project area limits
PCE	perchloroethylene
PCF	perflourocarbons
PM_{10}	particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter
$PM_{2.5}$	particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter
PPV	peak particle velocity
PRC	Public Resources Code

RAQS	Regional Air Quality Strategy
RECs	recognized environmental conditions
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SANDAG	San Diego Association of Governments
SB	Senate Bill
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
Scoping Plan	Climate Change Scoping Plan
SDAB	San Diego Air Basin
SDAPCD	San Diego Air Pollution Control District
SDCWA	San Diego County Water Authority
SDFD	San Diego Fire Department
SDIA	San Diego International Airport
sf	square feet
SF_5	sulfur hexafluoride
SO_X	sulfur oxides
SR	State Route
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
SWQMP	Storm Water Quality Management Plan
TAC	Toxic Air Contaminant
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
VHFHSZ	Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
VOCs	volatile organic compounds

1.0 Introduction

The San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) proposes to retrofit infrastructure at the Rio Vista Station on the MTS Green Line in the City of San Diego ("proposed project" or "project site").

The proposed project is located north of the I-8/Texas Street/Qualcomm way Interchange in an urbanized area primarily dominated by residential uses. The project site is bounded by the San Diego River to the south; Qualcomm Way to the east; residential uses to the north and west. Figure 1, *Project Vicinity*, depicts the regional location of the project site, and Figure 2, *Project Location*, shows the location of the project site and surrounding areas on an aerial photograph. Figure 3, *Project Features*, shows the project features and footprint.

The proposed Project is subject to compliance with CEQA, and the MTS is the CEQA lead agency. The Project is expected to be fully constructed by the spring of 2026.

As the Lead Agency for the proposed project under CEQA, MTS has prepared an Initial Study (IS) to determine if the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment. The IS identifies potentially significant effects to biological resources, cultural resources, noise, and tribal cultural resources, but mitigation measures incorporated into the proposed project by MTS would mitigate these effects to less than significant. There is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project with the implementation of mitigation measures would have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, pursuant to the Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines) (§15070[b]), MTS has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the proposed project. Included in this Draft MND is the IS documenting the reasons supporting the finding of no significant effect on the environment.

The Draft IS/MND is available for a 30-day public review period pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15105. The public review period will begin on October 1, 2025. Written comments regarding the adequacy of the Draft IS/MND must be received by November 1, 2025. Comments must be provided in writing via the MTS webpage (https://www.sdmts.com/inside-mts/current-projects/rio-vista-platform-project) or emailed to riovistaplatform@sdmts.com or mailed to:

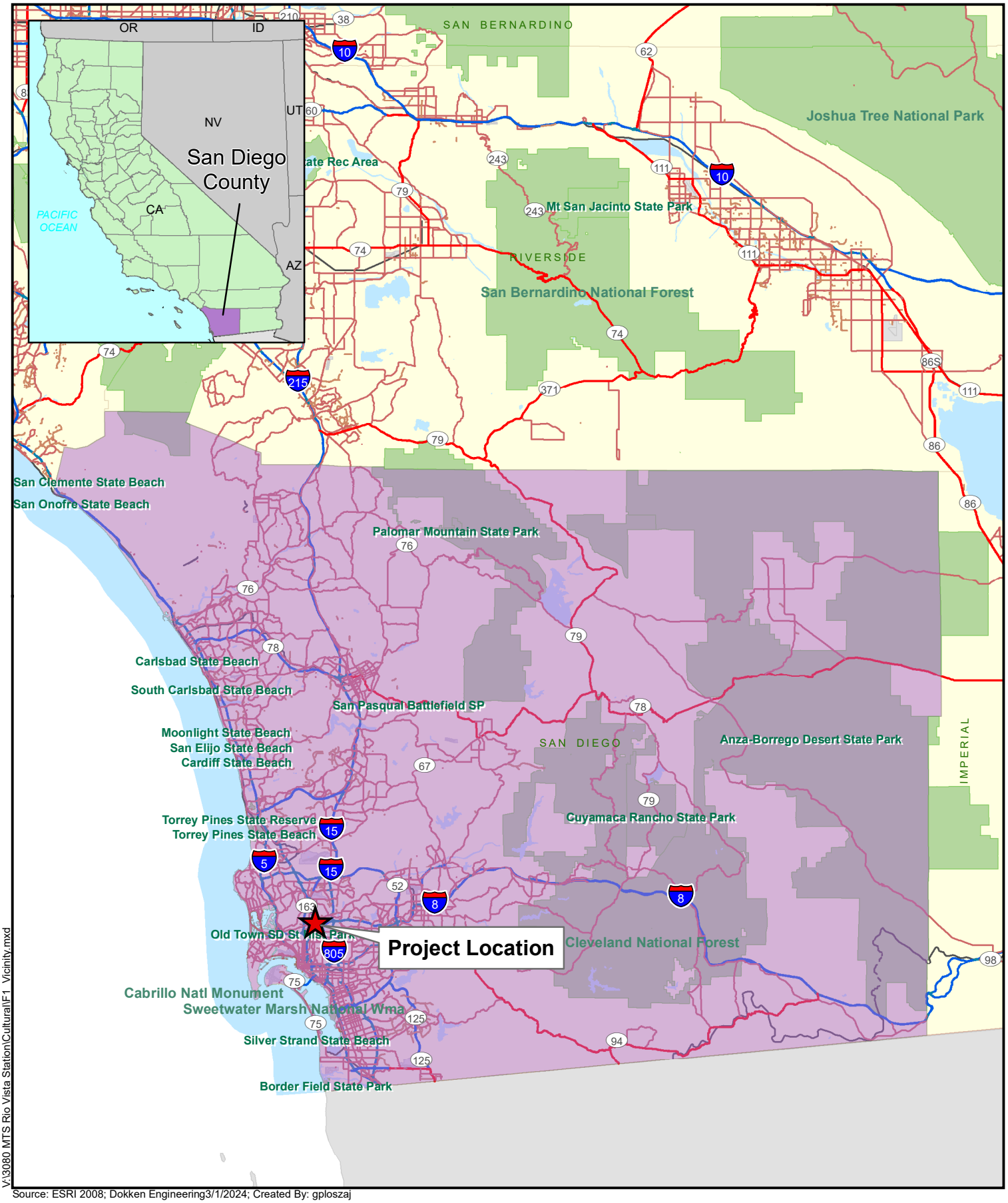
MTS, ATTN: Rio Vista Platform Project Comments 1255 Imperial Avenue, Suite 1000 San Diego, CA, 92101

Copies of the Draft IS/MND are available at the MTS offices at the addresses provided on the cover of this Draft IS/MND and online at:

https://www.sdmts.com/inside-mts/current-projects/rio-vista-platform-project

A copy of the Draft IS/MND also is available at the following public library:

Malcolm X Library
5841 Market Street
San Diego, CA 92114

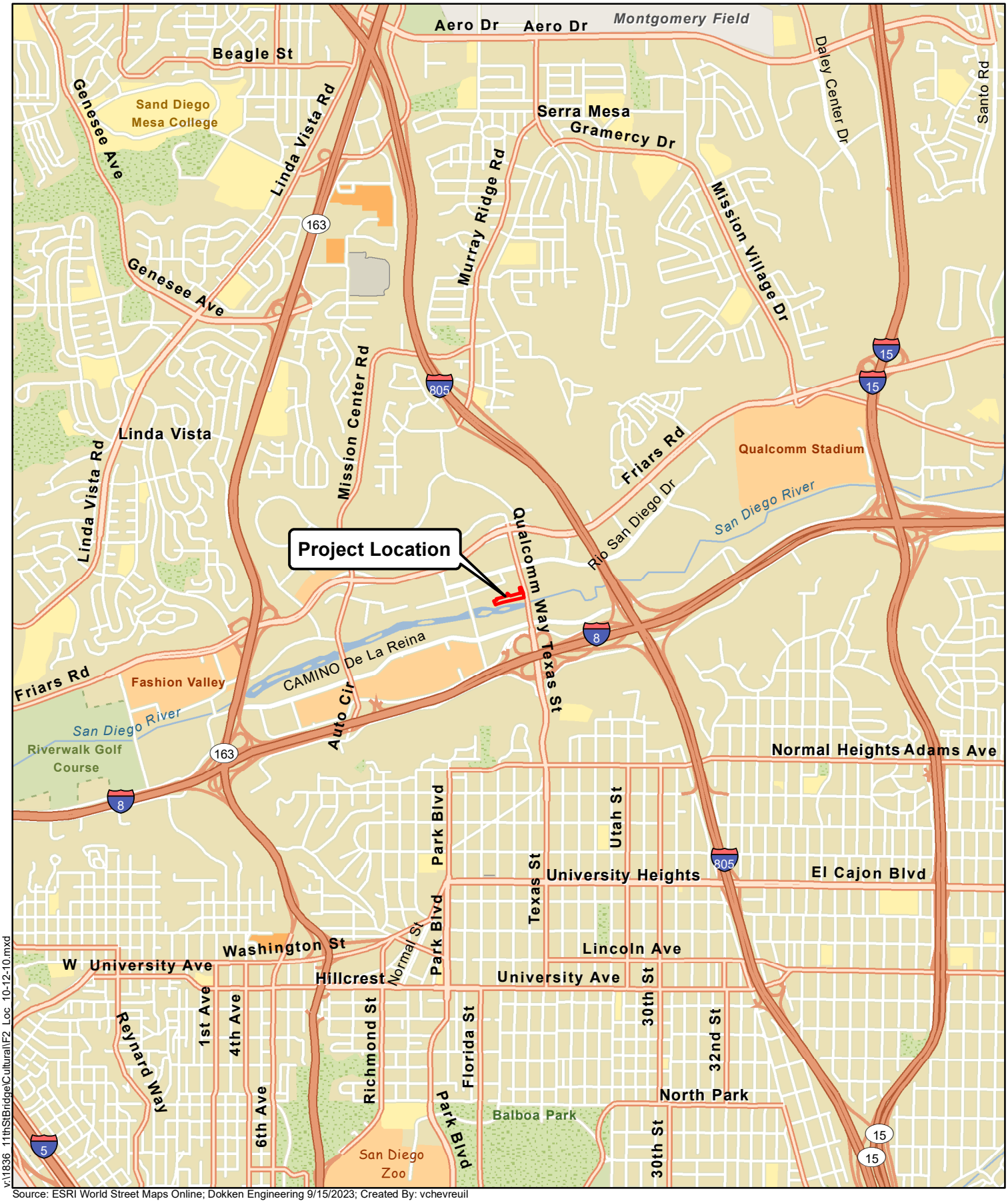


V:\3080 MTS Rio Vista Station\Cultural\F1_Vicinity.mxd

Source: ESRI 2008; Dokken Engineering3/1/2024; Created By: gploszaj

0 10 20 30 Miles

FIGURE 1
Project Vicinity
Rio Vista Platform Design - Phase II
San Diego County, California



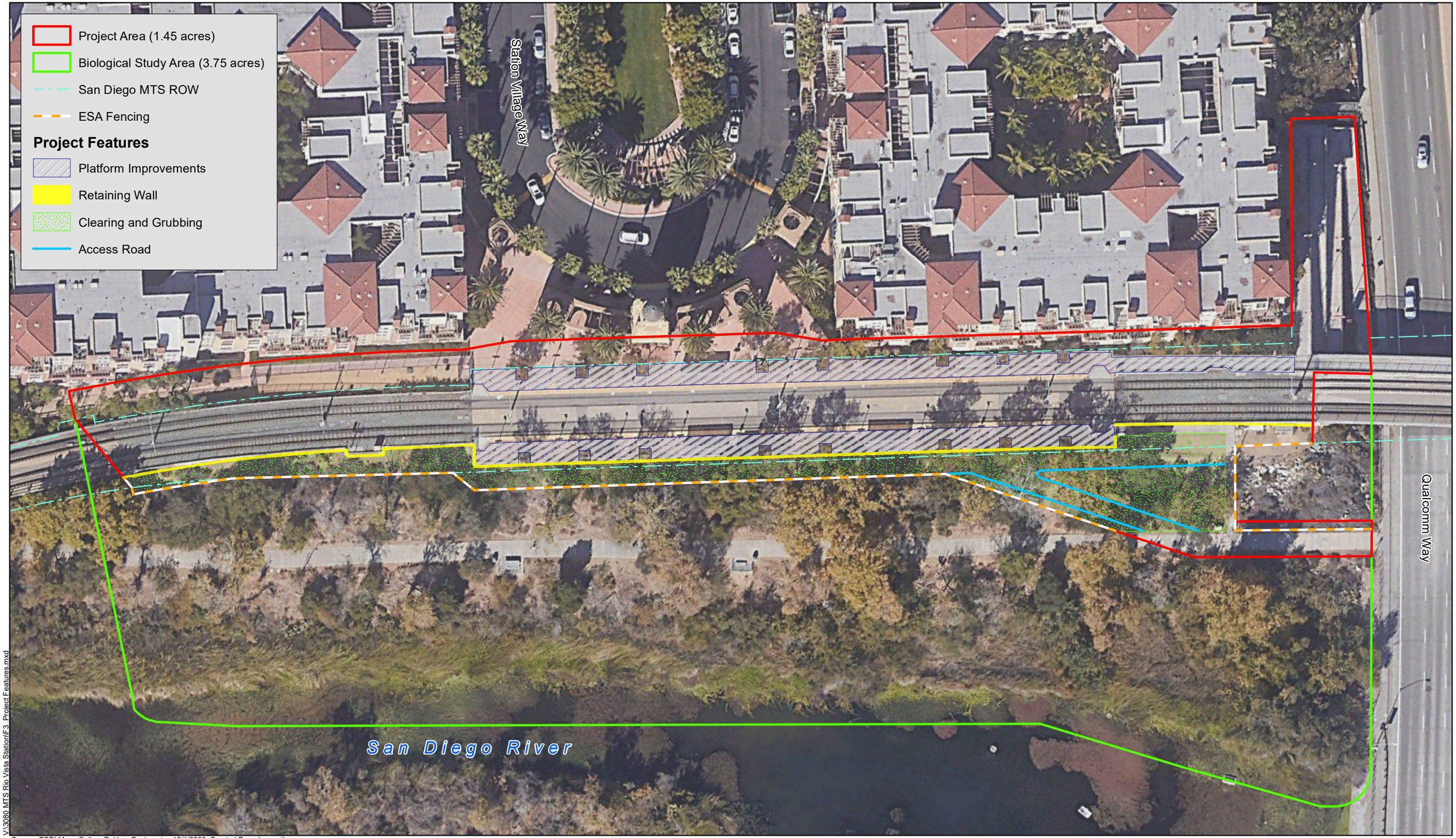
v:\1836 11thStBridge\Cultural\F2 Loc 10-12-10.mxd

Source: ESRI World Street Maps Online; Dokken Engineering 9/15/2023; Created By: vchevreuil

0 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

FIGURE 2
Project Location

Rio Vista Platform Design - Phase II
San Diego County, California



V:\3080 MTS Rio Vista Station\F3_Project Features.mxd

Source: ESRI Maps Online; Dokken Engineering 12/1/2023; Created By: vchevreuil

1 inch = 50 feet

0 50 100 150 200 250 Feet

FIGURE 3
Project Features

Rio Vista Platform Design - Phase II
San Diego County, California

2.0 Project Description

This section includes a description of the proposed project, project background, and the environmental setting, as well as anticipated discretionary actions and approvals. The project description is used as the basis for analyzing the proposed project's impacts on the existing physical environment, pursuant to CEQA, throughout this IS/MND.

2.1 Project Background

The Rio Vista Platform Design Project is a retrofit of infrastructure at the Rio Vista Station on the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System. The Rio Vista Station is on the MTS Green Line in the City of San Diego, located north of the I-8/Texas Street/Qualcomm way interchange in an urbanized area primarily dominated by residential users.

The MTS Rio Vista Station and apartment complex to the north were constructed in 1999 and 2003, respectively. There are various retaining wall configurations used to support the tracks between the grade separation structures at the Rio Vista Transit Station. A combination of precast concrete panel faced and welded wire (gabion basket) faced Mechanically Stabilized Embankment (MSE) with soil reinforcement are utilized as the main earth retaining system supporting the North County Transit District tracks. A supplemental cast-in-place (CIP) concrete curb wall is in place above the welded wire faced MSE wall along the left (north) side of the transit station platform.

MTS recently installed a series of monitor points to observe movement of the station's infrastructure. Several factors were determined to attribute to the movement of the walls and platform including:

- Presence of loose/soft materials in the upper five feet below the platform
- Unsuitable and potentially expansive materials used for the MSE walls
- Slackening of the MSE reinforcement behind the walls
- Settlement of the fill materials

To address observed settlement/movement at this station, the following retrofit recommendations will be needed to secure the station's infrastructure: tie rods, tie-back anchors, cast-in-place wall replacement, and surface drainage improvements.

2.2 Project Location and Setting

The proposed project is located in the southern portion of the City of San Diego in southwestern San Diego County (Figure 1). The project site encompasses approximately 1.45 acres comprised of Accessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 438-362-11-00 and 438-362-12-00. The site is located within the Mission Valley East neighborhood and occurs within an urbanized area primarily developed with residential uses. The project site is bounded by the San Diego River trail and river to the south; Qualcomm Way to the east; residential uses to the north and west (Figure 2).

Additional surrounding development includes residential and commercial retail uses to the north, west, and south beyond the Sacramento River; open space, recreational,

commercial retail uses to the east of Qualcomm Way; The Interstate 8/Qualcomm Way/Texas Street interchange lies to the southeast, and the Interstate-8 freeway runs parallel to the project in a southwest/northeast fashion.

The Project falls within the jurisdiction of the First San Diego River Improvement Project (FSDRIP), which is the segment of the San Diego River located between Qualcomm Way and Highway 163. Development within this region is subject to the FSDRIP Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) (City of San Diego 2004) (Appendix A), which outlines specific Development and Mitigation Guidelines to ensure the continuing protection of the natural resources created under the FSDRIP Revegetation Plan.

The project site is entirely developed on the north side with 4-story residential buildings, paved surface parking and pedestrian walkways, and limited ornamental landscaping. Topographically, the site varies with elevations ranging between 36 feet and 69 feet above mean sea level (amsl). Access is currently provided via Station Village Way.

2.3 Project Characteristics

There are two existing Mechanically Stabilized Embankment (MSE) retaining walls about 700 feet long that run parallel to the trolley tracks and Rio Vista Station Platform. The retaining walls are up to 17 feet tall, connecting the raised section of track between the existing Camino Del Este Bridge and Stadium Way Bridge. The platform itself is about 380 feet long inside the limits of the retaining walls. The project site is located between apartments, and the San Diego River which is an environmentally sensitive area.

The existing retaining walls and platform were constructed in 1999 and have had a history of settlement issues. There are gaps between wall panels, uneven walking surfaces, and cracking of some retaining wall components. There have been previous investigations to determine the extent of the damage and settlements that resulted in controlled monitoring.

This project retrofits the existing walls and includes general platform improvements. A combination of soil anchors, tie-back walls, and dead-man anchors will support the existing walls due to various constraints. Walers will be constructed on the outside of the existing concrete MSE panels to transfer loads from the panels to the tie rod anchor systems. The platform will see additional improvements including reconstruction of the wall coping, tree wells, station lighting, surface drainage improvements, and various other improvements.

A temporary construction access road from the San Diego River Parkway will be constructed within the natural area to the South of the platform to allow access to where the drilling and installing of wall tie rod anchors will occur. Specific impacts as a result of the project are described in Section 5.0 of the IS/MND.

Construction of the project is estimated to begin in Fall 2026 and take approximately 30 weeks to complete, for a projected opening year of 2027. Project construction would involve grading to build a temporary access road that will be constructed to the south of the site to allow equipment to access the platform. The analysis also assumes that construction activities would occur during daytime hours. Construction staging is anticipated to occur within the project site and construction access would be provided via the pedestrian path accessed from Qualcomm Way to the south of the platform and Station

Village Way to the north of the platform. Construction of the project will be phased with a variety of equipment, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Construction Phasing

Phase*	Work Description	Equipment
Pre-Construction	Clearing and Grubbing & Access Road Grading	Small Excavator, Bulldozer
1	Demolition	Small Excavator, Power-driven Saw, Jackhammer, Dump Truck, Air Compressor, Generator
2	Tie-Rod Installation	Drill Rig, Concrete Mixer/Concrete Pump Truck, Hydraulic Jack
3	Anchor Block Installation	Excavator, Concrete Mixer/Concrete Pump Truck, Dump truck/hauler
4	Backfill	Excavator, Dump truck/hauler, Compactor
5	Resurfacing Station and Installing Station Amenities	Concrete Mixer, Compact crane or boom truck

**Work is broken up into segments to maintain operation/services during construction. Phases 1-4 would occur multiple times.*

2.4 Lead Agency Discretionary Actions

MTS Board discretionary actions related to the proposed project include:

- Adopt the Final IS/MND for the proposed project.
- Consider project for approval.

2.5 Other Agency Permits and Approvals

2.5.1 City of San Diego Building Permit

MTS is exempt from local land use and zoning ordinances and are therefore not required to obtain City of San Diego building permits to construct the proposed project (Public Utilities Code section 120050(c) and 132354.4; Gov. Code sections 53090 and 53091). Traffic control permits may be required during construction. Coordination with the City of San Diego regarding construction will occur throughout design and construction pursuant to the July 13, 2003 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between MTS and the City.

2.5.2 Stormwater Compliance

The project would also be required to adhere to the NPDES Construction General Permit (NPDES No. CAS000002, SWRCB Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ; as amended by Order No. 2010-0014-DWQ and Order No. 2012-0014-DWQ), administered by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) during construction, which includes BMPs that serve to protect water and groundwater quality. Specific NPDES requirements associated with the proposed project include conformance with General Permit for Waste Discharge Requirements for Storm Water Discharges from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (Municipal Permit, NPDES No. CAS 00000004, State Water Resources Control

Board Order No. 2013-0001-DWQ, as amended by Order Nos. 2015-0133-EXEC, 2016-0069-EXEC, WQ 2018-0001-EXEC, WQ 2018-0007-EXEC, and 2017-XXXX-DWQ) (the "Small MS4 Permit"). The project would be subject to storm water regulations under the MTS Small MS4 Permit.

3.0 Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" or "Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

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

4.0 Determination

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐	I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
■	I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
☐	I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
☐	I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect (1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
☐	I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

_____ _____

Signature Date

Brent Boyd, Director of
Planning San Diego
Metropolitan Transit System

5.0 Environmental Initial Study Checklist

This IS checklist identifies potentially significant effects to biological resources, cultural resources, noise, and tribal cultural resources for the proposed project. The implementation of mitigation measures identified in this IS would ensure potentially significant impacts are less than significant with mitigation incorporated. All other environmental impacts would be less than significant, or no impact would occur. MTS has not adopted thresholds for use in CEQA documents where they are the Lead Agency or Responsible Agency. In the absence of MTS adopted thresholds, the analysis in this IS checklist relies on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and in some cases (as specified and where relevant to the particular impact), the City of San Diego's (2020) guidelines for determining significance, which are based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. The following impact conclusion definitions are from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and are used throughout the IS checklist:

- "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.

- "Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the inclusion of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." All mitigation measures are described, including a brief explanation of how the measures reduce the effect to a less than significant level. Mitigation measures from earlier analyses may be cross-referenced.

- "Less Than Significant Impact" applies where the project does not create an impact that exceeds a stated significance threshold.

- "No Impact" applies where a project does not create an impact in that category. "No Impact" answers do not require an explanation if they are adequately supported by the information sources cited by the lead agency which show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project would not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project specific screening analysis).

I. 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 views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from 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) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

No Impact. Scenic vistas are generally defined as public viewpoints that provide expansive or notable views of a highly valued landscape and are typically identified in planning documents, such as a general plan, but can also include locally known areas or locations where high-quality public views are available. Impacts to scenic vistas can result from development directly diminishing the scenic quality of the view or by blocking view corridors. The City of San Diego's General Plan (City of San Diego 2008a) does not identify or otherwise designate any scenic vistas, public viewpoints, view corridors, or protected viewsheds on the project site or adjacent areas in the project vicinity. The area surrounding the project site mostly consists of industrial development and transportation infrastructure.

Open space associated with the San Diego River is located directly adjacent to the project site to the south. This area consists of a vegetated slope extends south, is crossed by the paved San Diego River Trail, and then continues to slope south in the banks of the San Diego River. The San Diego River is identified in the Mission Valley Community Plan (City of San Diego 2018) as a "major visual asset of the Mission Valley Community". Public views of the river are accessible from the San Diego River Trail south of the project site between the San Diego River and the Qualcomm Way crossing to the east of the project site. The proposed retrofits would not affect views of the San Diego River from public vantage points in the project area, such as Qualcomm Way or the San Diego River Trail. Therefore, no Impact would occur.

b) Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. There are no officially designated state scenic highways in the vicinity of the project site. The nearest officially designated state scenic highway is the segment of SR 163 that extends through Balboa Park, which is approximately 2.25 miles southwest of the project site. The nearest eligible state scenic highway not officially designated is I-8, which is approximately ¼ mile south of the project site (Caltrans 2024). At these distances, project elements would not affect views from SR 163 or I-8. In addition, the project site is completely developed and does not contain notable scenic resources, such as large stands of mature trees or rock outcroppings. No historic-era buildings are present at the project site that would be affected.

The Project falls within the jurisdiction of the FSDRIP, which is the segment of the San Diego River located between Qualcomm Way and Highway 163. Development within this region is subject to the FSDRIP Natural Resource Management Plan (City of San Diego 2004), which outlines specific Development and Mitigation Guidelines to ensure the continuing protection of the natural resources created under the FSDRIP Revegetation Plan.

The project would include some site grading and construction of a temporary access road. Riparian vegetation directly south of the Rio Vista Station platform will be removed and a temporary access road will be graded from the San Diego River Parkway to allow construction access to the platform. Following the conclusion of the Project, temporary impacts to upland riparian habitat will be restored to pre-construction conditions in accordance with the FSDRIP.

The Project will be consistent with the Development and Mitigation Guidelines outlined in the NRMP of the FSDRIP. In addition, the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures BIO-1 through BIO-6, discussed further below in Section IV, Biological Resources, will reduce impacts to the riparian corridor. Thus, the project would not result in a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially damage scenic resources including those within a state scenic highway. With implementation of mitigation measures BIO-1 through BIO-6, impacts would be Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

c) In non-urbanized areas, would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from 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?

No Impact. Public Resources Code (PRC) 21071 defines the term “urbanized area” for the purpose of CEQA to mean an incorporated city that has a population of at least 100,000 persons or has a population of less than 100,000 persons if the population of that city and not more than two contiguous incorporated cities combined equals at least 100,000 persons. According to U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census (U.S. Census Bureau) data from 2021, the City of San Diego has a population of 1,381,611 (U.S. Census Bureau 2021). Thus, the project site is within an urbanized area as defined by PRC 21071 and is therefore evaluated relative to applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

The area north of the project footprint is zoned RM-3-9 for multiple-unit residences, and the area to the south where the San Diego River is located is zoned OF-1-1 for Open Space-Floodplain. The project area itself falls within the MTS right-of-way. While MTS is statutorily exempt from local

zoning requirements, the proposed retrofits would not require any change in visual character, nor would it require changes to any zoning to adjacent land uses. The proposed Project consists of retrofitting the existing walls and platform of the Rio Vista Station. No new structures would degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views to or from the adjacent San Diego River pedestrian path. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. No Impact would occur.

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

No Impact. There are two primary artificial sources of light that generally affect an urban environment: light emanating from building interiors that passes through windows to the outside, and light from exterior sources (e.g., street lighting, parking lot lighting, building illumination, security lighting, and landscape lighting) that affect the natural ambient light level. The introduction of light can be a nuisance by affecting adjacent areas and diminishing the view of the clear night sky depending on the location of the light sources and its proximity to nearby light-sensitive areas.

The project site is located in a developed area with residential development as well as adjacent open space. The existing light sources in the project area include streetlights and vehicle lights along surrounding roadways, as well as from interior and exterior building lighting emanating from the existing buildings both on site and on the surrounding properties. There is also overhead lighting associated with the MTS rail line that traverses through the project site.

The proposed project would include improvements to the existing lighting throughout the station; however, no new sources of light would be installed. Construction would occur during the day; therefore, no temporary lighting at night would occur. Therefore, the project would not create a new source of substantial light which would adversely affect views in the area and no impact would occur.

Glare impacts can occur because of artificial light or sunlight reflecting off a surface. Glare can create discomfort or present safety concerns (i.e., if glare is directed into the eyes of motorists). The project would comply with City of San Diego building code standards, including Section 142.0730 of the City of San Diego Municipal Code that regulates glare by allowing a maximum of 50 percent of the exterior of a building to be comprised of reflective material that has a light reflectivity factor greater than 30 percent. This regulation also prohibits use of reflective building materials where it is determined that such use would contribute to potential traffic hazards, diminished quality of riparian habitat, or reduced enjoyment of public open space. As such, the project would not create a new source of glare that would adversely affect views in the area and no impact would occur.

II. Agriculture and Forestry 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) Would the project 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. The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) is a statewide program that designates farmland among several categories, including Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance. The FMMP is maintained by the California Department of Conservation (DOC) and is the agency responsible for overseeing farmland classification throughout the state. Agricultural land is rated according to soil quality and irrigation status; the best quality land is called Prime Farmland. Unique farmland is land, other than Prime Farmland, which has combined conditions to produce sustained high quality and high yields of specialty crops. Farmland of Statewide Importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by State law. In some areas that are not identified as having national or statewide importance, land is Farmland of Local Importance. The project site does not include any farmland and would not result in any land use changes. According to the California Important Farmland Finder map tool by the DOC, the project site is classified as Urban and Built-Up Land and Other Land and does not contain Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Therefore, the project would not convert Farmland to non-agricultural use. No Impact would occur.

b) Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

No Impact. The Williamson Act is designed to prevent the premature and unnecessary conversion of open space lands and agricultural areas to urban uses. The Williamson Act enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use; in return, landowners receive property tax assessments which are much lower than normal because they are based upon farming and open space uses as opposed to full market value. The Williamson Act is only applicable to parcels within an established agricultural preserve consisting of at least 20 acres of Prime Farmland, or at least 40 acres of land not designated as Prime Farmland. The Williamson Act is designed to prevent the premature and unnecessary conversion of open space lands and agricultural areas to urban uses.

As stated in item II(a), the project site is located in an area classified by the DOC as Urban and Built-Up Land where neither farmland nor agricultural resources are present. The area north of the project footprint is zoned RM-3-9 for multiple-unit residences, and the area to the south where the San Diego River is located is zoned OF-1-1 for Open Space-Floodplain. The project would not result in any zoning changes. Additionally, the project site is not encumbered by a Williamson Act Contract and would not affect any properties zoned for agricultural use or affected by a Williamson Act Contract, as there are none within the project vicinity. Therefore, the project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract. No Impact would occur.

c) Would the project 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))?

No Impact. PRC Section 12220(g) defines "forest land" as land that can support 10 percent native cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits. Based on this definition, no forest land occurs within or adjacent to the project site. Moreover, there is no land zoned as forest land or timberland that exists within the project site or within its vicinity. While trees and vegetation exist on the south side of the site;, there is no concentration of trees within the site that would constitute a forest. Therefore, the project would not conflict with existing zoning for or cause a rezoning of forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned as Timberland Production. No Impact would occur.

d) Would the project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact. As stated in item II(c), there is no forest land present on site or vicinity. The site has not been historically and is not currently used or planned to be used for forest land. As such, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to
non-forest use. No impact would occur.

e) Would the project 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. As stated in items II(a) through II(d), the project site is located in an area where no agricultural resources are present on the project site or immediate vicinity. The site and surrounding area are classified as Urban and Built-Up Land. Additionally, no existing agricultural or forest land uses are located in the proximity of the project site. Therefore, the project would not involve changes in the existing environment that could result in the conversion of farmland or forest land into non-agricultural or non-forest use. No Impact would occur.

III. 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 of 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) Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project is located within the San Diego Air Basin (SDAB). Air quality in the SDAB is regulated by the San Diego Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD). The SDAPCD is the government agency that regulates sources of air pollution within the County. Currently, the SDAB is in "non-attainment" status for criteria pollutants ozone (O_3), 10-micron or less particulate matter (PM_{10}), and 2.5-micron or less particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$). The federal Clean Air Act (CAA) required the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to establish National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), which identify concentrations of pollutants in the ambient air below which no adverse effects on the public health and welfare are anticipated. The SDAPCD and SANDAG are responsible for developing and implementing the clean air plan for attainment and maintenance of the ambient air quality standards in the SDAB. The current regional air quality plan for the NAAQS is SDAPCD's 2020 Plan for Attaining the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ozone in San Diego County (Attainment Plan; SDAPCD 2020). The regional air quality plan for the CAAQS is SDAPCD's 2016 Revision to the Regional Air Quality Strategy for San Diego County (RAQS; SDAPCD 2016). A 2022 update to the 2016 RAQS continues to be in progress as of May 2024.

Strategies to achieve these emissions reductions are developed in the Attainment Plan and RAQS, prepared by the SDAPCD for the region. Both the Attainment Plan and RAQS rely on information from the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and SANDAG, including mobile and area source emissions, as well as information regarding projected growth in San Diego County, to project future emissions and then determine from that the strategies necessary for the reduction of emissions through regulatory controls. CARB mobile source emission projections and SANDAG growth projections are based on population and vehicle trends and land use plans developed by the cities and by the County. As such, projects that propose development that is consistent with the growth anticipated by the local jurisdictions' general plans would be consistent with the

Attainment Plan and RAQS. In the event that a project proposes development that is less intensive than anticipated within the General Plan, the project would likewise be consistent with the Attainment Plan and RAQS. If a project proposes development that is greater than that anticipated in the General Plan and SANDAG's growth projections upon which the Attainment Plan and RAQS are based, the project would be in conflict with the Attainment Plan and RAQS and might have a potentially significant impact on air quality.

The proposed project is located within the Mission Valley Community Plan Area and is consistent with the zoning of RM-3-9 for multiple-unit residences and OF-1-1 for Open Space-Floodplain. Community plans work together with the General Plan to provide location-based policies and recommendations in the City's 50-plus community planning areas. Community plans are written to refine the General Plan's citywide policies, designate land uses and housing densities, and include additional site-specific recommendations as needed. The proposed project has been designed to be compatible with the existing and potential future uses in the general area. As the project would not result in any zoning or land use changes, the project would continue to be in conformance with the Mission Valley Community Plan and would therefore be consistent with the Attainment Plan and RAQS. Thus, impacts associated with consistency with regional air quality plans would be Less than Significant.

b) Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non- attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?

Less Than Significant Impact. By its very nature, air pollution is largely a cumulative impact. The nonattainment status of regional pollutants is a result of past and present development within the SDAB. The region is a federal and/or state nonattainment area for ozone, PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$. MTS has not adopted thresholds for use in CEQA documents where they are the Lead Agency or Responsible Agency. In the absence of MTS adopted thresholds, this analysis relies on the City of San Diego's (2020) guidelines for determining significance, which are based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. The screening criteria were developed by SDAPCD and the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) with the purpose of attaining the NAAQS and California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS). The NAAQS and CAAQS identify concentrations of pollutants in the ambient air below which no adverse effects on the public health and welfare are anticipated. Therefore, for CEQA purposes, these screening criteria can be used as numeric methods to demonstrate that a project's total emissions would not result in a significant impact to air quality or have an adverse effect on human health. The screening thresholds are included in Table 1, *Screening-level Thresholds for Air Quality Impact Analysis*.

Table 1
SCREENING-LEVEL THRESHOLDS FOR AIR QUALITY IMPACT ANALYSIS

Pollutant	Total Emissions Pounds per Hour	Total Emissions Pounds per Day	Total Emissions Tons per Year
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM_{10})	---	100	15
Fine Particulate Matter ($PM_{2.5}$)[1]	---	67	10
Oxides of Nitrogen (NO_X)	25	250	40
Oxides of Sulfur (SO_X)	25	250	40
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	100	550	100
Lead and Lead Compounds	---	3.2	0.6
Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)	---	137	15

Source: City of San Diego 2020

[1] The City of San Diego does not specify a threshold for $PM_{2.5}$. Threshold here is based on SDAPCD Rules 20.1, 20.2, and 20.3.

The proposed project would generate criteria pollutants and precursors in the short-term during construction and the long-term during operation.

Construction Emissions

The project's construction emissions were estimated using CalEEMod. Construction was assumed to begin in May 2025 and lasting for 30 weeks with all construction activities occurring sequentially. Project-specific input was based on information provided by MTS and default model settings to estimate reasonably conservative conditions. Additional details of phasing, selection of construction equipment, and other input parameters, including CalEEMod data, are included in Appendix B.

The results of the calculations for the various phases of project construction are shown in Table 2, *Maximum Daily Construction Emissions*. The data are presented as the maximum anticipated daily emissions for comparison with the SDAPCD thresholds.

Table 2
MAXIMUM DAILY CONSTRUCTION EMISSIONS

Year	VOC*	NO_X*	CO*	SO_X*	PM_{10}*	$PM_{2.5}$*
Site Preparation	0.4	3.4	3.5	<0.1	0.2	0.2
Grading	3.1	27.3	29.4	<0.1	1.2	1.1
Maximum Daily Emissions	**3.1**	**27.3**	**29.4**	**<0.1**	**1.2**	**1.1**
Significance Thresholds	*137*	*250*	*550*	*250*	*100*	*55*
Significant Impact?	***No***	***No***	***No***	***No***	***No***	***No***

* Pollutant Emissions (pounds per day)
VOC = volatile organic compound; NO_X = nitrogen oxides; CO = carbon monoxide; SO_X = sulfur oxides;
PM_{10} = particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter; $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter

As shown in Table 2, emissions of criteria pollutants and ozone precursors from project construction would be below the applicable significance thresholds. Additionally, project construction would use clean engine technology in compliance with USEPA Tier 4 emissions standards and also comply with SDAPCD Regulation IV, Rule 55 Fugitive Dust Control. Therefore, direct impacts associated with criteria pollutants generated during project construction would be Less than Significant.

Operational Emissions

Upon completion of construction, the proposed Project would continue to operate as it did under existing conditions. There would be no change in operational emissions or new direct impacts associated with criteria pollutants generated during project operations.

c) Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less Than Significant. CARB and the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) have identified the following groups of individuals as the mostly likely to be affected by air pollution: adults over 65, children under 14, infants (including in utero in the third trimester of pregnancy), and persons with cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma,

emphysema, and bronchitis (CARB 2005). These groups are considered sensitive receptors. The closest existing sensitive receptors to the project site include multi-family residences immediately adjacent north of the project site. Impacts to sensitive receptors are typically analyzed for operational period carbon monoxide (CO) hotspots and exposure to toxic air contaminants (TACs). An analysis of the project's potential to expose sensitive receptors to these pollutants is provided below.

Carbon Monoxide Hotspots

Localized air quality effects can occur when emissions from vehicular traffic increase in local areas. The primary mobile source pollutant of local concern is CO, which is a direct function of vehicle idling time and, thus, traffic flow conditions. CO transport is extremely limited—it disperses rapidly with distance from the source under normal meteorological conditions. However, under certain extreme meteorological conditions, CO concentrations proximate to a congested roadway or intersection may reach unhealthful levels affecting local sensitive receptors (residents, school children, the elderly, hospital patients, etc.). Typically, high CO concentrations are associated with roadways or intersections operating at unacceptable levels of service or with extremely high traffic volumes. If a project generates vehicular traffic that increases average delay at signalized intersections operating at Level of Service (LOS) E or F or causes an intersection that would operate at LOS D or better without the project to operate at LOS E of F with the project, the project could result in significant CO hotspot-related effects to sensitive receptors.

The proposed project would contribute to a temporary increase in truck traffic at nearby intersections during construction, which would result in a temporary increase in localized CO concentrations associated with vehicle idling; however, as shown in Table 2, the increase is well below significance thresholds and would be minimal and temporary in nature. Implementation of avoidance and minimization measures AQ-1 and AQ-2 would ensure impacts related to CO as a result of vehicle idling would be minimized. Upon construction completion, the proposed project would have no impact related to LOS or traffic. Therefore, the project would not have the potential to result in a CO hotspot, and impacts would be Less than Significant.

Toxic Air Contaminants

Construction

Diesel engines emit a complex mixture of air pollutants, including gaseous material and diesel particulate matter (DPM). DPM emissions would be released from operation of the on-site construction equipment used for project construction. CARB has declared that DPM from diesel engine exhaust is a TAC. Additionally, the OEHHA has determined that chronic exposure to DPM can cause carcinogenic and non-carcinogenic health effects. For this reason, although other pollutants would be generated, DPM would be the primary pollutant of concern.

The dose to which receptors are exposed is the primary factor used to determine health risk. Dose is a function of the concentration of a substance or substances in the environment and the duration of exposure to the substance. Thus, the risks estimated for a maximally exposed individual are higher if a fixed exposure occurs over a longer time period. According to the OEHHA, health risk assessments (HRAs), which determine the exposure of sensitive receptors to TAC emissions, should be based on a 30-year exposure period; however, such assessments should be limited to the period/duration of activities associated with a project.

There would be few pieces of off-road, heavy-duty diesel equipment operating at a given time during project construction, and the construction period would be relatively short, especially when compared to the 30-year exposure period utilized for assessment (as noted above). In addition, the highest daily emission of PM_{10} (which includes equipment emissions of DPM) during construction is estimated to be approximately 10 pounds per day, which would be well below the 100 pounds per day significance level threshold. The significance level thresholds were developed with the purpose of attaining the NAAQS and CAAQS, which identify concentrations of pollutants in the ambient air below which no adverse effects on the public health and welfare are anticipated. Combined with the highly dispersive properties of DPM, construction-related emissions would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial emissions of TACs. Impacts from construction emissions would be Less than Significant.

Operation

CARB siting recommendations within the *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook* suggest a detailed HRA should be conducted for sensitive receptors within 1,000 feet of a warehouse distribution center, within 300 feet of a large gas station (defined as a facility with a throughput of 3.6 million gallons per year or greater), 50 feet of a typical gas dispensing facilities, or within 300 feet of a dry cleaning facility that uses perchloroethylene (PCE), among other siting recommendations (CARB 2005). The project would not result in conditions with respect to any CARB siting recommendations associated with exposure of sensitive receptors to TAC emissions such that preparation of an HRA would be warranted. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

Based on the above analysis, implementation of the project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

d) Would the project result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

Less Than Significant Impact. The State of California Health and Safety Code Sections 41700 and 41705, and SDAPCD Rule 51, prohibit emissions from any source whatsoever in such quantities of air contaminants or other material which cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to the public health or damage to property. Any unreasonable odor discernible at the property line of the project site would be considered a significant odor impact.

The proposed project could produce odors during proposed construction activities from construction equipment exhaust, application of asphalt, and/or the application of architectural coatings; however, standard construction practices would minimize the odor emissions and their associated impacts.
Furthermore, odors emitted during construction would be temporary, short-term, and intermittent in nature, and would cease upon the completion of the respective phase of construction. Accordingly, the proposed project would not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people during construction, and short-term impacts would be Less than Significant.

Upon completion of construction, operation of the proposed project would not result in any new emissions that would lead to odors adversely affecting a substantial number of people. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

IV. 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 Wildlife 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 Wildlife or US 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?	☐	■	☐	☐

The discussion below is summarized and based on the analysis and conclusions contained within the Biological Resources Technical Report (Dokken 2023) prepared for the proposed project. The report is included as Appendix C to this IS/MND.

Prior to field surveys, the BSA was defined as the area required for the staging, access, and construction of the Project with an approximate 150-foot buffer along the Project's southern margin in order to evaluate potential visual, noise, vibratory and other indirect impacts to sensitive biological resources along the San Diego River. The BSA measures approximately 730 feet wide and measures approximately 390 feet from north to south at its widest point. The total acreage of the BSA is approximately 3.75 acres.

A biological field survey was conducted on August 10, 2023, by Dokken Engineering biologist Scott Salembier. Habitat assessments were conducted within the BSA to assess the vegetative communities present, identify biological resources which may be impacted by the Project, and

evaluate the potential for special status species to occur on-site.

a) Would the project 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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. The project site is primarily developed and paved. However, the area south of the project site where a temporary access road would be constructed consists of willow riparian habitat and upland riparian habitat associated with the San Diego River, which have been identified as natural communities of special concern by CDFW. In addition, the coastal sage scrub habitat located directly east of the Project limits may provide suitable habitat for a variety of special status wildlife species.

Special Status Plant Species

Prior to field surveys, a list of regional special status plant species with potential to occur within the Project vicinity was compiled from database searches. The potential for each species to occur within the BSA was determined by analyzing the habitat requirements of each species and comparing the habitat requirements to available habitat within the BSA. After a careful comparison between habitat requirements and the habitat available within the BSA, no special status plants are anticipated to occur within the BSA. As such, no impacts to special status plants species will result from the construction of this Project.

Federally Listed Wildlife Species

Three federally and state listed species, coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*), least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus)*, and Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus)* have the potential to occur within the BSA due to the presence of locally suitable habitat as well as recent, local occurrences.

Coastal California Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*)

The BSA does not encompass arid coastal sage scrub habitat; however, the San Diego River riparian corridor may provide marginally suitable habitat for this species. In addition, there are numerous local CNDDB occurrences in the vicinity of the BSA, including a 2003 occurrence located 0.42 miles northeast of the BSA. Due to the presence of marginally suitable habitat as well as the recent local occurrences, the species may have a low potential to occur within the BSA. As such, incidental take of this species is not permitted without prior authorization under Section 7 or Section 10 Consultation with the USFWS. Approximately 0.27 acres of upland riparian habitat will be temporarily impacted during construction to allow for construction access to the proposed work area; however, all clearing, grubbing, grading, and other Project-related construction activities will occur outside the coastal California gnatcatcher breeding season (February 15 – August 15). Following the conclusion of the Project, temporary impacts to upland riparian habitat will be restored to pre-construction conditions in accordance with the FSDRIP. No permanent impacts to the species are anticipated; therefore, consultation with the USFWS is not required.

Least Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus)*

The BSA includes low elevation riparian habitat adjacent to the San Diego River. In addition, there are numerous recent CNDDB occurrences of this species within the San Diego River corridor, including a recent (2011) occurrence located directly upstream of the Project. Due to the presence of locally suitable habitat as well as the recent local occurrence, the species may have a high potential to occur within the BSA. As such, incidental take of this species is not permitted without prior authorization under Section 7 or Section 10 Consultation with the USFWS. Approximately 0.27 acres of upland riparian habitat will be temporarily impacted during construction to allow for construction access to the proposed work area; however, all clearing, grubbing, grading, and other Project-related construction activities will occur outside the coastal California gnatcatcher breeding season (March 15 - September 15). Following the conclusion of the Project, temporary impacts to upland riparian habitat will be restored to pre-construction conditions in accordance with the FSDRIP. No permanent impacts to the species are anticipated; therefore, consultation with the USFWS and an incidental take permit from CDFW is not required.

Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus)*

There are no CNDDB occurrences of this species within 10 miles of the BSA. However, the BSA includes suitable dense riparian habitat adjacent to the San Diego River. In addition, the Project occurs within the anticipated range of this species. Due to the presence of locally suitable habitat, the species may have a low potential to occur within the BSA. As such, incidental take of this species is not permitted without prior authorization under Section 7 or Section 10 Consultation with the USFWS. Approximately 0.27 acres of upland riparian habitat will be temporarily impacted during construction to allow for construction access to the proposed work area; however, all clearing, grubbing, grading, and other Project-related construction activities will occur outside the southwestern willow flycatcher breeding season (April 15 - August 31). Following the conclusion of the Project, temporary impacts to upland riparian habitat will be restored to pre-construction conditions in accordance with the FSDRIP. No permanent impacts to the species are anticipated; therefore, consultation with the USFWS is not required.

In addition to avoidance and minimization measures BIO-1 through BIO-4, the implementation of measures BIO-8 and BIO-9 will ensure that Project-related impacts to coastal California gnatcatcher, least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher are mitigated to less than significant. The Project will be consistent with the Development and Mitigation Guidelines outlined in the NRMP of the FSDRIP. No further consultation with USFWS or CDFW is required regarding impacts to coastal California gnatcatcher, least Bell's vireo, and southwestern willow flycatcher.

Species of Special Concern

The least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*) is not a state or federally listed species but is considered a SSC under CDFW. This species prefers to nest in emergent vegetation above or along the margin of open water habitat. Within the BSA, the willow riparian habitat located adjacent to the San Diego River provides a suitable nesting location for least bittern. In addition, there are numerous recent eBird occurrences of this species within approximately 2.5 miles of the BSA, including a recent (2016) occurrence confirmed with photo identification. Due to the presence of locally suitable habitat as well as the recent local occurrences, the species may have a high potential to nest within

the willow riparian habitat located adjacent to the San Diego River. With the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures BIO-1 through BIO-4, Project activities will be excluded from willow riparian habitat and be restricted to north of the San Diego River Parkway Trail. No impacts to willow riparian habitat will result from this project. Furthermore, Project activities will be limited to outside the least bittern breeding season in accordance with avoidance and minimization measure BIO-9, minimizing indirect construction impacts to the species.

The yellow warbler (*Setophaga petechia)* is not a state or federally listed species but is considered a SSC under CDFW. There are numerous recent eBird occurrences within the San Diego River corridor, including 2023 occurrences of the species directly south of the Project. In addition, the BSA encompasses riparian habitat suitable for nesting. Due to the presence of potentially suitable habitat as well as the recent local occurrences, yellow warbler has a high potential to occur within the BSA. No permanent impacts to yellow warbler habitat are anticipated. Temporary impacts will be returned to pre-construction conditions following the completion of construction activities and revegetated in accordance with avoidance and minimization measure BIO-7.

The western red bat (*Lasiurus frantzii*)is not a state or federally listed species but is considered a SSC under CDFW. There is a recent (2003) CNDDB occurrence of this species within the San Diego River corridor, approximately 5.7 miles northeast of the Project. The BSA includes dense riparian habitat with stands of cottonwood and willow that may be suitable for nesting. Due to the presence of locally suitable habitat, the species may have a low potential to occur within the BSA. In addition to avoidance and minimization measures BIO-1 through BIO-4, the implementation of measures BIO-8 through BIO-10 will ensure that Project-related impacts to western red bat are mitigated to less than significant.

The western yellow bat (*Lasiurus xanthinus*) is not a state or federally listed species but is considered a SSC under CDFW. There is a historic (1985) CNDDB occurrence of this species located approximately 2 miles south of the Project. In addition, the BSA includes dense riparian habitat that may be suitable for maternal colonies of this species. Furthermore, the San Diego River provides a proximal open water source directly south of the BSA. Due to the presence of locally suitable habitat as well as the local historic occurrence, the species may have a low potential to occur within the BSA. In addition to avoidance and minimization measures BIO-1 through BIO-4, the implementation of measures BIO-8 through BIO-10 will ensure that Project-related impacts to western yellow bat are mitigated to less than significant.

The two-striped gartersnake (*Thamnophis hammondii*) is not a state or federally listed species but is a SSC under CDFW. There is a recent (2001) CNDDB occurrence of this species located approximately 4.1 miles southeast of the Project Area. The BSA encompasses a dense riparian corridor adjacent to the San Diego River and may provide suitable upland habitat for the species. As such, there is a low potential for the species to occur within the BSA. In addition to avoidance and minimization measures BIO-1 through BIO-4, the implementation of measures BIO-9 and BIO-11 through BIO-14 will ensure that Project-related impacts to two-striped gartersnake are mitigated to less than significant.

The Project will be consistent with the Development and Mitigation Guidelines outlined in the NRMP of the FSDRIP. Furthermore, the project would not result in adverse indirect effects on special status species with implementation of mitigation measures BIO-1 through BIO-14. Impacts to species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would be

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

b) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. Riparian habitat associated with the San Diego River is present to the south of the project site. Within the BSA, the willow riparian habitat and upland riparian habitat associated with the San Diego River have been identified as natural communities of special concern by CDFW (Figure 4). In addition, the coastal sage scrub habitat located directly east of the Project limits may provide suitable habitat for a variety of special status wildlife species. Table 3. Impacts to Sensitive Natural Habitats and Figure 5. Project Impacts outline the impacts to sensitive habitat communities within the BSA. Project impacts and the associated avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures for the riparian corridor and coastal sage scrub habitat are discussed in their respective sections below.

Table 3
IMPACTS TO SENSITIVE NATURAL HABITATS

Impact Type (acres)	Sensitive Natural Habitat		
	Upland Riparian	Willow Riparian	Coastal Sage Scrub
Temporary	0.27 acres	0 acres	0 acres
Permanent	0 acres	0 acres	0 acres
Total	**0.27 acres**	**0 acres**	**0 acres**

Approximately 0.27 acres of upland riparian habitat will be temporarily impacted during construction to allow for construction access to the proposed work area. Riparian vegetation directly south of the Rio Vista Station platform will be removed and a temporary access road will be graded from the San Diego River Parkway to allow construction access to the platform. Following the conclusion of the Project, temporary impacts to upland riparian habitat will be restored to pre-construction conditions in accordance with the FSDRIP. No permanent impacts to upland riparian habitat will result from the proposed platform improvements.

The Project will be consistent with the Development and Mitigation Guidelines outlined in the NRMP of the FSDRIP. In addition, the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures BIO-1 through BIO-6 will reduce impacts to the riparian corridor. Therefore, impacts to riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community would be Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

c) Would the project 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. There are no state or federally protected wetlands within the project area. There would be No Impact.

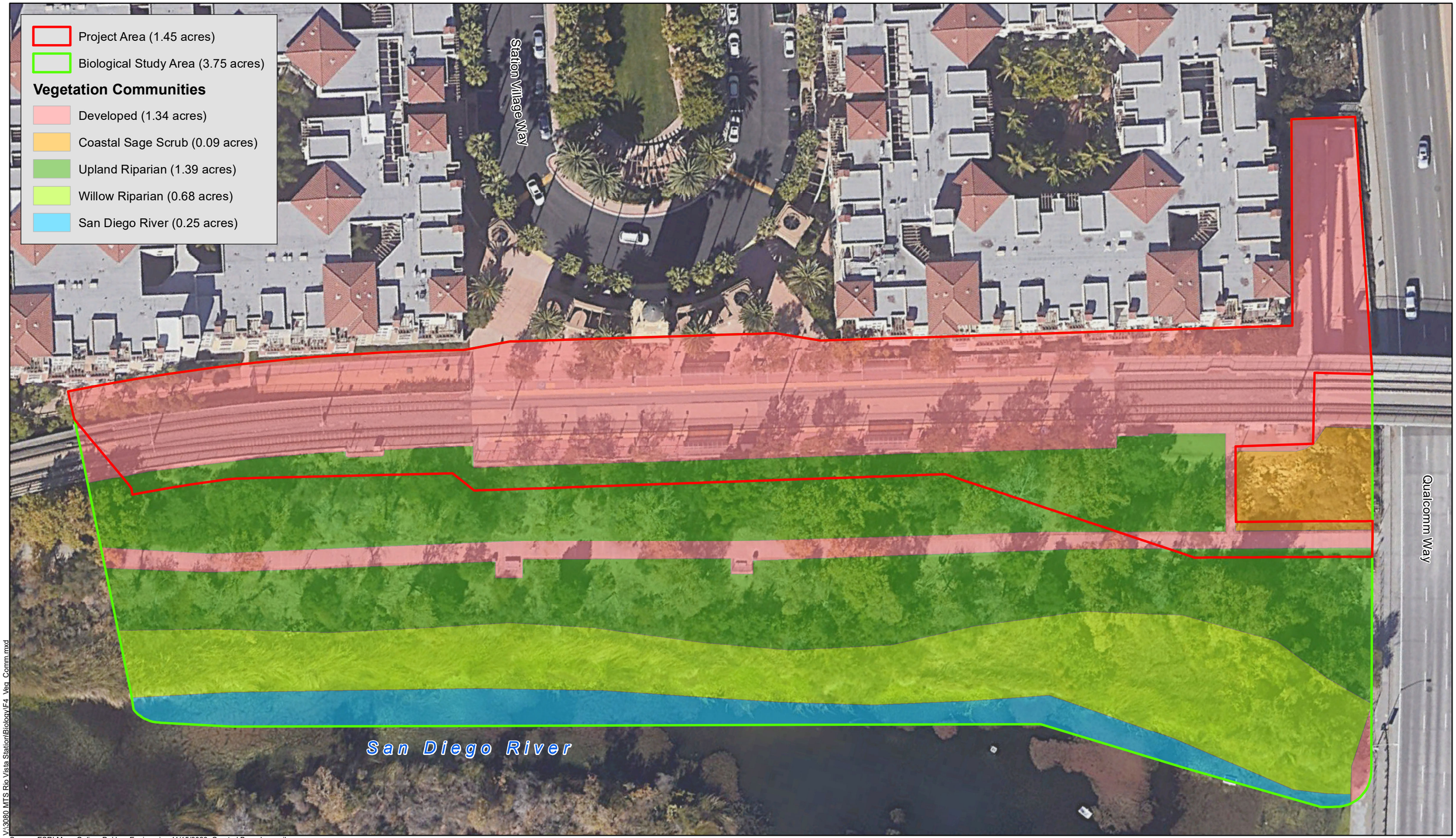
d) Would the project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The project site is primarily developed and located adjacent to the San Diego River. The San Diego River itself, however, acts as a wildlife corridor for wildlife species.

According to the NOAA habitat conservation Essential Fish Habitat View Tool, the BSA does not fall within Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for any of the identified species (NOAA 2023) and no work within the San Diego River would occur; therefore, no impacts to migratory fish would occur.

The San Diego River and its associated habitat acts as a migratory corridor for native birds. Native birds are protected by the MBTA and CFG Code Section 3513. The implementation of measures BIO-8 and BIO-9 would avoid all potential impacts to migratory birds.

The project is adjacent to open space to the south associated with the San Diego River. The project, however, would not interfere with the function as a wildlife corridor and would not constrain wildlife movement through the area. In addition, the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures BIO-1 through BIO-6 will reduce impacts to the riparian corridor. Impacts to wildlife movement would be Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.



V:\3080 MTS Rio Vista Station\Biology\F4_Veg_Comm.mxd

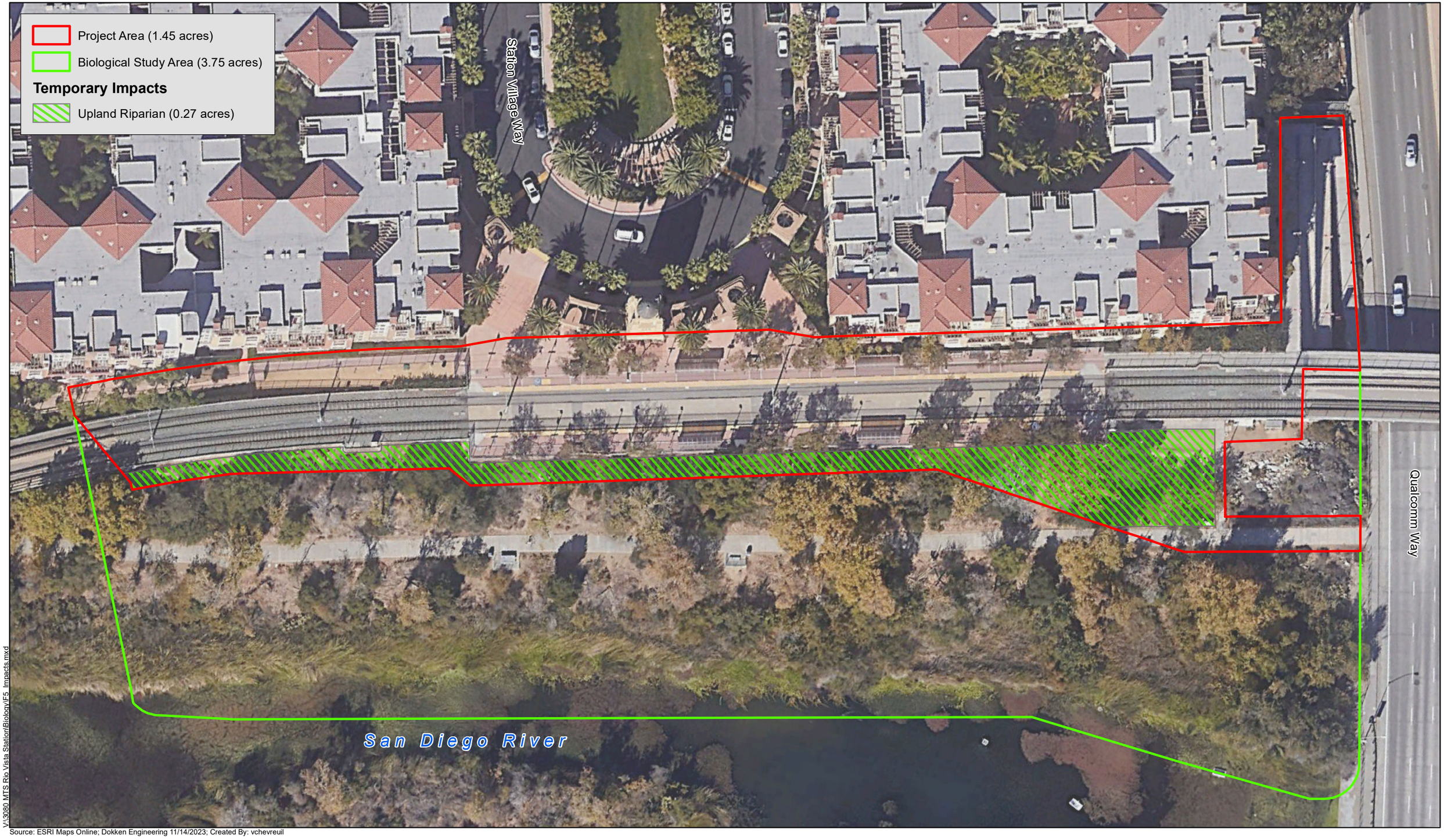
Source: ESRI Maps Online; Dokken Engineering 11/15/2023; Created By: vchevreuil

1 inch = 50 feet

0 50 100 150 200 250 Feet

FIGURE 4
Vegetation Communities

Rio Vista Platform Design - Phase II
San Diego County, California



V:\3080 MTS Rio Vista Station\Biology\F5_Impacts.mxd

Source: ESRI Maps Online; Dokken Engineering 11/14/2023; Created By: vchevreuil

1 inch = 50 feet

0 50 100 150 200 250 Feet

FIGURE 5
Project Impacts

Rio Vista Platform Design - Phase II
San Diego County, California

e) Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The Project falls within the jurisdiction of the FSDRIP, which is the segment of the San Diego River located between Qualcomm Way and Highway 163. Development within this region is subject to the FSDRIP Natural Resource Management Plan, which outlines specific Development and Mitigation Guidelines to ensure the continuing protection of the natural resources created under the FSDRIP Revegetation Plan.

Approximately 0.27 acre of riparian vegetation, which includes trees species such as coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) and Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), directly south of the platform will be removed to provide construction access and restored following the completion of construction. Removal of vegetation would conducted in accordance with the FSDRIP Revegetation Plan protecting biological resources and include all required measures, such as BIO-7 regarding implementing a post-construction revegetation and monitoring plan; therefore, impacts would be Less than Significant with mitigation.

f) Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. The project site occurs within the boundaries of the City of San Diego's adopted MSCP Subarea Plan (City of San Diego 1997) and in close proximity (as close as 150 feet) to the City of San Diego's Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA); however, MTS is not a covered participant in the MHPA and those provisions do not apply to this Project. The Project also falls within the jurisdiction of the FSDRIP, which is the segment of the San Diego River located between Qualcomm Way and Highway 163. Development within this region is subject to the FSDRIP NRMP, which outlines specific Development and Mitigation Guidelines to ensure the continuing protection of the natural resources created under the FSDRIP Revegetation Plan.

Approximately 0.27 acres of upland riparian habitat will be temporarily impacted during construction to allow for construction access to the proposed work area. Riparian vegetation directly south of the Rio Vista Station platform will be removed and a temporary access road will be graded from the San Diego River Parkway to allow construction access to the platform. Following the conclusion of the Project, temporary impacts to upland riparian habitat will be restored to pre-construction conditions in accordance with the FSDRIP. No permanent impacts to upland riparian habitat will result from the proposed platform improvements.

The Project will be consistent with the Development and Mitigation Guidelines outlined in the NRMP of the FSDRIP. In addition, the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures BIO-1 through BIO-6 will reduce impacts to the riparian corridor. Therefore, impacts related to consistency with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan would be Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

BIO-1: Every individual working on the Project must attend a biological awareness training session delivered by a CDFW qualified biologist. This training program willwill include

information regarding the sensitive habitats and special status species occurring or potentially occurring within the Project area, and the importance of avoiding impacts to these species and their habitat.

BIO-2: Prior to the start of construction activities, the Project limits within the San Diego River Parkway will be marked with high visibility Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) fencing or staking in accordance with the First San Diego River Improvement Plan to ensure construction will not further encroach into sensitive resources.

BIO-3: Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be incorporated into Project design and Project management to minimize impacts on the environment including erosion and the release of pollutants (e.g., oils, fuels):

- Exposed soils and material stockpiles will be stabilized, through watering or other measures, to prevent the movement of dust at the Project site caused by wind and construction activities such as traffic and grading activities;
- All vehicle and equipment fueling/maintenance would be conducted outside of any surface waters;
- Equipment used in and around jurisdictional waters must be in good working order and free of dripping or leaking contaminants;
- Raw cement, concrete or concrete washings, asphalt, paint or other coating material, oil or other petroleum products, or any other substances that could be hazardous to aquatic life will be prevented from contaminating the soil or entering jurisdictional waters;
- All erosion control measures, and storm water control measures would be properly maintained until the site has returned to a pre-construction state;
- All construction materials would be hauled off-site after completion of construction.

BIO-4: Vegetation removal will be avoided to the greatest extent practicable. Where feasible, trees and shrubs will be trimmed rather than removed.

BIO-5: Vehicle maintenance, staging and storing equipment, materials, fuels, lubricants, solvents, and other possible contaminants must remain outside of sensitive habitat marked with high-visibility fencing. Any necessary equipment washing must occur where the water cannot flow into sensitive habitat communities.

BIO-6: A chemical spill kit must be kept onsite and available for use in the event of a spill.

BIO-7: MTS will develop a post-construction revegetation and monitoring plan to restore the Project's temporary impacts to riparian vegetation. Revegetation of the temporarily impacted Project areas will be conducted in accordance with the Development and Mitigation Guidelines outlined in the NRMP of the FSDRIP. The revegetation plan, monitoring period, and associated success criteria will be determined in coordination with CDFW during the permitting phase of the Project.

BIO-8: Prior to vegetation removal or initial ground disturbance during the nesting bird season

(February 1 – September 30) a pre-construction nesting bird survey must be conducted by a Project biologist prior to the start of work. The nesting bird survey must include the Project area plus a 250-foot buffer. Within 2 weeks of the nesting bird survey, all areas surveyed by the biologist must be cleared by the contractor or a supplemental nesting bird survey is required.

A minimum 100 foot no-disturbance buffer will be established around any active nest of migratory birds and a minimum 300 foot no-disturbance buffer will be established around any nesting raptor species. The contractor must immediately stop work in the buffer area until the appropriate buffer is established and is prohibited from conducting work that could disturb the birds (as determined by the Project biologist and in coordination with wildlife agencies) in the buffer area until a qualified biologist determines the young have fledged. A reduced buffer can be established if determined appropriate by the Project biologist and approved by CDFW.

BIO-9: To avoid impacts to special status migratory birds, clearing, grubbing, grading, and other Project-related construction activities willwill occur between September 15 and February 15, outside the southwestern willow flycatcher breeding season (April 15 - August 31), the coastal California gnatcatcher breeding season (February 15 – August 15), and the least Bell's vireo breeding season (March 15 - September 15). No incidental take of the above species is permitted by this Project.

BIO-10: To avoid impacts to roosting bats, trees that may contain roosting bats must be removed between September 1 and March 1, outside of the bat maternity season.

BIO-11: Prior to vegetation removal or initial ground disturbance, a pre-construction clearance survey must be conducted by a Project biologist within two-striped gartersnake habitat (riparian corridor). Within 2 weeks of the pre-construction survey, all areas surveyed by the biologist must be cleared by the contractor or a supplemental clearance survey is required.

BIO-12: All excavated steep-walled holes and trenches within two-striped gartersnake habitat that are more than 6 inches deep will be covered with plywood (or similar material) or provided with one or more escape ramps at an angle of no more than 30 degrees constructed of earth fill or wooden planks at the end of each workday or 30 minutes prior to sunset, whichever occurs first. All steep-walled holes and trenches will be inspected each morning to ensure that no wildlife has become entrapped. All construction pipes, culverts, similar structures, construction equipment, and construction debris left overnight within two-striped gartersnake habitat will be inspected for two-striped gartersnake prior to being moved.

BIO-13: If erosion control is implemented within two-striped gartersnake habitat (riparian corridor), nonentangling erosion control material will be used to reduce the potential for entrapment. Tightly woven fiber netting (mesh size less than 0.25 inch) or similar material will be used to ensure snakes are not trapped (no monofilament). Coconut coir matting and fiber rolls containing burlap are examples of acceptable erosion control materials.

BIO-14: If a two-striped gartersnake is encountered during construction activities, the Project

biologist will be notified and construction activities will be suspended in a 50-foot radius of the animal until it leaves the project site on its own volition. A qualified biologist may relocate a two-striped gartersnake to outside the project area.

V. 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 dedicated cemeteries?	☐	■	☐	☐

The discussion below is summarized and based on the analysis and conclusions contained within the Cultural Resources Inventory Report (Dokken 2024) prepared for the proposed project. The report is included as Appendix D to this IS/MND.

a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?

No Impact. The Cultural Resources Survey Report conducted a records search, Sacred Lands File search, a review of historic aerial photographs and maps, historic background research, a pedestrian survey, and historic structures evaluation for the proposed project to determine the potential effects on historical resources. The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) was established by the National Historic Preservation Act to protect historically significant properties. Similarly, the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) requires the identification and mitigation of substantial adverse impacts that may affect the significance of eligible historical resources. To be eligible for listing in the NRHP or CRHR, a resource must meet specific criteria which are described in detail in the Cultural Resources Survey Report (Dokken 2024).

The area north of the project site has been disturbed by residential development, as well as transportation and utility installation, while disturbance to the south of the site is associated with the active recreational trail. The MTS Rio Vista Station (Station) platform and apartment complex to the north were constructed in 1999 and 2005, respectively. The records search conducted at the South Coastal Information Center (SCIC) yielded five previously recorded cultural resources within a half-mile radius of the project, none of which have been recorded within the project area of potential effect (APE), which coincides with the boundaries of the project site. Previously recorded historic resources include two historic buildings, two prehistoric sites, and a site with both prehistoric and historic components.

The structures within the APE do not appear eligible for federal or state listing. They are not included on a register of designated properties, and they are not contributors to any designated historic district.
Therefore, they do not qualify as historical resources under CEQA. Based on the results of the Cultural Resources Inventory Memorandum (Dokken 2024, Appendix D), no historic properties or historical resources would be affected by implementation of the proposed project.

Therefore, the project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5. No Impact would occur.

b) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?

Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. As noted above in item V(a), the records search conducted for the project identified 5 previously recorded cultural resources within a half-mile of the project site, but none within the project site. Previously recorded prehistoric resources consist of two lithic procurement and reduction areas, a low-density lithic scatter, and a shell scatter.

No archaeological resources were observed during the field survey. Due to the construction of the Station, the active recreational trail to the south of the Station, and the surrounding apartment complexes, the Project Area Limits (PAL) and surrounding area has been heavily disturbed. The degree of disturbance and development throughout the Project vicinity suggests that the probability to locate intact subsurface archaeological deposits is low.

While no Indigenous or historic-era resources are noted within the PAL, and the potential of encountering intact cultural resources is low, the Measures CR-1 and CUL-2 should be implemented in case cultural material is encountered. As a result, implementation of the proposed project could result in a potentially significant impact to archaeological resources. Implementation mitigation measure CR-1 and CR-2 would reduce impacts to Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

c) Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. There are no known grave sites within the project limits, and the potential for encountering human remains during construction activities is considered low, since grading and excavation activities would occur within a previously disturbed area. In the unlikely event that human remains are encountered, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that no further disturbance will occur until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to PRC Section 5097.98. The County Coroner must be notified of any human remains find immediately. If the remains are determined to be prehistoric, the Coroner would notify the NAHC, which would determine and notify a Most Likely Descendant (MLD). The MLD would have the opportunity to make recommendations to the NAHC on the disposition of the remains. With implementation of mitigation measure CR-2, impacts would be Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

CR-1 The construction contractor will implement an archaeological and Native American monitoring program during initial grading and other ground-disturbing construction activities. The monitoring program will include the retention of a qualified archaeologist and a Native American monitor from the Campo Band of Mission Indians. The archaeological and Native American monitors will attend a pre-construction meeting with the construction manager and be in attendance during initial ground disturbing activities at the project site. The monitors will determine the extent of their presence during soil disturbing activities.

The archaeological and Native American monitors will have the authority to temporarily halt or redirect grading and other ground-disturbing activity if cultural resources are encountered. If a resource is encountered, all operations within 50 feet of where the resource was found will be suspended immediately, MTS will be notified, and the qualified archaeologist, in consultation with the Native American monitor, will evaluate the significance of the find. If cultural material is determined to be significant, the qualified archaeologist will coordinate with the consulting tribes and MTS staff to develop and implement appropriate treatment measures. Pursuant to California PRC § 21083.2(b), avoidance is the preferred method of preservation. The archaeologist and the tribal representative will make recommendations to MTS on the measures that will be implemented to protect the newly discovered cultural resource(s), including but not limited to, avoidance in place, excavation, relocation, and further evaluation of the discoveries in accordance with CEQA. No further ground disturbance will occur in the area of the discovery until MTS approves the measures to protect the significant cultural resource(s).

CR-2 Section 5097.94 of the PRC and Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code protect Native American burials, skeletal remains and grave goods, regardless of age and provide method and means for the appropriate handling of such remains. If human remains are encountered, work would halt in that vicinity and the county coroner would be notified immediately. At the same time, an archaeologist would be contacted to evaluate the situation. If the human remains are of Native American origin, the coroner must notify the NAHC within twenty-four hours of such identification. CEQA details steps to be taken if human burials are of Native American origin.

VI. Energy

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact 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) Would the project result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project would consume energy resources during construction of the platform. Operation of the proposed facility upon construction completion would be the same as under existing conditions. The proposed project's direct electricity usage were estimated from the air quality emissions project modeling completed using CalEEMod. Fuel consumption factors in terms of gallons per hour of diesel for off-road equipment were calculated by inputting emissions results from the CalEEMod into the U.S. EPA Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator (U.S. EPA January 2024).

Construction Energy

Energy consumed for project construction would primarily consist of fuels in the form of diesel and gasoline. Fuel consumption would result from the use of on-road trucks for the transportation of construction materials and water, construction worker vehicles traveling to and from the project site, and from the use of off-road construction equipment. The estimated fuel and total energy consumed during project construction is shown in Table 4, *Construction Energy Use*.

Table 4 CONSTRUCTION ENERGY USE

Source	Annual Construction Emissions (MT/year)	Gallons Diesel	MMBtu
Off-Road Construction Equipment	160.28	15,745	2,163

MMBtu = million British thermal units

While construction activities would consume petroleum-based fuels, consumption of such resources would be temporary and would cease upon the completion of construction. The petroleum consumed during project construction would be typical of similar projects and would not require the use of new petroleum resources beyond those typically consumed in California annually for construction activities. Based on these considerations, construction of the project would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources and the impact would be less than significant.

Operational Energy

Upon completion of construction, the proposed Project would continue to operate as it did under existing conditions. There would be no change in energy use. Therefore, operation of the project would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

b) Would the project conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

Less Than Significant Impact. The 2022 Title 24 Part 6, Building Energy Efficiency Standards, and 2019 Title 24 Part 11, CALGreen, include provisions applicable to all buildings, which are mandatory requirements for efficiency and design. The project would be consistent with the requirements of Title 24 through implementation of energy-reduction measures, such as energy efficient lighting for the platform. Therefore, the project would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

VII. 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?	☐	☐	■	☐

The discussion below is summarized and based on the analysis and conclusions contained within the Geotechnical Memorandum (Atlas 2023) prepared for the proposed project. The report is included as Appendix E to this IS/MND.

a) Would the project 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. Seismically induced surface or ground rupture occurs when

movement on a fault deep within the earth breaks through to the surface as a result of seismic activity. Fault rupture almost always follows preexisting faults, which are zones of weakness. Sudden displacements are more damaging to structures because they are accompanied by shaking. Under the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act (Act), the California State Geologist identifies areas in the State that are at risk from surface fault rupture. The Act's main purpose is to prevent the construction of buildings used for human occupancy on the surface trace of active faults. The Act also requires the State Geologist to establish regulatory zones, known as Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones around the surface traces of active faults and to issue appropriate maps that identify these zones.

According to the USGS Quaternary Fault and Fold Database Interactive Mapper (USGS 2017), active faults near the project site include the Texas Street Fault and the Florida Canyon Fault, approximately 0.5 miles south and southwest, respectively. The Texas Street fault is a north-trending fault mapped from just north of State Route 94 to the south rim of Mission Valley. About 0.5 mile to the west, the Florida Canyon fault is another north-trending fault extending from the south end of Florida Canyon near Pershing Drive to the south rim of Mission Valley. Both sites are considered potentially active.

According to the Department of Conservation California Earthquake hazards Zone Application (EQ Zapp), the nearest active fault zone is the Rose Canyon Fault Zone approximately 3 miles west of the project site.

Despite the presence of active fault lines and fault zones within the general project vicinity, the proposed project is intended to retrofit existing MTS infrastructure and would not directly or indirectly exacerbate risk of loss, injury, or death related to rupture of a known earthquake fault. Impacts would Less than Significant.

ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is located in a seismically active region and is likely to be subjected to moderate to severe seismic ground shaking in response to a major earthquake occurring on the Rose Canyon fault zone or another major regional active fault, as identified in item VII(a)(i). An earthquake along any of these known active fault zones could result in severe ground shaking, and consequently cause injury and/or property damage in the project vicinity. However, the proposed retrofit of the existing infrastructure is intended to improve the stability of the station. Compliance with applicable seismic design criteria would ensure that people are not exposed to substantial adverse effects, including risk of loss, injury, or death, involving strong seismic ground shaking. Impacts related to strong seismic ground shaking would be Less than Significant.

iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Less Than Significant Impact. Seismic-induced soil liquefaction is a phenomenon during which loose, saturated granular materials undergo matrix rearrangement, develop high pore water pressure, and lose shear strength due to cyclic ground vibrations induced by earthquakes. Manifestations of soil liquefaction can include loss of bearing capacity below foundations, surface settlements and tilting in level ground, and instabilities in areas of sloping ground. Soil liquefaction can also result in increased lateral and uplift pressures on buried structures.

The project site is mapped in the City of San Diego Seismic Study Geologic Hazards and Faults Map

(City of San Diego 2008b) as an area of High Potential for liquefaction. However, as the purpose of the project is to retrofit existing MTS infrastructure, the project would improve rather than exacerbate the risk of exposure to substantial adverse effects, including risk of loss, injury, or death, involving liquefaction. Impacts associated with seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction would be Less than Significant.

iv. Landslides?

No Impact. Based on a review of published geologic maps, there are no known historical landslides in the project area. Furthermore, the San Diego Seismic Safety Study Geologic Hazards and Faults map (City of San Diego 2008b) indicates the project site is not located in an area that is susceptible to landslide hazards. Thus, the proposed project would not expose people to substantial adverse effects, including risk of loss, injury, or death, involving landslides. No Impact would occur.

b) Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Less Than Significant Impact. Soil exposed by construction activities could be subject to erosion if exposed to heavy rain, winds, or other storm events. There is the potential for soil erosion or loss of topsoil during construction activities as the ground is cleared and graded for the temporary access road. Compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Permit would include preparation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that requires implementation of standard erosion control practices and construction BMPs to prevent soil erosion and loss of topsoil from construction activities. BMPs may include the use of silt fencing, fiber rolls, and sandbags.

The proposed project would not result in long-term, operational impacts associated with soil erosion or loss of topsoil as the site would not result in an increased amount of exposed soil. Therefore, impacts related to soil erosion and the loss of topsoil would be Less than Significant.

c) Would the project 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed in items VII(a)(iii) and VII(a)(iv) above, the project site is mapped in an area of High Potential for Liquefaction but not landslides. Lateral spreading occurs when an underlying soil layer liquefies, and blocks of overlying surficial soil displace downslope or towards a sloping surface or unsupported “free face” such as riverbank. The lateral displacement typically ranges from a few inches to several feet and can cause severe damage to structures. However, as the purpose of the project is to retrofit existing MTS infrastructure, the project would improve rather than exacerbate the risk associated with an unstable geologic unit, subsidence or collapse. Impacts related unstable geologic units or soils would be Less than Significant.

d) Would the project 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. Per the Geotechnical Memorandum, the project site is underlain by fill and alluvium. Fill is expected to extend for about 25 to 30 feet below the bottom of the MSE walls and generally consists of loose to very dense, clayey sand and soft to hard, sandy, or silty clay with

varying amounts of gravel. Alluvium encountered at the site consists of medium dense to very dense poorly graded sand with varying amounts of silt.

As part of the proposed project, the existing Mechanically Stabilized Earth walls on the north and south side of the Rio Vista Platform would be repaired. The geotechnical memorandum determined that potentially expansive soils exist within the MSE walls as well as top of the slope of the south embankment. However, as the purpose of the project is to retrofit existing MTS infrastructure, including repair or replacement of the existing MSE walls with no expansive materials, the project would improve rather than exacerbate the risk associated with expansive soils. In addition, the project would incorporate standard engineering techniques in accordance with the CBC to avoid adverse effects of expansive soils. Therefore, Impacts related to expansive soils would be Less than Significant.

e) Would the project 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 proposed project does not include the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. The project would connect to the existing sewer infrastructure within the project area. No Impact would occur.

f) Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Less Than Significant Impact. Based on the geotechnical memorandum, the majority of the project site itself is anticipated to be underlain by artificial fill materials at various depths. Artificial fill materials are assigned a zero sensitivity rating for paleontological resources. Ground-disturbing activities associated with the proposed project are anticipated to occur in previously graded and disturbed areas that are underlain by artificial fill materials. As such, the potential for encountering intact paleontological resources during ground- disturbing activities is considered very low. Impacts to paleontological resources or unique geological features would be Less than Significant.

VIII. 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 gases?	☐	☐	☐	■

a) Would the project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Less Than Significant Impact. Global climate change refers to changes in average climatic conditions on Earth as a whole, including temperature, wind patterns, precipitation, and storms. Global temperatures are moderated by atmospheric gases. These gases are commonly referred to as greenhouse gases (GHGs) because they function like a greenhouse by letting sunlight in but preventing heat from escaping, thus warming the Earth's atmosphere. The GHGs defined under California's Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32) include carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), nitrous oxide (N2O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF6). Global climate change impacts are by nature cumulative; direct impacts cannot be evaluated because the impacts themselves are global rather than localized impacts.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15183.5(b), 15064(h)(3), and 15130(d), a lead agency may determine that a project's incremental contribution to a cumulative GHG effect is not cumulatively considerable if the project complies with the requirements of a previously adopted GHG emission reduction plan. MTS has not adopted thresholds for use in CEQA documents where they are the Lead Agency or Responsible Agency. In the absence of locally adopted thresholds, agencies commonly rely on thresholds identified in guidance prepared by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) and by regional air districts. These include a 1,100 MT CO_2e/year threshold (South Coast Air Quality Management District) and a 3,000 MT CO_2e/year threshold (cited by CAPCOA and used by several agencies as a bright-line threshold for land use projects).

The proposed project would result in temporary construction-related emissions of approximately 972 MT CO_2e (see Appendix B). Negligible long-term operational emissions would occur associated with maintenance once construction is complete. Because construction emissions would be below the conservative 1,100 MT CO_2e/year threshold, the project would not generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that would have a significant impact on the environment. Impacts would therefore be less than significant.

b) Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

No Impact. Although the project is located within the City of San Diego, the MTS is the CEQA lead agency and is not a covered entity under the City's CAP. MTS does not maintain its own CAP.

Nevertheless, the project has been evaluated for consistency with applicable statewide GHG reduction goals and policies, including AB 32, SB 32, and Executive Orders S-3-05 and B-30-15, which establish targets for reducing statewide GHG emissions.

The project consists of a retrofit to an existing light rail platform and would not result in any new operational GHG emissions or induce growth. Construction-related GHG emissions would be temporary and below conservative thresholds recommended by CAPCOA and regional air districts. As such, the project would not interfere with implementation of statewide GHG reduction targets and would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions and no impact would occur.

IX. 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) Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Less Than Significant Impact. Materials and waste are generally considered hazardous if they are poisonous (toxicity), can be ignited by open flame (ignitability), corrode other materials (corrosivity), or react violently, explode, or generate vapors when mixed with water (reactivity). The term "hazardous material" is defined in the State Health and Safety Code (Chapter 6.95, Section 25501[o]) as any material that, because of quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment. Hazardous waste is defined as any hazardous material that is abandoned, discarded, or recycled, as defined in the State Health and Safety Code (Chapter 6.95, Section 25125). The transportation, use, and disposal of hazardous materials, as well as the potential

releases of hazardous materials to the environment, are closely regulated through many state and federal laws.

During the project construction period, hazardous substances used to maintain and operate construction equipment (such as fuel, lubricants, adhesives, and solvents) would be present. The use of these materials could potentially result in significant impacts through accidental discharge associated with use and storage of hazardous materials. The transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials and/or wastes would be conducted in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. In addition, implementation of the proposed project would require conformance with the NPDES Construction General Permit. Specifically, this would entail implementation of a SWPPP to address the use of hazardous materials and the potential discharge of contaminants including construction-related hazardous wastes through the installation of appropriate BMPs. While specific BMPs would be determined during the SWPPP process, the suite of BMPs would include standard industry measures and guidelines contained in the NPDES Construction Permit text and Stormwater Best Management Practices Construction Handbook (California Stormwater Quality Association 2019). Based on compliance with applicable regulations and implementation of appropriate BMPs, hazardous material impacts related to construction activities would be Less than Significant.

Upon completion of the propose retrofit, operation of the proposed project would remain the same as existing conditions and not result in any new storage, use, or generation of hazardous materials or wastes. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

b) Would the project 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 Impact. Hazardous materials releases can occur if there are existing hazardous materials at the project site that would be disturbed by project construction or operation, or if project construction or operation activities involve the handling of substantial amounts of hazardous materials with a potential to result in upset and accident conditions. Based on a review of Envirostor and Geotracker (See Appendix F), no documented unauthorized releases of hazardous materials are known to have occurred at the project site. The closest occurrence is located at Mission Valley Chevron approximately 875 feet to the southeast, and the status of the cleanup site is closed.

During the construction period, there is also the possibility of accidental release of hazardous substances such as spilling of hydraulic fluid or diesel fuel associated with construction equipment maintenance. The level of risk associated with the accidental release of these hazardous substances is not considered significant due to the small volume and low concentration of hazardous materials. The construction contractor would be required to implement standard construction controls and safety procedures to avoid or minimize the potential for accidental release of such substances into the environment.

Impacts with respect to creating 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 would be Less than Significant.

c) Would the project 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 Impact. There are no existing or proposed schools within one-quarter mile of the project site. The nearest school is Warren-Walker Middle School approximately 0.4 miles south of the project site. The proposed project would involve the temporary use and/or storage of fuels, oils, and other potential hazardous materials typically used during construction, and ongoing use/storage of lithium batteries, solvents, cleaners, oils, lubricants, and paint during operation. No acutely hazardous materials would be used. The project's use of hazardous materials during construction would be handled in accordance with NPDES SWPPP requirements, as well as compliance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations associated with hazardous materials.

Upon construction completion, use of hazardous materials during ongoing operations would not be increased compared to existing conditions and would continue to be required to comply with applicable federal, state, and local regulations. Adherence to applicable regulations would avoid exposure to construction-related and operational hazardous materials from occurring to nearby schools. Therefore, impacts related to emissions or handling of hazardous materials, substances, or wastes near schools would be Less than Significant.

d) Would the project 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. Based on a review of Envirostor and Geotracker, no documented unauthorized releases of hazardous materials are known to have occurred at the project site. The database review identified a total of eight recognized environmental conditions (RECs) sites/cases in the project area (beyond the project site within ½ mile) that are considered to pose a minimal risk to the project site. These sites/cases previously or currently have underground and/or above ground storage tanks, documented leaking underground storage tanks leaks/releases, documented major spills, environmental site investigations, mitigations and/or cleanups, and past solid waste landfills/burn ash facilities. These cases/sites are generally considered to pose minimal risk to the project site based on the following factors:

- Age and status of the case;
- Unauthorized releases at the site impacted soil only;
- Distance of the site from the project site;
- Direction of groundwater at the site is away from the project site; and
- Depth of groundwater or lack of groundwater.

There are no known reported unauthorized releases of hazardous materials or wastes at the project site. Impacts related to listed hazardous materials sites would be Less than Significant.

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 site?

Less Than Significant Impact. The nearest airport to the project site is the San Diego International Airport (SDIA), located approximately nine miles to the southwest. As identified in the SDIA

Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP), the project site is outside of the Airport Influence Area (AIA) for SDIA (SDSIA 2024) . Additionally, the proposed project would not result in any change in use that would increase the number of people residing or working in the project area that could be exposed to excessive noise levels. Impacts would be less than significant. Furthermore, the project does not propose features that could result in hazards impacts on aircraft safety or operation. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

f) Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Less Than Significant Impact. Access to surrounding roadways would be maintained throughout the construction period. Identified emergency evacuation routes in the vicinity, including I-8, I-805, and SR 163 would not be affected during construction or operation. Site access would be provided by a temporary access road that would be constructed off of southbound Qualcomm Way and connect to the existing San Diego River Trail. Impacts related to impairment of emergency response plans or emergency evacuation plans would be Less than Significant.

g) Would the project expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

Less Than Significant Impact. The potential for wildland fires represents a hazard, particularly on undeveloped properties or where development exists adjacent to open space or within proximity to wildland fuels. State law requires that all local jurisdictions identify Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) within their areas of responsibility (California Government Code Sections 51175–51189).
These maps, which are prepared by the local agency in collaboration with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) determine fire hazards zones based on vegetation density, slope severity, and other relevant factors that contribute to fire severity.

The project site is located in a developed area but is adjacent to open space along the San Diego River. Given the proximity to a vegetated area, portions of the site are located within an area designated as a VHFHSZ by the City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department's VHFHSZ Mapper. The project however would not increase the potential for wildfires in the project area, as the site is already entirely developed, and the project would retrofit existing MTS structures. The proposed site retrofit would be required to comply with applicable wildland fire risk reduction and prevention requirements of the CBC and the California Fire Code. The project therefore would not increase or exacerbate exposure of people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires in the project area. Impacts would be Less than Significant. See Section XX, *Wildfire*, for additional discussion of wildfire.

X. 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 resources 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) Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project is subject to compliance with applicable elements of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and NPDES requirements. CWA Section 402 establishes the NPDES for regulating the discharge of pollutants into waters of the U.S. Specific NPDES requirements associated with the proposed project include conformance with General Permit for Waste Discharge Requirements for Storm Water Discharges from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (Municipal Permit, NPDES No. CAS 00000004, State Water Resources Control Board Order No. 2013-0001-DWQ, as amended by Order Nos. 2015-0133-EXEC, 2016-0069-EXEC, WQ 2018-0001-EXEC, WQ 2018-0007-EXEC, and 2017-

XXXX-DWQ) (the "Small MS4 Permit"). The project would be subject to storm water regulations under the MTS Small MS4 Permit.

The project would also be required to adhere to the NPDES Construction General Permit (NPDES No. CAS000002, SWRCB Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ; as amended by Order No. 2010-0014-DWQ and Order No. 2012-0014-DWQ), administered by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) during construction, which includes BMPs that serve to protect water and groundwater quality. The project would retrofit existing elevated MTS infrastructure and would not permanently add any new impervious surface. As a result, the project is considered a "Linear Underground/Overhead Project" (LUP) under the Small MS4 Permit and is required to implement standard construction and post- construction BMPs in compliance with the Small MS4 Permit such as source control. Implementation of standard construction and post-construction BMPs would further avoid potential violations of applicable standards and discharge violations.

In addition to CWA NPDES requirements, states are required to identify and document polluted surface water bodies, with the resulting documentation referred to as the CWA Section 303(d) List of Water Quality Limited Segments. This list of water bodies identifies the associated pollutants and total maximum daily loads (TMDLs), along with projected TMDL implementation schedules/status. A TMDL establishes the maximum amount of an impairing substance or stressor that a water body can assimilate and still meet water quality standards and allocates that load among pollution contributors. The San Diego RWQCB is responsible for developing the 303(d) list in the San Diego region. The receiving waters for the project site that are currently listed as impaired (based on the 2020-2022 303[d] List) include the San Diego River. The San Diego River is listed for the following pollutants: Benthic Community Effects, Bifenthrin, Chlordane, Chloride, Color, Cyfluthrin, Cypermethrin, Indicator Bacteria, Nitrogen, Oxygen, Dissolved, Permethrin, Phosphorus, Pyrethroids, Total Dissolved Solids, Toxicity, and Turbidity. Implementation of standard construction and post-construction BMPs would ensure that the proposed project would not create adverse water quality impacts to the San Diego River.

Compliance with the requirements of the CWA (including Section 402 [NPDES requirements] and Section 303 [impaired water segments], and NPDES Construction General Permit) would ensure that the proposed project would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. According to the Geotechnical Memorandum (Atlas 2024), groundwater at elevations of about 27 feet above mean sea level (MSL) was encountered in the past at the project site. However, the proposed project would not require the use of or otherwise substantially impair groundwater quality or interfere with groundwater recharge. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

b) Would the project 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 Impact. The proposed project would not require the use of, or otherwise substantially interfere with, groundwater supplies or recharge compared to existing conditions. The project would not involve any long-term use of groundwater and would temporarily connect to the City of San Diego's municipal system for any water needs, which purchases water from the San Diego County Water Authority, the regional wholesale water provider. In all, groundwater comprises a very small portion of the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) water portfolio (five percent). In addition, the City of San Diego Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP; City of

San Diego 2020) serves as a planning tool to document existing and future water demands and identify deficiencies and surpluses in relation to planning projections. The City of San Diego's General Plan land use designations work in concert with the UWMP in accurately forecasting water demands. The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan land uses for the site and would not generate any new water demand. Thus, the project would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies.

In relation to impervious surfaces that could interfere with groundwater recharge, the project site is primarily developed and would remain so with the proposed project.
Although project construction would require a temporary access road, the graded area would be restored to pre-project conditions; thus, the project would not result in a permanent increase in impervious surfaces. As a result, the project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

c) Would the project 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. Existing drainage on the project site consists of storm drains along the MTS railway. The proposed project would not substantially alter the overall existing drainage patterns. Upon construction, runoff from the site would continue to be directed across the site in generally the same direction and conveyed to existing storm drains along the MTS railway. Post-development site conditions would not change applicable regulatory mechanisms with regard to erosion or siltation.

In addition, the project would comply with applicable storm water regulations associated with MTS' Small MS4 Permit. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed above in item X(c)(i), the proposed project would not substantially alter the overall existing drainage patterns, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off site. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project would have no net increase in impervious surface are and would not generate an increase in runoff volumes. Thus, the proposed project would not

create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

iv. Impede or redirect flood flows?

Less Than Significant Impact. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Map Service Center (FEMA 2012), the southern portion of the project site is mapped within a 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard Area, and is adjacent to areas mapped Zone AE, which is a Special Flood Hazard Area (See Appendix G). However, the proposed project would not result in any permanent changes to the topography that would cause impediment or redirection of flood flows. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, would the project risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

Less than Significant Impact. As discussed above in item X(c)(iii), although the project site is mapped within a FEMA flood hazard or special flood hazard area (FEMA 2012), the project would not result in a permanent change that would exacerbate flood risk. Therefore, there would not be any new significant impact related to risk of pollutant release during a flood. Tsunamis are usually caused by displacement of the ocean flood causing large waves and are typically generated by seismic activity. The proposed project is located approximately seven miles inland from the Pacific Ocean and is not located within a designated tsunami inundation zone, according to the San Diego County Tsunami Hazrd Area Mapper. Therefore, there is little to no potential risk from a tsunami inundating the project site. A seiche is a standing wave in an enclosed or partly enclosed body of water. Seiches are normally caused by earthquake activity, and can affect harbors, bays, lakes, rivers, and canals. The nearest body of water is the San Diego River immediately adjacent south of the project site, however, the proposed retrofits of existing MTS infrastructure would not create any land use change that would exacerbate risks related to pollutant release as a result of a seiche at the San Diego River. No Impacts related to the release of pollutants due to floods, tsunamis, or seiches would occur.

e) Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is located within the Coastal Plain of San Diego Groundwater Basin and the regulatory boundaries of the RWQCB. The RWQCB is responsible for the adoption and implementation of water quality control plans, issuance of discharge permits, and performs other functions in relation to regulating the region's water quality. The Water Quality Control Plan for the San Diego Basin (Basin Plan; RWQCB 2021) identifies the project site as within the Chollas hydrologic subarea (HSA) of the San Diego Mesa hydrologic area of the San Diego hydrologic unit (908.22). As identified in item X(a), the San Diego River is listed as impaired on the Section 303(d) List for the following pollutants: Benthic Community Effects, Bifenthrin, Chlordane, Chloride, Color, Cyfluthrin, Cypermethrin, Indicator Bacteria, Nitrogen, Oxygen, Dissolved, Permethrin, Phosphorus, Pyrethroids, Total Dissolved Solids, Toxicity, and Turbidity. Runoff from the project site would be collected by the on-site storm drain system along the MTS railway and treated in accordance with the water quality regulations. The proposed project would be required to comply with applicable storm water quality standards during construction and operation. Conformance with the Basin Plan water quality objectives would be demonstrated

through compliance with applicable regulations and implementation of construction and post-construction BMPs. Thus, the project would be consistent with the Basin Plan.

In relation to sustainable groundwater management, the project site is located within the larger Coastal Plain of San Diego Basin. The Coastal Plan of San Diego Basin has multiple users, is not adjudicated, and currently does not have an overall groundwater basin management plan. To comply with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and the California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring Program, several local jurisdictions and water agencies formed a cooperative to monitor groundwater. Currently the Coastal Plain of San Diego Basin is not exhibiting signs of overdraft or being at risk of overdraft. Moreover, the project would not directly involve groundwater use. Thus, the project would not conflict with a sustainable groundwater management plan.

Implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

XI. 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) Would the project physically divide an established community?

Less than Significant Impact. The physical division of an established community typically refers to the construction of a linear feature, such as an interstate highway or railroad tracks, or removal of a means of access, such as a local road or bridge that would impact mobility within an existing community or between a community and outlying area. The project would occur in a developed site already served by existing roadways and utility infrastructure. While the proposed project would require construction of a temporary access road, this access road would be restored to pre-construction conditions and would not physically divide or separate neighborhoods. No other new linear features would be constructed. Therefore, the project would not physically divide an established community. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

b) Would the project 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?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed project is located within the Mission Valley Community Plan Area and has a land use designation of MTS right-of-way. The project proposes to retrofit existing MTS infrastructure and would have no impacts related to the site or adjacent land use designations.

The Project falls within the jurisdiction of the FSDRIP, which is the segment of the San Diego River located between Qualcomm Way and Highway 163. Development within this region is subject to the FSDRIP Natural Resource Management Plan, which outlines specific Development and Mitigation Guidelines to ensure the continuing protection of the natural resources created under the FSDRIP Revegetation Plan. Approximately 0.27 acre of riparian vegetation directly south of the platform will be removed to provide construction access and restored following the completion of construction. Removal of vegetation would conducted in accordance with the FSDRIP Revegetation Plan protecting biological resources and include all required measures, such as BIO-7 regarding implementing a post-construction revegetation and monitoring plan; therefore, impacts would be Less than Significant with Mitigation. Based on the above analysis, the project would not 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. Impacts would be Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

XII. 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) Would the project 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?

Less than Significant Impact. The Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 required the classification of land into mineral resource zones (MRZ), according to known or inferred mineral resource potential. As such, the DOC classifies the availability of mineral resources in a region into four MRZ categories: MRZ 1 for no mineral resources, MRZ 2 for significant resources areas with the quality and quantity known, MRZ 3 for significant resource areas with the quality and quantity unknown, and MRZ 4 for areas with no information. According to the Conservation Element in the City of San Diego's General Plan, the DOC is primarily interested in the preservation of significant resources in MRZ 2 regions. The project site is classified as MRZ 2; however, the project site is not currently being utilized for mineral extraction and would not require any activity that would result in extractive uses or loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

b) Would the project 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?

No Impact. As stated above in item XII(a), the City of San Diego's General Plan does not consider the project site to be a significant mineral resource area. Additionally, the project site is not used for mineral extraction and is not known as a locally important mineral resource recovery site. Further, the project site is not delineated on any plan for mineral resource recovery uses. No Impact would occur.

XIII. Noise

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project result in:				
a) 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) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne 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) Would the project 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 With Mitigation Incorporated. MTS has not adopted thresholds for use in CEQA documents where they are the Lead Agency or Responsible Agency. In the absence of MTS adopted thresholds, this analysis relies on the City of San Diego's (2020) approved guidelines for determining significance, which are based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. Construction noise thresholds are determined by the City of San Diego Noise Abatement and Control Ordinance. As such, the project would have a significant noise impact if it would:

- Result in temporary construction noise that exceeds:
    - 75 A-weighted decibel (dBA) time-averaged noise level (L_{EQ}) (12 hour) at the property line of a residentially zoned property from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. If construction work is to occur outside of the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., the City of San Diego's property line noise limits would be the significance threshold. Therefore, for construction during the evening and nighttime hours, a significant noise impact would occur if the project's construction noise exceeds 45 dBA L_{EQ} (12 hour) from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. or 40 dBA L_{EQ} (12 hour) from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. at the property line of a single-family residential zone.
    - 60 dBA L_{EQ} or the average ambient noise level, whichever is greater, at the edge of sensitive biological habitat during the breeding season.
- Result in or create a significant permanent increase in the existing noise levels that creates an exceedance of local standards. For the purposes of this analysis, a significant increase

would be greater than a perceptible change (3 dBA) over existing conditions that creates an exceedance of City of San Diego standards, the generation of noise levels at a common property line that exceed the applicable limits, or operational noise that exceeds 60 dBA L_{EQ} or the average ambient noise level, whichever is greater, at the edge of sensitive biological habitat.

Temporary Construction Noise

The proposed project would generate temporary increases in noise during its construction. Construction of the project would require vegetation clearing and grubbing, grading, and construction related to the proposed retrofit and platform improvements. Noise levels would fluctuate, depending on the construction activity, equipment type, and distance between noise source and receiver. Additionally, noise from construction equipment would vary dependent on the construction phase and the number and type of equipment in use at any given time. A portion of the project site to the south encompasses the upland riparian habitat, which will be utilized for temporary construction access. For the purposes of this analysis, construction activity is assumed to be located and will be operated within 50 feet of the riparian habitat and the nearest adjacent residences. Table 5, *Construction Noise Levels by Phase*, shows the anticipated construction noise levels for the proposed project.

Table 5
CONSTRUCTION NOISE LEVELS BY PHASE

Phase	Equipment Type	Equipment L_{MAX} at 50 feet	Composite L_{EQ} at 50 feet
Site Preparation (Clearing and Grubbing)	Tractor/Loader/Backhoe	79.1	79.1
	Rubber Tired Dozer	81.7	
Grading	Rubber Tired Dozer	81.7	85.0
	Tractor/Loader/Backhoe	77.6	
	Grader	85.0	
	Excavator	80.7	
	Scraper	81.7	
Retrofit and Platform Improvements	Crane	80.6	83.7
	Forklift	80.6	
	Tractor/Loader/Backhoe	77.6	
	Generator	80.6	
	Welder	80.6	

L_{EQ} = time-averaged noise level

At a distance of 50 feet, the loudest noise levels during construction (grading activities) are projected at 85 dBA LEQ at residential locations, which would exceed the City of San Diego's 75 dBA LEQ daytime limit. Construction is not planned to occur during evening hours; however, construction may occur during weekend hours. Pursuant to the City of San Diego's Noise Ordinance, should construction on sundays be necessary, MTS will obtain a noise variance permit from the City of San Diego Noise Abatement and Control Administrator.

Due to the likelihood of working in close proximity to one another, it was conservatively assumed that all equipment needed for grading would be in operation simultaneously at 50 feet from the

edge of the riparian habitat located south of the platform. At a distance of 50 feet, these pieces of equipment could generate an hourly combined average noise level of 85 dBA L_{EQ}. The use of construction equipment during site preparation, grading, and constructing the proposed retrofits and platform improvements would therefore result in a potentially significant impact at the edge of habitat for sensitive bird species. To avoid significant impacts to biological species, measure BIO-9 from the previous section would be implemented and work will not occur during the breeding season (April 15 – September 15). However, temporary construction noise generation could still result in a potentially significant impact to nearby residences.

A Construction Noise Control Plan was prepared for the Project by Eilar Associates, Inc. (2025) (Appendix H). An on-site inspection and ambient noise measurements were performed on Wednesday, March 5, 2025. The purpose of these measurements was to obtain information regarding existing ambient noise levels on site.

Construction noise levels were calculated at the nearest residential receivers to the north, designated herein as the east building and west building. As the noise-sensitive receptors would be within the building, noise levels have been calculated at the building facades at each story of the four-story buildings. Any other potentially noise-sensitive receivers are located at a greater distance from construction activity, and therefore, would be exposed to lesser noise impacts due to distance attenuation and shielding provided by intervening structures.

Calculations demonstrated that during the Preconstruction Phase, Phase 2, and Phase 5 of the Project, noise impacts at residential receivers are not expected to exceed a 12-hour average noise level of 75 dBA during construction activity. During Phase 1, Phase 3, and Phase 4, temporary sound barriers will be required. During Phase 1, a sound barrier with a minimum height of 12 feet is required when the power-driven saw and/or jackhammer will be used within 50 feet of residential buildings. For Phases 3 and 4, a sound barrier with a minimum height of 8 feet is required when activities will take place within 30 feet of residential buildings.

Further, the Project may require work to be completed at night and/or on Sundays and holidays. Pursuant to the City of San Diego's noise ordinance (Section 59.5.0404) construction activity is prohibited between the hours of 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. and on Sundays or legal holidays, and that during permissible hours of operation, noise levels from construction activity must be limited to a 12-hour average of no greater than 75 dBA at any residential use. Should work need to be completed outside of the allowable hours or on Sundays, a permit will be applied for and granted beforehand by the City of San Diego's Noise Abatement and Control Administrator. With the implementation of NOI-1 and NOI-2, the project is expected to comply with the noise regulations of the City of San Diego and impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

Operational Noise

The proposed retrofit of the existing MTS infrastructure would have no impact on the operational noise of the MTS transit system upon completion of the proposed retrofit. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels and there would be No Impact.

b) Would the project result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less Than Significant Impact. MTS have not adopted thresholds for use in CEQA documents where they are the Lead Agency or Responsible Agency. In the absence of MTS adopted thresholds, this analysis relies on the City of San Diego's (2020) approved guidelines for determining significance, which are based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. As such, the project would have a significant vibration impact if it would:

> Subject vibration-sensitive land uses to construction-related ground-borne vibration from continuous/frequent intermittent construction sources (such as impact pile drivers, vibratory pile drivers, and vibratory compaction equipment) that exceeds the vibration criterion of
> 0.3 inch per second peak particle velocity (PPV), as specified by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for engineered buildings.

Construction of the proposed project would include the use of a vibratory compaction roller and has the potential to result in temporary vibration impacts to structures and humans. Based on the potential site locations, compaction activities would not occur closer than 50 feet to the nearest off-site structures.

Other construction activities would be less intensive than compaction and would produce less vibration. Therefore, vibration levels from compaction are considered conservative for the project construction.

Operation of a vibratory compactor would create approximately 0.21 inch per second PPV at a distance of 25 feet. At 50 feet, the compactor would create 0.098 PPV.[4] This would be lower than what is considered the damage criteria of 0.3 inch per second PPV for engineered concrete and masonry structures by the FTA. Therefore, although a vibratory roller may be perceptible to nearby human receptors, temporary impacts associated with the roller and other potential equipment used during project construction would be less than significant. The proposed project does not include operational components that would generate substantial vibration. Operational vibration impacts 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 Impact. As noted in item IX(e), the project site is outside of the Airport Influence Area (AIA) for San Diego International Airport. Additionally, the proposed project would not result in any change in use that would increase the number of people residing or working in the project area that could be exposed to excessive noise levels. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

BIO-9: To avoid impacts to special status migratory birds, clearing, grubbing, grading, and other Project-related construction activities will occur between September 15 and February 15, outside the southwestern willow flycatcher breeding season (April 15 - August 31), the coastal California gnatcatcher breeding season (February 15 – August 15), and the least Bell's vireo breeding season (March 15 - September 15). No incidental take of the

above species is permitted by this Project.

NOI-1 During Phase 1, Phase 3, and Phase 4 of construction of the Project, temporary sound barriers will be required. During Phase 1, a sound barrier with a minimum height of 12 feet is required when the power-driven saw and/or jackhammer will be used within 50 feet of residential buildings. For Phases 3 and 4, a sound barrier with a minimum height of 8 feet is required when activities will take place within 30 feet of residential buildings.

NOI-2 The Project will comply with the construction noise limits found within Section 59.5.0404 of the San Diego Municipal Code. Construction activity is prohibited between the hours of 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. and on Sundays or legal holidays, and that during permissible hours of operation, noise levels from construction activity must be limited to a 12-hour average of no greater than 75 dBA at any residential use unless a permit has been applied for and granted beforehand by the City of San Diego's Noise Abatement and Control Administrator.

XIV. 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) Would the project 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 proposed project does not include housing or employment opportunities that would induce population growth. Furthermore, the project would not result in the extension of roads or other infrastructure that would indirectly induce substantial population growth. Therefore, the proposed project would not induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly or indirectly. There would be No Impact.

b) Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. The proposed project would not involve the demolition of any existing habitable structures. Thus, the proposed project would not displace existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. There would be No Impact.

XV. 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:				
i.	Fire protection?	☐	☐	■	☐
ii.	Police protection?	☐	☐	■	☐
iii.	Schools?	☐	☐	☐	■
iv.	Parks?	☐	☐	☐	■
v.	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 any of the public services:

i. Fire protection?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is located in a developed area currently served by fire protection services, and project implementation would not require the construction of new or expanded fire facilities. The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) provides fire protection services in the project area. Currently the project site supports industrial land uses that like most land uses, may during the lifespan of the uses require a need for fire protection services. The closest fire stations are located approximately 2.1 miles from the project site and include San Diego Fire Station 45 (9366 Friars Road) to the northeast and San Diego Fire Station 18 (4676 Felton Street) to the southeast. These stations serve the project area, including the current on-site uses. The project, however, would not increase population in the project area or cause increased traffic congestion on streets in the project area, or otherwise interfere with the ability of fire services to maintain acceptable service ratios, meet target response times, or other performance objectives for fire protection. During construction, fire protection may be required, but these would be short-term demands and would not require increases in the level of public service offered or affect response times. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

ii. Police protection?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is located in a developed area currently served by police protection services, and project implementation would not require the construction of new or expanded police facilities. The San Diego Police Department provides law enforcement services in the project area, with the closest police station (North Park Storefront Office) located approximately 2 miles to the south at 2745 Howard Ave. The project would not increase population in the project area or cause increased traffic congestion on streets in the project area, or otherwise interfere with the ability of police services to maintain acceptable service ratios, meet target response times, or other performance objectives for police protection. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

iii. Schools?

No Impact. The project does not propose new housing or other uses that would directly or indirectly induce population growth such that there would be an increase in demand for school services.
Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the need for construction of additional school facilities. No Impact would occur.

iv. Parks?

No Impact. The project would not induce growth that would require alteration to existing parks or the construction of a new park. No Impact would occur.

v. Other public facilities?

No Impact. The project site is located in a developed area where public services are already provided. The project would improve the safety of the existing MTS Rio Vista Station and facilities. No Impacts to other public facilities would occur.

XVI. 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) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	■

a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project consists of retrofitting existing infrastructure and would not induce growth that would substantially increase the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities. Although access through the portion of the San Diego River Trail within the project area may be temporarily impacted during construction, the trail will be restored to pre-project conditions. The project is therefore not anticipated to result in the use of available parks or facilities such that substantial deterioration occurs, or that would require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities to satisfy demand. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

No Impact. The proposed project consists of retrofitting existing infrastructure that would not require or result in the need to construct or expand recreational facilities. No Impact would occur.

XVII. 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) Would the project 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) Would the project conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?

No Impact. The proposed project would retrofit existing MTS infrastructure. Thus, the proposed project would be consistent with the goals of the 2021 Regional Plan (SANDAG 2021) of improving and enhancing the region's transit network as it would maintain and improve existing infrastructure that would support the goal of an improved regional transit system and bolstering additional transportation mode choices to reduce reliance on the automobile and reducing regional emissions of criteria pollutants and GHGs.

Similarly, the project would be consistent with the goals of the City of San Diego General Plan Mobility Element to improve mobility through development of a balanced multi-modal transportation network, and to increase transit ridership and mode share through increased transit service accessibility, frequency, connectivity, and availability.

The project would improve the existing MTS Rio Vista transit station but otherwise have no impact to any existing transit (e.g., bus stops), bike lanes, and pedestrian (e.g., sidewalks) facilities in the project area. The proposed project would include a temporary construction access road off of Qualcomm way. However, this temporary access road would be removed upon construction completion and would not adversely affect operations of the roadways or intersections in the project area, including Qualcomm Way. Based on the above analysis, the proposed project would not conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system. No Impact would occur.

b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

Less Than Significant Impact. As of the implementation of Senate Bill (SB) 743 on July 1, 2020, VMT is the new performance measure used in CEQA transportation studies. According to the City of San Diego Transportation Study Manual, as a transit facility, this project is considered to be a Locally Serving Public Facility that does not require transportation VMT CEQA analysis. The proposed project would retrofit existing MTS infrastructure and would no have impact related to VMT. Therefore, the project would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b). There would be No Impact.

c) Would the project 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 Impact. The project site does not include any design features that would increase traffic hazards. The project is consistent with the on-site and surrounding land use and zoning designations, and implementation of the project would not introduce incompatible uses to the project site. Additionally, during construction, the proposed project would comply with local regulations regarding temporary road closures and/or one-way traffic controls. Therefore, the project would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

d) Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?

Less Than Significant Impact. Operation of the proposed project would not result in any new increase in project- related traffic that would cause a significant increase in congestion on local roadways such that it would interfere with emergency response access.

Access to surrounding roadways would be maintained throughout the construction period. Identified emergency access routes in the vicinity, including I-8, I-805, and SR 163 would not be affected during construction or operation. Site access would be provided by a temporary access road that would be constructed off of southbound Qualcomm Way and connect to the existing San Diego River Trail. Impacts related to emergency access would be Less than Significant.

XVIII. Tribal 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 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 Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or	☐	■	☐	☐
ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency will consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☐	■	☐	☐

The discussion below is summarized and based on the analysis and conclusions contained within the Cultural Resources Inventory Report (Dokken 2024) prepared for the proposed project. The report is included as Appendix D to this IS/MND.

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 Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k)?

Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. A Tribal Cultural Resource (TCR) may be considered significant if included in a local or state register of historical resources; determined by the lead agency to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in PRC §5024.1; is a geographically defined cultural landscape that meets one or more of these criteria; is a historical resource described in PRC §21084.1, a unique archaeological resources described in PRC §21083.2; or is a non-unique archaeological resource if it conforms with the above criteria.

On November 7, 2023, a letter and a map depicting the Project vicinity was sent to the NAHC, asking the NAHC commission to review the Sacred Lands File (SLF) for any Native American cultural resources that might be affected by the Project (Appendix D). The request to the NAHC seeks to identify any Native

American cultural resources within the Project vicinity. A list of Native American individuals who might have information or concerns about the Project was also requested. On November 30, 2023, Pracilla Torres-Fuentes, Cultural Resources Analyst, informed via email that a review of the sacred lands file returned positive results.

Consultation under Assembly Bill 52 (AB52) was initiated on March 1, 2024 by MTS. A response was received from the Campo Band of Mission Indians on April 15, 2024 requesting consultation under AB52. The Tribe requested to be included in surveys, mitigation planning, and monitoring. Although the pedestrian survey had been completed at that time, a copy of the Cultural Resources Inventory Memorandum was provided to the Tribe on May 24, 2024. The response also stated that outreach would be made to the Tribe when biological revegetation plans were being developed and that the environmental document would be provided when available.

No Indigenous-era or historic-era cultural resources were identified during the January 11, 2024, pedestrian inspection. Due to the construction of the Station, the active recreational trail to the south of the Station, and the surrounding apartment complexes, the project area limit (PAL) and surrounding area has been heavily disturbed. In consideration of these factors, the overall potential for encountering intact archaeological resources within the PAL is considered low. Consultation under AB 52 is currently on-going.

Although there is potential to discover previously unknown TCRs at the project site, implementation of mitigation measures CR-1 and CR-2 identified in item V(b) of this IS/MND would reduce potential impacts to TCRs to less than significant levels. Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency will consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?

Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. Refer to item XVIII(a) above. Impacts would be Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated with implementation of mitigation measures CR-1 and CR-2.

XIX. 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, electric 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) Would the project require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project is located in a developed area with existing infrastructure and utilities. The proposed project would not result in increased demand for water, wastewater, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications services. While the proposed project would involve some surface drainage improvements, the project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

b) Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years?

No Impact. The project is located in a developed area with existing water infrastructure. However, the proposed project would not result in any new connections to local water mains or any increased demand of water supply. Water use during construction would be minimal and used for dust control. There would be No Impact.

c) Would the project 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 proposed project is located in a developed area with existing wastewater infrastructure. However, the proposed project would not result in any new connections to local sewer mains or any increased demand for sewer capacity. Therefore, the project would not 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. There would be No Impact.

d) Would the project 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 Impact. The proposed project is located in a developed area with solid waste collection services provided by the City of San Diego. Construction activities may generate solid waste that would be disposed of in a local landfill. The construction contractor would be required to dispose of construction waste through appropriate coordination with landfills in accordance with existing laws and regulations governing the types of waste that are allowed to be disposed of in landfills. The proposed project would be required to comply with the City of San Diego's Construction Demolition and Debris Deposit Ordinance (San Diego Municipal Code §66.0601), which requires that at least 65 percent of construction waste be diverted from landfills via reuse and recycling.

Operation of the proposed project would not result in any new generation of solid waste. Therefore, the project would not 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. Impacts would be Less than Signfiicant.

e) Would the project comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Less Than Significant Impact. Refer to item XIX(d) above. By incorporating waste reduction, recycling, and diversion measures, the project would comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Impacts would be Less than Signfiicant.

XX. 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 slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	■	☐

According to the Safety Element of the City's General Plan, wildfires typically pose minimal threat to people and buildings in urban areas but increasing human encroachment into natural areas increases the likelihood of bodily harm or structural damage. This encroachment occurs in areas called the wildland-urban interface, which is considered an area within the high and very high fire hazard severity zone, as defined by Cal FIRE. The City of San Diego's Wildfire Hazards map shows that the project site is partially located within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (City of San Diego 2022). Therefore, the proposed project could potentially expose people or structures to wildland fires and the following wildfire issues apply to the project.

a) Would the project substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Less Than Significant Impact. Access to surrounding roadways would be maintained throughout the construction period. Identified emergency evacuation routes in the vicinity, including Rio San Diego Drive, Camino Del Este, Qualcomm Way, and Interstate 8 would not be affected during construction or operation. The additional trucks used for construction would not cause severe congestion that would impede emergency response. Therefore, the project would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

b) Would the project, 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed in item IX(g), the project site is located in a developed area

but is adjacent to open space along the San Diego River. Given the proximity to this open space canyon, portions of the site are located within an area designated as a VHFHSZ by the City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (City of San Diego 2022). The project however would not increase the potential for wildfires in the project area, as the site is already entirely developed, and the project would replace existing structures with new ones. The new buildings and other proposed site improvements would be required to comply with applicable wildland fire risk reduction and prevention requirements of the CBC and the California Fire Code. The project therefore would not exacerbate wildfire risks or expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

c) Would the project 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is located in a developed area that is served by existing utilities and roadways. Although the project would require construction of a temporary access road, the removal of riparian vegetation would not exacerbate fire risk. Following construction of the Project, the site of the temporary access road will be restored to pre-construction conditions. The project would not require the installation or maintenance of fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines, or other utilities. Therefore, the project would not exacerbate fire risk associated with these types of improvements. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

d) Would the project expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

Less Than Significant Impact. The site is located adjacent to an open space area characterized by the San Diego River, However, the project site is developed and entirely paved and this condition would remain upon project implementation. As discussed in items VII(a)(iv) and X(a)(ii), the project is not subject to landslides or flooding and thus, the risk of people and structures experiencing significant risks such as downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes is negligible. Impacts would be Less than Significant.

XXI. Mandatory Findings of Significance

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to 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) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of past, present, and probable future projects)?	☐	☐	■	☐
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will 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 Incorporated. With the incorporation of mitigation measures identified in this IS/MND, the proposed project would not have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, reduce the habitat of a sensitive plant or animal species, or eliminate important examples of California history or prehistory.

As discussed in Section IV, *Biological Resources*, the proposed project could result in potentially significant indirect impacts to sensitive wildlife. Implementation of mitigation measures BIO-1 through BIO-18 would reduce potentially significant impacts to biological resources to less than significant levels.

As described in Section V, *Cultural Resources*, and Section XVIII, *Tribal Cultural Resources*, there is a potential for unknown subsurface archaeological resources/Tribal Cultural Resources given the presence of known Native American habitation sites along the Chollas Creek corridor. Such resources, if present, could provide material to address important research questions and may contain culturally sensitive material. Therefore, encountering unforeseen archaeological resources and/or Tribal Cultural Resources during ground-disturbing activities may result in potentially significant impacts. With implementation of mitigation measures CR-1 and CR-2, impacts would be Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

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

Less Than Significant. Cumulative environmental impacts are those impacts that by themselves are not significant, but when considered with impacts occurring from other projects in the vicinity would result in a cumulative impact. Related projects considered to have the potential of creating cumulative impacts in association with the project consist of projects that are reasonably foreseeable and that would be constructed or operated during the life of the project. The project is located in a developed area that is largely built out. No other construction projects are anticipated in the immediate area of the project site.

Implementation of the proposed project would not result in individually limited, but cumulatively considerable significant impacts. As discussed under item III(b), the project's operational activities would not result in long-term emissions of criteria pollutants and precursors that would exceed the SDAPCD daily or annual screening thresholds. Therefore, the project's operational activities would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants that would violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. Similarly, the project would have a less than significant impact in relation to GHG (refer to Section VIII, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*), and VMT (refer to Section XVII, *Transportation*) which is inherently discussed in terms of cumulative impacts.

Other future projects within the surrounding area would be required to comply with applicable local, state, and federal regulations to reduce potential impacts to less than significant, or to the extent possible. As such, the project is not anticipated to contribute to potentially significant cumulative environmental impacts. Project cumulative impacts would be Less than Significant.

c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated. The project would not consist of any uses or activities that would negatively affect any persons in the vicinity. The air quality analysis summarized in III, Air Quality, concluded that with incorporation of mitigation measures AQ-1 and AQ-2, the project would have less than significant impacts in relation to toxic air contaminants and other air quality health concerns. The proposed project would cause an increase in ambient noise levels during construction, which would be addressed with mitigation measures NOI-1 and NOI-2. However, impacts would be temporary and in compliance with local ordinances. The increased noise levels would not cause substantial adverse impacts on human beings. No documented unauthorized releases of hazardous materials are known to have occurred at the project site. Therefore, there would not be any substantial adverse risks to humans from encountering hazardous materials, as identified in Section IX, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*. Risks to humans associated with wildfires would be less than significant as proposed buildings and other proposed site improvements would be required to comply with applicable wildland fire risk reduction and prevention requirements of the CBC and the California Fire Code. Additionally, no substantial adverse effects to humans would occur with respect to geological (refer to Section VII, *Geology and Soils*) or hydrologic (refer to Section X, *Hydrology and Water Quality*) hazards. With implementation of identified mitigation measures, impacts resulting in substantial adverse effects on human beings would be reduced to Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

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