

4.0 Conclusion

Based on the results of the Project criteria and alternatives selection process detailed in this document, the set of segments presented in Appendix L, Figure L1 will be carried forward for further evaluation in the technical studies for the Project. The individual segments identified in Figure L1 can be interchanged to create a number of realignment alternatives for SR 79. Three general corridors are established consisting of western, central, and eastern alignment alternatives (Appendix L, Figures L2 through L4).

All Project segments were reviewed to maximize avoidance of environmental impacts where feasible, including aquatic resources, MSHCP conservation areas, hazard sites that required substantial site modification, Section 4(f) resources, and community impacts. The eastern and western alignment alternatives represent avoidance alternatives to aquatic resources as required by the CWA Section 404 (b)(1) Guidelines. However, the eastern alternative does not avoid community impacts, and the central alignment has impacts to aquatic resources.

Alignment Review Areas were adopted for the Project to identify locations where multiple segments could be constructed, but environmental impacts to aquatic resources or the community may occur depending on the final alignment selected. To determine the least environmentally damaging alternative through the Alignment Review Areas, it is necessary to obtain additional information. As information becomes available, the Alignment Review Areas will be reduced to the greatest extent possible with the intent to have a definitive alignment through these areas prior to entering the final evaluations to be performed in the environmental document. It is the conclusion of this report that the alignments presented in Appendix L, Figure L1, will be carried forward to review the opportunities within these Alignment Review Areas. For the evaluation to continue in the technical studies, the Project study area will be revised to include all segments presented in Appendix L, Figure L1, as well as a buffered area to include any design iterations for the alternatives and required revisions to local roadway access. Refinements to the proposed alignment alternatives may occur as new information becomes available. These refinements will identify more specific alignments through the Alignment Review Areas and potential shifts in the other segments outside of the Alignment Review Areas to further avoid or minimize environmental impacts without eliminating the three general alternatives (Eastern, Central and Western). In order to preserve a less environmentally damaging alternative that may be practicable, the shift in the alignment may involve the reconsideration of certain areas previously eliminated under the screening process. The final alignment alternatives, based on this refinement, will be presented for Final Agreement to the Project Criteria and Alternatives Selection prior to the completion of the Project environmental document (EIS/EIR).