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County of Monterey
State of California

MITIGATED
NEGATIVE DECLARATION

FILED

SEP 16 2019

STEPHEN L. VAGNINI
MONTEREY COUNTY CLERK
DEPUTY

Project Title:	Charter Spectrum Fiber Optic Cable Installation
File Number:	PLN190010
Owners:	State of California Department of Transportation & the County of Monterey
Project Location:	Approximately 5.25 miles of SR1 between milepost (M.P.) 69.666 and M.P. 74.638, south of the City of Monterey and north of Garrapata State Park.
Primary APNs:	NA (road right-of-way)
Project Planner:	Joseph Sidor, Associate Planner
Permit Type:	Coastal Development Permit
Project Description:	Proposed aerial and underground installation of fiber optic cable lines along SR1 within the existing right-of-way.

THIS PROPOSED PROJECT WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT AS IT HAS BEEN FOUND:

- a) That said project will not have the potential to significantly degrade the quality of the environment.
- b) That said project will have no significant impact on long-term environmental goals.
- c) That said project will have no significant cumulative effect upon the environment.
- d) That said project will not cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.

Decision Making Body:	County of Monterey Zoning Administrator
Responsible Agency:	County of Monterey Resource Management Agency (RMA)
Review Period Begins:	September 17, 2019
Review Period Ends:	October 18, 2019

Further information, including a copy of the Initial Study, is available at Monterey County RMA-Planning, 1441 Schilling Place South, 2nd Floor, Salinas, CA 93901, (831) 755-5025.

MONTEREY COUNTY

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY

RMA-PLANNING

1441 SCHILLING PLACE, 2nd FLOOR, SALINAS, CA 93901

PHONE: (831) 755-5025/FAX: (831) 757-9516



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Project Title: Charter Spectrum Fiber Optic Cable Installation

File No.: PLN190010

Project Location: SR1 Corridor in the Carmel area

Name of Property Owner: Caltrans (roadway right-of-way)

Name of Applicant: Charter Communications, Inc.

Assessor's Parcel Number(s): Not Applicable (roadway right-of-way)

Acreage of Property: Approximately 63 acres of project area

General Plan Designation: N/A (roadway right-of-way not designated)

Zoning District: N/A (roadway right-of-way unclassified)

Lead Agency: County of Monterey

Prepared By: Joseph Sidor, RMA-Planning; and Rincon Consultants, Inc.

Date Prepared: September 16, 2019

Contact Person: Joseph Sidor, Associate Planner

Phone Number: 831-755-5262

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

A. Description of Project: The Charter Spectrum Fiber Optic Cable Installation project includes the proposed installation of fiber optic cable lines along State Route 1 (SR 1) within the existing right-of-way. This project includes the following components (Source: IX.1):

- Aerial and underground installation of fiber optic cables along/under SR 1 within the existing Caltrans right-of-way.
- Both aerial lines and underground lines would be installed immediately adjacent to or slightly offset from SR 1.
- Installation of aerial segments would include the placement of fiber optic cables on existing utility poles from a height of 22 to 31 feet above ground level.
- Underground installation would utilize an approximate bore size of four inches in diameter.
- Underground lines would be installed by direct boring to a maximum depth of four feet in areas where no previously identified cultural resources are present.
- In areas planned for underground lines falling within 100 feet of known archeological resources, directional boring would occur at depths between 10-20 feet below the surface with the intent of avoiding any cultural resources constituents or subsurface deposits.

The project area includes approximately 5.25 miles of SR1 between milepost (M.P.) 69.666 and M.P 74.638 south of the City of Monterey and north of Garrapata State Park (see Figure 1). The northern boundary of the project area is located at the intersection of SR 1 and Carpenter Street and the southern boundary of the project area is located at the intersection of Corona Rd and SR 1. The project area passes through Carmel-By-The-Sea and Carmel Valley, skirting the eastern edge of Point Lobos State Natural Reserve and finally passing through Carmel Highlands. The Project Area Limits (PAL), represented by the area potentially subject to direct impact through project installation activities (i.e., ground-disturbing activities and staging), includes all portions of the proposed alignment and a 50-foot buffer on either side. SR 1 is designated as a State Scenic Highway throughout the project area (Source: IX.2).

With the exception of three short segments of the proposed alignment for the fiber optic cable lines, cable installation would take place along the highway shoulder or existing utility lines immediately adjacent to SR 1 (see Figure 2). The proposed cable alignment deviates slightly from SR 1 at the following locations (Source IX.1):

- At the northern end of Carmel Hills Drive, the cable would cross a small strip of land separating SR 1 from Carmel Hills Drive where it would be attached to existing utility lines for approximately 0.13 mile before crossing SR 1 at 3rd Avenue and again be attached to existing utility lines along the highway shoulder.
- Just before the intersection of SR 1 and Morse Drive, the above-ground cable would cross SR 1 to an existing utility pole at the corner of SR 1 and Morse Drive. From there,

the cable would be installed underground and follow Morse Drive for approximately 0.3 mile until its intersection with South Carmel Hills Drive where it would continue underground until the intersection of SR 1 and South Carmel Hills Drive. At that point, the cable would remain underground, following SR 1.

- At the intersection of SR 1 and Carmel Valley Road, the cable (already underground) would cross under the highway just above an existing pedestrian/bike tunnel and follow Carmel Valley Road for approximately 0.07 mile before being brought above-ground to join existing utility poles that follow a pedestrian/bike path. The aerial cable would be attached to existing utility poles along the pedestrian/bike path for approximately 0.15 mile until crossing the bike path and reentering the Caltrans right-of-way along SR 1 just north of Rio Road.

The project involves the aerial and underground installation of fiber optic cable. All installation activities would take place in developed areas within the existing right-of-way. The proposed method of aerial installation would involve the attachment of a single overhead fiber optic cable on existing utility poles that already have electrical and telecommunications attachments. This method of aerial installation does not require the construction of new utility poles or modification of existing structures. The proposed underground method of line installation involves directional underground boring with a bore size of approximately four inches in diameter. This method is estimated to displace approximately 3,750 cubic feet of earth. There would be approximately 26 three foot by five foot bore pits and seven two foot by three foot hand holes created, for a total of 33 excavation sites within the project area. Digging at each excavation site would take approximately two to three hours per site location, for a maximum estimated excavation time of 99 hours (Source: IX.1).

In total, approximately 4.59 miles or 87.5 percent of the fiber optic cable would be installed using the aerial method and approximately 0.66 miles or 12.5 percent would be installed using the underground method.

Figure 1: Project Area and Vicinity

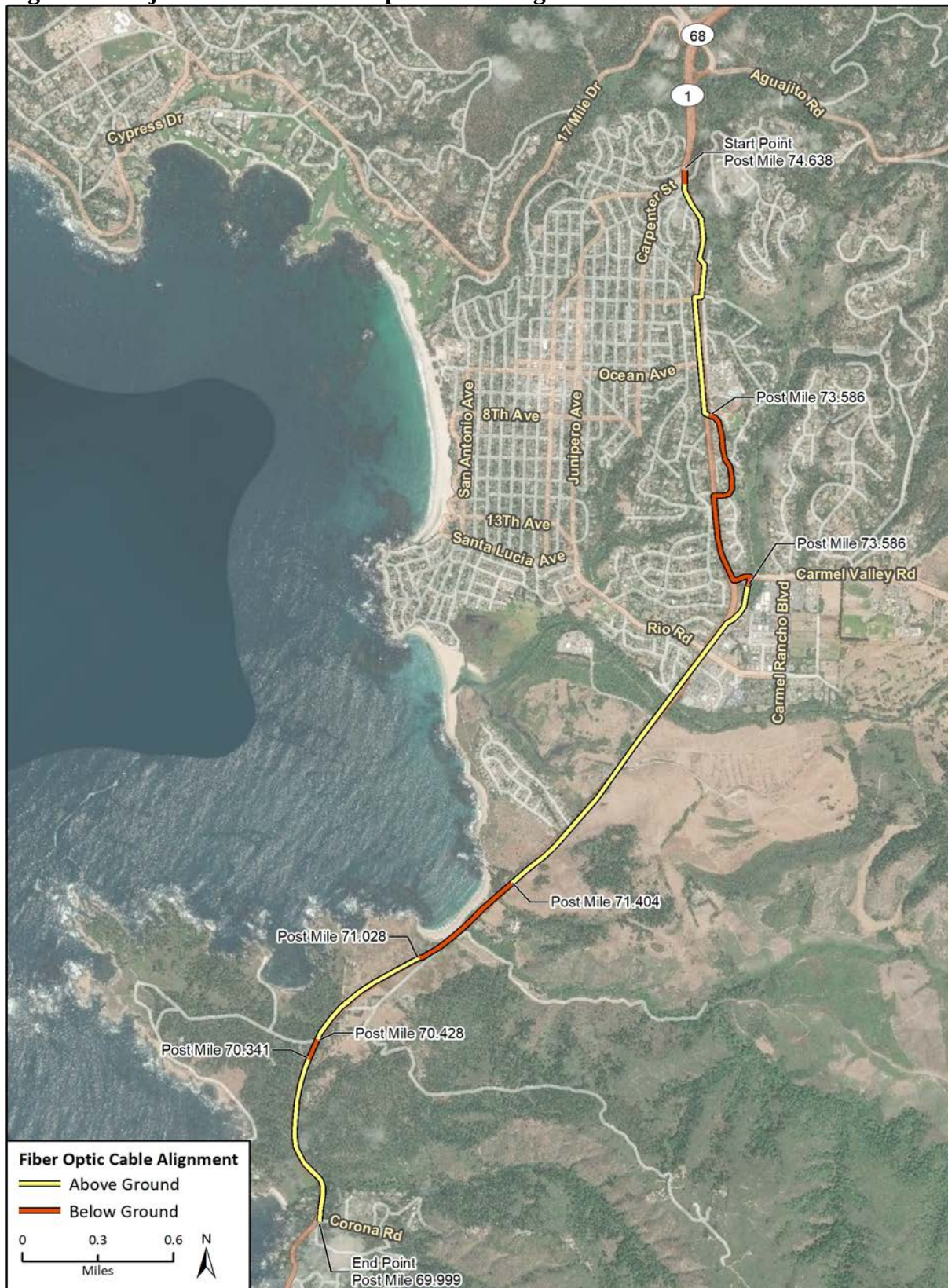


Project Location



Fig 3 Regional location

Figure 2: Project Area and Fiber Optic Cable Alignment



Imagery provided by Microsoft Bing and its licensors © 2019.
Alignment from SLEG Inc and Monterey County, 2019.

Fig 2 Project Area and Alignment

B. Surrounding Land Uses and Environmental Setting:

The project would take place along the SR 1 corridor between Carpenter Street on the north and Corona Road on the south. The entire project area is located in unincorporated Monterey County (Source: IX.4). SR 1 is officially designated as a State Scenic Highway throughout the project area (Source: IX.2). At the northern end of the project area, the SR 1 corridor is adjacent to unincorporated County neighborhoods and the city of Carmel-by-the-Sea. Single family residential development borders SR 1 between Carpenter Street and Oliver Road. SR 1 passes by Carmel High School at its intersection with Ocean Avenue. An area of commercial development and a bike/pedestrian path are present between Carmel Valley Road and Rio Road. Land that is mostly undeveloped borders SR 1 between Rio Road and Carmel Highlands, except for Carmel Meadows, a small area of low-density residential development at Ribera Road. SR 1 passes Monastery Beach and skirts the edge of Point Lobos State Natural Reserve. South of Point Lobos, SR 1 enters Carmel Highlands and is sparsely bordered by single family homes until it reaches the southern boundary of the project area at Corona Road.

The stretch of SR 1 within the project area runs parallel to the Pacific Coast, just south of Monterey Bay. Topography is variable and includes areas of substantial grade. The native vegetation communities immediately surrounding the highway are categorized as Coastal cypress and pine forests (Source IX.5). Coast live oaks and seasonal forbs and grasses are also present. Many developed properties adjacent to the project area have been landscaped (Source IX.6). The climate is characterized as Mediterranean with mild summers and cooler wet winters.

C. Other public agencies whose approval is required:

The proposed project would require the following permits from public agencies (Source IX.7):

- A Coastal Development Permit from Monterey County is required because it involves work within the Coastal Zone at sites that lie within 750 feet of known archaeological resources. The County of Monterey's Coastal Plan has been certified by the State of California Coastal Commission; therefore, the County is authorized to issue Coastal Development Permits.
- An encroachment permit from Monterey County is required to authorize segments of the proposed cable alignment that are on County roads or streets.
- An encroachment permit from Caltrans is required to authorize segments of the proposed cable alignment that are within the SR 1 right-of-way.

In addition, the California Public Utilities Commission has already approved Charter Fiberlink CA-CCO, LLC's (U-6878-C) request for a deviation from Public Utilities Code Section 320 to construct new overhead (aerial) fiber facilities along SR 1 in Monterey County (Source: IX.3). Public Utilities Code Section 320 encourages underground installation of new utility and telecommunications cables in the proximity of State Scenic Highways (Source: IX.8). However, a Section 320 deviation was approved in this case because there are pre-existing utility lines along SR 1 within the project area.

The proposed project was also reviewed by the Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District (CHFPD), Monterey County Resource Management Agency (MCRMA) Public Works and Environmental Services Departments, and the Carmel Highlands Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC). Informational IDR packages were forwarded to the California Coastal Commission and the Monterey Division of the Monterey County Sheriff's Office. The MCRMA Planning Unit received no comments from any of the above agencies and departments (Source: IX.7).

III. PROJECT CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER APPLICABLE LOCAL AND STATE PLANS AND MANDATED LAWS

Use the list below to indicate plans applicable to the project and verify their consistency or non-consistency with project implementation.

General Plan/Area Plan	☒	Air Quality Mgmt. Plan	☐
Specific Plan	☐	Airport Land Use Plans	☐
Water Quality Control Plan	☐	Local Coastal Program-LUP	☒

General Plan/Area Plan: Within the coastal areas of unincorporated Monterey County, the 1982 General Plan policies apply where the Local Coastal Program (LCP) is silent. This typically is limited to noise policies as the LCP policies contain the majority of development standards applicable to development in the coastal areas. The project includes the installation of a fiber optic cable line within the existing right-of-way adjacent to SR 1 and is consistent with the policies of the 1982 General Plan, and would not create any noise other than minor and temporary construction noise (Source IX.9).

Local Coastal Program-LUP: The project is subject to the Carmel Area Land Use Plan (LUP), which is part of the Certified Local Coastal Program in Monterey County. This Initial Study discusses consistency with relevant LUP policies in Section IV.9.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED AND DETERMINATION

A. FACTORS

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, as discussed within the checklist on the following pages.

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

Some proposed applications that are not exempt from CEQA review may have little or no potential for adverse environmental impact related to most of the topics in the Environmental Checklist; and/or potential impacts may involve only a few limited subject areas. These types of projects are generally minor in scope, located in a non-sensitive environment, and are easily identifiable and without public controversy. For the environmental issue areas where there is no potential for significant environmental impact (and not checked above), the following finding can be made using the project description, environmental setting, or other information as supporting evidence.

☐ Check here if this finding is not applicable

FINDING: For the above referenced topics that are not checked off, there is no potential for significant environmental impact to occur from either construction, operation or maintenance of the proposed project and no further discussion in the Environmental Checklist is necessary.

EVIDENCE:

1. Agriculture and Forest Resources. The project area is not designated as Prime, Unique or Farmland of Statewide or Local Importance and project construction would not result in conversion of prime agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses. The project area is not under a Williamson Act Contract and is not located in or adjacent to agriculturally designated lands. The project area is located within the SR 1 corridor and all elements of the project would take place adjacent to SR 1 within the existing right-of-way. Land bordering the project area is already disturbed, with residential and commercial development present on much of the adjacent land. No trees are proposed for removal and no significant forest resources are present in the project area. *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts to agriculture or forest resources.* (Source: IX.1, 10 & 11)
2. Air Quality. The project area is located within the North Central Coast Air Basin, which is under the jurisdiction of the Monterey Bay Air Resources District. Only minor and temporary impacts on air quality from construction-related activities are anticipated for this project. There would be no long-term emissions and no new uses or increase in the intensity of use of the property either directly or indirectly. The minor construction-related impacts would not violate any air quality standards or obstruct implementation of the Monterey Bay Air Resources District air quality management plans. *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts to air quality.* (Source: IX.12)
3. Biological Resources. Portions of the project area fall within terrestrial areas designated as Critical Habitat For Threatened And Endangered Species (critical habitat) by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Portions of the project area also contain riparian habitat area designated as critical habitat by the USFWS. However, all elements of the proposed project, including project staging, aerial installation of cables and underground installation of cables would take place within the existing developed right-of-way and would not alter any habitat area. No work would occur within areas of critical habitat designated by the USFWS. In addition, no work would occur in existing riparian habitat areas or other sensitive natural communities identified in the Carmel Area LUP. There are no trees or vegetation proposed for removal. Therefore, the project would not have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a sensitive or special status species and would not have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community. The proposed project is consistent with all policies and goals related to biological resources and conservation outlined in the Carmel Area LUP and 1982 Monterey County General Plan. *Therefore, no impact on biological resources is anticipated as a result of the project.* (Source: IX.1, 9 13, 14)
4. Energy. The proposed project would not require substantial energy usage during construction or change the energy usage of surrounding properties. Overall, boring and cable installation activities would not be expected to have any adverse impact on available electricity supplies or infrastructure. Installation and boring activities would utilize fuel-efficient equipment consistent with state and federal regulations and would comply with state measures to reduce the inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary

consumption of energy. *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in potentially significant environmental effects due to the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy.* (Source: IX.1)

5. Geology/Soils. The proposed method of underground cable installation would involve displacement of approximately 3,750 cubic feet of earth. Excavated earth would be refilled and recompact after installation. Geologic and soil related conditions would not be impacted by this project. The existing drainage pattern in the project area would not be altered or result in substantial erosion or siltation within or near the project area. *Therefore, the proposed project would not change hazards resulting from geologic or soils conditions resources.* (Source: IX.1 & 7)
6. Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The project involves the installation of fiber optic cables along a section of SR 1 and would not change the existing energy needs of nearby development or impact local traffic beyond the minor roadway disruptions expected during construction. Temporary construction-related emissions are anticipated. No new long-term sources of greenhouse gas emissions are anticipated as a result of the fiber optic cable installation. Monterey County does not have a greenhouse gas reduction plan by which consistency or conflicts can be measured; however, the proposed project would not conflict with the Monterey County Municipal Climate Action Plan or the Association of Monterey Bay Area Government's 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy as it only involves the installation of fiber optic cables. *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in significant increases in greenhouse gas emissions.* (Source: IX.1, 9, 15 & 16)
7. Hazards/Hazardous Materials. The project involves installation of fiber optic cable installation where there would be no use of hazardous materials that would constitute a threat of explosion or other significant release that would pose a threat to neighboring properties or schools. The project would not involve the transport, use, or disposal of any hazardous materials. There are no known hazards or hazardous materials associated with this project. The proposed fiber optic cables would not create stationary operations, hazardous emissions or involve handling hazardous materials. The site location and scale have less than significant impact on emergency response or emergency evacuation, aside from temporary disruptions to traffic flow expected during construction. There are no active hazardous material sites located within the project area or surrounding areas. The site is not located near an airport or airstrip. The project area is located in a Cal Fire State Responsibility Area with a very high fire hazard severity zone. However, the proposed project would not expose people or structures to significant risk of loss, injury or death involving a wildland fire. *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts related to hazards/hazardous materials.* (Source: IX.1, 17, 18, 19 & 20).
8. Hydrology/Water Quality. The proposed project would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. It would also not have any impact on groundwater basins or groundwater recharge and would not conflict with the Monterey County Groundwater Management Plan given the nature of the project. Although the Carmel River, San Jose Creek, and Gibson Creek do pass through the project area, these waterways would not be impacted as construction-related activities would be confined to

within the developed right-of-way. The underground method of cable installation would involve the excavation of approximately 3,750 cubic feet of earth. However, excavated earth would be refilled and recompact after installation and would not alter the existing drainage pattern or floodwater flows within the project area or result in substantial erosion or siltation within or near the project area. This project would not result in an increase of impervious surface cover within the project area. *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in any negative impacts related to hydrology/water quality.* (Source: IX.1, 7, 21)

9. Land Use/Planning. The proposed project would not include the construction of any new, permanent barriers or walls and would not physically divide an established community. The proposed project is subject to the Carmel Area LUP. Components of the LUP relevant to the project include Sections 2.2.2-2.2.3 (Visual Resources Key Policy and Visual Resources General Policies), Sections 2.3.2-2.3.3 (Biological Resources Key Policy and Biological Resources General Policies), Sections 2.8.2-2.8.3 (Archeological Resources Key Policy and Archeological Resources General Policy) and Sections 3.1.2-3.1.3 (Transportation Key Policy and Highway 1 and Transportation Policies). The proposed project complies with all relevant policies in the Carmel Area LUP. In addition, the project would not result in the alteration of existing zoning policy within the project area. As discussed above in Section II, the proposed project would require a Coastal Development Permit and an encroachment permit from Monterey County and an encroachment permit from Caltrans prior to final approval. The project has already received approval for a requested deviation from Public Utilities Code § 320. The proposed project was also reviewed by CHFPD, MCRMA Public Works and Environmental Services Departments, and the Carmel Highlands LUAC. No comments were received from any of these agencies. *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in any negative impacts related to Land Use/Planning.* (Source: IX.1, 7, 8, & 14)
10. Mineral Resources. No mineral resources have been identified within the proposed project area or would be affected by this project. *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts to mineral resources.* (Source: IX.1 & 22)
11. Population/Housing. The proposed project would not induce substantial population in the area, either directly or indirectly as no new housing infrastructure would be constructed. The project would not alter the location, distribution, or density of human population in the area in any significant way or create a demand for additional housing. *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts related to population and housing.* (Source: IX.1)
12. Public Services. The proposed project consists only of the installation of fiber optic cables along the SR 1 corridor. The project would have no measurable effect on existing public services or create new demand for them, including fire and police protection, schools and parks. The proposed project was also reviewed by CHFPD, MCRMA Public Works and Environmental Services Departments, and the Carmel Highlands LUAC. An informational inter-departmental review (IDR) package was sent to the Monterey Division of the Monterey County Sheriff's Office. The Monterey County RMA received

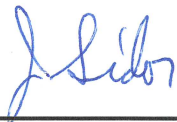
no comments from any of these agencies. *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts related to public services.* (Source: IX.1 & 7)

13. Recreation. The project would not result in an increase in use of existing recreational facilities that would cause substantial physical deterioration or require the construction or expansion of recreation facilities in the surrounding area. No parks, trail easements, or other recreational opportunities would be permanently impacted by the proposed project. *Therefore, the proposed project would not result in impacts related to recreation.* (Source: IX.1)

B. DETERMINATION

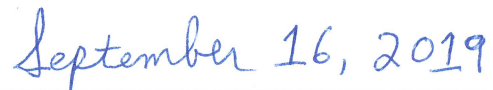
On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☐ 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

Joe Sidor



Date

Associate Planner

V. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

This Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared pursuant to Public Resources Code, Division 13, Section 21000 et. seq. (“The California Environmental Quality Act” or “CEQA”) and the California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3 (“Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA”).

This document is intended to inform the Zoning Administrator and the public of the potential environmental impacts that may result from the project. In general, the document attempts to identify foreseeable environmental effects, identify ways the potential impacts can be avoided or reduced, establish a threshold used to evaluate the severity of impacts, and identify measures that can be applied to reduce potential impacts (mitigation measures).

This document is focused only on those items where a potential impact to “resources” exist. A brief explanation for a “no impact” determination is provided above. More detailed discussion on potential impacts to aesthetics, cultural resources, noise, tribal cultural resources, utilities and service systems, transportation, and wildfire are described below.

This document represents the independent judgement of the County of Monterey.

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

1. AESTHETICS		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 nonurbanized 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

The proposed project would involve the aerial and underground installation of fiber optic cables along a section of SR 1. Figure 3, below, contains photographs from selected points in the project area showing where the cable would be installed. The stretch of SR 1 that falls within the project area is of high aesthetic quality due to its proximity to the Pacific Coast, Santa Lucia Range and coastal forests. SR 1 is officially designated as a State Scenic Highway throughout the project area (Source: IX.2). In addition, most of the project area falls within the general viewshed defined by the Carmel Area Local Coastal Program (Source: IX.23).

Aesthetics 1(a) – Less than Significant Impact

Underground cable segments (see Figure 2) would have no permanent impact on any scenic vistas or other scenic resources. The proposed method of aerial installation would involve the attachment of approximately 4.59 miles of overhead fiber optic cable at a height between 22-31 feet above ground level on existing utility poles that already have electrical and telecommunications attachments. This method of aerial installation does not require the construction of new utility poles or modification of existing structures. While installation would occur in areas of high aesthetic quality, this project would not adversely affect existing scenic vistas within the project area. Long stretches of SR 1 are bordered by existing utility lines, often on both sides, which would be used for aerial cable attachment (Figure 3). Adding a single cable in areas that already have poles and aerial facilities would not damage scenic resources as compared to existing pre-project conditions. Additionally, the minimal effects of the project have been reduced compared to the original proposal, as the cumulative length of the aerial portion of the project has been reduced in favor of underground installation. Moreover, temporary installation activities related to the aerial segments also would not damage scenic resources. The cable would be installed over existing rights-of-way with conventional equipment, and no

existing structures would be modified. Therefore, the project would have less than significant impact. (Source: IX.1 & 3)

Figure 3 Photographs of Project Area



Photograph 1. Aerial Installation: Looking south from the northern end of Carmel Hills Drive.



Photograph 2. Aerial Installation: Looking west across SR 1 just north of Ocean Avenue intersection.



Photograph 3. Aerial Installation: Looking south along pedestrian/bike path near Barnyard Shopping Village.



Photograph 4. Aerial Installation: Looking south along SR 1 just south of Rio Road intersection.



Photograph 5. Underground Installation: Looking south along SR 1 at Monastery Beach where cable would run underground along roadway shoulder.



Photograph 6. Aerial Installation: Looking northwest along SR 1 north of entrance to Point Lobos State Natural Reserve.

Aesthetics 1(b) – Less than Significant Impact

Although the project area is within an officially designated State Scenic Highway, the project would not substantially damage scenic resources including trees, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings. The project would entail the installation of telecommunications facilities primarily below ground within an existing disturbed right-of-way, and above-ground components would involve the attachment of a single cable on existing utility poles. Construction activities would only take place in previously disturbed areas along existing roadways. The project would not require the removal of any trees or disruption of rock outcrops and no new structures would be constructed nor existing structures modified. Therefore, the project would have less than significant impact (Source: XI.1 & 3).

Aesthetics 1(c) – Less than Significant Impact

While the project area is characterized as having a high aesthetic quality, this project would not adversely affect existing visual character or quality within the project area. Long stretches of SR 1 are bordered by existing utility lines, often on both sides, which would be used for aerial cable attachment (Figure 3). Adding a single cable in areas that already have poles and aerial facilities would not damage scenic resources as compared to existing pre-project conditions. The cable would be installed over existing rights-of-way with conventional equipment. Sections of cable installed underground would have no permanent impact on scenic resources. The project area would be returned to its pre-project state by the Developer after construction is completed. Therefore, the project would have less than significant impact. (Source: XI.1 & 3)

Aesthetics 1(d) – Less than Significant Impact

The proposed project includes installation of fiber optic cables along SR 1. The proposed project would not involve the installation of any new source of light or glare. In addition, project construction activities would be required to comply with county ordinances limiting construction between 7:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. As a result, the project would not create a substantial new source of light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. Therefore, the project would have less than significant impact. (Source: IX.1 & 24)

2. AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

Would the project:		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

See Section II and IV

3. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations.

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

See Section II and IV

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
a)	Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and 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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c)	Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☐	☒

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES				
Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:
See Section II and IV

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES				
Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion:

Dudek prepared an Archaeological Survey Report (ASR) for the project in June of 2017 for review by the Monterey County RMA and Caltrans District 5. The ASR resulted in the identification of a total of 14 prehistoric archaeological sites within the project area limits (PAL). Due to the presence of known archaeological resources, Caltrans required the preparation of an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) Action Plan to avoid impacts to archaeological sites. The ASR and ESA Action Plan indicate that, of the 14 archaeological sites, eight are located in an area where the proposed fiberoptic line would be carried overhead by existing poles and would thus be avoided by the project. Additionally, these eight sites would be identified on construction plans and designated as “no parking” areas.

The ESA Action Plan identifies the remaining six archaeological sites within the PAL as ESAs and work-exclusion zones and requires archaeological monitoring in the vicinity of these zones. In these areas, the project would utilize directional drilling for the placement of the fiber optic line and all drilling would be conducted beneath the lowest depth of each site.

Cultural Resources 5(a) & 5(b)– Less than Significant

The project site falls entirely within existing right-of-way and does not contain any built environment features that may be considered historical resources. The project site does, however, contain a total of 14 archaeological resources that are assumed to be historical resources for the purposes of CEQA. Based on the results of an ASR and ESA Action Plan prepared in conformance with Caltrans requirements, the project has been designed to avoid impacts to known archaeological resources. Additionally, the ESA Action Plan requires archaeological monitoring in sensitive areas. With adherence to the requirements placed on the project by Caltrans in the ESA Action Plan, impacts to known historical/archaeological resources would not be adverse. Impacts to unknown archaeological resources would be reduced to less than significant with adherence to the ESA Action Plan for unanticipated discoveries as well as compliance with and implementation of the County's Condition of Approval (COA) for cultural resources PD003(A), Cultural Resources - Inadvertent Discovery. Full text of PD003(A) is provided below.

PD003(A), Cultural Resources - If, during the course of construction, cultural, archaeological, historical or paleontological resources are uncovered at the site (surface or subsurface resources) work shall be halted immediately within 50 meters (165 feet) of the find until a qualified professional archaeologist can evaluate it. Monterey County RMA-Planning and a qualified archaeologist (i.e., an archaeologist registered with the Register of Professional Archaeologists) shall be immediately contacted by the responsible individual present on-site. When contacted, the project planner and the archaeologist shall immediately visit the site to determine the extent of the resources and to develop proper mitigation measures required for the discovery.

Cultural Resources 5(c)– Less than Significant

Archaeological sites recorded within the project site are known to contain human remains; however, each of these sites would be avoided by the project either by aerial installation or by directional drilling beneath known archaeological sites. If unanticipated human remains are unearthed, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires no further disturbance to occur until the county coroner has made the necessary findings as to the origin and disposition pursuant to the Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. If the remains are determined to be of Native American descent, the coroner has 24 hours to notify the Native American Heritage Commission which will determine and notify a most likely descendant (MLD). The MLD shall complete the inspection of the site and make recommendations to the landowner within 48 hours of being granted access. The project would also be required to implement PD003(B), Human Remains, as a Condition of Approval (COA). Full text of PD003(B) is provided below. With adherence to existing regulations and the COA, impacts to human remains would be less than significant.

PD003(B), Human Remains - If archaeological resources or human remains are accidentally discovered during construction, the following steps will be taken: There shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent human remains until: The coroner of the county in which the remains are discovered must be

contacted to determine that no investigation of the cause of death is required, and if the coroner determines the remains to be Native American: The coroner shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission and RMA-Planning within 24 hours. The Native American Heritage Commission shall identify the person or persons from a recognized local tribe of the Esselen, Salinan, Costonoans/Ohlone and Chumash tribal groups, as appropriate, to be the most likely descendent. The most likely descendent may make recommendations to the landowner or the person responsible for the excavation work, for means of treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and any associated grave goods as provided in Public Resources Code Section 5097.9 and 5097.993, or where the following conditions occur, the landowner or his authorized representatives shall rebury the Native American human remains and associated grave goods with appropriate dignity on the property in a location not subject to further subsurface disturbance:

- a. The Native American Heritage Commission is unable to identify a most likely descendent or the most likely descendent failed to make a recommendation within 24 hours after being notified by the commission.
- b. The descendent identified fails to make a recommendation; or
- c. The landowner or his authorized representative rejects the recommendation of the descendent, and the mediation by the Native American Heritage Commission fails to provide measures acceptable to the landowner.

Conclusion:

As designed, the project has the potential to impact unknown historical/archaeological resources and with adherence to existing regulations, the Caltrans ESA Action Plan, and County Conditions of Approval, the project would have a less than significant impact on historical/archaeological resources.

6. ENERGY				
Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

See Section II and IV

7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS				
Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

See Section II and IV

8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

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

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

See Section II and IV

9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
g)	Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

See Section II and IV

10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
a)	Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b)	Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c)	Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:	☐	☐	☐	☒
i)	result in a 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 offsite;	☐	☐	☐	☒
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; or	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:
See Section II and IV

11. LAND USE AND PLANNING				
Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:
See Section II and IV

12. MINERAL RESOURCES				
Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:
See Section II and IV

13. NOISE				
Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

13. NOISE	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project result in:				
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Noise is defined as unwanted sound. Noise level measurements include intensity, frequency, and duration, as well as time of occurrence. Noise level (or volume) is generally measured in decibels (dB) using the A-weighted sound pressure level (dBA). The A-weighting scale is an adjustment to the actual sound pressure levels to be consistent with that of human hearing response, which is most sensitive to frequencies around 4,000 Hertz (about the highest note on a piano) and less sensitive to low frequencies (below 100 Hertz).

Sound pressure level is measured on a logarithmic scale with the 0 dBA level based on the lowest detectable sound pressure level that people can perceive (an audible sound that is not zero sound pressure level). Based on the logarithmic scale, a doubling of sound energy is equivalent to an increase of 3 dBA, and a sound that is 10 dBA less than the ambient sound level has no effect on ambient noise. Because of the nature of the human ear, a sound must be about 10 dBA greater than the ambient noise level to be judged as twice as loud. In general, a 3 dBA change in the ambient noise level is noticeable, while 1-2 dBA changes generally are not perceived. Quiet suburban areas typically have noise levels in the range of 40-50 dBA, while areas adjacent to arterial streets are typically in the 50-60+ dBA range. Normal conversational levels are usually in the 60-65 dBA range and ambient noise levels greater than 65 dBA can interrupt conversations.

Noise levels from point sources, such as those from individual pieces of machinery, typically attenuate (or drop off) at a rate of 6 dBA per doubling of distance from the noise source. Noise levels from lightly traveled roads typically attenuate at a rate of about 4.5 dBA per doubling of distance. Noise levels from heavily traveled roads typically attenuate at about 3 dBA per doubling of distance. Noise levels may be reduced by intervening structures: generally, a single row of buildings between the receptor and the noise source reduces noise levels by about 5 dBA, and a solid wall or berm reduces noise levels by 5 to 10 dBA. The manner in which residences in California are constructed generally provides a reduction of exterior-to-interior noise levels of approximately 20 to 25 dBA with closed windows.

The duration of noise is important because sounds that occur over a long period of time are more likely to be an annoyance or cause direct physical damage or environmental stress. One of the most frequently used noise metrics that considers both duration and sound power level is the equivalent noise level (Leq). The Leq is defined as the single steady A-weighted level that is equivalent to the same amount of energy as that contained in the actual fluctuating levels over a period of time (essentially, the average noise level). Typically, Leq is summed over a one-hour period. Lmax is the highest RMS (root mean squared) sound pressure level within the

measurement period, and L_{min} is the lowest RMS sound pressure level within the measurement period.

The time period in which noise occurs is also important since nighttime noise tends to disturb people more than daytime noise. Community noise is usually measured using the Day-Night Average Level (L_{dn}), which is the 24-hour average noise level with a 10-dBA penalty for noise occurring during nighttime (10 PM to 7 AM) hours, or Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL), which is the 24-hour average noise level with a 5 dBA penalty for noise occurring from 7 PM to 10 PM and a 10 dBA penalty for noise occurring from 10 PM to 7 AM. The L_{dn} and CNEL typically do not differ by more than 1 dBA. In practice, CNEL and L_{dn} are often used interchangeably.

Some land uses are more sensitive to ambient noise levels than other uses due to the amount of noise exposure and the types of activities involved. For example, residences, motels, hotels, schools, libraries, churches, nursing homes, auditoriums, museums, cultural facilities, parks, and outdoor recreation areas are more sensitive to noise than commercial and industrial land uses.

Vibration is a unique form of noise because its energy is carried through buildings, structures, and the ground, whereas sound is simply carried through the air. Thus, vibration is generally felt rather than heard. Some vibration effects can be caused by noise (e.g., the rattling of windows from passing trucks). This phenomenon is caused by the coupling of the acoustic energy at frequencies that are close to the resonant frequency of the material being vibrated. Typically, ground-borne vibration generated by manmade activities attenuates rapidly as distance from the source of the vibration increases. The ground motion caused by vibration is measured as particle velocity in inches per second and is measured in vibration decibels (VdB).

The vibration velocity level threshold of perception for humans is approximately 65 VdB. A vibration velocity of 75 VdB is the approximate dividing line between barely perceptible and distinctly perceptible levels for many people. Most perceptible indoor vibration is caused by sources inside buildings such as the operation of mechanical equipment, movement of people, or the slamming of doors. Typical outdoor sources of perceptible ground-borne vibration are construction equipment, steel-wheeled trains, and traffic on rough roads.

Vibration impacts would be significant if they exceed the following Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) thresholds:

- 65 VdB where low ambient vibration is essential for interior operations, such as hospitals and recording studios
- 72 VdB for residences and buildings where people normally sleep, including hotels
- 75 VdB for institutional land uses with primary daytime use, such as churches and schools
- 95 VdB for physical damage to extremely fragile historic buildings
- 100 VdB for physical damage to buildings

In addition to the groundborne vibration thresholds outlined above, the FTA outlined human response to different levels of groundborne vibration and determined that vibration that is 85 VdB is acceptable only if there are an infrequent number of events per day.

The proposed project would take place along existing roadways that experience consistent daily traffic and substantial noise levels, especially during the daytime hours. The project area is in close proximity to sensitive receptors including residential areas and a high school. Many single-family residential homes along SR 1 are immediately adjacent to the project area and are within 50 feet of the proposed fiber optic cable alignment. Portions of the Carmel High School campus are within 200 feet or less of the project area.

Regulatory Setting

The current County of Monterey Noise Ordinance is contained the County Code Chapter 10.60 “Noise Control”. The ordinance is brief, and applies to “any machine, mechanism, device, or contrivance” within 2,500 feet of any occupied dwelling unit. The ordinance limits the noise generated to 85 dBA at a distance of 50 feet from the noise source. Noise-generating construction activities are limited to the hours between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday; no construction noise is allowed on Sundays or national holidays. Vibration is not regulated by the ordinance and no limitations or thresholds related to vibration impacts are established. The proposed project would be subject to the Noise Ordinance. (Source: IX.24)

Noise 13(a) – Less than Significant Impact

The operation of heavy equipment during construction of the proposed project would result in temporary increases in noise in the immediate project vicinity. Table 13.1 provides maximum noise levels associated with heavy equipment that may be required for proposed project construction. The installation of fiber optic cables would not permanently change any noise receptors or any existing noise conditions. There is no evidence that the persons residing or working near the project site would be significantly impacted by noise related to this project. As shown in Table 13.1, maximum noise levels from required equipment would not exceed 85 dBA at 50 feet. Temporary construction activities, including all underground boring necessary for the underground installation of cables, would be required to comply with the County’s noise requirements, described above. Underground boring, fill, and compacting activities would only be required in a small section of the total project area, with the length of new underground cable totaling approximately 1.4 miles. Therefore, the proposed project would result less than significant impacts to noise. (Source: IX.1)

Table 13.1 Typical Construction Noise Levels

Equipment	Typical Maximum Noise Level (dBA) 50 Feet from Source
Backhoe	80
Dump Truck	84
Concrete Mixer	85
Grader	85
Dozer	85
Paver	85
Roller	85
Scraper	85
Compactor	82
Loader	80
Source: IX.30	

Noise 13(b) – Less than Significant Impact

The operation of heavy equipment and directional boring required for underground cable installation during construction of the proposed project would result in temporary increases in groundborne vibration in the immediate project vicinity. Table 13.2 provides vibration levels associated with heavy equipment that may be required for proposed project construction. Per Caltrans guidance, vibration levels of 0.10 in/sec PPV would be strongly perceptible to receptors and would be considered as potentially significant to residences (Source: IX.31). As shown in Table 13.2, vibration levels from all construction activities other use of a vibratory roller would naturally reduce to below 0.10 in/sec at 25 feet from the construction area. Any vibration caused by the proposed project would be temporary in nature and only 0.66 mile of cable would be installed underground. No pile driving is required and the boring necessary for underground cable installation would not generate excessive vibration. Impacts would be less than significant.

Table 13.2 Vibration Source Levels for Construction Equipment

Construction Equipment	Approximate PPV (in/sec) at 25 feet	Approximate PPV (in/sec) VdB at 50 feet	Approximate PPV (in/sec) VdB at 100 feet ^a	Approximate PPV (in/sec) VdB at 250 feet ^a	Approximate PPV (in/sec) VdB at 500 feet ^a
Large Bulldozer	0.089	0.031	0.011	0.003	0.001
Loaded Trucks	0.076	0.027	0.01	0.002	0.001
Small Bulldozer	0.003	0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Vibratory Roller	0.21	0.074	0.026	0.007	0.002
Jackhammer	0.035	0.012	0.004	0.001	<0.001

^a Based on the formula $VdB = VdB(25 \text{ feet}) - 30\log(d/25)$ provided by the FTA (2018)

Source: IX.30

Noise 13(c) – No Impact

The project area is not located within an airport land use plan area, or within 2 miles of a public or private airport. Therefore, the proposed project would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels associated with airports or a private airstrip. No impact would occur.

14. POPULATION AND HOUSING				
Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

See Section II and IV

15. PUBLIC SERVICES		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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:					
a)	Fire protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b)	Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c)	Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d)	Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e)	Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:
See Section II and IV

16. RECREATION		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
a)	Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b)	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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:
See Section II and IV

17. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC				
Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 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?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

The project area runs along approximately 5.25 miles of SR 1 between M.P. 69.666 and M.P. 74.638 south of the City of Monterey and north of Garrapata State Park (see Figure 1). Within the project area, the number of highway lanes varies. North of its intersection with Ocean Avenue, SR 1 has two lanes in both directions. South of Ocean Avenue, it becomes one lane in the southbound direction but remains two lanes in the northbound direction, with this configuration continuing until the intersection of SR 1 and Rio Road. South of Rio Road, SR 1 remains one lane in both directions throughout the remainder of the project area.

With the exception of three short segments of the project alignment, cable installation would occur within the highway shoulder or existing utility lines immediately adjacent to SR 1. As discussed in Section IIA, the proposed cable alignment deviates slightly from SR 1 along Carmel Hills Drive, Morse Drive, Carmel Valley Road and a pedestrian/bike path.

The stretch of SR 1 that falls within the project area is functionally classified as a Principal Arterial by Caltrans and experiences substantial daily traffic, especially during peak commute hours (7:00 AM to 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM) (Source: IX.2). SR 1 is of high importance to the area as it connects Carmel-by-the-Sea, Carmel Valley, Carmel Highlands and other unincorporated areas of Monterey County with cities of the greater Monterey Bay region, such as Monterey, Seaside and Marina.

Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST), the regional provider of bus services, operates within the project area. The following bus stops are present within the project area:

- Rio Road/Crossroads: Located at the intersection of SR 1 and Rio Road. Served by MST 22, 24 and 94 lines.
- Highway 1/Rio Road: Located just south of the intersection of SR 1 and Rio Road. Served by MST 22 line.
- Highway 1/Ribera Road: Two stops (one on the northbound side of SR1 and one on the southbound side) located at the intersection of SR1 and Ribera Road. Served by MST 22 line.

- Highway 1/Point Lobos: Two stops (one on the northbound side of SR1 and one on the southbound side) located near the main entrance to Point Lobos State Reserve. Served by MST 22 line.

Designated pedestrian and bike facilities are only present in a few areas. Sidewalks are not present along most of the stretch of SR 1 within the project area, with the exception of major intersections (Ocean Avenue, Rio Road). Sidewalks are present along Morse Drive. SR 1 lacks bike lanes throughout the project area, although cyclists routinely bike along the roadway's shoulder.

Transportation/Traffic 17(a), (c) & (d) – Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated

The proposed project would not conflict with any program, plan, ordinance or policy related to transportation, including the regulations established by the Carmel Area Land Use Plan, Monterey County General Plan, Monterey County Code of Ordinances and 2040 Monterey County Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (Source: IX. 9, 14, 16, & 24).

The proposed project would not cause permanent increases in traffic, transit, or non-motorized travel. However, the installation of fiber optic cables would impact traffic flow on SR 1 and adjacent streets (Carmel Hills Drive, Morse Drive, Carmel Valley Road) during construction. The section of the bike/pedestrian path between Carmel Valley Road and Rio Road would likely also be impacted, as the proposed alignment of cables follows existing utility lines along this stretch of the path. The installation process would require the use of large trucks, boring machinery, and heavy equipment. This equipment would primarily be located on the roadway shoulder during aerial and underground installation of fiber optic cables; however, certain portions of the cable would cross the existing roadway, requiring equipment to be positioned within the roadway and necessitating lane closures (Source: IX.1). Therefore, traffic flow along portions of SR 1 could be impacted during installation, especially when lane closures would restrict traffic flow to a single lane. Lane closures could also impede access by emergency response vehicles and extend response times to communities and commercial developments adjacent to SR 1.

According to the project plan set (PLN190010) submitted by the project applicant, the installation process would require the periodic closure of roadway shoulders and highway lanes. Shoulder closures would follow Standard Caltrans Plan No. RSP T-10. Caltrans Plan RSP T-10 stipulates that cones and/or barricades must be placed along the edge of the roadway shoulder and that appropriate traffic signage shall alert drivers to the closure. Lane closures would follow Standard Caltrans Plan RSP T-13. Caltrans Plan RSP T-13 stipulates that traffic cones and/or barricades must be placed along a gradual taper to initiate the lane closure then, be placed along the far edge of the closed lane. Due to the nature of the project and characteristics of the roadway, traffic flow along SR 1 would be limited to one lane in certain segments during the cable installation. In this situation, flaggers would be positioned at both ends of all lane closures to direct traffic. Appropriate signage would alert drivers to lane closures (Source: IX.25 & 26).

Per Monterey County regulations, the contractor performing cable installation must comply with a traffic management plan, which would include, but not be limited to: provision of detours,

traffic control procedures, signing, a public awareness campaign, and pedestrian and bicycle access control. Given the nature of SR 1 and the importance of the corridor to the region, temporary construction-phase impacts to SR 1 operations could be substantial. Mitigation would be required if the traffic management plan provided by the construction contractor does not adequately address traffic related impacts of the proposed project.

Transportation 17 (b) – No Impact

Section 15064.3 of the CEQA Guidelines establishes specific considerations for evaluating a project's transportation impacts. The CEQA Guidelines identify vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which is the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project, as the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. Vehicle miles traveled exceeding an applicable threshold of significance for land use projects may indicate a significant impact. Given that the proposed project involves the installation of fiber optic cables along SR 1 and adjacent roadways, it would not lead to an increase in VMT. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Recommended Mitigation:

Implementation of the following mitigation measures would reduce impacts to Transportation to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measure No. 1:

The construction contractor shall prepare a Construction Traffic Management Plan to minimize traffic flow interference from construction activities. The Construction Traffic Management Plan shall be submitted to the County and shall include plans to accomplish the following:

- Minimize construction-related traffic traveling to the project site in the peak commute hours (7:00 AM to 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM);
- Minimize construction-related lane closures on SR 1 and other affected roadways (Carmel Hills Drive, Morse Drive, Carmel Valley Road) during the peak commute hours (7:00 AM to 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM);
- Stage construction-related shoulder and lane closures such that only small portions of SR 1 are affected at any one time;
- Maintain existing access for land uses in the proximity of the project area during project construction;
- Consult with emergency service providers and agencies that coordinate emergency response and evacuations, including CAL FIRE and the Monterey County Sheriff's Office, that operate in the project area to seek input on avoiding disruptions to emergency service and evacuation;
- Accommodate cyclists during lane and shoulder closures to ensure that they can safely navigate impacted sections of SR 1 during cable installation;
- Ensure that construction activities do not present hazards to those utilizing bus stops located along SR 1 or prevent busses from accessing existing stops;
- For the bike/pedestrian pathway present between Carmel Valley Road and Rio Road, adequately indicate construction related impacts to users of the pathway with signage, barricades or other appropriate means;

- Schedule deliveries and pick-ups of construction materials to non-peak travel periods, to the maximum extent feasible;
- Coordinate haul trucks, deliveries and pick-ups to reduce the potential for trucks waiting to load or unload for protracted periods of time;
- Control construction equipment traffic from the contractors with flaggers; and
- Designate transport routes for heavy trucks and haul trucks to be used over the duration of the project.

Mitigation Measure No. 2:

A communication protocol shall be established to alert residents and commercial tenants located immediately adjacent to SR 1 and other affected roadways of construction work near their property and associated traffic related impacts including lane and road closures. The intent of this protocol shall be to inform the public of the project and associated impacts to traffic. The protocol shall include the distribution of an informational mailer to all property owners immediately adjacent to all sections of the project area, or other method of information sharing determined suitable to Monterey County RMA.

18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 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 § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☐	☒	☐	☐

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1, on April 2 and August 13, 2019, RMA-Planning consulted with Chairwoman Louise Ramirez, the tribal chairwoman of the Ohlone-Costanoan, Esselen Nation (OCEN) regarding the proposed project. OCEN is generally opposed to land disturbance that has the potential to impact archaeological resources. In this case, OCEN is concerned with unearthing artifacts or human remains belonging to their tribal ancestors (Source IX. 1, 8, 9, 10, 14, & 32). To mitigate potential impacts to these resources, OCEN requests a tribal monitor be present during all earth disturbing activities.

On August 15, 2019, RMA-Planning sent a consultation letter to Tom Nason of the Esselen Tribe of Monterey County. As of September 16, 2019, the Esselen Tribe has not requested consultation.

Implementation of the mitigation measure described below would ensure that, if artifacts or human remains are discovered, these resources are treated with appropriate dignity and respect. These mitigations shall apply in addition to the conditions of approval described in the cultural resources section above.

Recommended Mitigation:

Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce impacts to Tribal Cultural Resources to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measure No. 3:

A tribal monitor from a Native American group local to Monterey County listed by the Native American Heritage Commission shall be present during the excavation of each proposed bore pit and any project-related archaeological excavation that may become necessary in the event of unanticipated discoveries. If ground disturbance requiring a tribal monitor is occurring at two or more locations simultaneously, a tribal monitor shall be present at each location. The tribal monitor shall have the authority to temporarily halt work in order to examine any potentially significant cultural materials or features. If resources are discovered, and following any carbon dating or analysis by the archaeologist, the County and/or applicant shall provide an area for reburial of resources on-site or provide an adequate off-site location for reburial. The tribal monitor shall be given the authority to determine the ultimate disposition of any artifacts or remains on site. This mitigation is not intended to alleviate the County and/or applicant from contacting the coroner and complying with state law if human remains are discovered.

Conclusion:

As designed and mitigated, the project would have a less than significant impacts on Tribal Cultural Resources.

19. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 waste water 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:**Utilities and Service Systems 19(a) –Less Than Significant**

The proposed project includes the installation of new fiber optic cables using aerial and underground methods along SR 1. These new cables would serve the purpose of expanding high speed internet access to residents in Carmel-by-the-Sea, Carmel Highlands, and surrounding areas. Construction activities related to cable installation would only occur within areas that are already developed and adjacent to existing rights-of-way. Given its scope, the proposed project would not require the construction of new or expanded municipal water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage facilities, electric power or natural gas facilities. Most of the new cables would be attached to existing utility poles alongside roadways. Some sections of the new cable would be installed underground, but as discussed in Sections VI. 1, 4, and 6, underground installation methods would not result in significant environmental disruption. The proposed project would not require the construction of any permanent structures. Therefore, the project would have a less than significant impact related to the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities.

Utilities and Service Systems 19(b), (c), (d), (e) – No Impact

Given the nature of the proposed project, it would not need require water nor would it generate waste water or solid waste during operation. Therefore, no impact would occur.

20. WILDFIRE				
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

While nearly all of California is subject to some degree of wildfire hazard, there are specific features that make certain areas more hazardous. CAL FIRE is required by law to map areas of significant fire hazards based on fuels, terrain, weather and other relevant factors (Source: IX.28 & 29). The primary factors that increase an area's susceptibility to fire hazards include topography and slope, vegetation type and vegetation condition, and weather and atmospheric conditions. CAL FIRE maps fire hazards based on zones, referred to as Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Each of the zones influence how people construct buildings and protect property to reduce risk associated with wildland fires. Under state regulations, areas within Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) must comply with specific building and vegetation management requirements intended to reduce property damage and loss of life within these areas.

In California, responsibility for wildfire prevention and suppression is shared by federal, state and local agencies. Federal agencies have legal responsibility to prevent and suppress wildfires in Federal Responsibility Areas (FRAs). CAL FIRE prevents and suppresses wildfires in State Responsibility Area (SRA) lands, which are non-federal lands in unincorporated areas with watershed value, are of statewide interest, defined by land ownership, population density, and land use. Wildfire prevention and suppression in Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) are typically provided by city fire departments, fire protection districts, counties, and by CAL FIRE under contract to local government. These lands include incorporated cities, cultivated agriculture lands, and portions of the desert.

Wildfire 20(a) – Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Portions of the project area are located in State Responsibility Areas designated as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (Source: IX.29). These portions include the northern boundary of the project area to the intersection of SR 1 and Carmel Valley Road and from the intersection of SR 1 and an unnamed road at the entrance of Palo Corona Regional Park to the southern boundary of the project area. The portion of the project area in between Carmel Valley Road and the unnamed road is considered a Local Responsibility Area of Unincorporated Monterey County. As discussed in Section VI.17, the proposed project has the potential to disrupt traffic flow along SR 1 and adjacent roadways. Installation of fiber optic cables would require closure of lanes and roadway shoulders, which could impact emergency response and emergency evacuation in the event of a wildfire. Therefore, mitigation is required to reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

Wildfire 20 (b) & (d) – Less Than Significant

The project area is located in a State Responsibility Area designated as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (Source: IX.29). Parts of the project area are located within a 100-year flood hazard zone, but as discussed in section IV.8, the proposed project would not impact flood flows or drainage. The proposed project would involve the installation of fiber optic cables along an existing roadway. Therefore, the project would not substantially exacerbate wildfire risks or thereby expose nearby developments to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire. The project would not expose people or structures to significant risks including downslope or downstream flooding. Therefore, wildfire risks would not be exacerbated and risks to people or structures due to runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes would not occur. Impacts would be less than significant.

Wildfire 20 (c) – No Impact

The proposed project does not involve the installation of additional roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utility infrastructure that would exacerbate fire risk or permanently impact the environment. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Recommended Mitigation:

As stated in section VI.17, mitigation is required to reduce transportation related impacts to less than significant levels. Mitigation Measure No. 1 stipulates the development of a Construction Traffic Management Plan, which would require the developer to coordinate with all providers of emergency services that operate within the project area and consult with agencies that coordinate emergency response and evacuations. Compliance with this mitigation measure would reduce impacts to emergency response and evacuations to a less than significant level.

VII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

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

Discussion/Conclusion/Mitigation:

Mandatory Findings of Significance (a) – Less Than Significant Impact

As discussed in this Initial Study, the project would have no impact, a less than significant impact, or a less than significant impact after mitigation with respect to all environmental issues. Regarding biological resources, no impacts to habitat or biological communities are anticipated to occur as a result of this proposed project, as stated in section IV.3. All elements of the proposed project, including project staging, aerial installation of cables and underground installation of cables would take place within the existing developed right-of-way and would not alter any habitat area. Regarding cultural resources, potential impacts to known prehistoric archeological sites within the project area would be reduced to a less than significant level by implementing the Caltrans Environmentally Sensitive Area Action Plan, County Conditions of Approval and state regulations, as discussed in section VI.5.

Mandatory Findings of Significance (b) – No Impact

As discussed in this Initial Study, the project would have no impact, a less than significant impact, or a less than significant impact after mitigation with respect to all environmental issues. The project would not result in substantial long-term environmental impacts and, therefore, would not contribute to cumulative environmental changes that may occur due to planned and pending development. Potential impacts of the project would not be cumulatively considerable.

Mandatory Findings of Significance (c) – Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Effects on human beings are generally associated with impacts related to issue areas such as air quality, geology and soils, noise, traffic safety, and hazards. As discussed in this Initial Study, the project would have no impact or result in a less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated in each of these resource areas. As discussed in Section IV.A, the project would have no impact on air quality, geology and soils and hazards. As discussed in Section VI.13, *Noise*, the construction activities associated with the project would be required to comply with the Monterey County Noise Ordinance, therefore, noise related impacts would be less than significant. As discussed in Section VI.17, *Transportation*, the project would not alter existing transportation infrastructure and its impacts to traffic and emergency access would be reduced to less than significant with mitigation incorporated. The project would not cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

VIII. CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FEES

Assessment of Fee:

The State Legislature, through the enactment of Senate Bill (SB) 1535, revoked the authority of lead agencies to determine that a project subject to CEQA review had a “de minimis” (minimal) effect on fish and wildlife resources under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Projects that were determined to have a “de minimis” effect were exempt from payment of the filing fees.

SB 1535 has eliminated the provision for a determination of “de minimis” effect by the lead agency; consequently, all land development projects that are subject to environmental review are now subject to the filing fees, unless the California Department of Fish and Wildlife determines that the project will have no effect on fish and wildlife resources.

To be considered for determination of “no effect” on fish and wildlife resources, development applicants must submit a form requesting such determination to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. A No Effect Determination form may be obtained by contacting the Department by telephone at (916) 653-4875, or through the Department’s website at www.wildlife.ca.gov.

Conclusion: The project will be required to pay the fee unless a “no effect” determination can be obtained from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Evidence: Based on the record as a whole as embodied in the RMA-Planning files pertaining to PLN90010 and the attached Initial Study / Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration.

IX. REFERENCES

1. Project Application and Plans (PLN190010)
2. Caltrans Web Map Gallery
3. Public Utilities Commission Resolution T-17589
4. Monterey County PBI Map Viewer
5. Natural Vegetation of Central California based on Kuchler 1977 data layer, Conservation Biology Institute
6. Aerial imagery of the site and surroundings from Google Maps and Google Earth
7. Correspondence with Joseph Sidor, Associate Planner, Monterey County Resource Management Agency Planning Division
8. California Public Utilities Code Chapter 2, Section 320
9. Monterey County General Plan (2010 as amended)
10. California Important Farmland Finder, California Department of Conservation
11. Williamson Act Reports and Statistics, California Department of Conservation
12. 2012-2015 Air Quality Management Plan, Monterey Bay Air Resources District
13. Critical Habitat ArcGIS Feature Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
14. Carmel Area Land Use Plan
15. Monterey County Climate Action Plan
16. 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
17. EnviroStor, California Department of Toxic Substances Control
18. GeoTracker, California State Water Resources Control Board
19. Permit Compliance System (PCS) and Integrated Compliance Information System (ICIS) databases, USEPA
20. Fire Hazard Severity Zones in SRA, CalFire
21. Monterey County Groundwater Management Plan, Monterey County Water Resources Agency
22. Mineral Lands Classification data portal, California Department of Conservation
23. Carmel Area Local Coastal Program General Viewshed
24. Monterey County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 10.60

25. Traffic Control System for Lane Closures on Freeways and Expressways, Plan No. RSP T10A
26. Traffic Control System for Lane Closure on Two Lane Conventional Highways, Plan No. RSP T13
27. Public Resources Code [PRC] 4201-4204
28. California Government Code 51175-89
29. Monterey County Fire Hazard Severity Zones in SRA, Cal Fire
30. Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment, Federal Transit Administration
31. Technical Noise Supplement to the Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol, Caltrans
32. Planning Division Consultation Letter with Chairwoman Louise Ramirez, the tribal chairwoman of the Ohlone-Costanoan, Esselen Nation (OCEN)

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