SAN FRANCISCO BAY RESTORATION AUTHORITY

Staff Recommendation
June 12, 2026

SAFER BAY RESTORATION DESIGN AND PERMITTING PROJECT

Project No. RA-035
Project Manager: Alexis Barrera

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to $3,850,000 to the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority to obtain permits for the entire seven-mile Strategy to Advance Flood Protection, Ecosystems, and Recreation along San Francisco Bay (SAFER Bay) Project and to conduct technical studies and prepare final designs for the restoration of 568 acres of tidal marsh, enhancement of 436 acres of managed ponds, and construction of levees, for the four managed ponds that are part of the SAFER Bay Project in San Mateo County.

LOCATION: Cities of East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and Redwood City, San Mateo County; Measure AA Region: West Bay

MEASURE AA PROGRAM CATEGORY: Safe, Clean Water and Pollution Prevention Program; Vital Fish, Bird and Wildlife Habitat Program; Integrated Flood Protection Program; Shoreline Public Access Program.

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: Project Location Map

Exhibit 2: Project Area and Designs

Exhibit 3: June 24, 2022 Staff Recommendation

Exhibit 4: March 3, 2023 Staff Recommendation

Exhibit 5: CEQA Documentation

Exhibit 6: Project Letters

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS
Staff recommends that the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority adopt the following resolution and findings:

Resolution:

The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority hereby authorizes the disbursement of an amount not to exceed three million eight hundred fifty thousand dollars ($3,850,000) to the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority ("the grantee") to obtain permits for the entire seven-mile Strategy to Advance Flood Protection, Ecosystems, and Recreation along San Francisco Bay (SAFER Bay) Project and to conduct technical studies and prepare final designs for the restoration of 568 acres of tidal marsh, enhancement of 436 acres of managed ponds, and construction of levees, for the four managed ponds that are part of the SAFER Bay Project in San Mateo County ("the project").

Prior to commencement of the project, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Authority the following:

1. A detailed work program, schedule, and budget.
2. Names and qualifications of any contractors to be employed in carrying out the project.
3. A plan for acknowledgement of Authority funding.

Findings:

Based on the accompanying staff recommendation and attached exhibits, the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Act, Gov. Code Sections 66700-66706.
2. The proposed authorization is consistent with The San Francisco Bay Clean Water, Pollution Prevention and Habitat Restoration Measure (Measure AA).
3. The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority has independently reviewed and considered the Strategy to Advance Flood Protection, Ecosystems, and Recreation Along San Francisco Bay (SAFER Bay) Project Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) certified by the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority on May 28, 2026 pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") and attached to the accompanying staff recommendation via website link shown in Exhibit 5. The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority has also reviewed the Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program (MMRP) adopted by the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority on May 28, 2026 and attached to the accompanying staff recommendation via website link shown in Exhibit 5. The Authority finds, as described further in the accompanying staff recommendation, that:
    a) The SAFER Bay Project will have potentially significant environmental effects in the areas of aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, and transportation. The Authority finds that the mitigation measures identified in the EIR will avoid, reduce or mitigate these possible significant environmental effects to less-than-significant levels and these mitigation measures have been required or incorporated into the SAFER Bay Project.
    b) The Authority further finds that the SAFER Bay Project will result in significant and unavoidable impacts in the areas of aesthetics and noise, but environmental

and other benefits of the SAFER Bay Project as described in the accompanying staff recommendation outweigh or render acceptable these unavoidable adverse environmental impacts to achieve the objectives of the SAFER Bay Project.

c) The Restoration Authority adopts the Findings regarding Significant Effects and Statement of Overriding Conservations set forth in the accompanying staff recommendation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends the Restoration Authority authorize a grant of up to $3,850,000 to the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to obtain permits for the entire seven-mile Strategy to Advance Flood Protection, Ecosystems, and Recreation along San Francisco Bay (SAFER Bay) Project and to conduct technical studies and prepare final designs for the restoration of 568 acres of tidal marsh, enhancement of 436 acres of managed ponds, and construction of levees, for the four managed ponds that are part of the SAFER Bay project in San Mateo County ("the project").

The SAFER Bay project area extends for seven miles along the San Mateo shoreline and is divided into eight different reaches (Exhibit 1). Communities along these reaches are exposed to coastal flooding from San Francisco Bay, and this flood hazard is expected to worsen with sea level rise. The San Francisco Bay Trail along some of these reaches is degraded in sections and also vulnerable to flooding due to sea level rise. The project area includes four managed ponds within the Ravenswood Unit of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge), that are within the footprint of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project (SBSPR Project) but are being planned for restoration as part of the SAFER Bay Project (Exhibit 1). These ponds, which comprise four SAFER Bay Project reaches, were once areas of tidal marsh and later converted to salt production ponds. The loss of tidal marsh has reduced habitat for marsh-dependent species and water quality of the Bay. While these ponds are now part of the Refuge and managed for wildlife use, they do not support tidal marsh habitat and are vulnerable to accidental breaching because they are surrounded by un-engineered salt pond berms. The SAFER Bay Project will address these historic and future impacts to habitat, communities, and recreation by enhancing and restoring wetland habitat and providing flood protection that meets Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) standards and accounts for 3.5 feet of sea level rise.

The project includes preparation of permit applications and negotiating with regulators to secure permits for the entire SAFER Bay Project including all of the flood protection, restoration, and recreational elements along the entire seven-mile project area (Exhibit 2, Figure 1). Flood protection throughout the seven-mile project area primarily includes construction of levees but may also include construction of floodwalls and flood gates where necessary. To enhance recreation, the SAFER Bay Project will create new sections of Bay Trail and improve degraded sections of the Bay Trail by placing them on the tops of levees and by incorporating Bay Trail design standards that include signage, viewing points, benches, and community access

points. Restoration and enhancement of habitat will occur in managed ponds R1, R2, R3, and SF2 at the Refuge (Exhibit 2).

The project includes development of final designs for the restoration and enhancement of the four managed ponds, and for construction of associated levees and habitat transition zones (Exhibit 2) in Ponds R2 and SF2. Tidal marsh restoration will result in 568 acres of habitat that will support several threatened and endangered species including the Ridgway's rail, salt marsh harvest mouse, and salmonids. The construction of levees around the PG&E substation and along Highway 84 in Pond R2 will protect those facilities from tidal inundation after the ponds are breached and will increase their long-term resilience to sea level rise. A habitat transition zone —a shallow dirt slope that will get built along the side of the levee—will protect the levee from erosion due to wind waves and provide high tide refuge for wildlife. The City of Menlo Park is completing the design of the levee and habitat transition zone in Pond R2. Enhancement of managed ponds R3 and SF2 will benefit the federally threatened western snowy plover that nests in dry salt pond habitat. Enhancement includes installation of oyster shell or gravel in Pond R3 to provide camouflage for snowy plover chicks, control of predators, and conversion of perennially ponded habitat in SF2 to seasonally inundated habitat that can support nesting (Exhibit 2, Figure 2). This restoration and enhancement will help achieve the goals and objectives of the SBSPR Project although it is being planned and implemented as part of the SAFER Bay Project.

The proposed project builds on two previous grants for the SAFER Bay Project by the Restoration Authority. On June 24, 2022, the Authority authorized $1,000,000 for initial design, studies, and preparation of environmental documentation for the SAFER Bay Project (Exhibit 3). That authorization was augmented by $3,980,000 on March 3, 2023 (Exhibit 4). The JPA completed CEQA review of the SAFER Bay Project on May 28, 2026 (Exhibit 5). The environmental review process included extensive consultation with the Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team, as well as staff from the Refuge and SBSPR Project, leading to the completion of 30% restoration designs that are now ready to be advanced to the final design stage so that they are implementation ready.

The JPA includes the cities of East Palo Alto, Palo Alto, Menlo Park, the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District, and Valley Water. The JPA planned and implemented the San Francisquito Creek Flood Protection and Ecosystem Restoration Project (Reach 1), a multi-jurisdictional fluvial flood risk reduction and ecosystem restoration project between Highway 101 and San Francisco Bay, along 1.5 miles of San Francisquito Creek in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. That project is directly adjacent to the southern boundary of the SAFER Bay Project area and was completed in 2020, protecting approximately 500 parcels from 100-year fluvial floods and three feet of sea level rise.

The SAFER Bay Project has a well-established Community Advisory Committee that is coordinated by non-profit partners Nuestra Casa and Climate Resilient Communities. Community advisors have provided valuable input to the project team about local concerns regarding construction impacts, traffic, recreation, and public access. The community-based organizations and the JPA provide SAFER Bay Project tours to local educational and community groups and regular briefings to member cities, Menlo Park and East Palo Alto.

In the planning phase, the SAFER Bay Project faces similar risks to most multi-objective projects along the San Francisco Bay shoreline. These include delays during permitting or discovery of new information requiring design changes.

Site Description: The SAFER Bay Project site is located on the west side of San Francisco Bay and includes approximately seven miles of the shoreline from the Menlo Park/Redwood City border south along East Palo Alto to San Francisquito Creek, which is the border between East Palo Alto (San Mateo County) and Palo Alto (Santa Clara County). Many sections of the Bay Trail in the project area are unpaved, less than 10 feet wide, and considered substandard from an accessibility perspective. The SAFER Bay Project includes actions that are within the Refuge, Refuge-managed land in Laumeister and Faber Tract Marshes (owned by the City of Palo Alto), and Ravenswood Open Space Preserve (owned by Midpeninsula Open Space District). Ponds within the Refuge that would be restored and enhanced are former salt production ponds that are currently managed to provide habitat for waterfowl in the winter and snowy plover and shorebirds in the summer.

The SAFER Bay Project also includes actions within land owned by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission and the Cargill Corporation, as well as lands within the jurisdiction of the California Department of Transportation.

PROJECT FINANCING

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority	$3,850,000
Federal Emergency Management Agency	$2,500,000
To Be Raised	$1,930,000
Project Total	**$8,280,000**

The above table shows the cost of the project. The $2,500,000 contribution from FEMA is part of a larger amount of funding provided for the entire seven-mile SAFER Bay Project, which has been awarded a total of $30,194,335 in planning and implementation funding through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant Program of FEMA and the California Office of Emergency Services. The $30,194,335 will support planning and construction of flood protection features within Menlo Park and East Palo Alto, including the $2,500,000 that has been granted to the City of Menlo Park to perform technical analyses and design of the levee and the habitat transition zone that will get constructed in Pond R2 as part of tidal marsh restoration.

Projected in-kind services include staff time from the JPA and member cities Menlo Park and East Palo Alto. Over the course of the three-year project schedule, the estimated staff time is expected to total approximately $250,000.

CONSISTENCY WITH AUTHORITY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION, THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY RESTORATION AUTHORITY ACT:

Consistent with Government Code Section 66704.5, the JPA is a local agency working on shoreline parcels in the San Francisco Bay area, on a project that is eligible for Authority grants

because it will 1) restore, protect, or enhance tidal wetlands, managed ponds, and natural habitats on the shoreline in the San Francisco Bay area; (2) build or enhance shoreline levees or other flood management features that are part of a project to restore, enhance, or protect tidal wetlands, managed ponds, or natural habitats; and (3) provide or improve public access or recreational amenities that are part of a project to restore, enhance, or protect tidal wetlands, managed ponds, or natural habitats.

Consistent with Section 66704.5(e) this grant will be for planning and permitting an eligible project.

CONSISTENCY WITH MEASURE AA PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES:

This authorization is consistent with Measure AA's Safe, Clean Water and Pollution Prevention Program, since the SAFER Bay Project will restore wetlands that provide natural filters and remove pollution from the Bay's water.

This authorization is consistent with Measure AA's Vital Fish, Bird and Wildlife Habitat Program since the SAFER Bay Project will restore tidal wetland and transition zone habitat that will support and increase vital populations of fish, birds, and other wildlife in and around the Bay, including the Refuge.

Consistent with Measure AA's Integrated Flood Protection Program, the SAFER Bay Project will use natural habitats in combination with traditional shoreline protection measures wherever possible to help protect communities and infrastructure along the Bay's shoreline from the risks of severe coastal flooding caused by storms and high-water levels.

Furthermore, this authorization is consistent with Measure AA's Shoreline Public Access Program since the SAFER Bay Project will enhance the quality of life of Bay Area residents by creating new trail access, improving the current condition of many sections of the San Francisco Bay Trail, and making trails more resilient to sea level rise by raising their surface elevation.

CONSISTENCY WITH MEASURE AA PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA:

1. **Greatest positive impact.** The project will lead to the restoration of over 500 acres of high-quality tidal marsh habitat that will be part of a large, connected network of marsh habitat along the west side of the Bay, including Ravenswood Pond R4 that was recently restored in 2023. Establishing large contiguous blocks of habitat creates core habitat areas that are buffered from disturbance, benefiting wildlife that are less tolerant of human activity.

   Establishing levees and implementing habitat enhancement will help sustain nesting snowy plovers in the South Bay. Existing nesting habitat in Ponds R1 and R2 is at risk from flooding because those ponds are surrounded by aging salt pond berms that are at risk of breaching. The potential for accidental breaching is exacerbated by sea level rise. By enhancing habitat in Pond R3 which is further inland and not directly next to the Bay and protecting habitat in SF2 with a new levee, the snowy plover nesting population will be better protected from flooding now and into the future as sea level rises. The project is consistent with the Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Science Update (State Coastal Conservancy

2015) that calls for completing restoration of tidal marsh as soon as possible to keep up with escalating rates of sea level rise. The habitat restoration and enhancement elements of the SAFER Bay Project will help the SBSPR Project achieve its restoration targets for snowy plover, Ridgway's rail, tidal marsh, and estuarine fish as outlined in the SBSPR Project Adaptive Management Plan.

The project will also provide a substantial flood protection benefit to thousands of parcels within the SAFER Bay Project area by planning for upgrading levees and installing other flood protection features.

2. **Greatest long-term impact.** The project will lead to enhanced flood risk management along seven miles of shoreline by planning for construction of traditional flood protection levees and nature-based shoreline protection such as tidal marsh and habitat transition zones. This integrated approach will enhance the built and natural environment within the project area, adding resilience to the effects of climate change for the next 50 years. Ponds R1 and R2 are currently at elevations that are close to marsh plain elevation and will not need to accrete very much sediment before supporting tidal marsh vegetation which gives these ponds a good chance of keeping up with increasing rates of sea level rise into the future.

3. **Leveraging resources and partnerships.** The project will leverage federal resources through the JPA's partnership with the Refuge, whose biologists contributed to the design of the project and will provide expert assistance in monitoring the success of the project. The SAFER Bay project has also received funding from FEMA BRIC and HMGP to support CEQA finalization and implementation of the project.

4. **Economically disadvantaged communities.** The Authority identifies East Palo Alto and the Belle Haven and Bayfront neighborhood of Menlo Park as Economically Disadvantaged Communities. Nuestra Casa and Climate Resilient Communities are conducting ongoing outreach with these and other affected communities about the risks of climate change and opportunities for adaptation to those risks. The SAFER Bay Project has integrated residents of these communities into the design process.

   Implementation of the SAFER Bay Project will benefit over 2,000 households within the East Palo Alto and the Belle Haven and Bayfront neighborhoods by reducing flood risk and flood insurance requirements. The SAFER Bay Project will also increase opportunities to access natural areas by building new trails and making improvements to existing trail sections.

5. **Benefits to economy.** Implementation of the SAFER Bay Project will lead to less disruption and displacement of residents in San Mateo County communities due to flood impacts. This will allow people to better maintain daily routines and reach workplaces in support of local and regional economies. Labor required to construct the project will provide employment opportunities for Bay Area residents. The project includes at least one new Bay Trail entrance, which will become a new connection opportunity for bicycle commuters. By protecting critical infrastructure such as roads, schools, and electrical substations from tidal inundation, the area will be safeguarded. One substation is a regional supply area providing

electric power service for more than 300,000 customers. Protecting the residential areas of Menlo Park's Belle Haven neighborhood and neighborhoods in East Palo Alto will protect critically needed affordable housing.

6. **Engage youth and young adults.** Climate Resilient Communities and Nuestra Casa have engaged with residents to spread awareness of sea level rise issues around the Bay and encourage protection of their communities. They have also expanded the conversation to encompass winter storm and king-tide flooding awareness and preparation. Locally, the group Youth United for Community Action (YUCA) has been engaged in the SAFER Bay project through the Community Advisory Group, facilitated by community partners, Nuestra Casa and Climate Resilient Communities. YUCA members have attended SAFER Bay Project tours and Community Advisory Group meetings to learn about the restoration aspects of the project and restoration-related careers.

7. **Monitoring, maintenance, and stewardship.** The cities of Menlo Park and East Palo Alto have accepted responsibility for long-term maintenance of the SAFER Bay Project and the JPA or the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resilience District (OneShoreline) will be involved for the long-term in support of adaptive management and monitoring. Restored Ponds R1, R2, R3, and SF2 will be managed and stewarded in the long-term as part of the Refuge, which has its own management and monitoring program for Refuge lands.

8. **Coastal Conservancy's San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.** The SAFER Bay Project is: (1) consistent with the Estuary Blueprint (San Francisco Estuary Partnership 2022) Action 10 (protect, restore and enhance tidal marsh), Action 11 (restore estuarine-upland transition zones), Action 12 (maximize habitat benefits of managed ponds) and Action 24 (provide equitable public access compatible with wildlife), and the Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Science Update (State Coastal Conservancy 2015), which identifies opportunities to create a near continuous corridor of tidal marsh where the project is located (pp. 92); (2) multijurisdictional because it involves two cities in San Mateo County and serves a regional constituency (the restoration component will facilitate nationally and regionally significant wetland restoration efforts and will improve regional trail systems); (3) ready to move forward immediately because it has completed the CEQA process and has a team under contract that is ready to continue with permitting and design; (4) providing opportunities for habitat, flood protection, and public access benefits that could be lost if the project is not quickly implemented, particularly within the context of future sea level rise, and (5) providing matching funds from other sources as described in the "Project Financing" section.

9. **San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission's Coastal Management Program.** The SAFER Bay Project meets the following priorities of the San Francisco Bay Plan:

   Tidal Marshes and Mudflats Policy 5: Restore tidal action to tidal marshes and tidal flats that have been diked off from the Bay and/or manage historic wetlands to provide important Bay habitat for fish and other wildlife.

Water Quality Policy 1: Restore the Bay's tidal marshes and conserve water surface area and volume to protect and improve water quality.

Fish, Other Aquatic Organisms and Wildlife Policy 1: Conserve and restore the Bay's tidal marshes, tidal flats, and subtidal habitat to assure benefits to fish and other aquatic organisms and wildlife for future generations.

Shoreline Protection Policy 5: Evaluate use of natural and nature-based features such as marsh vegetation and levees with transitional ecotone habitat

Environmental Justice and Social Equity Policy 3: Conduct equitable and culturally-relevant community outreach.

10. **San Francisco Bay Joint Venture's Implementation Strategy.** This authorization is consistent with the SFBJV Implementation Strategy and meets many of its objectives. The SAFER Bay Project was conditionally accepted as a SFBJV project in May 2020. The SAFER Bay Project will request full acceptance as an SFBJV project once design is complete.

CONSISTENCY WITH AUTHORITY'S TRIBAL CONSULTATION POLICY: The JPA has provided tribal engagement via the Assembly Bill 52 process and through outreach to all tribes on the Native American Heritage Commission list as documented in the Final EIR.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

On May 28, 2026, the JPA, as lead agency, certified the Strategy to Advance Flood Protection, Ecosystems, and Recreation Along San Francisco Bay (SAFER Bay) Project Final Environmental Impact Report ("EIR") (Exhibit 5) and approved the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program – SAFER Bay Project. The EIR contains both project-level evaluations and program-level evaluations of the SAFER Bay Project ("Project") based on the level of design and construction information available.

For the following resource areas, the EIR indicated that the Project will have potentially significant environmental effects, however changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project that mitigate to less than significant each of the potentially significant effects: Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, and Transportation.

For the following resource areas, the EIR indicated that the Project will have significant environmental effects that although minimized or reduced by mitigation measures will not be less than significant, either because no mitigation measures are available or mitigation measures were considered but identified as infeasible due to specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations: Aesthetics and Noise. These impacts will remain significant and unavoidable. A Statement of Overriding Considerations (see below) is recommended to address these significant and unmitigated impacts.

Findings for Significant Impacts that can be Mitigated to Less-Than-Significant levels

Aesthetics:
Project construction may create a new source of lighting or glare that could affect residents or wildlife habitat. These construction impacts will be mitigated by directing lighting away from adjacent residential areas or wildlife habitat and by using the minimum amount of lighting necessary.

Air Quality:
Project construction could impact air quality by creating fugitive dust emissions. Emissions will be reduced to less than significant levels by implementing best management practices, including imposing limits on driving speeds and watering of construction areas.

Biological Resources:
The Project may adversely affect wildlife species, including threatened and endangered species, either directly or through habitat modification. Impacts to species will be reduced to less than significant levels by implementing worker awareness training, maintaining construction vehicles free of debris to minimize spread of pathogens and invasive plants, imposing seasonal restrictions on construction, and creation of buffer areas where no work can occur to avoid impacts to nesting birds and other wildlife.

Proposed habitat restoration activities in Ponds R1, R2, R3, and SF2, as well as all temporarily affected areas in all Project reaches, may create impacts to state or federally protected wetlands through direct removal, filling, or hydrological interruption. To mitigate impacts, the Project will prepare and implement a habitat restoration and monitoring plan that includes specific plans for the revegetation, restoration, and enhancement of these ponds and other areas that are subject to temporary construction impacts.

Cultural resources:
To reduce the potential for impacts to historical, archaeological, or tribal cultural resources, a cultural resources monitoring plan will be developed and implemented. If there is inadvertent discovery of potentially significant cultural resources, a qualified archaeologist and a Native American representative will inspect the resource and it will be avoided, if feasible. If avoidance is not feasible, the Project will consult with appropriate tribes and other parties to develop measures that will minimize or mitigate potential impacts.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials:
Hazardous materials may be released into the environment during transport, use, or disposal. To minimize potential for impacts, a health and safety plan will be prepared that includes designation of a health and safety supervisor, stop work procedures, emergency procedures, and procedures to follow if evidence of soil or groundwater contamination is encountered. In addition, a Soils Management Plan and Groundwater Handling Requirements are specified due to the known contamination in the area.

Hydrology and Water Quality:
Importation of fill has the potential to degrade surface or ground water quality. The Project will avoid impacts by implementing a Quality Assurance Project Plan for all imported terrestrial fill to be used on the Project site.

The Project could alter the existing drainage pattern of the area which could create or contribute to runoff water that could exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems. This potential impact will be mitigated by including pump stations or other measures, where necessary.

Transportation:
Truck travel associated with construction may create more traffic within residential areas. A roadway maintenance plan will be prepared and implemented that includes designated haul routes, preconstruction surveys to document pre-project baseline conditions of roadway segments that are used for construction, and implementation of repairs to affected roadway facilities as necessary.

Findings for Potentially Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

Aesthetics:
Public viewing opportunities toward marsh habitat and the East Bay Hills would be interrupted by proposed shoreline protection and recreational features. Implementation of mitigation measures that include floodwall design and landscaping treatments will reduce visual contrast for the affected views but would not eliminate view obstructions; consequently, this impact would be significant and unavoidable despite mitigation.

Noise:
Construction activities within certain reaches of the Project would expose nearby sensitive receptors to noise levels that would either exceed the Federal Transit Authority's daytime criterion for residential uses or represent an increase of more than 10dBA over existing daytime ambient levels at the receptors. Mitigation measures will attenuate construction noise; however, existing daytime ambient levels could still be exceeded by more than 10 dBA and these impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

Statement of Overriding Considerations

In the event a project has unavoidable significant environmental effects, the CEQA Guidelines require the decision-making agency to balance, as applicable, the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including region-wide or statewide environmental benefits, of a proposed project against its unavoidable environmental risks when determining whether to approve the project (Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15093). If the specific project benefits outweigh the unavoidable significant environmental effects of the project, a Statement of Overriding Considerations may be adopted and the project approved, despite its significant environmental effects. The overall environmental benefits of the Project, as detailed in the Project Summary section of this staff recommendation warrant the Conservancy's decision to approve the Project. The Project's public benefits that justify proceeding with the Project despite the environmental cost of the unavoidable significant environmental effects include:

1. long-term environmental benefits to state and federally threatened and endangered species and other plants and animals,
2. significant reduction in flood risk for the City of East Palo Alto and the Bell Haven and Bayfront neighborhoods in Menlo Park, and
3. benefits to public health and recreation by expanding, improving and elevating the San Francisco Bay Trail.

For these reasons Authority staff recommends that the Authority find that the Project, as mitigated, avoids or reduces to less than significant all potentially significant environmental effects, except for the unavoidable significant environmental effects to Aesthetics and Noise. With respect to these unavoidable significant environmental effects, Authority staff recommends that the Authority find that the environmental, economic, social, and other benefits of the Project outweigh the unavoidable significant environmental effects, thereby warranting its approval.

Upon approval of the Project, staff will file a Notice of Determination.