

Palmdale to Burbank Project Section WILDLIFE, BIOLOGICAL AND AQUATIC RESOURCES



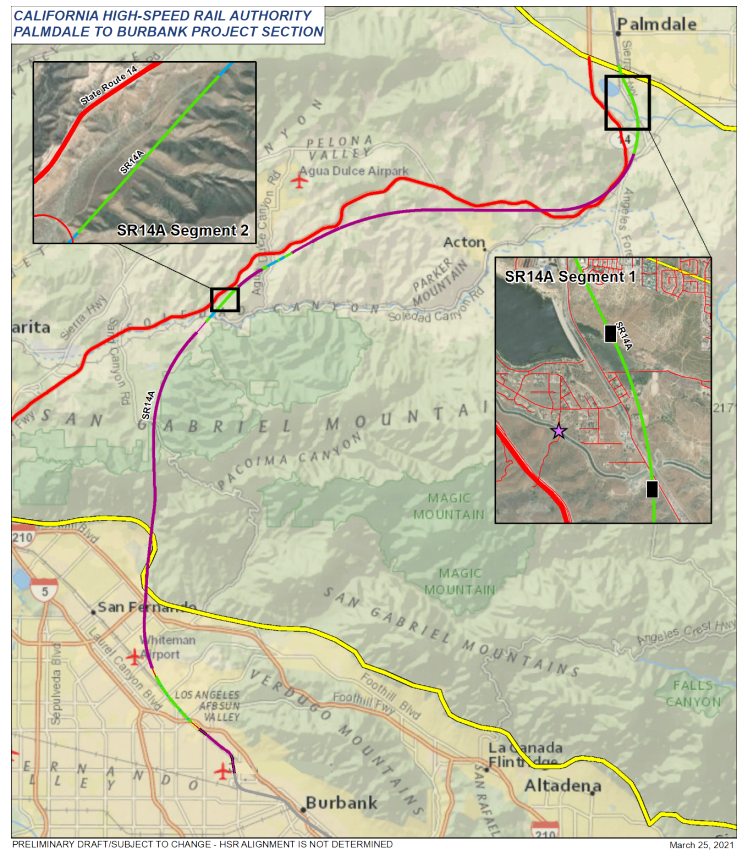
- NORTHERN CALIFORNIA REGION
 - San Francisco Salesforce Transit Center
 - San Francisco 4th & King Station
 - Millbrae (SFO)
 - San Jose Diridon Station
 - Gilroy
 - Merced
- CENTRAL VALLEY REGION
 - Fresno
 - Kings/Tulare Regional Station
 - Bakersfield
- BAKERSFIELD TO PALMDALE PROJECT SECTION
 - Palmdale
- PALMDALE TO BURBANK PROJECT SECTION
 - Burbank Airport Station
- BURBANK TO LOS ANGELES PROJECT SECTION
 - Los Angeles Union Station
- LOS ANGELES TO ANAHEIM PROJECT SECTION
 - Anaheim

Consistent with Proposition 1A approved by California voters, the California High-Speed Rail is designing a system with features aimed at avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating potential impacts to biological and aquatic resources that may result from construction and operation of the project. Design efforts strive to maintain important ecological linkages and wildlife movement corridors while identifying and advancing mitigation opportunities to offset potential impacts to plants and animals and wetlands and other aquatic resources.

Working with agencies across the system, the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) has been evaluating potential impacts to biological and aquatic resources and finding ways to reduce those impacts. The goal is to design the project to avoid impacts at the outset, and where potential impacts are identified, implement measures that avoid or minimize such impacts, including offsetting impacts to species of plants and animals, as well as the habitat types upon which they depend. For example, as part of the Palmdale to Burbank project section environmental evaluation, the Authority studied ecological linkages and wildlife movement corridors and implemented measures to ensure that wildlife movement and habitat connectivity was maintained.

The Authority's analysis in the Palmdale to Burbank Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) concluded that, with specified mitigation measures, the construction and operation of the project would not result in a significant impact on biological or aquatic resources. It is also important to note that 81% of the Preferred Alternative for this section is in tunnel, cut-and-cover or on an elevated structure, maintaining existing wildlife habitat and connectivity.

The Authority prepared a Wildlife Corridor Assessment to thoroughly evaluate the potential to impact habitat connectivity through project construction. The project has extensive tunnel segments, including through the Angeles National Forest. Viaducts over the Santa Clara River and Agua Dulce Canyon also provide permeability for the project. The tunnels and viaducts are closely aligned with areas where there are existing wildlife crossing opportunities under the SR14 freeway, thereby maintaining existing levels of connectivity.



Map showing locations of new wildlife crossings

Based on the evaluation in the Wildlife Corridor Assessment, the Authority designed a mitigation measure that requires the installation of two dedicated wildlife crossings: one in the vicinity of Una Lake and one near the California Aqueduct



Combined Undercrossing/Drainage Culvert and Wildlife Jump-Out



Typical Wildlife Undercrossing

Other examples of the Authority's efforts on the Palmdale to Burbank section include:

UNA LAKE

While working closely with the U.S. EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Authority developed a preferred alternative that avoids impacts to the biological and aquatic resources at Una Lake. Through that coordination process, the Authority obtained the concurrence of the two agencies that SR14A, the preferred alternative, is the preliminary Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative.



SANTA CLARA RIVER AND PACOIMA WASH

In coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Authority developed extensive measures to ensure that construction of the crossing over the Santa Clara River would not adversely affect the State fully protected and federally endangered unarmored threespine stickleback. The construction staging and layout areas were revised to reduce to reduce the project footprint by 15 acres and limit the impact on Pacoima Wash, a major tributary of the Tujunga Wash and Los Angeles River.

BEE CANYON

Based on the presence of the endangered slender-horned spineflower and the threatened coastal California gnatcatcher, and at the request of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Authority undertook a design refinement in the Bee Canyon area to reduce footprint impacts to suitable habitat. The design refinement reduced the temporary footprint in Bee Canyon from 12.51 acres to 0 acres, and the permanent footprint in Bee Canyon was reduced by 28.54 acres.

OPERATIONAL NOISE

To address the potential for train noise to adversely affect special-status birds, including the federally endangered least Bell's vireo and the threatened coastal California gnatcatcher, the Authority will install sound barriers in areas adjacent to high-quality special-status bird habitat if noise levels exceed Authority thresholds.

Other special-status species such as the mountain lion would benefit from the installation of these barriers because the barriers would also reduce noise exposure for all wildlife in the vicinity, including known wildlife movement corridors along the Santa Clara River and Agua Dulce Canyon.

The location, length, and height of these sound barriers will be determined based on detailed noise modeling for areas of high-quality, special-status bird habitat, and accounting for existing conditions, so the noise-attenuating effects of topography and other existing features can be accounted for during the final design phase.

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