

**JULY 02 2019**

## **Tulare 99 Interchange Project**

### **STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

On State Route 99 in Tulare County  
between 0.9 mile north of the Avenue 200 overcrossing  
and 0.5 mile north of the Paige Avenue overcrossing

06-TUL-99-26.3/27.6

EA 06-0U880 and EFIS 06-1600-0074

SCH 2018121066

### **Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration/ Environmental Assessment**



Prepared by the  
State of California Department of Transportation

The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated December 23, 2016 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and Caltrans.

**June 2019**



## **General Information About This Document**

### ***What's in this document:***

This document contains a Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment that examines the environmental effects of the proposed project on State Route 99 in Tulare County between 0.9 mile north of the Avenue 200 overcrossing and 0.5 mile north of the Paige Avenue overcrossing.

The Initial Study and proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment was circulated to the public from December 21, 2018 to January 29, 2019. Comment cards, letters and emails about the draft document were received and are shown in the Comments and Responses section (Appendix H) of the document, which was added after the draft document was circulated. Elsewhere throughout this document, a line in the right margin indicates a change to the document since the draft was circulated.

### ***What happens after this:***

The proposed project has completed environmental compliance with completion of this final environmental document. When funding is approved, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration, can design and build all or part of the project.

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document is available in Braille, in large print, on audiocassette, or on computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please write to or call Caltrans, Attention: Jeff Sorensen, San Joaquin Environmental Management Branch, 855 M Street, Suite 200, Fresno, CA 93721; phone (559) 445-6447; or call the District 6 Public Information Office at (559) 488-4067, or use the California Relay Service 1 (800) 735-2929 (TTY), 1 (800) 735-2929 (Voice), or 711.

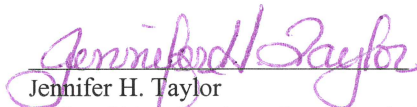
Construct an interchange on State Route 99 between 0.9 mile north of  
the Avenue 200 overcrossing and 0.5 mile north of the Paige Avenue overcrossing

**INITIAL STUDY  
with Mitigated Negative Declaration  
/ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code  
(Federal) 42 USC 4332(2)(C)

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
Department of Transportation

6/12/19  
Date

  
Jennifer H. Taylor  
Office Chief, Southern San Joaquin Valley  
Central Region  
California Department of Transportation

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**California Department of Transportation**

**Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)**

**for the**

**Tulare 99 Interchange Project**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has determined that Alternative 1A on State Route 99 in Tulare County between 0.9 mile north of the Avenue 200 overcrossing and 0.5 mile north of the Paige Avenue overcrossing will have no significant impact on the human environment. This Finding of No Significant Impact is based on the attached Environmental Assessment, which has been independently evaluated by Caltrans and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the need, environmental issues, and impacts of the proposed project and appropriate mitigation measures. It provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. Caltrans takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope, and content of the attached Environmental Assessment and incorporated technical reports.

The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 USC 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated December 23, 2016 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and Caltrans.

6/12/19  
Date

Jennifer H. Taylor  
Jennifer H. Taylor  
Office Chief, Southern San Joaquin Valley  
Central Region  
California Department of Transportation



## Mitigated Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

### **Project Description**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to construct a new interchange or reconstruct an existing interchange on State Route 99 between 0.9 mile north of the Avenue 200 overcrossing and 0.5 mile north of the Paige Avenue overcrossing near the City of Tulare in Tulare County.

### **Determination**

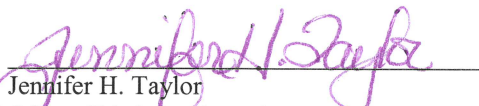
Caltrans has prepared an Initial Study for this project and, following public review, has determined from this study that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons.

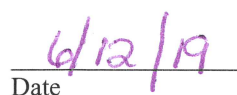
The project would have no effect on cultural resources, coastal resources, wild or scenic rivers, parks and recreational facilities, timberlands, growth, community character and cohesion, environmental justice, geology, mineral resources, housing and population, hydrology/floodplain, natural communities, wetlands and other waters, plant species, animal species, fisheries resources, tribal resources or invasive species.

In addition, the project would have no significant effect on paleontology, air quality, land use and planning, transportation and traffic, threatened and endangered species, farmland, hazardous materials, noise, public/emergency services, utilities, greenhouse gas emissions, or water quality.

The project would have no significant adverse effect on visual resources because the following mitigation measure would reduce potential effects to insignificance:

- Include replacement planting and irrigation to replace eucalyptus trees and oleander shrubs that are being removed from the roadsides and median for the proposed project.

  
 Jennifer H. Taylor  
 Office Chief, Southern San Joaquin Valley  
 Central Region  
 California Department of Transportation

  
 Date





## Summary

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to construct a new interchange or reconstruct an existing interchange on State Route 99 between 0.9 mile north of the Avenue 200 overcrossing and 0.5 mile north of the Paige Avenue overcrossing near the City of Tulare in Tulare County. Four build alternatives (Alternatives 1A, 1C, 2 and 3) and a No-Build Alternative are proposed.

### Summary of Potential Impacts from Alternatives

Potential Impact		Alternative 1A	Alternative 1C	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	No-Build Alternative
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Consistency with the Tulare General Plan</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Coastal Zone</b>		Not in Coastal Zone	Not in Coastal Zone	Not in Coastal Zone	Not in Coastal Zone	Not in Coastal Zone
<b>Wild and Scenic Rivers</b>		No Wild and Scenic Rivers	No Wild and Scenic Rivers	No Wild and Scenic Rivers	No Wild and Scenic Rivers	No Wild and Scenic Rivers
<b>Parks and Recreational Facilities</b>		No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts
<b>Farmlands and Timberlands</b>		19 acres	19 acres	19 acres	No impacts	No impacts
<b>Growth</b>		Not growth inducing	Not growth inducing	Not growth inducing	Not growth inducing	Not growth inducing
<b>Community Character and Cohesion</b>		No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts
<b>Relocations and Real Property Acquisition</b>	<b>Business Displacements</b>	No displacements	No displacements	Concrete batch plant	Tire service, truck stop, motel	No displacements
	<b>Housing Displacements</b>	No displacements	No displacements	No displacements	No displacements	No displacements
	<b>Utility Service Relocation</b>	Electrical, sewer, water, gas, telecommunication lines	Electrical, sewer, water, gas, telecommunication lines	Electrical, sewer, water, gas, telecommunication lines	Electrical, sewer, water, gas, telecommunication lines	No utility relocation
<b>Environmental Justice</b>		No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts
<b>Emergency Services</b>		Traffic Management Plan would be developed to minimize emergency service delays during construction	Traffic Management Plan would be developed to minimize emergency service delays during construction	Traffic Management Plan would be developed to minimize emergency service delays during construction	Traffic Management Plan would be developed to minimize emergency service delays during construction	Traffic Management Plan not required
<b>Traffic and Transportation/ Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities</b>		Construction of bike lanes and sidewalks	Construction of bike lanes and sidewalks	Construction of bike lanes and sidewalks	Construction of bike lanes and sidewalks	No construction of bike lanes or sidewalks
<b>Visual/Aesthetics</b>		Oleander removal: 350 feet  Eucalyptus removal: 11 trees	Oleander removal: 350 feet under Phase 1, 500 feet under Phase 2  Eucalyptus removal: 12 trees under Phase 1, 10 trees under Phase 2	Oleander removal: 350 feet under Phase 1, 500 feet under Phase 2  Eucalyptus removal: 14 trees under Phase 1, 10 trees under Phase 2	Oleander removal: 500 feet  Eucalyptus removal: 39 trees	No oleander or eucalyptus removal

Potential Impact	Alternative 1A	Alternative 1C	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	No-Build Alternative
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts
<b>Hydrology and Floodplain</b>	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts
<b>Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff</b>	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts
<b>Geology, Soils, Seismicity and Topography</b>	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts
<b>Paleontology</b>	Impacts if Pleistocene sediments are found	Impacts if Pleistocene sediments are found	Impacts if Pleistocene sediments are found	Impacts if Pleistocene sediments are found	No impacts
<b>Hazardous Waste and Materials</b>	Properties located on Blackstone Street and Paige Avenue	Properties located on Blackstone Street, K Street and Paige Avenue	Properties located on Blackstone Street, K Street and Paige Avenue	Properties located on Blackstone Street and Paige Avenue	No impacts
<b>Air Quality</b>	Temporary impacts from construction-generated dust  No permanent impacts	Temporary impacts from construction-generated dust  No permanent impacts	Temporary impacts from construction-generated dust  No permanent impacts	Temporary impacts from construction-generated dust  No permanent impacts	Potential for congestion to increase over time resulting in increased idling and emissions
<b>Noise and Vibration</b>	Noise abatement measures not recommended	Noise abatement measures not recommended	Noise abatement measures not recommended	Noise abatement measures not recommended	No impacts
<b>Natural Communities</b>	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts
<b>Wetlands and Other Waters</b>	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts
<b>Plant Species</b>	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts
<b>Animal Species</b>	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts
<b>Threatened and Endangered Species</b>	Implement pre-construction surveys, construction SSPs	Implement pre-construction surveys, construction SSPs	Implement pre-construction surveys, construction SSPs	Implement pre-construction surveys, construction SSPs	No impacts
<b>Invasive Species</b>	Implement Executive Order 13112	Implement Executive Order 13112	Implement Executive Order 13112	Implement Executive Order 13112	No impacts
<b>Cumulative Impacts</b>	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts

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# Chapter 1 Proposed Project

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## 1.1 Introduction

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in association with the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG), proposes to construct a new interchange or reconstruct an existing interchange on State Route 99 between 0.9 mile north of the Avenue 200 overcrossing and 0.5 mile north of the Paige Avenue overcrossing near the City of Tulare in Tulare County. See Figures 1-1 and 1-2 for project vicinity and location maps. Caltrans, as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Caltrans is also the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Four build alternatives (Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3) and a No-Build Alternative are being considered:

- Alternative 1A would construct a new interchange at Commercial Avenue with auxiliary lanes and leave the Paige Avenue interchange on-ramp and off-ramp opened.
- Alternative 1C would construct a new interchange at Commercial Avenue and permanently close all existing ramps at the Paige Avenue interchange.
- Alternative 2 would construct a new interchange at Industrial Avenue and permanently close the Paige Avenue interchange.
- Alternative 3 would reconstruct the Paige Avenue interchange by widening existing local roads and replacing the existing bridge structure with a wider structure and realigning on- and off-ramps.

Alternative 1C and Alternative 2 would be built in two phases once funding is available. Phase 2 work for Alternative 1C and Alternative 2 would replace the existing Paige Avenue overcrossing with a new structure to accommodate a four-lane roadway with shoulders and sidewalks.

The estimated project cost for Alternative 1A is \$59,300,000. The estimated project cost for Alternative 1C, Phase 1 is \$70,226,000 and Phase 2 is \$24,085,000. The estimated project cost for Alternative 2, Phase 1 is \$79,019,000 and Phase 2 is \$24,085,000. The estimated project cost for Alternative 3 is \$77,194,000.

State Route 99 is a major corridor used by both trucks and commuters between communities and rural agricultural areas throughout the San Joaquin Valley. It is also the main link that connects the San Joaquin Valley with the Sacramento metropolitan area and, via Interstate 5, with the Los Angeles area.

State Route 99 within the project limits is currently a four-lane roadway and is situated in an urban area with relatively flat terrain. The roadway within the project limits consists of two 12-foot travel lanes, with a 10-foot outside shoulder and a 5-foot inside shoulder for northbound and southbound directions. The freeway is divided by a beam barrier in the median.

The 2018 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (2018 RTP/SCS), which was prepared by the Tulare County Association of Governments and covers the years 2018-2042, includes construction of a new interchange on State Route 99 at the World Ag Expo and International Agri-Center (Commercial Avenue). This project is also included in the 2013 Federal Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (FSTIP).

California participated in the “Surface Transportation Project Delivery Pilot Program” (Pilot Program) pursuant to 23 USC 327, for more than five years, beginning July 1, 2007, and ending September 30, 2012. MAP-21 (P.L. 112-141), signed by President Barack Obama on July 6, 2012, amended 23 USC 327 to establish a permanent Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program. As a result, Caltrans entered into a Memorandum of Understanding pursuant to 23 USC 327 with the Federal Highway Administration. The NEPA Assignment MOU became effective October 1, 2012 and was renewed on December 23, 2016 for a term of five years. In summary, Caltrans continues to assume Federal Highway Administration responsibilities under NEPA and other federal environmental laws in the same manner as was assigned under the Pilot Program, with minor changes. With NEPA Assignment, the Federal Highway Administration assigned and Caltrans assumed all of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary’s responsibilities under NEPA. This assignment includes projects on the State Highway System and Local Assistance Projects off of the State Highway System within the State of California, except for certain categorical exclusions that the Federal Highway Administration assigned to Caltrans under the 23 USC 326 CE Assignment MOU projects excluded by definition, and specific project exclusions.

## **1.2 Purpose and Need**

The purpose and need section discusses the reasons for the proposed project and provides structure for the development of alternatives.

### **1.2.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the project is to improve the operational performance of State Route 99 within the project limits, relieve traffic congestion on local roads, and improve accessibility to the freeway system in that area. In addition, the project improvements would enhance the east-west movement of traffic and goods, supporting economic development.



## 1.2.2 Need

Traffic projections for the project limits show an increase in traffic volume over time, which will result in longer motorist delays, excessive congestion and queuing (long line of vehicles) at the existing ramp-end intersections, and potential traffic backups onto the freeway mainline. Local circulation between east and west, crossing State Route 99, will also be congested.

Traffic volume and quality of traffic flow are used to analyze freeway operation and related congestion issues:

- Traffic volumes are represented as average annual daily traffic counts, which are the average number of vehicles that pass a given point within a 24-hour period.
- Quality of traffic flow is represented as level of service. Level of service ranges from A to F. Level of service “A” indicates free-flowing traffic, while level of service “F” indicates gridlock and stop-and-go conditions.
- A traffic analysis was performed for existing conditions (2018), implementation year (2027) and design-year conditions (2047).

Traffic mitigation is needed based on the analysis conducted by the Caltrans Traffic Operations Branch on August 23, 2016. Traffic volume analysis done by the Technical Planning Branch at the same time indicates that the Paige Avenue interchange and the intersection of Paige Avenue/Laspina Street are operating at levels of service D and F during the peak traffic periods. Also, the traffic forecasting data projects increases in traffic volume at the Paige Avenue interchange, which will cause longer delays, excessive queuing at the existing off-ramps, and potential overflows of traffic onto the freeway mainline.

### *Traffic Volumes*

Table 1.1 shows existing and forecasted traffic volumes as average daily traffic (ADT). Increases in traffic volume at the Paige Avenue interchange from the projected forecast will cause longer delays and long queues at the existing off-ramps, with a potential overflow of traffic onto the freeway mainline.

**Table 1.1 Traffic Volumes**

Average Daily Traffic	State Route 99 Mainline	Alternatives 1A and 1C at Commercial Avenue	Alternative 2 at Industrial Avenue	Alternative 3 at Paige Avenue
2027 ADT	68,500	6,700	7,200	20,000
2037 ADT	NA	12,000	12,900	24,500
2047 ADT	105,500	21,500	23,100	2,750

Source: Caltrans Traffic Planning 2016

**Level of Service**

The Paige Avenue interchange and Paige Avenue/Laspina Street intersection currently operate at levels of service D and F during peak traffic periods. The intersections at the Paige Avenue interchange currently operate at levels of service C to F and will approach level of service F prior to 2047. Future increases in traffic volume at the Paige Avenue interchange will cause long delays and lead to excessive queuing at the existing off-ramps, with potential overflows of traffic onto the freeway mainline.

**Existing Roadway**

The existing Paige Avenue interchange is a Type L-6 interchange system with the freeway ramps connecting with Blackstone Street and Paige Avenue. The existing northbound hook ramps are accessed through Paige Avenue, and the existing southbound hook ramps connect to Blackstone Street. Paige Avenue is a two-lane roadway without turn lanes on the east side of freeway. Westbound traffic on Paige Avenue must stop and wait until the eastbound traffic is clear before proceeding to turn left onto the State Route 99 northbound on-ramp access. The northbound off-ramp traffic must wait until both westbound and eastbound Paige Avenue through traffic is clear before turning onto westbound Paige Avenue. The queue length of the eastbound approach of Paige Avenue and Laspina Street is longer than the spacing between the intersection and the northbound off-ramp. The shorter spacing would lead to excessive queuing of traffic at the northbound off-ramp and could possibly extend to the freeway mainline.

No bike lanes provide for multi-modal use at Paige Avenue and the bridge structure.

**Safety**

Table 1.2 shows the most recent three-year accident rate data available (from August 1, 2012 to July 31, 2015) for the State Route 99 mainline in the project area.

**Table 1.2 Accident Rate Data**

State Route 99 Mainline						
Location	Actual			Average		
	Fatal	Fatal plus Injury	Total	Fatal	Fatal plus Injury	Total
Northbound post miles 26.3 to 28.1	0.000	0.26	0.81	0.005	0.24	0.74
Southbound post miles 26.3 to 28.1	0.000	0.15	0.58	0.005	0.24	0.71
Northbound on-ramp from Paige Avenue/Avenue 216 (post mile 27.623)	0.000	0.00	0.00	0.001	0.14	0.48
Southbound on-ramp from Blackstone Street/Paige Avenue (post mile 27.625)	0.000	0.00	0.23	0.001	0.14	0.48
Southbound off-ramp to Blackstone Street/Paige Avenue (post mile 27.718)	0.000	0.00	1.10	0.002	0.23	0.78
Northbound off-ramp to Paige Avenue/Avenue 216 (post mile 27.530)	0.000	0.45	2.23	0.002	0.23	0.78

Source: Caltrans Traffic Operations 2018

F=Fatal, I=Injury

The accident rates for the northbound State Route 99 mainline between post miles 26.3 and 28.1 indicate that the actual fatal accident rate is lower than the statewide average for similar roadways with comparable traffic volumes. However, the actual fatal-plus-injury rate and the actual total accident rates are higher than the statewide average. The accident rates for the southbound State Route 99 mainline within the project limits indicate that the actual accident rates are lower than the statewide average.

The accident rates for the northbound on-ramp from Paige Avenue/Avenue 216 (post mile 27.623) and the southbound on-ramp from Blackstone Street/Paige Avenue (post mile 27.625) indicate that the actual accident rates are lower than the statewide average for similar ramps with comparable traffic volumes.

No accidents were recorded within the most recent three-year study period at the northbound on-ramp from Paige Avenue/Avenue 216.

The accident rates for the southbound off-ramp to Blackstone Street/Paige Road indicate that the actual fatal and the actual fatal-plus-injury accident rates are lower than the statewide average. However, the actual total accident rate is higher than the statewide average.

The accident rates for the northbound Paige off-ramp to Paige Avenue/Avenue 216 (post mile 27.530) indicate that the actual fatal accident rate is lower than the statewide average fatal accident rate. However, the actual fatal-plus-injury and the actual total accident rates are higher than the statewide average.

For the northbound direction of the mainline freeway, the most common type of accident was hit-object, with the main collision factor being an improper turn. The main object struck was a median barrier. For the southbound direction of the mainline freeway, the most common type of accident was hit-object, with the main collision factor being an improper turn. The main object struck was a fence.

For the southbound on-ramp from Blackstone Street/Paige Avenue, the accident type was hit-object caused by an improper turn. The object struck was a dike or curb. For the southbound off-ramp to Blackstone Street/Paige Road, the accident type was hit-object caused by speeding. The object struck was a traffic sign.

### **1.3 Project Description**

Caltrans proposes to construct a new interchange or reconstruct an existing interchange on State Route 99 between 0.9 mile north of the Avenue 200 overcrossing and 0.5 mile north of the Paige Avenue overcrossing near the City of Tulare in Tulare County. See Figures 1-1 and 1-2 for project vicinity and location maps.

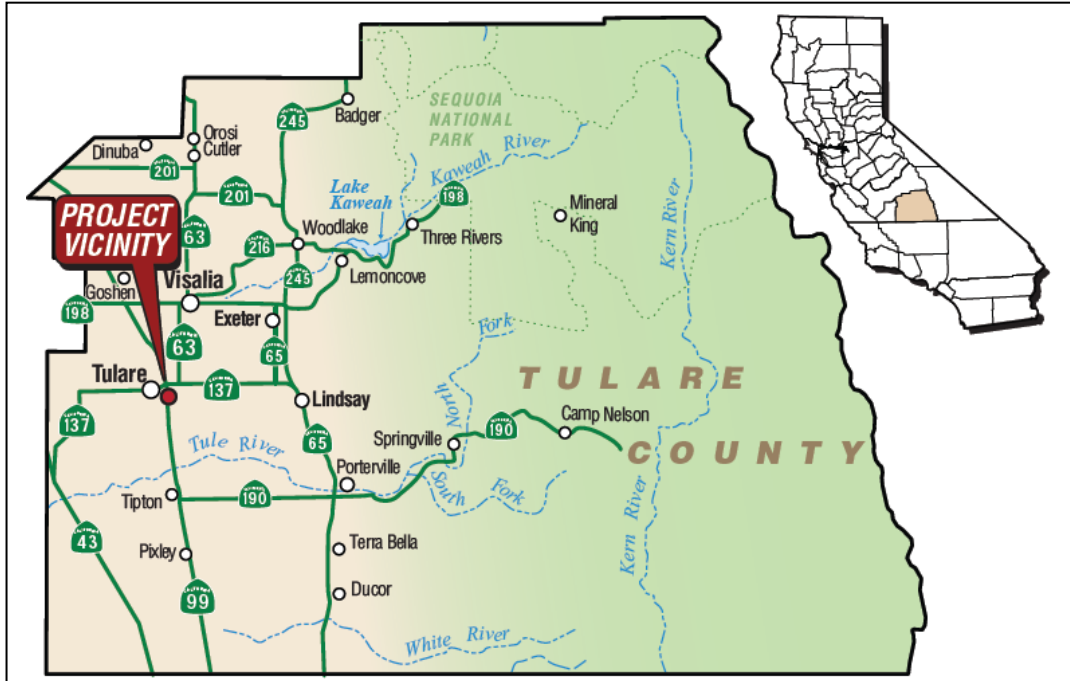


Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map



Figure 1-2 Project Location Map

Within the project limits, State Route 99 is a four-lane roadway in an urban area with relatively flat terrain. The roadway consists of two 12-foot travel lanes, a 10-foot outside shoulder, and a 5-foot inside shoulder for northbound and southbound directions. The freeway is divided by a beam barrier in the median.

Context sensitive solutions such as landscaping would be included in the project. A landscape/replanting plan would include planting eucalyptus trees to replace those being removed from the roadsides and median. Complete streets elements have been considered and would include installing bike lanes and constructing sidewalks.

## **1.4 Project Alternatives**

The project contains a number of standardized measures that are used on most, if not all, Caltrans projects and were not developed in response to any specific environmental impact resulting from the proposed project. These measures are addressed in more detail in the Environmental Consequences sections in Chapter 2.

### **1.4.1 Build Alternatives**

Four build alternatives (Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3) and a No-Build Alternative are being considered.

#### ***Common Design Features of the Build Alternatives***

Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 include the following:

- Construct bike lanes. Bike lanes would be constructed in these areas: along both eastbound and westbound Commercial Avenue within the city right-of-way limits for Alternative 1A and Alternative 1C; eastbound and westbound Industrial Avenue within the city right-of-way limits for Alternative 2; and eastbound and westbound Paige Avenue within the city right-of-way limits for Alternative 3. Within the state right-of-way, along the eastbound and westbound overcrossing, there would be an 8-foot-wide shoulder that can be used as a bike lane for the new Commercial Avenue overcrossing under Alternative 1A and Alternative 1C, for the Industrial Avenue overcrossing under Alternative 2, or for the Paige Avenue overcrossing under Alternative 1C and Alternative 2-Phase 2, and Alternative 3. The bike lanes at Commercial Avenue or Industrial Avenue would be mainly connected to K Street and Laspina Street. The bike lanes at Paige Avenue would be mainly connected to Blackstone Street and Laspina Street.
- Install a 10-foot-wide sidewalk.
- Construct drainage basins within the proposed project limits.
- Install a new drainage system (pipes with drainage inlets, possible side ditches along the freeway and ramps) to direct runoff from the freeway and ramps into the proposed basins.

- Relocate utilities (water, sewer, storm drain, AT&T lines, high pressure gas line, and utility poles).

### ***Unique Features of the Build Alternatives***

#### ***Alternative 1A***

Alternative 1A includes the following:

- Construct a four-lane interchange (two through lanes per direction of traffic) at Commercial Avenue, 0.8 mile south of the Paige Avenue overcrossing, and use existing Commercial Avenue from K Street to connect to State Route 99. Existing ramps at Paige Avenue would remain open. The existing Paige Avenue overcrossing would not be replaced.
- Construct a left-turn lane from southbound K Street and a right-turn lane from northbound K Street for traffic to turn onto Commercial Avenue. Existing Commercial Avenue would be widened and realigned to accommodate the new freeway interchange. A new portion of Commercial Avenue would connect with Laspina Street to become a “T” intersection.
- Construct auxiliary lanes (one lane per direction of traffic) on State Route 99 between the proposed Commercial Avenue interchange and the existing Paige Avenue interchange. The approximately 1,800-foot-long auxiliary lanes with 10-foot shoulders would connect the proposed ramp to the existing Paige Avenue ramp.
- Install shoulders at interchange on-ramps and off-ramps within the Caltrans right-of-way. The ramp outside shoulders would be 8 feet wide; the ramp inside shoulders would be 4 feet wide. The bridge structure would have an 8-foot-wide outside shoulder that can also be used as a bike lane. The bridge structure would not have an inside shoulder.
- The estimated project cost for Alternative 1A is \$59,300,000.

#### ***Alternative 1C***

Alternative 1C would be constructed in two phases. Phase 1 would construct an interchange at Commercial Avenue, south of the existing Paige Avenue overcrossing. Phase 2 would replace the existing Paige Avenue overcrossing structure once additional funding becomes available.

Alternative 1C includes the following:

- Construct a four-lane interchange at Commercial Avenue (two through lanes per direction of traffic), 0.8 mile south of the existing Paige Avenue overcrossing. All existing ramps at Paige Avenue would be permanently closed. Existing Blackstone Street would be realigned as a local road connection between the new Commercial Avenue interchange and Paige Avenue.

- Remove the existing ramps at Paige Avenue and replace them with cul-de-sacs. These roads would become access for the existing businesses onto Blackstone Street or Paige Avenue.
- Once Phase 2 construction funding is available, replace the existing Paige Avenue overcrossing structure to accommodate two 12-foot-wide through lanes with a bike lane and 10-foot-wide sidewalk per direction. Paige Avenue would remain a two-lane roadway with a wide bridge structure. The new bridge would allow future roadway widening at Paige Avenue by the City of Tulare.
- Construct a left-turn lane from southbound K Street and a right-turn lane from northbound K Street for traffic to turn onto Commercial Avenue. Existing Commercial Avenue would be widened and realigned to accommodate the new freeway interchange. Existing Blackstone Street would be realigned as a local road connection between the new Commercial Avenue interchange and Paige Avenue. A new portion of Commercial Avenue would connect with Laspina Street to become a “T” intersection.
- Install shoulders at the interchange on-ramps and off-ramps within the Caltrans right-of-way. The ramp outside shoulders would be 8 feet wide; the ramp inside shoulders would be 4 feet wide. The bridge structure would have an 8-foot-wide outside shoulder that can also be used as a bike lane. The bridge structure would not have an inside shoulder.
- The estimated project cost for Alternative 1C, Phase 1 is \$70,226,000; the estimated project cost for Phase 2 is \$24,085,000.

### *Alternative 2*

Alternative 2 would be constructed in two phases. Phase 1 would construct an interchange at Industrial Avenue. Phase 2 would replace the existing Paige Avenue overcrossing structure once available funding becomes available.

Alternative 2 includes the following:

- Construct a four-lane interchange at Industrial Avenue (two through lanes per direction of traffic). All existing ramps at Paige Avenue would be permanently closed. Existing Blackstone Street would be realigned as a local road connection between the new Industrial Avenue interchange and Paige Avenue.
- Construct a new intersection at Industrial Avenue and Laspina Street.
- Replace the existing Paige Avenue overcrossing structure to accommodate two 12-foot-wide through lanes with a bike lane, 8-foot-wide shoulder and 10-foot-wide sidewalk per each direction. The new bridge would allow future roadway widening at Paige Avenue by the City of Tulare.
- Construct a left-turn lane from southbound K Street and a right-turn lane from northbound K Street for traffic to turn onto Industrial Avenue. Existing Industrial Avenue would be widened and realigned to accommodate the new freeway interchange. Existing Blackstone Street would be realigned as a local road connection between the new Industrial Avenue interchange and Paige Avenue. A

new portion of Industrial Avenue would connect with Laspina Street to become a “T” intersection.

- Install shoulders at interchange on-ramps and off-ramps within the Caltrans right-of-way. Ramp outside shoulders would be 8 feet wide; ramp inside shoulders would be 4 feet wide. The bridge structure would have an 8-foot-wide outside shoulder that can also be used as a bike lane. The bridge structure would not have an inside shoulder.
- The estimated project cost for Alternative 2, Phase 1 is \$79,019,000; the estimated project cost for Phase 2 is \$24,085,000.

### *Alternative 3*

Alternative 3 includes the following:

- Reconstruct the existing interchange at Paige Avenue and realign ramps.
- Replace the existing Paige Avenue overcrossing structure to accommodate two 12-foot-wide through lanes with a bike lane, 8-foot-wide shoulder and 10-foot-wide sidewalk per direction. The new bridge would allow for future freeway widening.
- Provide metered on- and off-ramps from Paige Avenue onto State Route 99.
- Reconstruct intersections at Blackstone Street and Paige Avenue, and Laspina Street and Paige Avenue.
- Add signals to all intersections on Paige Avenue from Blackstone Street to Laspina Street.
- Install culverts to channel Tulare Canal due to new ramp configurations.
- The estimated project cost for Alternative 3 is \$77,194,000.

#### **1.4.2 No-Build (No-Action) Alternative**

The No-Build Alternative has the least environmental impact but does not address the purpose and need of the project. Under the No-Build Alternative, State Route 99 and Paige Avenue would stay in their present conditions. No improvements would be made to State Route 99 or Paige Avenue. No measures would be taken to reduce congestion or improve operations.

## **1.5 Identification of the Preferred Alternative**

After public circulation of the draft environmental document, Alternative 1A was selected as the preferred build alternative by the Project Development Team on April 2, 2019, based on engineering and environmental analysis, and community input. Alternative 1A proposes to construct a new interchange at Commercial Avenue (post mile 26.8) on State Route 99 between 0.9 mile north of Avenue 200 Overcrossing



(post mile 26.3) and Paige Road Overcrossing (post mile 27.6) near the City of Tulare in Tulare County. Paige Avenue interchange will remain open.

Alternative 1A includes the following:

- Construct a new Partial Cloverleaf (Type L-9) interchange at Commercial Avenue.
- Construct new 2,155-foot and 2,100-foot auxiliary lanes in the northbound and southbound directions, respectively, between Paige Avenue interchange and the new interchange at State Route 99.
- Widen the shoulder from 5 feet to 10 feet within the project limits.
- Extend the existing Blackstone Street to connect to the new interchange by providing two travel lanes with a bike lane for both northbound and southbound Blackstone Street per City of Tulare design standards.
- Extend the existing Commercial Avenue to connect between K Street and Laspina Street by providing two 12-foot travel lanes, one 8-foot shoulder, 10-foot sidewalk for eastbound and westbound Commercial Avenue within the right-of-way, and 18-foot wide median along Commercial Avenue between K Street and Laspina Street. Within the City of Tulare right-of-way, it will be an 11-foot travel lane with shoulder per City of Tulare design standards.
- Provide one left-turn lane at southbound K Street and one right-turn lane at northbound K Street onto Commercial Avenue.
- Provide two left-turn lanes at northbound Laspina Street and one right-turn lane at southbound Laspina Street onto Commercial Avenue.
- Provide stop signs at the following intersections: State Route 99 northbound off-ramp/Commercial Avenue, southbound off-ramp/Commercial Avenue, Commercial Avenue/Laspina Street, Commercial Avenue/Blackstone Street and Commercial Avenue/K Street, and it would accommodate for future signalization at these locations if warranted.
- Provide an additional lane on the new on-ramps to accommodate ramp metering.
- Construct drainage basins and a new drainage system to accommodate for runoff.
- Relocate utilities (water, sewer, storm drain, AT&T lines, high pressure gas line, and utility poles).
- The estimated project cost for Alternative 1A is \$59,300,000.

The 2018 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (2018 RTP/SCS), which was prepared by the Tulare County Association of Governments and covers the years 2018-2042, includes construction of a new interchange on State Route 99 at the World Ag Expo and International Agri-Center (Commercial Avenue). This project is also included in the 2013 Federal Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (FSTIP).

## 1.6 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Discussion Prior to Draft Environmental Document

One build alternative (Alternative 1B) was considered and withdrawn for the proposed project. Alternative 1B proposed constructing a new interchange 0.2 mile south of Commercial Avenue, leaving the Paige Avenue interchange on- and off-ramps opened. Laspina Street would require realignment. The Tulare Golf Course, Mefford Airport, the World Ag Expo and International Agri-Center, and the Southern California Energy Education Center would be impacted by this alternative, so this build alternative was eliminated from further study.

## 1.7 Permits and Approvals Needed

The need for permits was determined once a preferred alternative was selected. Potential permits are listed below.

After the public circulation and review period of the draft environmental document was completed, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project. Permits will not be required for Alternative 1A.

**Table 1.3 Permits**

Agency	Permit/Approval	Status
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Section 404	Permits not required
State Water Quality Control Board	Section 401 Certification	Permits not required
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Section 1602	Permits not required

## **Chapter 2** Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

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As part of the scoping and environmental analysis done for the project, the following environmental issues were considered, but no adverse impacts were identified. So, there is no further discussion of these issues in this document.

- Coastal Zone—There will be no effects to coastal resources because the project is not located within the coastal zone (Field visit, June 29, 2018).
- Wild and Scenic Rivers—There are no wild or scenic rivers in the project area (Field visit, June 29, 2018).
- Parks and Recreational Facilities—There will be no effect to parks or recreational facilities because the project is not located within parks or recreational facilities. There are no 4(f) resources (parks, recreational facilities, wildlife and waterfowl refuges) within approximately 0.5 mile of any of the project alternatives (Field visit, June 29, 2018).
- Growth—The project will not induce unplanned growth in the area (Caltrans Community Impact Assessment, August 2018).
- Community Character and Cohesion—The project will not change community character and cohesion (Caltrans Community Impact Assessment, August 2018).
- Fish Resources—This project is located outside of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) jurisdiction, so an NMFS species list is not required and no effects to NMFS species are anticipated (Caltrans Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts, July 3, 2018).
- Environmental Justice—Alternatives 1A, 1C, 2 and 3 will not cause disproportionately high and adverse effects on any minority or low-income populations in accordance with the provisions of Executive Order 12898. No further environmental justice analysis is required (Caltrans Community Impact Assessment, August 2018).
- Cultural Resources—No historic properties would be affected. If human remains are discovered, California Health and Safety Code (H&SC) Section 7050.5 states that further disturbances and activities shall stop in any area or nearby area suspected to overlie remains, and the County Coroner contacted. If the remains are thought by the coroner to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), who, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, will then notify the Most Likely Descendent (MLD). At this time, the person who discovered the remains will contact Ms. Mandy Macias at Caltrans so that she may work with the Most Likely Descendent

on the respectful treatment and disposition of the remains. Further provisions of Public Resources Code 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable (Caltrans Historic Property Survey Report, June 27, 2018).

- **Natural Communities**—No natural communities exist within the project limits (Caltrans Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts, July 3, 2018).
- **Wetlands and Other Waters**—There are no wetlands or other waters in the project area (Caltrans Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts, July 3, 2018).
- **Plant Species**—No federal or state listed plant species have the potential to occur within the project area (Caltrans Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts, July 3, 2018).
- **Geology, Soils and Topography**—No substantial faults are known to cross Tulare County, according to the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Maps and the State of California Department of Conservation (<http://tularecounty.ca.gov/rma/index.cfm/projects/planning-projects/applicant-projects/papich-construction-asphalt-batch-plant/11-papich-3-6-geology-and-soils/>).
- **Hydraulics/Floodplain**—The project is not located in a 100-year base floodplain (Caltrans Technical Information for Location Hydraulic Study, August 2018).

## **2.1 Human Environment**

### **2.1.1 Existing and Future Land Use**

#### ***Affected Environment***

A Community Impact Assessment was completed for this project in August 2018.

Land use in the immediate vicinity of the project is mostly industrial with limited commercial and residential zones that include heavy industrial, light industrial, single-family residential, multiple-family residential, general commercial and retail commercial. See Figures 2-1 and 2-2 for land use maps.

A mobile home park, a motel and two truck stops sit next to all build alternatives. Across the street from them, to the north, is a suburban neighborhood of single-family homes. The rest of the area in the project vicinity is zoned as industrial or commercial. Three contiguous parcels of cultivated land next to the mobile home park are zoned as retail commercial and light industrial parcels. All three parcels are zoned as light industrial parcels in the 2035 City of Tulare General Plan.

The surrounding area near the project site does not contain any land officially described as parks and recreational facilities. The proposed interchange project is entirely within the limits of the City and County of Tulare.

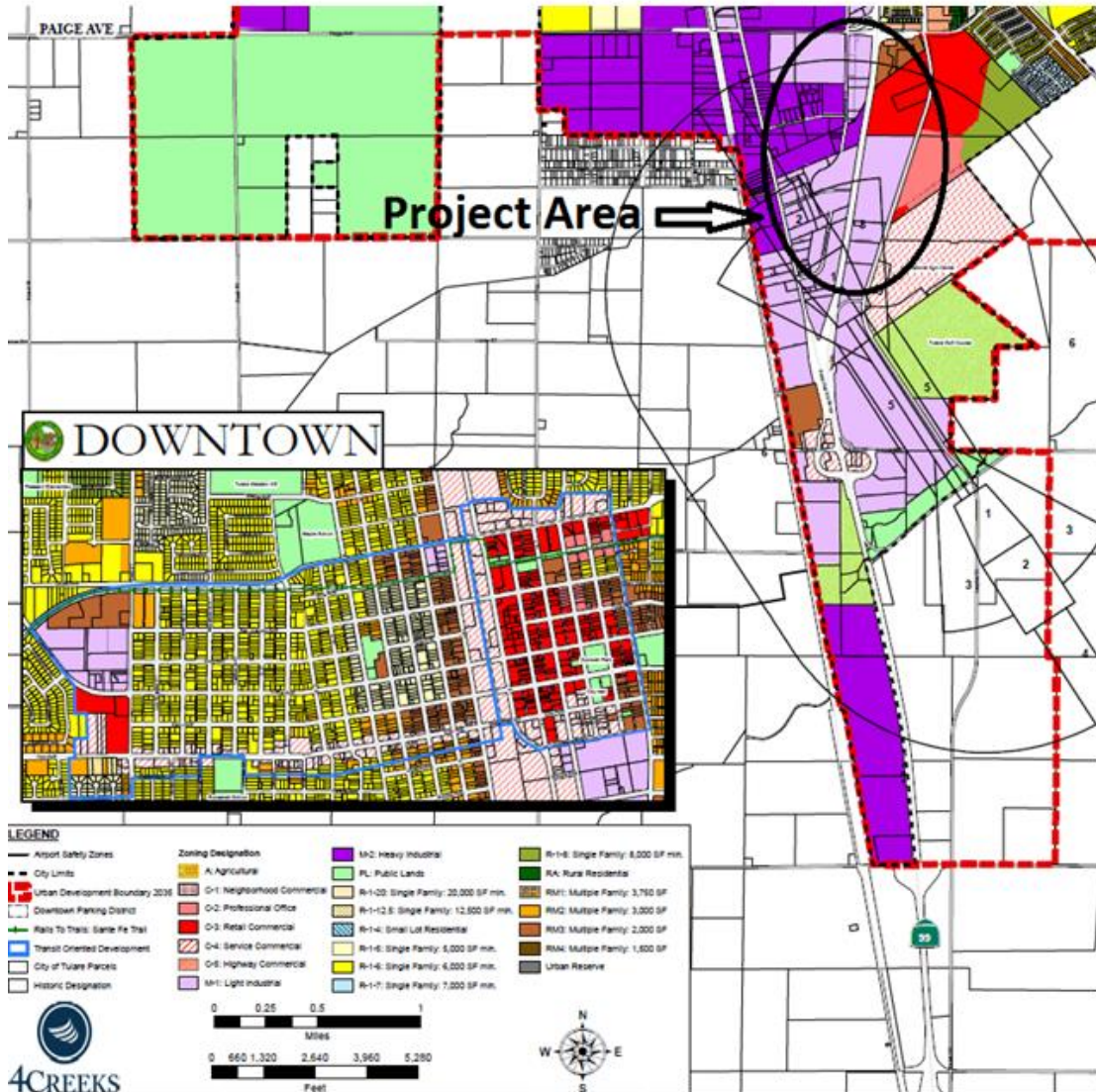


Figure 2-1 Existing Land Use

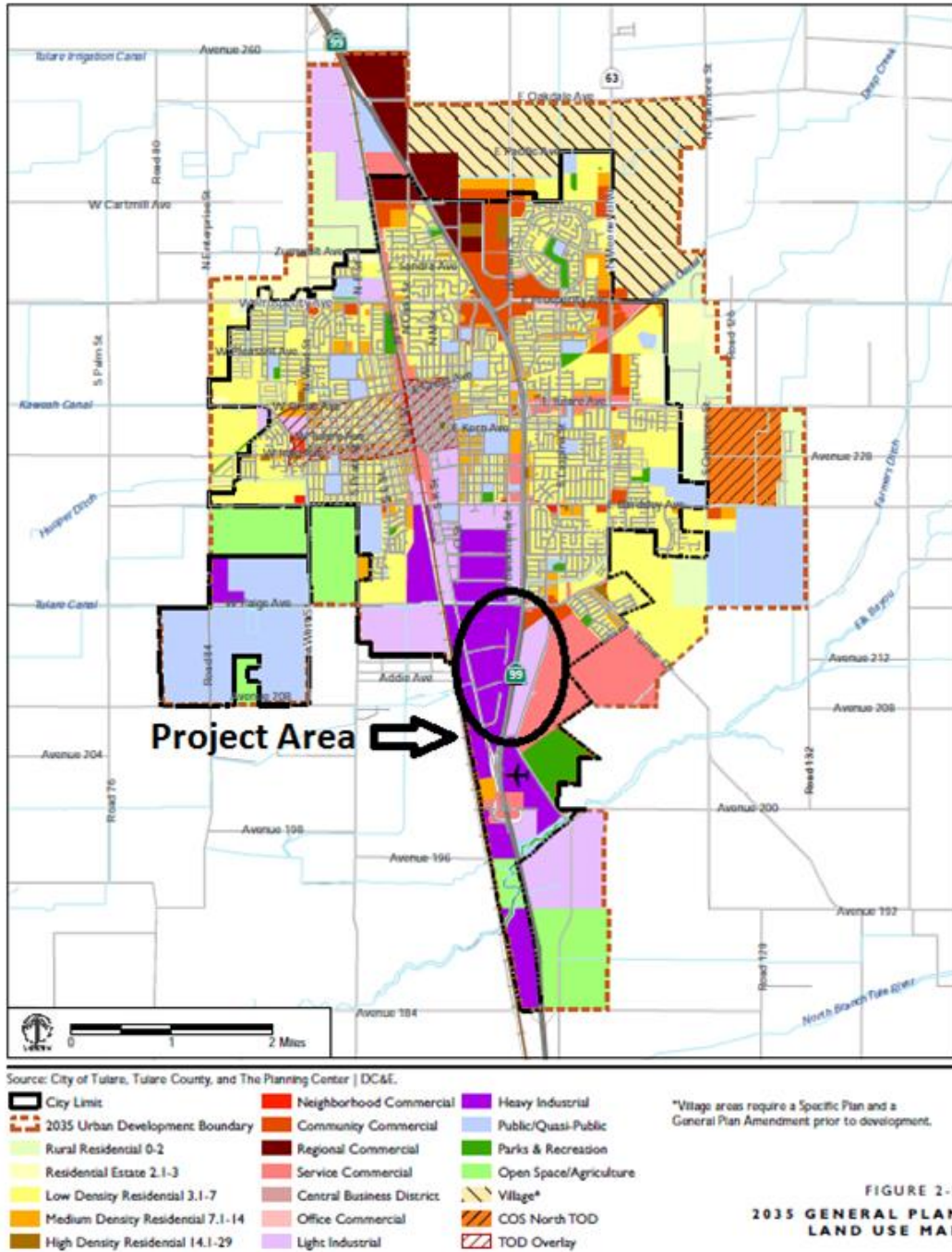


Figure 2-2 City of Tulare 2035 General Plan Land Use

### **Environmental Consequences**

#### *Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3*

The project does not open new areas to development because the area is already accessible and largely developed.

Changes in land use and density are not expected from this project. The project impacts prime farmland but does not reduce what would otherwise be zoned as agricultural in the study area since it is not currently or foreseeably zoned as such. The project area is expected to become more industrial. The parcels along State Route 99 that are currently zoned as light industrial will become heavy industrial.

The project area is expected to grow and develop, with or without the proposed project. Growth is expected to occur at an average annual rate of 2.7 percent over the next 20 years, according to the City of Tulare General Plan. The project aims to accommodate the expected growth and prevent the potential overflow of future rising traffic volumes onto State Route 99; it therefore does not influence growth in the study area.

In anticipation of planned growth and in consideration of environmental factors that necessitate sustainable initiatives, the City of Tulare has added a village zoning designation in its general plan. This designation applies to an area in the northeast quadrant of the city and aims to create distinctive, walkable communities. It requires that all proposed development receive approval for consistency with the specific vision for that location.

The proposed project does not conflict with that vision because the interchange project is at the far southern end of the city limits and has no direct or indirect impact on the village location, except to positively improve the flow of traffic on mainline State Route 99.

Community connectivity within the project area would remain the same before, during and after construction.

#### *No-Build Alternative*

No land would be acquired with the No-Build Alternative, and land use would remain as currently zoned.

### **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

#### *Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 and the No-Build Alternative*

Avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures would not be anticipated.

## **2.1.2 Consistency with State, Regional, and Local Plans and Programs**

### ***Affected Environment***

The project is consistent with local, regional, and statewide plans and policies.

#### *Tulare County Bicycle Plan*

The Tulare County Bicycle Plan identifies proposed bike lanes on K Street west of State Route 99 and a Class I bike path along Laspina Street east of State Route 99. A Class II bike lane facility would be provided on both sides at the proposed interchange within the project limits, including the new bridge structure. The Class II bike lanes would connect to a future bicycle network.

The project area contains a narrow overcrossing along Paige Avenue that lacks bike lanes; nearby, Laspina Street has bike lanes on either side. But there is no connection between the west and east sides of the study area because of State Route 99. The proposed project would construct bike lines over State Route 99.

#### *Tulare General Plan*

If Alternative 1A or 1C is chosen, a new interchange would be constructed at or near Commercial Avenue, which currently does not connect to State Route 99. This would support the 2015-2035 Tulare General Plan, prepared by the City of Tulare and adopted on October 7, 2014. The plan includes the proposal of a new major arterial roadway along Commercial Avenue between K Street and Laspina Street.

#### *Tulare County Regional Transportation Plan*

If Alternative 1A or 1C is chosen, a new interchange would be constructed at or near Commercial Avenue, which currently does not connect to State Route 99. This would support the 2014-2040 Regional Transportation Plan, prepared by the Tulare County Association of Governments and adopted on June 20, 2014. The plan includes interchange improvements anticipated for the 20-year horizon within the corridor of State Route 99 at Paige Avenue and Commercial Avenue.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

#### *Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3*

All build alternatives are consistent with the 2014 Tulare County Association of Governments Regional Transportation Plan. The build alternatives would improve safety and operations at the interchange while also enhancing the regional corridor and providing effective and efficient goods movement within the region.

All build alternatives are consistent with 2019 Tulare County Association of Governments Federal Transportation Improvement Program and the 2018 Tulare County State Transportation Improvement Program. The proposed project is identified in each program.



None of the build alternatives would affect land use. All existing and planned land use in the area would remain the same.

### *No-Build Alternative*

The No-Build Alternative would not be consistent with the 2014 Tulare County Association of Governments Regional Transportation Plan because it would not provide the transportation-related infrastructure needed to improve safety and operations at the interchange nor accommodate planned development in the region.

The No-Build Alternative would be inconsistent with both the Federal Transportation Improvement Program and State Transportation Improvement Program because the proposed project is identified as a necessary project in both the state and federal transportation programs.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

No avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures would be necessary for land use.

## **2.1.3 Farmland**

### ***Regulatory Setting***

The National Environmental Policy Act and the Farmland Protection Policy Act (7 U.S. Code 4201-4209; and its regulations, 7 Code of Federal Regulations Part 658) require federal agencies, such as the Federal Highway Administration, to coordinate with the Natural Resources Conservation Service if their activities may irreversibly convert farmland (directly or indirectly) to nonagricultural use. For purposes of the Farmland Protection Policy Act, farmland includes prime farmland, unique farmland, and land of statewide or local importance.

The California Environmental Quality Act requires the review of projects that would convert Williamson Act contract land to non-agricultural uses. The main purposes of the Williamson Act are to preserve agricultural land and to encourage open space preservation and efficient urban growth. The Williamson Act provides incentives to landowners through reduced property taxes to discourage the early conversion of agricultural and open space lands to other uses.

### ***Affected Environment***

A Community Impact Assessment was completed in August 2018.

Prime farmland is scattered throughout the study area and exists within the project vicinity. A field of cultivated wheat sits west of Laspina Street, bordering the Tulare Inn Mobile Home Park. An almond grove is across the street to the east.

Farmland of statewide importance is scattered throughout the study area. Farmland of local importance is scattered throughout the study area and exists within the project vicinity.

## Environmental Consequences

### Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C and Alternative 2

A U.S. Department of Agriculture Farmland Impact Rating was completed for the project on June 10, 2018 (see Appendix D).

Prime farmland is scattered throughout the study area and exists within the project vicinity. If Alternative 1A, 1C or 2 is chosen, such parcels would be impacted, including a field of cultivated wheat west of Laspina Street bordering the Tulare Inn Mobile Home Park. Construction of a new interchange would bisect the parcel. The U.S. Department of Agriculture rated the impact of this farmland conversion as 140 points in value out of 260. This represents 0.003 percent of farmable land in the county.

Farmland would not be impacted under Alternative 3.

Nineteen acres of farmland would be directly converted for the proposed project (see Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1 Farmland Conversion**

Farmland Conversion by Alternative						
Alternative	Land Directly Converted (acres)	Land Indirectly Converted (acres)	Prime and Unique Farmland (acres)	Percentage of Farmland in County	Percentage of Farmland in State	Farmland Conversion Impact Rating
1A and 1C	19	56	56	0.003	0.00066	140
2	19	66	66	0.003	0.00066	140
3	0		0	0	0	0

Source: Form NRCS-CPA-106 (Farmland Conversion Impact Rating for Corridor-Type Projects)

The field of cultivated wheat is split into three parcels that are currently zoned as light industrial and retail commercial. In the 2035 City of Tulare General Plan, all three parcels are classified as light industrial. The proposed project therefore would not reduce what would have otherwise been classified as agricultural land.

Several Williamson Act parcels surround the study area, but none are within it or in the immediate vicinity of the project. Farmland of statewide importance and local importance are scattered throughout the study area. None of the build alternatives would affect these parcels of land.

### Alternative 3 and No-Build Alternative

No farmland would be converted under Alternative 3 and the No-Build Alternative.

### **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

Because the project does not reduce the amount of land classified as agricultural and the farmland impact rating is less than 260 points, there would be no avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures.

#### **2.1.4 Relocations and Real Property Acquisition**

##### **Regulatory Setting**

The Caltrans Relocation Assistance Program is based on the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (Uniform Act), and Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 24. The purpose of the Relocation Assistance Program is to ensure that persons displaced as a result of a transportation project are treated fairly, consistently, and equitably so that such persons will not suffer disproportionate injuries as a result of projects designed for the benefit of the public as a whole. See Appendix C for a summary of the Relocation Assistance Program.

All relocation services and benefits are administered without regard to race, color, national origin, persons with disabilities, religion, age, or sex. See Appendix B for a copy of the Caltrans Director's Title VI policy statement.

##### **Affected Environment**

A Community Impact Assessment for the project was completed in August 2018.

The Budget Inn and Tulare Inn Mobile Home Park sit next to the State Route 99 northbound off-ramp. Gutierrez Tire Service, Paige Truck Stop gas station and a ready-mix concrete batch plant are also within this area. A drainage ditch and water well are also in the area.

##### **Environmental Consequences**

###### **Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3**

Alternatives 1A, 1C, and 3 would require partial acquisition of the ready-mix concrete batch plant property. Alternative 2 would require full acquisition of the ready-mix concrete batch plant.

Alternative 3 would require full acquisition of Gutierrez Tire Service, Paige Truck Stop, and the Budget Inn. A residential relocation of the manager of the Budget Inn is also anticipated; the owner/manager of the motel has a residence onsite.

Alternative 1A would impact approximately 35 parcels within heavy industrial, light industrial, and residential zoning, including parcels belonging to City of Tulare or Tulare County. Business and outdoor advertising signs would have to be relocated.

Alternative 1C would have an impact similar to Alternative 1A. Approximately 36 parcels within heavy industrial and light industrial zoning, including parcels

belonging to City of Tulare or Tulare County, would be affected by this alternative. Business and outdoor advertising signs would have to be relocated.

Alternative 2 would impact approximately 36 parcels within heavy industrial and light industrial zoning, including parcels belonging to City of Tulare or Tulare County. Business and outdoor advertising signs would have to be relocated. This design would impact the functionality of parking lots that would potentially be reconfigured or replaced.

Alternative 3 would impact approximately 38 parcels within single-/multiple-family residential, heavy industrial and light industrial, commercial and residential zoning, including parcels belonging to City of Tulare or Tulare County. This design would impact several backyards of the single-family residences and affect drainage ditches and water well relocation. Business and outdoor advertising signs would have to be relocated.

Business and residential displacements will not occur under preferred Alternative 1A.

#### *No-Build Alternative*

There would be no relocations under the No-Build Alternative.

### **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

#### *Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3*

To maintain access for the Tulare Inn Mobile Home Park, an alternate driveway would be constructed off Laspina Street, cutting through the adjacent farmland parcel and connecting to an opening in the median.

Caltrans would acquire the needed property in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (see Appendix C).

#### *No-Build Alternative*

Avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures are not required for the No-Build Alternative.

## **2.1.5 Utilities and Emergency Services**

### ***Affected Environment***

Water, sewer, storm drain, and AT&T lines are located within the project area. The existing manholes, water valve, and storm drain inlet would be adjusted to proposed grade on the new pavement. There are also communication conduits, vaults, electrical conduits and cabinets, high pressure gas line, and utility poles along both sides of the existing roadway.

Table 2.2 lists the emergency services available to the community.

**Table 2.2 Emergency Services**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Facility Type</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Distance</b>
Tulare Fire Station	Fire Suppression	2082 E. Foster Drive, Tulare, CA 93274	0.5 mile
Tulare Police Department	Police Services	260 M Street, Tulare, CA 93274	2.5 mile
Life Star Ambulance	Ambulance Services	234 N. M Street, Tulare, CA 93274	3 miles

Source: Caltrans Community Impact Assessment 2018

### **Environmental Consequences**

#### *Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3*

Utility relocation is required for Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2, and Alternative 3. Existing utilities (telecommunication overhead and underground lines, sewer and water line, electric and gas lines) along Paige Avenue between Blackstone Street and Laspina Street, and existing Commercial Avenue and Industrial Avenue, may need to be protected when the project resurfaces the existing pavement to match with the new segment of the roadway and interchange. Existing manholes would need to be raised to grade. Existing overhead or underground facilities may need to be relocated due to roadway widening. Storm drain basins that would be impacted may require relocation with City of Tulare coordination. Tulare Canal just north of existing Paige Avenue may need to be realigned or channeled with a box culvert if impacted. Coordination with Tulare Irrigation District would be required.

Response times for emergency services would not be affected during construction because access would not change. After the project is constructed, emergency response times would be better than they would be without the project because the project aims to prevent congestion and traffic overflow onto State Route 99.

#### *No-Build Alternative*

No utility relocation would be required. There could be potential delays to emergency services due to increased traffic congestion under the No-Build Alternative.

### **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

#### *Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3*

All utility relocation work would be done by the utility companies. Utility users would be informed of the date and time in advance of any service disruptions.

Construction work on the irrigation ditches and canals would be coordinated with the irrigation companies. All work would occur when the ditches and canals were dry.

A traffic management plan would be developed to minimize delays and maximize safety during construction. The traffic management plan may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Release of information through brochures and mailers, press releases, and notices from the Caltrans public information office.
- Use of fixed and portable changeable message signs.
- Incident management through the Construction Zone Enhancement Enforcement Program and the transportation management plan.

## **2.1.6 Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities**

### ***Regulatory Setting***

Caltrans, as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration, directs that full consideration should be given to the safe accommodation of pedestrians and bicyclists during the development of federal-aid highway projects (see 23 Code of Federal Regulations 652). It further directs that the special needs of the elderly and the disabled must be considered in all federal-aid projects that include pedestrian facilities. When current or anticipated pedestrian and/or bicycle traffic presents a potential conflict with motor vehicle traffic, every effort must be made to minimize the detrimental effects on all highway users who share the facility.

In July 1999, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) issued an Accessibility Policy Statement pledging a fully accessible multimodal transportation system. Accessibility in federally assisted programs is governed by the USDOT regulations (49 Code of Federal Regulations 27) implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S. Code 794). The Federal Highway Administration has enacted regulations for the implementation of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including a commitment to build transportation facilities that provide equal access for all persons. These regulations require application of the ADA requirements to federal-aid projects, including Transportation Enhancement Activities.

### ***Affected Environment***

A Traffic Operations Analysis was completed for the project in October 2018.

State Route 99 serves as the main route of passage through the affected environment. Side streets extend out from and into the surrounding neighborhoods, connecting to residential areas and industrial sites. While the study area has bicycle lanes in its central and northern sections, none exist near the project area.

The State Route 99 northbound off-ramp at Paige Avenue curves westward around the Budget Inn before connecting to Paige Avenue. Tulare Inn Mobile Home Park has one entrance/exit at this area of the off-ramp. Currently, there is minimal pedestrian access connecting the east and west sides of the study area across State Route 99;

only a narrow, raised sidewalk extends along one side of the Paige Avenue overcrossing.

Along Commercial Avenue near K Street are existing businesses with driveways entering/exiting their parking lots. There is also street parking along Commercial Avenue on both sides of the street.

The study area is served by seven public transit bus routes that run on the northern edge of the project area. Route 2 serves southeast Tulare and passes in front of the current entrance of the Tulare Inn Mobile Home Park; the route goes from Laspina Street south to the corner of Paige Avenue, then turns east along Foster Drive.

The Paige Avenue/Blackstone Street intersection is the adjacent local intersection of southbound ramps at the Paige Avenue interchange. It currently operates with all-way stop control with level of service C during peak hours. The Paige Avenue/ Laspina Street intersection is the adjacent local intersection of northbound ramps at the Paige Avenue interchange. It currently operates with all-way stop control with a level of service D and F during peak hours.

Bardsley Avenue is an east-west road crossing State Route 99 just 1 mile north of the Paige Avenue overcrossing. All on- and off-ramps for northbound and southbound directions are in single-lane configuration. This interchange is currently operating with one-way stop control at the northbound and southbound off-ramps. Intersections at Bardsley Avenue/Blackstone Street, Bardsley Avenue/Spruce (north), and Bardsley Avenue/Laspina Street have traffic signals, and Bardsley Avenue/Spruce (south) has one-way stop control.

Avenue 200/Rankin Road is an east-west road crossing State Route 99 about 2 miles south of the Paige Avenue overcrossing. All on- and off-ramps for northbound and southbound directions are in single-lane configuration. The northbound ramps/Tex Drive intersection has one-way stop control; southbound ramps/K Street has two-way stop control. The northbound ramps connect to Tex Drive and K Street, and Hosfield Drive. The southbound ramps connect to Rankin Road and K Street. Hosfield Drive continues along the east side of State Route 99 and then becomes Avenue 200.

Table 2.3 shows the levels of service for the intersections affected by the project.

**Table 2.3 Existing and Future Level of Service**

Intersection	Traffic Control	Existing		LOS in 2027		LOS in 2047	
		A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
State Route 99 northbound ramps/ Paige Avenue	One-way stop control	C	D	F	F	F	F
State Route 99 southbound ramps/ Blackstone Street	Two-way stop control	D	C	F	F	F	F
Paige Avenue/Blackstone Street	All-way stop control	C	C	E	F	F	F
Paige Avenue/Laspina Street	All-way stop control	D	F	F	F	F	F
State Route 99 northbound ramps/Tex Drive	One-way stop control	A	A	A	B	B	B
State Route 99 south bound ramps (Rankin Road)/K Street	Two-way stop control	B	B	B	C	C	F
State Route 99 northbound ramps/ Bardsley Avenue	One-way stop control	F	F	F	F	F	F
State Route 99 southbound ramps/ Bardsley Avenue	One-way stop control	F	F	F	F	F	F
Bardsley Avenue/Blackstone Street	Signal	C	C	C	D	E	F
Bardsley Avenue/Spruce Street (South)	One-way stop control	C	D	E	F	F	F
Bardsley Avenue/Spruce Street (North)	Signal	A	A	B	A	B	B
Bardsley Avenue/Laspina Street	Signal	C	D	D	E	F	F

Source: Caltrans Operations Analysis, October 2018

Table 2.4 shows the annual average daily traffic counts for project interchanges.

**Table 2.4 Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts - Existing Conditions**

2018	Rankin Road Drive IC (Avenue 200)			Paige Avenue IC			Bardsley Avenue IC		
	Northbound Off-ramp	Mainline	Northbound On-ramp	Northbound Off-ramp	Mainline	Northbound Slip On- ramp from Westbound	Northbound On-ramp	Mainline	Northbound Off-ramp
	Existing AADT	800	27,740	720	2,300	26,160	3,300	1,340	28,120

Existing	Rankin Road Drive IC (Avenue 200)			Paige Avenue IC			Bardsley Avenue IC		
	Southbound On-ramp	Mainline	Southbound Off-ramp	Southbound On-ramp	Mainline	Southbound Off-ramp	Southbound On-ramp	Mainline	Southbound Off-ramp
	AADT	1,050	26,510	1,200	4,000	23,710	4,500	2,030	26,180

Source: Caltrans Technical Planning, October 2018

### Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3

Tables 2.5-2.8 show the forecasted levels of service for Alternatives 1A, 1C, 2 and 3.



**Table 2.5 Level of Service (LOS) Alternative 1A**

Intersection	Traffic Control	LOS in 2027		LOS in 2047	
		A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
State Route 99 northbound ramps/Commercial Avenue	Signal	A	A	A	A
State Route 99 southbound ramps/Commercial Avenue	Signal	A	A	B	A
Commercial Avenue/Laspina Street	Signal	B	B	B	C
Commercial Avenue/Blackstone Street	Signal	B	B	C	B
Commercial Avenue/K Street	Signal	B	B	C	C
State Route 99 northbound ramps/Paige Avenue	Signal	C	B	C	C
State Route 99 southbound ramps/Blackstone Street	Signal	B	B	D	B
Paige Avenue/Blackstone Street	Signal	C	C	D	D
Paige Avenue/Laspina Street	Signal	C	C	D	C
State Route 99 northbound ramps/Tex Drive	One-way stop control	A	B	B	B
State Route 99 south ramps (Rankin Road) /K Street	Two-way stop control	B	B	C	D
State Route 99 northbound ramps/Bardsley Avenue	One-way stop control	F	F	F	F
State Route 99 southbound ramps/Bardsley Avenue	One-way stop control	F	F	F	F
Bardsley Avenue/Blackstone Street	Signal	C	D	E	F
Bardsley Avenue/Spruce Street (South)	One-way stop control	E	F	F	F
Bardsley Avenue/Spruce Street (North)	Signal	B	A	B	B
Bardsley Avenue/Laspina Street	Signal	D	E	F	F
Bardsley Avenue/Laspina Street	Signal	D	E	F	F

Source: Caltrans Traffic Operations Analysis October 2018

**Table 2.6 Level of Service (LOS) Alternative 1C**

Intersection	Traffic Control	LOS in 2027		LOS in 2047	
		A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
State Route 99 northbound ramps/ Commercial Avenue	Signal	A	A	A	B
State Route 99 southbound ramps/ Commercial Avenue	Signal	A	A	B	A
Commercial Avenue/Laspina Street	Signal	B	B	C	C
Commercial Avenue/Blackstone Street	Signal	B	B	C	B
Commercial Avenue/K Street	Signal	B	B	C	C
Paige Avenue/Blackstone Street	Signal	C	C	D	D
Paige Avenue/Laspina Street	Signal	C	C	D	D
State Route 99 northbound ramps/Tex Drive	One-way stop control	A	B	B	B
State Route 99 southbound ramps (Rankin Road)/K Street	Two-way stop control	B	C	C	D
State Route 99 northbound ramps/ Bardsley Avenue	One-way stop control	F	F	F	F
State Route 99 southbound ramps/ Bardsley Avenue	One-way stop control	F	F	F	F
Bardsley Avenue/Blackstone Street	Signal	C	D	E	F
Bardsley Avenue/Spruce Street (South)	One-way stop control	E	F	F	F
Bardsley Avenue/Spruce Street (North)	Signal	B	A	C	B
Bardsley Avenue/Laspina Street	Signal	E	F	F	F

Source: Caltrans Traffic Operations Analysis, October 2018

**Table 2.7 Level of Service (LOS) Alternative 2**

Intersection	Traffic Control	LOS in 2027		LOS in 2047	
		A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
State Route 99 northbound ramps/Industrial Avenue	Signal	A	A	B	B
State Route 99 southbound ramps/Industrial Avenue	Signal	A	A	B	B
Industrial Avenue/Laspina Street	Signal	B	B	C	C
Industrial Avenue/Blackstone Street	Signal	B	B	C	C
Industrial Avenue/K Street	Signal	B	B	C	C
Paige Avenue/Blackstone Street	Signal	C	C	D	D
Paige Avenue/Laspina Street	Signal	C	D	D	D
State Route 99 northbound ramps/Tex Drive	One-way stop control	A	B	B	B
State Route 99 southbound ramps (Rankin Road)/K Street	Two-way stop control	B	C	C	D
State Route 99 northbound ramps/Bardsley Avenue	One-way stop control	F	F	F	F
State Route 99 southbound Ramps/Bardsley Avenue	One-way stop control	F	F	F	F
Bardsley Avenue/Blackstone Street	Signal	C	D	E	F
Bardsley Avenue/Spruce Street (South)	One-way stop control	E	F	F	F
Bardsley Avenue/Spruce Street (North)	Signal	B	A	C	B
Bardsley Avenue/Laspina Street	Signal	E	F	F	F

Source: Caltrans Traffic Operations Analysis, October 2018

**Table 2.8 Level of Service (LOS) Alternative 3**

Intersection	Traffic Control	LOS in 2027		LOS in 2047	
		A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
State Route 99 northbound ramps/Paige Avenue	Signal	A	A	C	B
State Route 99 southbound ramps/Paige Avenue	Signal	B	B	C	C
Paige Avenue/Blackstone Street	Signal	C	C	C	D
Paige Avenue/Laspina Street	Signal	C	C	C	D
State Route 99 northbound ramps/Tex Drive	One-way stop control	A	B	B	B
State Route 99 southbound ramps (Rankin Road)/K Street	Two-way stop control	B	C	C	F
State Route 99 northbound ramps/Bardsley Avenue	One-way stop control	F	F	F	F
State Route 99 southbound ramps/Bardsley Avenue	One-way stop control	F	F	F	F
Bardsley Avenue/Blackstone Street	Signal	C	D	E	F
Bardsley Avenue/Spruce Street (South)	One-way stop control	E	F	F	F
Bardsley Avenue/Spruce Street (North)	Signal	B	A	B	B
Bardsley Avenue/Laspina Street	Signal	D	E	F	F

Source: Caltrans Traffic Operations Analysis, October 2018

State Route 99 is projected to be a four-lane facility by 2027 and a six-lane facility by 2047. A traffic volume forecast for this project was performed for horizon years 2027, 2037 and 2047 (see Tables 2.9 and 2.10).

**Table 2.9 Forecasted Traffic**

Category	Design Periods (within post mile limits 26.3 to 28.1)						
	State Route 99 Mainline	Alternatives 1A and 1C (at Commercial Avenue)		Alternative 2 (at Industrial Avenue)		Alternative 3 (at Paige Avenue)	
	20 years 2027-2047	10 years 2027-2037	20 years 2027-2047	10 years 2027-2037	20 years 2027-2047	10 years 2027-2037	20 years 2027-2047
2027 ADT	68,500	6,700	6,700	7,200	7,200	20,000	20,000
2037 ADT	-	12,000	-	12,900	-	24,500	-
2047 ADT	105,500	-	21,500	-	23,100	-	30,000
2037 DHV	9,600	1,100	-	1,150	-	2,250	-
2047 DHV	-	-	1,950	-	2,100	-	2,750
Peak-Hour Directional Volume Percentage	59%	59%	59%	59%	59%	59%	59%
Truck (Design Hourly Volume)	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%
Traffic Index	15.5	11	12.5	11	13	12.5	13.5
Design Speed	70 mph	45 mph		45 mph		45 mph	

AADT: Average Annual Daily Traffic  
DHV: Design hourly Volume

Source: Caltrans Technical Planning, October 2018

**Table 2.10 Adjacent Existing Interchanges Outside the Project Limits  
Forecasted Traffic**

Category	Design Periods (post miles 25.4, 28.6)							
	Alternative 1A		Alternative 1C		Alternative 2		Alternative 3	
	Rankin Road/ Avenue 200 at K Street	Bardsley Avenue	Rankin Road/ Avenue 200 at K Street	Bardsley Avenue	Rankin Road/ Avenue 200 at K Street	Bardsley Avenue	Rankin Road/ Avenue 200 at K Street	Bardsley Avenue
	20 years 2027-2047	20 years 2027-2047	20 years 2027-2047	20 years 2027-2047	20 years 2027-2047	20 years 2027-2047	20 years 2027-2047	20 years 2027-2047
2027 ADT	2,750	23,800	2,800	24,400	2,800	24,400	2,850	23,800
2047 ADT	4,750	36,500	4,950	39,500	4,950	39,500	5,400	36,500
2047 DHV	480	3,650	490	3,950	490	3,950	540	3,650
Peak-Hour Directional Volume Percentage	59%	59%	59%	59%	59%	59%	59%	59%
Truck (Design Hourly Volume)	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%
Traffic Index	11	14	11	14	11	14	11	14
Design Speed	25 mph		25 mph		25 mph		25 mph	

AADT: Average Annual Daily Traffic  
DHV: Design hourly Volume

Source: Caltrans Technical Planning, October 2018

Additional analysis was done for each alternative (1A, 1C, 2, 3, and No-Build) to evaluate the local operation at the adjacent interchanges. These interchanges are at Bardsley Avenue (post mile 28.6) and Avenue 200/Rankin Road (post mile 25.4). The current year (2018), implementation year (2027), and design year (2047) were analyzed.

Under Alternative 1A and Alternative 1C, it may be necessary to widen Commercial Avenue per the City of Tulare roadway standards for industrial corridors. Driveways for the businesses would be reconstructed. Some parking spaces would be eliminated because of the street widening. Access would be restored at the same locations unless property owners propose different locations. If so, a detailed study would determine if access at another location were feasible or not.

Under Alternative 2, it may be necessary to widen Industrial Avenue per the City of Tulare roadway standards for industrial corridors. Driveways for the businesses would need to be reconstructed. Some parking spaces would be eliminated because of the street widening. Access would be restored at the same locations unless property owners propose different locations. If so, a detailed study would determine if access at another location were feasible or not.

Under Alternative 3, the Tulare Inn Mobile Home Park would lose access at its current entrance/exit at the intersection of the State Route 99 northbound off-ramp and Paige Avenue.

Under Alternative 3, residents of the Tulare Inn Mobile Home Park, a senior citizen community, would have to walk farther to the bus stop than they presently do. From the proposed relocation of the entrance, these residents would have to walk up Laspina Street on an unpaved side of the road. The mobile home park likely has residents with mobility issues, making it difficult for them to cross this new route. The widening of Paige Avenue at the corner of Laspina Street would impact the bus stop.

#### *No-Build Alternative*

Under the No-Build Alternative, a level of service of F is expected at the northbound on- and off-ramp at the Paige Avenue interchange and the southbound off-ramp at the Paige Avenue interchange by 2047. A level of service F is expected at Paige Avenue and Blackstone Street and Paige Avenue and Laspina Street by 2047. See Table 2.11.

**Table 2.11 Level of Service No-Build Alternative**

Intersection	Traffic Control	Existing A.M.	Existing P.M.	LOS in 2027		LOS in 2047	
				A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
State Route 99 northbound ramps/ Paige Avenue	One-way stop control	C	D	F	F	F	F
State Route 99 southbound ramps/ Blackstone Street	Two-way stop control	D	C	F	F	F	F
Paige Avenue/ Blackstone Street	All-way stop control	C	C	E	F	F	F
Paige Avenue/ Laspina Street	All-way stop control	D	F	F	F	F	F

Source: Caltrans Traffic Operations, October 2018

**Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

*Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3*

A traffic management plan would be developed to minimize delays and maximize safety for motorists. The traffic management plan may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Release of information through brochures and mailers, press releases, and advertisements managed by the public information office.
- Use of fixed and portable changeable message signs.
- Incident management through the Construction Zone Enhancement Enforcement Program and the transportation management center.
- Use of one-way traffic control.
- Use of detour(s) during construction.

Bike lanes would be constructed outside the right-of-way where the existing parking is provided. Bike lanes would be within the Caltrans right-of-way at the outside shoulder, between the ramp intersections and along the bridge structure. Sidewalks would also be constructed.

Under Alternative 3, a driveway would be constructed off Laspina Street to maintain access to the Tulare Inn Mobile Home Park.

**2.1.7 Visual/Aesthetics**

**Regulatory Setting**

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, establishes that the federal government use all practicable means to ensure all Americans safe, healthful,

productive, and *aesthetically* (emphasis added) and culturally pleasing surroundings (42 U.S. Code 4331[b][2]). To further emphasize this point, the Federal Highway Administration, in its implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act (23 U.S. Code 109[h]), directs that final decisions on projects are to be made in the best overall public interest taking into account adverse environmental impacts, including among others, the destruction or disruption of aesthetic values.

The California Environmental Quality Act establishes that it is the policy of the state to take all action necessary to provide the people of the state “with...enjoyment of *aesthetic*, natural, scenic and historic environmental qualities” (California Public Resources Code Section 21001[b]).

### **Affected Environment**

A Visual Impact Assessment was completed for the project in October 2018.

The landscape of the project area is flat with wide views of the Sierra Nevada mountain range to the east and various coastal ranges to the west. These mountain ranges provide the only naturally occurring variation in topography within the project corridor. The flat land is planted with vast agricultural fields.

The visual character of the corridor is defined by the suburban and agricultural setting. The agricultural fields introduce a strong pattern of colors and lines that vary in their direction and texture, depending on the crops being grown. The colors in the fields vary from season to season. Residential, commercial and industrial areas break up the continuity of the agricultural fields. While this change in land use may have the potential to increase visual diversity, the development is not strong in any visual patterns of line or color.

Besides the interchange and pavement, the oleander shrubs and eucalyptus trees are the most visually dominant features within the highway corridor. Oleanders in the median provide a texture that is visually complementary to the adjacent agricultural fields. The median oleanders create a strong vertical element screening the view of the opposite flowing traffic. This screening reduces the visual perception of the highway scale; only the northbound lanes are visible from the northbound side of traffic and only the southbound lanes are visible from the southbound side. The reduced scale reinforces the rural character of the project corridor. When the oleander is flowering during the spring and summer, the flowers introduce a strong element of color that contrasts sharply with the adjacent lackluster views.

The large eucalyptus trees measure as tall as 90 feet in height, and the trunks are greater than 24 inches in diameter. The trees function aesthetically to delineate the roadway and provide visual variety to an otherwise flat landscape. The trees reinforce the rural, agricultural character of the corridor by visually reinforcing the pattern of colors and textures of the adjacent agricultural fields. The tall eucalyptus trees are noticeable from far away, but the trees are sparse and spaced far apart so that the visual influence is greatly reduced.

## Environmental Consequences

### Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3

The project would remove oleander shrubs and eucalyptus trees (see Table 2.12). The oleanders would be removed from the median so the project could construct the bridge columns and install the required permanent safety barrier leading up to the bridge columns. The 10-foot-wide inside shoulders would be paved up to the median barrier. Eucalyptus trees would be removed to allow for the new interchange, ramps, and auxiliary lanes.

### Oleander and Eucalyptus Removal

Table 2.12 shows the oleander shrubs and eucalyptus trees removed by alternative.

**Table 2.12 Oleander Shrub and Eucalyptus Tree Removal**

Alternatives			Quantity Removed		Oleander Removal Limits
			Oleander (feet)	Eucalyptus (each)	
1A		Construct new interchange at Commercial Avenue with Paige Avenue interchange open	350	11	100 feet to the north and 250 feet to the south from the center of the new bridge
1C	Phase 1	Construct new interchange at Commercial Avenue with Paige Avenue interchange closed permanently	350	12	100 feet to the north from the center of new bridge and 250 feet to the south from the center of the new bridge
	Phase 2	Replace existing Paige Avenue overcrossing with new structure	500	10	250 feet to the north from the center of new Paige and 250 feet to the south from the center of the new Paige
2	Phase 1	Construct new interchange at Industrial Avenue with Paige Avenue interchange closed permanently	350	14	100 feet to the north from the center of new bridge and 250 feet to the south from the center of the new bridge
	Phase 2	Replace existing Paige Avenue overcrossing with new structure	500	10	250 feet to the north from the center of new bridge and 250 feet to the south from the center of the new bridge
3		Replace existing Paige Avenue overcrossing with new structure	500	39	250 feet to the north from the center of new bridge and 250 feet to the south from the center of the new bridge

Source: Caltrans Visual Impact Assessment 2018

Alternative 1A would remove the least amount of median oleander at 350 feet. Alternatives 1C and 2 would remove the most amount of median oleander at 850 feet. This total amount of removal, however, would be realized only if Phase 2 for each alternative is ultimately funded. If funds are not available to complete Phase 2, then Alternatives 1C, 2, and 3 would remove the same amount of oleander at 500 feet.

Alternative 3 would remove the most eucalyptus trees at 39 trees. Without Phase 2 work, Alternative 1C would remove 12 eucalyptus trees and Alternative 2 would remove 14 eucalyptus trees. If Phase 2 of both Alternatives 2 and 3 is realized, it will result in the removal of 10 additional eucalyptus trees at the Paige Avenue overcrossing structure. Alternative 1A would remove the fewest eucalyptus trees at only 11 trees.

### Visual Quality

The most visually noticeable new element of the project would be the new interchange, or the new bridge structure. The new interchange would be elevated, providing topographical relief to the project corridor.

The visual quality of the existing corridor would not be altered by the project. The presence of industrial sites and residential and commercial areas breaks up the agricultural patterns and creates a sense of visual intrusion in the landscape. A concrete mixing facility sits west of and next to State Route 99 near Industrial Avenue. The facility is highly visible from State Route 99. Alternatives 1A, 1C, and 3 may not affect the facility. Alternative 2 may require the removal of the facility to construct the new interchange at Industrial Avenue. This would result in a noticeable visual change to the project corridor. The facility currently distracts from the visual quality of the project corridor, and its removal would result in a slight increase in visual unity.

The new interchange in any build alternative would not greatly change the existing condition of visual quality. The new bridge structure would be built of the same materials and patterns of other existing bridges in the project corridor. While this type of structure would not positively increase the memorability, or reduce the visual intrusions in the project corridor, it would not negatively affect them either. Under the proposed build alternatives, the new interchange would be in what is now an agricultural field. This may add to the visual dissonance of the area by introducing another built element into the pattern of agricultural fields. However, the highway planting that is included with this project would decrease the effects of this impact. The net change in visual quality from the project would be negligible.

### *No-Build Alternative*

No impacts to visual resources would occur under the No-Build Alternative.

### **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

#### *Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3*

The project would include replacement planting and irrigation to replace eucalyptus trees and oleander shrubs that are removed from the roadsides and median for all four build alternatives. The replacement planting would be placed at the new interchange area. The replacement planting would be funded from the interchange project but occur under a separate contract. A three-year plant establishment period would be included with the separate project to help establish the new plantings.

The new highway planting would soften the visual effect of the new interchange. The new trees would be spaced closer together than they are now, strengthening the implied line of the trees. As the new trees and the new oleander grow and mature, they would eventually provide visual relief, and add color and texture to the roadsides. They would add a strong vertical element to an otherwise flat terrain and help visually blend the new interchange with the surrounding agricultural landscape. The overall change to visual resources would be low.



### *No-Build Alternative*

No avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures would be required under the No-Build Alternative.

## **2.2 Physical Environment**

### **2.2.1 Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff**

#### ***Regulatory Setting***

##### *Federal Requirements: Clean Water Act*

In 1972, Congress amended the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, making the addition of pollutants to the waters of the United States (U.S.) from any point source<sup>1</sup> unlawful unless the discharge complies with a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (also known as NPDES) permit. This act and its amendments are known today as the Clean Water Act. Congress has amended the act several times. In the 1987 amendments, Congress directed dischargers of storm water from municipal and industrial/construction point sources to comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit scheme. The following are important Clean Water Act sections:

Sections 303 and 304 require states to issue water quality standards, criteria, and guidelines.

Section 401 requires an applicant for a federal license or permit to conduct any activity that may result in a discharge to waters of the U.S. to obtain certification from the state that the discharge will comply with other provisions of the act. This is most frequently required in tandem with a Section 404 permit request (see below).

Section 402 establishes the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, a permitting system for the discharges (except for dredge or fill material) of any pollutant into waters of the U.S. Regional Water Quality Control Boards administer this permitting program in California. Section 402(p) requires permits for discharges of storm water from industrial/construction and municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s).

Section 404 establishes a permit program for the discharge of dredge or fill material into waters of the U.S. This permit program is administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The goal of the Clean Water Act is “to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation’s waters.”

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<sup>1</sup> A point source is any discrete conveyance such as a pipe or a human-made ditch.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issues two types of 404 permits: General and Individual. There are two types of General permits: Regional and Nationwide. Regional permits are issued for a general category of activities when they are similar in nature and cause minimal environmental effect. Nationwide permits are issued to allow a variety of minor project activities with no more than minimal effects.

Ordinarily, projects that do not meet the criteria for a Regional or Nationwide Permit may be permitted under one of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Individual permits. There are two types of Individual permits: Standard permits and Letters of Permission. For Individual permits, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' decision to approve is based on compliance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (U.S. EPA) Section 404 (b)(1) Guidelines (40 Code of Federal Regulations Part 230), and whether the permit approval is in the public interest.

The Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines were developed by the U.S. EPA in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and allow the discharge of dredged or fill material into the aquatic system (waters of the U.S.) only if there is no practicable alternative that would have less adverse effects. The guidelines state that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may not issue a permit if there is a least environmentally damaging practicable alternative (LEDPA) to the proposed discharge that would have lesser effects on waters of the U.S. and not have any other significant adverse environmental consequences. According to the guidelines, documentation is needed that a sequence of avoidance, minimization, and compensation measures has been followed, in that order.

The guidelines also restrict permitting activities that violate water quality or toxic effluent<sup>2</sup> standards, jeopardize the continued existence of listed species, violate marine sanctuary protections, or cause "significant degradation" to waters of the U.S. In addition, every permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, even if not subject to the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines, must meet general requirements. See 33 Code of Federal Regulations 320.4. A discussion of the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative determination, if any, for the document is included in the Wetlands and Other Waters section.

### *State Requirements: Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act*

California's Porter-Cologne Act, enacted in 1969, provides the legal basis for water quality regulation within California. This act requires a "Report of Waste Discharge" for any discharge of waste (liquid, solid, or gaseous) to land or surface waters that may impair beneficial uses for surface and/or groundwater of the state. It predates the Clean Water Act and regulates discharges to waters of the state. Waters of the state include more than just waters of the U.S., like groundwater and surface waters not considered waters of the U.S. Also, it prohibits discharges of "waste" as defined, and this definition is broader than the Clean Water Act definition of "pollutant." Discharges under the Porter-Cologne Act are permitted by Waste Discharge

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<sup>2</sup> The U.S. EPA defines "effluent" as "wastewater, treated or untreated, that flows out of a treatment plant, sewer, or industrial outfall."

Requirements (WDRs) and may be required even when the discharge is already permitted or exempt under the Clean Water Act.

The State Water Resources Control Board and Regional Water Quality Control Boards are responsible for establishing the water quality standards (objectives and beneficial uses) required by the Clean Water Act and regulating discharges to ensure compliance with the water quality standards. Details about water quality standards in a project area are included in the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan. In California, Regional Water Quality Control Boards designate beneficial uses for all water body segments in their jurisdictions and then set criteria necessary to protect those uses. As a result, the water quality standards developed for particular water segments are based on the designated use and vary depending on that use.

Also, the State Water Resources Control Board identifies waters failing to meet standards for specific pollutants. These waters are then state-listed in accordance with Clean Water Act Section 303(d). If a state determines that waters are impaired for one or more constituents and the standards cannot be met through point source or non-point source controls (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits or Waste Discharge Requirements), the Clean Water Act requires the establishment of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), which specify allowable pollutant loads from all sources (point, non-point, and natural) for a given watershed.

#### *State Water Resources Control Board and Regional Water Quality Control Boards*

The State Water Resources Control Board administers water rights, sets water pollution control policy, and issues water board orders on matters of statewide application, and oversees water quality functions throughout the state by approving Basin Plans, Total Maximum Daily Loads, and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits. Regional Water Quality Control Boards are responsible for protecting beneficial uses of water resources within their regional jurisdiction using planning, permitting, and enforcement authorities to meet this responsibility.

#### *National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program*

##### *Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4)*

Section 402(p) of the Clean Water Act requires the issuance of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits for five categories of storm water discharges, including Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s). An MS4 is defined as “any conveyance or system of conveyances (roads with drainage systems, municipal streets, catch basins, curbs, gutters, ditches, human-made channels, and storm drains) owned or operated by a state, city, town, county, or other public body having jurisdiction over storm water, that is designed or used for collecting or conveying storm water.”

The State Water Resources Control Board has identified Caltrans as an owner/operator of an MS4 under federal regulations. The Caltrans MS4 permit covers

all Caltrans rights-of-way, properties, facilities, and activities in the state. The State Water Resources Control Board or the Regional Water Quality Control Board issues National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits for five years, and permit requirements remain active until a new permit has been adopted.

The Caltrans MS4 Permit, Order No. 2012-0011-DWQ (adopted on September 19, 2012 and effective on July 1, 2013), as amended by Order No. 2014-0006-EXEC (effective January 17, 2014), Order No. 2014-0077-DWQ (effective May 20, 2014) and Order No. 2015-0036-EXEC (conformed and effective April 7, 2015) has three basic requirements:

- Caltrans must comply with the requirements of the Construction General Permit (see below).
- Caltrans must implement a year-round program in all parts of the state to effectively control storm water and non-storm water discharges.
- Caltrans storm water discharges must meet water quality standards through implementation of permanent and temporary (construction) Best Management Practices (BMPs), to the maximum extent practicable, and other measures as the State Water Resources Control Board determines to be necessary to meet the water quality standards.

To comply with the permit, Caltrans developed the Statewide Storm Water Management Plan to address storm water pollution controls related to highway planning, design, construction, and maintenance activities throughout California. The Statewide Storm Water Management Plan assigns responsibilities within Caltrans for implementing storm water management procedures and practices as well as training, public education and participation, monitoring and research, program evaluation, and reporting activities. The Statewide Storm Water Management Plan describes the minimum procedures and practices Caltrans uses to reduce pollutants in storm water and non-storm water discharges. It outlines procedures and responsibilities for protecting water quality, including the selection and implementation of Best Management Practices. The proposed project will be programmed to follow the guidelines and procedures outlined in the latest Statewide Storm Water Management Plan to address storm water.

### Construction General Permit

The Construction General Permit, Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ (adopted on September 2, 2009 and effective on July 1, 2010), as amended by Order No. 2010-0014-DWQ (effective February 14, 2011) and Order No. 2012-0006-DWQ (effective on July 17, 2012) regulates storm water discharges from construction sites that result in a Disturbed Soil Area (DSA) of one acre or greater, and/or are smaller sites that are part of a larger common plan of development. By law, all storm water discharges associated with construction activity where clearing, grading, and excavation result in soil disturbance of at least one acre must comply with the provisions of the General Construction Permit. Construction activity that results in soil disturbances of less than one acre is subject to this Construction General Permit if there is potential for

significant water quality impairment resulting from the activity as determined by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Operators of regulated construction sites are required to develop Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans, implement sediment, erosion, and pollution prevention control measures, and obtain coverage under the Construction General Permit.

The Construction General Permit separates projects into Risk Levels 1, 2, and 3. Risk levels are determined during the planning and design phases and are based on potential erosion and transport to receiving waters. Requirements apply according to the Risk Level determined. For example, a Risk Level 3 (highest risk) project would require compulsory storm water runoff pH and turbidity monitoring, and before-construction and after-construction aquatic biological assessments during specified seasonal windows. For all projects subject to the permit, applicants are required to develop and implement an effective Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. In accordance with the Caltrans Statewide Storm Water Management Plan and Standard Specifications, a Water Pollution Control Program is necessary for projects with Disturbed Soil Area less than one acre.

### ***Affected Environment***

A Water Quality Assessment was completed for the project in March 2018, followed by an addendum completed on June 11, 2018. A Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts was completed on July 3, 2018.

The project is within the hydrogeological area identified as the South Valley Floor Hydrologic Unit. The nearest water body—Elk Bayou stream—is about 6,000 feet south of post mile 26.3. A large agricultural canal—Tulare Canal—crosses under State Route 99 just north of the Paige Avenue overcrossing. Smaller cross culverts are also found in the project limits. There is one bridge and approximately 25 culverts within the project area.

No blue-line drainages lie within the project area, so coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife was not conducted.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

#### ***Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3***

Elk Bayou is on the State of California 303(d) list of impaired waters. Chlorpyrifos, Dimethoate and high pH levels are identified as causing the impairment. No aquatic organisms were identified in the project area. No short-term or long-term impacts to aquatic life are associated with these listed pollutants.

Table 2.13 shows the total disturbed area expected from construction of this interchange project.

**Table 2.13 Total Disturbed Area per Alternative**

Alternatives	Total Disturbed Area in Acres
1A	42
1C	52
2	82
3	45

Source: Caltrans Water Quality Assessment 2018

### *No-Build Alternative*

No short-term or long-term impacts to water quality are associated with the No-Build Alternative.

### **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

#### *Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3*

Because the project will disturb more than one acre of soil, the following are required to minimize short-term impacts to water quality:

- A Notification of Intent (NOI) is to be submitted to the appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board at least 30 days prior to the start of construction.
- A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) is to be prepared and implemented during construction to the satisfaction of the Resident Engineer.
- A Notice of Termination (NOT) is to be submitted to the Regional Board upon completion of construction and site stabilization. A project will be considered complete when the criteria for final stabilization in the Construction General Permit are met.

By incorporating proper and accepted engineering practices and Best Management Practices, the proposed project would minimize short-term impacts and not produce long-term impacts to water quality during construction or its operation.

A large agricultural canal located within the project limits, (listed on maps as either Main or Tulare Canal) will not be impacted under the preferred Alternative 1A. Additionally, no jurisdictional waters were identified within the project limits. Coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Regional Water Quality Control Board is not required under the preferred Alternative 1A.

### *No-Build Alternative*

Coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Regional Water Quality Control Board is not required under the No-Build Alternative.

## **2.2.2 Paleontology**

### **Regulatory Setting**

Paleontology is a natural science focused on the study of ancient animal and plant life as it is preserved in the geologic record as fossils. A number of federal statutes specifically address paleontological resources, their treatment, and funding for mitigation as a part of federally authorized projects.

16 U.S. Code 431-433 (the “Antiquities Act”) prohibits appropriating, excavating, injuring, or destroying any object of antiquity situated on federal land without the permission of the Secretary of the Department of Government having jurisdiction over the land. Fossils are considered “objects of antiquity” by the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the Forest Service, and other federal agencies.

16 U.S. Code 461-467 established the National Natural Landmarks program. Under this program property owners agree to protect biological and geological resources such as paleontological features. Federal agencies and their agents must consider the existence and location of designated National Natural Landmarks, and of areas found to meet the criteria for national significance, in assessing the effects of their activities on the environment under the National Environmental Policy Act.

16 U.S. Code 470aaa (the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act) prohibits the excavation, removal, or damage of any paleontological resources located on federal land under the jurisdiction of the Secretaries of the Interior or Agriculture without first obtaining an appropriate permit. The statute establishes criminal and civil penalties for fossil theft and vandalism on federal lands.

23 U.S. Code 1.9(a) requires that the use of federal-aid funds must be in conformity with all federal and state laws.

23 U.S. Code 305 authorizes the appropriation and use of federal highway funds for paleontological salvage as necessary by the highway department of any state, in compliance with 16 U.S. Code 431-433 above and state law.

Under California law, paleontological resources are protected by the California Environmental Quality Act.

### **Affected Environment**

A Paleontology Evaluation Report and Preliminary Paleontological Mitigation Plan for this project was completed on January 29, 2018.

The paleontological study included review of geologic maps, literature, online databases, the Paleontological Identification Report and preliminary project construction plans provided by Caltrans. A site visit was done on November 13, 2017 to review the geology of the site and surrounding areas.

The geology of the project area is identified as Holocene basin deposits and Holocene to late Pleistocene alluvial fan deposits, which include the Modesto Formation. Both geologic units were found during the site visit. There are no documented paleontological localities within the boundaries of the project study area, and no fossils were discovered during the site visit.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

#### *Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3*

Excavation for basins and other soil disturbance activities during construction may potentially result in impacts to high sensitivity paleontological resources if Pleistocene sediments are encountered either at the surface or at depth during excavation.

#### *No-Build Alternative*

No impacts to paleontology resources are anticipated under the No-Build Alternative.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

#### *Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3*

The following measures are recommended:

- Paleontological monitors, under the direction of the qualified principal paleontologist, will be onsite to conduct full-time monitoring of excavation in Holocene to late Pleistocene alluvial fan deposits. For excavations in Holocene basin deposits, spot-check monitoring will occur when excavation deeper than 5 feet below original ground surface occurs.
- In the event of unanticipated paleontological resource discoveries during project-related activities, work must be halted within 25 feet of the discovery until it can be evaluated by a qualified paleontologist.
- Monitoring and spot-checking should not be conducted in previously disturbed sediments or artificial fill.
- The Principal Paleontologist will attend the pre-construction meeting to address any concerns or issues related to monitoring activities. Prior to any project excavation, a Worker Environmental Awareness Program training for all earth-moving personnel and their supervisors will be presented to inform them of the possibility for fossil discoveries.

#### *No-Build Alternative*

Avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures are not required under the No-Build Alternative.



### 2.2.3 Hazardous Waste and Materials

#### **Regulatory Setting**

Hazardous materials, including hazardous substances and wastes, are regulated by many state and federal laws. Statutes govern the generation, treatment, storage and disposal of hazardous materials, substances, and waste, and also the investigation and mitigation of waste releases, air and water quality, human health, and land use.

The main federal laws regulating hazardous wastes/materials are the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980, and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) of 1976. The purpose of CERCLA, often referred to as “Superfund,” is to identify and clean up abandoned contaminated sites so that public health and welfare are not compromised. The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act provides for “cradle to grave” regulation of hazardous waste generated by operating entities. Other federal laws are the following:

- Community Environmental Response Facilitation Act (CERFA) of 1992
- Clean Water Act
- Clean Air Act
- Safe Drinking Water Act
- Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)
- Atomic Energy Act
- Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)
- Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA)

In addition, Executive Order 12088, *Federal Compliance with Pollution Control Standards*, mandates that necessary actions be taken to prevent and control environmental pollution when federal activities or federal facilities are involved.

California regulates hazardous materials, waste, and substances under the authority of the California Health and Safety Code and is also authorized by the federal government to implement the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act in the state. California law also addresses specific handling, storage, transportation, disposal, treatment, reduction, cleanup, and emergency planning of hazardous waste. The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act also restricts disposal of wastes and requires cleanup of wastes that are below hazardous waste concentrations but could impact ground and surface water quality. California regulations that address waste management and prevention and cleanup of contamination include Title 22 Division 4.5 Environmental Health Standards for the Management of Hazardous Waste, Title 23 Waters, and Title 27 Environmental Protection.

Worker and public health and safety are key issues when addressing hazardous materials that may affect human health and the environment. Proper management and disposal of hazardous material is vital if it is found, disturbed, or generated during project construction.

### **Affected Environment**

An updated Initial Site Assessment was completed for this project in June 2018 because of project description changes. The original Initial Site Assessment was done in March 2018. Preliminary Site Investigations for aerially deposited lead and asbestos-containing materials were completed in December 2017.

Residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural land uses are found within the project limits. The project area also includes vacant and undeveloped land.

### **Environmental Consequences**

#### *Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3*

The Initial Site Assessment found that eight parcels within the project limits may require further hazardous material/waste evaluation depending on the build alternative selected and extent of right-of-way acquisition. Table 2.14 shows the locations per alternative that pose a moderate risk for hazardous waste/hazardous material.

**Table 2.14 Hazardous Waste/Hazardous Material Concerns Per Alternative**

<b>Build Alternative</b>	<b>Location</b>
Alternative 1A	Roche Oil Bulk Plant at 2200 S. Blackstone Street Mobil/Pacific Pride and former service station at 1120 E. Paige Avenue Gutierrez Tire at 1132 E. Paige Avenue Paige Avenue Truck Stop at 1297 E. Paige Avenue Truck stop property at 1285 E. Paige Avenue South Valley Materials at 3500 S. Blackstone Street
Alternative 1C	Roche Oil Bulk Plant at 2200 S. Blackstone Street Mobil/Pacific Pride and former service station at 1120 E. Paige Avenue Gutierrez Tire at 1132 E. Paige Avenue Paige Avenue Truck Stop at 1297 E. Paige Avenue Truck stop property at 1285 E. Paige Avenue South Valley Materials at 3500 S. Blackstone Street Vacant land (former Imperial Pallet) at 4266 S. K Street
Alternative 2	Roche Oil Bulk Plant at 2200 S. Blackstone Street Mobil/Pacific Pride and former service station at 1120 E. Paige Avenue Gutierrez Tire at 1132 E. Paige Avenue Paige Avenue Truck Stop at 1297 E. Paige Avenue Truck stop property at 1285 E. Paige Avenue South Valley Materials at 3500 S. Blackstone Street Vacant land (former Tulare Auto Wrecking) at 3748 S. K Street
Alternative 3	Roche Oil Bulk Plant at 2200 S. Blackstone Street Mobil/Pacific Pride and former service station at 1120 E. Paige Avenue Gutierrez Tire at 1132 E. Paige Avenue Paige Avenue Truck Stop at 1297 E. Paige Avenue Truck stop property at 1285 E. Paige Avenue South Valley Materials at 3500 S. Blackstone Street

Source: Caltrans Initial Site Assessment, June 2018

The results of the site reconnaissance, historical and regulatory file research, and prior field investigations indicate the potential presence of impacts to soil and groundwater, and existing and potential abandoned underground storage tanks.

Mobil/Pacific Pride, Paige Avenue Truck Stop, and South Valley Materials listed above in Alternative 1A (the preferred alternative) will be directly impacted by the project and as such Preliminary Site Investigations (PSIs) are required. Due to existing or former fueling operations or handling and storage of hazardous materials/wastes, these locations may have soil and/or groundwater contamination. Mobil/Pacific Pride and Paige Avenue Truck Stop are former leaking underground storage tank sites.

The responsible parties must meet all county and Regional Water Quality Control Board regulatory requirements. Tank and piping removal and any associated cleanup/remediation costs are the responsibility of the tank owner(s) whenever possible and by Caltrans only when necessary. Pending Preliminary Site Investigation results, the cost of any cleanup of contaminated soil could be as much as \$250,000.

Other potential hazardous waste concerns within the project boundaries may include undocumented underground storage tanks associated with former refueling and service stations and asbestos-containing materials and/or lead-based paint in existing buildings and related structures.

A bridge survey was done to identify if asbestos-containing materials and/or lead-based paints exist on the Paige Avenue overcrossing prior to bridge demolition or modification. Trace amounts of nonfriable (not easily crushed/pulverized by hand) chrysotile asbestos were detected (less than 0.1 percent) in concrete on the Paige Avenue overcrossing. Asbestos was not detected in the other suspect materials (joint fill material, asphalt, drain pipe and textured paint). Lead-based paint was not detected on the bridge.

Aerially deposited lead from the historical use of leaded gasoline exists along roadways throughout California. There is the likely presence of soils with elevated concentrations of lead due to aerially deposited lead on the state highway system right-of-way within the limits of the project alternatives. Soil determined to contain lead concentrations exceeding stipulated thresholds must be managed under the July 1, 2016 Aerially Deposited Lead Agreement between Caltrans and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control. The Aerially Deposited Lead Agreement allows such soils to be safely reused within the project limits as long as all requirements of the Aerially Deposited Lead Agreement are met.

Aerially deposited lead concerns are associated with the northbound and southbound shoulders within the project limits. Soil excavated from the surface of the southbound shoulder to a depth of 3 feet or shallower would be considered non-regulated/non-hazardous and could be reused onsite, relinquished to the contractor, or disposed of as non-regulated soil. Soil to a depth of 1 foot along the northbound shoulder had higher

lead concentrations and could be managed under the Department of Toxic Substance Control Agreement and reused within the existing right-of-way or disposed of offsite at an approved Class I landfill.

#### *No-Build Alternative*

There are no hazardous waste/material concerns with the No-Build Alternative.

### **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

#### *Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3*

The following considerations and provisions are required:

- Where encountered, undocumented underground storage tanks, septic systems and domestic/agricultural/oil wells should be properly removed or abandoned in accordance with Tulare County requirements.
- An Asbestos Compliance Plan and a Lead Compliance Plan are required for this project. Appropriate standard special provisions would be included in the construction package to address proper handling and disposal.
- Preliminary Site Investigations would be done on affected private parcels of preferred Alternative 1A to identify the extent of the contamination, if any, prior to parcel acquisition or temporary construction easements. Caltrans' policy is to avoid contaminated properties if possible, to have responsible parties accept responsibility for remediation, and to seek reimbursement from those parties when Caltrans must conduct remediation as part of the project development process. If contaminated properties are required in order to proceed with the project, adequate site investigations must be completed, and the cost of the remediation considered prior to appraisal and acquisition process.
- San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District regulations require that an asbestos survey be conducted on any bridge/building prior to demolition or modification, regardless of the date of construction. A written National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) notification to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is required no less than 14 days prior to demolition activities whether asbestos is present or not.

#### *No-Build Alternative*

Avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures are not required for the No-Build Alternative.

## **2.2.4 Air Quality**

### ***Regulatory Setting***

The Federal Clean Air Act, as amended, is the main federal law that governs air quality. The California Clean Air Act is its companion state law. These laws, and related regulations by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and the California Air Resources Board (ARB), set standards for the concentration of

pollutants in the air. At the federal level, these standards are called National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The federal and state ambient air quality standards have been established for six transportation-related criteria pollutants that have been linked to potential health concerns: carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), particulate matter (PM)—which is broken down for regulatory purposes into particles of 10 micrometers or smaller (PM<sub>10</sub>) and particles of 2.5 micrometers and smaller (PM<sub>2.5</sub>)—and sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>). In addition, national and state standards exist for lead (Pb), and state standards exist for visibility-reducing particles, sulfates, hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S), and vinyl chloride.

The national and state standards are set at levels that protect public health with a margin of safety and are subject to periodic review and revision. Both state and federal regulatory schemes also cover toxic air contaminants (air toxics); some criteria pollutants are also air toxics or may include certain air toxics in their general definition.

Federal air quality standards and regulations provide the basic scheme for project-level air quality analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act. In addition to this environmental analysis, a parallel “conformity” requirement under the Federal Clean Air Act also applies.

The conformity requirement is based on Federal Clean Air Act Section 176(c), which prohibits the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and other federal agencies from funding, authorizing, or approving plans, programs, or projects that do not conform to State Implementation Plan (SIP) for attaining the NAAQS. “Transportation Conformity” applies to highway and transit projects and takes place on two levels: the regional (or planning and programming) level and the project level. The proposed project must conform at both levels to be approved.

Conformity requirements apply only in nonattainment and “maintenance” (former nonattainment) areas for the NAAQS, and only for the specific NAAQS that are or were violated. U.S. EPA regulations at 40 Code of Federal Regulations 93 govern the conformity process. Conformity requirements do not apply in unclassifiable or attainment areas for NAAQS and do not apply at all for state standards regardless of the status of the area.

Regional conformity is concerned with how well the regional transportation system supports plans for attaining the NAAQS for carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>), and in some areas (though not in California), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>). California has nonattainment or maintenance areas for all of these transportation-related “criteria pollutants” except SO<sub>2</sub>, and also has a nonattainment area for lead (Pb); however, lead is not currently required by the Federal Clean Air Act to be covered in transportation conformity analysis.

Regional conformity is based on emission analysis of Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) and Federal Transportation Improvement Programs (FTIPs) that include all transportation projects planned for a region over a period of at least 20 years (for the

RTP) and 4 years (for the FTIP). RTP and FTIP conformity uses travel demand and emission models to determine whether the implementation of those projects would conform to emission budgets or other tests at various analysis years showing that requirements of the Federal Clean Air Act and the State Implementation Plan are met.

If the conformity analysis is successful, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Federal Highway Administration, and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) make the determinations that the RTP and FTIP are in conformity with the State Implementation Plan for achieving the goals of the Federal Clean Air Act. Otherwise, the projects in the RTP and/or FTIP must be modified until conformity is attained. If the design concept and scope and the “open-to-traffic” schedule of a proposed transportation project are the same as described in the RTP and FTIP, then the proposed project meets regional conformity requirements for purposes of project-level analysis.

Project-level conformity is achieved by demonstrating that the project comes from a conforming RTP and TIP; the project has a design concept and scope<sup>3</sup> that has not changed significantly from those in the RTP and TIP; project analyses have used the latest planning assumptions and EPA-approved emissions models; and in particulate matter areas, the project complies with any control measures in the State Implementation Plan. Furthermore, additional analyses (known as hot-spot analyses) may be required for projects located in carbon monoxide and particulate matter nonattainment or maintenance areas to examine localized air quality impacts.

### ***Affected Environment***

An Air Quality Study Report was completed for the project in September 2018. The air study provides a discussion of the proposed project, the physical setting of the project area, and the regulatory framework for air quality. The report provides data on existing air quality and evaluates potential air quality impacts associated with the proposed project.

Climate and topography affect air quality. The most important influence over the weather pattern of the San Joaquin Valley is the semi-permanent subtropical high-pressure cell referred to as the “Pacific High.” During summer, the Pacific High is positioned off the coast of northern California, diverting ocean-driven storms to the north, so summer months are virtually rainless. During winter, the Pacific High moves south, allowing storms to pass through the San Joaquin Valley. Most of the precipitation expected during a given year occurs from December through April.

During summer, the predominant surface winds are out of the northwest. This up-valley wind flow is interrupted in early fall by the emergence of nocturnal, down-valley winds that become progressively more predominant as winter approaches. Wind speeds are generally highest during the spring and lightest in fall and winter. The relatively cool air is warmed on its journey south through the valley. As it

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<sup>3</sup> “Design concept” means the type of facility that is proposed, such as a freeway or arterial highway. “Design scope” refers to those aspects of the project that would clearly affect capacity and thus any regional emissions analysis, such as the number of lanes and the length of the project.

reaches the south end of the valley, the average high temperature during the summer is nearly 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Relative humidity during the summer is quite low, causing large daily temperature variations. Low temperatures in the summer can drop to the upper 60s.

In winter, the average high temperatures reach into the mid-50s, and the average low temperatures drop to the mid-30s. The valley is subject to extensive fog in the winter. Heavy fog occurs on an average of 20 days per year, with December and January having the most frequent fog.

The land is generally flat around the proposed project location. Because of lower rainfall and warmer temperatures, Tulare County’s climate is classified as Mediterranean. The rainy season is October through April.

Tulare County is in attainment status for both the State and Federal Carbon Monoxide Ambient Air Standards, therefore an analysis is not needed.

The project is in an area that is in attainment-maintenance for the federal PM<sub>10</sub> standard and in nonattainment for the federal PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard. It is nonattainment for both PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> state standards. A conformity analysis for this project as “Not a Project of Air Quality Concern” was conducted and submitted to the San Joaquin Valley Council of Governments’ Directors’ Association Interagency Consultation Group (IAC) on May 3, 2018. The Interagency Consultation Partners concurred on May 3, 2018 that this is “Not a Project of Air Quality Concern.”

Table 2.15 shows the attainment status for state and federal ambient air standards.

**Table 2.15 State and Federal Attainment Status**

Pollutant	State Attainment Status	Federal Attainment Status
Ozone (O <sub>3</sub> )	Nonattainment	Nonattainment
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM <sub>10</sub> )	Nonattainment	Attainment-Maintenance
Fine Particulate Matter (PM <sub>2.5</sub> )	Nonattainment	Nonattainment
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	Attainment	Attainment
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> )	Non-applicable	Non-applicable
Sulfur Dioxide (SO <sub>2</sub> )	Non-applicable	Non-applicable

Source: U.S. EPA web site, ARB web site <http://www.arb.ca.gov/research/aaqs/aaqs2.pdf>

Table 2.16 shows the current federal and state ambient air quality standards.

**Table 2.16 Federal and State Ambient Air Quality Standards**

Ambient Air Quality Standards						
Pollutant	Averaging Time	California Standards <sup>1</sup>		National Standards <sup>2</sup>		
		Concentration <sup>3</sup>	Method <sup>4</sup>	Primary <sup>3,5</sup>	Secondary <sup>3,6</sup>	Method <sup>7</sup>
Ozone (O <sub>3</sub> ) <sup>8</sup>	1 Hour	0.09 ppm (180 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Ultraviolet Photometry	—	Same as Primary Standard	Ultraviolet Photometry
	8 Hour	0.070 ppm (137 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )		0.070 ppm (137 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )		
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM <sub>10</sub> ) <sup>9</sup>	24 Hour	50 µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Gravimetric or Beta Attenuation	150 µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Same as Primary Standard	Inertial Separation and Gravimetric Analysis
	Annual Arithmetic Mean	20 µg/m <sup>3</sup>		—		
Fine Particulate Matter (PM <sub>2.5</sub> ) <sup>9</sup>	24 Hour	—	—	35 µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Same as Primary Standard	Inertial Separation and Gravimetric Analysis
	Annual Arithmetic Mean	12 µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Gravimetric or Beta Attenuation	12.0 µg/m <sup>3</sup>		
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	1 Hour	20 ppm (23 mg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Non-Dispersive Infrared Photometry (NDIR)	35 ppm (40 mg/m <sup>3</sup> )	—	Non-Dispersive Infrared Photometry (NDIR)
	8 Hour	9.0 ppm (10 mg/m <sup>3</sup> )		9 ppm (10 mg/m <sup>3</sup> )	—	
	8 Hour (Lake Tahoe)	6 ppm (7 mg/m <sup>3</sup> )		—	—	
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> ) <sup>10</sup>	1 Hour	0.18 ppm (339 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Gas Phase Chemiluminescence	100 ppb (188 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	—	Gas Phase Chemiluminescence
	Annual Arithmetic Mean	0.030 ppm (57 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )		0.053 ppm (100 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Same as Primary Standard	
Sulfur Dioxide (SO <sub>2</sub> ) <sup>11</sup>	1 Hour	0.25 ppm (655 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Ultraviolet Fluorescence	75 ppb (196 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	—	Ultraviolet Fluorescence; Spectrophotometry (Pararosaniline Method)
	3 Hour	—		—	0.5 ppm (1300 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	
	24 Hour	0.04 ppm (105 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )		0.14 ppm (for certain areas) <sup>11</sup>	—	
	Annual Arithmetic Mean	—		0.030 ppm (for certain areas) <sup>11</sup>	—	
Lead <sup>12,13</sup>	30 Day Average	1.5 µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Atomic Absorption	—	—	High Volume Sampler and Atomic Absorption
	Calendar Quarter	—		1.5 µg/m <sup>3</sup> (for certain areas) <sup>12</sup>	Same as Primary Standard	
	Rolling 3-Month Average	—		0.15 µg/m <sup>3</sup>		
Visibility Reducing Particles <sup>14</sup>	8 Hour	See footnote 14	Beta Attenuation and Transmittance through Filter Tape	<b>No National Standards</b>		
Sulfates	24 Hour	25 µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Ion Chromatography			
Hydrogen Sulfide	1 Hour	0.03 ppm (42 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Ultraviolet Fluorescence			
Vinyl Chloride <sup>12</sup>	24 Hour	0.01 ppm (26 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Gas Chromatography			

See footnotes on next page ...

For more information please call ARB-PIO at (916) 322-2990

California Air Resources Board (5/4/16)



Chapter 2 • Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences,  
and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

1. California standards for ozone, carbon monoxide (except 8-hour Lake Tahoe), sulfur dioxide (1 and 24 hour), nitrogen dioxide, and particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and visibility reducing particles), are values that are not to be exceeded. All others are not to be equaled or exceeded. California ambient air quality standards are listed in the Table of Standards in Section 70200 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations.
2. National standards (other than ozone, particulate matter, and those based on annual arithmetic mean) are not to be exceeded more than once a year. The ozone standard is attained when the fourth highest 8-hour concentration measured at each site in a year, averaged over three years, is equal to or less than the standard. For PM<sub>10</sub>, the 24 hour standard is attained when the expected number of days per calendar year with a 24-hour average concentration above 150 µg/m<sup>3</sup> is equal to or less than one. For PM<sub>2.5</sub>, the 24 hour standard is attained when 98 percent of the daily concentrations, averaged over three years, are equal to or less than the standard. Contact the U.S. EPA for further clarification and current national policies.
3. Concentration expressed first in units in which it was promulgated. Equivalent units given in parentheses are based upon a reference temperature of 25°C and a reference pressure of 760 torr. Most measurements of air quality are to be corrected to a reference temperature of 25°C and a reference pressure of 760 torr; ppm in this table refers to ppm by volume, or micromoles of pollutant per mole of gas.
4. Any equivalent measurement method which can be shown to the satisfaction of the ARB to give equivalent results at or near the level of the air quality standard may be used.
5. National Primary Standards: The levels of air quality necessary, with an adequate margin of safety to protect the public health.
6. National Secondary Standards: The levels of air quality necessary to protect the public welfare from any known or anticipated adverse effects of a pollutant.
7. Reference method as described by the U.S. EPA. An "equivalent method" of measurement may be used but must have a "consistent relationship to the reference method" and must be approved by the U.S. EPA.
8. On October 1, 2015, the national 8-hour ozone primary and secondary standards were lowered from 0.075 to 0.070 ppm.
9. On December 14, 2012, the national annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> primary standard was lowered from 15 µg/m<sup>3</sup> to 12.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The existing national 24-hour PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards (primary and secondary) were retained at 35 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, as was the annual secondary standard of 15 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The existing 24-hour PM<sub>10</sub> standards (primary and secondary) of 150 µg/m<sup>3</sup> also were retained. The form of the annual primary and secondary standards is the annual mean, averaged over 3 years.
10. To attain the 1-hour national standard, the 3-year average of the annual 98th percentile of the 1-hour daily maximum concentrations at each site must not exceed 100 ppb. Note that the national 1-hour standard is in units of parts per billion (ppb). California standards are in units of parts per million (ppm). To directly compare the national 1-hour standard to the California standards the units can be converted from ppb to ppm. In this case, the national standard of 100 ppb is identical to 0.100 ppm.
11. On June 2, 2010, a new 1-hour SO<sub>2</sub> standard was established and the existing 24-hour and annual primary standards were revoked. To attain the 1-hour national standard, the 3-year average of the annual 99th percentile of the 1-hour daily maximum concentrations at each site must not exceed 75 ppb. The 1971 SO<sub>2</sub> national standards (24-hour and annual) remain in effect until one year after an area is designated for the 2010 standard, except that in areas designated nonattainment for the 1971 standards, the 1971 standards remain in effect until implementation plans to attain or maintain the 2010 standards are approved.  
Note that the 1-hour national standard is in units of parts per billion (ppb). California standards are in units of parts per million (ppm). To directly compare the 1-hour national standard to the California standard the units can be converted to ppm. In this case, the national standard of 75 ppb is identical to 0.075 ppm.
12. The ARB has identified lead and vinyl chloride as 'toxic air contaminants' with no threshold level of exposure for adverse health effects determined. These actions allow for the implementation of control measures at levels below the ambient concentrations specified for these pollutants.
13. The national standard for lead was revised on October 15, 2008 to a rolling 3-month average. The 1978 lead standard (1.5 µg/m<sup>3</sup> as a quarterly average) remains in effect until one year after an area is designated for the 2008 standard, except that in areas designated nonattainment for the 1978 standard, the 1978 standard remains in effect until implementation plans to attain or maintain the 2008 standard are approved.
14. In 1989, the ARB converted both the general statewide 10-mile visibility standard and the Lake Tahoe 30-mile visibility standard to instrumental equivalents, which are "extinction of 0.23 per kilometer" and "extinction of 0.07 per kilometer" for the statewide and Lake Tahoe Air Basin standards, respectively.

For more information please call ARB-PIO at (916) 322-2990

California Air Resources Board (5/4/16)

## **Environmental Consequences**

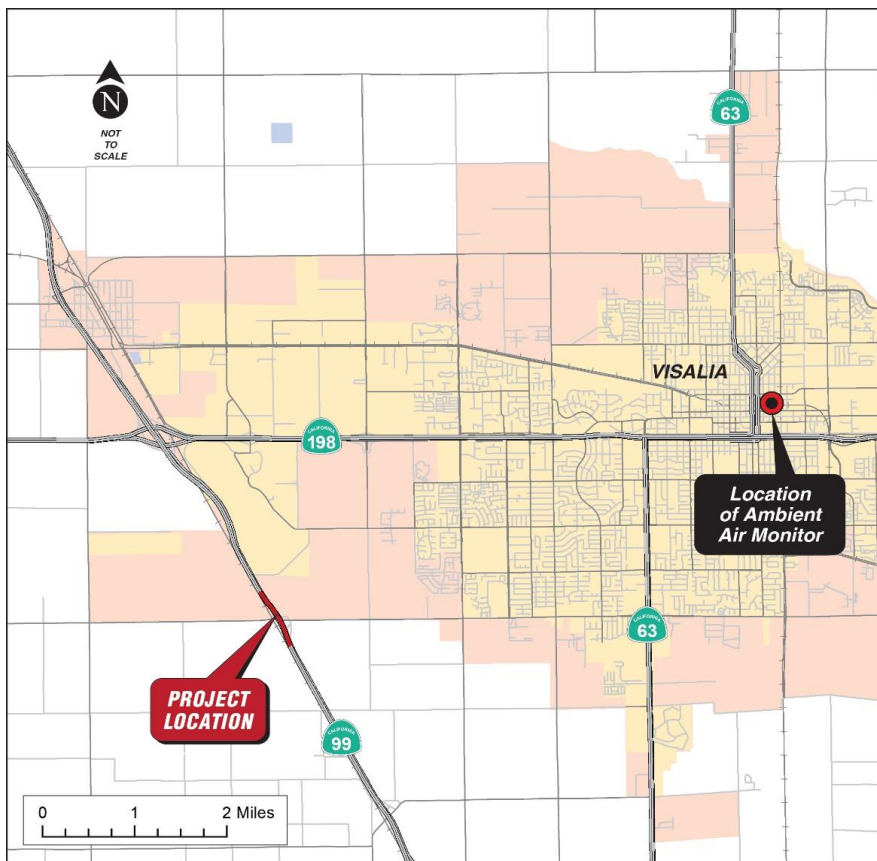
### **Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3**

A regional conformity analysis covering the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin for ozone, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and PM<sub>10</sub> was carried out for this project and all reasonably foreseeable and financially constrained regionally significant projects for at least 20 years from the date that the analysis was started. The analysis used the latest planning assumptions and the most recent emission models and appropriate analysis methods, as determined

by Interagency Consultation on May 3, 2018, and is expected to be federally approved December 31, 2018. Based on this analysis, the region will be in conformity with the State Implementation Plan, including this project, based on conformity test(s) and analysis procedures, as described in 40 Code of Federal Regulations 93.109(l). The design concept and scope of the proposed project is consistent with the project design concept and scope used in the regional conformity analysis. The Traffic Control Measure Timely Implementation evaluation was reviewed, and interagency consultation concurred on May 3, 2018.

The project does not meet the criteria of an exempt project from regional conformity under 40 Code of Federal Regulations 93.126. However, the project does not meet the criteria for a “Project of Air Quality Concern” and does not meet the conformity rule that defines projects requiring a PM<sub>2.5</sub> or PM<sub>10</sub> hot-spot analysis.

The ambient air monitor closest to the project location (as shown in Figure 2-3) is in downtown Visalia at 310 North Church Street, about 5 miles northeast of the project location. This is typically upwind from the project location. The area around the interchange is commercial or farmland, so there are no sensitive receptors nearby. Data from this monitor was not included in this report due to its upwind location.



**Figure 2-3 Ambient Air Monitor Nearest to Project Location**

**Particulate Matter (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>)**

A conformity analysis for this project as “Not a Project of Air Quality Concern” was conducted and submitted to the San Joaquin Valley Council of Governments’ Directors’ Association Interagency Consultation Group (IAC) on May 3, 2018. The Interagency Consultation Partners concurred on May 3, 2018 that this is “Not a Project of Air Quality Concern.”

Table 2.17 shows the estimated tons/year emissions of the existing 2018 situation and the 2047 horizon year for the project alternatives.

**Table 2.17 PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> Operational Emissions Grams per Year**

Alternative	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>
Existing/Baseline 2018	143,080	314,630
<b>30-Year Horizon/Design Year (2047)</b>		
Alternative 1A	220,460	547,500
Alternative 1C	220,460	547,500
Alternative 2	228,825	547,865
Alternative 3	221,555	548,595
No-Build Alternative	222,650	549,690

Source: Caltrans Central Region Environmental Engineering Branch, June 2018

The PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> emissions for the no-build/build alternatives (2047) increase when compared to the baseline (2018) emissions. This should be expected as local growth will cause an increase in local traffic over time regardless of whether the project is built or not.

The traffic level of service is worse for the 2047 No-Build Alternative when compared to the build alternatives in 2047. The four build alternatives would help alleviate congestion and improve level of service when compared to the No-Build Alternative (see Tables 2.18-2.23). In addition, improving traffic flow would help decrease particulate matter for the four build alternatives (2047) in comparison to the No-Build Alternative (2047), as seen in the lower particulate matter emissions.

**Table 2.18 Level of Service (2018)—Existing**

Intersection	Traffic Control	Existing Level of Service	
		A.M. Peak	P.M. Peak
State Route 99 Northbound Ramps/ Paige Avenue	One-Way Stop Control	C	D
State Route 99 Southbound Ramps/ Paige Avenue	One-Way Stop Control	D	C
Paige Avenue/Blackstone Street	All-Way Stop Control	C	C
Paige Avenue/Laspina Street	All-Way Stop Control	D	F

Source: Caltrans Central Region Transportation Planning, October 2018

**Table 2.19 Level of Service—Alternative 1A**

Intersection	Traffic Control	LOS in 2027		LOS in 2047	
		A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
State Route 99 northbound ramps/ Commercial Avenue	Signal	A	A	A	A
State Route 99 southbound ramps/ Commercial Avenue	Signal	A	A	B	A
Commercial Avenue/ Laspina Street	Signal	B	B	B	C
Commercial Avenue/ Blackstone Street	Signal	B	B	C	B
Commercial Avenue/ K Street	Signal	B	B	C	C
State Route 99 northbound ramps/ Paige Avenue	Signal	C	B	C	C
State Route 99 southbound ramps/ Blackstone Street	Signal	B	B	D	B
Paige Avenue/ Blackstone Street	Signal	C	C	D	D
Paige Avenue/ Laspina Street	Signal	C	C	D	D

Source: Caltrans Central Region Transportation Planning, October 2018

**Table 2.20 Level of Service—Alternative 1C**

Intersection	Traffic Control	LOS in 2027		LOS in 2047	
		A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
State Route 99 northbound ramps/ Commercial Avenue	Signal	A	A	A	B
State Route 99 southbound ramps/ Commercial Avenue	Signal	A	A	B	A
Commercial Avenue/ Laspina Street	Signal	B	B	C	C
Commercial Avenue/ Blackstone Street	Signal	B	B	C	B
Commercial Avenue/ K Street	Signal	B	B	C	C
Paige Avenue/ Blackstone Street	Signal	C	C	D	D
Paige Avenue/ Laspina Street	Signal	C	C	D	D

Source: Caltrans Central Region Transportation Planning, October 2018

**Table 2.21 Level of Service—Alternative 2**

Intersection	Traffic Control	LOS in 2027		LOS in 2047	
		A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
State Route 99 northbound ramps/ Industrial Avenue	Signal	A	A	B	B
State Route 99 southbound ramps/ Industrial Avenue	Signal	A	A	B	B
Industrial Avenue/ Laspina Street	Signal	B	B	C	C
Industrial Avenue/ Blackstone Street	Signal	B	B	C	C
Industrial Avenue/ K Street	Signal	B	B	C	C
Paige Avenue/ Blackstone Street	Signal	C	C	D	D
Paige Avenue/ Laspina Street	Signal	C	D	D	D

Source: Caltrans Central Region Transportation Planning, October 2018

**Table 2.22 Level of Service—Alternative 3**

Intersection	Traffic Control	LOS in 2027		LOS in 2047	
		A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
State Route 99 northbound ramps/ Paige Avenue	Signal	A	A	C	B
State Route 99 southbound ramps/ Paige Avenue	Signal	B	B	C	C
Paige Avenue/ Blackstone Street	Signal	C	C	C	D
Paige Avenue/ Laspina Street	Signal	C	C	C	D

Source: Caltrans Central Region Transportation Planning, October 2018

**Table 2.23 Level of Service—No-Build Alternative**

Intersection	Traffic Control	Existing		LOS in 2027		LOS in 2047	
		A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
State Route 99 northbound ramps/ Paige Avenue	One-way stop control	C	D	F	F	F	F
State Route 99 southbound ramps/ Blackstone Street	Two-way stop control	D	C	F	F	F	F
Paige Avenue/ Blackstone Street	All-way stop control	C	C	E	F	F	F
Paige Avenue/ Laspina Street	All-way stop control	D	F	F	F	F	F

Source: Caltrans Central Region Transportation Planning, October 2018

### *Carbon Monoxide (CO)*

Tulare County is in attainment status for both the state and federal carbon monoxide ambient air standards, so an analysis is not needed.

### *Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSAT)*

The Tulare 99 Interchange project best falls into the category of low potential mobile source air toxics (MSAT) effects, which requires a qualitative analysis.

There are no sensitive land uses within 500 feet of the proposed project for any build alternative.

For each alternative, the amount of mobile source air toxics emitted would be proportional to the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) = (annual average daily traffic x miles length of project x 365 days) if other variables such as fleet mix are the same for each alternative. The vehicle miles traveled estimated for each of the build alternatives would be slightly higher than that for the No-Build Alternative because the additional capacity increases the efficiency of the roadway and attracts rerouted trips from elsewhere in the transportation network. This increase in vehicle miles traveled would lead to higher mobile source air toxics emissions at the improved interchange, along with a corresponding decrease in mobile source air toxics emissions along the parallel routes. The emissions increase is offset somewhat by lower mobile source air toxics emission rates due to increased speeds.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) MOVES2014 model, as well as the EMFAC (Emissions FACTors) model used in California, emissions of all the priority mobile source air toxics decrease as the vehicle speed increases. Because the estimated vehicle miles traveled under each of the alternatives are nearly the same, it is expected there would be no appreciable difference in overall mobile source air toxics emissions among the various alternatives.

Regardless of the alternative chosen, emissions will likely be lower than present levels in the design year because of the EPA’s national control programs that are projected to reduce annual mobile source air toxics emissions by over 90 percent between 2010 and 2050 (Updated Interim Guidance on Mobile Source Air Toxic Analysis in NEPA Documents, Federal Highway Administration, October 12, 2016). Local conditions may differ from these national projections in terms of fleet mix and turnover, vehicle miles traveled growth rates, and local control measures. However, the magnitude of the EPA-projected reductions is so great (even after accounting for vehicle miles traveled growth) that mobile source air toxics emissions in the study area are likely to be lower in the future in nearly all cases.

**Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)**

With use of the 2017 Air Resources Board EMFAC (Emissions FACTor) model, the estimated emissions are shown in Table 2.24. The amount of estimated carbon dioxide emissions for horizon year 2047 is greatest for the No-Build Alternative, compared to the build alternatives. Carbon dioxide emissions generally will increase as level of service degrades and vehicle congestion increases.

As discussed above, level of service will be worst for the No-Build Alternative (2047) when compared to the build alternatives (2047) and cause carbon dioxide emissions to increase more rapidly for the No-Build Alternative.

In 2047, the no-build and build carbon dioxide emissions are greater than the estimated emissions for the existing baseline condition. The increase in daily traffic over time will cause the annual tons of carbon dioxide emissions for future no-build/build alternatives to be greater than the existing baseline.

Between 2018 and 2047, the local population and commercial growth will result in the increased annual average daily traffic count shown in Tables 2.24 and 2.25, which will cause carbon dioxide increases over time in the project area. This increase would occur with or without the project. However, if the tons/vehicle miles traveled are calculated, the amount of emissions per mile decreases over the baseline of 2018 (see baseline in Table 2.26) for future build alternatives.

**Table 2.24 Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts—Existing Conditions**

2018 Existing AADT	Rankin Road Drive IC (Avenue 200)			Paige Avenue IC			Bardsley Avenue IC		
	Northbound Off-ramp	Mainline	Northbound On-ramp	Northbound Off-ramp	Mainline	Northbound Slip on-ramp from Westbound	Northbound On-ramp	Mainline	Northbound Off-ramp
	800	27,740	720	2,300	26,160	3,300	1,340	28,120	5,230
Existing AADT	Rankin Road Drive IC (Avenue 200)			Paige Avenue IC			Bardsley Avenue IC		
	Southbound On-ramp	Mainline	Southbound Off-ramp	Southbound On-ramp	Mainline	Southbound Off-ramp	Southbound On-ramp	Mainline	Southbound Off-ramp
	1,050	26,510	1,200	4,000	23,710	4,500	2,030	26,180	3,110

Source: Caltrans Central Region Transportation Planning, October 2018

**Table 2.25 Forecasted Traffic for Build Alternatives**

Traffic Breakdown	Design Periods (within post mile limits 26.3 to 28.1)						
	State Route 99 Mainline	Alternative 1A and 1C (at Commercial)		Alternative 2 (at Industrial)		Alternative 3 (at Paige)	
	20 years 2027-2047	10 years 2027-2037	20 years 2027-2047	10 years 2027-2037	20 years 2027-2047	10 years 2027-2037	20 years 2027-2047
2027 AADT	68,500	6,700	6,700	7,200	7,200	20,000	20,000
2037 AADT	-	12,000	-	12,900	-	24,000	-
2047 AADT	105,500	-	21,500	-	23,100	-	30,000
2037 DHV	9,600	1,100	-	1,150	-	2,250	-
2047 DHV	-	-	1,950	-	2,100	-	2,750
Peak-Hour Directional Volume Percentage	59%	59%	59%	59%	59%	59%	59%
Truck Design Hourly Volume	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%
Traffic Index	15.5	11	12.5	11	13	12.5	13.5
Design Speed	70 mph	45 mph		45 mph		45 mph	

*AADT: Average Annual Daily Traffic*

*DHV: Design hourly volume*

*Source: Caltrans Operations Analysis, October 2018*

**Table 2.26 Carbon Dioxide Operational Tons/Year**

Alternative	CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions
Existing/Baseline 2018	7.15
Alternative 1A	9.39
Alternative 1C	9.49
Alternative 2	9.56
Alternative 3	9.85
No-Build Alternative	10.33

### *Construction Emissions*

During construction, the proposed project will generate air pollutants. The exhaust from construction equipment contains hydrocarbons, oxides of nitrogen, carbon monoxide, suspended particulate matter, and odors. However, most of the pollutants would be windblown dust generated during excavation, grading, hauling, and various other activities. The impacts of these activities would vary each day as construction progresses.

Caltrans Standard Specifications pertaining to dust control and dust palliative requirements are a required part of all construction contracts and should effectively reduce and control emission impacts during construction. The provisions of Caltrans Standard Specifications, Section 14-9.02 “Air Pollution Control” and Section 10-5 “Dust Control,” require the contractor to comply with the air pollution control rules, ordinances, and regulations and statutes that apply to work performed under the



contract, including those provided in Government Code §11017. The amount of PM<sub>10</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> (nitrogen oxide) emissions are likely to exceed the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's (SJVAPCD) Rule 9510/Indirect Source Review Rule. The construction contractor selected for this project will be required to comply with this rule and to submit an Air Impact Analysis to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and pay any fees if required.

Tulare County is not among the counties listed as containing serpentine and ultramafic rock (Governor's Office of Planning and Research, October 26, 2000). Therefore, the impact from naturally occurring asbestos (NOA) during project construction would be minimal to none. If structures that may contain asbestos are to be demolished, it is the responsibility of the contractor to comply with the Rules and Regulations of the Air Pollution Control District. A Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) would be required for these structures prior to demolition or modification.

Construction activities will not last for more than 5 years at one general location, so construction-related emissions do not need to be included in regional and project-level conformity analysis (40 CFR 93.123(c)(5)).

#### *No-Build Alternative*

No impacts to air quality are anticipated with the No-Build Alternative.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

#### *Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3*

Caltrans Standard Specifications pertaining to dust control and dust palliative requirements are a required part of all construction contracts and should effectively reduce and control emission impacts during construction. The provisions of Caltrans Standard Specifications, Section 14-9.02 "Air Pollution Control" and Section 10-5 "Dust Control," require the contractor to comply with the air pollution control rules, ordinances, and regulations and statutes that apply to work performed under the contract, including those provided in Government Code §11017.

If structures that may contain asbestos are to be demolished/modified, it is the responsibility of the contractor to comply with the Rules and Regulations of the Air Pollution Control District. A Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) would be required for structures prior to demolition or modification.

#### *No-Build Alternative*

Avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures are not required for the No-Build Alternative.

#### *Climate Change*

Neither the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) nor the Federal Highway Administration has issued explicit guidance or methods to conduct project-level greenhouse gas analysis. The Federal Highway Administration emphasizes concepts of resilience and sustainability in highway planning, project development,

design, operations, and maintenance. Because there have been requirements set forth in California legislation and executive orders on climate change, the issue is addressed in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) chapter of this document. See Chapter 3. The CEQA analysis may be used to inform the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) determinations for the project.

## **2.2.5 Noise**

### ***Regulatory Setting***

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the California Environmental Quality Act provide the broad basis for analyzing and abating highway traffic noise effects. The intent of these laws is to promote the general welfare and to foster a healthy environment. The requirements for noise analysis and consideration of noise abatement and/or mitigation, however, differ between the National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Quality Act.

#### ***California Environmental Quality Act***

The California Environmental Quality Act requires a strictly baseline versus build analysis to assess whether a proposed project will have a noise impact. If a proposed project is determined to have a significant noise impact under the California Environmental Quality Act, then the act dictates that mitigation measures must be incorporated into the project unless those measures are not feasible. The rest of this section will focus on the National Environmental Policy Act/23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 772 (23 CFR 772) noise analysis; please see Chapter 3 of this document for further information on noise analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act.

#### ***National Environmental Policy Act and 23 CFR 772***

For highway transportation projects with Federal Highway Administration involvement (and Caltrans, as assigned), the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1970 and its implementing regulations (23 Code of Federal Regulations 772) govern the analysis and abatement of traffic noise impacts. The regulations require that potential noise impacts in areas of frequent human use be identified during the planning and design of a highway project. The regulations include noise abatement criteria (NAC) that are used to determine when a noise impact would occur. The noise abatement criteria differ depending on the type of land use under analysis. For example, the noise abatement criterion for residences (67 dBA) is lower than the noise abatement criterion for commercial areas (72 dBA).

Table 2.27 lists the noise abatement criteria for use in the National Environmental Policy Act/23 CFR 772 analysis.

**Table 2.27 Noise Abatement Criteria**

Activity Category	Noise Abatement Criteria, Hourly A-Weighted Noise Level, Leq(h)	Description of Activity Category
A	57 (Exterior)	Lands on which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need and where the preservation of those qualities is essential if the area is to continue to serve its intended purpose.
B <sup>1</sup>	67 (Exterior)	Residential.
C <sup>1</sup>	67 (Exterior)	Active sport areas, amphitheaters, auditoriums, campgrounds, cemeteries, day care centers, hospitals, libraries, medical facilities, parks, picnic areas, places of worship, playgrounds, public meeting rooms, public or nonprofit institutional structures, radio studios, recording studios, recreation areas, Section 4(f) sites, schools, television studios, trails, and trail crossings.
D	52 (Interior)	Auditoriums, day care centers, hospitals, libraries, medical facilities, places of worship, public meeting rooms, public or nonprofit institutional structures, radio studios, recording studios, schools, and television studios.
E	72 (Exterior)	Hotels, motels, offices, restaurants/bars, and other developed lands, properties, or activities not included in A–D or F.
F	No NAC—reporting only	Agriculture, airports, bus yards, emergency services, industrial, logging, maintenance facilities, manufacturing, mining, rail yards, retail facilities, shipyards, utilities (water resources, water treatment, electrical, etc.), and warehousing.
G	No NAC—reporting only	Undeveloped lands that are not permitted.
<sup>1</sup> Includes undeveloped lands permitted for this activity category.		

Figure 2-4 lists the noise levels of common activities to enable readers to compare the actual and predicted highway noise levels discussed in this section with common activities.

Common Outdoor Activities	Noise Level (dBA)	Common Indoor Activities
Jet Fly-over at 300m (1000 ft)	110	Rock Band
Gas Lawn Mower at 1 m (3 ft)	100	
Diesel Truck at 15 m (50 ft), at 80 km (50 mph)	90	Food Blender at 1 m (3 ft)
Noisy Urban Area, Daytime	80	Garbage Disposal at 1 m (3 ft)
Gas Lawn Mower, 30 m (100 ft) Commercial Area	70	Vacuum Cleaner at 3 m (10 ft) Normal Speech at 1 m (3 ft)
Heavy Traffic at 90 m (300 ft)	60	Large Business Office
Quiet Urban Daytime	50	Dishwasher Next Room
Quiet Urban Nighttime	40	Theater, Large Conference Room (Background)
Quiet Suburban Nighttime	30	Library
Quiet Rural Nighttime	20	Bedroom at Night, Concert Hall (Background)
	10	Broadcast/Recording Studio
Lowest Threshold of Human Hearing	0	Lowest Threshold of Human Hearing

**Figure 2-4 Noise Levels of Common Activities**

According to the Caltrans Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol for New Highway Construction and Reconstruction Projects, May 2011, a noise impact occurs when the predicted future noise level with the project substantially exceeds the existing noise level (defined as a 12 dBA or more increase) or when the future noise level with the project approaches or exceeds the noise abatement criteria. Approaching the noise abatement criteria is defined as coming within 1 dBA of the noise abatement criteria.

If it is determined that the project will have noise impacts, then potential abatement measures must be considered. Noise abatement measures that are determined to be

reasonable and feasible at the time of final design are incorporated into the project plans and specifications. This document discusses noise abatement measures that would likely be incorporated in the project.

The Caltrans Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol sets forth the criteria for determining when an abatement measure is reasonable and feasible. Feasibility of noise abatement is basically an engineering concern. A minimum 5-dBA reduction for all impacted receptors in the future noise levels must be achieved for an abatement to be considered feasible. Other considerations include topography, access requirements, other noise sources, and safety considerations. Also, a noise reduction of at least 7 dBA must be achieved at one or more benefited receptors for an abatement measure to be considered reasonable. The reasonableness determination is basically a cost-benefit analysis. Factors used in determining whether a proposed noise abatement measure is reasonable include: residents' acceptance and the cost per benefited residence.

### ***Affected Environment***

A Noise Study Report was completed for the project in March 2018. A Noise Abatement Decision Report was completed in August 2018.

The project area consists of small businesses on the west and east sides of State Route 99. These include the Budget Inn hotel, a mobile home park and a cluster of homes on the east side of State Route 99, just west of Paige Avenue. Businesses and homes sit about 50 to 100 feet from the edge of the shoulder of the highway. Traffic on existing State Route 99 is the main source of noise in the study area. The noise study analyzed noise levels on both sides of State Route 99 within the project limits.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

#### ***Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3***

The project is identified as a Type 1 project and will result in a noise impact that requires consideration of noise abatement under Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3.

A noise study field investigation was done on October 17, 2017 during the highest traffic noise hour (10:00 a.m.). Table 2.28 shows results of the noise measurements.

**Table 2.28 Short-term Noise Measurement Results**

<b>Receiver Number</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Noise Level Meter Distance from Right-of-Way (feet)</b>	<b>Duration (minutes)</b>	<b>Measurement (Leq, dBA)</b>
R1	2291 S. Tamarack Street	Residential	27	10	67
R2	4450 S. Blackstone Street	Industrial	400	10	57
R3	None available	Agricultural	94	10	67
R4	830 Commercial Avenue	Industrial	500	10	52

Source: Caltrans Noise Study Report, March 2018

The area around the two proposed interchanges (Alternative 1A and Alternative 2) would have no long-term noise impacts that would require noise abatement because the land use for the receivers near the proposed interchanges under these alternatives is mostly industrial (Activity Category F) and there are no noise impact criteria for this activity category per Caltrans Noise Protocol 2011-Table 1.

The noise receptors (receivers) and impacts are described below.

### Receiver R1

- Represents a cluster of single-family residences.
- Under Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C and Alternative 2, residences would be located north of the proposed interchanges, on the east side of State Route 99. Future noise levels are predicted to be 67 decibels. This noise level approaches the noise abatement criterion of 67 decibels for residential land use. Noise abatement for this location is required to attenuate for the future noise impacts.
- Under Alternative 3, the proposed interchange would be approximately 30 feet south of the residences. Future noise levels are predicted to be 67 decibels. This noise level approaches the noise abatement criterion of 67 decibels for residential land use. Noise abatement for this location is required to attenuate for the future noise impacts.
- The proposed soundwall (SW1) height at 12 feet for one portion and 14 feet for another is acoustically feasible for Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C and Alternative 2. The soundwall would be approximately 1,500 feet long (see Table 2.29). The wall would benefit 11 first-row residences on the east side of State Route 99 just north of the Paige Avenue overcrossing. See Appendix G for the proposed soundwall locations.
- The proposed soundwall (SW1) height at 12 feet is acoustically feasible for Alternative 3. The soundwall would be approximately 1,004 feet long (see Table 2.29). The wall would benefit 11 first-row residences on the east side of State Route 99 just north of the Paige Avenue overcrossing. See Appendix G for the proposed soundwall locations.
- Proposed soundwall (SW1) meets the design goal of a 7-decibel noise reduction at one or more benefited receptors for Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3.
- The proposed soundwall would impact the existing Tulare Canal under Alternative 3. An additional segment of the open channel would have to be replaced with a box culvert, increasing construction costs.
- The beginning of the wall would be placed where it will meet the sight distance and horizontal clearance standard under Alternative 3. The sound reduction benefit to the 11 first-row residences east of State Route 99 may be reduced because of the shorter length of the soundwall.
- The soundwall construction cost exceeds the reasonable allowance for the benefited receivers. Therefore, the proposed soundwall (SW1) is not

recommended for Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 (see Table 2.29).

Table 2.29 evaluates feasibility of the sound reduction benefit compared to the cost of building soundwalls for this project.

**Table 2.29 Soundwall Evaluation**

Barrier	Location of Beginning of Soundwall	Post Mile	Height (feet)	Acoustically Feasible	Number of Benefited Residences	Design Goal Achieved	Total Reasonable Allowance	Estimated Construction Cost	Cost Less than Allowance
Soundwall (SW1) for Alternatives 1A, 1C, 2	Northbound State Route 99 at post mile 27.6	27.65	12	Yes	11	Yes	\$1,012,000	\$2,030,000	No
		27.86	14	Yes	11	Yes	\$1,012,000	\$2,170,000	No
Soundwall (SW1) for Alternative 3	Northbound State Route 99 at post mile 27.6	27.65 to 27.86	12	Yes	11	Yes	\$1,012,000	\$1,360,000	No

Source: Caltrans Noise Abatement Decision Report 2018

Receiver R2

- Represents a truck stop, also includes the Budget Inn Hotel and mobile home park.
- Under Alternative 3, the mobile home park would be on the east side of State Route 99 and south of the interchange. Future noise levels are predicted to be 58 decibels. This level is below the noise abatement criterion of 67 decibels for the land use.
- Noise abatement for this location is not required to attenuate for the future noise impacts.

Receiver R3

- Represents an agricultural field east of State Route 99. Future noise levels are predicted to be 70 decibels.
- Noise abatement is not required for this land use.

Receiver R4

- Represents an industrial facility at 830 Commercial Avenue. Under Alternative 1C, Receiver R4 would be next to the ramp. Future noise levels are predicted to be 53 decibels.
- Noise abatement for this location is not required.

*Construction Noise Impacts*

Local noise levels near the proposed project would increase during project construction. The amount of the increase would vary with the types and models of equipment used. Noise levels from normal construction activities range from 80 to 95

decibels at 50 feet (see Table 2.30). Noise produced by construction equipment would be reduced over a distance at a rate of 6 decibels per doubling of distance. Construction for the project is expected to take about 580 working days. Nighttime construction is anticipated with the project.

**Table 2.30 Construction Equipment Noise**

Noise Source	50-Foot Maximum Noise Level (Lmax) dBA2 3	Noise Source	50-Foot Maximum Noise Level (Lmax) dBA2 3
Air Compressor (portable)	89	Front End Loader	90
Air Compressor (stationary)	89	Generator	87
Auger, drilled shaft rig	89	Gradall	85
Backhoe	90	Grader	89
Bar Bender	85	Grinder	82
Chain Saw	88	Impact Wrench	85
Compactor	85	Jack Hammer	88
Concrete Mixer (small trailer)	68	Paver	92
Concrete Mixer Truck	89	Pavement Breaker	85
Concrete Pump Trailer	84	Pneumatic Tool	88
Concrete Vibrator	81	Pump	80
Crane, Derrick	90	Roller	83
Crane, Mobile	85	Sand Blaster	87
Dozer (Bulldozer)	90	Saw, Electric	80
Excavator	92	Scraper	91
Forklift	86	Shovel	90
Water truck	94	Tamper	88
		Tractor	90
		Trucks (Under Load)	95

Source: Caltrans Noise Study Report 2018

**Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Noise Abatement Measures**

Project construction is estimated to last for 580 days. During the construction phases of the project, noise from construction activities may intermittently dominate the noise environment in the immediate area of construction. There will be also be night work during construction. When this type of activity occurs, the project will have special provisions (SSPs) showing the days and time of such activities.

The following are possible control measures that can be implemented to minimize noise disturbances at sensitive areas during construction:

- All equipment will have sound-control devices no less effective than those provided on the original equipment. Each internal combustion engine used for any purpose on the job or related to the job will be equipped with a muffler of a type recommended by the manufacturer. No internal combustion engine should be operated on the job site without an appropriate muffler.



- Construction methods or equipment that will provide the lowest level of noise impact (for example, avoid impact pile driving near residences and consider alternative methods that are also suitable for the soil condition) should be used.
- Idling equipment will be turned off.
- Truck loading, unloading, and hauling operations will be restricted so that noise and vibration are kept to a minimum through residential neighborhoods to the greatest possible extent.

The contractor would be required to adhere to the following administrative noise control measures:

- Once details of the construction activities become available, the contractor will work with local authorities to develop an acceptable approach to minimize interference with the business and residential communities, traffic disruptions, and the total duration of the construction.
- Good public relations will be maintained with the community to minimize objections to unavoidable construction impacts. Frequent activity updates of all construction activities will be provided. A construction noise monitoring program to track sound levels and limit the impacts will be implemented.
- In case of construction noise complaints by the public, the Resident Engineer will coordinate with the construction manager, and the specific noise-producing activity may be changed, altered, or suspended temporarily, if necessary.

It is possible that certain construction activities could cause intermittent localized concern from vibration in the project area. During certain construction phases, processes such as earth moving with bulldozers, the use of vibratory compaction rollers, demolitions, or pavement braking may cause construction-related vibration impacts such as human annoyance or, in some cases, building damages. There are cases where it may be necessary to use this type of equipment close to residential buildings.

The following are procedures that can be used to minimize the potential impacts from construction vibration:

- Restrict the hours of vibration-intensive equipment or activities such as vibratory rollers so that impacts to residents are minimal (e.g., weekdays during daytime hours only when as many residents as possible are away from home).
- The owner of a building close enough to a construction vibration source that damage to that structure due to vibration is possible would be entitled to a pre-construction building inspection to document the pre-construction condition of that structure.
- Conduct vibration monitoring during vibration-intensive activities.

A combination of the mitigation techniques for equipment vibration control as well as administrative measures, when properly implemented, can be selected to provide the most effective means to minimize the effects of construction activity.

Application of the mitigation measures would reduce the construction impacts; however, temporary increases in vibration would likely occur at some locations.

## **2.3 Biological Environment**

### **2.3.1 Animal Species**

#### ***Regulatory Setting***

Many state and federal laws regulate impacts to wildlife. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service), and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife are responsible for implementing these laws. This section discusses potential impacts and permit requirements associated with animals not listed or proposed for listing under the federal or state Endangered Species Act. Species listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered are discussed in the Threatened and Endangered Species Section 2.3.2. All other special-status animal species are discussed here, including California Department of Fish and Wildlife fully protected species and species of special concern, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or NOAA Fisheries Service candidate species.

Federal laws and regulations relevant to wildlife include the following:

- National Environmental Policy Act
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act

State laws and regulations relevant to wildlife include the following:

- California Environmental Quality Act
- Sections 1600–1603 of the California Fish and Game Code
- Sections 4150 and 4152 of the California Fish and Game Code

#### ***Affected Environment***

A Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts was completed for the project on July 3, 2018.

Scattered eucalyptus trees (*Eucalyptus globulus*) stand along the side of the highway in the project area. Oleander bushes (*Nerium oleander*) grow mostly in the median. Mature eucalyptus trees can provide suitable nesting habitat for a variety of bird and raptor species. Multiple surveys were done and, during visits to the project area,

biologists saw Swainson's hawks flying overhead, but no nests were found. Fields next to the project footprint contain low-growing ruderal species that could serve as potential foraging habitat. The Swainson's hawk is discussed under Section 2.3.2, Threatened and Endangered Species.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

#### ***Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3***

The following standard special provisions may be added to ensure that project activities comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and do not result in harmful impacts to nesting birds or their nests, eggs, and young. One or more of the following actions may apply and incorporated as Standard Special Provisions: pre-construction surveys, biological monitoring during initial ground-disturbing activities, seasonal restrictions on the removal of suitable nest trees or brush, and the placement of Environmentally Sensitive Area buffers around nests or burrows.

Standard Special Provisions (SSPs) typically used include:

- SSP 14-1.01 Environmental Stewardship, including Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs)
- SSP 14-6.02 Species Protection (buffers, work stoppage areas)
- SSP 14-6.03 Bird Protection (nest protection buffers)

Implementation of any Standard Special Provision would depend on specific project circumstances and/or contractual requirements (such as those listed in various environmental permits), which may or may not be applicable to this project.

#### ***No-Build Alternative***

No impacts to animal species would occur under the No-Build Alternative.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

#### ***Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2, Alternative 3 and the No-Build Alternative***

Compensatory mitigation for animal species is not required.

## **2.3.2 Threatened and Endangered Species**

### ***Regulatory Setting***

The main federal law protecting threatened and endangered species is the Federal Endangered Species Act: 16 U.S. Code Section 1531, et seq. See also 50 Code of Federal Regulations Part 402. This act and later amendments provide for the conservation of endangered and threatened species and the ecosystems on which they depend. Under Section 7 of this act, federal agencies, such as the Federal Highway Administration (and Caltrans, as assigned), are required to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's

National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service) to ensure that they are not undertaking, funding, permitting, or authorizing actions likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat. Critical habitat is defined as geographic locations critical to the existence of a threatened or endangered species. The outcome of consultation under Section 7 may include a Biological Opinion with an Incidental Take statement or a Letter of Concurrence. Section 3 of Federal Endangered Species Act defines take as “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect or any attempt at such conduct.”

California has enacted a similar law at the state level, the California Endangered Species Act, California Fish and Game Code Section 2050, et seq. The California Endangered Species Act emphasizes early consultation to avoid potential impacts to rare, endangered, and threatened species and to develop appropriate planning to offset project-caused losses of listed species populations and their essential habitats.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is the agency responsible for implementing the California Endangered Species Act. Section 2080 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibits “take” of any species determined to be an endangered species or a threatened species. Take is defined in Section 86 of the California Fish and Game Code as “hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill.” The California Endangered Species Act allows for take incidental to otherwise lawful development projects; for these actions, an Incidental Take Permit is issued by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

For species listed under both the Federal Endangered Species Act and California Endangered Species Act requiring a Biological Opinion under Section 7 of Federal Endangered Species Act, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife may also authorize impacts to California Endangered Species Act species by issuing a Consistency Determination under Section 2080.1 of the California Fish and Game Code.

Another federal law, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976, was established to conserve and manage fishery resources found off the coast, as well as anadromous species and Continental Shelf fishery resources of the United States, by exercising (A) sovereign rights for the purposes of exploring, exploiting, conserving, and managing all fish within the exclusive economic zone established by Presidential Proclamation 5030, dated March 10, 1983, and (B) exclusive fishery management authority beyond the exclusive economic zone over such anadromous species, Continental Shelf fishery resources, and fishery resources in special areas.

### ***Affected Environment***

A Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts was completed for this project on July 2018.

### *Swainson's Hawk*

The Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) is listed as threatened by the State of California and is protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. This hawk is a summer migrant to the Central Valley and winters in South America. Swainson's hawks are slender, with long pointed wings and dark flight feathers. They forage in grasslands, agricultural fields, and livestock pastures. Their main food sources are mice, gophers, ground squirrels, rabbits, large insects, reptiles, amphibians, and small birds. These hawks roost and nest in trees. Breeding occurs from late March into late August.

A California Natural Diversity Database query resulted in four occurrences of Swainson's hawk sightings and nests within 2.5 miles of the project location, the most recent occurring in 2011. There are no known nest trees within the action area. Multiple surveys were conducted and, during visits to the project area, biologists saw Swainson's hawks flying overhead, but no nests were found. Fields next to the project footprint contain low-growing ruderal species that could serve as potential foraging habitat.

### *Tipton Kangaroo Rat*

The Tipton kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys nitratoides nitratoides*) is a federal and state endangered species. Tipton kangaroo rats occupy relatively flat arid land on alluvial fan and floodplain soils. Their burrows are commonly found in slightly elevated mounds, road berms, canal embankments, and railroad beds. Burrow systems are usually located in open areas; in areas of dense shrub cover, the burrows are hidden beneath shrubs.

Tipton kangaroo rats eat mainly seeds, but also eat some insects and small amounts of herbaceous vegetation when available.

The adult Tipton kangaroo rat measures 3.9 to 4.3 inches long without its tail and another 5.1 inches with the tail. Adults weigh approximately 1.3 ounces.

### *San Joaquin Kit Fox*

The San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*) is a federal endangered and state threatened species. The kit fox is the smallest fox in North America, weighing about 5 pounds and measuring about 12 inches tall. These foxes have large ears set close together, a slim body, and a long, bushy tail that is carried low and straight.

The San Joaquin kit fox is active year-round and inhabits grassland, scrubland, oak woodland, alkali sink scrubland, and vernal pool and alkali meadow communities, but is also known to occur in very modified habitats such as oil fields and wind turbines. San Joaquin kit foxes use dens for protection, temperature regulation, and shelter from weather. They may dig their own dens, use dens built by other animals, or use artificial structures (culverts, abandoned pipelines, or banks in sumps).

No coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife has occurred to date. Currently, no state-listed species have been found to occur within the project limits, but there is a potential for the state-listed Swainson's hawk to nest within the project limits. If the Swainson's hawk is found nesting in the project footprint prior to construction, 2081 Incidental Take Permit coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife may be needed.

### **Environmental Consequences**

#### *Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3*

##### Swainson's Hawk

The project area contains suitable nest trees for Swainson's hawks, but no nesting Swainson's hawks were seen within the project limits. Tree removal is anticipated, but due to the lack of nests there will be no impact to nesting. Any noise or disturbance from construction would have no greater impact to a Swainson's hawk than the current disturbances from State Route 99 and the various residential and commercial traffic in the area. Therefore, no impacts to Swainson's hawks are anticipated with implementation of the following measures:

- Protocol-level pre-construction surveys according to *Recommended Timing and Methodology for Swainson's Hawk Nesting Surveys in California's Central Valley* (May 2000) will be completed by qualified biologists during nesting season (February 1 to September 30) prior to groundbreaking activities to ensure no nesting Swainson's hawks will be affected if construction is to occur during the nesting season.
- If nesting Swainson's hawks are observed onsite, then the nest site will be designated an Environmentally Sensitive Area, with a buffer zone of 600 feet until it has been determined by a qualified biologist that the young have fledged out of the nest.
- A qualified biologist will monitor the active nest during construction activities.
- A special provision for migratory birds will be included to ensure that no potential nesting migratory birds are affected during construction activities.
- Removal of any trees within the project area should be done outside of the nesting season; however, if a tree within the project area needs to be removed during the nesting season, a qualified biologist will inspect the tree prior to removal to ensure that no nests are present.

The following Standard Special Provisions may be added to ensure that project activities comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and do not result in harmful impacts to nesting birds or their nests, eggs, and young. One or more of the following actions may apply and be incorporated as Standard Special Provisions: pre-construction surveys, biological monitoring during initial ground-disturbing activities,

seasonal restrictions on the removal of suitable nest trees or brush, and the placement of Environmentally Sensitive Area buffers around nests or burrows.

Standard Special Provisions (SSPs) typically used include the following:

- SSP 14-1.01 Environmental Stewardship, including Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs)
- SSP 14-6.02 Species Protection (buffers, work stoppage areas)
- SSP 14-6.03 Bird Protection (nest protection buffers)

Implementation of any Standard Special Provisions would depend on specific project circumstances and/or contractual requirements (such as those listed in various environmental permits), which may or may not be applicable to this project.

### Tipton Kangaroo Rat

During biological surveys, rodent burrows were found in the project area but were isolated to one small portion along the irrigation canal. The burrows were inactive. There was no presence of scrub or woody shrubs that would provide appropriate ground cover for Tipton kangaroo rats, and the only potentially suitable field in the project area is cultivated and sprayed. Based on these survey results and lack of undisturbed habitat, Tipton kangaroo rats are unlikely to occur within the project area.

The project area is surrounded by development, so the potential for Tipton kangaroo rats to move into the project area is low. There is little suitable habitat for the species within the action area, and surveys did not detect active burrows. No direct, indirect, or future impacts on the Tipton kangaroo rat are expected to occur with implementation of the following:

- Prior to the start of construction, a qualified biologist knowledgeable in the biology of the Tipton kangaroo rat and the species' legislative protection will conduct an employee education program for all contractors, their employees, and agency personnel involved in the project. The program will include the following: a description of the natural history of the species and its habitat with the potential to be affected by the proposed project, the general measures that are being implemented to conserve the species as they relate to the proposed project, the penalties for non-compliance, and the boundaries of the work area within which the project must be accomplished. A fact sheet conveying this information would be prepared for distribution to the above-mentioned individuals or others who may enter the project site.

### San Joaquin Kit Fox

A survey of the project area found no evidence of the San Joaquin kit fox, denning, or foraging habitat. Only one parcel that could potentially support the San Joaquin kit fox was observed in the project area, but the site was walked and no dens were found. No small mammals were observed, nor were any active burrows, so a suitable prey base does not occur in the area, making the project area extremely poor foraging

habitat. Any kit foxes would have to cross several large agricultural fields to reach the project area; this would make their presence unlikely. Based on these observations, San Joaquin kit foxes are unlikely to occur in the project area.

Because San Joaquin kit foxes are not expected to occur within the project area, they would not be impacted. No direct, indirect, or future impacts on San Joaquin kit foxes are anticipated with implementation of the following:

- Prior to any ground disturbance, the contractor, all employees of the contractor, subcontractors, and subcontractors' employees will attend an employee education program by a Caltrans or other approved biologist. The program will consist of a brief presentation on San Joaquin kit fox biology, legislative protection, and measures to avoid impacts to the species during project implementation.
- Pre-construction/pre-activity surveys would be conducted no less than 14 days and no more than 30 days prior to the beginning of ground disturbance and/or construction activities or any project activity likely to impact the San Joaquin kit fox.

Table 2.31 summarizes the Endangered Species Act determinations for the species included in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife special-status species queries performed for the project. Of these, none were found to have a high potential to occur onsite or be impacted by the project.



**Table 2.31 Summary of Endangered Species Act Determinations**

Species	Status <sup>(1)</sup>	Possible in Which Habitat Type	Species Impacts Expected After AMMs <sup>(2)?</sup>	FESA Determination
California red-legged frog	FT	Ponds, perennial pools, slow-moving streams, and adjacent riparian areas. Can be found in livestock watering impoundments.	No, no breeding habitat onsite and existing basins cannot support species.	<i>No effect.</i>
California tiger salamander	FT	Partly shaded, shallow streams and riffles with a rocky substrate.	No, no habitat features exist within or near the project area. No ponds, perennial pools or slow-moving streams occur.	<i>No effect.</i>
Delta smelt	FT	Spawns in freshwater but lives in the mixing zone of fresh and saline water in the Sacramento and San Joaquin estuaries of the San Francisco Bay.	No, project area is outside of this species' range.	<i>No effect.</i>
Vernal pool fairy shrimp	FT	Vernal pool complexes apart of undulating landscapes, where soil mounds are interspersed with basins, swales, and drainages.	No, no vernal pools onsite.	<i>No effect.</i>
San Joaquin kit fox	FE	Alkali sink, valley grassland, and open woodlands, in valleys and adjacent gentle foothills with suitable prey base.	No, denning habitat is marginal at best and dens and prey base do not occur.	<i>No effect.</i>
Tipton kangaroo rat	FE	Arid-land communities on alluvial fan and floodplain soils having level or nearly level topography along the valley floor of the Tulare Basin.	No, no active burrows were found onsite and no species occurrences exist near project location.	<i>No effect.</i>
Blunt-nosed leopard lizard	FE	Semiarid grasslands, alkali flats, low foothills, canyon floors, large washes, and arroyos, usually on sandy, gravelly, or loamy substrate, sometimes on hardpan.	No, no burrowing habitat onsite.	<i>No effect.</i>
Giant garter snake	FT	Agricultural wetlands and other waterways such as irrigation and drainage canals, sloughs, ponds, small lakes and low-gradient streams.	No, action area is outside current range	<i>No effect.</i>
San Joaquin adobe sunburst	FT	Cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grasslands	No, ruderal and agriculture lands dominate the landscape, so the original habitat is not supported	<i>No effect.</i>

(1) Species Status Key: FE = Federal Endangered; FT = Federal Threatened

(2) AMMs = Avoidance and Minimization Measures

**No-Build Alternative**

No threatened or endangered species would be affected by the No-Build Alternative.

**Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

**Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3**

Compensatory mitigation is not required under Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3.

**No-Build Alternative**

Compensatory mitigation is not required under the No-Build Alternative.

### **2.3.3 Invasive Species**

#### ***Regulatory Setting***

On February 3, 1999, President William J. Clinton signed Executive Order 13112 requiring federal agencies to combat the introduction or spread of invasive species in the United States. The order defines invasive species as “any species, including its seeds, eggs, spores, or other biological material capable of propagating that species, that is not native to that ecosystem whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.” Federal Highway Administration guidance issued August 10, 1999 directs the use of the State’s invasive species list, maintained by the California Invasive Species Council to define the invasive species that must be considered as part of the National Environmental Policy Act analysis for a proposed project.

#### ***Affected Environment***

A Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts was completed for the project in July 2018.

The project area consists of areas of unpaved highway shoulders, highway medians, and weedy areas around and between agricultural fields and other structures.

#### ***Environmental Consequences***

*Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2, Alternative 3 and the No-Build Alternative*

Two invasive plant species were found in the project footprint at various points along the State Route 99 and Paige Avenue intersection: tumbleweed (*Salsola tragus*) and ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*).

#### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

*Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2, and Alternative 3*

Caltrans has issued policy guidelines, which provide a framework for addressing roadside vegetation management issues for construction activities and maintenance programs. These measures may include the inspection and cleaning of project equipment, commitments to ensure the use of native or invasive-free mulches, topsoils and seed mixes, as well as eradication strategies for the removal and proper disposal of existing populations, or those that could occur in the future.

*No-Build Alternative*

Avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures are not required under the No-Build Alternative.

## 2.4 Cumulative Impacts

### ***Regulatory Setting***

Cumulative impacts are those that result from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, combined with the potential impacts of the proposed project. A cumulative effect assessment looks at the collective impacts posed by individual land use plans and projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively substantial impacts taking place over a period of time.

Cumulative impacts to resources in the project area may result from residential, commercial, industrial, and highway development, as well as from agricultural development and the conversion to more intensive agricultural cultivation. These land use activities can degrade habitat and species diversity through consequences such as displacement and fragmentation of habitats and populations, alteration of hydrology, contamination, erosion, sedimentation, disruption of migration corridors, changes in water quality, and introduction or promotion of predators. They can also contribute to potential community impacts identified for the project, such as changes in community character, traffic patterns, housing availability, and employment.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 describes when a cumulative impact analysis is necessary and what elements are necessary for an adequate discussion of cumulative impacts. The definition of cumulative impacts under California Environmental Quality Act can be found in Section 15355 of the CEQA Guidelines. A definition of cumulative impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act can be found in 40 Code of Federal Regulations Section 1508.7.

### ***Affected Environment***

Two nearby Caltrans projects are in the planning stages:

- A proposed lane addition project on State Route 99 between Avenue 200 and Prosperity Avenue—The project proposes to widen State Route 99 from four lanes to six lanes, and right-of-way acquisition will be required.
- A proposed pavement project from Paige Avenue overcrossing to Prosperity Avenue—Work also includes rumble strip installation, shoulder backing, and guardrail upgrade. All proposed work would be within Caltrans' right-of-way.

Two Caltrans projects will be in the construction stages:

- A worker safety improvement project on State Route 99 from post miles 28.2 to 31.0—Work includes providing maintenance access gates, paths and pullouts for roadside maintenance and applying inert material cover in landscape areas adjacent to traffic for worker safety. All work to occur within the Caltrans right-of-way.
- A signal installation project on State Route 137 at the State Route 99 southbound on- and off-ramp intersection and the State Route 99 northbound on- and off-ramp

intersection—Work also includes realigning the State Route 99 northbound on- and off-ramp, creating a three-way intersection and closing a local street. Additional right-of-way will be needed for the northbound ramps.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

**Land Use:** The proposed lane addition project would convert residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial uses to transportation uses. Caltrans projects consider the land use goals and transportation needs identified in the Tulare County Regional Transportation Plan and Tulare County General Plan. Cumulative impacts to land use conversion are recognized, planned and anticipated for the area. Cumulative impacts would be considered negligible.

**Farmland:** The proposed lane addition project would convert agricultural land to non-agricultural use. Cumulative impacts to agricultural land conversion are recognized, planned and anticipated for the area. Cumulative impacts would be considered negligible.

**Visual Resources:** The inherent size and engineered appearance of the enlarged highway facility would cause a permanent change to the visual setting. The character of the highway corridor would appear more urbanized as the highway facilities become larger in scale, introduce several concrete structures, and add more pavement and roadway accessories into the view.

**Water Quality:** The proposed lane addition project would add more impervious surface. Caltrans projects are designed to minimize increases in storm water discharge rates by installing appropriate treatment Best Management Practices to encourage storage and infiltration of storm water within the right-of-way. Cumulative impacts to water quality from these projects are considered negligible.

**Biological Resources:** Potential San Joaquin kit fox and Swainson's hawk habitat occur in the area.

The worker safety improvement project and proposed pavement project are within the Caltrans right-of-way and would not contribute to cumulative impacts.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

**Land Use and Farmland:** Caltrans considers measures to convert fewer acres of farmland. Remnant parcels of farmland would be avoided as much as possible by acquiring right-of-way in slivers (linear strips) of property next to the existing parcels. When possible, Caltrans would allow farmland to be kept in production (after purchase) until needed for construction.

The Caltrans Relocation Advisory Assistance Program helps locate suitable replacement property, and the Relocation Payment Program reimburses for certain costs involved in relocating. Types of payments include moving and related expenses (personal property not being acquired for the highway project), reestablishment

expenses (expenses related to replacement property), and in-lieu payment (a fixed payment in-lieu of moving and related expenses).

**Biological Resources:** Pre-construction surveys, onsite biological monitoring, and establishing environmentally sensitive areas within the proposed project limits would be implemented. If mitigation is required, onsite mitigation or if possible mitigation accomplished through a mitigation bank would be implemented.



# Chapter 3 CEQA Evaluation

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## 3.1 Determining Significance under CEQA

The proposed project is a joint project by Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration and is subject to state and federal environmental review requirements. Project documentation, therefore, has been prepared in compliance with both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Federal Highway Administration's responsibility for environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 U.S. Code Section 327 (23 USC 327) and the Memorandum of Understanding dated December 23, 2016 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and Caltrans. Caltrans is the lead agency under both the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act.

One of the main differences between the National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Quality Act is the way significance is determined. Under the National Environmental Policy Act, significance is used to determine whether an Environmental Impact Statement, or a lower level of documentation, will be required. The National Environmental Policy Act requires that an Environmental Impact Statement be prepared when the proposed federal action (project) as a whole has the potential to "significantly affect the quality of the human environment." The determination of significance is based on context and intensity. Some impacts determined to be significant under the California Environmental Quality Act may not be of sufficient magnitude to be determined significant under the National Environmental Policy Act. Under the National Environmental Policy Act, once a decision is made regarding the need for an Environmental Impact Statement, it is the magnitude of the impact that is evaluated and no judgment of its individual significance is deemed important for the text. The National Environmental Policy Act does not require that a determination of significant impacts be stated in the environmental documents.

The California Environmental Quality Act, on the other hand, does require Caltrans to identify each "significant effect on the environment" resulting from the project and ways to mitigate each significant effect. If the project may have a significant effect on any environmental resource, then an Environmental Impact Report must be prepared. Every significant effect on the environment must be disclosed in the Environmental Impact Report and mitigated if feasible. In addition, the CEQA Guidelines list a number of "mandatory findings of significance," which also require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report. There are no types of actions under the National Environmental Policy Act that parallel the findings of mandatory significance of the California Environmental Quality Act. This chapter discusses the effects of this project and California Environmental Quality Act significance.

## 3.2 CEQA Environmental Checklist

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed project. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with the projects will indicate that there are no impacts to a particular resource. A NO IMPACT answer in the last column reflects this determination. The words “significant” and “significance” used throughout the following checklist are related to California Environmental Quality Act, not National Environmental Policy Act, impacts. The questions in this form are intended to encourage the thoughtful assessment of impacts and do not represent thresholds of significance.

Project features, which can include both design elements of the project and standardized measures that are applied to all or most Caltrans projects such as Best Management Practices (BMPs) and measures included in the Standard Plans and Specifications or as Standard Special Provisions, are considered to be an integral part of the project and have been considered prior to any significance determinations documented below; see Chapters 1 and 2 for a detailed discussion of these features. The annotations to this checklist are summaries of information contained in Chapter 2 in order to provide you with the rationale for significance determinations; for a more detailed discussion of the nature and extent of impacts, please see Chapter 2. This checklist incorporates by reference the information contained in Chapters 1 and 2.



**AESTHETICS**

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics**

**a) No impact**

There are no scenic vistas in the proposed project area. (*Caltrans Visual Impact Assessment Minor Level, October 2018*)

**b) No impact**

There are no scenic resources in the proposed project area. (*Caltrans Visual Impact Assessment Minor Level, October 2018*)

**c) Less than significant impact**

The project will include replacement planting and irrigation to replace eucalyptus trees and oleander shrubs that are being removed from the roadsides and median for all four build alternatives. The replacement planting will be placed at the new interchange area. As the new trees and oleander shrubs grow and mature, they will eventually provide visual relief and add color and texture to the roadsides. (*Caltrans Visual Impact Assessment Minor Level, October 2018*)

**d) No impact**

No impacts from light or glare would affect daytime or nighttime views in the area. Lighting would be replaced or added as required by Caltrans standard plans for safety. The project would have no impact on the creation of a new source of light or glare. (*Caltrans Visual Impact Assessment Minor Level, October 2018*)

**AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES**

<p>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 the forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.</p>				
Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources**

**a) Less than significant impact**

No Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance exists in the project area. Prime farmland is scattered throughout the study area and exists within the project vicinity. Construction of a new interchange would bisect the parcel. The U.S. Department of Agriculture rated the impact of this farmland conversion as 140 points

in value out of 260. This represents 0.003 percent of farmable land in the county.  
(*Farmland Impact Rating Form in Appendix D*)

**b) No impact**

The project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract. (*Farmland Impact Rating Form in Appendix D*)

**c) No impact**

No forest land exists within the proposed project area.

**d) No impact**

No forest land exists within the proposed project area.

**e) Less than significant impact**

No Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance exists in the project area. Prime farmland is scattered throughout the study area and exists within the project vicinity. Construction of a new interchange would bisect the parcel. The U.S. Department of Agriculture rated the impact of this farmland conversion as 140 points in value out of 260. This represents 0.003 percent of farmable land in the county.  
(*Farmland Impact Rating Form in Appendix D*)

**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.				
Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) 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 (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality**

**a) No impact**

The project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan. The project is included in the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) Regional Transportation Plan and the Federal Transportation Improvement Program. (*Caltrans Air Quality Study Report 2018*)

**b) No impact**

The project would not violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. Interagency consultation occurred on May 3, 2018. The interagency partners concurred that the project is “Not a Project of Air Quality Concern.” (*Caltrans Air Quality Study Report 2018*)

**c) No impact**

The project would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions that exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors). The region is in nonattainment under the state ambient air quality standards for PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>. A conformity

analysis for this project as “Not a Project of Air Quality Concern” was conducted and submitted to the San Joaquin Valley Council of Governments’ Directors’ Association Interagency Consultation Group (IAC) on May 3, 2018. The Interagency Consultation Partners concurred on May 3, 2018 that this is “Not a Project of Air Quality Concern.” (*Caltrans Air Quality Study Report 2018*)

**d) No impact**

The project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

**e) No impact**

The project would not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people.

**BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources**

**a) Less than significant impact**

The project would have a less than significant impact on candidate, sensitive or special-status species with implementation of Standard Special Provisions to the construction contract. (*Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts, July 2018*)

**b) No impact**

No riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities exist within the proposed project area. (*Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts, July 2018*)

**c) No impact**

No federally protected wetlands lie within the proposed project area. (*Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts, July 2018*)

**d) No impact**

The project would not affect any migratory wildlife corridors or the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species. The project would not impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites. Migratory fish are not located within the project limits. (*Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts, July 2018*)

**e) No impact**

The project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. (*Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts, July 2018*)

**f) No impact**

The project would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. (*Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts, July 2018*)

**CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable 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 as defined in §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Cultural Resources**

**a) No impact**

The project would not affect historic resources because there are no historic resources identified within the project area. (*Caltrans Historic Property Survey Report, June 2018*)

**b) No impact**

The project would not affect archaeological resources because there are no archaeological resources identified within the project area. (*Caltrans Historic Property Survey Report, June 2018*)

**c) Less than significant impact**

Excavation for basins and other soil disturbance activities during construction may potentially result in impacts to high sensitivity paleontological resources if Pleistocene sediments are encountered either at the surface or at depth during excavation. The following measures are recommended to minimize impacts to paleontological resources: have paleontology monitors onsite during excavation; hold a pre-construction meeting to describe monitoring activities and provide Worker Awareness training. (*Paleontology Evaluation Report and Preliminary Paleontological Mitigation Plan, January 2018*)



***d) No impact***

The project would not disturb human remains or dedicated cemeteries because there are no dedicated cemeteries identified within the project area.

**GEOLOGY AND SOILS**

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils**

**a) No impact**

The project would not expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault, strong ground shaking, liquefaction, or landslides.

***b) No impact***

The project would not result in substantial soil erosion or topsoil loss. Caltrans incorporates erosion control plans for projects prior to construction.

***c) No impact***

The project is located on flat land.

***d) No impact***

The project is not located on expansive soils.

***e) No impact***

There are no septic or wastewater disposal systems associated with this project.

**GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<p>Caltrans has used the best available information based to the extent possible on scientific and factual information, to describe, calculate, or estimate the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that may occur related to this project. The analysis included in the climate change section of this document provides the public and decision-makers as much information about the project as possible. It is Caltrans' determination that in the absence of statewide-adopted thresholds or greenhouse gas emissions limits, it is too speculative to make a significance determination regarding an individual project's direct and indirect impacts with respect to global climate change. Caltrans remains committed to implementing measures to reduce the potential effects of the project. These measures are outlined in the climate change section that follows the CEQA checklist and related discussions.</p>			
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?				

**HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

***a) Less than significant impact***

The project would create a less than significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Any hazardous materials found at the project site would be disposed of at an

approved disposal facility or handled onsite as directed by the contract special provisions. (*Caltrans Initial Site Assessment, June 2018*)

**b) No impact**

The project would not 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. (*Caltrans Initial Site Assessment, June 2018*)

**c) No impact**

The project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. (*Caltrans Initial Site Assessment, June 2018*)

**d) Less than significant impact**

The project has three sites—Roche Oil Bulk Plant, Mobil/Pacific Pride Gas Station, and Paige Avenue Truck Stop—found on a hazardous materials sites list (compiled under Government Code Section 65962.5) that could be impacted by the build alternatives. Preliminary Site Investigations would be required for any property to be purchased for the project to determine if any contamination has occurred prior to the purchase. Tank removal, pipe removal and associated cleanup costs are generally the responsibility of the tank owner(s). However, pending the Preliminary Site Investigation results, contaminated soil from the site would be disposed of at an approved facility, creating a less than significant hazard to the public or the environment with mitigation incorporated. (*Caltrans Initial Site Assessment, June 2018*)

**e) No impact**

The project lies near Mefford Field Airport. The project would not result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area because a build alternative that would have impacted the airport was dropped from further study and eliminated from consideration. (*Caltrans Initial Site Assessment, June 2018*)

**f) No impact**

The project is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip.

**g) No impact**

The project would not interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

**h) No impact**

The project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands. No wildlands are found within the project area.

**HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY**

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality

### **a) No impact**

The project would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. (*Caltrans Water Quality Assessment, June 2018*)

### **b) No impact**

The project would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge creating a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level. (*Caltrans Water Quality Assessment, June 2018*)

### **c) No impact**

The project would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area to result in substantial erosion or siltation. No rivers are in the project area. (*Caltrans Water Quality Assessment, March 2018*)

### **d) No impact**

The project would not alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding. No rivers are in the project area.

### **e) No impact**

The project would not create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of the existing or planned storm water drainage. (*Caltrans Water Quality Assessment, March 2018*)

### **f) No impact**

The project would not degrade water quality. (*Caltrans Water Quality Assessment, March 2018*)

### **g) No impact**

The project work does not include construction of houses.

### **h) No impact**

The project work does not include construction or placement of structures.

### **i) No impact**

The project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam. (*Caltrans Technical Information for Location Hydraulic Study, August 2018*)

### **j) No Impact**

The project would not cause inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.



**LAND USE AND PLANNING**

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Land Use and Planning**

**a) No impact**

The project would not divide an established community. (*Caltrans Community Impact Assessment, August 2018*)

**b) No impact**

The project would not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. (*Caltrans Community Impact Assessment, August 2018*)

**c) No impact**

The project would not conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. (*Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts, July 2018*)

**MINERAL RESOURCES**

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Mineral Resources**

**a) No impact**

The project would not result in the loss of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state.

**b) No impact**

The project would not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site noted in a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan.

**NOISE**

Would the project result in:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise**

**a) No impact**

The project would not expose people to noise levels in excess of standards established in a local general plan, noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies. *(Caltrans Noise Study Report, March 2018)*

**b) Less than significant impact**

Equipment noise control measures would be implemented to avoid or minimize potential groundborne vibration or noise levels. Any increase in vibration and noise would be temporary during construction. *(Caltrans Noise Study Report, March 2018)*

**c) Less than significant impact**

The proposed soundwall (SW1) meets the design goal of a 7-decibel noise reduction at one or more benefited receptors for Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2

and Alternative 3, but the soundwall construction cost exceeds the reasonable allowance for the benefited receivers. Therefore, the proposed soundwall is not recommended for Alternative 1A, Alternative 1C, Alternative 2 and Alternative 3. (*Caltrans Noise Study Report, March 2018*).

**d) Less than significant impact**

A temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above existing levels may occur during construction; control measures during construction would be implemented to minimize noise disturbances. (*Caltrans Noise Study Report, March 2018*)

**e) No impact**

The project is not located on airport land.

**f) No impact**

The project is not within the vicinity of a private airstrip.

**POPULATION AND HOUSING**

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial 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)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Population and Housing**

**a) No impact**

The project would not physically divide an established community. (*Caltrans Community Impact Assessment, August 2018*)

**b) No impact**

The project would not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of any agency with jurisdiction over the project (including but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. (*Caltrans Community Impact Assessment, August 2018*)

**c) No impact**

The project would not conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. (*Caltrans Community Impact Assessment, August 2018*)

**PUBLIC SERVICES**

a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Public Services**

**a) No impact**

The project would not interfere with new or physically altered governmental facilities or require a 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 fire protection, police protection, schools, parks and other facilities. (*Caltrans Community Impact Assessment, August 2018*)

**RECREATION**

	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Recreation**

**a) No impact**

The project would not increase the use of existing neighborhood/regional parks or other recreational facilities to cause substantial physical deterioration of the facility. *(Caltrans Community Impact Assessment, August 2018)*

**b) No impact**

No recreational facilities occur within the proposed project area. The project does not require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that would have an adverse physical effect on the environment. *(Caltrans Community Impact Assessment, August 2018)*

**TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC**

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Transportation/Traffic**

**a) No impact**

The project would not conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy that measures transportation circulation system performance (mass transit, non-motorized travel) and circulation system components (intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit). (*Caltrans Community Impact Assessment, August 2018*)



**b) No impact**

The project would not conflict with a traffic congestion management program (level of service standards and travel demand measures) or other county agency standards for designated roads or highways. (*Caltrans Community Impact Assessment, August 2018*)

**c) No impact**

The project would not result in air traffic pattern changes.

**d) No impact**

The project would not increase hazards due to a design feature or incompatible uses. (*Caltrans Community Impact Assessment, August 2018*)

**e) No impact**

Emergency access would not be affected. (*Caltrans Community Impact Assessment, August 2018*)

**f) No impact**

The project would not conflict with policies, plans or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities. (*Caltrans Community Impact Assessment, August 2018*)

**TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) 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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources**

**a) No impact**

No resources in the proposed project area are 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). (*Caltrans Historic Property Survey Report, June 2018*)

**b) No impact**

There are no resources in the proposed project area that are significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, significance of a resource to a California Native American tribe. (*Caltrans Historic Property Survey Report, June 2018*)

**UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS**

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems**

**a) No impact**

The project will not generate any wastewater. (*Caltrans Water Quality Assessment, March 2018*)

**b) No impact**

The project would not require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects.

**c) No impact**

The project would not require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects. (*Caltrans Water Quality Assessment, March 2018*)

**d) No impact**

The project would not change the availability of sufficient water supplies to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources; no new or expanded entitlements are needed.

**e) No impact**

The project would not change the determination by the wastewater treatment provider that 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.

**f) No impact**

The project would not generate solid waste.

**g) No impact**

The project would not generate solid waste.

**MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project 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)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Mandatory Findings of Significance**

**a) No impact**

The project does not have the potential to 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. (*Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts, July 2018 and Caltrans Historic Property Survey Report, June 2018*)

**b) Less than significant impact**

The project has less than significant cumulative considerable impacts.

**c) *Less than significant impact***

The project would not cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.

### 3.3 Climate Change

Climate change refers to long-term changes in temperature, precipitation, wind patterns, and other elements of the earth's climate system. An ever-increasing body of scientific research attributes these climatological changes to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, particularly those generated from the production and use of fossil fuels.

While climate change has been a concern for several decades, the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) by the United Nations and World Meteorological Organization in 1988 has led to increased efforts devoted to greenhouse gas emissions reduction and climate change research and policy. These efforts are concerned mostly with the emissions of greenhouse gases generated by human activity, including carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), tetrafluoromethane, hexafluoroethane, sulfur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>), fluoroform (HFC-23), 1, 1, 1, 2-tetrafluoroethane (HFC-134a), and difluoroethane (HFC-152a).

In the U.S., the main source of greenhouse gas emissions is electricity generation, followed by transportation.<sup>4</sup> In the U.S., the main source of greenhouse gas emissions is electricity generation, followed by transportation. In California, however, transportation sources (including passenger cars, light-duty trucks, other trucks, buses, and motorcycles) are the largest contributors of greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>5</sup> The dominant greenhouse gas emitted is CO<sub>2</sub>, mostly from fossil fuel combustion.

Two terms are typically used when discussing how we address the impacts of climate change: “greenhouse gas mitigation” and “adaptation.” “Greenhouse gas mitigation” covers the activities and policies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions to reduce or “mitigate” the impacts of climate change. “Adaptation,” on the other hand, is concerned with planning for and responding to impacts resulting from climate change (such as adjusting transportation design standards to withstand more intense storms and higher sea levels).

#### **Regulatory Setting**

This section outlines federal and state efforts to comprehensively reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation sources.

##### *Federal*

To date, no national standards have been established for nationwide mobile-source greenhouse gas reduction targets, nor have any regulations or legislation been enacted specifically to address climate change and greenhouse gas emissions reduction at the project level.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/us-greenhouse-gas-inventory-report-1990-2014>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/inventory/data/data.htm>

The National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S. Code Part 4332) requires federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making a decision on the action or project.

The Federal Highway Administration recognizes the threats that extreme weather, sea-level change, and other changes in environmental conditions pose to valuable transportation infrastructure and those who depend on it. The Federal Highway Administration therefore supports a sustainability approach that assesses vulnerability to climate risks and incorporates resilience into planning, asset management, project development and design, and operations and maintenance practices.<sup>6</sup> This approach encourages planning for sustainable highways by addressing climate risks while balancing environmental, economic, and social values—“the triple bottom line of sustainability.”<sup>7</sup> Program and project elements that foster sustainability and resilience also support economic vitality and global efficiency, increase safety and mobility, enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve the quality of life. Addressing these factors up front in the planning process will assist in decision-making and improve efficiency at the program level and will inform the analysis and stewardship needs of project-level decision-making.

Various efforts have been made at the federal level to improve fuel economy and energy efficiency to address climate change and its associated effects.

The Energy Policy Act of 1992 (EPACT92, 102nd Congress H.R.776.ENR): With this act, Congress set goals, created mandates, and amended utility laws to increase clean energy use and improve overall energy efficiency in the United States. EPACT92 consists of 27 titles detailing various measures designed to lessen the nation’s dependence on imported energy, provide incentives for clean and renewable energy, and promote energy conservation in buildings. Title III of EPACT92 addresses alternative fuels. It gave the U.S. Department of Energy administrative power to regulate the minimum number of light-duty alternative fuel vehicles required in certain federal fleets beginning in fiscal year 1993. The main goal of the program is to cut petroleum use in the United States by 2.5 billion gallons per year by 2020.

Energy Policy Act of 2005 (109th Congress H.R.6 (2005–2006): This act sets forth an energy research and development program covering: (1) energy efficiency; (2) renewable energy; (3) oil and gas; (4) coal; (5) Indian energy; (6) nuclear matters and security; (7) vehicles and motor fuels, including ethanol; (8) hydrogen; (9) electricity; (10) energy tax incentives; (11) hydropower and geothermal energy; and (12) climate change technology.

Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975 (42 USC Section 6201) and Corporate Average Fuel Standards: This act establishes fuel economy standards for on-road motor vehicles sold in the United States. Compliance with federal fuel economy

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/sustainability/resilience/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.sustainablehighways.dot.gov/overview.aspx>



standards is determined through the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) program on the basis of each manufacturer's average fuel economy for the portion of its vehicles produced for sale in the United States.

The U.S. EPA's authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions stems from the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Massachusetts v. EPA* (2007). The Supreme Court ruled that greenhouse gases meet the definition of air pollutants under the existing Clean Air Act and must be regulated if these gases could be reasonably anticipated to endanger public health or welfare. Responding to the court's ruling, the U.S. EPA finalized an endangerment finding in December 2009. Based on scientific evidence, it found that six greenhouse gases constitute a threat to public health and welfare. Thus, it is the Supreme Court's interpretation of the existing act and EPA's assessment of the scientific evidence that form the basis for EPA's regulatory actions.

The U.S. EPA in conjunction with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) issued the first of a series of greenhouse gas emission standards for new cars and light-duty vehicles in April 2010<sup>8</sup> and significantly increased the fuel economy of all new passenger cars and light trucks sold in the United States. The standards required these vehicles to meet an average fuel economy of 34.1 miles per gallon by 2016. In August 2012, the federal government adopted the second rule that increases fuel economy for the fleet of passenger cars, light-duty trucks, and medium-duty passenger vehicles for model years 2017 and beyond to average fuel economy of 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025. Because the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration cannot set standards beyond model year 2021 due to statutory obligations and the rules' long timeframe, a mid-term evaluation is included in the rule. The Mid-Term Evaluation is the overarching process by which the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, EPA, and Air Resources Board will decide on the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) and greenhouse gas emissions standard stringency for model years 2022–2025. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has not formally adopted standards for model years 2022 through 2025. However, the EPA finalized its mid-term review in January 2017, affirming that the target fleet average of at least 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025 was appropriate. In March 2017, President Donald Trump ordered the EPA to reopen the review and reconsider the mileage target.<sup>9</sup>

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and EPA issued a Final Rule for "Phase 2" for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles to improve fuel efficiency and cut carbon pollution in October 2016. The agencies estimate that the standards will save up to 2 billion barrels of oil and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by up to 1.1 billion metric tons over the lifetimes of model year 2018–2027 vehicles.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.c2es.org/federal/executive/epa/greenhouse-gas-regulation-faq>

## State

With the passage of legislation including State Senate and Assembly bills and executive orders, California has been innovative and proactive in addressing greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

Assembly Bill 1493, Pavley Vehicular Emissions: Greenhouse Gases, 2002: This bill requires the California Air Resources Board (ARB) to develop and implement regulations to reduce automobile and light truck greenhouse gas emissions. These stricter emissions standards were designed to apply to automobiles and light trucks beginning with the 2009-model year.

Executive Order S-3-05 (June 1, 2005): The goal of this order is to reduce California's greenhouse gas emissions to: (1) year 2000 levels by 2010, (2) year 1990 levels by 2020, and (3) 80 percent below year 1990 levels by 2050. This goal was further reinforced with the passage of Assembly Bill 32 in 2006 and SB 32 in 2016.

Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), Chapter 488, 2006: Núñez and Pavley, The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: AB 32 codified the 2020 greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals as outlined in Executive Order S-3-05, while further mandating that the Air Resources Board create a scoping plan and implement rules to achieve "real, quantifiable, cost-effective reductions of greenhouse gases." The Legislature also intended that the statewide greenhouse gas emissions limit continue in existence and be used to maintain and continue reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases beyond 2020 (Health and Safety Code Section 38551(b)). The law requires the Air Resources Board to adopt rules and regulations in an open public process to achieve the maximum technologically feasible and cost-effective greenhouse gas reductions.

Executive Order S-01-07 (January 18, 2007): This order set forth the low carbon fuel standard (LCFS) for California. Under this order, the carbon intensity of California's transportation fuels is to be reduced by at least 10 percent by the year 2020. The Air Resources Board re-adopted the low carbon fuel standard regulation in September 2015, and the changes went into effect on January 1, 2016. The program establishes a strong framework to promote the low-carbon fuel adoption necessary to achieve the Governor's 2030 and 2050 greenhouse gas reduction goals.

Senate Bill 97 (SB 97), Chapter 185, 2007, Greenhouse Gas Emissions: This bill requires the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to develop recommended amendments to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines for addressing greenhouse gas emissions. The amendments became effective on March 18, 2010.

Senate Bill 375 (SB 375), Chapter 728, 2008, Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection: This bill requires Air Resources Board to set regional emissions reduction targets for passenger vehicles. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for each region must then develop a "Sustainable Communities Strategy" (SCS) that integrates transportation, land use, and housing policies to plan how it will achieve the emissions target for its region.

Senate Bill 391 (SB 391), Chapter 585, 2009, California Transportation Plan: This bill requires the State's long-range transportation plan to meet California's climate change goals under AB 32.

Executive Order B-16-12 (March 2012): This order required state entities under the direction of the governor, including the Air Resources Board, the California Energy Commission, and the Public Utilities Commission, to support the rapid commercialization of zero-emission vehicles. It directs these entities to achieve various benchmarks related to zero-emission vehicles.

Executive Order B-30-15 (April 2015): This order established an interim statewide greenhouse gas emission reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 in order to ensure California meets its target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. It further orders all state agencies with jurisdiction over sources of greenhouse gas emissions to implement measures, pursuant to statutory authority, to achieve reductions of greenhouse gas emissions to meet the 2030 and 2050 greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets. It also directs the Air Resources Board to update the Climate Change Scoping Plan to express the 2030 target in terms of million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MMTCO<sub>2e</sub>). Finally, it requires the Natural Resources Agency to update the state's climate adaptation strategy, Safeguarding California, every 3 years, and to ensure that its provisions are fully implemented.

Senate Bill 32, (SB 32) Chapter 249, 2016: This bill codifies the greenhouse gas reduction targets established in Executive Order B-30-15 to achieve a mid-range goal of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.

### *Environmental Setting*

In 2006, the Legislature passed the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32), which created a comprehensive, multi-year program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in California. AB 32 required the Air Resources Board to develop a Scoping Plan that describes the approach California will take to achieve the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. The Scoping Plan was first approved by the Air Resources Board in 2008 and must be updated every 5 years. The second updated plan, California's 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan, adopted on December 14, 2017, reflects the 2030 target established in EO B-30-15 and SB 32.

The AB 32 Scoping Plan and the subsequent updates contain the main strategies California will use to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As part of its supporting documentation for the updated Scoping Plan, the Air Resources Board released the greenhouse gas inventory for California.<sup>10</sup> The Air Resources Board is responsible for maintaining and updating California's Greenhouse Gas Inventory per H&SC Section 39607.4. The associated forecast/projection is an estimate of the emissions anticipated

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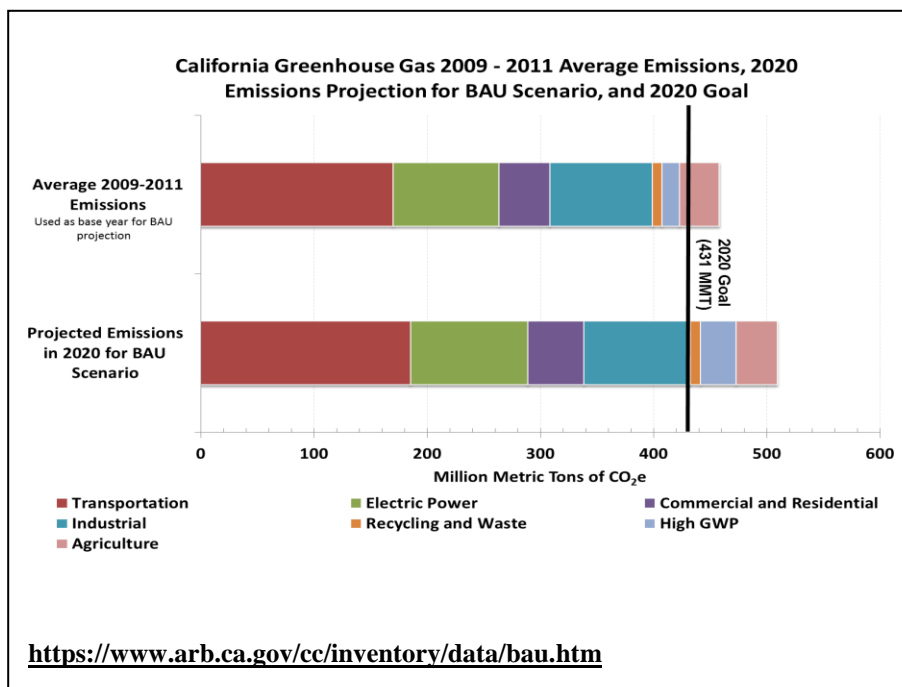
<sup>10</sup> 2017 Edition of the GHG Emission Inventory Released (June 2017): <https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/inventory/data/data.htm>

to occur in the year 2020 if none of the foreseeable measures included in the Scoping Plan were implemented.

An emissions projection estimates future emissions based on current emissions, expected regulatory implementation, and other technological, social, economic, and behavioral patterns. The projected 2020 emissions provided in Figure 3-1 represent a business-as-usual (BAU) scenario assuming none of the Scoping Plan measures are implemented. The 2020 BAU emissions estimate assists the Air Resources Board in demonstrating progress toward meeting the 2020 goal of 431 MMTCO<sub>2e</sub>.<sup>11</sup> The 2018 edition of the greenhouse gas emissions inventory found total California emissions of 429 MMTCO<sub>2e</sub> for 2016.

The 2020 BAU emissions projection was revisited in support of the First Update to the Scoping Plan (2014). This projection accounts for updates to the economic forecasts of fuel and energy demand as well as other factors. It also accounts for the effects of the 2008 economic recession and the projected recovery. The total emissions expected in the 2020 BAU scenario include reductions anticipated from Pavley I and the Renewable Electricity Standard (30 MMTCO<sub>2e</sub> total). With these reductions in the baseline, estimated 2020 statewide BAU emissions are 509 MMTCO<sub>2e</sub>.

**Figure 3-1 2020 Business as Usual (BAU) Emissions Projection**



<sup>11</sup> The revised target using Global Warming Potentials (GWP) from the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report (AR4)

### **Project Analysis**

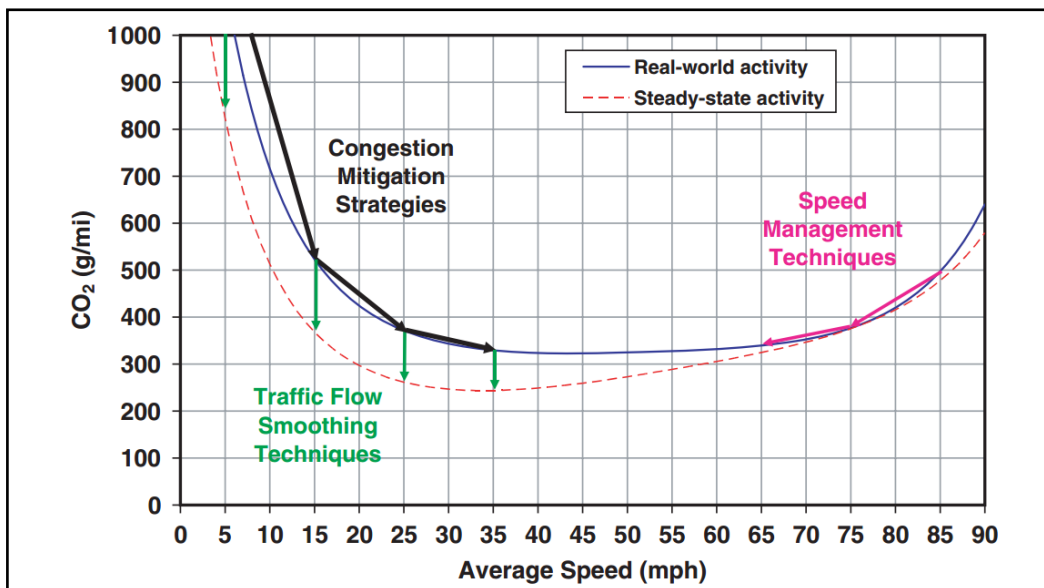
An individual project does not generate enough greenhouse gas emissions to significantly influence global climate change. Rather, global climate change is a cumulative impact. This means that a project may contribute to a potential impact through its incremental change in emissions when combined with the contributions of all other sources of greenhouse gas.<sup>12</sup> In assessing cumulative impacts, it must be determined if a project's incremental effect is "cumulatively considerable" (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15064(h)(1) and 15130). To make this determination, you must compare the incremental impacts of the project with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects. To gather sufficient information on a global scale of all past, current, and future projects to make this determination is a difficult, if not impossible, task.

Greenhouse gas emissions for transportation projects can be divided into those produced during operations and those produced during construction. The following represents a best faith effort to describe the potential greenhouse gas emissions related to the proposed project.

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<sup>12</sup> This approach is supported by the AEP: *Recommendations by the Association of Environmental Professionals on How to Analyze GHG Emissions and Global Climate Change in CEQA Documents* (March 5, 2007), as well as the South Coast Air Quality Management District (Chapter 6: The CEQA Guide, April 2011) and the US Forest Service (Climate Change Considerations in Project Level NEPA Analysis, July 13, 2009).

## Operational Emissions

**Figure 3-2 Possible Use of Traffic Operation Strategies in Reducing On-Road CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions**

Source: Matthew Barth and Kanok Boriboonsomsin, University of California, Riverside, May 2010 (<http://www.researchgate.net/publication/46438207>)

The highest levels of CO<sub>2</sub> from mobile sources such as automobiles occur at stop-and-go speeds (0–25 miles per hour) and speeds over 55 miles per hour; the most severe emissions occur from 0–25 miles per hour (see Figure 3-2 above). To the extent that a project relieves congestion by enhancing operations and improving travel times in high-congestion travel corridors, greenhouse gas emissions, particularly CO<sub>2</sub>, may be reduced.

The Tulare County Regional Road System is part of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The Regional Road System is a network of highways and roads connecting cities and unincorporated communities providing rapid and efficient goods movement throughout the county. The Regional Road System has been included in the adopted Regional Transportation Plan since 1980. The Regional Road System, which connects cities or provides access through cities in the county, includes State Route 99 from the Kern County line through Tulare and Visalia to the Fresno County line.

The 2018 Regional Transportation Plan, Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP-SCS), prepared by the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG), and adopted on August 23, 2018 included interchange improvements anticipated for the 20-year horizon within the corridor of State Route 99 at Paige Avenue and Commercial Avenue. Under objectives for air quality and greenhouse gases in the RTP-SCS, construction of bike lanes and sidewalks, as part of the Tulare 99 Interchange Project, would provide residents other transportation options.

The bike lanes would be constructed mainly along both eastbound and westbound of Commercial Avenue within the city right-of-way limits for Alternative 1A and Alternative 1C, eastbound and westbound of Industrial Avenue within the city right-of-way limits for Alternative 2, and eastbound and westbound of Paige Avenue within the city right-of-way limits for Alternative 3. Within the State right-of-way along the eastbound and westbound overcrossing, there will be an 8-foot-wide shoulder; the proposed 8-foot-wide shoulder can be used as a bike lane for the new Commercial Avenue overcrossing under Alternative 1A and Alternative 1C, for the Industrial Avenue overcrossing under Alternative 2, or for the Paige Avenue overcrossing under Alternative 1C and Alternative 2-Phase 2, and Alternative 3. The bike lanes at Commercial Avenue or Industrial Avenue would be connected mainly to K Street and Laspina Street. The bike lanes at Paige Avenue would be connected mainly to Blackstone Street and Laspina Street.

Table 3.1 displays estimated CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as calculated using the 2017 Air Resources Board EMFAC (Emissions FACtor) model. Opening year (2027) CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for the no-build alternative is 8.85 metric tons/year, higher than for each build alternative for 2027. The 20-year horizon/design (2047) CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for the no-build alternative is 10.34 metric tons/year, higher than for each build alternative for 2047.

Table 3.1 also displays the annual vehicle miles for the baseline year 2018, opening year 2027 and the 20-year horizon design year 2047. The annual vehicle miles traveled for 2018 is 28,210. The annual vehicle miles traveled for 2027 is 7,297,080. The annual vehicle miles traveled for 2047 is 9,925,080. Local population and commercial growth will result in the increased vehicle miles traveled (VMT) causing CO<sub>2</sub> increases overtime in the area. The increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions would occur with or without the project.

However, when comparing the no-build and build alternatives for open to traffic year 2027 and for the 2047 design year (Table 3.1), the No-Build Alternative CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are greater than for each of the build alternatives. The reduced emissions under the build alternatives can be attributed to the proposed improvements to existing traffic flow (interchange construction and ramp metering for all on-ramps from Commercial Avenue onto State Route 99) covered under this interchange project and potential reduced queuing at the existing ramp-end intersections.

**Table 3.1 Modeled Annual CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions and Vehicle Miles Traveled, by Alternative**

Alternative	CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions (Metric U.S. Tons/Year)	Annual Vehicle Miles Traveled <sup>1</sup>
<b>Existing/Baseline 2018</b>	7.15	28210
<b>Open to traffic-Year 2027</b>		
No-Build Alternative	8.85	7,297,080
Build Alternative 1A	7.44	7,297,080
Build Alternative 1C	7.37	7,297,080
Build Alternative 2	7.29	7,297,080
Build Alternative 3	7.62	7,297,080
<b>20-Year Horizon/Design-Year 2047</b>		
No-Build Alternative	10.34	9,925,080
Build Alternative 1A	9.39	9,925,080
Build Alternative 1C	9.49	9,925,080
Build Alternative 2	9.56	9,925,080
Build Alternative 3	9.85	9,925,080

CO<sub>2</sub> = carbon dioxide

Source: EMFAC 2017

<sup>1</sup> Annual vehicle miles traveled (VMT) values derived from daily vehicle miles traveled values multiplied by 347, per ARB methodology (ARB 2008).

While EMFAC has a rigorous scientific foundation and has been vetted through multiple stakeholder reviews, its emission rates are based on tailpipe emission test data. The numbers are estimates of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and not necessarily the actual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The model does not account for factors such as the rate of acceleration and the vehicles' aerodynamics, which would influence CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. To account for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, the Air Resources Board's Greenhouse Gas Inventory follows the IPCC guideline by assuming complete fuel combustion, while still using EMFAC data to calculate CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions. Though EMFAC is currently the best available tool for use in calculating greenhouse emissions, it is important to note that the CO<sub>2</sub> numbers provided are only useful for a comparison of alternatives.

Four main strategies can reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation sources: (1) improving the transportation system and operational efficiencies, (2) reducing travel activity, (3) transitioning to lower greenhouse gas-emitting fuels, and (4) improving vehicle technologies/efficiency. To be most effective, all four strategies should be pursued concurrently.

The Federal Highway Administration supports these strategies to lessen climate change impacts, which correlate with efforts that the State of California is undertaking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector.

### **Construction Emissions**

Construction greenhouse gas emissions would result from material processing, onsite construction equipment, and traffic delays due to construction. These emissions will be produced at different levels throughout the construction phase; their frequency and occurrence can be reduced through innovations in plans and specifications and by implementing better traffic management during construction phases.



In addition, with innovations such as longer pavement lives, improved traffic management plans, and changes in materials, the greenhouse gas emissions produced during construction can be offset to some degree by longer intervals between maintenance and rehabilitation activities.

Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions generated from construction equipment were estimated using the Caltrans Construction Emissions Tool. The estimated CO<sub>2</sub> construction emissions are 1,590 US tons generated per year. The approximate total tons would be 3,180 tons for the approximate two-year work time.

To reduce construction greenhouse emissions, the following measures would be implemented:

- Caltrans will prepare a traffic management plan to most efficiently manage traffic during construction.
- According to Caltrans' Standard Specifications, the contractor must comply with all local Air Pollution Control District (APCD) rules, ordinances, and regulations for air quality restrictions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Provide a detour if needed to handle traffic during construction and minimize idling emissions.
- Shut off equipment when not in use or minimize idling time.
- Maintain all construction equipment in proper working condition according to manufacturer's specifications.
- Encourage and/or provide carpools or shuttle vans for construction worker commutes.
- Use onsite soils if available to reduce the vehicle miles traveled for haul trucks.

### **CEQA Conclusion**

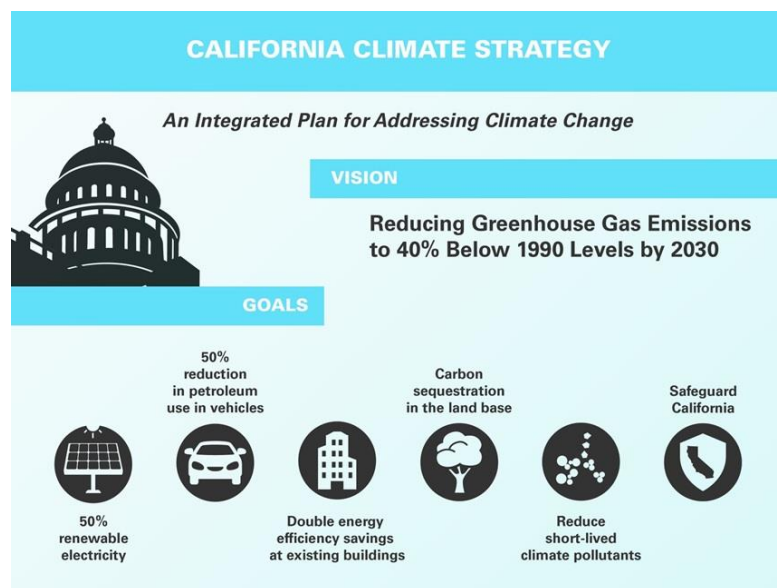
While the project would result in a slight increase in greenhouse gas emissions during construction, it is anticipated that the project would result in a long-term reduction of operational greenhouse gas emissions under any of build alternatives compared with the No-Build Alternative, as shown in Table 3-1. All alternatives show an increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions compared to the 2018 baseline as a result of planned and anticipated residential and commercial growth, which would occur with or without the project. While it is Caltrans' determination that in the absence of further regulatory or scientific information related to greenhouse gas emissions and California Environmental Quality Act significance, it is too speculative to make a significance determination regarding the project's direct impact and its contribution on the cumulative scale to climate change, Caltrans is firmly committed to implementing measures to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These measures are outlined in the following section.

## Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategies

### Statewide Efforts

In an effort to further the vision of California’s greenhouse gas reduction targets outlined in AB 32 and SB 32, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. identified key climate change strategy pillars (concepts). See Figure 3-3. These pillars highlight the idea that several major areas of the California economy will need to reduce emissions to meet the 2030 greenhouse gas emissions target. These pillars are (1) reducing today’s petroleum use in cars and trucks by up to 50 percent; (2) increasing from one-third to 50 percent our electricity derived from renewable sources; (3) doubling the energy-efficiency savings achieved at existing buildings and making heating fuels cleaner; (4) reducing the release of methane, black carbon, and other short-lived climate pollutants; (5) managing farm and rangelands, forests, and wetlands so they can store carbon; and (6) periodically updating the state’s climate adaptation strategy, Safeguarding California.

**Figure 3-3 Governor’s Climate Change Pillars: 2030 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals**



The transportation sector is integral to the people and economy of California. To achieve greenhouse gas emission reduction goals, it is vital that we build on our past successes in reducing criteria and toxic air pollutants from transportation and goods movement activities. Greenhouse gas emission reductions will come from cleaner vehicle technologies, lower-carbon fuels, and reduction of vehicle miles traveled. One of Governor Brown’s key pillars sets the ambitious goal of reducing today’s petroleum use in cars and trucks by up to 50 percent by 2030.

Governor Brown called for support to manage natural and working lands, including forests, rangelands, farms, wetlands, and soils, so they can store carbon. These lands have the ability to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through biological processes, and to then sequester carbon in above- and below-ground matter.

### *Caltrans Activities*

Caltrans continues to be involved on the Governor's Climate Action Team as the Air Resources Board works to implement Executive Orders S-3-05 and S-01-07 and help achieve the targets set forth in AB 32. Executive Order B-30-15, issued in April 2015, and SB 32 (2016), set a new interim target to cut greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The following major initiatives are underway at Caltrans to help meet these targets.

### *California Transportation Plan (CTP 2040)*

The California Transportation Plan (CTP) is a statewide, long-range transportation plan to meet our future mobility needs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The plan defines performance-based goals, policies, and strategies to achieve our collective vision for California's future statewide, integrated, multimodal transportation system. It serves as an umbrella document for all other statewide transportation planning documents.

SB 391 (Liu 2009) requires the California Transportation Plan to meet California's climate change goals under AB 32. Accordingly, the CTP 2040 identifies the statewide transportation system needed to achieve maximum feasible greenhouse gas emission reductions while meeting the state's transportation needs. While Metropolitan Planning Organizations have primary responsibility for identifying land use patterns to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, CTP 2040 identifies additional strategies in Pricing, Transportation Alternatives, Mode Shift, and Operational Efficiency.

### *Caltrans Strategic Management Plan*

The Strategic Management Plan, released in 2015, creates a performance-based framework to preserve the environment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, among other goals. Specific performance targets in the plan that will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions include the following:

- Increasing percentage of non-auto mode share
- Reducing vehicle miles traveled per capita
- Reducing Caltrans' internal operational (buildings, facilities, and fuel) greenhouse gas emissions

### *Funding and Technical Assistance Programs*

In addition to developing plans and performance targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Caltrans also administers several funding and technical assistance programs that have greenhouse gas reduction benefits. These include the Bicycle

Transportation Program, Safe Routes to School, Transportation Enhancement Funds, and Transit Planning Grants. A more extensive description of these programs can be found in Caltrans Activities to Address Climate Change (2013).

The Caltrans Director's Policy 30 (DP-30) Climate Change (June 22, 2012) is intended to establish a department policy that will ensure coordinated efforts to incorporate climate change into departmental decisions and activities.

Caltrans Activities to Address Climate Change (April 2013) provides a comprehensive overview of activities undertaken by Caltrans statewide to reduce greenhouse gas emissions resulting from agency operations.

### Project-Level Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategies

The following measures would also be implemented in the project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and potential climate change impacts from the project:

- The project is designed to reduce congestion, which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from traffic delays and idling under the future growth scenario.
- The project will add pedestrian and bicycle facilities to the project area to encourage use of non-motorized modes of transportation.
- Caltrans will prepare a traffic management plan to most efficiently manage traffic during construction.
- According to Caltrans' Standard Specifications, the contractor must comply with all local Air Pollution Control District (APCD) rules, ordinances, and regulations for air quality restrictions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Provide a detour if needed to handle traffic during construction to minimize idling emissions.
- Shut off equipment when not in use or minimize idling time to reduce emissions.
- Maintain all construction equipment in proper working condition according to manufacturer's specifications.
- Use onsite soils if available to reduce the vehicle miles traveled for haul trucks.
- The project would plant disturbed areas with a variety of native and drought-tolerant trees and shrubs in ratios sufficient to replace the air quality and cooling benefits of trees removed by construction of the project.
- The project would incorporate the use of LED energy-efficient lighting and traffic signals.

### *Adaptation Strategies*

"Adaptation strategies" refer to how Caltrans and others can plan for the effects of climate change on the state's transportation infrastructure and strengthen or protect the facilities from damage—or, put another way, planning and design for resilience. Climate change is expected to produce increased variability in precipitation, rising

temperatures, rising sea levels, variability in storm surges and their intensity, and the frequency and intensity of wildfires. These changes may affect the transportation infrastructure in various ways, such as damage to roadbeds from longer periods of intense heat; increasing storm damage from flooding and erosion; and inundation from rising sea levels. These effects will vary by location and may, in the most extreme cases, require that a facility be relocated or redesigned. These types of impacts to the transportation infrastructure may also have economic and strategic ramifications.

### Federal Efforts

At the federal level, the Climate Change Adaptation Task Force, co-chaired by the Council on Environmental Quality, the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), released its interagency task force progress report on October 28, 2011<sup>13</sup>, outlining the federal government’s progress in expanding and strengthening the nation’s capacity to better understand, prepare for, and respond to extreme events and other climate change impacts. The report provided an update on actions in key areas of federal adaptation, including: building resilience in local communities, safeguarding critical natural resources such as fresh water, and providing accessible climate information and tools to help decision-makers manage climate risks.

The federal Department of Transportation issued a U.S. DOT Policy Statement on Climate Adaptation in June 2011, committing to “integrate consideration of climate change impacts and adaptation into the planning, operations, policies, and programs of DOT in order to ensure that taxpayer resources are invested wisely and that transportation infrastructure, services and operations remain effective in current and future climate conditions.”<sup>14</sup>

To further the DOT Policy Statement, on December 15, 2014, the Federal Highway Administration issued order 5520 (*Transportation System Preparedness and Resilience to Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events*).<sup>15</sup> This directive established a Federal Highway Administration policy to strive to identify the risks of climate change and extreme weather events to current and planned transportation systems. The Federal Highway Administration will work to integrate consideration of these risks into its planning, operations, policies, and programs to promote preparedness and resilience, safeguard federal investments, and ensure the safety, reliability, and sustainability of the nation’s transportation systems.

The Federal Highway Administration has developed guidance and tools for transportation planning that fosters resilience to climate effects and sustainability at the federal, state, and local levels.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/administration/eop/ceq/initiatives/resilience>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/sustainability/resilience/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legsregs/directives/orders/5520.cfm>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/sustainability/resilience/>

### State Efforts

On November 14, 2008, then-Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed Executive Order S-13-08, which directed a number of state agencies to address California's vulnerability to sea-level rise caused by climate change. This order set in motion several agencies and actions to address the concern of sea-level rise and directed all state agencies planning to construct projects in areas vulnerable to future sea-level rise to consider a range of sea-level rise scenarios for the years 2050 and 2100, assess project vulnerability and, to the extent feasible, reduce expected risks and increase resiliency to sea-level rise. Sea-level rise estimates should also be used in conjunction with information on local uplift and subsidence, coastal erosion rates, predicted higher high water levels, and storm surge and storm wave data.

Then-Governor Schwarzenegger also requested the National Academy of Sciences to prepare an assessment report to recommend how California should plan for future sea-level rise. The final report, *Sea-Level Rise for the Coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington (Sea-Level Rise Assessment Report)*,<sup>17</sup> was released in June 2012 and included relative sea-level rise projections for the three states, taking into account coastal erosion rates, tidal impacts, El Niño and La Niña events, storm surge, and land subsidence rates, and the range of uncertainty in selected sea-level rise projections. It provided a synthesis of existing information on projected sea-level rise impacts to state infrastructure (such as roads, public facilities, and beaches), natural areas, and coastal and marine ecosystems, and a discussion of future research needs regarding sea-level rise.

In response to Executive Order S-13-08, the California Natural Resources Agency (Resources Agency), in coordination with local, regional, state, federal, and public and private entities, developed the California Climate Adaptation Strategy (December 2009),<sup>18</sup> which summarized the best available science on climate change impacts to California, assessed California's vulnerability to the identified impacts, and outlined solutions that can be implemented within and across state agencies to promote resiliency. The adaptation strategy was updated and rebranded in 2014 as *Safeguarding California: Reducing Climate Risk (Safeguarding California Plan)*.

In April 2015, then-Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. enhanced the overall adaptation planning effort by signing Executive Order B-30-15, requiring state agencies to factor climate change into all planning and investment decisions. In March 2016, sector-specific Implementation Action Plans that demonstrate how state agencies are implementing Executive Order B-30-15 were added to the Safeguarding California Plan. This effort represents a multi-agency, cross-sector approach to addressing adaptation to climate change-related events statewide.

Executive Order S-13-08 also gave rise to the *State of California Sea-Level Rise Interim Guidance Document* (SLR Guidance), produced by the Coastal and Ocean

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<sup>17</sup> *Sea Level Rise for the Coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington: Past, Present, and Future* (2012) is available at: [http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record\\_id=13389](http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=13389).

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.climatechange.ca.gov/adaptation/strategy/index.html>

Working Group of the California Climate Action Team (CO-CAT), of which Caltrans is a member. First published in 2010, the document provided “guidance for incorporating sea-level rise (SLR) projections into planning and decision making for projects in California,” specifically, “information and recommendations to enhance consistency across agencies in their development of approaches to SLR.”<sup>19</sup>

Climate change adaptation for transportation infrastructure involves long-term planning and risk management to address vulnerabilities in the transportation system from the following: increased precipitation and flooding; increased frequency and intensity of storms and wildfires; rising temperatures; and rising sea levels. Caltrans is actively engaged in working toward identifying these risks throughout the state and will work to incorporate this information into all planning and investment decisions as directed in Executive Order B-30-15.

The proposed project is outside the coastal zone and not in an area subject to sea-level rise. Accordingly, direct impacts to transportation facilities due to projected sea-level rise are not expected.





## **Chapter 4**      **Coordination**

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Early and continuing coordination with the general public and public agencies is an essential part of the environmental process. It helps planners determine the necessary scope of environmental documentation and the level of analysis required, and to identify potential impacts and avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures and related environmental requirements. Agency consultation and public participation for this project have been accomplished through a variety of formal and informal methods, including Project Development Team meetings, interagency coordination meetings, and letters and correspondence. This chapter summarizes the results of Caltrans' efforts to identify, address, and resolve project-related issues through early and continuing coordination.

### ***Resource Agencies***

October 5, 2018: Roland Garcia, Caltrans biologist, obtains U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service official species list.

February 5, 2019: Roland Garcia, Caltrans biologist, obtains an updated U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service official species list.

### ***Native American Tribes***

May 18, 2017: Mandy Macias, Caltrans Native American Coordinator, conducts tribal outreach.

### ***Public Outreach***

January 8, 2019: An open forum public hearing was held at the International Agri-Center in Tulare, California. The hearing was in an open house format; attendees could wander freely, view various displays, and ask questions of the project team. A court reporter was present to record the spoken comments of the attendees. All meeting attendees were given a project information sheet and a comment card. The comment card provided a means by which participants could submit their written comments about the project. Approximately 50 people attended the open forum public hearing. Approximately 133 comment cards, letters and emails were received during the draft environmental document public circulation period.

January 14, 2019: Meeting with Terry Marshall, Land Manager Calaveras Materials Inc. regarding the Tulare 99 Interchange Project design features and the Lehigh ready-mix concrete batch plant.

February 5, 2019: A Tulare City Council meeting presentation was conducted by Caltrans and the Tulare County Association of Governments regarding the findings of the South Tulare Interchange Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment and subsequent selection of a preferred alternative. The Tulare City Council adopted Resolution 19-76 supporting Caltrans' recommendation of preferred Alternative 1A for the project.

February 22, 2019 and May 9, 2019: Caltrans met with representatives from South Valley Materials, Inc. to discuss potential impacts the project may have on Lehigh ready-mix concrete batch plant. During the first meeting, Caltrans clarified that the project would not require relocation of the plant for Alternatives 1A, 1C and 3. After the selection of the preferred alternative, Caltrans met with South Valley Materials, Inc. representatives a second time to discuss access to the new city street and the plant's need for two driveways. Their concerns were noted. Caltrans will continue working with the City of Tulare to minimize impacts to the west side of the parcel related to impacts associated with the Blackstone Street extension.

## **Chapter 5**      **List of Preparers**

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This document was prepared by the following Caltrans Central Region staff:

Allam Alhabaly, Transportation Engineer. B.S., California State University, Fresno, School of Engineering; 16 years of experience in environmental technical studies, with emphasis on noise studies. Contribution: Water Quality Report and Noise Report.

Roland Garcia, Environmental Planner (Natural Sciences). B.S., Biology, California State University, Fresno; 8 years of biological experience. Contribution: Natural Environment Study.

Kay Goshgarian, Associate Environmental Planner. M.S., Environmental Management, University of San Francisco; B.S., Agricultural (Plant) Science, California State University, Fresno; over 20 years of environmental, agricultural land and agricultural water use planning experience. Contribution: Draft Environmental Document.

Maya Hildebrand Garcia, Associate Environmental Planner. B.S., Geology, Utah State University; 6 years of air quality experience. Contribution: Air Quality Study Report.

Irene Lee, Transportation Engineer. B.S., Civil Engineering, California Polytechnic State University, Pomona; 20 years of project development experience. Contribution: Overview of proposed project alternatives.

Ramon Lopez, P.E., Transportation Engineer. B.S., Civil Engineering, San Diego State University; 20 years of civil engineering experience. Contribution: Location Hydraulics Study.

Mandy Macias, Associate Environmental Planner (Arch)/Native American Coordinator. B.A., Anthropology, California State University, Fresno; more than 20 years of California archaeology experience. Contribution Coordinated Native American outreach for the project.

Michael Mills, Professional Landscape Architect CA #4770. B.A., Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning, Utah State University; 19 years of landscape architecture experience. Contribution: Mitigation Planting Plans, specifications, estimates. Contribution: Visual Impact Assessment.

G. William "Trais" Norris, III, Senior Environmental Planner. B.S., Urban Regional Planning, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona; 17 years of land use, housing, redevelopment, and environmental planning experience. Contribution: Oversight review of the environmental document.

Lea Spann, Engineering Geologist. B.A., Environmental Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara; over 20 years of hazardous waste/materials experience and 5 years of environmental planning experience. Contribution: Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment.

Richard C. Stewart, Engineering Geologist, P.G. B.S., Geology, California State University, Fresno; more than 30 years of hazardous waste and water quality experience; 16 years of paleontology/geology experience. Contribution: Paleontological Identification Report.

Erica Sumner, Environmental Planner. B.A., Environmental Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz; 4 years of environmental analysis and environmental planning experience. Contribution: Community Impact Assessment.

Jennifer H. Taylor, Environmental Office Chief. Double Bachelor of Arts in Political Studies and Organizational Sciences, Pitzer College; 30 years of experience in environmental and land use planning. Contribution: Oversight review of the environmental document.

Brian Wickstrom, Associate Environmental Planner (Arch). M.A., Special Studies: Cultural Resources Management, Sonoma State University; more than 30 years of cultural resource experience. Contribution: Archaeological Survey Report (ASR)/Historical Property Survey Report (HPSR).

# Chapter 6 Distribution List

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Jean Fuller California State Senate 5701 Truxtun Avenue, Suite 150 Bakersfield, CA 93309	Devon Mathis California State Assembly 100 West Willow Street, Suite 405 Visalia, CA 93291	Ted Smalley Tulare County COG 210 North Church Street, Suite B Visalia, CA 93291
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# Appendix A Mapping



Figure A-1 Alternative 1A



Figure A-2 Alternative 1C





Figure A-3 Alternative 2



Figure A-4 Alternative 3

# Appendix B Title VI Policy Statement

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

EDMUND G. BROWN Jr., Governor

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*Making Conservation  
a California Way of Life.*

April 2018

## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

The California Department of Transportation, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ensures *"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."*

Related federal statutes and state law further those protections to include sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, and age.

For information or guidance on how to file a complaint, please visit the following web page:  
[http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/bep/title\\_vi/t6\\_violated.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/bep/title_vi/t6_violated.htm).

To obtain this information in an alternate format such as Braille or in a language other than English, please contact the California Department of Transportation, Office of Business and Economic Opportunity, 1823 14<sup>th</sup> Street, MS-79, Sacramento, CA 95811. Telephone (916) 324-8379, TTY 711, email [Title.VI@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Title.VI@dot.ca.gov), or visit the website [www.dot.ca.gov](http://www.dot.ca.gov).

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laurie Berman".

LAURIE BERMAN  
Director

*"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system  
to enhance California's economy and livability"*



# Appendix C Summary of Relocation Benefits

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## *California Department of Transportation Relocation Assistance Program*

### RELOCATION ASSISTANCE ADVISORY SERVICES

#### **DECLARATION OF POLICY**

“The purpose of this title is to establish a **uniform policy for fair and equitable treatment** of persons displaced as a result of federal and federally assisted programs in order that such persons **shall not suffer disproportionate injuries** as a result of programs designed for the benefit of the public as a whole.”

The Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states, “No Person shall... be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law, nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.” The Uniform Act sets forth in statute the due process that must be followed in Real Property acquisitions involving federal funds. Supplementing the Uniform Act is the government-wide single rule for all agencies to follow, set forth in 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 24. Displaced individuals, families, businesses, farms, and nonprofit organizations may be eligible for relocation advisory services and payments, as discussed below.

#### **FAIR HOUSING**

The Fair Housing Law (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968) sets forth the policy of the United States to provide, within constitutional limitations, for fair housing. This act, and as amended, makes discriminatory practices in the purchase and rental of most residential units illegal. Whenever possible, minority persons shall be given reasonable opportunities to relocate to any available housing regardless of neighborhood, as long as the replacement dwellings are decent, safe, and sanitary and are within their financial means. This policy, however, does not require the Department to provide a person a larger payment than is necessary to enable a person to relocate to a comparable replacement dwelling.

Any persons to be displaced will be assigned to a relocation advisor, who will work closely with each displacee in order to see that all payments and benefits are fully utilized and that all regulations are observed, thereby avoiding the possibility of displacees jeopardizing or forfeiting any of their benefits or payments. At the time of the initiation of negotiations (usually the first written offer to purchase), owner-occupants are given a detailed explanation of the state’s relocation services. Tenant occupants of properties to be acquired are contacted soon after the initiation of negotiations and also are given a detailed explanation of the Caltrans Relocation Assistance Program. To avoid loss of possible benefits, no individual, family, business, farm, or nonprofit organization should commit to purchase or rent a replacement property without first contacting a Department relocation advisor.

### **RELOCATION ASSISTANCE ADVISORY SERVICES**

In accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, the Department will provide relocation advisory assistance to any person, business, farm or nonprofit organization displaced as a result of the acquisition of real property for public use, so long as they are legally present in the United States. The Department will assist eligible displacees in obtaining comparable replacement housing by providing current and continuing information on the availability and prices of both houses for sale and rental units that are “decent, safe, and sanitary.” Nonresidential displacees will receive information on comparable properties for lease or purchase (for business, farm, and nonprofit organization relocation services, see below).

Residential replacement dwellings will be in a location generally not less desirable than the displacement neighborhood at prices or rents within the financial ability of the individuals and families displaced, and reasonably accessible to their places of employment. Before any displacement occurs, comparable replacement dwellings will be offered to displacees that are open to all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, and consistent with the requirements of Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. This assistance will also include the supplying of information concerning Federal and State assisted housing programs and any other known services being offered by public and private agencies in the area.

Persons who are eligible for relocation payments and who are legally occupying the property required for the project will not be asked to move without first being given at least 90 days written notice. Residential occupants eligible for relocation payment(s) will not be required to move unless at least one comparable “decent, safe, and sanitary” replacement dwelling, available on the market, is offered to them by the Department.

### **RESIDENTIAL RELOCATION PAYMENTS**

The Relocation Assistance Program will help eligible residential occupants by paying certain costs and expenses. These costs are limited to those necessary for or incidental to the purchase or rental of a replacement dwelling and actual reasonable moving expenses to a new location within 50 miles of the displacement property. Any actual moving costs in excess of the 50 miles are the responsibility of the displacee. The Residential Relocation Assistance Program can be summarized as follows:

#### *Moving Costs*

Any displaced person, who lawfully occupied the acquired property, regardless of the length of occupancy in the property acquired, will be eligible for reimbursement of moving costs. Displacees will receive either the actual reasonable costs involved in moving themselves and personal property up to a maximum of 50 miles, or a fixed payment based on a fixed moving cost schedule. Lawful occupants who move into the displacement property after the initiation of negotiations must wait until the Department obtains control of the property in order to be eligible for relocation payments.

#### *Purchase Differential*

In addition to moving and related expense payments, fully eligible homeowners may be entitled to payments for increased costs of replacement housing.

Homeowners who have owned and occupied their property for 90 days or more prior to the date of the initiation of negotiations (usually the first written offer to purchase the property), may qualify to receive a price differential payment and may qualify to receive reimbursement for certain nonrecurring costs incidental to the purchase of the replacement property. An interest differential payment is also available if the interest rate for the loan on the replacement dwelling is higher than the loan rate on the displacement dwelling, subject to certain limitations on reimbursement based upon the replacement property interest rate.

#### *Rent Differential*

Tenants and certain owner-occupants (based on length of ownership) who have occupied the property to be acquired by the Department prior to the date of the initiation of negotiations may qualify to receive a rent differential payment. This payment is made when the Department determines that the cost to rent a comparable “decent, safe, and sanitary” replacement dwelling will be more than the present rent of the displacement dwelling. As an alternative, the tenant may qualify for a down payment benefit designed to assist in the purchase of a replacement property and the payment of certain costs incidental to the purchase, subject to certain limitations noted under the *Down Payment* section below.

To receive any relocation benefits, the displaced person must buy or rent and occupy a “decent, safe and sanitary” replacement dwelling within one year from the date the Department takes legal possession of the property, or from the date the displacee vacates the displacement property, whichever is later.

#### *Down Payment*

The down payment option has been designed to aid owner-occupants of less than 90 days and tenants in legal occupancy prior to the Department’s initiation of negotiations. The one-year eligibility period in which to purchase and occupy a “decent, safe and sanitary” replacement dwelling will apply.

#### *Last Resort Housing*

Federal regulations (49 CFR 24) contain the policy and procedure for implementing the Last Resort Housing Program on Federal-aid projects. Last Resort Housing benefits are, except for the amounts of payments and the methods in making them, the same as those benefits for standard residential relocation as explained above. Last Resort Housing has been designed primarily to cover situations where a displacee cannot be relocated because of lack of available comparable replacement housing, or when the anticipated replacement housing payments exceed the limits of the standard relocation procedure, because either the displacee lacks the financial ability or other valid circumstances.

After the initiation of negotiations, the Department will within a reasonable length of time, personally contact the displacees to gather important information, including the following:

- Number of people to be displaced.
- Specific arrangements needed to accommodate any family member(s) with special needs.

- Financial ability to relocate into comparable replacement dwelling which will adequately house all members of the family.
- Preferences in area of relocation.
- Location of employment or school.

### **NONRESIDENTIAL RELOCATION ASSISTANCE**

The Nonresidential Relocation Assistance Program provides assistance to businesses, farms and nonprofit organizations in locating suitable replacement property, and reimbursement for certain costs involved in relocation. The Relocation Advisory Assistance Program will provide current lists of properties offered for sale or rent, suitable for a particular business's specific relocation needs. The types of payments available to eligible businesses, farms, and nonprofit organizations are: searching and moving expenses, and possibly reestablishment expenses; or a fixed in lieu payment instead of any moving, searching and reestablishment expenses. The payment types can be summarized as follows:

#### *Moving Expenses*

Moving expenses may include the following actual, reasonable costs:

- The moving of inventory, machinery, equipment and similar business-related property, including: dismantling, disconnecting, crating, packing, loading, insuring, transporting, unloading, unpacking, and reconnecting of personal property. Items acquired in the right-of-way contract may not be moved under the Relocation Assistance Program. If the displacee buys an Item Pertaining to the Realty back at salvage value, the cost to move that item is borne by the displacee.
- Loss of tangible personal property provides payment for actual, direct loss of personal property that the owner is permitted not to move.
- Expenses related to searching for a new business site, up to \$2,500, for reasonable expenses actually incurred.

#### *Reestablishment Expenses*

Reestablishment expenses related to the operation of the business at the new location, up to \$25,000 for reasonable expenses actually incurred.

#### *Fixed In Lieu Payment*

A fixed payment in lieu of moving, searching, and reestablishment payments may be available to businesses that meet certain eligibility requirements. This payment is an amount equal to half the average annual net earnings for the last two taxable years prior to the relocation and may not be less than \$1,000 nor more than \$40,000.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Reimbursement for moving costs and replacement housing payments are not considered income for the purpose of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, or for the purpose of determining the extent of eligibility of a displacee for assistance under the Social Security Act, or any other law, *except* for any federal law providing local "Section 8" Housing Programs.

Any person, business, farm or nonprofit organization that has been refused a relocation payment by the Department relocation advisor or believes that the



payment(s) offered by the agency are inadequate may appeal for a special hearing of the complaint. No legal assistance is required. Information about the appeal procedure is available from the relocation advisor.

California law allows for the payment for lost goodwill that arises from the displacement for a public project. A list of ineligible expenses can be obtained from the Department's Division of Right of Way and Land Surveys. California's law and the federal regulations covering relocation assistance provide that no payment shall be duplicated by other payments being made by the displacing agency.



# Appendix D Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form

U.S. Department of Agriculture FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING						
<b>PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency)</b>				Date Of Land Evaluation Request <b>7-10-2018</b>		
Name of Project <b>Tulare Interchange Project</b>				Federal Agency Involved <b>Caltrans</b>		
Proposed Land Use <b>New State Route Interchange</b>				County and State <b>Tulare County, California</b>		
<b>PART II (To be completed by NRCS)</b>				Date Request Received By NRCS <b>7/16/18</b>		Person Completing Form: <b>Bradley Hancock</b>
Does the site contain Prime, Unique, Statewide or Local Important Farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply - do not complete additional parts of this form)				YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Average Farm Size <b>223</b>
Major Crop(s) <b>Cotton, Citrus, Alfalfa</b>		Farmable Land In Govt. Jurisdiction Acres: <b>638,789%</b> <b>20.7</b>		Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: <b>867,965%</b> <b>28.1</b>		
Name of Land Evaluation System Used <b>CA State System</b>		Name of State or Local Site Assessment System <b>None</b>		Date Land Evaluation Returned by NRCS <b>7/17/2018</b>		
<b>PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)</b>				Alternative Site Rating		
				Site A	Site B	Site C
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly				<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly				<b>56</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>0</b>
C. Total Acres In Site				<b>56</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information</b>						
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland				<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	
B. Total Acres Statewide Important or Local Important Farmland				<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
C. Percentage Of Farmland in County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted				<b>0.003</b>	<b>0.003</b>	
D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value				<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	
<b>PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Criterion</b> Relative Value of Farmland To Be Converted (Scale of 0 to 100 Points)				<b>85</b>	<b>85</b>	
<b>PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency) Site Assessment Criteria</b> (Criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5 b. For Corridor project use form NRCS-CPA-106)				Maximum Points	Site A	Site B
1. Area In Non-urban Use				(15)	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Perimeter In Non-urban Use				(10)	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
3. Percent Of Site Being Farmed				(20)	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
4. Protection Provided By State and Local Government				(20)	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
5. Distance From Urban Built-up Area				(15)	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
6. Distance To Urban Support Services				(15)	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
7. Size Of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average				(10)	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
8. Creation Of Non-farmable Farmland				(10)	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
9. Availability Of Farm Support Services				(5)	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
10. On-Farm Investments				(20)	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
11. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services				(10)	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
12. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use				(10)	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS				<b>160</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)</b>						
Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)				<b>100</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>85</b>
Total Site Assessment (From Part VI above or local site assessment)				<b>160</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>55</b>
TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)				<b>260</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>140</b>
Site Selected:				Date Of Selection		
				Was A Local Site Assessment Used? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		
Reason For Selection:  <b>A Preferred Build Alternative has not yet been selected.</b>						
of Federal agency representative completing this form: <b>Erica Sumner</b>						Date: <b>7-10-2018</b>
(See Instructions on reverse side)						



## **Appendix E** Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Summary

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To ensure that all environmental measures identified in this document are executed at the appropriate times, the following mitigation program (as noted on the proposed Environmental Commitments Record [ECR] which follows) would be implemented. During project design, avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures will be incorporated into the project's final plans, specifications, and cost estimates, as appropriate. All permits will be obtained before project implementation.

During construction, environmental and construction/engineering staff will ensure that the commitments contained in the Environmental Commitments Record are fulfilled. Following construction and appropriate phases of project delivery, long-term mitigation maintenance and monitoring will take place, as applicable. As the following Environmental Commitments Record is a draft, some fields have not been completed, and will be completed as each of the measures is implemented.

Note: Some measures may apply to more than one resource area. Duplicated or redundant measures have not been included in this Environmental Commitments Record.

### ***Biology***

#### ***Swainson's Hawk***

- Protocol-level pre-construction surveys according to *Recommended Timing and Methodology for Swainson's Hawk Nesting Surveys in California's Central Valley* (May 2000) will be completed by qualified biologists during nesting season (February 1 to September 30) prior to groundbreaking activities to ensure no nesting Swainson's hawks will be affected if construction is to occur during the nesting season.
- If nesting Swainson's hawks are observed onsite, then the nest site will be designated an Environmentally Sensitive Area, with a buffer zone of 600 feet until it has been determined by a qualified biologist that the young have fledged out of the nest.
- A qualified biologist will monitor the active nest during construction activities.
- A special provision for migratory birds will be included to ensure that no potential nesting migratory birds are affected during construction activities.
- Removal of any trees within the project area should be done outside of the nesting season; however, if a tree within the project area needs to be removed during the nesting season, a qualified biologist will inspect the tree prior to removal to ensure that no nests are present.

Standard Special Provisions (SSPs) typically used include the following:

- SSP 14-1.01 Environmental Stewardship, including Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs)
- SSP 14-6.02 Species Protection (buffers, work stoppage areas)
- SSP 14-6.03 Bird Protection (nest protection buffers)

### *Tipton Kangaroo Rat*

No direct, indirect, or future impacts on the Tipton kangaroo rat are expected to occur with implementation of the following:

- Prior to the start of construction, a qualified biologist knowledgeable in the biology of the Tipton kangaroo rat and the species' legislative protection will conduct an employee education program for all contractors, their employees, and agency personnel involved in the project. The program will include the following: a description of the natural history of the species and its habitat with the potential to be affected by the proposed project, the general measures that are being implemented to conserve the species as they relate to the proposed project, the penalties for non-compliance, and the boundaries of the work area within which the project must be accomplished. A fact sheet conveying this information would be prepared for distribution to the above-mentioned individuals or others who may enter the project site.

### *San Joaquin Kit Fox*

No direct, indirect, or future impacts on San Joaquin kit foxes are anticipated with implementation of the following:

- Prior to any ground disturbance, the contractor, all employees of the contractor, subcontractors, and subcontractors' employees will attend an employee education program by a Caltrans or other approved biologist. The program will consist of a brief presentation on San Joaquin kit fox biology, legislative protection, and measures to avoid impacts to the species during project implementation.
- Pre-construction/pre-activity surveys would be conducted no less than 14 days and no more than 30 days prior to the beginning of ground disturbance and/or construction activities or any project activity likely to impact the San Joaquin kit fox.

### *Invasive Species*

Caltrans has issued policy guidelines that provide a framework for addressing roadside vegetation management issues for construction activities and maintenance programs. These measures may include the inspection and cleaning of project equipment, commitments to ensure the use of native or invasive-free mulches,

topsoils and seed mixes, as well as eradication strategies for the removal and proper disposal of existing populations, or those that could occur in the future.

### **Visual/Aesthetics**

The project will include replacement planting and irrigation to replace eucalyptus trees and oleander shrubs that are being removed from the roadsides and median for all four build alternatives. The replacement planting will be placed at the new interchange area. The replacement planting will be funded from the interchange project but will occur under a separate contract. A three-year plant establishment period will be included with the spin-off project to help establish the new plantings.

The new highway planting will soften the visual effect of the new interchange. The new trees will be spaced closer together than they are now, strengthening the implied line of the trees. As the new trees and the new oleander shrubs grow and mature, they will eventually provide visual relief and add color and texture to the roadsides. They will add a strong vertical element to an otherwise flat terrain and visually blend the new interchange with the surrounding agricultural landscape. The overall change to visual resources will be low.

### **Water Quality/Stormwater**

Once a preferred alternative is selected, coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Regional Water Quality Control Board is anticipated to determine if permits are needed for this project.

### **Noise/Vibration**

The following are possible control measures that can be implemented to minimize noise disturbances at sensitive areas during construction:

- All equipment will have sound-control devices no less effective than those provided on the original equipment. Each internal combustion engine used for any purpose on the job or related to the job will be equipped with a muffler of a type recommended by the manufacturer. No internal combustion engine should be operated on the job site without an appropriate muffler.
- Construction methods or equipment that will provide the lowest level of noise impact (for example, avoid impact pile driving near residences and consider alternative methods that are also suitable for the soil condition) should be used.
- Idling equipment will be turned off.
- Truck loading, unloading, and hauling operations will be restricted so that noise and vibration are kept to a minimum through residential neighborhoods to the greatest possible extent.

The contractor will be required to adhere to the following administrative noise control measures:

- Once details of the construction activities become available, the contractor will work with local authorities to develop an acceptable approach to minimize interference with the business and residential communities, traffic disruptions, and the total duration of the construction.
- Good public relations will be maintained with the community to minimize objections to unavoidable construction impacts. Frequent activity updates of all construction activities will be provided. A construction noise monitoring program to track sound levels and limit the impacts will be implemented.
- In case of construction noise complaints by the public, the Resident Engineer will coordinate with the construction manager, and the specific noise-producing activity may be changed, altered, or suspended temporarily, if necessary.

The following are procedures that can be used to minimize the potential impacts from construction vibration:

- Restrict the hours of vibration-intensive equipment or activities such as vibratory rollers so that impacts to residents are minimal (e.g., weekdays during daytime hours only when as many residents as possible are away from home).
- The owner of a building close enough to a construction vibration source that damage to that structure due to vibration is possible would be entitled to a pre-construction building inspection to document the pre-construction condition of that structure.
- Conduct vibration monitoring during vibration-intensive activities.

### ***Hazardous Waste/Materials***

The following considerations and provisions are required:

- Where encountered, undocumented underground storage tanks, septic systems and domestic/agricultural/oil wells should be properly removed or abandoned in accordance with Tulare County requirements.
- An Asbestos Compliance Plan and a Lead Compliance Plan are required for this project. Appropriate Special Standard Provisions would be included in the construction package to address proper handling and disposal.
- Preliminary Site Investigations would be done on private parcels of the preferred Alternative 1A to identify the extent of contamination, if any, prior to parcel acquisition or temporary construction easements. Caltrans' policy is to avoid contaminated properties if possible, to have responsible parties accept responsibility for remediation as part of the project development process. If contaminated properties are required in order to proceed with the project, adequate site investigations must be completed, and the cost of the remediation considered prior to the appraisal and acquisition process.
- San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District regulations require that an asbestos survey be conducted on any building prior to demolition or modification,



regardless of the date of construction. A written National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) notification to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is required no less than 14 days prior to demolition activities whether asbestos is present or not.

### **Cultural Resources**

If human remains are exposed during project activities, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that no further disturbance should occur until the county coroner has made the necessary findings as to origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code 5097.98.

### **Air Quality**

Caltrans Standard Specifications pertaining to dust control and dust palliative requirements are a required part of all construction contracts and should effectively reduce and control emission impacts during construction. The provisions of Caltrans Standard Specifications, Section 14-9.02 “Air Pollution Control” and Section 10-5 “Dust Control,” require the contractor to comply with the air pollution control rules, ordinances, and regulations and statutes that apply to work performed under the contract, including those provided in Government Code § 11017.

If structures that may contain asbestos are to be demolished, it is the responsibility of the contractor to comply with the Rules and Regulations of the Air Pollution Control District. A Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) would be required for structures prior to demolition or modification.

### **Paleontology**

- Paleontological monitors, under the direction of the qualified principal paleontologist, will be onsite to conduct full-time monitoring of excavation in Holocene to late Pleistocene alluvial fan deposits. For excavations in Holocene basin deposits, spot-check monitoring will occur when excavation deeper than 5 feet below original ground surface occurs.
- In the event of unanticipated paleontological resource discoveries during project-related activities, work must be halted within 25 feet of the discovery until it can be evaluated by a qualified paleontologist.
- Monitoring and spot-checking should not be conducted in previously disturbed sediments or artificial fill.
- The Principal Paleontologist will attend the pre-construction meeting to address any concerns or issues related to monitoring activities. Prior to any project excavation, a Worker Environmental Awareness Program training for all earth-moving personnel and their supervisors will be presented to inform them of the possibility for fossil discoveries.



# Appendix F Species Lists



## United States Department of the Interior

### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Sacramento Fish And Wildlife Office

Federal Building

2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605

Sacramento, CA 95825-1846

Phone: (916) 414-6600 Fax: (916) 414-6713



In Reply Refer To:  
Consultation Code: 08ESMF00-2018-SLI-1134  
Event Code: 08ESMF00-2019-E-02731  
Project Name: Tulare Interchange

February 05, 2019

Subject: Updated list of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location, and/or may be affected by your proposed project

#### To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed species list identifies threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, as well as proposed and final designated critical habitat, under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) that may occur within the boundary of your proposed project and/or may be affected by your proposed project. The species list fulfills the requirements of the Service under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Please follow the link below to see if your proposed project has the potential to affect other species or their habitats under the jurisdiction of the National Marine Fisheries Service:

[http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/protected\\_species/species\\_list/species\\_lists.html](http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/protected_species/species_list/species_lists.html)

New information based on updated surveys, changes in the abundance and distribution of species, changed habitat conditions, or other factors could change this list. Please feel free to contact us if you need more current information or assistance regarding the potential impacts to federally proposed, listed, and candidate species and federally designated and proposed critical habitat. Please note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the accuracy of this species list should be verified after 90 days. This verification can be completed formally or informally as desired. The Service recommends that verification be completed by visiting the ECOS-IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists and information. An updated list may be requested through the ECOS-IPaC system by completing the same process used to receive the enclosed list.

The purpose of the Act is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend may be conserved. Under sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(2) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 *et seq.*), Federal agencies are required to utilize their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and to determine whether projects may affect threatened and endangered species and/or designated critical habitat.

A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2) (c)). For projects other than major construction activities, the Service suggests that a biological evaluation similar to a Biological Assessment be prepared to determine whether the project may affect listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat. Recommended contents of a Biological Assessment are described at 50 CFR 402.12.

If a Federal agency determines, based on the Biological Assessment or biological evaluation, that listed species and/or designated critical habitat may be affected by the proposed project, the agency is required to consult with the Service pursuant to 50 CFR 402. In addition, the Service recommends that candidate species, proposed species and proposed critical habitat be addressed within the consultation. More information on the regulations and procedures for section 7 consultation, including the role of permit or license applicants, can be found in the "Endangered Species Consultation Handbook" at:

<http://www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/TOC-GLOS.PDF>

Please be aware that bald and golden eagles are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668 *et seq.*), and projects affecting these species may require development of an eagle conservation plan ([http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/eagle\\_guidance.html](http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/eagle_guidance.html)). Additionally, wind energy projects should follow the wind energy guidelines (<http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/>) for minimizing impacts to migratory birds and bats.

Guidance for minimizing impacts to migratory birds for projects including communications towers (e.g., cellular, digital television, radio, and emergency broadcast) can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/CurrentBirdIssues/Hazards/towers/towers.htm>; <http://www.towerkill.com>; and <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/CurrentBirdIssues/Hazards/towers/comtow.html>.

We appreciate your concern for threatened and endangered species. The Service encourages Federal agencies to include conservation of threatened and endangered species into their project planning to further the purposes of the Act. Please include the Consultation Tracking Number in the header of this letter with any request for consultation or correspondence about your project that you submit to our office.

02/05/2019

Event Code: 08ESMF00-2019-E-02731

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Attachment(s):

- Official Species List

## Official Species List

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

**Sacramento Fish And Wildlife Office**  
Federal Building  
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605  
Sacramento, CA 95825-1846  
(916) 414-6600

02/05/2019

Event Code: 08ESMF00-2019-E-02731

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## Project Summary

Consultation Code: 08ESMF00-2018-SLI-1134

Event Code: 08ESMF00-2019-E-02731

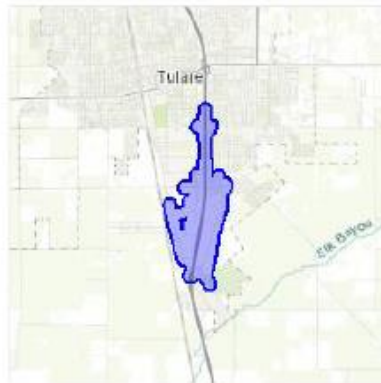
Project Name: Tulare Interchange

Project Type: TRANSPORTATION

Project Description: The project proposes to construct a new interchange on State Route 99 at Commercial Avenue or Industrial Avenue south of the existing interchange at Paige Avenue. The proposed interchanges are situated within the City of Tulare between Post Miles (PMs) 26.3 and 28.1.

### Project Location:

Approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/36.17968904779085N119.32815576912674W>



Counties: Tulare, CA

## Endangered Species Act Species

There is a total of 9 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on this species list.

Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species.

IPaC does not display listed species or critical habitats under the sole jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries<sup>1</sup>, as USFWS does not have the authority to speak on behalf of NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

- 
1. [NOAA Fisheries](#), also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

### Mammals

NAME	STATUS
San Joaquin Kit Fox <i>Vulpes macrotis mutica</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2873">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2873</a>	Endangered
Tipton Kangaroo Rat <i>Dipodomys nitratoides nitratoides</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/7247">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/7247</a> Species survey guidelines: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/guideline/survey/population/40/office/11420.pdf">https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/guideline/survey/population/40/office/11420.pdf</a>	Endangered

### Reptiles

NAME	STATUS
Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard <i>Gambelia silus</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/625">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/625</a>	Endangered
Giant Garter Snake <i>Thamnophis gigas</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4482">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4482</a>	Threatened



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## Amphibians

NAME	STATUS
California Red-legged Frog <i>Rana draytonii</i> There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2891">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2891</a>	Threatened
California Tiger Salamander <i>Ambystoma californiense</i> Population: U.S.A. (Central CADPS) There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2076">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2076</a>	Threatened

## Fishes

NAME	STATUS
Delta Smelt <i>Hypomesus transpacificus</i> There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/321">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/321</a>	Threatened

## Crustaceans

NAME	STATUS
Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp <i>Branchinecta lynchi</i> There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/498">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/498</a>	Threatened

## Flowering Plants

NAME	STATUS
San Joaquin Adobe Sunburst <i>Pseudobahia peirsonii</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2931">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2931</a>	Threatened

## Critical habitats

THERE ARE NO CRITICAL HABITATS WITHIN YOUR PROJECT AREA UNDER THIS OFFICE'S JURISDICTION.



**Summary Table Report**  
 California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
 California Natural Diversity Database

Query Criteria: Quad-span style= color:Red> IS <span>(Tulare>(3611923))

Name (Scientific/Common)	CNDDB Ranks	Listing Status (Fed/State)	Other Lists	Elev. Range (ft.)	Total EO's	Element Occ. Ranks										Population Status			Presence				
						A	B	C	D	X	U	Historic > 20 yr	Recent <= 20 yr	Extant	Poss. Extrap.	Extrap.							
<i>Andrena macswainii</i> An andrenid bee	G2 S2	None None		270 270	7 S:1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0			
<i>Boreo swainsoni</i> Swainson's hawk	G5 S3	None Threatened	BLM, S-Sensitive IUCN, LC-Least Concern USFWS, BCC-Birds of Conservation Concern	270 275	2465 S:4	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	4	0	0	0		
<i>Gaulanthus californicus</i> California jewelflower	G1 S1	Endangered Endangered	Rare Plant Rank - 1B.1	285 285	63 S:1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Pseudobalia peirsonii</i> San Joaquin adobe sunburst	G1 S1	Threatened Endangered	Rare Plant Rank - 1B.1 SB, RSABG-Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden		51 S:1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<i>Vulpes macrotis mutica</i> San Joaquin kit fox	G4T2 S2	Endangered Threatened		275 300	1017 S:4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0

10/5/2018

CNPS Inventory Results



## Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants

## Plant List

2 matches found. *Click on scientific name for details*

## Search Criteria

Found in Quad 3611923

[Modify Search Criteria](#)
[Export to Excel](#)
[Modify Columns](#)
[Modify Sort](#)
[Display Photos](#)

Scientific Name	Common Name	Family	Lifeform	Blooming Period	CA Plant Rank	State Rank	Global Rank	State Listing Status	Federal Listing Status	Habitats	Lowest Elevation	Highest Elevation	CA Endemic
<a href="#">Caulanthus californicus</a>	California jewelflower	Brassicaceae	annual herb	Feb-May	1B.1	S1	G1	CE	FE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chenopod scrub</li> <li>• Pinyon and juniper woodland</li> <li>• Valley and foothill grassland</li> </ul>	61 m	1000 m	yes
<a href="#">Pseudobahia peirsonii</a>	San Joaquin adobe sunburst	Asteraceae	annual herb	Feb-Apr	1B.1	S1	G1	CE	FT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cismontane woodland</li> <li>• Valley and foothill grassland</li> </ul>	90 m	800 m	yes

## Suggested Citation

California Native Plant Society, Rare Plant Program. 2018. Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California (online edition, v8-03 0.39). Website <http://www.rareplants.cnps.org> [accessed 05 October 2018].

## Search the Inventory

[Simple Search](#)[Advanced Search](#)[Glossary](#)

## Information

[About the Inventory](#)[About the Rare Plant Program](#)[CNPS Home Page](#)[About CNPS](#)[Join CNPS](#)

## Contributors

[The Calflora Database](#)[The California Lichen Society](#)[California Natural Diversity Database](#)[The Jepson Flora Project](#)[The Consortium of California Herbaria](#)[CalPhotos](#)

## Questions and Comments

[rareplants@cnps.org](mailto:rareplants@cnps.org)

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<http://rareplants.cnps.org/result.html?adv=t&quad=3611923#cdisp=1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,13,12,14>

1/1



# Appendix G Proposed Soundwall Locations





# Appendix H Comments and Responses

## *Comment from the State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit*



## ***Response to Comment from the State Clearinghouse***

The State Clearinghouse letter stated that no state agencies had submitted comments on the project by the end of the state review period. Caltrans has complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 1 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:


I am a volunteer at the International Agri-Center® and fully support the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial Ave or Commercial Ave. A new interchange at either of these locations is preferred because:

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Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

 1-3-19

Name Date

**Response to Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center**

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 2 of 95**

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Thank you,



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 3 of 95**

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Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date 01 January 2019

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Thank you,

Name Date

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 5 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

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Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

 11/3/19

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Date

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 6 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:

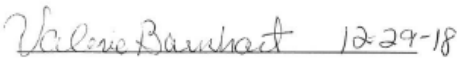
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Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

 12-29-18

Name Date

**Response to Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding building the South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Avenue, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Comment from a Staff Member at the International Agri-Center, 7 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

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I am on staff at the International Agri-Center® and I fully support the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial Ave or Commercial Ave. A new interchange at either of these locations is preferred because:

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Thank you,

 1-4-19

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Name

  
Date

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 9 of 95**

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Thank you,

 11/7/2019

Name Date

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**Comment from a Citizen supporting the International Agri-Center, 10 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:


I am a concerned citizen supporting the International Agri-Center® and fully support the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial Ave or Commercial Ave. A new interchange at either of these locations is preferred because:

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 1-7-19

Name Date

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**Comment from a Concerned Citizen supporting the International Agri-Center, 11 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

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Thank you,

 1/7/19

Name Date

**Response to Comment from a Concerned Citizen supporting the International Agri-Center**

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 12 of 95**

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Thank you,

 \_\_\_\_\_ 1-7-2019  
Name Date

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**Comment from a Concerned Citizen supporting the International Agri-Center, 13 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

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Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

Keri Bender 01-07-19  
Name Date

**Response to Comment from a Concerned Citizen supporting the International Agri-Center**

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**Comment from a Concerned Citizen supporting the International Agri-Center, 14 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

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 1-7-19

Name Richard Bender Date

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 15 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

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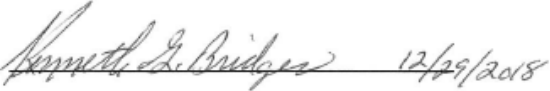
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- Supportive existing businesses are helping to make this project shovel-ready

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Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

 12/29/2018

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Response to Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center**

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 16 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a volunteer at the International Agri-Center® and fully support the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial Ave or Commercial Ave. A new interchange at either of these locations is preferred because:

- Provides better access to existing and potential businesses
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Thank you,

 1-2-19

Name Date

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Thank you,

 12/28/18  
Name Date

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 19 of 95**

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Thank you,

 1/3/19

Name Date

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 20 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

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Thank you,

 12-31-18  
Name Date

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 22 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:

RECEIVED JAN 02 2019


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Name Date

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 23 of 95**

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Thank you,

John Dominguez 1-5-19  
Name Date

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 24 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:


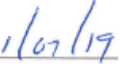
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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 25 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:

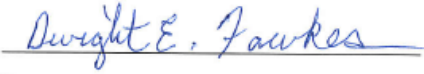
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Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Comment from an Employee at the International Agri-Center, 26 of 95**

December 21, 2018

RE: South Tulare Interchange


To Whom It May Concern:

I am an employee of the International Agri-Center® at 4500 S. Laspina Street in Tulare. I am in support of the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial Ave or Commercial Ave. These locations have great potential and will help this area of town continue to grow.

I am not in support of the project at Paige Ave. That on and off ramp are already dangerous and existing structures seem to be difficult to work around.

Please consider helping Tulare grow and develop a safer interchange at either Industrial Ave or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,



Jennifer Fawkes

**Response to Comment from an Employee at the International Agri-Center**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding building the South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Avenue, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 27 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:


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Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

 1/7/19  
Name Date

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 28 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:

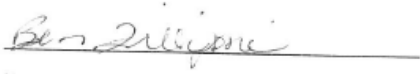
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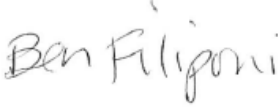
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Thank you,

  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 31 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

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Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

  
Name Ray Fonseca Date 1/7/2019

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Thank you,

 1-7-19

Name Date

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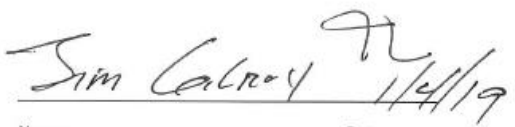
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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date 11/24/19

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RE: South Tulare Interchange

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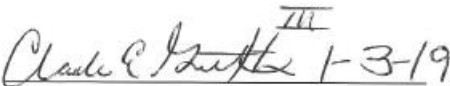
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Thank you,

 1-3-19

Name Date

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Thank you,

  
WILLIAM HALL 1-7-19

Name Date

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**Comment from a Staff Member at the International Agri-Center, 38 of 95**

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 12/28/18

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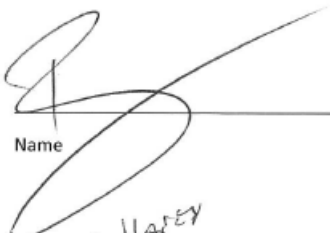
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Thank you,

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Name Date

Basia Harvey 1-3-19

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 40 of 95**

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 42 of 95**

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- Supportive existing businesses are helping to make this project shovel-ready

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Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

 1-7-19  
Name Date

**Response to Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding building the South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Avenue, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Comment from a Staff Member at the International Agri-Center, 44 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:


I am on staff at the International Agri-Center® and I fully support the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial Ave or Commercial Ave. A new interchange at either of these locations is preferred because:

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Thank you,

 12.28.18  
Name Date

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 45 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:

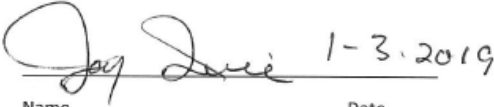
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Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

 1-3, 2019

Name Date

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 46 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

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Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

Walter R. Davis 1-3-19

Name Date

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Thank you,

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Name Date

1-7-19

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 49 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:

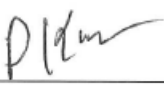
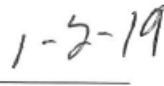
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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 50 of 95**

RECEIVED JAN 02 2019

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date 12-30-18

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 1-7-19

Name Cash R D Kherl Date

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Name Naabi Khab Date

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Thank you,

 12-29-2018

Name Date

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Thank you,

 12/28/18

Name Date

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Thank you,

Anne Jukutan 1/03/18

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Thank you,

 1-4-2019

Name Date  
VINCENT G. MARK

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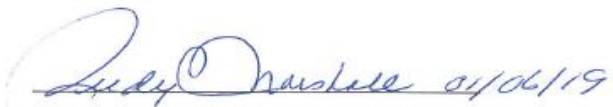
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 04/06/19

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Comment from a Staff Member at the International Agri-Center, 60 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:


I am on staff at the International Agri-Center® and am a resident of Tulare. I fully support the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial Ave or Commercial Ave. A new interchange at either of these locations is preferred because:

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 Dec 28, 2018

Name Date

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**Comment from a Concerned Citizen Supporting the International Agri-Center, 61 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

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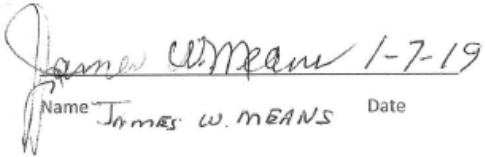
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 1-7-19  
Name JAMES W. MEANS Date

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Thank you,

 Don A. MENDONCA 1/7/19

Name Date

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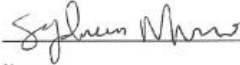
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Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

 12/29/18  
Name Date

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**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 66 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:

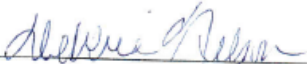
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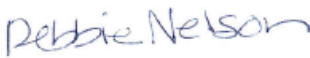
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RECEIVED JAN 07 2019

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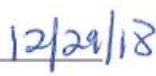
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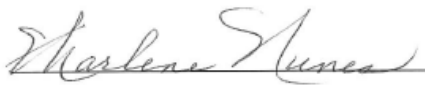
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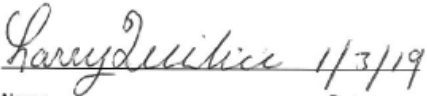
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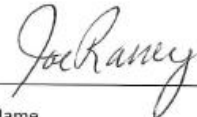
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 1-3-2019

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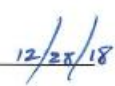
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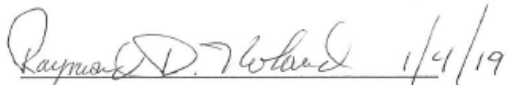
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 Donna Rowe 1/03/18

<https://files.constantcontact.com/21cf93aa0014579169a-4e02-49aa-8672-f1f92e01cd.docx>

1/3/18 10:24 AM  
Page 1 of 2

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Paul E. Sims    1/7/2019

Name

Date

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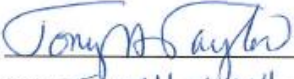
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- Supportive existing businesses are helping to make this project shovel-ready

I am not in support of the project at Paige Ave. This on/off ramp is already congested and dangerous. With the location of existing businesses and homes, it would be difficult and cost-prohibitive to convert. Paige Ave should be left as an overpass to help with traffic flow from a new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

  
Name TONY H. TAYLOR Date 1-7-2019

**Response to Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding building the South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Avenue, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 88 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a volunteer at the International Agri-Center® and fully support the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial Ave or Commercial Ave. A new interchange at either of these locations is preferred because:

- Provides better access to existing and potential businesses
- Opens up new property to development
- Will draw more traffic and tourism revenue to the airport, Tulare Golf Course and the International Agri-Center® - this benefits the whole Tulare community
- Supportive existing businesses are helping to make this project shovel-ready

I am not in support of the project at Paige Ave. This on/off ramp is already congested and dangerous. With the location of existing businesses and homes, it would be difficult and cost-prohibitive to convert. Paige Ave should be left as an overpass to help with traffic flow from a new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date 1-7-19

**Response to Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding building the South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Avenue, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 89 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:


I am a volunteer at the International Agri-Center® and fully support the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial Ave or Commercial Ave. A new interchange at either of these locations is preferred because:

- Provides better access to existing and potential businesses
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- Will draw more traffic and tourism revenue to the airport, Tulare Golf Course and the International Agri-Center® - this benefits the whole Tulare community
- Supportive existing businesses are helping to make this project shovel-ready

I am not in support of the project at Paige Ave. This on/off ramp is already congested and dangerous. With the location of existing businesses and homes, it would be difficult and cost-prohibitive to convert. Paige Ave should be left as an overpass to help with traffic flow from a new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

  
Name Date

**Response to Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding building the South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Avenue, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.



**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 90 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:


I am a volunteer at the International Agri-Center® and fully support the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial Ave or Commercial Ave. A new interchange at either of these locations is preferred because:

- Provides better access to existing and potential businesses
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I am not in support of the project at Paige Ave. This on/off ramp is already congested and dangerous. With the location of existing businesses and homes, it would be difficult and cost-prohibitive to convert. Paige Ave should be left as an overpass to help with traffic flow from a new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

  
Name Date

**Response to Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding building the South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Avenue, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 91 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:


I am a volunteer at the International Agri-Center® and fully support the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial Ave or Commercial Ave. A new interchange at either of these locations is preferred because:

- Provides better access to existing and potential businesses
- Opens up new property to development
- Will draw more traffic and tourism revenue to the airport, Tulare Golf Course and the International Agri-Center® - this benefits the whole Tulare community
- Supportive existing businesses are helping to make this project shovel-ready

I am not in support of the project at Paige Ave. This on/off ramp is already congested and dangerous. With the location of existing businesses and homes, it would be difficult and cost-prohibitive to convert. Paige Ave should be left as an overpass to help with traffic flow from a new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

 1-3-19

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Response to Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding building the South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Avenue, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 92 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:

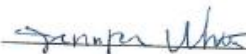
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- Provides better access to existing and potential businesses
- Opens up new property to development
- Will draw more traffic and tourism revenue to the airport, Tulare Golf Course and the International Agri-Center® - this benefits the whole Tulare community
- Supportive existing businesses are helping to make this project shovel-ready

I am not in support of the project at Paige Ave. This on/off ramp is already congested and dangerous. With the location of existing businesses and homes, it would be difficult and cost-prohibitive to convert. Paige Ave should be left as an overpass to help with traffic flow from a new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

 \_\_\_\_\_ 1-3-19  
Name Date  
JENNIFER WHITE

**Response to Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding building the South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Avenue, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 93 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a volunteer at the International Agri-Center® and fully support the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial Ave or Commercial Ave. A new interchange at either of these locations is preferred because:

- Provides better access to existing and potential businesses
- Opens up new property to development
- Will draw more traffic and tourism revenue to the airport, Tulare Golf Course and the International Agri-Center® - this benefits the whole Tulare community
- Supportive existing businesses are helping to make this project shovel-ready

I am not in support of the project at Paige Ave. This on/off ramp is already congested and dangerous. With the location of existing businesses and homes, it would be difficult and cost-prohibitive to convert. Paige Ave should be left as an overpass to help with traffic flow from a new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

Nancy White 12/27/18  
Name Date

2532 E. Harvard Ct.  
Visalia, CA 93292

**Response to Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding building the South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Avenue, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 94 of 95**

Robert Bates  
1513 Kaweah Dr.  
Tulare, CA 93274

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:


I am a volunteer at the International Agri-Center® and fully support the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial Ave or Commercial Ave. A new interchange at either of these locations is preferred because:

- Provides better access to existing and potential businesses
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- Supportive existing businesses are helping to make this project shovel-ready

I am not in support of the project at Paige Ave. This on/off ramp is already congested and dangerous. With the location of existing businesses and homes, it would be difficult and cost-prohibitive to convert. Paige Ave should be left as an overpass to help with traffic flow from a new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,

 January 5, 2019

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Date

**Response to Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding building the South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Avenue, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center, 95 of 95**

RE: South Tulare Interchange

To Whom It May Concern:


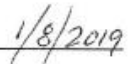
I am a volunteer at the International Agri-Center® and fully support the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial Ave or Commercial Ave. A new interchange at either of these locations is preferred because:

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- Supportive existing businesses are helping to make this project shovel-ready

I am not in support of the project at Paige Ave. This on/off ramp is already congested and dangerous. With the location of existing businesses and homes, it would be difficult and cost-prohibitive to convert. Paige Ave should be left as an overpass to help with traffic flow from a new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Ave.

Thank you,


 

Name Date

**Response to Comment from a Volunteer at the International Agri-Center**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding building the South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Avenue, will be considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Comment from W. Lynn Dredge**



**INTERCHANGE**  
**Tulare** CALIFORNIA 99  
**Comment Card**


NAME: W. Lynn Dredge  
 ADDRESS: 418 North Dickman Dr CITY: Tulare ZIP: 95274  
 REPRESENTING: Self - AgriCenter & Faria Family 280-9696

Please add me to the project mailing list.

I would like the following comments filed in the record\* (please print):  
Favor Commercial Act leaving Page 45 13  
for Present time.  
Tulare with the Faria family who owns  
and will dedicate much of the right-of-way on both  
sides of Freeway at Commercial.  
Will discuss that with Caltrans staff at your  
convenience

\*Place your comments into the Comment Box tonight or mail your comments by January 25, 2019 to:  
 CALTRANS DISTRICT 6  
 Attention: Trais Norris  
 855 M Street, Suite 200  
 Fresno, CA 93721  
 email: trais.norris@dot.ca.gov

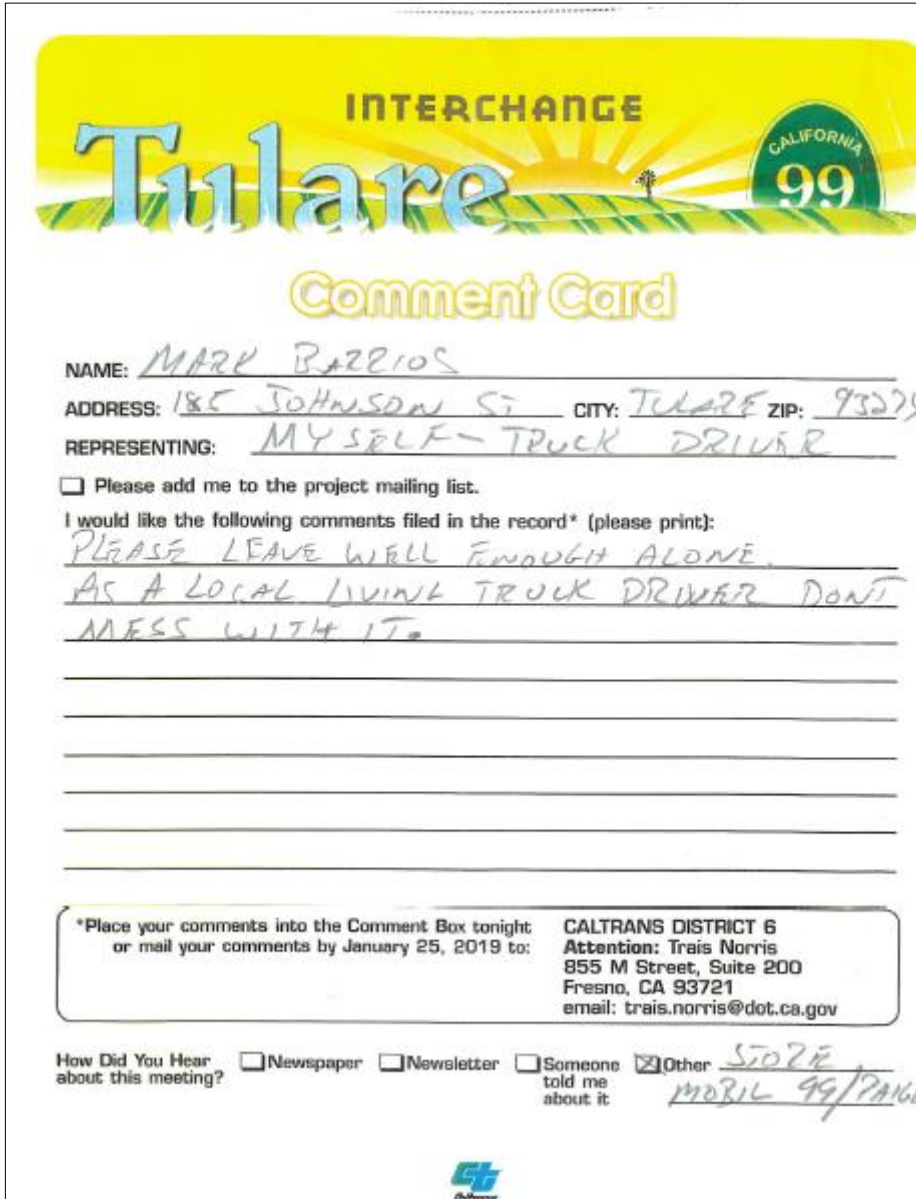
How Did You Hear about this meeting?  Newspaper  Newsletter  Someone told me about it  Other \_\_\_\_\_



**Response to Comment from W. Lynn Dredge**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment favoring the Commercial Avenue alternative and leaving Paige as is, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Comment from Mark Barrios**



The image shows a 'Tulare Interchange Comment Card' with a yellow header featuring a sun and the text 'INTERCHANGE Tulare CALIFORNIA 99'. Below the header, the card contains handwritten information: NAME: MARK BARRIOS; ADDRESS: 185 JOHNSON ST; CITY: TULARE; ZIP: 93274; REPRESENTING: MYSELF - TRUCK DRIVER. There is a checkbox for 'Please add me to the project mailing list.' and a section for comments: 'I would like the following comments filed in the record\* (please print): PLEASE LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE. AS A LOCAL LIVING TRUCK DRIVER DONT MESS WITH IT.' At the bottom, there is contact information for Caltrans District 6 and a section for 'How Did You Hear about this meeting?' with checkboxes for Newspaper, Newsletter, Someone told me about it, and Other (checked), with handwritten notes 'STOZE' and 'MOBIL 99/PAIGE'.

INTERCHANGE  
**Tulare** CALIFORNIA 99  
Comment Card

NAME: MARK BARRIOS  
ADDRESS: 185 JOHNSON ST CITY: TULARE ZIP: 93274  
REPRESENTING: MYSELF - TRUCK DRIVER

Please add me to the project mailing list.

I would like the following comments filed in the record\* (please print):  
PLEASE LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE.  
AS A LOCAL LIVING TRUCK DRIVER DONT  
MESS WITH IT.

\*Place your comments into the Comment Box tonight  
or mail your comments by January 25, 2019 to: CALTRANS DISTRICT 6  
Attention: Trais Norris  
855 M Street, Suite 200  
Fresno, CA 93721  
email: trais.norris@dot.ca.gov

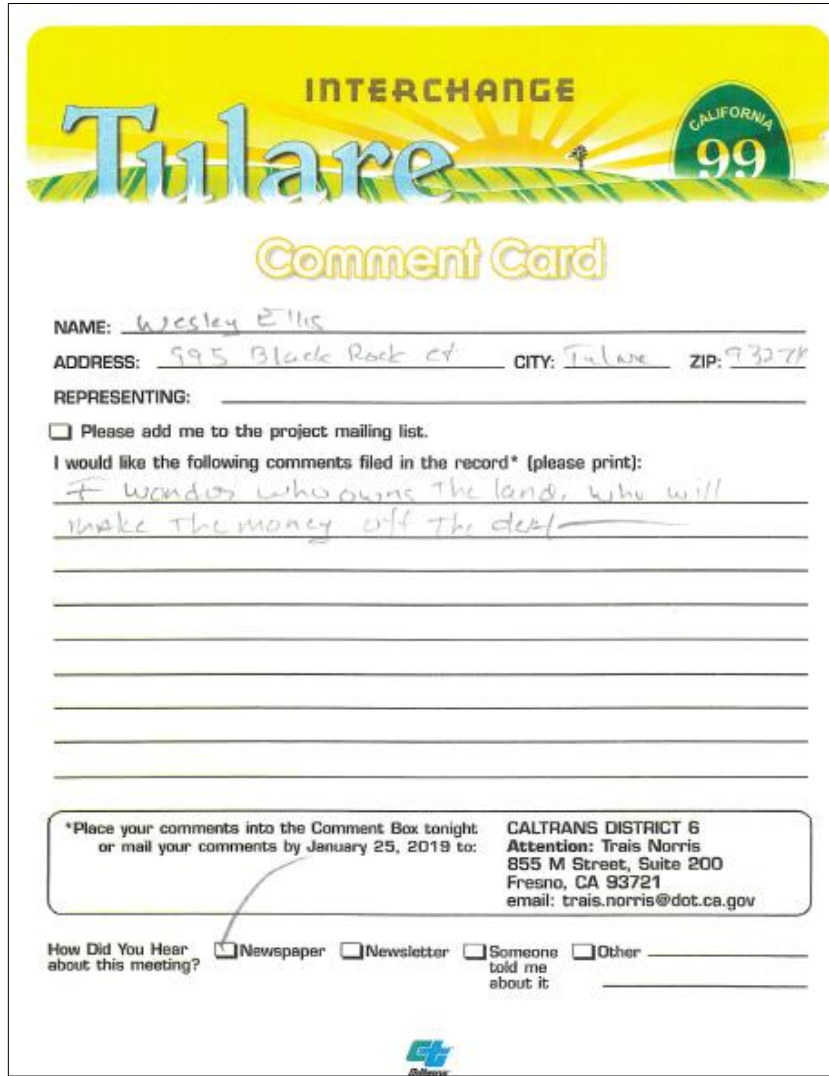
How Did You Hear about this meeting?  Newspaper  Newsletter  Someone told me about it  Other STOZE  
MOBIL 99/PAIGE

**Response to Comment from Mark Barrios**

Under the No-Build Alternative, State Route 99 and Paige Avenue would stay in their present conditions. No improvements would be made to State Route 99 or Paige Avenue. No measures would be taken to reduce congestion or improve operations. The No-Build Alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the project.



**Comment from Wesley Ellis**



The image shows a 'Comment Card' for the Tulare 99 Interchange project. The card has a yellow header with a sun and a green sign that says 'CALIFORNIA 99'. Below the header, the text 'INTERCHANGE Tulare Comment Card' is displayed. The card contains a form with the following fields and text:

NAME: Wesley Ellis  
ADDRESS: 595 Black Rock Ct CITY: Tulare ZIP: 93278  
REPRESENTING: \_\_\_\_\_

Please add me to the project mailing list.

I would like the following comments filed in the record\* (please print):  
I wonder who owns the land, who will  
make the money off the deal

\*Place your comments into the Comment Box tonight or mail your comments by January 25, 2019 to:  
CALTRANS DISTRICT 6  
Attention: Trais Norris  
855 M Street, Suite 200  
Fresno, CA 93721  
email: trais.norris@dot.ca.gov

How Did You Hear about this meeting?  Newspaper  Newsletter  Someone told me about it  Other \_\_\_\_\_


At the bottom of the card is the Caltrans logo.


**Response to Comment from Wesley Ellis**

Approximately 48 acres will be acquired for preferred Alternative 1A. A property owner has donated 42 acres of land to the City of Tulare to be use for the interchange project. The City of Tulare will transfer the land to Caltrans. The remaining six acres will be purchased from several property owners effected by the project.



**Comment from Angel G. Flores**



**INTERCHANGE**  
**Tulare** 

**Comment Card**

NAME: ANGEL G. FLORES

ADDRESS: P.O. Box 4014 CITY: VIZALIA ZIP: 93278

REPRESENTING: Roche Oil Inc - Tulare, CA.

Please add me to the project mailing list.


I would like the following comments filed in the record\* (please print):

Alternative 3 seems to be the best for  
the area in Tulare. The Paige Ave.  
Overpass is very important to every  
person near the area. The overpass is about  
the main over pass that connects every worker,  
resident and businesses together from what  
I have seen at where I have been  
working for the past 12 years. Thank you  
for reading my input. Angel Flores

\*Place your comments into the Comment Box tonight  
or mail your comments by January 25, 2019 to:

**CALTRANS DISTRICT 6**  
**Attention: Trais Norris**  
**855 M Street, Suite 200**  
**Fresno, CA 93721**  
**email: trais.norris@dot.ca.gov**


How Did You Hear about this meeting?  Newspaper  Newsletter  Someone told me about it  Other AT WORK.  
I Work At Roche Oil  
INC.



**Response to Comment from Angel G. Flores**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding Alternative 3, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative based on engineering, environmental analysis and community input. In addition, Alternative 3 would require relocation of a tire service, truck stop and motel, whereas Alternative 1A will not require any business relocations. Finally, Alternative 1A allows the Paige Avenue interchange to remain open.

**Comment from Ty Holscher**



**INTERCHANGE**  
**Tulare** CALIFORNIA **99**

**Comment Card**


NAME: Ty HOLSCHER  
ADDRESS: 1395 SO 'K' STREET CITY: TULARE ZIP: 93224  
REPRESENTING: MYSELF

Please add me to the project mailing list.  
I would like the following comments filed in the record\* (please print):

ALT 1C IS THE BEST CHOICE.  
LESS RIGHT OF WAY LOST.  
VACANT LAND AS IT IS NOW.

\*Place your comments into the Comment Box tonight or mail your comments by January 25, 2019 to: CALTRANS DISTRICT 6  
Attention: Trais Norris  
855 M Street, Suite 200  
Fresno, CA 93721  
email: trais.norris@dot.ca.gov


How Did You Hear about this meeting?  Newspaper  Newsletter  Someone told me about it  Other \_\_\_\_\_



**Response to Comment from Ty Holscher**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding Alternative 1C was considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project. Paige Avenue interchange will remain open under Alternative 1A. Under Alternative 1C, all existing ramps to Paige Avenue would be closed.

**Comment from George Pierce**



The image shows a 'Comment Card' for the Tulare 99 Interchange project. At the top, there is a graphic with a sun, the word 'Tulare' in large blue letters, and a green shield with 'CALIFORNIA 99'. Below the graphic is the title 'Comment Card'. The form contains handwritten information: NAME: George Pierce; ADDRESS: 1128 N. Madison Ct.; CITY: Tulare; ZIP: 93274; REPRESENTING: Carter Tractor, Inc. & International Agri-Center. There is a checked box for 'Please add me to the project mailing list.' and a section for comments: 'I would like the following comments filed in the record\* (please print): Please build 1A as the alternative. It should help everyone concerned.' Below this are several blank lines. A box at the bottom right provides contact information for CALTRANS DISTRICT 6, Attention: Trais Norris, 855 M Street, Suite 200, Fresno, CA 93721, email: trais.norris@dot.ca.gov. At the bottom left, there is a question 'How Did You Hear about this meeting?' with options: Newspaper, Newsletter, Someone told me about it, and Other. The 'Other' option is checked and has handwritten text: 'Interim Tulare Agri-Center Board Member'. The Caltrans logo is at the bottom center.

**INTERCHANGE**  
**Tulare** CALIFORNIA 99  
**Comment Card**

NAME: George Pierce  
ADDRESS: 1128 N. Madison Ct. CITY: Tulare ZIP: 93274  
REPRESENTING: Carter Tractor, Inc. & International Agri-Center

Please add me to the project mailing list.

I would like the following comments filed in the record\* (please print):  
Please build 1A as the alternative. It  
should help everyone concerned.

\*Place your comments into the Comment Box tonight or mail your comments by January 25, 2019 to:  
CALTRANS DISTRICT 6  
Attention: Trais Norris  
855 M Street, Suite 200  
Fresno, CA 93721  
email: trais.norris@dot.ca.gov


How Did You Hear about this meeting?  Newspaper  Newsletter  Someone told me about it  Other Interim Tulare Agri-Center Board Member



**Response to Comment from George Pierce**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment favoring Alternative 1A, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Comment from Shea Gowin**



**INTERCHANGE**  
**Tulare** CALIFORNIA 99

**Comment Card**


NAME: Shea Gowin  
ADDRESS: 1920 W Prosperity Ave CITY: Tulare ZIP: 93274  
REPRESENTING: Gowin Green Inc. / Self

Please add me to the project mailing list.  
I would like the following comments filed in the record\* (please print):

I think Option 1A is the best option for the  
whole of Tulare.

\*Place your comments into the Comment Box tonight or mail your comments by January 25, 2019 to: CALTRANS DISTRICT 6  
Attention: Trais Norris  
855 M Street, Suite 200  
Fresno, CA 93721  
email: [trais.norris@dot.ca.gov](mailto:trais.norris@dot.ca.gov)


How Did You Hear about this meeting?  Newspaper  Newsletter  Someone told me about it  Other \_\_\_\_\_



**Response to Comment from Shea Gowin**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment favoring Option 1A as the best option, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Comment from Larry Quilici**



The image shows a "Comment Card" for the Tulare 99 Interchange project. The card features a header with a sun and the text "INTERCHANGE Tulare CALIFORNIA 99". Below the header, the card is titled "Comment Card". The form contains the following fields and text:


NAME: Larry Quilici  
ADDRESS: 1543 Coe/10 CITY: Tulare ZIP: 93274  
REPRESENTING: I.A.C.

Please add me to the project mailing list.

I would like the following comments filed in the record\* (please print):  
I am in favor of Project 1A  
for the interchange. It will work the  
best for all  
Larry Quilici

\*Place your comments into the Comment Box tonight or mail your comments by January 25, 2019 to: CALTRANS DISTRICT 6  
Attention: Trais Norris  
855 M Street, Suite 200  
Fresno, CA 93721  
email: trais.norris@dot.ca.gov


How Did You Hear about this meeting?  Newspaper  Newsletter  Someone told me about it  Other \_\_\_\_\_



**Response to Comment from Larry Quilici**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment favoring Project 1A for the interchange, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Comment from Jennifer Fawkes**



**INTERCHANGE**  
**Tulare** CALIFORNIA 99

**Comment Card**


NAME: Jennifer Fawkes  
 ADDRESS: 2540 E. Tulare Ave. CITY: Visalia ZIP: 93292  
 REPRESENTING: International Hajri-Center

Please add me to the project mailing list.

I would like the following comments filed in the record\* (please print):  
I prefer plan 1A. Provides the most options long-term  
creates a new interchange away from Paige.  
 Please send me the full report:  
jennifer.f@farmstow.org  
 or  
4500 S. Laspina St.  
Tulare, CA 93274

\*Place your comments into the Comment Box tonight or mail your comments by January 25, 2019 to:  
**CALTRANS DISTRICT 6**  
**Attention: Trais Norris**  
 855 M Street, Suite 200  
 Fresno, CA 93721  
 email: trais.norris@dot.ca.gov

How Did You Hear about this meeting?  Newspaper  Newsletter  Someone told me about it  Other Work




**Response to Comment from Jennifer Fawkes**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment favoring plan 1A for creating a new interchange away from Paige Avenue, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project. Your name has been added to the mailing list, and you will receive a copy of the final environmental document.



**Comment from Brian Thohurn**



**INTERCHANGE**  
**Tulare** 

**Comment Card**

NAME: Brian Thohurn  
 ADDRESS: 2425 S. Blackstone CITY: CA ZIP: 93277  
 REPRESENTING: So Calif Edison

Please add me to the project mailing list.

I would like the following comments filed in the record\* (please print):  
So Cal Edison's priority is to ensure the safe efficient  
traffic flow in the area, so our crews can  
continue to move safely and efficiently to respond  
to emergencies and during the course of normal  
operations. To that end, options 1A + 1C provide  
the most constructive concepts to ensure + maintain  
the safe, efficient traffic flow in the area.

Thank you for your consideration!  
(u)

\*Place your comments into the Comment Box tonight or mail your comments by January 25, 2019 to:  
 CALTRANS DISTRICT 6  
 Attention: Trais Norris  
 855 M Street, Suite 200  
 Fresno, CA 93721  
 email: trais.norris@dot.ca.gov


How Did You Hear about this meeting?  Newspaper  Newsletter  Someone told me about it  Other \_\_\_\_\_



**Response to Comment from Brian Thohurn**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding options 1A and 1C as the most constructive concepts to ensure and maintain safe and efficient traffic flow, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Comment from Jerry Sinift**



**INTERCHANGE**  
**Tulare** CALIFORNIA 99

**Comment Card**


NAME: JERRY SINIFT  
ADDRESS: 4500 So LASHINA ST CITY: TULARE ZIP: 93274  
REPRESENTING: INTERNATIONAL AGRI-CENTER

Please add me to the project mailing list.

I would like the following comments filed in the record\* (please print):  
1A IS THE ALTERNATIVE WE WANT -  
THIS WILL BRING MORE INDUSTRIAL BUSINESS TO  
SOUL TULARE

\*Place your comments into the Comment Box tonight or mail your comments by January 25, 2019 to: CALIFORNIA DISTRICT 6  
Attention: Trais Norris  
855 M Street, Suite 200  
Fresno, CA 93721  
email: trais.norris@dot.ca.gov


How Did You Hear about this meeting?  Newspaper  Newsletter  Someone told me about it  Other \_\_\_\_\_




**Response to Comment from Jerry Sinift**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding your preference for Alternative 1A, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Comment from Courtney Roche**



**INTERCHANGE**  
**Tulare** 

**Comment Card**


NAME: COURTNEY ROCHE JR.  
 ADDRESS: PO BOX 89 CITY: TULARE ZIP: 93274  
 REPRESENTING: ROCHE OIL INC.

Please add me to the project mailing list.

I would like the following comments filed in the record\* (please print):  
ROCHE OIL INC IS LOCATED AT  
1120 E PAIGE AVE., THE SOUTHBOUND  
ON/OFF RAMP IS LOCATED NEXT TO  
OUR BUSINESS. WE NEED THE OFF/ON  
RAMP TO STAY OPEN. CLOSING  
OF OFF/ON RAMP WOULD SERIOUSLY  
AFFECT OUR BUSINESS IN A  
NEGATIVE WAY.

\*Place your comments into the Comment Box tonight or mail your comments by January 25, 2019 to:  
 CALTRANS DISTRICT 6  
 Attention: Trais Norris  
 855 M Street, Suite 200  
 Fresno, CA 93721  
 email: trais.norris@dot.ca.gov

How Did You Hear about this meeting?  Newspaper  Newsletter  Someone told me about it  Other \_\_\_\_\_



**Response to Comment from Courtney Roche**

One of the alternatives is to maintain Paige Avenue interchange and construct a new interchange 0.8 mile south of Paige Avenue interchange. The existing on- and off-ramps at Paige Avenue interchange will remain open. The preferred Alternative 1A will provide an additional crossing between east and west State Route 99.

**Comment from Stuart Lewis**

**INTERCHANGE**  
**Tulare** CALIFORNIA **99**

**Comment Card**

NAME: STUART LEWIS  
 ADDRESS: 4200 B. CROSS AVE CITY: TULARE ZIP: 93204  
 REPRESENTING: \_\_\_\_\_

Please add me to the project mailing list.

I would like the following comments filed in the record\* (please print):  
The intersection is very unsafe  
and someone is going to get killed  
and then maybe the city or the State of  
Ca. will do something about it before  
it is to late!

\*Place your comments into the Comment Box tonight  
 or mail your comments by January 25, 2013 to:  
**CALTRANS DISTRICT 6**  
 Attention: Trais Norris  
 855 M Street, Suite 200  
 Fresno, CA 93721  
 email: trais.norris@dot.ca.gov

How Did You Hear about this meeting?  Newspaper  Newsletter  Someone told me about it  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: The Intersection is very unsafe and someone is going to get Killed and then maybe the city or the State of Ca. will do something about it before it is to late!

**Response to Comment from Stuart Lewis**

Your comment regarding the unsafe intersection is noted. The purpose of the project is to improve the operational performance of State Route 99 within the project limits, relieve traffic congestion on local roads, and improve accessibility to the freeway system in that area. In addition, the project improvements would enhance the east-west movement of traffic and goods, supporting economic development. The preferred Alternative 1A will improve operational performance within the project limits. Stop signs at the following intersections are included under Alternative 1A: State Route 99 northbound off-ramp/Commercial Avenue, southbound off-ramp/Commercial Avenue, Commercial Avenue/Laspina Street, Commercial Avenue/Blackstone Street and Commercial Avenue/K Street, and it would accommodate for future signalization at these locations if warranted.

**Comments from Mitchell Chadwick (6 pages)**



Patrick G. Mitchell  
pmitchell@mitchellchadwick.com  
916-462-8887  
916-788-0290 Fax

January 25, 2019

**VIA U.S. MAIL & EMAIL**

G. William "Trais" Norris III  
San Joaquin Environmental Management Branch  
California Department of Transportation  
855 M Street, Suite 200  
Fresno, CA 93721-2716

**Re: Comments on Tulare 99 Interchange Project Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment**

Dear Mr. Norris:

My office represents Lehigh Hanson, Inc. and its subsidiary South Valley Materials, Inc. ("Lehigh") regarding a ready-mix concrete batch plant<sup>1</sup> located at the east end of Industrial Avenue on Blackstone Street in Tulare, California ("Plant"). The Plant would be impacted by the California Department of Transportation's ("Caltrans") proposed Tulare 99 Interchange Project ("Project"). Our law firm has reviewed the Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment for the Tulare 99 Interchange Project ("Initial Study") prepared by Caltrans regarding the Project. Lehigh appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Initial Study. As part of the Project, Caltrans, in association with the Tulare County Association of Governments, proposes to construct a new interchange or reconstruct an existing interchange on State Route 99 between 0.9 mile north of the Avenue 200 overcrossing and 0.5 mile north of the Paige Avenue overcrossing near the City of Tulare in Tulare County.

As part of the Initial Study, Caltrans evaluated four build alternatives (1A, 1C, 2, and 3) and a no-build alternative. This Project is significant to Lehigh because the Initial Study states that all four build alternatives would result in the taking of Lehigh's Plant. However, after reviewing the Initial Study and figures provided therein, it appears to Lehigh that Alternative 3 would not require Caltrans to acquire any portion of Lehigh's Plant.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, it appears that Alternatives 1A and 1C could be completed by Caltrans without requiring the complete taking of

<sup>1</sup> The Initial Study refers to Lehigh's ready-mix concrete batch plant incorrectly as a "cement batch plant." This error should be corrected in future documents.

<sup>2</sup> Based on Lehigh's review of the Initial Study maps, please clarify if any portion of Lehigh's Plant would be impacted by Alternative 3.

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3001 Lava Ridge Court, Suite 120 - Roseville, CA 95661 • Ph. 916.462.8888 • Fax 916.788.0290 • www.mitchellchadwick.com

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January 25, 2019  
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Lehigh's Plant. In fact, with some slight design revisions to Alternatives 1A and 1C, it appears that Caltrans could totally avoid Lehigh's Plant. For the reasons discussed below, under no circumstances should Caltrans approve Alternative 2.

At this time, no preferred alternative has been selected by Caltrans. (Initial Study p. 11.) Because Alternative 3 does not seem to require Caltrans to acquire Lehigh's Plant, which acquisition would come at significant cost to Caltrans and would necessitate the relocation of the Plant with related environmental impacts, Lehigh strongly urges Caltrans to select Alternative 3. Alternatively, because Alternative 1A looks as though it can be redesigned to be completed without affecting the Plant operations, Lehigh asks that Caltrans select Alternative 1A, if Caltrans refuses to select Alternative 3.

In addition, given the environmental impacts related to relocating the Plant, Lehigh believes to do so requires that Caltrans prepare an environmental impact report for the Project, not a mitigated negative declaration, if Alternatives 1A and 1C are not redesigned or if Caltrans selects Alternative 2.

A. Caltrans Needs to Clarify the Impacts, if Any, of Alternatives 1A, 1C, and 3 on the Plant

As stated above, the Initial Study states that Alternatives 1A, 1C, 2, and 3 would all require the taking of Lehigh's Plant. (Initial Study pp. v, 21.) This statement appears to be factually incorrect. As an initial matter, Lehigh would like Caltrans to clarify that Alternative 3 would not necessitate the taking of Lehigh's Plant. Lehigh has reviewed both the narrative description of Alternative 3 and Figure A-4 (Initial Study pp. 1, 140), and it appears that Alternative 3 as proposed would not require Caltrans to acquire the Plant. Additionally, Lehigh believes that Alternatives 1A and 1C could be constructed with only minor redesigns to avoid Lehigh's Plant.<sup>5</sup> Thus, Lehigh requests that Caltrans explain why it would be necessary for Caltrans to acquire the Plant under Alternatives 1A, 1C, and 3. Further, the Initial Study does not specify whether Caltrans would need to acquire the entire Plant for each alternative, or only a portion. The Initial Study's own maps of Alternatives 1A and 1C (Initial Study pp. 137-138) show only small portions of Lehigh's Plant being impacted by the Project. Lehigh therefore also requests that Caltrans provide narrative and mapping clarity regarding exactly how much of the Plant site would need to be taken, if any, under each alternative.

3

<sup>5</sup> It appears that the southbound ramp from State Route 99 to Commercial Avenue under Alternatives 1A and 1C could be redesigned to the same configuration as the northbound 99 offramp, thus entirely avoiding the southbound offramp's impact on the Plant. Likewise, it appears that the southerly extension of Blackstone Street under Alternatives 1A and 1C could initiate its westerly turn slightly to the south of its current commencement, also thereby entirely avoiding Lehigh's Plant.

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The Initial Study refers to a Community Impact Assessment that was prepared for the Project in August 2018. (Initial Study p. 21.) Please provide us with a copy of this assessment.

**B. Under Eminent Domain Principles, Caltrans Must Pay Lehigh for Fair Market Value of Property Taken and Loss of Business Goodwill**

5

Under California law, the owner of property acquired by eminent domain is entitled to compensation. (Cal. Constitution Art. 1, §19; Cal. Code of Civ. Proc. §1263.010.) This compensation includes both compensation for the fair market value of the property taken and payment for loss of business goodwill. (Cal. Code of Civ. Proc. §§1263.310, 1263.510.) "Goodwill" is defined quite broadly as "the benefits that accrue to a business as a result of its location, reputation for dependability, skill or quality, and any other circumstances resulting in probable retention of old or acquisition of new patronage." (Cal. Code of Civ. Proc. §1263.510, subd. b.) Section 1263.510 was enacted by the California legislature in 1975 as part of a comprehensive revision of eminent domain law in California. A primary reason that Section 1263.510 was enacted was to provide monetary compensation for the kinds of losses which typically occur when a business is forced to move and give up the benefits of its former location. (*People ex. Rel. Dept. of Transportation v. Muller* (1984) 36 Cal.3d 263, 270.)

The Plant has operated in this location since 2001 and has a well-established market position. During this time, Lehigh has serviced the regional ready-mix concrete needs and built up goodwill with its customers. If Caltrans does take Lehigh's Plant through eminent domain and Lehigh is forced to relocate its Plant, Lehigh would suffer significant business goodwill losses. A relocated batch plant in a new location would require Lehigh to obtain a new permit to operate from the City of Tulare. This new permit would be expensive to obtain, would carry more onerous restrictions, and would have a significant effect on Lehigh's Plant operations, all of which would lead to a significant loss in profits. Additionally, Lehigh's Tulare batch plant is currently in a key location, allowing for servicing the local market as well as many nearby consumer markets. The Plant's easy access to State Route 99 saves time on deliveries, and in ready-mix concrete deliveries every minute is critical to profitability. Relocating the batch plant would almost certainly lead to a significant decline in profitability due to being in a less desirable location. On top of compensating Lehigh for business goodwill losses for the Plant, Caltrans would also be required to pay Lehigh for the fair market value of the property taken and the diminution in value of the remainder of the property. (Cal. Code of Civ. Proc. §1263.310.)

The exercise of the eminent domain power requires a finding of necessity. (Cal. Code Civ. Proc. §1240.110.) To make such a finding, a public agency must establish that: 1) the public interest and necessity require the project; 2) the project is planned or located in the manner that will be most compatible with the greatest public good and the least private injury; and 3) the property sought to be acquired is necessary for the project. (Cal. Code Civ. Proc. §1240.130; *Santa Cruz County Redevelopment Agency v. Izant* (1995) 37 Cal.App.4<sup>th</sup> 141, 148.) This means that under

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eminent domain principles, Caltrans is not allowed to condemn the entire Plant, if e.g. under Alternatives 1A and 1C Caltrans can instead slightly redesign the Project. (Cal. Code Civ. Proc. §1240.130.) In addition, even with no redesign, Caltrans is not legally allowed to condemn the entire Plant for Alternatives 1A or 1C when only small portions of the Plant would be necessary. (*Id.*)

The taking of an entire Plant is extremely costly, and Caltrans should consider this cost as it decides on a preferred alternative. Lehigh has recently had two other sites taken via eminent domain by Caltrans in association with the High-Speed Rail Project. These sites were located in Fresno County. After failing to reach a consensus on property valuation with Caltrans, Lehigh engaged in litigation, which resulted in Caltrans paying Lehigh millions of dollars in compensation for each of the two takings. Should Caltrans eventually pursue Alternative 2, Caltrans would have to compensate Lehigh for the loss of its Tulare batch plant or, if Alternatives 1A or 1C are pursued without a redesign, Caltrans would have to compensate Lehigh for its adverse effect on its Plant. Caltrans should avoid this significant cost and the cost of litigation by selecting an alternative that does not result in the taking of the Plant.

**C. The Initial Study Should Provide a More Robust Analysis of the Environmental Effects of Relocation of Lehigh's Ready-Mix Concrete Batch Plant**

6

In the Initial Study, Caltrans has proposed four build alternatives and one no-build alternative, but a preferred alternative has not yet been selected. According to the Initial Study, Alternatives 1A, 1C, and 2 all require the taking of Lehigh's existing Plant. These alternatives therefore, according to the Initial Study, necessitate the relocation of Lehigh's concrete batch plant to a new area of the County, perhaps in an area that is currently used for open space or agricultural uses. This relocation would result in new environmental impacts related to siting and developing a brand-new ready-mix plant. Under CEQA, public agencies "should not approve projects as proposed if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures which would substantially lessen the environmental effects" of the project. (Cal. Pub. Res. Code § 21002.) Lehigh believes that the environmental effects of relocating its batch plant would be significant. These potential effects should be considered in the Initial Study and could be avoided by selecting Alternative 3.

**D. The CEQA Document Prepared for the Project Should be an EIR**

7

The Initial Study is 181 pages long, which is closer to the length of some environmental impact reports ("EIR"). After 181 pages of analysis in the Initial Study, Caltrans concludes that with mitigation measures, there will be no significant effect on the environment. This conclusion allows Caltrans to avoid preparing an environmental impact report ("EIR") under CEQA. But, as discussed above, the Initial Study does not analyze the potential environmental impacts related to the forced relocation of Lehigh's Plant. Lehigh believes that this relocation alone could cause

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significant environmental impacts. These potential impacts could include an increase in distance traveled by trucks going to and from the relocated plant and impacts to prime agricultural land<sup>4</sup>, depending on where the new plant is sited.

Further, the Initial Study does not adequately discuss potential significant impacts to listed species. The blunt-nosed leopard lizard was identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a species that may occur in the Project area. (Initial Study, Appendix F.) The Initial Study determines that because there is no burrowing habitat onsite, there will be no impacts to the lizard. However, the Initial Study does not mention or provide any analysis of the fact that the blunt-nosed leopard lizard is a fully protected species under California law, and no take is allowed of this species. (Cal. Fish and Game Code §5050.) Under CEQA, where there is substantial evidence that a project may have a significant effect on the environment, the lead agency is required to prepare an EIR. (14 CCR §15064.) Given the significant effects on the environment that would be caused by Caltrans take of the Plant and the Plant's relocation, Lehigh believes that Caltrans should prepare a full EIR for this project.

E. Alternatives 1A and 3 Provide Multiple Benefits

In addition to the fact that Alternatives 1A and 3 could be accomplished without significantly impacting operations at Lehigh's Plant, these alternatives also provide a range of other benefits. For example, Alternatives 1A and 3 are less expensive than Alternative 2. The total cost of both phases of Alternative 2 is \$103 million versus a total cost of \$72 million for Alternative 1A and a total cost of \$77 million for Alternative 3 (all rounded to the nearest million). (Initial Study p. 1.) Additionally, Alternatives 1A (42 acres) and 3 (45 acres) would disturb significantly less acreage as compared to Alternative 2 (82 acres). (Initial Study p. 39.) Finally, choosing an alternative that allows the Plant to remain operational in its current location would be beneficial to Caltrans and the public, as concrete made at the Plant could be used for the Project's construction with very short haul distances, thus reducing truck vehicle miles traveled (VMTs), and the related greenhouse gas and criteria air pollutant emissions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Lehigh believes that taking its Tulare Plant would be both very costly to Caltrans and environmentally damaging. The Plant has operated for at least 18 years, currently has a favorable operating permit that would not relocate with the Plant, and is very profitable. These factors all increase the business goodwill for which Lehigh must be compensated. In addition, the Initial Study has failed to evaluate the environmental impacts of relocating the Plant. Caltrans' acquisition of the Plant would cause greenfield site impacts, as Lehigh must find a new location for the Plant. Due to these considerations not included in the Initial Study, Lehigh urges

<sup>4</sup> Tulare County farmland is some of the most productive farmland in the United States.

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Caltrans to adopt Alternative 3 as its preferred alternative. Alternatively, if as Lehigh suspects, Alternative 1A could be redesigned so as to not affect the Plant's operations, Caltrans could select Alternative 1A. Should Caltrans select either Alternative 1A or 1C, Lehigh requests that those alternatives be modified as follows so as to avoid Lehigh's Plant:

- 1) Commence the southbound offramp from State Route 99 to Commercial Avenue slightly further south to avoid the Plant's eastern boundary;
- 2) Reconfigure the connection of the Blackstone Street southerly connection to Commercial Avenue to avoid the Plant's western boundary; and
- 3) Include the construction of a sound wall in between the southbound offramp and the Plant to limit noise impacts to Lehigh's Plant.

Please contact me or Sarah Taylor at my firm with any questions.

Sincerely yours,

MITCHELL CHADWICK LLP



Patrick G. Mitchell

Cc: Ana Damonte (Lehigh)  
Sarah Taylor (Mitchell Chadwick)

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### ***Response to Comments from Mitchell Chadwick***

Thank you for your January 25, 2019 letter with comments regarding the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

1. Your comment under Footnote 1, regarding the correct reference for the Lehigh's ready-mix concrete batch plant is noted. Identification of this business as the Lehigh's ready-mix concrete batch plant has been updated in the final environmental document.
2. Footnote 2 requested clarification of the impacts to Lehigh's ready-mix batch plant under Alternative 3. If Alternative 3 had been selected as the preferred alternative,

0.3 acre would have been required along the east side of the parcel, adjacent to State Route 99, for accommodating roadway drainage runoff.

3. Comment 3 Under subheading A. *Caltrans needs to clarify the impacts, if any, of Alternatives 1A, 1C and 3 on the Plant:* Right-of-way estimates were not available at the time the draft environmental document was circulated to the public. Refinement of the design alternatives show that partial property acquisition of Lehigh's ready-mix concrete batch plant would be required under Alternatives 1A, 1C and 3. Alternative 2 would displace Lehigh's entire operation. Alternative 1A would require 1-acre from Lehigh's ready-mix concrete batch plant, which includes an outdoor advertising sign, 24 trees and possibly a portion of an onsite drainage basin. Alternative 1C would require 1-acre from Lehigh's ready-mix concrete batch plant, which includes an outdoor advertising sign, 24 trees and possibly a portion of an onsite drainage basin. Alternative 3 would require 0.30 acre from Lehigh's ready-mix concrete batch plant, which includes an outdoor advertising sign. The trees and drainage basin would not be affected under Alternative 3. The final environmental document was updated to reflect the most recent right-of-way estimates of acreage acquisitions for the Lehigh's ready-mix concrete batch plant.

Coordination efforts with representatives from Lehigh ready-mix concrete batch plant and Caltrans on February 22, 2019 and May 9, 2019 provided additional information confirming that Alternatives 1A, 1C and 3 would not entail full acquisition of the subject parcel.

As requested, a hard copy of the Community Impact Assessment for the Tulare 99 Interchange project was sent to Mitchell Chadwick on April 4, 2019.

4. Footnote 3 stated that redesigning both the offramp and the Blackstone Street Extension could potentially lessen the impact to Lehigh's facility. The proposed southbound off-ramp to Commercial Avenue was designed per current design standards. Moving the ramp to the south will introduce non-standard design features which would deviate from current design standard policies. Therefore, the southbound off-ramp will not be moved further south. Currently, the design for the new interchange off-ramp is still at the preliminary design phase. Detailed design will further minimize the impact to the east side of the parcel. Caltrans will work with the City of Tulare to minimize the west side of the parcel's impact at the Blackstone Street extension.

5. Comment 5 regarding the Eminent Domain principle, fair market value of property acquired, and associated loss of business is not applicable as business and residential displacements will not occur under preferred Alternative 1A. The Lehigh's ready-mix concrete batch plant will not be relocated under preferred Alternative 1A.

Recent right-of-way estimates show that 1-acre would be required from Lehigh's ready-mix concrete batch plant property for Alternatives 1A or 1C, and 0.3 acre would be required for Alternative 3. Alternatives 1A, 1C and 3 would improve accessibility to the freeway system in the area and relieve traffic congestion on local

roads. None of these alternatives consider access impacts, as the plant and its customers will continue to have easy access to State Route 99 via Paige Avenue or the proposed Commercial Avenue.

6. The comment under subheading C requesting that the Initial Study provide a more robust analysis of the environmental effects of the relocation of Lehigh's ready-mix batch plant is noted. However, after refinement of design alternatives 1A, 1C and 3, it was determined that the project would not require relocation of the plant. Rather, partial property acquisition of Lehigh's ready-mix concrete batch plant would be required under Alternatives 1A, 1C and 3.

Recent right-of-way estimates show that 1-acre will be required along the eastern edge of Lehigh's ready-mix concrete batch plant property for preferred Alternative 1A.

7. Under subheading D, *The CEQA document prepared for the project should be an EIR*: According to CEQA, an EIR must be prepared whenever there is substantial evidence, in light of the whole record, that a project may have a significant effect on the environment. A significant effect on the environment is a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project, including but not limited to land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. Caltrans used the CEQA environmental checklist in Chapter 3 and supporting technical studies as referenced in this Initial Study to determine that the Tulare 99 Interchange Project will not cause a significant impact to the environment.

Business and residential displacements will not occur under preferred Alternative 1A. The Lehigh's ready-mix concrete batch plant will not be relocated under preferred Alternative 1A.

The blunt-nosed leopard lizard is identified by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as a fully protected species. However, based on a thorough literature search and habitat assessment, a no-effect determination was made for the blunt-nosed leopard lizard. A site assessment/ground-level reconnaissance survey was conducted on December 15, 2017 by Caltrans biologists Dena Gonzalez and Roland Garcia. Based on their initial observations, it was determined the focused wildlife surveys were not required due to the project area lacking presence of suitable habitat. Subsequent visits were conducted by Caltrans biologists on February 2, 2018, April 24, 2018 and May 1, 2018. Agricultural fields, the World Ag Expo, light industrial businesses including trucking and Lehigh's ready-mix concrete batch plant with basin, ruderal vegetation, commercial and residential structures, and some bare ground occur in the project area. Roadside vegetation present is ruderal due to native vegetation being heavily modified or completely removed by previous construction activities and agricultural operations. The project area does not have suitable habitat for the blunt-nosed leopard lizard. As per the California Natural Diversity Database, the only known occurrence of the blunt-nose leopard lizard in the area is dated 1974 and approximately 9.6 miles away from the Lehigh's ready-mix concrete batch plant.

An analysis of impacts to agricultural land is included in *Chapter 2.1.3 Farmland*. Prime farmland is scattered throughout the study area and exists within the project vicinity. Construction of a new interchange would bisect one parcel. The U.S. Department of Agriculture rated the impact of this farmland conversion as 140 points in value out of 260. This represents 0.003 percent of farmable land in the county, a less than significant impact under preferred Alternative 1A.

8. Under subheading E, *Alternatives 1A and 3 provide multiple benefits*: All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment identifying the multiple benefits of Alternatives 1A and 3, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project. This alternative will allow the batch plant to remain operational. Business and residential displacements will not occur under preferred Alternative 1A. Alternative 3 would require full acquisition of three business, Gutierrez Tire Service, Paige Truck Stop, and the Budget Inn and a residential relocation of the owner/manager onsite residential unit.

9. No business or residential displacements will occur as a result of selecting Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative.

Your proposal to move the offramp further south would introduce non-standard design features, deviating from the current design standard policies. Therefore, the southbound off-ramp cannot be moved further south.

Caltrans will work with the City of Tulare to minimize the west side of the parcel's impact at the Blackstone Street extension, per your request.

For highway transportation projects with Federal Highway Administration involvement (and Caltrans, as assigned), the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1970 and its implementing regulations (23 Code of Federal Regulations 772) govern the analysis and abatement of traffic noise impacts. The regulations require that potential noise impacts in areas of frequent human use be identified during the planning and design of a highway project. The regulations include noise abatement criteria that are used to determine when a noise impact occur. The noise abatement criteria differ depending on the type of land use under analysis. The Lehigh ready-mix concrete batch plant land use is identified as Activity F, manufacturing. There are no noise abatement criteria for land uses described under Activity F. Please refer to Chapter 2, Section 2.25 of the final environmental document for detailed discussion on noise impacts.

**Comment from George Pierce**

**1-877-TRACTOR**  
www.GartonTractor.com

January 3, 2019

California Department of Transportation  
1120 N M Street  
MS49  
Sacramento, CA 95834

To Whom It May Concern:

Garton Tractor, Inc. is a large farm equipment dealership with ten locations throughout California with one located at 4780 south K Street, Tulare, CA. Customers and our suppliers use Paige Avenue and Avenue 200 off ramps from Highway 99 to access our business. Most of our customers and suppliers avoid the Paige Avenue interchange due to the heavy traffic and the unsafe conditions surrounding this interchange. They will use the Avenue 200 interchange instead. There are more truck rollovers, both north bound as well as south bound, than all the other off ramps for the city of Tulare combined.

Garton Tractor, Inc. is a major supporter for the International Agri-Center and fully support the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial Avenue or Commercial Avenue. A new interchange at either locations is preferred because:

- It provides better access to our business and other existing and potential businesses.
- It will open up new properties to development.
- It will draw more traffic and tourism revenue to the Tulare Airport, Tulare Golf Course and the International Agri-Center which will benefit the whole Tulare Community.
- Supportive existing businesses are helping to make this project shovel-ready.

Garton Tractor, Inc. is not in support of the project at Paige Avenue. This interchange is already congested and dangerous. With the location of existing businesses and homes, it would be difficult and cost-prohibitive to convert. Paige Avenue should be left as an overpass to help with traffic flow from a new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Avenue.

Please build the new South Tulare Interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Avenue.

Sincerely,

George Pierce  
General Manager  
Garton Tractor, Inc.  
4780 South K Street  
Tulare, CA 93274

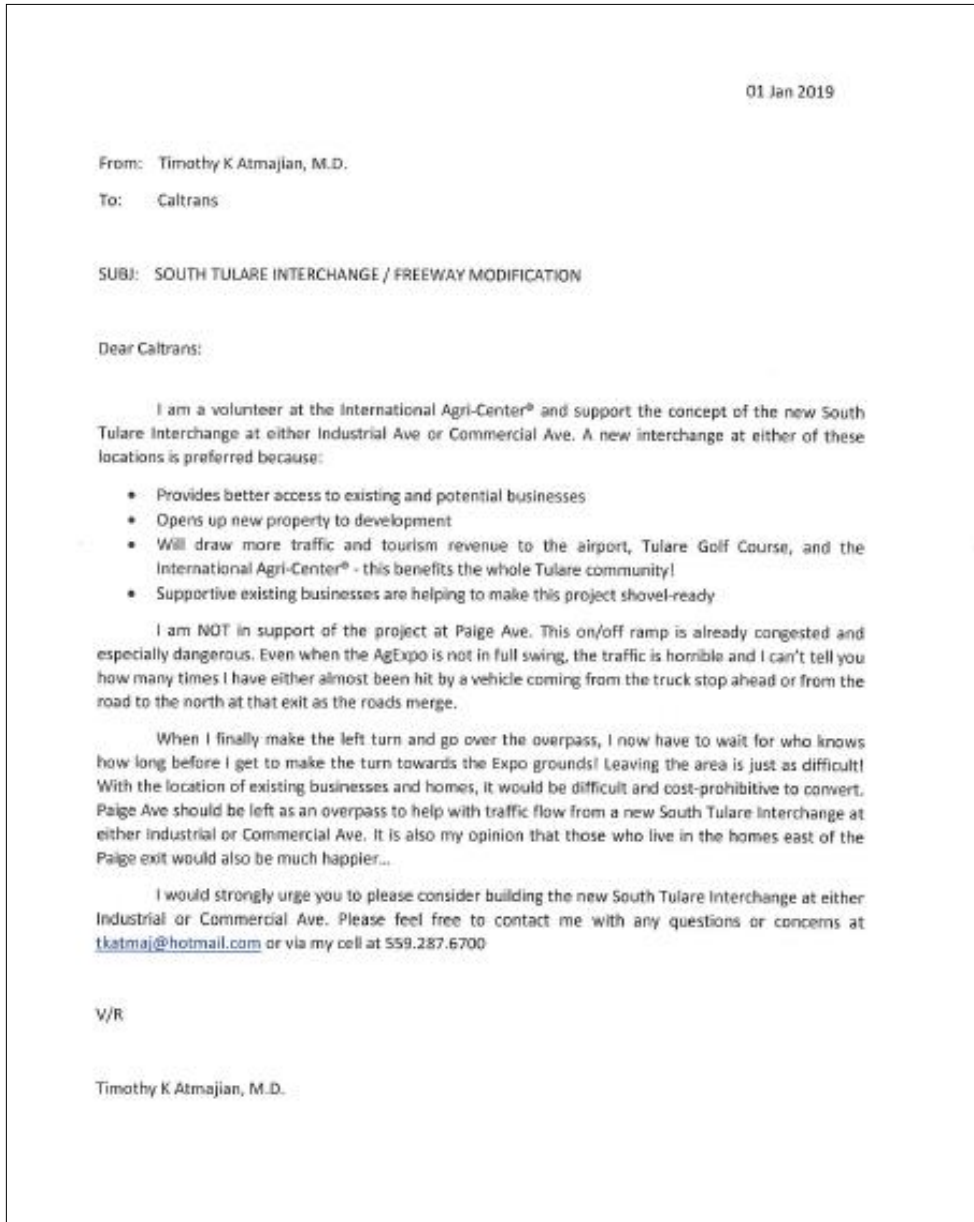
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1840 N. Golden State Ste 100 P.O. Box 1949 Tulare, CA 93281 (559)622-2022	1400 McHenry Ave Merced, CA 95320 (209)487-8811 Fax (209)487-1617	2301 E. Street P.O. Box 617 Merced, CA 95320 (209)862-1798	2214 Empire St P.O. Box 4119 Sawdust, CA 95769 (209)848-1457	2171 Clinton Ct Santa Rosa, CA 95407 (707)544-2160 Fax (707)544-2161	4100 S. A Street P.O. Box 47 Tulare, CA 93271 (559)936-0027	200 Tulare St Tulare, CA 93270 (559) 458-1888 Fax (559) 458-3881	1880 Russell Rd Fowler, CA 95324 (209) 471-8541 Fax (209) 471-8541	100 South Hwy 99 Merced, CA 95311 (209) 725-4880 Fax (209) 725-4880
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**Response to Comment from George Pierce**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment in support of the South Tulare interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Avenues, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Comment from Timothy K. Atmajian, M.D.**



**Response to Comment from Timothy K. Atmajian, M.D.**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment supporting the South Tulare interchange at either Industrial or Commercial Avenue, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

## Comment from George Wilson


**Jennifer Fawkes**

---

**From:** Jerry Sinift  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 8, 2019 10:08 AM  
**To:** Jennifer Fawkes  
**Subject:** FW: Update

Did you receive this?

**Jerry Sinift**  
CEO  
O: (559) 688-1751 Ext 2004  
C: (559) 358-0157



INTERNATIONALAGRICENTER.ORG  
559.688.1030 | 4500 S. LASPINA ST. TULARE, CA

**From:** George Wilson <gcwbaw@springvillewireless.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 8, 2019 9:32 AM  
**To:** Wally Roeben <wally@farmshow.org>; Jerry Sinift <jerry@farmshow.org>; barbaraaw38@gmail.com; Barbara Cooper <barbara@farmshow.org>  
**Subject:** Update

Wally

Picked up banners this morning...On way to Los Banos to get 'em up today...

I thought "interchange meeting" was Wednesday...Won't be able to make meeting today...

I support interchange as proposed other than "Paige Ave"

You may sign my name on petition as "Yes"

George Wilson

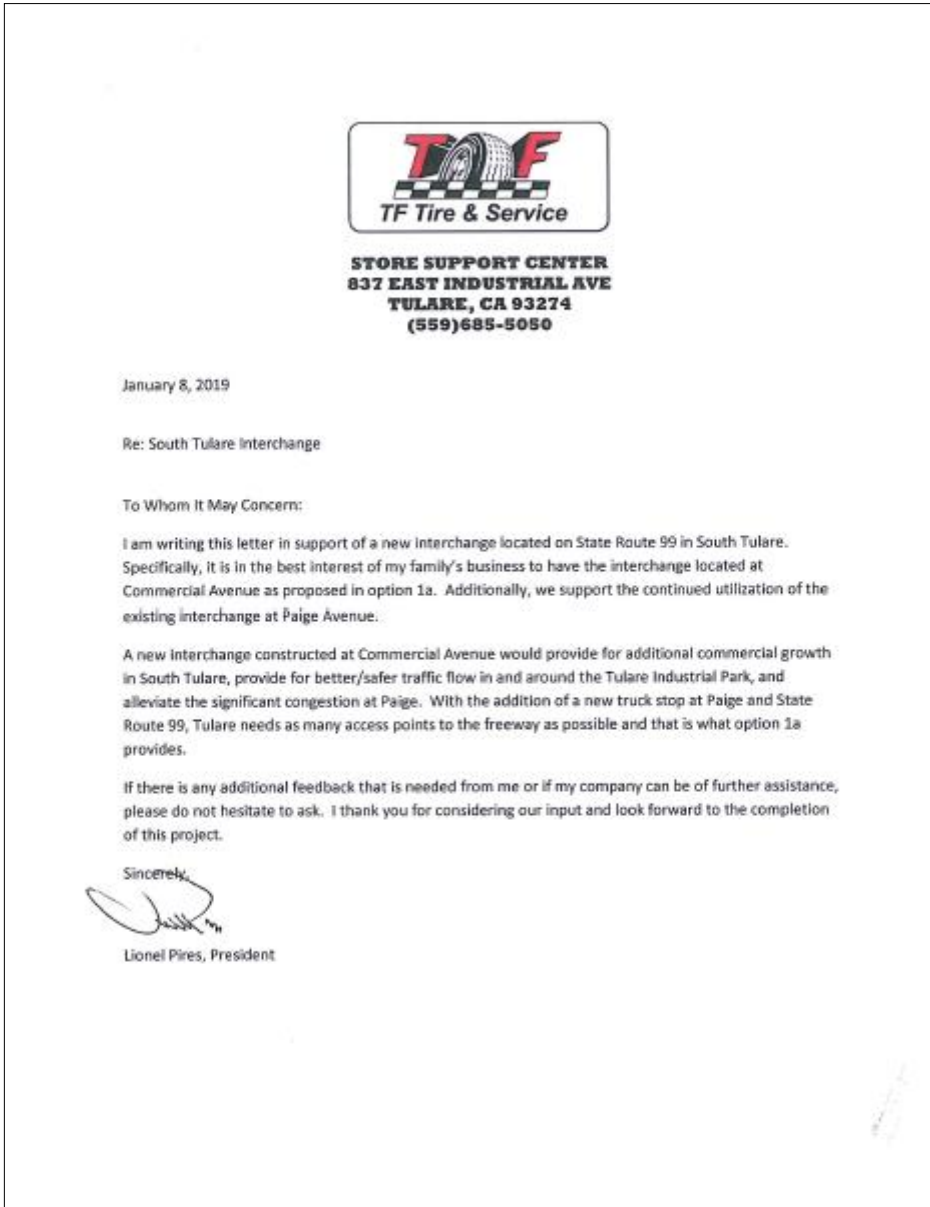
1

## Response to Comment from George Wilson

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment supporting the interchange location other than at Paige Avenue, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.



**Comment from Lionel Pires**



**Response to Comment from Lionel Pires**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment supporting the interchange at Commercial Avenue, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Comment from Rick Shuffield (2 pages)**



10601 North Pennsylvania  
P.O. Box 26210  
Oklahoma City, OK 73126

January 21, 2019

G. William Trias Norris III  
Senior Environmental Planner  
California Department of Transportation

Via Email Delivery: [trias.norris@dot.ca.gov](mailto:trias.norris@dot.ca.gov)

RE: Tulare Build Alternatives "Tulare 99 Interchange Project"

Mr. Norris

First of all, thanks to the State of California and the City of Tulare for finally addressing the situation. I think it is important to provide some history, in the event you are not familiar with the past discussion of this project.

Love's worked with CalTrans and the City of Tulare more than 10 years ago, as part of those efforts, we redesigned our project to accommodate, what was planned to be the future reworking of the Paige Avenue Interchange. We moved our site plan around to ensure that the pending improvements would not interfere with our operations and allow the reconstruction of the interchange to occur. In doing so, we did not have our optimum site presentation and wasted prime development land in the process, all with the assurance the improvements would be made.

After a thorough review of the options, there are only two options that would work for us in order to remain a viable business, those include the reworking of the existing Paige Avenue Interchange, Alternative 3, which would be our first choice, which was the expected course of action when we decided to spend millions of dollars to locate in the City. The second option Alternative 1A, which would be not be as desirable, but would allow us to remain in operations.

I want to bring to your attention, one item that was not considered in part of this document, is the dire shortage of truck parking spaces along this corridor. This shortage could be exacerbated and create a real safety concern if other options are chosen, not only will it impact our ability to be a going concern, but believe it would be very negative to a newly approved Pilot Travel Center at the same interchange

(800) 388-0983 / [www.Loves.com](http://www.Loves.com) / "clean places, friendly faces"

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10601 North Pennsylvania  
P.O. Box 26210  
Oklahoma City, OK 73126

We are asking CalTrans and the City to consider the existing businesses who invested in the City and who have contributed a very large and stable tax base for the City to consider this in the decision making process of which option to proceed with.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rick Shuffield".

Rick Shuffield  
VP Real Estate & Development

Cc: Traci Myers [tmyers@ci.tulare.ca.us](mailto:tmyers@ci.tulare.ca.us)  
Community Development Deputy Director City of Tulare

(800) 388-0983 / [www.loves.com](http://www.loves.com) / "clean places, friendly faces"

**Response to Comment from Rick Shuffield**

1. All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding Alternative 3 and Alternative 1A, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project. Paige Avenue interchange will remain open under Alternative 1A.
2. The City of Tulare is responsible for creating truck parking spaces. The City of Tulare Planning Department would be the point of contact regarding parking spaces.

**Transcript Comment from Ms. Patty Colson**

Atkinson-Baker, Inc.  
www.depo.com

1 TUESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2019; TULARE, CALIFORNIA  
2 5:32 P.M.  
3 MS. PATTY COLSON: At the intersection of  
4 Blackstone and Paige Avenue, the signage needs to be  
5 bigger when you come out of Love's telling them where  
6 to get in the southbound lanes of Highway 99. If the  
7 signage is not correct, they mistakenly make the wrong  
8 turn and then go down Paige Avenue and have to turn  
9 around in the traffic to get back to the southbound  
10 lane onramp.  
11 Also, I favor 1C, because it doesn't  
12 displace as many businesses. For the alternative, I  
13 like Map C. I like the neon signs, all the caution  
14 signs. All their signs should be neon yellow. And at  
15 Paige Avenue, where the southbound traffic goes off on  
16 Paige, they need a big sign there that says "Slow,  
17 Dangerous Curve" or something, because the trucks flip  
18 over on their side. They come off the freeway too  
19 fast and flip onto their side.  
20 -o0o-  
21 MR. COURTNEY ROCHE, JR.: I'm Courtney Roche,  
22 Jr. I represent Roche Oil Inc., 1120 East Paige  
23 Avenue, which is on the southbound exit of Paige and  
24 99. We started our business there in 1974. We've  
25 been there before any other businesses were in the

4

Transcript of Proceedings  
January 8, 2019

**Response to Transcript Comment from Ms. Patty Colson**

Every freeway off-ramp belonging to Caltrans is routinely monitored for unusual patterns of traffic collisions. If an unusual pattern is called to the Department's attention, that location will be further investigated in detail. For now, the Department believes the existing signs are appropriate. However, the Office of Traffic Investigations will review the collision history of this off-ramp and may consider changes as may apply.

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding Alternative 1C, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project. Paige Avenue interchange will remain open under Alternative 1A. Business displacements will not occur under preferred Alternative 1A.

**Transcript Comment from Mr. Courtney Roche Jr. (2 pages, 1 of 2)**

Atkinson-Baker, Inc.  
www.depo.com

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Transcript of Proceedings  
January 8, 2019

**Transcript Comment from Mr. Courtney Roche Jr. (2 pages, 2 of 2)**

Atkinson-Baker, Inc.  
www.depo.com

1 area. So we just we really want Paige Avenue offramps  
2 and onramps to stay open for many years to come. We  
3 need to have that for our business.

4 -o0o-

5 COURTNEY ROCHE, SR.: I'd like to see Paige  
6 stay open. We've been there since 1974 when nobody  
7 was there, and the plans have changed since the city  
8 told us the plan was going to be different. Now it's  
9 changing again and we'd still like to keep it open.  
10 We have a lot of customers. And we started with one  
11 employee and now we have 25 employees. Thank you.

12 -o0o-

13 MR. STEVE FARIA: My comment's the 1A. I think  
14 the 1A would be a benefit for the community for access  
15 and development.

16 -o0o-

17 MR. MIKE FARIA: So I looked at all the  
18 different options, and to me it's a no brainer. And  
19 that is 1A, because with 1A, commercial is a little  
20 further from the congestion of Love's and everything  
21 that's over there, and it also leaves Paige open. I  
22 can't imagine any of these options that close Paige  
23 on- and off-ramps, unless commercial is built first.  
24 Because Paige no on- and off-ramps would kill the  
25 town. So for me, 1A makes the most sense. I think

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Transcript of Proceedings  
January 8, 2019

**Response to Transcript Comment from Mr. Courtney Roche Jr.**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding Paige Avenue, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project. The existing ramps at Paige Avenue would remain open.



**Transcript Comment from Mr. Courtney Roche Sr.**

Atkinson-Baker, Inc.  
www.dpo.com

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Transcript of Proceedings  
January 8, 2019

**Response to Transcript Comment from Mr. Courtney Roche Sr.**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding Paige Avenue were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project. The existing ramps at Paige Avenue would remain open.

### **Transcript Comment from Mr. Steve Faria**

Atkinson-Baker, Inc.  
www.depo.com

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Transcript of Proceedings  
January 8, 2019

### **Response to Transcript Comment from Mr. Steve Faria**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding 1A, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Transcript Comment from Mr. Mike Faria (2 pages, 1 of 2)**

Atkinson-Baker, Inc.  
www.depo.com

1 area. So we just we really want Paige Avenue offramps  
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Transcript of Proceedings  
January 8, 2019

**Transcript Comment from Mr. Mike Faria (2 pages, 2 of 2)**

Atkinson-Baker, Inc.  
www.depo.com

1 everybody should be happy, because Paige remains the  
2 same while they are building commercial. And  
3 commercial, the design looks beautiful.  
4 -o0o-  
5 MS. SUSAN DUYST: I would just like to comment  
6 that I would like to see Paige stay open for the  
7 benefit of the community and the businesses that have  
8 contributed. I'm a part of Roche Oil at 1120 East  
9 Paige. We moved there in the '70s, and we employ  
10 about 25 people. And they all love working there, and  
11 I think that we've improved the area, along with  
12 Love's. And we bring in a lot of sales tax. And I  
13 just think it would be best for the community to keep  
14 Paige open.  
15 -o0o-  
16 (End of hearing at 6:44 p.m.)  
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Transcript of Proceedings  
January 8, 2019

**Response to Transcript Comment from Mr. Mike Faria**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding 1A, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project.

**Transcript Comment from Ms. Susan Duyst**

Atkinson-Baker, Inc.  
www.depo.com

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2 same while they are building commercial. And  
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Transcript of Proceedings  
January 8, 2019

**Response to Transcript Comment from Ms. Susan Duyst**

All comments received during the public circulation period for the draft environmental document, including your comment regarding Paige Avenue, were considered by the Project Development Team. After the public circulation period ended, the Project Development Team met and selected Alternative 1A as the preferred alternative for the Tulare 99 Interchange project. The existing ramps at Paige Avenue would remain open.



# Appendix I FHWA Air Quality Conformity Letter



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**Federal Highway Administration  
California Division**

650 Capitol Mall, Suite 4-100  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 498-5001  
(916) 498-5008 (fax)

April 1, 2019

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-CA

Sharri Bender Ehlert, Director  
California Department of Transportation  
District 6  
855 M Street, Suite 200  
Fresno, CA 93721

Attention: Maya Hildebrand

Dear Ms. Bender Ehlert:

SUBJECT: Project Level Conformity Determination for the Paige Avenue Interchange Project (RTP ID CT-RTP07-014)

On March 8, 2019, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) a complete request for a project level conformity determination for the Paige Avenue Interchange Project. The project is in an area that is designated Non-Attainment or Maintenance for Ozone and Particulate Matter (PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub>).

The project level conformity analysis submitted by Caltrans indicates that the project-level transportation conformity requirements of 40 CFR Part 93 have been met. The project is included in the Tulare County Association of Governments' (TCAG) current Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), as amended. The design concept and scope of the preferred alternative have not changed significantly from those assumed in the regional emissions analysis.

As required by 40 CFR 93.116 and 93.123, the localized PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> analyses are included in the documentation. The analyses demonstrate that the project will not create any new violations of the standards or increase the severity or number of existing violations.

Based on the information provided, FHWA finds that the Paige Avenue Interchange Project conforms with the State Implementation Plan (SIP) in accordance with 40 CFR Part 93.

If you have any questions pertaining to this conformity finding, please contact Joseph Vaughn at (916) 498-5346 or by email at [Joseph.Vaughn@dot.gov](mailto:Joseph.Vaughn@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

Tashia J. Clemens  
Director, Planning and Environment

## List of Technical Studies

- Air Quality Report
- Community Impact Assessment
- Noise Study Report
- Water Quality Report
- Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts
- Location Hydraulic Study
- Historical Property Survey Report
  - Historic Resource Evaluation Report
  - Historic Architectural Survey Report
  - Archaeological Survey Report
- Hazardous Waste Reports
  - Initial Site Assessment
  - Preliminary Site Investigation
- Scenic Resource Evaluation/Visual Assessment
- Paleontology Evaluation Report

To obtain a copy of one or more of these technical studies/reports, please send your request to the following email address: [d6.public.info@dot.ca.gov](mailto:d6.public.info@dot.ca.gov)

Please indicate the project name and project identifying code (under the project name on the cover of this document) and specify the technical report you would like a copy of. Provide your name and email address or U.S. postal service mailing address (street address, city, state and zip code).