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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

The following acronyms and abbreviations are used throughout this Draft EIR and its technical appendices.

A

AAQA	Ambient Air Quality Analysis
AAQS	Ambient Air Quality Standards
AB	Assembly Bill
ACEP	Agricultural Conservation Easement Program
ACM	Asbestos-Containing Material
ACT	Advanced Clean Trucks
ADMRT	Air Dispersion Modeling and Risk Tool
AEC	Advanced Environmental Concepts, Inc.
AERMOD	AMS/EPA Regulatory Model (air dispersion model)
AF	Acre-Feet
AFF	Above Finished Floor
AFY	Acre-Feet per Year
ALUCP	Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan
APN(s)	Assessor's Parcel Number(s)
APR	Application Review Policy
ARB	Air Resources Board
AST(s)	Aboveground Storage Tank(s)
ASTM	ASTM International (formerly American Society for Testing and Materials)
ATCM	Airborne Toxic Control Measure
ATP	Active Transportation Plan
AWSC	All-Way Stop-Controlled

B

BAU	Business as Usual
BMP(s)	Best Management Practice(s)
BO	Biological Opinion
BPS	Best Performance Standards
BSFC	Brake Specific Fuel Consumption
BTU	British Thermal Unit

C

C_2H_6	Ethane
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
Cal/EPA	California Environmental Protection Agency
CAP(s)	Climate Action Plan(s)
CAPCOA	California Air Pollution Control Officers Association
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CAS	Clean Air Solvent
CBB	Crotch's bumble bee
CBC	California Building Code
CBSC	California Building Standards Commission
CCAA	California Clean Air Act
CCE	California Candidate Endangered
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEC	California Energy Commission
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFC	Chlorofluorocarbons
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CGS	California Geological Survey
CH_4	Methane
CHRIS	California Historical Resources Information System
CLRTAP	Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level
CO	Carbon Monoxide
CO_2	Carbon Dioxide
CO_2e	Carbon Dioxide Equivalent
CPUC	California Public Utilities Commission
CRA	Cultural Resources Assessment
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
CRPR	California Rare Plant Rank
CSC	California Species of Special Concern
CTR	Commute Trip Reduction
CUP	Conditional Use Permit
CUPA	Certified Unified Program Agency

D

dB	Decibels

dBA	A-Weighted Decibels
DBH	Diameter at Breast Height
DCE	Dichloroethylene
DCP	Dust Control Plan
DNL	Day-Night Average Sound Level
DOC	(California) Department of Conservation
DPM	Diesel Particulate Matter
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
DWR	(California) Department of Water Resources

E

EB	Eastbound
EHD	Environmental Health Department
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EISA	Energy Independence and Security Act
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
EPA	(United States) Environmental Protection Agency
ERIS	Environmental Risk Information Services
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ESL	Environmental Screening Levels
ETAF	Evapotranspiration Adjustment Factor
EV	Electric Vehicle
EVA	Emergency Vehicle Access

F

FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FESA	Federal Endangered Species Act
FHSZ	Fire Hazard Severity Zone
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FIP	Federal Implementation Plan
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FMMP	Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
FRA	Federal Responsibility Area
FRI/FS	Focused Remedial Investigations/Feasibility Studies
FTA	Federal Transit Administration

G

GAMAQI	Guide for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts
GHG	Greenhouse Gas(es)
GKGSA	Greater Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency
gpd	Gallons per Day
GS-37	Green Seal Standard 37
GSA(s)	Groundwater Sustainability Agency
GSP	Groundwater Sustainability Plan
GWh	Gigawatt-Hours

H

H_2S	Hydrogen Sulfide
HAP(s)	Hazardous Air Pollutant(s)
HARP2	Hotspots Analysis and Reporting Program (Version 2)
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
HFC(s)	Hydrofluorocarbons
HHW	Household Hazardous Waste
HI	Hazard Index
HMBP	Hazardous Materials Business Plan
HP	Horsepower
HPAC	Historic Preservation Advisory Committee
HRA	Health Risk Assessment
HSAA	Hazardous Substance Account Act
HVAC	Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
HWMP	Hazardous Waste Management Program

I

IGP	Industrial General Permit
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOU(s)	Investor-Owned Utility(ies)
IS	Initial Study
ISR	Indirect Source Review
ITE	Institute of Transportation Engineers
ITP(s)	Incidental Take Permit(s)

J

JPA	Joint Powers Authority

K

KSF	Thousand Square Feet
kW	Kilowatts

L

LAFCO	Local Agency Formation Commission
LCC	Land Capability Classification
Ldn	Day-Night Average Sound Level
LE	Land Evaluation
LED	Light-Emitting Diode
Leq	Equivalent Continuous Sound Level
LESA	Land Evaluation and Site Assessment
LEV	Low Emission Vehicle
LOS	Level of Service
LRA	Local Responsibility Area
LSE(s)	Load-Serving Entity(ies)
LUST	Leaking Underground Storage Tank

M

MAWA	Maximum Applied Water Allowance
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MEI	Maximally Exposed Individual
MJLHMP	Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
MKGSA	Mid-Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency
MM	Mitigation Measure
MMRP	Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
MS4	Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System
MT	Metric Ton
MTs	Minimum Thresholds
MW	Megawatts
MWELO	Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance
MWh	Megawatt-Hour

N

N_2O	Nitrous Oxide
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NAR	Native American Reserve
NB	Northbound
NDC(s)	Nationally Determined Contributions
NDIR	Non-Dispersive Infrared
NEHRP	National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program
NEHRPA	National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program Act
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NHTSA	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NO_2	Nitrogen Dioxide
NOA	Naturally Occurring Asbestos
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOD	Notice of Determination
NOI	Notice of Intent
NOP	Notice of Preparation
NO_x	Oxides of Nitrogen (Nitrogen Oxides)
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPPA	Native Plant Protection Act
NPS	National Park Service
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places

O

ODS	Ozone-Depleting Substances
OEHHA	Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
ONAC	Office of Noise Abatement and Control
OSC	Open Space and Conservation (General Plan Element)
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration

P

PCE	Perchloroethylene
PEV	Plug-in Electric Vehicle
PFC	Perfluorocarbons

PM	Particulate Matter
PM_{10}	Particulate Matter (≤10 microns in diameter)
$PM_{2.5}$	Fine Particulate Matter (≤2.5 microns in diameter)
ppb	Parts per Billion
ppm	Parts per Million
PPV	Peak Particle Velocity
PRC	Public Resources Code
PRPA	Paleontological Resources Preservation Act
PSCU	Parks, Schools, Community Facilities, and Utilities (General Plan Element)
PV	Photovoltaic
PVC	Polyvinyl Chloride

R

REC	Recognized Environmental Condition
REL	Reference Exposure Level
RFS	Renewable Fuel Standard
RMW(s)	Representative Monitoring Well(s)
ROG	Reactive Organic Gases
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
RTP/SCS	Regional Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy
RWQCB(s)	Regional Water Quality Control Board(s)

S

SA	Site Assessment
SB	Senate Bill; Southbound (in traffic movement descriptions)
SBX-7-7	Senate Bill X7-7 (Water Conservation Act of 2009)
SCE	Southern California Edison
SCS	Sustainable Communities Strategy
SF	Square Feet
SF_6	Sulfur Hexafluoride
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer / Office
SIL(s)	Significant Impact Level(s)
SIP(s)	State Implementation Plan(s)
SJVAB	San Joaquin Valley Air Basin
SJVAPCD	San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
SJVC	San Joaquin Valley College
SLA	Special Landscape Area
SO_2	Sulfur Dioxide
SOI	Sphere of Influence
SORE	Small Off-Road Engines
SO_x	Sulfur Oxides
SPCC	Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure
SR	State Route
SRA	State Responsibility Area
SSJVIC	Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board

T

TAC(s)	Toxic Air Contaminant(s)
TAZ	Traffic Analysis Zone
TCA	Trichloroethane
TCAG	Tulare County Association of Governments
TCE	Trichloroethylene
TCEHD	Tulare County Environmental Health Division
TCR(s)	Tribal Cultural Resource(s)
TDM	Transportation Demand Management
TIS	Traffic Impact Study
TMDL(s)	Total Maximum Daily Load(s)
TNM	Traffic Noise Model
TPH	Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons
TRU(s)	Transport Refrigeration Unit(s)

U

UDB	Urban Development Boundary
UFC	Uniform Fire Code
UFP	Ultrafine Particles
UGB	Urban Growth Boundary
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation

USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
UST(s)	Underground Storage Tank(s)
UWMP	Urban Water Management Plan
UWUO(s)	Urban Water Use Objective(s)

V

VdB	Vibration Decibels
VERA	Voluntary Emissions Reduction Agreement
VFD	Visalia Fire Department
VHFHSZ	Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
VOC(s)	Volatile Organic Compound(s)

W

WB	Westbound
WEAP	Worker Environmental Awareness Program
WELO	Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance
WSA	Water Supply Assessment
WSCP	Water Shortage Contingency Plan
WUI	Wildland-Urban Interface
WY	Water Year

Z

ZEE	Zero Emission Equipment
ZEV(s)	Zero-Emission Vehicle(s)
ZOI	Zone of Influence

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Executive Summary provides an overview of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared by the City of Visalia (City), as the Lead Agency, for the proposed Kelsey-Hurley Industrial Park Project (Project) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines § 15123. This section includes a summary of the proposed Project and alternatives addressed in the EIR. A brief description of the areas of controversy and issues raised during scoping, an overview of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), and a table that summarizes the environmental impacts, mitigation measures, and level of significance after mitigation are also included in this section.

ES.1 - Project Overview

ES.1.1 Project Location and Existing Conditions

The Project Site encompasses approximately 122 acres, comprising Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 081-040-001, 081-071-020, and 081-071-042, in the western portion of the City of Visalia. The Site is located within a City of Visalia "county island" in unincorporated Tulare County, inside the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI). The Site is bounded by Hurley Avenue to the north, Road 88 to the east, State Route (SR) 198 to the south, and Kelsey Street to the west. The Site benefits from direct access to SR 198, proximity to SR 99, and close proximity to the Visalia Municipal Airport, and is located within Visalia's established Industrial Park area, a major regional employment center for manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution.

The Site has historically been used for agricultural production, primarily almond orchards and row crops, and contains an inactive milking barn and associated farm structures remaining from prior operations. Two seasonal drainages occur on the Site: Mill Creek, which traverses the southern portion of the Site, and Mill Creek Ditch, which runs along the northern boundary. The Site is bordered by agricultural uses to the north and east, vacant land to the west, and commercial uses to the south. The Site is designated Industrial under the Visalia 2030 General Plan and lies within the Tier I Urban Development Boundary (UDB) but is currently zoned AE-20 (Exclusive Agriculture, 20-acre minimum) under the Tulare County Zoning Ordinance.

ES.1.2 Project Description

The Project would implement the Kelsey-Hurley Industrial Park Master Plan (Appendix B), which establishes the development standards, design guidelines, circulation network, and infrastructure framework for the Site, consistent with the City's Industrial land use designation. At full buildout, the Project would include approximately 1,834,045 square feet (SF) of building area, consisting of the following components:

Industrial/Warehouse Buildings: Five industrial buildings totaling approximately 1,748,900 SF on Parcels 2, 3, 6, 7, and 8, designed primarily for warehouse and distribution use with ancillary office space and capable of accommodating storage, distribution, and light manufacturing uses. Maximum building height would be 75 feet.
Industrial-Serving Commercial Pads: Thirteen pads totaling approximately 55,500 SF for service-based businesses supporting the industrial park and surrounding area, including seven pads (approximately 28,900 SF) in the northwest corner of the Site (Parcel 1) and six pads (approximately 26,600 SF) in the northeast corner of the Site (Parcels 4 and 5).
Self-Storage Facility: An approximately 29,645 SF self-storage facility on Parcel 9, adjacent to Road 88, with an office and keypad-controlled gated access.
Stormwater Basin: An approximately 6.92-acre detention basin (Parcel 10) in the southeast corner of the Site, south of Mill Creek, with a storage capacity of 11.5 acre-feet (AF).
Parking: A total of 2,027 automobile parking stalls and 529 trailer parking stalls to accommodate employees, visitors, and fleet vehicles.

Existing perimeter roadways, including Hurley Avenue, Kelsey Street, and Clancy Street/Road 88, would be improved to City of Visalia street standards. Crowley Avenue would be realigned, with its centerline shifting approximately 33 feet north, and would function as a local industrial street within the Site. Internal circulation would be provided by private roads, with truck routes serving loading areas separated from passenger vehicle routes. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements include new sidewalks, Class II bike lanes along perimeter roadways, and a Class I bike path along Mill Creek forming part of the planned Mill Creek Trail. Landscaping consisting of drought-tolerant, low-maintenance species, monument and wayfinding signage, and energy-efficient LED lighting designed to minimize glare and light spill would be provided throughout the Site.

Potable water would be supplied by the California Water Service (Cal Water) Visalia District through connections to existing lines at the intersection of Kelsey Street and Crowley Avenue, with an estimated demand of approximately 240 acre-feet per year (AFY) at full buildout.

Sanitary sewer service would be provided by the City through connections to the existing main in Kelsey Street. All onsite stormwater would be conveyed to the detention basin in the southeast corner of the Site, and electricity would be provided by Southern California Edison (SCE).

ES.1.3 Phasing

The Project would be developed in four phases, allowing development to proceed in coordination with infrastructure availability and market demand:

Phase I: Buildings 1 and 3 (approximately 599,500 SF), the seven industrial-serving commercial pads in the northwest corner, and the stormwater detention basin.
Phase II: Buildings 2 and 4 (approximately 592,300 SF) and the six industrial-serving commercial pads in the northeast corner.
Phase 3: Building 5 (approximately 557,100 SF) in the southern portion of the Site, south of Crowley Avenue.
Phase 4: The self-storage facility (approximately 29,645 SF) adjacent to Road 88.

Roadway, utility, and landscaping improvements would be constructed incrementally with each phase, with storm drainage infrastructure constructed during the first three phases.

ES.1.4 Project Objectives

The primary objectives of the Project are to:

Promote Economic Development and Job Creation: Develop an industrial park to provide high-quality employment opportunities in manufacturing, warehousing, and industrial-serving commercial, supporting the City's goal of attracting businesses and reducing unemployment in Tulare County.
Implement the Site's Industrial General Plan Land Use Designation: Convert agricultural land to industrial and commercial uses by implementing the Site's Industrial General Plan land use designation, maximizing economic productivity while annexing the Site to the City for municipal services.
Enhance Regional Connectivity and Infrastructure: Improve transportation infrastructure, including new sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and road extensions, to support efficient goods movement near SR 198, while integrating with existing utilities and stormwater systems.
Achieve Sustainable Development: Incorporate measures to minimize environmental impacts.

Incorporate Industrial-Supporting Commercial Services: Include industrial-supporting commercial services to serve onsite workers and reduce offsite trips, creating a self-contained industrial hub.

ES.1.5 Required Approvals

Implementation of the Project would require the following discretionary approvals from the City and the Tulare County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO):

Annexation: Annexation of the approximately 122-acre Site from unincorporated Tulare County into the City of Visalia, subject to review and approval by LAFCO. Upon annexation, the Site would be pre-zoned to the City's Industrial (I) zone, consistent with the General Plan Industrial land use designation.
Tentative Parcel Map: Subdivision of the Site into 10 lots of varying sizes. Each lot would undergo site plan review at the time of development.
Conditional Use Permit (CUP): Reduction of the 5-acre minimum lot size requirement within the Industrial zone district and development of the industrial-serving commercial pads.

Other permits and approvals that may be required include San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) Indirect Source Review (Rule 9510) and Dust Control Plan (DCP) approval (Regulation VIII); coverage under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit; a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and Clean Water Act Section 404/401 authorizations from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), if work affects Mill Creek or Mill Creek Ditch; expiration or cancellation of Williamson Act Contracts #9794 and #10351, which are in non-renewal status; and subsequent City site plan review, grading, building, and encroachment permits.

ES.2 - Summary of Environmental Impacts

ES.2.1 Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

Chapter 3 of this Draft EIR evaluates the potential environmental impacts of the Project for 13 environmental topics: Aesthetics; Agricultural Resources; Air Quality; Biological Resources; Cultural Resources; Energy; Geology and Soils; Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Hydrology and Water Quality; Noise; Transportation; and Tribal Cultural

Resources. Impacts are classified as No Impact, Less than Significant, Less than Significant with Mitigation, or Significant and Unavoidable. Each impact, the applicable mitigation measures, and the level of significance before and after mitigation are summarized in Table ES-1 in Section ES.6.

All Project impacts would be less than significant, or less than significant with mitigation incorporated, with the exception of the following two impacts, which would be significant and unavoidable at both the Project and cumulative levels:

Conversion of Prime Farmland (Impact 3.2-1)

The Project would permanently convert approximately 118.8 acres of Prime Farmland and 3.2 acres of Farmland of Local Importance to non-agricultural use. The Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) model yielded a score of 77.5, indicating a significant impact. Although the Site lies within the Tier I UDB, is designated Industrial in the 2030 General Plan, and is exempt from the agricultural preservation requirements of Visalia Municipal Code Chapter 18.04, no feasible mitigation exists to offset the permanent loss of this Important Farmland. The Project's contribution to regional farmland conversion would also be cumulatively considerable.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (Impact 3.12-2)

The Project would generate 36.83 vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per service population, exceeding the City's adopted threshold of 26.0 VMT per service population (84 percent of the Tulare County Association of Governments [TCAG] regional average of 31.0). Achieving the threshold would require a 29.3 percent reduction, which is not attainable through feasible measures. Mitigation Measure (MM) TRANS-1 would achieve only a partial reduction, and the Project's contribution to regional VMT would be cumulatively considerable.

Pursuant to Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21081 and CEQA Guidelines § 15091 and 15093, the City may not approve the Project unless it adopts findings for each significant and unavoidable impact and a Statement of Overriding Considerations concluding that the Project's benefits outweigh its unavoidable adverse environmental effects.

0.1.1 ES.2.2 Impacts Reduced to Less than Significant with Mitigation

The following impacts would be potentially significant without mitigation but would be reduced to a less than significant level with implementation of the mitigation measures identified in Chapter 3 and summarized in Section ES.3:

Agricultural Resources

The Site is subject to Williamson Act contracts that are currently in non-renewal status. MM AG-1 would ensure the Project does not conflict with these contracts (Impact 3.2-2).

Air Quality

Unmitigated annual operational Reactive Organic Gasses (ROG) emissions of 10.8 tons per year would exceed the SJVAPCD threshold of 10 tons per year, and unmitigated diesel exhaust from off-road construction equipment could result in cancer risks above the SJVAPCD threshold at nearby sensitive receptors. With MMs AQ-1 through AQ-3, net operational ROG emissions would be reduced to 9.8 tons per year, and the Health Risk Assessment (HRA) shows a mitigated cancer risk of 10.8 in one million and a chronic hazard index of 0.003 at the maximally exposed individual, below the SJVAPCD thresholds of 20 in one million and 1.0, respectively (Impacts 3.3-1 through 3.3-3).

Biological Resources

Construction could result in injury, mortality, or disturbance to loggerhead shrike, Swainson's hawk, and pallid bat during nesting or roosting, could affect other special status species identified by CDFW if present, and could impede native wildlife nursery sites. MMs BIO-1.1 through BIO-10 would reduce these impacts (Impacts 3.4-1 and 3.4-4).

Cultural Resources, Paleontological Resources, and Tribal Cultural Resources

No known historical, archaeological, or tribal cultural resources (TCRs) were identified on the Site; however, ground-disturbing activities could inadvertently uncover buried resources, paleontological resources, or human remains. MMs TRI-1 through TRI-4 and MM GEO-2 would reduce these impacts (Impacts 3.5-1 through 3.5-3, 3.7-6, and 3.13-1).

Geology and Soils

Seismic ground shaking, potentially unstable or expansive soils, and construction-related erosion would be addressed through MM GEO-1, MM GEO-2, MM HYD-2 (Impacts 3.7-1 through 3.7-4).

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Project would generate approximately 9,421 metric tons (MT) of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions per year during operation and approximately 1,456 MT CO_2e during the worst-case construction year. With MM GHG-1, the Project would be consistent with the City of Visalia Climate Action Plan (CAP) and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) 2022 Scoping Plan (Impacts 3.8-1 and 3.8-2).

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Impacts associated with the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials during construction would be reduced through MM HYD-2 (Impact 3.9-1).

Hydrology and Water Quality

Construction and operational stormwater discharges and changes to onsite drainage patterns would be addressed through MMs HYD-1 through HYD-3 (Impacts 3.10-1 and 3.10-3).

Noise

Future operational stationary noise sources could conflict with existing or future noise-sensitive receptors. MM NOISE-1 would require an acoustical study and noise reduction measures to ensure compliance with the Visalia Municipal Code (Impact 3.11-1).

ES.2.3 Less than Significant Impacts and No Impacts

Impacts related to Aesthetics and Energy would be less than significant without mitigation. The Project would not substantially degrade scenic vistas, scenic resources, or visual character, and onsite lighting would comply with Title 24 and City standards. The Project would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary energy consumption and would not conflict with renewable energy or energy efficiency plans. In addition, the remaining thresholds within the other topic areas would result in no impact or a less than significant impact, including impacts to forest land; riparian habitat, wetlands, local biological ordinances, and habitat conservation plans; septic systems; hazards related to upset conditions, schools, listed hazardous materials sites, airports, emergency response, and wildland fires; groundwater supply; flood-related pollutant release; water quality control and groundwater management plans; groundborne vibration and airport noise; and transportation plan consistency, geometric design hazards, and emergency access. A discrete area of hydrocarbon-impacted soil identified in the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (Appendix G) was excavated and disposed of offsite in September 2025 (Appendix H), and the Water Supply Assessment (WSA) (Appendix J) demonstrates sufficient groundwater supplies to serve the Project through 2045 under normal, single-dry, and multiple-dry year conditions.

ES.2.4 Effects Found Not to Be Significant

Based on the Initial Study (IS) prepared for the Project (Appendix A), the following topics were determined to result in no impact or a less than significant impact and were not carried forward for detailed analysis in Chapter 3: Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources,

Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfire. These determinations are summarized in Section 5.5.

ES.2.5 Other CEQA Considerations

As discussed in Chapter 5, the Project is growth-accommodating rather than growth-inducing, as it implements planned industrial growth within the UDB and does not extend infrastructure with substantial excess capacity into unplanned areas; growth-inducing impacts would be less than significant. The permanent conversion of approximately 122 acres of agricultural land, including 118.8 acres of Prime Farmland, constitutes a significant irreversible environmental change. The commitment of energy and construction materials would be consistent with that of similar planned industrial development and would not be wasteful or unjustified.

ES.3 - Mitigation Measures

ES.3.1 Summary of Key Mitigation Measures

The mitigation measures identified in this Draft EIR are summarized below by topic. The complete text of each measure is provided in Chapter 3 and Chapter 6.

Agricultural Resources

MM AG-1 requires the Project Applicant, prior to annexation, to coordinate with Tulare County on the Williamson Act non-renewal process and either observe the remaining non-renewal period so that development does not commence until the contracts have expired, or petition the contract holder for cancellation in accordance with California Government Code Sections 51280 et seq. No feasible mitigation was identified to offset the permanent loss of Prime Farmland.

Air Quality

MM AQ-1 requires the Project Owner to enter into a Voluntary Emissions Reduction Agreement (VERA) with the SJVAPCD securing ROG reductions of not less than 1.1 pounds per year per 1,000 SF of building floor area and not less than 1.0 ton per year at full buildout, with documentation required prior to issuance of each building permit. MM AQ-2 requires all landscaping equipment used on the Site to qualify as zero emission under the CARB amendments to the Small Off Road Engines (SORE) Regulation. MM AQ-3 requires all diesel-fueled off-road construction equipment to meet Tier 4 Final engine standards, reducing diesel particulate matter (DPM) emissions by approximately 84 percent.

Biological Resources

MMs BIO-1.1 through BIO-1.3 and BIO-3.1 through BIO-3.4 establish construction timing restrictions, pre-construction surveys, and avoidance buffers for nesting birds and raptors and pallid bat maternity roosts, and require humane eviction of non-breeding bats. MMs BIO-2.1 through BIO-2.3 require protocol-level Swainson's hawk surveys, a minimum 0.5-mile no-disturbance buffer around active nests during the nesting season, and an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) with compensatory foraging habitat if take cannot be avoided. MMs BIO-4 through BIO-10 require habitat assessments, focused or protocol-level surveys, species-specific no-disturbance buffers, Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training, and, where take cannot be avoided, incidental take authorization and compensatory habitat mitigation for western burrowing owl, Crotch's bumble bee (CBB), California tiger salamander, American badger, western pond turtle, western spadefoot, vernal pool fairy shrimp, and vernal pool tadpole shrimp.

Geology and Soils

MM GEO-1 requires preparation of, and compliance with, a site-specific Geotechnical Evaluation prior to issuance of grading permits, addressing seismic ground shaking, liquefaction, soil stability, and expansive soils in accordance with the CBC. MM GEO-2 requires work stoppage and evaluation by a qualified paleontologist upon discovery of paleontological resources.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

MM GHG-1 requires submittal of a GHG Reduction Design Verification Letter demonstrating that applicable CAP and 2022 Scoping Plan commitments, including California Energy Code compliance, CALGreen electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, water-efficient landscaping, and waste diversion facilities, are incorporated into the final Project design and tenant agreements.

Hydrology and Water Quality

MM HYD-1 requires submittal of a Notice of Intent (NOI) to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) prior to ground disturbance. MM HYD-2 requires preparation and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) with construction Best Management Practices (BMPs), which also addresses erosion and construction-related hazardous materials. MM HYD-3 requires a Development Maintenance Manual for the long-term operation and maintenance of post-construction stormwater controls.

Noise

MM NOISE-1 requires an acoustical study, prepared prior to issuance of building permits for uses with potential noise conflicts, and incorporation of noise reduction measures such as equipment siting, enclosures, berms or walls, and low-noise equipment to ensure compliance with Visalia Municipal Code noise limits.

Transportation

MM TRANS-1 requires a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan, including compliance with SJVAPCD Rule 9410, onsite pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements, and payment of fair-share fees to TCAG for regional TDM programs. The TDM Plan must achieve the maximum feasible VMT reduction and, at a minimum, a 10.5 percent reduction, with annual monitoring and reporting to the City.

Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources

MMs TRI-1 through TRI-4 require the Applicant to offer culturally affiliated tribes the opportunity to provide a Tribal Monitor prior to and during ground disturbance, along with WEAP cultural resources training for construction personnel; work stoppage and evaluation by a qualified archaeologist upon discovery of historical or archaeological resources, including consultation with culturally affiliated tribes where a find is determined to be Native American in origin; appropriate disposition of recovered artifacts; and compliance with California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and PRC § 5097.98 upon discovery of human remains.

ES.3.2 Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

PRC § 21081.6 and CEQA Guidelines § 15097 require the Lead Agency to adopt a program for monitoring or reporting on the implementation of mitigation measures adopted as conditions of project approval. Chapter 6 of this Draft EIR presents the MMRP for the Project. For each mitigation measure, the MMRP identifies the party responsible for implementation, the timing of implementation, and the method of verification.

Implementation timing ranges from prior to annexation (MM AG-1); to prior to issuance of grading or building permits (MMs AQ-1, GEO-1, GHG-1, HYD-1, NOISE-1, and TRANS-1); to prior to and during construction (MMs AQ-3, BIO-1.1 through BIO-10, HYD-2, and TRI-1 through TRI-4); to ongoing operations (MMs AQ-1, AQ-2, HYD-3, and TRANS-1). The City, as the Lead Agency, is responsible for verifying compliance with the MMRP. The Project Applicant must comply with all adopted mitigation measures as conditions of Project approval, and the MMRP will be adopted by the City in conjunction with certification of the Final EIR.

ES.4.1 Alternatives Considered but Rejected

Chapter 4 evaluates a reasonable range of alternatives to the Project, as required by CEQA Guidelines § 15126.6. The alternatives were selected based on their potential to avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effects of the Project, particularly the significant and unavoidable impacts related to the conversion of Prime Farmland and VMT, while feasibly attaining most of the basic Project objectives.

Alternative Site Location

Relocating the Project to a more urbanized area within Visalia was rejected due to the lack of available parcels of sufficient size for large-scale warehousing. This alternative would not meet Objective 2 and could increase VMT by displacing jobs farther from regional highways.

Full Residential Conversion

Converting the Site to residential uses was rejected because it would conflict with the City's designation of the area for industrial growth and would not meet Objectives 1 and 3.

ES.4.2 Alternatives Evaluated

Alternative 1: No Project Alternative

The Site would remain in its existing agricultural condition under Tulare County jurisdiction, and no annexation, infrastructure improvements, or development would occur. This alternative would avoid all Project impacts, including the significant and unavoidable farmland conversion and VMT impacts, but would not meet any of the Project objectives.

Alternative 2: Reduced Intensity Alternative

The scale of the Project would be reduced by approximately 50 percent, with the industrial buildings reduced to approximately 874,450 SF, the industrial-serving commercial pads reduced to approximately 27,750 SF, and the self-storage facility reduced to approximately 14,823 SF. This alternative would reduce total VMT, trip generation, and other scale-dependent impacts; however, because the City's threshold is an efficiency metric, VMT per service population would remain essentially unchanged at approximately 36.83, and the significant and unavoidable VMT impact would remain. This alternative would partially meet all Project objectives.

Alternative 3: Enhanced Mixed-Use Alternative

Approximately 20 percent of the Site (200 multi-family units on roughly 24 to 28 acres) would be developed with residential uses, with approximately 1.4 million SF of industrial/warehouse buildings, the full complement of industrial-serving commercial pads, and the self-storage facility. This alternative would reduce VMT to an estimated 29.46 VMT per service population through improved jobs-housing balance and internal trip capture, but would still exceed the City's threshold and would increase noise conflicts by introducing residential sensitive receptors. This alternative would meet most Project objectives.

ES.4.3 Environmentally Superior Alternative

The No Project Alternative would avoid all Project impacts but would not meet any of the Project objectives. Excluding the No Project Alternative, Alternative 2 (Reduced Intensity Alternative) is the environmentally superior alternative. Although it would not reduce the Project's VMT per service population below the City's threshold, it would substantially reduce scale-dependent impacts, including total VMT and trip generation, air quality and GHG emissions, biological resources, and noise, while attaining most Project objectives. Because the significant and unavoidable VMT impact would remain, this alternative would still require a Statement of Overriding Considerations if approved.

ES.5 - Areas of Known Controversy or Issues Raised During Scoping

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines § 15082, the City circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) (SCH No. 2025050880) for a 30-day public comment period from May 15, 2025, to June 13, 2025, and held a virtual public scoping meeting on May 28, 2025. The City received three comment letters from state agencies during the scoping period. No comments were received from Native American tribes, members of the general public, or other interested parties. The issues raised are summarized below and in Section 1.4.

Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC)

The NAHC letter (May 30, 2025) outlined the tribal consultation requirements of Assembly Bill (AB) 52 and Senate Bill (SB) 18, and recommended a Sacred Lands File search, a California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) records search, provisions in the MMRP for inadvertent discoveries of archaeological resources and human remains, and confidentiality

of tribal information. These issues are addressed in Section 3.5, Cultural Resources, and Section 3.13, Tribal Cultural Resources.

California Department of Conservation (DOC)

The DOC letter (June 9, 2025) noted that the Site contains Prime Farmland and Williamson Act Contract lands, and recommended analysis of direct, indirect, and cumulative farmland conversion, compatibility with Williamson Act contracts, and agricultural conservation easements as mitigation. The DOC observed that the conversion of agricultural land may constitute an impact of at least regional significance. These issues are addressed in Section 3.2, Agricultural Resources.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)

The CDFW letter (June 13, 2025) recommended habitat assessments and focused or protocol-level surveys for special status species, including Swainson's hawk, western burrowing owl, CBB, California tiger salamander, American badger, western pond turtle, western spadefoot, vernal pool fairy shrimp, and vernal pool tadpole shrimp; avoidance buffers, nesting bird surveys, and measures to reduce artificial night lighting near the Mill Creek riparian corridor; consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); and a cumulative biological resources analysis. These issues are addressed in Section 3.4, Biological Resources.

Based on the scoping comments and the analysis in this Draft EIR, the principal areas of known controversy are the permanent conversion of Prime Farmland and Williamson Act Contract lands, potential impacts to special status species, and the Project's significant and unavoidable VMT impact. No other areas of known controversy or issues requiring resolution were identified during scoping. Issues to be resolved by the City as decision-maker include whether to certify the EIR, whether to adopt findings and a Statement of Overriding Considerations for the significant and unavoidable farmland conversion and VMT impacts, whether to approve the Project or one of the alternatives, and the manner in which the Williamson Act contracts would be concluded prior to development.

ES.6 - Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Table ES-1 summarizes the environmental impacts of the Project, the level of significance before mitigation, the applicable mitigation measures, and the level of significance after mitigation for each impact and cumulative impact evaluated in Chapter 3. The full text of each mitigation measure is provided in Chapter 3 and in the MMRP in Chapter 6.

Table ES-1: Summary of Environmental Impacts, Mitigation Measures, and Level of Significance

Environmental Impact	Level of Significance Before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance After Mitigation
Aesthetics (Section 3.1)			
Impact 3.1-1: Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Impact 3.1-2: Would the Project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Impact 3.1-3: Would the Project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the Site and its surroundings, or conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant

Impact 3.1-4: Would the Project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Cumulative Aesthetics Impacts	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Agricultural Resources (Section 3.2)			
Impact 3.2-1: Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, to non-agricultural use?	Significant	No feasible mitigation is available.	Significant and Unavoidable
Impact 3.2-2: Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	Potentially Significant	MM AG-1: Williamson Act Contract Compliance	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Impact 3.2-3: Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production?	No Impact	No mitigation is required.	No Impact
Impact 3.2-4: Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	No Impact	No mitigation is required.	No Impact
Impact 3.2-5: 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?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Cumulative Agricultural Resources Impacts	Significant	No feasible mitigation is available beyond compliance with existing regulations.	Significant and Unavoidable

Air Quality (Section 3.3)			
Impact 3.3-1: Would the Project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	Potentially Significant	MM AQ-1: Voluntary Emissions Reduction Agreement MM AQ-2: Zero Emission Landscaping Equipment Plan MM AQ-3: Tier 4 Off Road Engine Control Plan	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Impact 3.3-2: Would the Project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is non-attainment under an applicable national or state ambient air quality standard?	Potentially Significant	MM AQ-1: Voluntary Emissions Reduction Agreement MM AQ-2: Zero Emission Landscaping Equipment Plan MM AQ-3: Tier 4 Off Road Engine Control Plan	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Impact 3.3-3: Would the Project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	Potentially Significant	MM AQ-2: Zero Emission Landscaping Equipment Plan MM AQ-3: Tier 4 Off Road Engine Control Plan	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Impact 3.3-4: Would the Project result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Cumulative Air Quality Impacts	Potentially Significant	MM AQ-1: Voluntary Emissions Reduction Agreement MM AQ-2: Zero Emission Landscaping Equipment Plan MM AQ-3: Tier 4 Off Road Engine Control Plan	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Biological Resources (Section 3.4)			

Impact 3.4-1: Would the Project 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 CDFW or USFWS?	Potentially Significant	MM BIO-1.1: Construction Timing for Nesting Birds and Raptors MM BIO-1.2: Pre-construction Surveys for Nesting Birds and Raptors MM BIO-1.3: Avoidance of Active Nests MM BIO-2.1: Swainson's Hawk Surveys Prior to Construction MM BIO-2.2: Swainson's Hawk Avoidance Buffer MM BIO-2.3: Swainson's Hawk Take Authorization MM BIO-3.1: Construction Timing for Pallid Bat MM BIO-3.2: Pre-construction Surveys for Pallid Bat MM BIO-3.3: Avoidance of Maternity Roosts for Pallid Bat MM BIO-3.4: Humane Eviction of Non-breeding Bats MM BIO-4: Western burrowing owl Mitigation MM BIO-5: Crotch's bumble bee Mitigation MM BIO-6: California tiger salamander Mitigation MM BIO-7: American Badger Mitigation MM BIO-8: Western Pond Turtle Mitigation MM BIO-9: Western Spadefoot Mitigation MM BIO-10: Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp and Vernal Pool Tadpole Shrimp Surveys and Avoidance	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Impact 3.4-2: Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by CDFW or USFWS?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Impact 3.4-3: Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on State or federally protected wetlands through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant

Impact 3.4-4: Would the Project 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?	Potentially Significant	MMs BIO-1.1 through BIO-3.4 (see Impact 3.4-1)	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Impact 3.4-5: Would the Project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Impact 3.4-6: Would the Project conflict with the provisions of an adopted habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan?	No Impact	No mitigation is required.	No Impact
Cumulative Biological Resources Impacts	Potentially Significant	MMs BIO-1.1 through BIO-10 (see Impact 3.4-1)	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Cultural Resources (Section 3.5)			
Impact 3.5-1: Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	Potentially Significant	MM TRI-1: Tribal Monitoring MM TRI-2: Discovery of Historical or Archaeological Cultural Resources	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Impact 3.5-2: Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	Potentially Significant	MM TRI-1: Tribal Monitoring MM TRI-2: Discovery of Historical or Archaeological Cultural Resources MM TRI-3: Disposition of Recovered Archaeological Artifacts	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Impact 3.5-3: Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	Potentially Significant	MM TRI-4: Human Remains Discovery Protocol	Less than Significant with Mitigation

Cumulative Cultural Resources Impacts	Potentially Significant	MM TRI-1: Tribal Monitoring MM TRI-2: Discovery of Historical or Archaeological Cultural Resources MM TRI-3: Disposition of Recovered Archaeological Artifacts MM TRI-4: Human Remains Discovery Protocol	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Energy (Section 3.6)			
Impact 3.6-1: Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during Project construction or operation?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Impact 3.6-2: Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Cumulative Energy Impacts	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Geology and Soils (Section 3.7)			
Impact 3.7-1: Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving fault rupture, strong seismic ground shaking, seismic-related ground failure including liquefaction, or landslides?	Potentially Significant	MM GEO-1: Preparation and Compliance with a Geotechnical Evaluation	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Impact 3.7-2: Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	Potentially Significant	MM HYD-2: Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) Implementation	Less than Significant with Mitigation

Impact 3.7-3: 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 offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?	Potentially Significant	MM GEO-1: Preparation and Compliance with a Geotechnical Evaluation	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Impact 3.7-4: Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	Potentially Significant	MM GEO-1: Preparation and Compliance with a Geotechnical Evaluation	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Impact 3.7-5: Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	No Impact	No mitigation is required.	No Impact
Impact 3.7-6: Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	Potentially Significant	MM GEO-2: Unanticipated Discovery of Paleontological Resources	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Cumulative Geology and Soils Impacts	Potentially Significant	MM GEO-1: Preparation and Compliance with a Geotechnical Evaluation MM GEO-2: Unanticipated Discovery of Paleontological Resources	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Section 3.8)			
Impact 3.8-1: Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	Potentially Significant	MM GHG-1: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Design and Operational Verification	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Impact 3.8-2: Conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs?	Potentially Significant	MM GHG-1: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Design and Operational Verification	Less than Significant with Mitigation

Cumulative GHG Impacts	Potentially Significant	MM GHG-1: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Design and Operational Verification	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Hazards and Hazardous Materials (Section 3.9)			
Impact 3.9-1: Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	Potentially Significant	MM HYD-2: Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) Implementation	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Impact 3.9-2: 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?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Impact 3.9-3: Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Impact 3.9-4: 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, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Impact 3.9-5: For a project located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the Project area?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant

Impact 3.9-6: Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Impact 3.9-7: Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Cumulative Hazards and Hazardous Materials Impacts	Potentially Significant	MM HYD-2: Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) Implementation	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Hydrology and Water Quality (Section 3.10)			
Impact 3.10-1: Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	Potentially Significant	MM HYD-1: Construction Stormwater NOI and Compliance MM HYD-2: Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) Implementation MM HYD-3: Development Maintenance Manual for Post-Construction Stormwater Controls	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Impact 3.10-2: Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the Project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Impact 3.10-3: Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the Site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, resulting in erosion or siltation, flooding, exceedance of stormwater drainage capacity, or impeded or redirected flood flows?	Potentially Significant	MM HYD-1: Construction Stormwater NOI and Compliance MM HYD-2: Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) Implementation MM HYD-3: Development Maintenance Manual for Post-Construction Stormwater Controls	Less than Significant with Mitigation

Impact 3.10-4: In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to Project inundation?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Impact 3.10-5: Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	No Impact	No mitigation is required.	No Impact
Cumulative Hydrology and Water Quality Impacts	Potentially Significant	MM HYD-1: Construction Stormwater NOI and Compliance MM HYD-2: Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) Implementation MM HYD-3: Development Maintenance Manual for Post-Construction Stormwater Controls	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Noise (Section 3.11)			
Impact 3.11-1: Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	Potentially Significant	MM NOISE-1: Acoustical Study and Noise Reduction Measures	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Impact 3.11-2: Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Impact 3.11-3: For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant

Cumulative Noise Impacts	Potentially Significant	MM NOISE-1: Acoustical Study and Noise Reduction Measures	Less than Significant with Mitigation
Transportation (Section 3.12)			
Impact 3.12-1: Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Impact 3.12-2: Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	Significant	MM TRANS-1: Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan and VMT Reduction	Significant and Unavoidable
Impact 3.12-3: Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Impact 3.12-4: Result in inadequate emergency access?	Less than Significant	No mitigation is required.	Less than Significant
Cumulative Transportation Impacts	Significant	MM TRANS-1: Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan and VMT Reduction	Significant and Unavoidable
Tribal Cultural Resources (Section 3.13)			
Impact 3.13-1: Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a TCR, as defined in PRC § 21074?	Potentially Significant	MM TRI-1: Tribal Monitoring MM TRI-2: Discovery of Historical or Archaeological Cultural Resources MM TRI-3: Disposition of Recovered Archaeological Artifacts MM TRI-4: Human Remains Discovery Protocol	Less than Significant with Mitigation

Cumulative TCR Impacts	Potentially Significant	MM TRI-1: Tribal Monitoring MM TRI-2: Discovery of Historical or Archaeological Cultural Resources MM TRI-3: Disposition of Recovered Archaeological Artifacts MM TRI-4: Human Remains Discovery Protocol	Less than Significant with Mitigation

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1 - 1 Purpose of the EIR

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared by the City of Visalia (City) as the Lead Agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.)[1] and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.).[2] The EIR evaluates the potential significant environmental effects of the proposed Kelsey-Hurley Industrial Park Project (Project), identifies feasible mitigation measures to reduce or avoid those effects to the extent feasible, and analyzes a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed Project.

The Project involves the annexation of an approximately 122-gross-acre Site from unincorporated Tulare County into the City of Visalia. The Site is located near the southeast corner of Kelsey Street and Hurley Avenue, bounded by Road 88 to the east, Kelsey Street to the west, Hurley Avenue to the north, and SR 198 to the south. The Project is intended to support regional logistics, manufacturing, and commercial needs with convenient access to SR 198. The purpose of this EIR is to:

- Provide the City of Visalia, responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and the public with detailed information regarding the Project's potential significant environmental impacts.
- Identify and incorporate feasible mitigation measures that would reduce identified significant impacts to a less than significant level (or to the extent feasible where full avoidance is not possible).
- Evaluate alternatives to the proposed Project, including the No Project, Reduced Intensity, and Enhanced Mixed-Use Alternatives, as required by CEQA.
- Ensure compliance with CEQA by disclosing potential environmental consequences, promoting informed decision-making, and facilitating public participation.

This EIR builds directly upon the analysis contained in the Kelsey-Hurley Industrial Park Initial Study (IS) and addresses in detail those environmental topics identified during the scoping process as requiring further evaluation. Topics not requiring in-depth analysis are addressed to the extent necessary to provide a complete environmental review, consistent with the

1) CEQA statute — PRC § 21000 et seq.
2) 14 CCR § 15000 et seq

scoping process outlined in PRC § 21080.4(a) and the CEQA Guidelines. The Project Applicant must comply with all adopted mitigation measures as conditions of Project approval.

1 - 2 CEQA Process Overview

1.2.1 Intro

The environmental review process for the Kelsey-Hurley Industrial Park Project has been conducted in full compliance with CEQA requirements for public participation, scoping, and disclosure. The key steps are summarized below.

1.2.2 Notice of Preparation and Scoping

In accordance with PRC § 21080.4[3] and CEQA Guidelines § 15082,[4] the City of Visalia prepared and circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR. The NOP was distributed to responsible and trustee agencies, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (State Clearinghouse), Native American tribes, and other interested parties. The NOP was made publicly available to solicit early input on the scope and content of the environmental analysis. The 30-day public comment period for the NOP ran from Thursday, May 15, 2025, to Friday, June 13, 2025. A formal public scoping meeting was held virtually on Wednesday, May 28, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. to receive public comments and suggestions regarding the scope and content of the EIR.

A formal scoping process was conducted to identify the range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and significant effects to be analyzed in depth in the EIR, and to eliminate from detailed study those issues found not to be important or already adequately addressed. The scoping process followed PRC § 21080.4(a) and CEQA Guidelines requirements. As a result, this EIR focuses its detailed analysis on the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G environmental topics (see Chapter 3), while addressing other CEQA-required topics to the extent necessary for complete review, as determined by the Lead Agency.

Comment letters received in response to the NOP provided guidance that helped refine the scope of analysis. A summary of public comments received during the NOP/scoping period is provided in *Section 1.4.*

3) PRC § 21080.4
4) CEQA Guidelines § 15082

1.2.3 Preparation of the Draft EIR

Following scoping, the City directed preparation of this Draft EIR. The environmental analysis in Chapter 3 follows the standard CEQA format for each topic: Environmental Setting, Regulatory Setting, Impact Assessment (including significance thresholds consistent with CEQA Appendix G and the City's established thresholds), Mitigation Measures, and Cumulative Impacts.

1.2.4 Public Review of the Draft EIR

This Draft EIR is being circulated for a minimum 45-day public review period as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15105.[5] During this period, the public, responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and other interested parties may submit written comments on the adequacy of the environmental analysis, the proposed mitigation measures, and the alternatives evaluated. The City will also hold at least one public hearing during the review period to receive comments on the Draft EIR.

1.2.5 Final EIR, Certification, and Project Approval

Following the close of the public review period, the City will prepare a Final EIR that includes all comments received on the Draft EIR and the City's responses to those comments (consistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15088).[6] The Final EIR will be considered by the City of Visalia Planning Commission and/or City Council in making its decision on the Project. If the EIR is certified and the Project is approved, the City will file a Notice of Determination (NOD) with the Tulare County Clerk-Recorder and the State Clearinghouse. The filing of the NOD begins the 30-day statute of limitations for legal challenges under CEQA (PRC § 21167).[7]

1 - 3 Project Background and Objectives

1.3.1 Intro

The Kelsey-Hurley Industrial Park Project is located in the western portion of the City of Visalia's Sphere of Influence (SOI) on land that is currently within unincorporated Tulare County. Historically, the Site has been used for agricultural production, primarily almond orchards and row crops, consistent with the surrounding rural and agricultural character of western Tulare County.

5) CEQA Guidelines § 15105
6) CEQA Guidelines § 15088
7) PRC § 21167

The Project Site benefits from excellent regional access, with direct frontage along Hurley Avenue to the north and proximity to SR 198 to the south. This location places the Site at the crossroads of major transportation corridors, including connections to SR 99, and in close proximity to the Visalia Municipal Airport. These attributes make the area well-suited for logistics, warehousing, manufacturing, and distribution uses that rely on efficient goods movement. The City of Visalia has identified the western industrial area as a key employment center, and the proposed Project represents a logical extension of existing industrial development patterns in the corridor. The Project is consistent with the City of Visalia General Plan land use designations for industrial development and represents the next logical step in implementing the City's long-term economic development and jobs-housing balance objectives.

1.3.2 Project Objectives

The primary objectives of the Kelsey-Hurley Industrial Park Project are to:

1) Promote Economic Development and Job Creation: Develop an industrial park to provide high-quality employment opportunities in manufacturing, warehousing, and industrial serving commercial, supporting the City's goal of attracting businesses and reducing unemployment in Tulare County.
2) Implement the Site's Industrial General Plan Land Use Designation: Convert agricultural land to industrial and commercial uses by implementing the Site's Industrial General Plan land use designation, maximizing economic productivity while annexing the Site to the City for municipal services.
3) Enhance Regional Connectivity and Infrastructure: Improve transportation infrastructure, including new sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and road extensions, to support efficient goods movement near SR 198, while integrating with existing utilities and stormwater systems.
4) Achieve Sustainable Development: Incorporate measures to minimize environmental impacts.
5) Incorporate Industrial-Supporting Commercial Services: Include industrial-supporting commercial services to serve on-site workers and reduce off-site trips, creating a self-contained industrial hub.

1 - 4 Summary of Public Comments from NOP/Scoping

1.4.1 Intro

The NOP for the Kelsey-Hurley Industrial Park Project (SCH No. 2025050880)[8] was circulated for a 30-day public review period beginning in May 2025. During the NOP scoping period, the City of Visalia received three comment letters from state agencies. No comments were received from Native American tribes, members of the general public, or other interested parties. A summary of each comment letter and the manner in which the issues raised are addressed in this Draft EIR is provided below.

1.4.2 Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC)

The NAHC letter, dated May 30, 2025, provided a comprehensive overview of the requirements of Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52)[9] concerning tribal cultural resources (TCRs) and Senate Bill 18 (SB 18)[10] for projects involving general plan or specific plan amendments. The letter stressed the importance of early and meaningful consultation with California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the Project Site to identify and protect TCRs and to avoid in advertent discoveries of Native American human remains. Key recommendations included:

- Requesting a Sacred Lands File search and a Native American Tribal Consultation List from the NAHC.
- Conducting a California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) records search through the appropriate regional Information Center and, if warranted, a professional archaeological inventory survey.
- Incorporating provisions into the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the identification, evaluation, and culturally appropriate treatment of inadvertently discovered archaeological resources and human remains, including monitoring by a qualified archaeologist and a culturally affiliated Native American monitor in areas of identified sensitivity.
- Maintaining the confidentiality of information submitted by tribes regarding the location, description, or use of TCRs.
- Considering feasible mitigation measures to avoid or minimize significant adverse impacts to TCRs, such as avoidance and preservation in place, treating resources with cultural

8) SCH No. 2025050880
9) AB 52
10) SB 18

dignity, and permanent conservation easements with culturally appropriate management criteria.

These topics are addressed in *Chapter 3, Section 3.5 Cultural Resources* and *Section 3.13 Tribal Cultural Resources.*

1.4.3 California Department of Conservation (DOC), Division of Land Resource Protection

The DOC letter, dated June 9, 2025, focused on the Project's potential impacts to agricultural land and resources. The letter noted that the Project Site contains Prime Farmland as mapped by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) and that a portion of the Site is subject to a Williamson Act contract. The DOC recommended that the environmental review discuss:

- The type, amount, and location of farmland conversion resulting directly and indirectly from Project implementation.
- Potential impacts on current and future agricultural operations in the vicinity, including land-use conflicts, increases in land values and taxes, and loss of agricultural support infrastructure.
- Incremental impacts that could contribute to cumulative impacts on agricultural land when considered together with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.
- Compatibility of the proposed development with lands within an agricultural preserve and/or enrolled in a Williamson Act contract, consistent with local program requirements.
- Proposed mitigation measures for the loss or conversion of agricultural land, including the use of agricultural conservation easements (through outright purchase or payment of mitigation fees to a qualified local, regional, or statewide entity).

The DOC observed that the conversion of agricultural land may constitute an impact of at least regional significance. These issues are analyzed in detail in Chapter 3, Section 3.2, Agricultural Resources.

1.4.4 California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)

The CDFW letter, dated June 13, 2025, was submitted in CDFW's capacity as both Trustee Agency and Responsible Agency under CEQA. The letter summarized the Project Site's existing conditions (regularly disked row crops and orchards) and noted the presence of Mill Creek traversing the southern portion of the Site and Mill Creek Ditch adjacent to the northern boundary. CDFW identified the geographic overlap of the Project Site with the known ranges of several special status species and provided specific recommendations for biological technical studies and mitigation.

CDFW recommended that the biological studies supporting the Draft EIR include habitat assessments and focused or protocol-level surveys for the following species (among others): Swainson's hawk, western burrowing owl (CESA candidate species), Crotch's bumble bee (CESA candidate species), California tiger salamander, American badger, western pond turtle, western spadefoot, vernal pool fairy shrimp, and vernal pool tadpole shrimp. Specific recommendations included:

- Pre-construction surveys for Swainson's hawk following Swainson's Hawk Technical Advisory Committee methodology, with a minimum ½-mile no-disturbance buffer around active nests during the nesting season (March 1–September 15) and acquisition of an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) under CESA if take cannot be avoided.
- Similar survey, avoidance, minimization, and ITP recommendations for the other special status species where suitable habitat is present.
- Measures to reduce impacts from artificial night lighting on wildlife, particularly near the Mill Creek riparian corridor (e.g., motion-sensitive lighting, downward-directed fixtures, low mounting heights, and avoidance of white/blue light spectrum in ecologically sensitive areas).
- Pre-activity nesting bird surveys (no more than 10 days prior to ground or vegetation disturbance) with appropriate buffers (minimum 250 feet for non-listed birds and 500 feet for non-listed raptors) if work occurs during the breeding season (February 15–September 15).
- Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding federally listed species.
- A cumulative impact analysis for all biological resources that may be significantly or potentially significantly impacted by the Project.

These comments and recommendations are addressed in *Chapter 3, Section 3.4 Biological Resources* of this EIR. All comments received during the NOP scoping period have been considered in the preparation of this Draft EIR. No other areas of known controversy or issues requiring resolution were identified during scoping.

1 - 5 Organization of the EIR

This EIR is organized to provide a clear, comprehensive, and logical presentation of the environmental review conducted pursuant to CEQA.

- **Executive Summary.** This section includes a summary of the proposed Project and alternatives addressed in the Draft EIR. A brief description of the areas of controversy and issues raised during scoping, an overview of the MMRP, and a table that summarizes the environmental impacts, mitigation measures, and level of significance after mitigation are

also included in this section. The Executive Summary addresses Project Overview, Summary of Environmental Impacts, Key Mitigation Measures, Alternatives Considered, and Areas of Known Controversy or Issues Raised During Scoping.

- **Chapter 1: Introduction.** This chapter provides an introduction and overview describing the purpose of this Draft EIR, the CEQA process (including the NOP, scoping, and public review), Project Background and Objectives, Summary of Public Comments from NOP/Scoping, and Organization of the EIR.
- **Chapter 2: Project Description.** This chapter includes a detailed description of the proposed Project, including its location and regional context, existing Site conditions, proposed Project components, phasing plan, utilities and infrastructure, and required approvals and permits.
- **Chapter 3: EIR-Level Environmental Analysis.** This chapter analyzes the environmental impacts of the proposed Project. Impacts are organized into major topic areas. Each topic area includes a description of the environmental setting, regulatory setting, impact assessment, mitigation measures, and cumulative impacts. The specific environmental topics that are addressed within Chapter 3 are as follows:
    - Section 3.1—Aesthetics: Addresses the potential impacts of the proposed Project on Aesthetics Resources, including the visual character of the Project Site and surroundings, scenic resources, views, scenic highways, and sources of light and glare.
    - Section 3.2—Agriculture and Forestry Resources: Addresses the potential for conversion of Important Farmland to non-agricultural use and impacts to forestry resources.
    - Section 3.3—Air Quality: Addresses potential air quality impacts associated with Project implementation, including emissions of criteria pollutants during construction and operation, and emissions of toxic air contaminants (TACs).
    - Section 3.4—Biological Resources: Addresses potential impacts on special status habitat, vegetation, and wildlife; potential degradation or elimination of important habitat for special status species; and impacts on listed, proposed, and candidate threatened and endangered species.
    - Section 3.5—Cultural Resources: Addresses potential impacts on historical resources, archaeological resources, and paleontological resources.
    - Section 3.6—Energy: Addresses potential Project impacts related to energy usage and conservation.
    - Section 3.7—Geology and Soils: Addresses potential impacts related to soils and assesses effects of Project-related development in relation to geologic and seismic conditions. Also addresses potential impacts related to paleontological or unique geologic resources.

- Section 3.8—Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Addresses potential Project emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and consistency with applicable plans and policies.
- Section 3.9—Hazards and Hazardous Materials: Addresses the potential for presence of hazardous materials or conditions on the Project Site and in the Project area that may have the potential to create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.
- Section 3.10—Hydrology and Water Quality: Addresses potential impacts related to local hydrological conditions, including drainage areas and changes in flow rates, as well as the proposed Project's potential impacts to water quality, erosion, and groundwater supplies.
- Section 3.11—Noise: Addresses potential noise impacts during construction and Project buildout from mobile and stationary sources on sensitive receptors. The section also addresses potential impacts related to groundborne vibration and groundborne noise.
- Section 3.12—Transportation: Addresses potential impacts related to the local and regional roadway system with respect to Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and public transportation, bicycle, and pedestrian access.
- Section 3.13—Tribal Cultural Resources: Addresses potential impacts on TCRs.

- **Chapter 4: Project Objectives and Alternatives Analysis.** This chapter presents the Project objectives, discusses alternatives considered but rejected from further consideration, describes the alternatives analyzed (No Project, Reduced Intensity, and Enhanced Mixed-Use Alternatives), provides a comparative analysis of impacts by environmental topic (using tables), and identifies the environmentally superior alternative.
- **Chapter 5: Other Mandatory CEQA Sections.** This chapter addresses growth-inducing impacts, significant and unavoidable impacts, significant irreversible environmental changes, cumulative impacts, and effects found not to be significant from the IS.
- Chapter 6: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program. This chapter presents the MMRP for the Project.
- **Chapter 7: List of Preparers and Consultants.** This chapter identifies Lead Agency staff, consultants who prepared the EIR, and agencies consulted during the environmental review process.
- **Chapter 8: References.** This chapter provides a comprehensive list of references and documents cited in the preparation of this EIR.
- **Appendices.** The EIR appendices include notices and other procedural documents pertinent to the EIR, as well as supporting technical studies and analyses prepared for the proposed Project. The following supporting materials and technical studies were prepared for the proposed Project in support of the EIR:
  - Appendix A: EIR Public Involvement (NOP, EIR Public Scoping Comments, Initial Study)

- Appendix B: Master Plan
- Appendix C: LESA Model
- Appendix D: Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Health Risk Assessment
- Appendix E: Biological Study
- Appendix F: Cultural Resources Assessment
- Appendix G: Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report
- Appendix H: Phase II Excavation Letter
- Appendix I: Energy Calculations
- Appendix J: Water Supply Assessment Report
- Appendix K: Traffic Impact Study
- Appendix L: VMT Analysis Letter

This organization ensures that the environmental analysis for the Project is presented in a manner that is accessible to decision-makers, agencies, and the public while fully complying with CEQA requirements.

CHAPTER 2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2 - 1 Project Location and Regional Context

The Project is located in the western portion of the City of Visalia, Tulare County, California, within a City of Visalia "county island" in unincorporated Tulare County but inside the City's SOI. The approximately 122-acre Project Site comprises Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 081-040-001, 081-071-020, and 081-071-042. The Project Site is proposed for annexation into the City of Visalia limits and is designated for Industrial land use under the City of Visalia General Plan.

As illustrated in Figure 2-1, Vicinity Map, the Project Site is bounded by Road 88 to the east, Kelsey Street to the west, Hurley Avenue to the north, and State Route (SR) 198 to the south. The Site is currently used for agricultural production (farmland) and features flat topography with minimal vegetation, consistent with the surrounding rural and agricultural landscape. An aerial overview of the Project Site and immediate vicinity is provided in Figure 3-1.

The Project Site lies in close proximity to the Visalia Municipal Airport (approximately 0.8 miles southwest of the Site), supporting potential air freight and multimodal logistics opportunities. Surrounding land uses include agricultural uses and industrial developments to the north; service commercial uses and SR 198 to the south; agricultural uses and rural residential properties to the east; and vacant land and industrial developments to the west.

Regionally, the Project Site occupies a strategic position at the crossroads of major transportation corridors in California's Central Valley. Direct access to SR 198 and proximity to SR 99 provide excellent connectivity for the movement of goods and services. Figure 2-2, Regional Location Map, depicts the Project Site's location within Tulare County, the City of Visalia, and the broader Central Valley region, highlighting key regional highways, urban centers, and the Visalia Municipal Airport.

This location within Visalia's established Industrial Park area, combined with access to SR 99, SR 198, and the nearby airport, positions the Project to support modern logistics, warehousing, distribution, and light manufacturing operations while advancing the City's economic development objective.



Figure 2-1. Vicinity Map

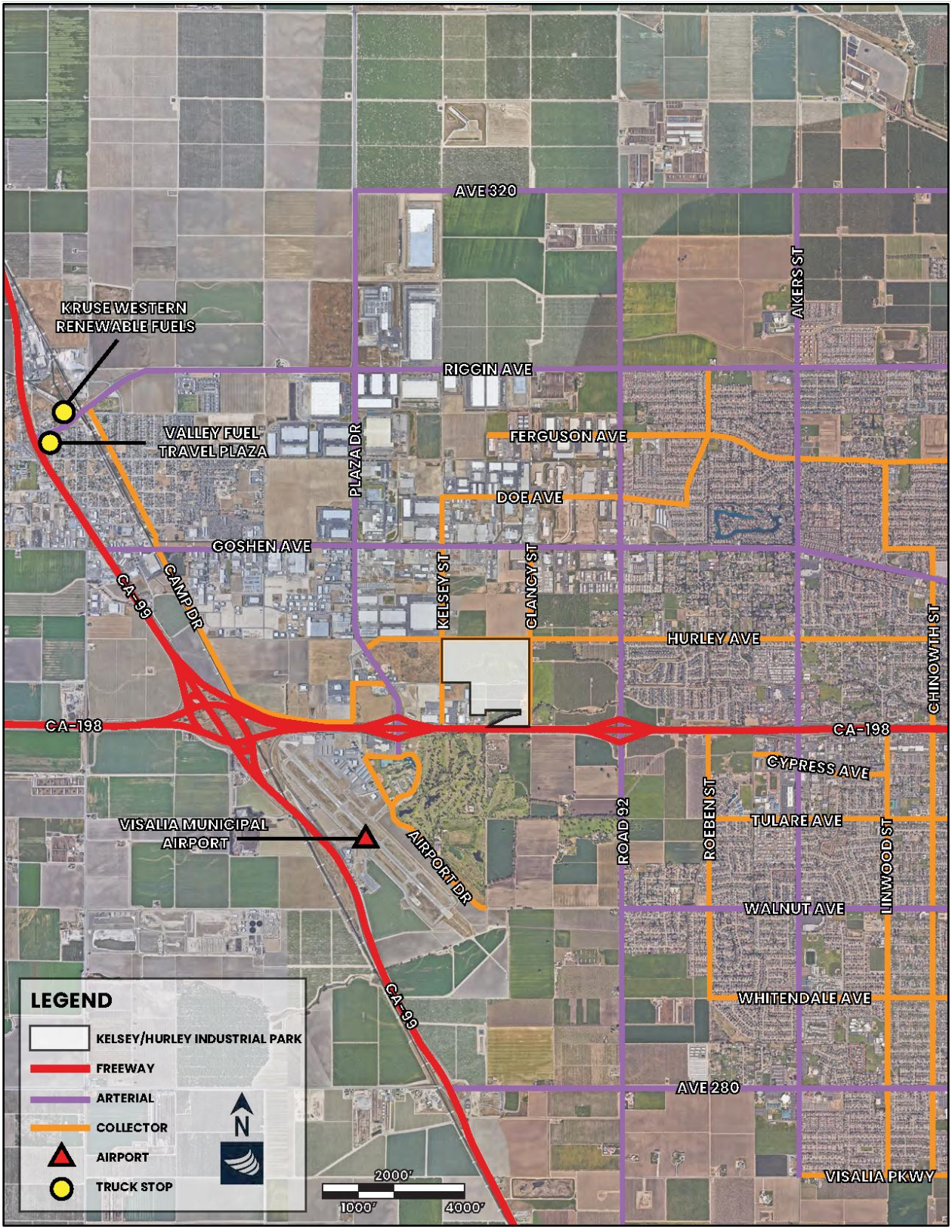


Figure 2-2. Regional Location Map

2 - 2 Existing Site Conditions

The Project Site encompasses approximately 122 acres located at the southeast corner of North Kelsey Street and West Hurley Avenue, in the western portion of the City of Visalia, Tulare County, California.

Existing Land Use

The Site has historically been used for agricultural purposes. It supported four principal habitats and land use types: almond orchard, active and fallow agricultural fields, ruderal/developed areas, and seasonal drainages. The ruderal and developed portions of the Site included an inactive milking barn and associated farm structures remaining from prior operations. No urban development currently exists on the Site.

Surrounding Land Uses

The Site is bordered by agricultural lands to the north and east, vacant land to the west, and commercial property to the south. The immediate vicinity is characterized by a transition from rural agricultural land to urban and industrial uses consistent with the City's planned westward growth.

Soils

According to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey, the Site contains three soil map units, all with slopes of 0 to 2 percent: Nord fine sandy loam, Akers-saline-sodic complex, and Colpien loam. The Nord and Akers series are very deep, well-drained soils formed in granitic and sedimentary alluvium, with negligible to low runoff and moderate to moderately slow permeability. Colpien loam consists of very deep, moderately well-drained soils on terraces with moderately slow permeability. The Nord and Akers units are classified as hydric; however, due to a long history of agricultural disturbance, the Site is no longer expected to exhibit native soil characteristics supportive of wetland vegetation.

Hydrology and Drainage

Two seasonal drainages occur on the Site: Mill Creek, which traverses the southern portion of the Site, and Mill Creek Ditch, a distributary fork of Mill Creek, along the northern boundary. Mill Creek is a distributary of the Kaweah River, which splits from the river approximately eight miles upstream (east) of the Site, flows generally westward through Visalia, and joins Cross Creek approximately 11 miles downstream (southwest). Flows in these drainages peak during winter storms and typically dry by late spring. No perennial streams or standing water bodies occur on the Site. Stormwater currently drains across the agricultural fields and orchards toward the two drainages, with no formal infrastructure. The flat topography promotes infiltration and slow

runoff, though intense storms can cause localized ponding on hydric soils. The majority of the Site lies within FEMA Flood Zone X (minimal flood hazard), with a small portion (approximately 1.6 acres) located within Special Flood Hazard Area Zone AE.

2 - 3 Proposed Project Components

2.3.1 Intro

The Project would be developed consistent with the City of Visalia's Industrial land use designation and includes annexation of the Site into the Visalia city limits. The overall layout of the proposed Project is shown in Figure 2-3, Site Plan.

2.3.2 Description of Buildings

Industrial/Warehouse Buildings

The Project is anchored by five industrial buildings totaling approximately 1,748,900 square feet (SF), designed primarily for warehouse and distribution use with ancillary office space, and capable of accommodating storage, distribution, and light manufacturing uses. Maximum building height would be 75 feet. The industrial building program is summarized in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: Industrial Building Program

Building	Approximate Floor Area	Phase
Building 1	251,200 SF	Phase 1
Building 2	251,200 SF	Phase 2
Building 3	348,300 SF	Phase 1
Building 4	341,100 SF	Phase 2
Building 5	557,100 SF	Phase 3
Total	**1,748,900 SF**	**—**

Source: Kelsey-Hurley Industrial Park Master Plan (Appendix B).

Industrial-Serving Commercial Pads

The Project includes approximately 55,500 square feet of industrial-serving commercial development intended for service-based businesses supporting the industrial park and surrounding area. Seven pads totaling approximately 28,900 SF would be located in the northwest corner of the Site (Parcel 1), and six pads totaling approximately 26,600 SF would be located in the northeast corner (Parcels 4 and 5), as shown in Figure 2-3.

Self-Storage Facility

A self-storage facility totaling approximately 29,645 SF would be developed on Parcel 9, in the eastern portion of the Site adjacent to Road 88. The facility would include an office and keypad-controlled gated access.

Stormwater Basin

A detention/stormwater basin (Parcel 10) would be constructed in the southeast corner of the Site, south of Mill Creek. The basin encompasses approximately 6.92 acres with a storage capacity of 11.5 acre-feet (AF), exceeding the calculated Site requirement of 11 AF. All onsite stormwater would be conveyed to this basin, which also provides flood control benefits.

Parking

The Project would provide a total of 2,027 automobile parking stalls and 529 trailer parking stalls to accommodate employees, visitors, and fleet vehicles, distributed across the Site.

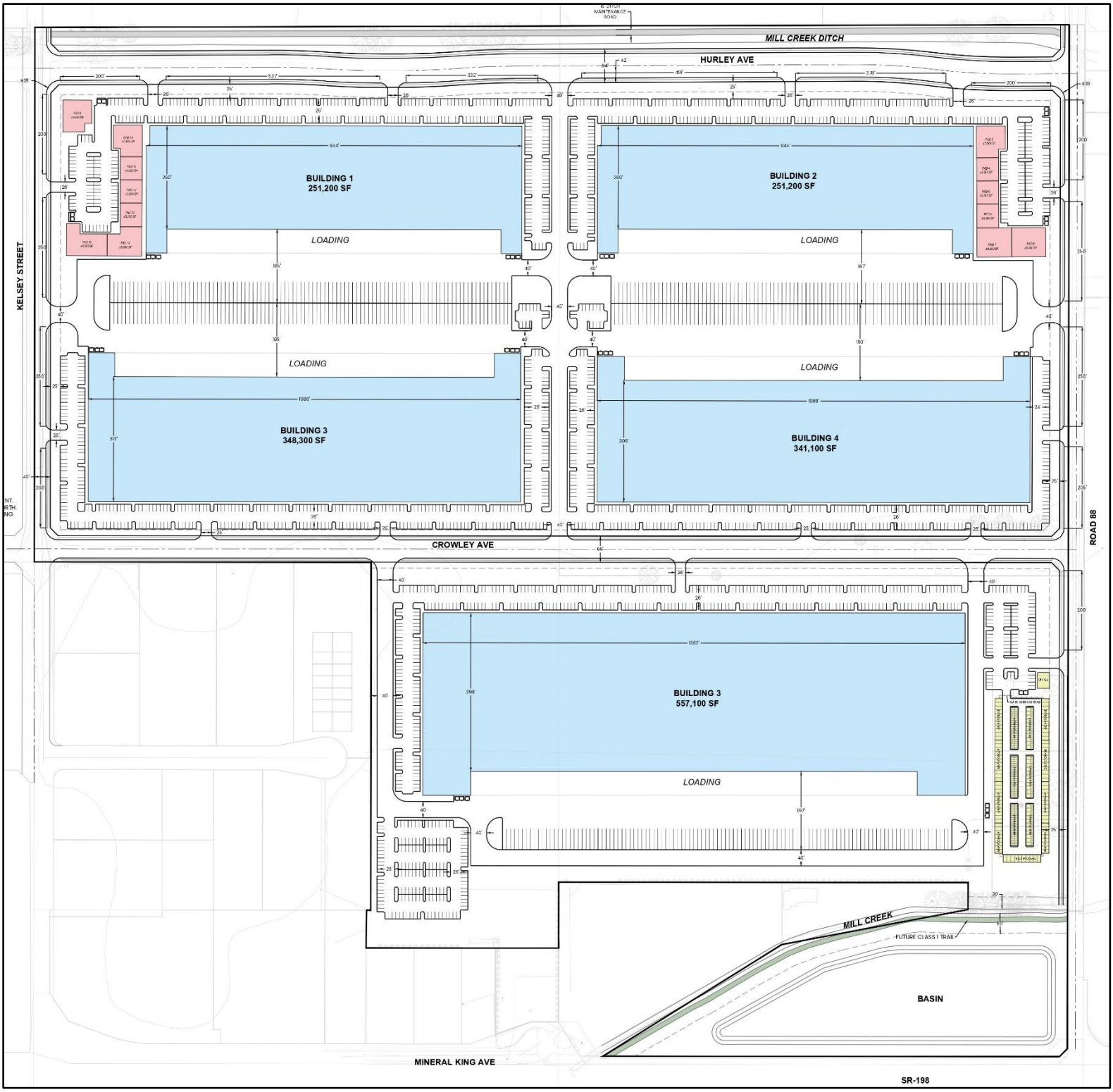


Figure 2-3. Site Plan

2.3.3 Access and Circulation

Access to the Site would be provided via unsignalized driveways on Kelsey Street, Hurley Avenue, Crowley Avenue, and other perimeter roadways, meeting or exceeding the minimum spacing requirements identified in the City's Design and Improvement Standards. Internal circulation would be provided by new private roads with 40-foot rights-of-way, and existing streets would be improved to City of Visalia street standards. Surrounding roadways are designated collector streets. Crowley Avenue would be realigned, with its centerline shifting approximately 33 feet north, and would function as a local industrial street within the Site. Onsite circulation separates truck routes from passenger vehicle routes, with designated truck routes serving the loading areas between building pairs and combined truck/vehicle routes along the Site perimeter, as shown in Figure 2-4, Circulation Map.

Pedestrian and bicycle improvements include new sidewalks along Hurley Avenue, Kelsey Street, and Crowley Avenue; a Class I bike path along Mill Creek near the basin, forming part of the larger Mill Creek Trail; and Class II bike lanes along the perimeter roadways, as shown in Figure 2-6, Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation Map.

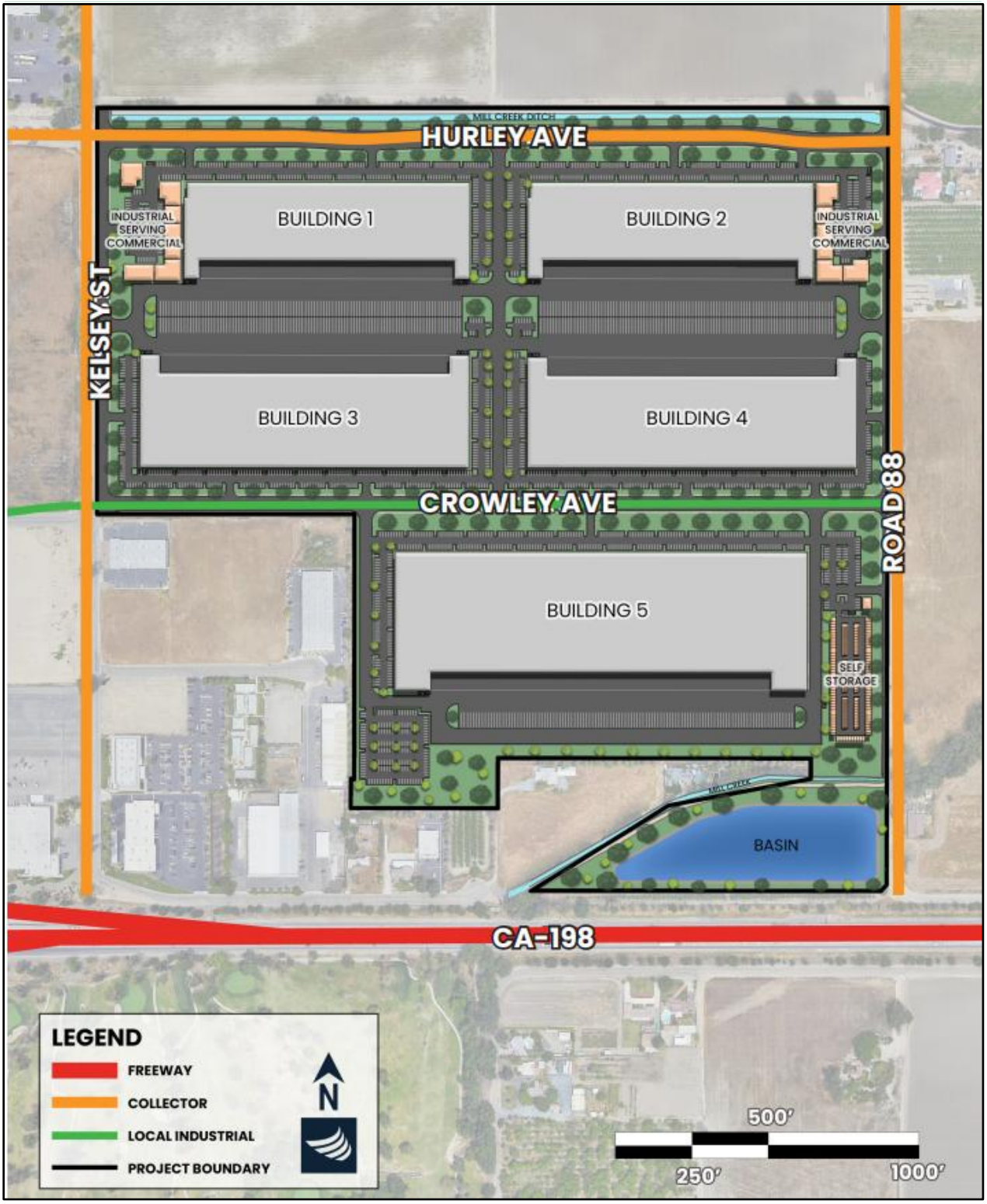


Figure 2-4. Circulation Map

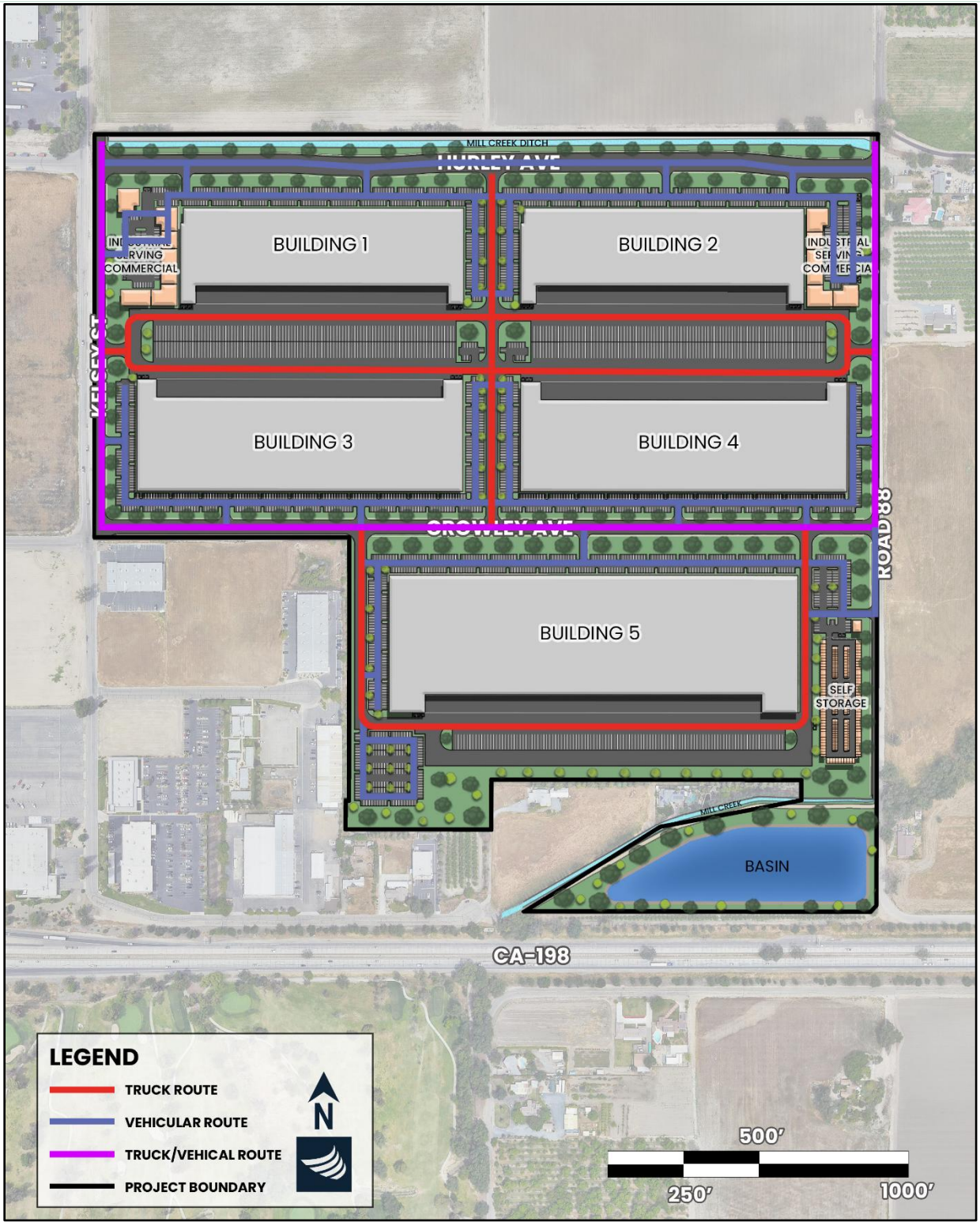


Figure 2-5. Interior Circulation Map

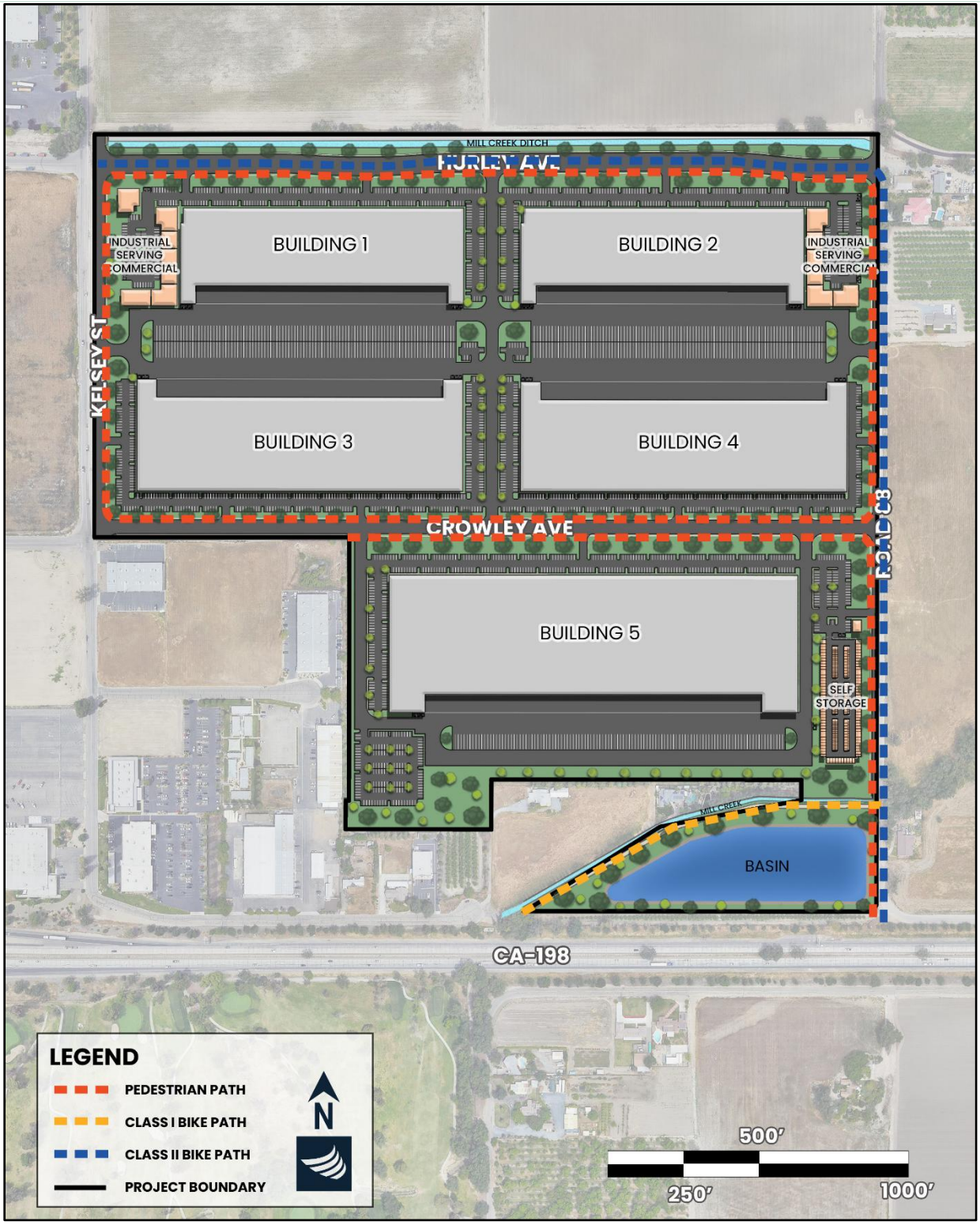


Figure 2-6. Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation Map

2.3.4 Landscaping, Signage, and Lighting

Landscaping would be installed throughout the Site, including shade and accent trees and groundcover along street frontages, parking areas, and the basin perimeter, as shown in Figure 2-7, Landscaping Map. All landscaping and irrigation would conform to the City of Visalia Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (WELO), utilizing drought-tolerant plantings and high-efficiency irrigation. Project signage would include monument signage at the primary Site entries on Hurley Avenue, Kelsey Street, and Crowley Avenue, with wayfinding signage at internal drive intersections to direct trucks, vehicles, and visitors, as shown in Figure 2-8, Signage Map. Onsite lighting would consist of energy-efficient LED fixtures designed to minimize glare and light spill onto adjacent properties and would comply with Title 24 Outdoor Lighting Standards and the Visalia Municipal Code.

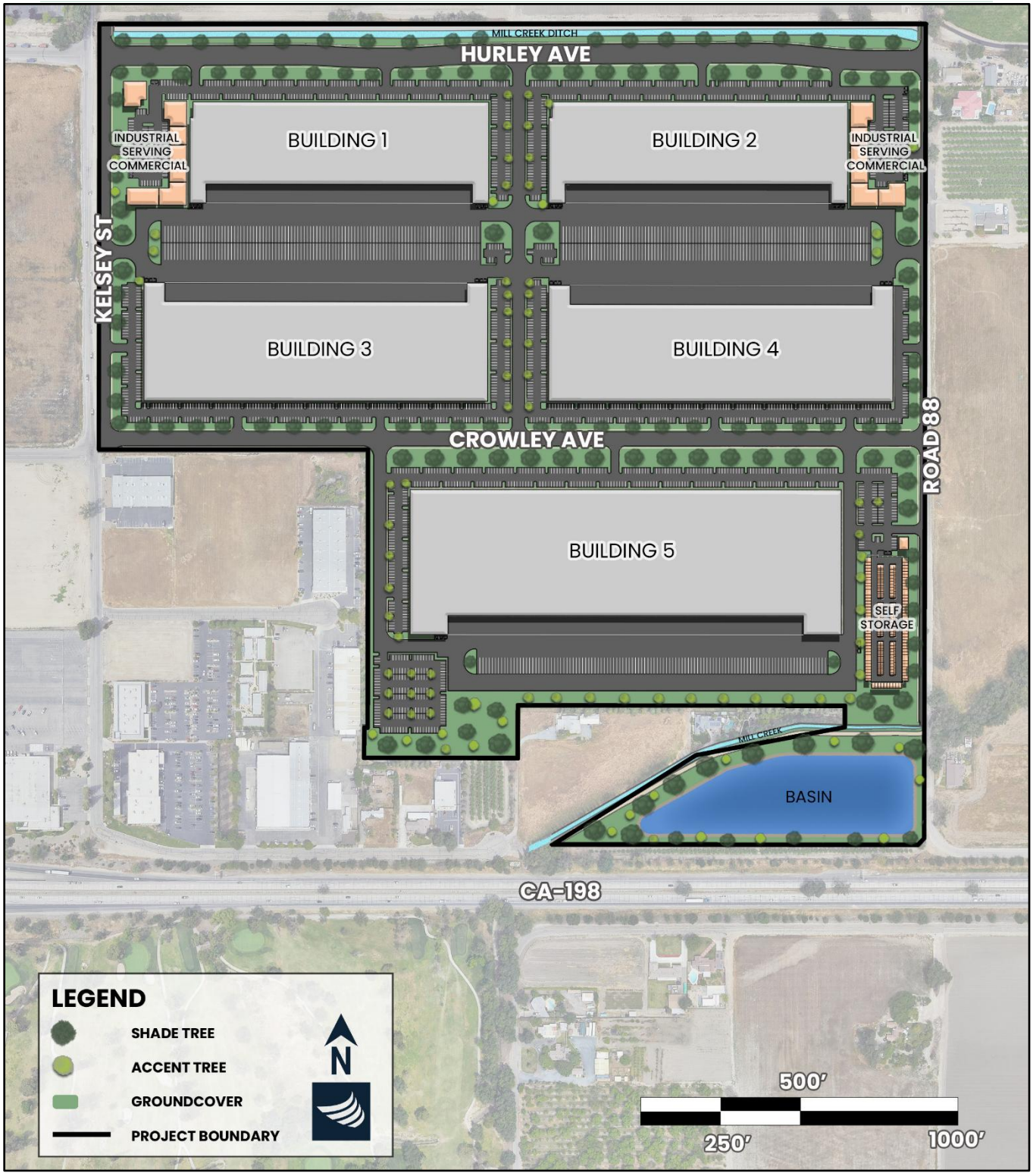


Figure 2-7. Landscaping Map

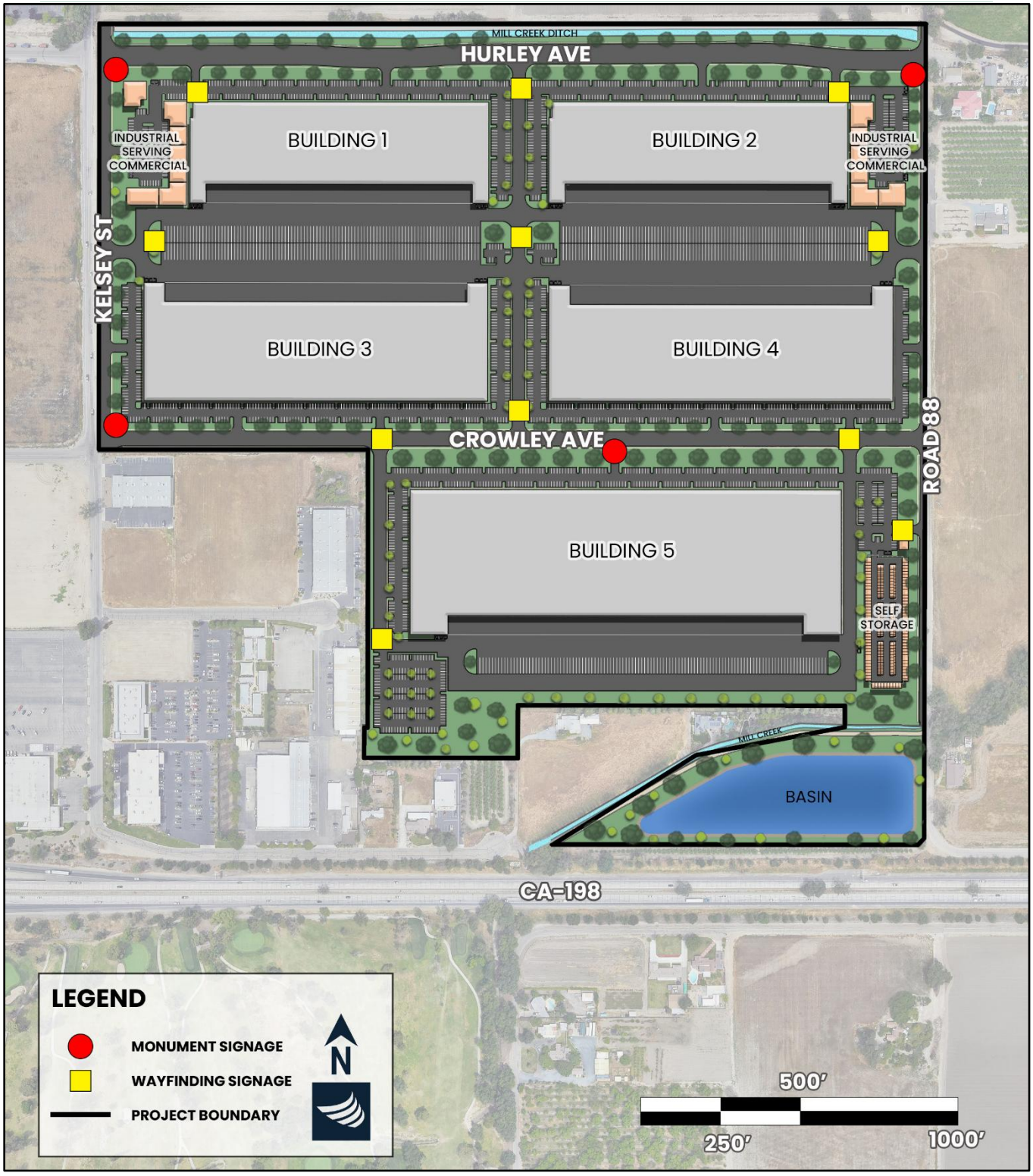


Figure 2-8. Signage Map

2 - 4 Phasing Plan

The Project would be developed in four phases. The phasing approach allows development to proceed in coordination with infrastructure availability and market demand. Phase boundaries are shown in Figure 2-9, Phasing Plan.

- Phase I: Construction of two industrial buildings (Buildings 1 and 3, totaling approximately 599,500 SF) in the western portion of the northern Site area, the seven industrial-serving commercial pads in the northwest corner, and the stormwater basin in the southeast corner of the Site. Phase I establishes the primary drainage infrastructure serving the development.
- Phase II: Construction of two additional industrial buildings (Buildings 2 and 4, totaling approximately 592,300 SF) in the eastern portion of the northern Site area and the six industrial-serving commercial pads in the northeast corner.
- Phase 3: Construction of Building 5 (approximately 557,100 SF) in the southern portion of the Site, south of Crowley Avenue.
- Phase 4: Development of the self-storage facility (approximately 29,645 SF) adjacent to Road 88.

Roadway, utility, and landscaping improvements would be constructed incrementally with each phase, as described in *Section 2.5.*

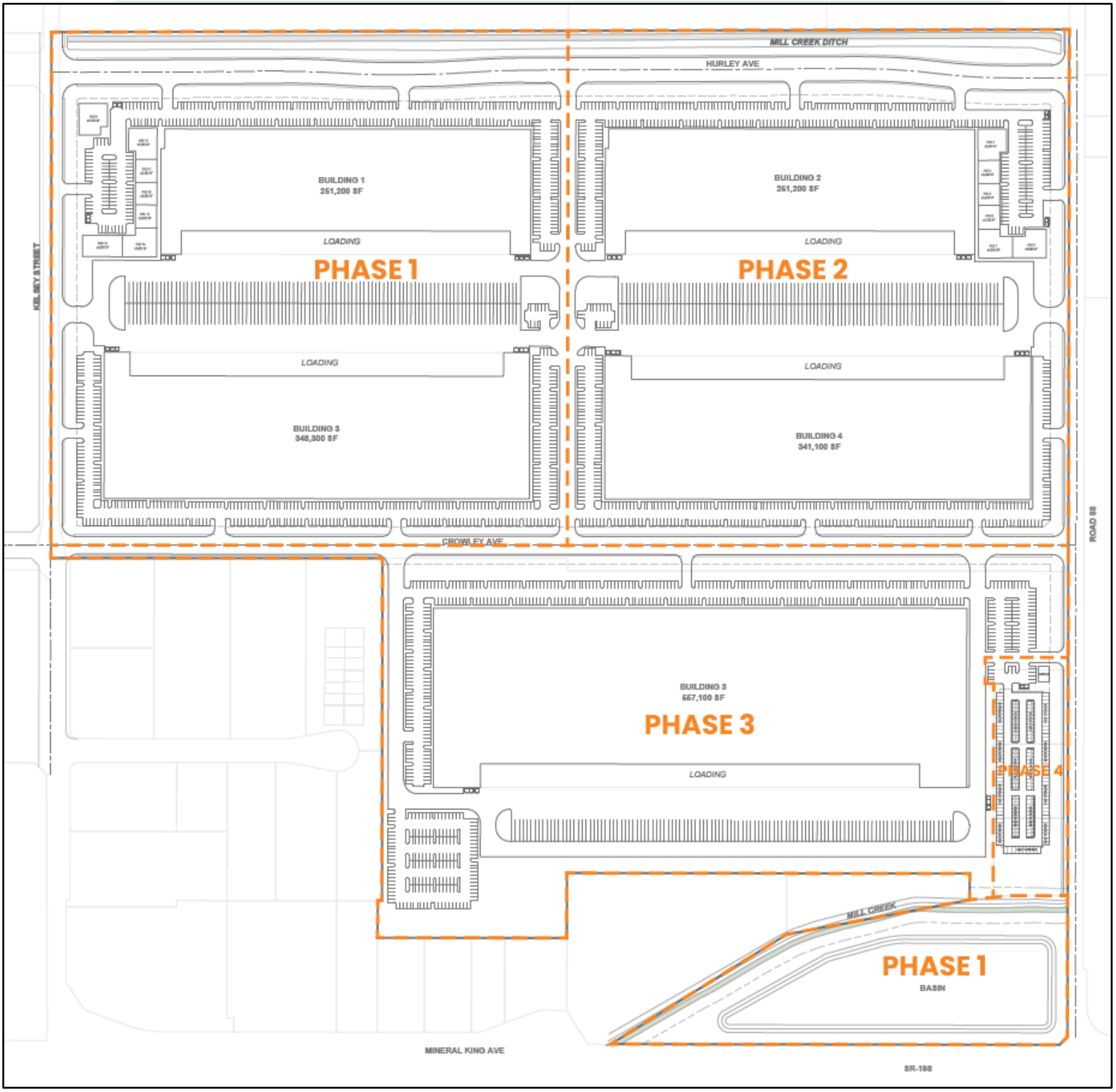


Figure 2-9. Phasing Plan

2 - 5 Utilities and Infrastructure

Water

Potable water would be supplied by the California Water Service (Cal Water) Visalia District, which relies entirely on groundwater pumped from the Kaweah Subbasin; no onsite groundwater extraction is proposed. The Project would connect to existing 12-inch water lines at the intersection of Kelsey Street and Crowley Avenue. From this connection point, 12-inch water line extensions would be constructed along the Hurley Avenue, Kelsey Street, Crowley Avenue, and Road 88 frontages and internally to form a looped system serving the industrial buildings, commercial pads, and self-storage facility, as shown in Figure 2-10, Water Connection Plan. The Project's estimated water demand at full buildout is approximately 240 acre-feet per year (AFY), as evaluated in the Water Supply Assessment (WSA) prepared for the Project (Appendix J).

Sewer

Sanitary sewer service would be provided by the City of Visalia. The Project would connect to the existing 21-inch sewer main in Kelsey Street, with additional existing 8-inch mains located along Mineral King Avenue and south of the Site. New 12-inch sewer main extensions would be constructed in Hurley Avenue and Crowley Avenue, and an 8-inch extension would be constructed along the eastern portion of the Site to serve Building 5 and the self-storage facility, as shown in Figure 2-11, Sewer Connection Plan. These extensions would integrate with the existing municipal sewer network to provide wastewater conveyance for all Project components.

Stormwater

Onsite storm drainage infrastructure would be constructed during the first three phases of development. The system would include storm drain pipelines ranging from 18 to 48 inches in diameter along Kelsey Street, Crowley Avenue, and Road 88, and between the industrial buildings, sized to capture and convey runoff from the developed Site, as shown in Figure 2-12, Storm Drainage Plan. All stormwater would be directed to the detention basin in the southeast corner of the Site, ensuring that post-development runoff rates do not exceed pre-development levels consistent with City of Visalia standards.

Electricity

Electricity would be provided by Southern California Edison (SCE), which serves the Project area. The Project would comply with California Energy Code (Title 24, Part 6) and CALGreen requirements.

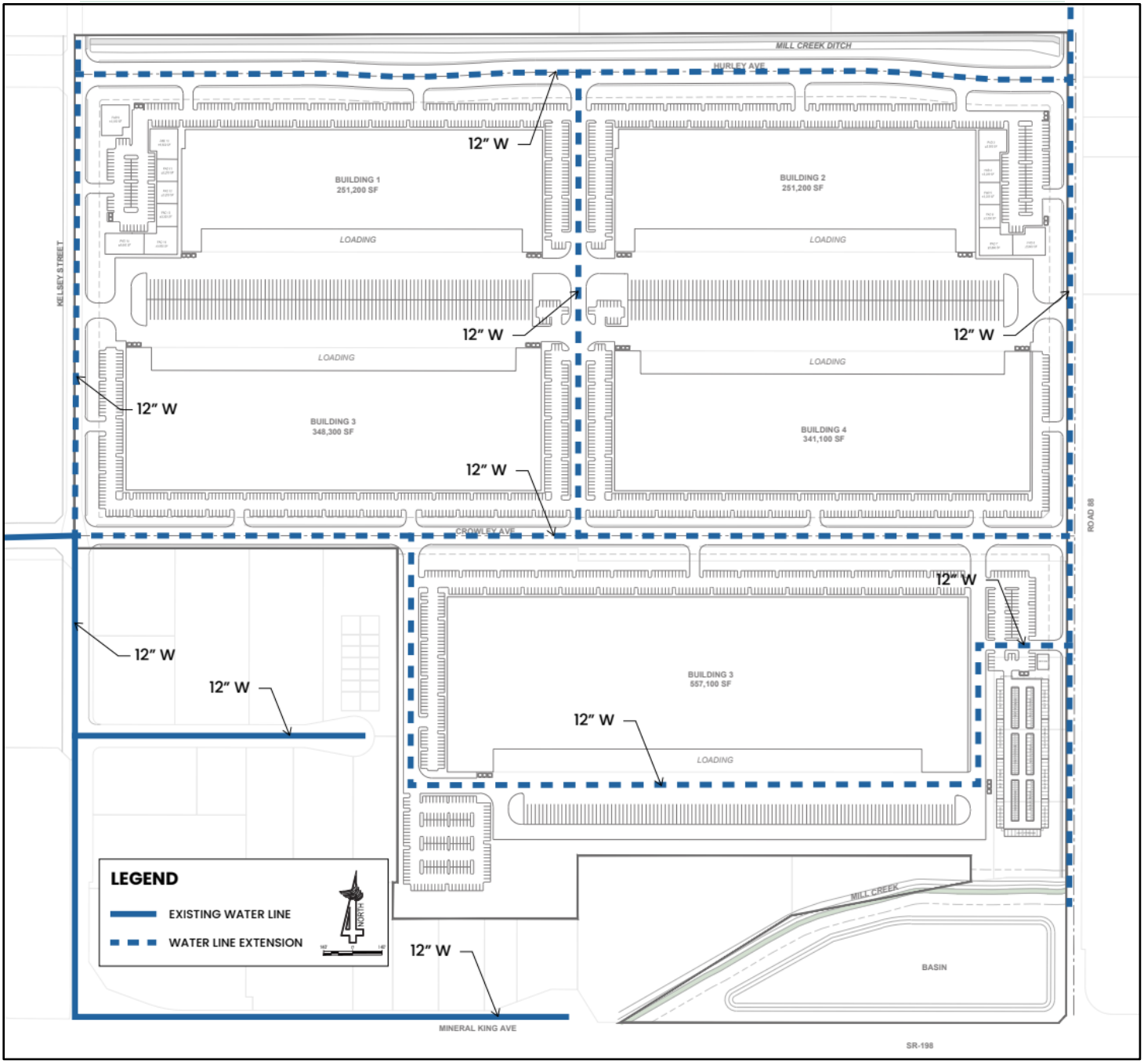


Figure 2-10. Water Connection Plan

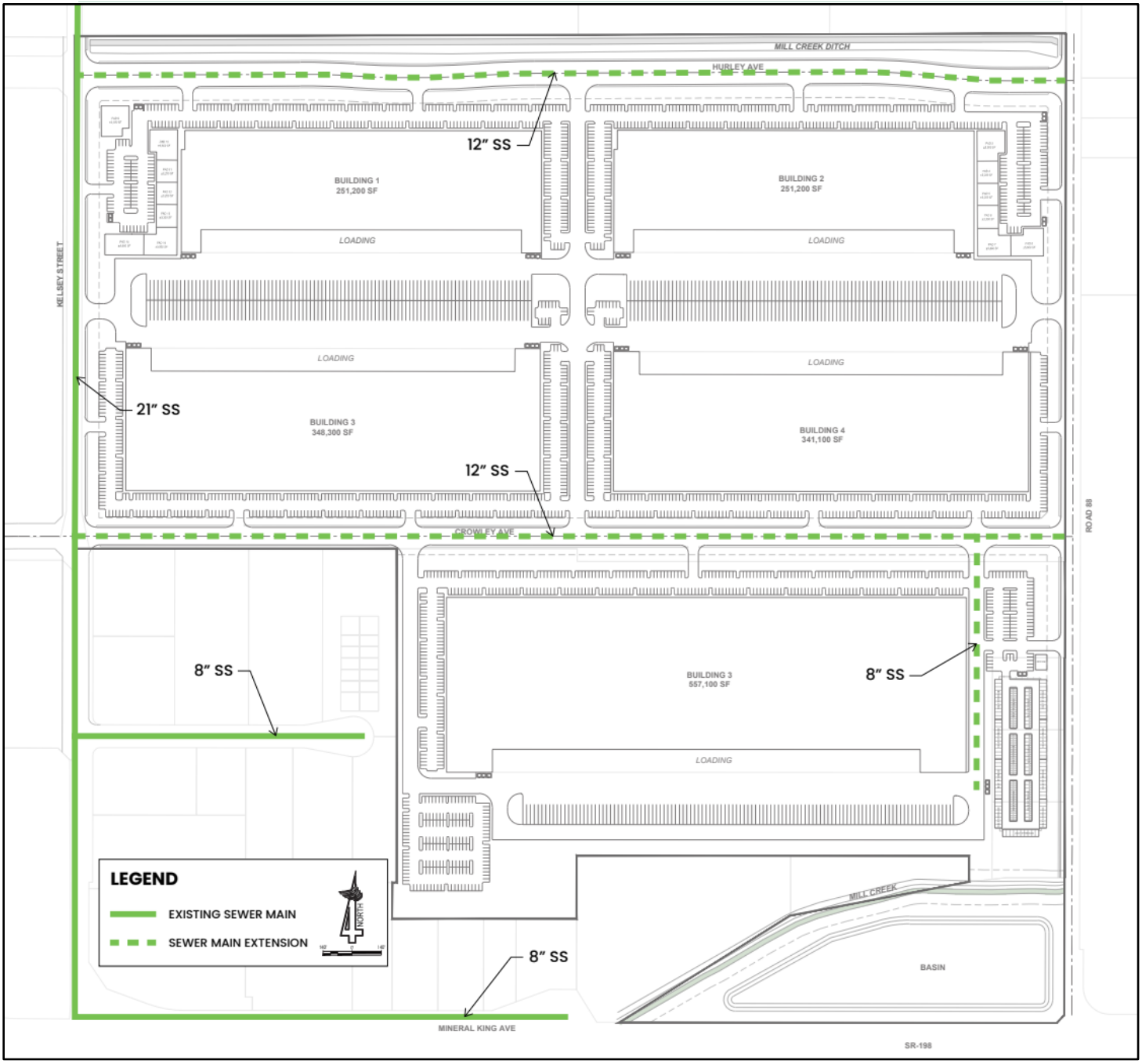


Figure 2-11. Sewer Connection Plan

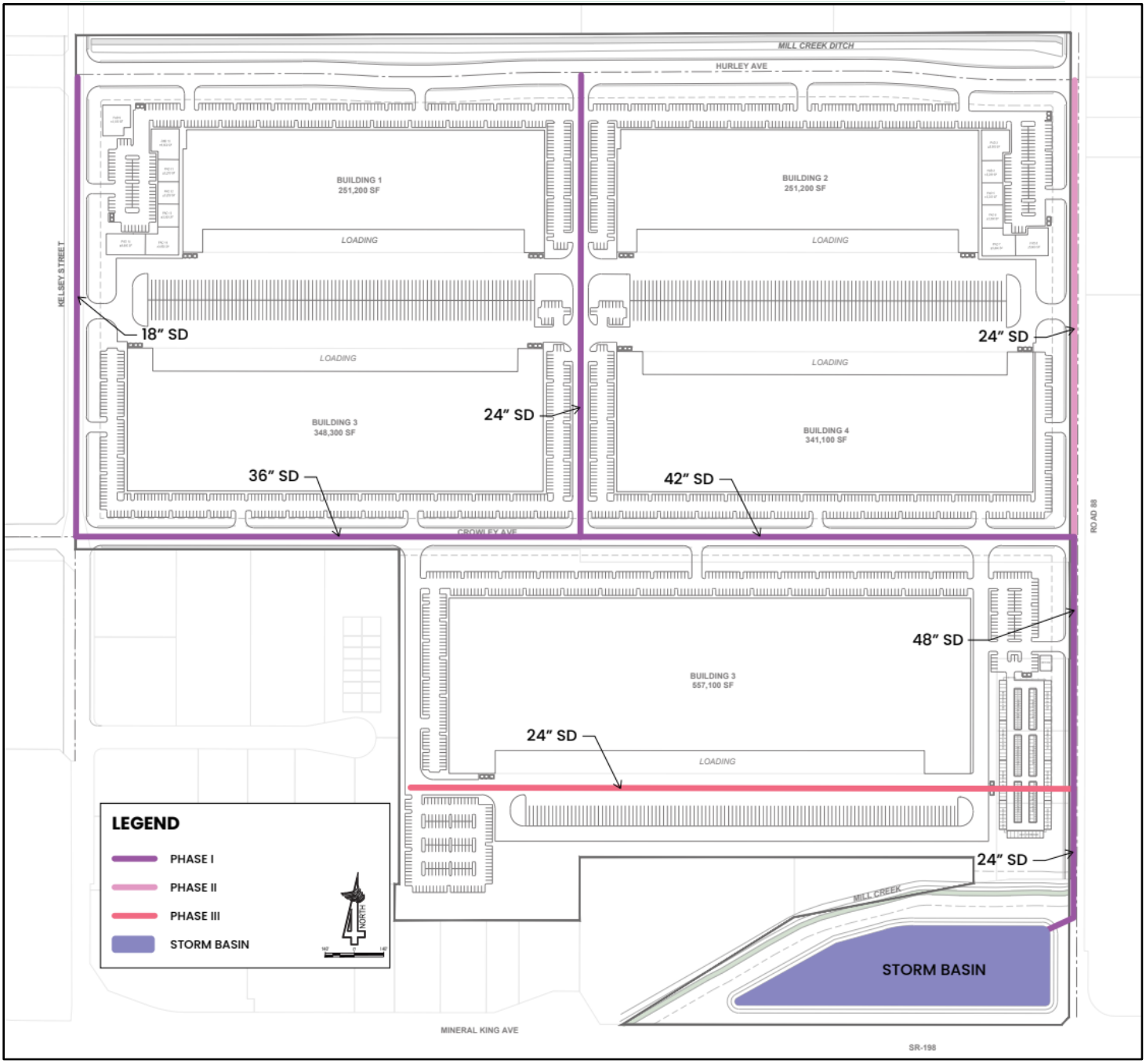


Figure 2-12. Storm Drainage Plan

2 - 6 Required Approvals and Permits

Annexation

The Project Site is currently located in unincorporated Tulare County within a City of Visalia "island," inside the City's SOI. Implementation of the Project requires annexation of the approximately 122-acre Site from Tulare County into the City of Visalia, subject to review and approval by the Tulare County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) pursuant to the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 and the Tulare County LAFCO Policy and Procedure Manual. The Site is currently zoned AE-20 under the Tulare County zoning ordinance; upon annexation, the property would be pre-zoned I (Industrial).

Tentative Parcel Map

The Project requires approval of a Tentative Parcel Map by the City of Visalia to subdivide the approximately 122-acre Site into 10 lots of varying sizes, consistent with the land use program described in *Section 2.3.* Each lot would subsequently undergo site plan review at the time of development.

Conditional Use Permit

A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is required from the City of Visalia to allow a reduction of the 5-acre minimum lot size requirement within the Industrial zone district and to permit development of the industrial-serving commercial pads. Any future use not otherwise permitted by right under Visalia Municipal Code Section 17.25.030 and Table 17.25.030 would require a separate CUP or other additional entitlements as applicable.

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Permits

The Project Site is within the jurisdiction of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD). Independent of the mitigation measures identified in this EIR, the following SJVAPCD compliance steps are required:

- Indirect Source Review (Rule 9510): The Applicant must complete the Indirect Source Review process, including submittal of an Air Impact Assessment Application and payment of applicable fees. Projects exceeding the mitigation threshold must incorporate onsite measures to substantially reduce construction and operational NO_x and PM_{10} emissions or pay offsite mitigation fees to fund equivalent reductions through District incentive programs.
- Dust Control Plan (Regulation VIII): Prior to initiating construction, the construction contractor must prepare and submit a Dust Control Plan (DCP) detailing the applicable fugitive dust control measures required under SJVAPCD Regulation VIII.

- Authority to Construct / Permit to Operate (Regulation II): Most anticipated tenants of the industrial/warehouse, industrial-serving commercial, and self-storage uses are unlikely to require air district permits, as emissions would result primarily from mobile sources and energy use. However, any future tenant proposing regulated equipment or processes producing substantial emissions must first obtain an Authority to Construct and Permit to Operate from SJVAPCD, which would incorporate all applicable air pollution control requirements as enforceable permit conditions.

Other Agency Permits and Approvals

In addition to the entitlements identified above, the following permits and approvals from Responsible Agencies may be required to implement the Project:

State Water Resources Control Board / Central Valley RWQCB

Because the Project would disturb more than one acre of soil, coverage under the NPDES Construction Stormwater General Permit is required, including preparation and implementation of a site-specific Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) by a Qualified SWPPP Developer. In addition, if work within Mill Creek or Mill Creek Ditch results in a discharge of fill or other material to waters of the State, the Applicant would be required to obtain a Section 401 Water Quality Certification (where the feature is also a water of the U.S.) or Waste Discharge Requirements, or a waiver thereof, from the Central Valley RWQCB.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

The Site contains two seasonal drainages, Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch, which the Biological Evaluation (Appendix E) identifies as likely jurisdictional waters of the State based on the presence of a defined bed and bank. Although the Project incorporates development setbacks from both features, Phase I includes storm drain pipelines along Road 88 that would convey Site runoff across Mill Creek to the storm basin, and Project frontage and roadway improvements would occur in the vicinity of the existing Road 88 culvert crossing. Prior to commencing any activity that would substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow or substantially change or use any material from the bed, channel, or bank of these drainages, the Applicant shall submit a Notification of Lake or Streambed Alteration to CDFW pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 1602 and shall obtain a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement if CDFW determines that the activity could adversely affect fish or wildlife resources.

United States Army Corps of Engineers

Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch could meet the definition of waters of the U.S. under the 2023 Revised Definition of "Waters of the United States" Rule. The Applicant should obtain an approved jurisdictional determination from the USACE prior to construction. If either feature is determined to be a water of the U.S., any discharge of dredged or fill material associated with

the Mill Creek pipeline crossing or related roadway, culvert, or drainage improvements would require authorization under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which may be available through a Nationwide Permit, together with a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Central Valley RWQCB.

Williamson Act Contract Holder (Tulare County or City of Visalia)

The Site is subject to Williamson Act Contract #9794 (Preserve #3382) and Contract #10351 (Preserve #3509), both of which are in non-renewal status and located within an agricultural preserve. If development commenced prior to expiration of the remaining non-renewal term, cancellation of the contracts and diminishment of the agricultural preserve would be required. Both actions must be initiated and acted upon by the contract holder, which would be Tulare County if the actions are initiated prior to annexation or the City of Visalia if the contracts have been succeeded by the City at the time of initiation. Cancellations must be approved in accordance with California Government Code Sections 51280 et seq., including the statutory findings required under Section 51282, and diminishment of the agricultural preserve must be approved in accordance with Government Code Section 51230 et seq. and the applicable local agricultural preserve rules. These actions are addressed in Section 3.2, Agricultural Resources, and MM AG-1.

City of Visalia

Subsequent ministerial and discretionary approvals, including site plan review for each lot, grading and building permits, improvement plans for onsite and offsite infrastructure, and encroachment permits for work within public rights-of-way.

CHAPTER 3 EIR-LEVEL ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

This section of the EIR for the Kelsey-Hurley Industrial Park Project addresses topics required by CEQA. Each topic includes a description of existing environmental and regulatory conditions for the Project. The Impacts and Mitigation Measures subsection for each topic evaluates potential impacts and proposes mitigation measures to address them.

Unless otherwise specified, mitigation measures are designed to reduce impacts to a less than significant level. When multiple mitigation measures are proposed for a specific impact, all measures are required to achieve a less than significant impact unless the terms "or" or "alternatively" are used in the list of measures.

The Project Applicant must comply with all mitigation measures, including associated reporting requirements, as a condition of Project approval. Non-compliance with any required mitigation measure may result in enforcement action, which could include permit modification or revocation, in accordance with established City procedures. For mitigation measures requiring monitoring by the City of Visalia, the Project Applicant/operator shall maintain comprehensive performance records for each measure, available for Agency review.

Each impact is briefly described. A detailed discussion and analysis follow, with mitigation measures listed and numbered to correspond to the identified impact.

Analysis Focus

The EIR and the discussions in this chapter are focused in accordance with the scoping process outlined in PRC § 21080.4(a) and the CEQA Guidelines. CEQA-required topics not identified during scoping as requiring in-depth analysis have been addressed to the extent necessary for environmental review, as determined by the Lead Agency, the City of Visalia. This EIR builds upon the analysis in the Kelsey-Hurley Industrial Park Initial Study and addresses environmental topics requiring further evaluation.

Determination of Significance

Under CEQA, a significant impact is defined as a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in the environment (PRC § 21068). The determination of significance is based on substantial evidence in light of the whole record. Significance criteria for each impact are identified prior to the impact discussion in each section, consistent with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines.

3 - 1 Aesthetics

This section of the EIR evaluates potential impacts of the proposed Project on aesthetics resources, including the visual character, scenic resources, views, scenic highways; and sources of light and glare. No NOP comment letters were received pertaining to Aesthetics.

3.1.1 Environmental Setting

The Project is located in a rural unincorporated area of Tulare County; however, it forms part of a "county island" within Visalia's SOI. As shown in the aerial imagery (Figure 3-1), the area is predominantly rural and agricultural with developed areas nearby. The Project Site is currently used as farmland, with agricultural uses and industrial developments bordering it to the north, service commercial uses and SR 198 to the south, agricultural uses and rural residential properties to the east, and vacant land and industrial developments to the west.



Figure 3-1. Aerial Overview of Project Site

The landscape features flat topography with minimal vegetation, consistent with the surrounding agricultural context. The following photos demonstrate the aesthetic character of the Project area. As shown, the proposed Project Site area is in a relatively flat area characterized by agricultural uses.



Figure 3-2. Overview From North of Project Area, Facing South



Figure 3-3. Overview From Northeast of Project Area, Facing Southwest.



Figure 3-4. Overview From East of Project Area, Facing West.



Figure 3-5. Overview From Southeast Corner of Project Area, Facing Northwest.



Figure 3-6. Overview From Southwest Corner of Project Area, Facing Northeast.



Figure 3-7. Overview From Northwest Corner of Project Area, Facing Southeast.



Figure 3-8. Overview From Center of Project Area, Facing North.

Scenic Resources

Scenic resources include landscapes and features that are visually or aesthetically pleasing. They contribute positively to a distinct community or region. These resources produce a visual benefit to communities. The City of Visalia has a visual character mix of rural and built environments. Visalia is surrounded by natural open space agricultural land, with uses such as grazing, open space, and cultivated agriculture. Downtown Visalia is the physical, cultural, and economic center, with historic homes surrounding the downtown. St. Johns River flows along the north side of Visalia's City limits, along with smaller creeks and ditches throughout the city. Valley Oak trees, both individually and in groves, also provide an essential scenic feature and link to the natural setting of the San Joaquin Valley. The goal of Visalia's General Plan regarding visual resources is to preserve and re-establish the City's natural waterway system and Valley Oak tree groves with parks, conservation areas, and trailways.[11]

11) City of Visalia 2030 General Plan

Scenic Vistas

A scenic vista is defined as a viewpoint that provides expansive views of a highly valued landscape for the benefit of the general public.[12] The Visalia General Plan identifies the Sierra Nevada mountains to the east and agricultural lands surrounding the City as scenic vistas surrounding Visalia.

3.1.2 Regulatory Setting

State

State Scenic Highways

The State Scenic Highway Program is implemented by Caltrans and was developed to preserve the aesthetic quality of certain highway corridors. Highways included in this program are designated as scenic highways. A highway is designated as scenic based on how much of the natural landscape is visible to travelers, the quality of that landscape, and the extent to which development obstructs views of the landscape.[13]

According to Caltrans mapping of State Scenic Highways, the City of Visalia does not have officially designated State Scenic Highways; however, the City has one eligible State Scenic Highway, a 44-mile stretch of SR 198 from SR 99 to Sequoia National Park. This stretch of highway is a designated scenic corridor in the City's General Plan. This portion of the highway is less than 100 feet southern point of the Site, where the Basin is planned to be.[14]

Title 24 Outdoor Lighting Standards

The California Energy Commission (CEC) adopts the Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24, Parts 1 and 6), which include outdoor lighting standards. The 2019 update modified the outdoor lighting standards to reflect an industry shift to LED lighting, among other changes. The current 2025 Building Energy Efficiency Standards became effective on January 1, 2026. The changes included modified standards to reflect an industry shift to LED lighting, and other changes.[15]

Local

City of Visalia Valley Oak Preservation Ordinance

The City's Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance (Visalia Municipal Code Chapter 12.24) provides basic standards, measures, and compliance requirements for the preservation and protection

12) 2025 CEQA Statutes and Guidelines, Appendix G
13) Caltrans Scenic Highway Program
14) Caltrans Scenic Highway Map
15) California Energy Commission Title 24

of native Valley oak trees and landmark trees. The Ordinance (as amended by Ordinance No. 2025-06 on August 4, 2025) prohibits the destruction of oak trees on public property except with an oak tree removal permit. A permit may be granted only if it is found that the oak tree is in danger of falling on a structure or is a host for a plant, pest, or disease endangering other species; if removal is necessary to allow the reasonable enjoyment of private property; or if urban forestry or land management practices warrant removal. If a tree removal permit is granted, the tree must either be replaced by new oak trees on the same property or mitigation fees must be paid to establish new oak trees on other properties.[16]

West Highway 198 Corridor Open Space Buffer

In April 2010, the Visalia City Council approved the establishment of a 200-foot open space buffer on both sides of SR 198, creating a scenic corridor between SR 99 and Central Visalia. The scenic corridor setback was incorporated into the City of Visalia 2030 General Plan Policies PSCU-P-11 and PSCU-P-12 and the General Plan's land use map.

2030 City of Visalia General Plan

The 2030 General Plan includes the policies related to aesthetic resources that correlate to the proposed Project:

- *LU-P-28*: Continue to use natural and man-made edges, such as major roadways and waterways within the City's Urban Growth Boundary, as urban development limit and growth phasing lines.
- *LU-P-37*: Adopt specific development standards for scenic entryways (gateways) and roadway corridors into the City, including special setback and landscape standards, open space and park development, and/or land use designations.
- *LU-P-39*: Improve tree planting, landscaping, and site design standards to minimize the visual impact of large parking lots and buildings, to enhance and promote natural characteristics compatible with urban form, to minimize heat gain and promote energy conservation, and to improve stormwater infiltration.
- *LU-P-40*: Where possible, through the Site Plan Review process, retain native trees as landscape elements and for shading.
- *LU-P-42*: Develop scenic corridor and gateway guidelines that will maintain the agricultural character of Visalia at its urban fringe.

16) Visalia Municipal Code Chapter 12.24

- *LU-P-43*: Work with utilities and transportation companies to landscape power line and railroad rights-of-way throughout the community and to underground utilities where possible.
- *LU-P-59*: Ensure that natural and open space features, such as Valley Oak trees and community waterways, are treated as special site amenities as part of any residential development.
- *LU-P-72*: Ensure that noise, traffic, and other potential conflicts that may arise in a mix of commercial and residential uses are mitigated through good site planning, building design, and/or appropriate operational measures.
- *LU-P-100*: Establish zoning standards to assure high-quality design and site planning for large-scale industrial development.
- *LU-P-106*: Develop performance standards to supplement and augment design standards to minimize the negative impacts (glare, signage, noise, dust, traffic) associated with the establishment of new or expansion of existing service commercial and industrial development.
- *OSC-P-8*: Protect, restore and enhance a continuous corridor of native riparian vegetation along Planning Area waterways, including the St. Johns River; Mill, Packwood, and Cameron Creeks; and segments of other creeks and ditches where feasible, in conformance with the Parks and Open Space diagram of this General Plan.
- *OSC-P-10*: Ensure that building and vehicle service areas, loading docks, trash enclosures and storage areas are set back from waterways and/or screened from view from the creek corridor to minimize environmental and visual impacts.
- *OSC-P-13*: In new neighborhoods that include waterways, improvement of the waterway corridor, including preservation and/or enhancement of natural features and development of a continuous waterway trail on at least one side, shall be required.
- *OSC-P-17*: Require that new development along waterways maintain a visual orientation and active interface with waterways. Develop design guidelines to be used for review and approval of subdivision and development proposals to illustrate how this can be accomplished for different land uses in various geographic settings.
- *OSC-P-28*: Protect significant stands of Valley Oak woodlands from further development by designating them for Conservation, creating habitat management plans, where needed, and undertaking restoration activities as appropriate.

- *OSC-P-34*: Enhance views and public access to Planning Area waterways and other significant features such as Valley Oak groves consistent with flood protection, irrigation water conveyance, habitat preservation and recreation planning policies.
- OSC-P-35: Use native trees in street and public landscaping designs, where appropriate, to preserve Visalia's character.
- *T-P-57*: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include updated off-street parking and loading area design standards that have multiple benefits and reduce environmental impacts. Strategies may include, but are not limited to:
    - Require parking and loading to be provided on the side of or behind buildings, where feasible;
    - Promote the use of time and/or motion sensitive parking lot and security lights, where feasible;
    - Establish specific standards for perimeter landscaping for parking lots and structures;
    - Separate pedestrian pathways from car lanes where feasible;
    - Promote the use of porous pavement and low impact drainage features, as appropriate to the site; and
    - Restrict use of vacant lots as vehicle parking and outdoor storage of commercial equipment, construction equipment, and similar unless screened from public view.
- *PSCU-P-11*: Develop a system of natural corridors and greenways, consistent with the Parks and Open Space diagram.
- *PSCU-P-12*: The City shall establish a scenic corridor setback along the West 198 Highway corridor. The setback shall measure at least 200 feet from the north and south sides of the Highway 198 right of way between Road 86 and 1/4-mile west of Akers Street.
    - The lands in the identified setback area shall be acquired and dedicated for open space uses in perpetuity by the City through market value purchases, dedications by affected property owners, transfers of development rights, or other means.

3.1.3 Thresholds of Significance

The thresholds of significance for this section are established by the CEQA Appendix G Checklist. Except as provided in PRC 21099, would the Project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

b) *Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?*
c) *In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?*
d) *Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?*

3.1.4 Impacts Discussion

Impact 3.1-1: Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

A scenic vista is a viewpoint that provides expansive views of a highly valued landscape for the benefit of the general public. As described in Section 3.1.1, the Visalia General Plan identifies the Sierra Nevada to the east and the agricultural lands surrounding the City as the area's scenic vistas. SR 198, less than 100 feet south of the Site, is an eligible State Scenic Highway. Although SR 198 is not itself a scenic vista, it is the key public viewpoint from which motorists see the Sierra Nevada foothills approximately 20 miles to the east and the open farmland that characterizes the San Joaquin Valley.

Near the Site, these vistas are experienced primarily from SR 198, Kelsey Street to the west, and Hurley Avenue to the north. Views from SR 198 include foreground expanses of flat agricultural land, scattered rural structures and vegetation, and, on clear days, the Sierra Nevada in the background. These views are partially filtered by roadside vegetation and nearby industrial buildings but retain a sense of openness and rural character. Views from Kelsey Street and Hurley Avenue are more constrained by existing development, though they still include glimpses of agricultural land and distant foothills. The Site's flat topography means ground-level views are not obstructed by natural features, but urban development in the vicinity has already begun to alter the rural panorama.

Operation

The Project would replace open agricultural land with industrial buildings consistent with the Site's Industrial zoning and General Plan designation. From SR 198, taller buildings could enter the visual field, reducing the expansiveness of the agricultural vista and partially screening distant mountain views. From Kelsey Street and Hurley Avenue, immediate views would shift from farmland to industrial uses, although nearby warehousing and distribution facilities have already transformed much of the surrounding rural land.

The Project design limits these effects. Vertical development would be set back approximately 500 feet from SR 198, with the area adjacent to the highway reserved for the stormwater basin. This exceeds the minimum 200-foot setback required for the West Highway 198 Scenic Corridor under General Plan Policy PSCU-P-12, which aims to preserve greenspace, agricultural character, and scenic gateway qualities entering Visalia from the west. The basin would preserve foreground open-space views from SR 198. Landscaping would use drought-tolerant, low-maintenance trees and vegetation from Visalia's Street Tree Master List to screen building facades and soften the transition from rural to urban uses, maintaining a sense of openness along the corridor. Views from other nearby roadways would experience minimal additional change given the flat topography, existing industrial context, and proposed landscaping.

Conclusion

Given the Project's location within an area transitioning to industrial use, the prevalence of similar surrounding developments, and the incorporation of setbacks, landscaping, and conservation elements, the Project would not substantially degrade the quality or accessibility of scenic vistas from public viewpoints in the immediate area, including SR 198. Therefore, the Project would result in a less than significant impact on scenic vistas.

> **Impact 3.1-2: Would the Project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?**

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

No officially designated State Scenic Highways are located in the City of Visalia or near the Site. SR 198, less than 100 feet south of the Site, is eligible for designation, so the analysis considers whether the Project would damage scenic resources visible from that corridor.

Operation

Project buildings would be set back approximately 500 feet from SR 198, with the intervening area used for the stormwater basin. Landscaping within the setback would be consistent with the City of Visalia General Plan and would preserve the greenspace and rural character of the corridor. No Valley Oak trees would be affected, as all are required to be protected and preserved under the City's Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance.

Conclusion

The Project would not damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway. Therefore, impacts related to scenic resources would be less than significant.

> **Impact 3.1-3: In non-urbanized areas, would the Project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the Site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point). If the Project is in an urbanized area, would the Project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?**

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

Pursuant to PRC § 21071, in relevant part, an "urbanized area" in an unincorporated area is defined as: (A) land that is either (1) completely surrounded by one or more incorporated cities (with the population of the unincorporated area and the surrounding cities equaling not less than 100,000 persons, and the population density of the unincorporated area at least equaling the population density of the surrounding cities), or (2) located within an urban growth boundary and has an existing residential population of at least 5,000 persons per square mile; and (B) the relevant Board of Supervisors has taken certain actions that reflect principles to encourage compact development.

While the Project Site is in an unincorporated area partially surrounded by the City of Visalia, and is within the City's Planning Area, UDB Tier I of the City, and the City's SOI, it does not have an existing residential population of at least 5,000 persons per square mile or otherwise meet the criteria to be considered as an "urbanized area." The City of Visalia has an estimated population of 146,541 in 2025[17], with a population density of approximately 3,862 persons per

17) US Census Bureau

square mile. The county island containing the Site consists primarily of agricultural land, has a residential population far below 5,000 persons per square mile, and does not otherwise meet the criteria for an urbanized area. The non-urbanized threshold therefore applies.

Operation

The Site's existing visual character is that of flat agricultural land with minimal structures, part of the Visalia region's mix of rural and built environments. The Site is bordered by agricultural land to the north and east, vacant land to the west, and commercial uses and SR 198 to the south, with warehouses, distribution facilities, and parking areas nearby to the north and west. Public views from the Site include agricultural land to the north and east, and the Sierra Nevada is potentially visible on clear days; waterways such as the St. Johns River are not visible.

The Project would introduce new built forms, but it would extend industrial development of the type already present to the north and west rather than introduce incompatible densities or architectural styles, as a conversion to residential or retail use might. Public views from SR 198, Kelsey Street, and Hurley Avenue would change modestly given the flat topography, but the development is designed to blend with the evolving landscape and would not substantially degrade overall visual quality. Because the Site is a county island within the City's SOI and adjacent to existing industrial development, rather than on the open edge of the City, the conversion would not substantially alter the area's rural appearance.

Conclusion

The Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the Site and its surroundings. Therefore, impacts related to visual character would be less than significant.

Impact 3.1-4: Would the Project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

Nighttime lighting is needed for safe and secure industrial development but can produce light trespass, meaning light that falls beyond its intended area, in the form of spillover light and glare. Spillover light can affect light-sensitive uses such as rural residences and the night sky, and it is minimized by using only the light necessary and by using shielded fixtures. Glare

occurs when a light source in the field of vision is brighter than the eye can comfortably accept; it is reduced by blocking direct line of sight to the source and by using cutoff fixtures that direct light downward and emit little light at near-horizontal angles.

Operation

The Project will introduce new sources of lighting to support its 122-acre development, including interior and exterior illumination from five industrial buildings, parking lot and security lighting, streetlights along internal roadways such as Crowley Avenue, and vehicle headlights from the industrial-serving commercial pads, loading docks, and truck circulation routes.

The Master Plan prepared for this Project (Appendix B) includes a lighting plan, which specifies the use of energy-efficient LED fixtures, including D-Series Size 1 Area Luminaires (with performance packages at 4000K CCT and 80 CRI, various distribution types like Type IV Medium, Type III Short, and Type V Wide) mounted at heights of 24 feet above finished floor (AFF), as well as WDGE3 and WDGE2 architectural wall sconces to reduce spillover. These fixtures are strategically placed across parking areas, drive aisles, pedestrian pathways, and building perimeters to ensure consistent illumination, reduce dark spots, and enhance security during nighttime operations.

Photometric calculations in the Master Plan (Appendix B) indicate average lighting levels of 2.3 foot-candles (fc) in the self-storage lot (with a maximum of 4.6 fc and minimum of 0.5 fc) and 1.2 fc sitewide (with a maximum of 7.9 fc and minimum of 0.0 fc), adhering to municipal guidelines for safety. Importantly, all specified fixtures have BUG (Backlight, Uplight, Glare) ratings with U0 (zero uplight), which helps minimize sky glow and light pollution.

Daytime glare could result from reflective surfaces on warehouse roofs and facades, glass windows, and parked vehicles or equipment. This transition from a low-light agricultural area to an industrial setting could alter nighttime skies, potentially cause light to trespass onto adjacent agricultural or vacant properties, and introduce new visual elements that affect day or nighttime views, which could result in a potentially significant impact absent compliance with applicable lighting regulations and standards.

The City of Visalia's Zoning Ordinance (Municipal Code Title 17)[18] and development standards address light and glare impacts through requirements for shielded fixtures to prevent upward light spillage, deflection of lighting away from adjacent uses, and limits on light intensity at property boundaries. The City's General Plan supports these measures by emphasizing high design standards for light pollution reduction and buffering between urbanized and

18) Visalia Municipal Code Title 17

agricultural areas to minimize impacts on neighboring rural lands. The Project's design incorporates setbacks from Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch, which include landscaping features such as shade trees (Forest Green Oak, Chinese Pistache) selected from Visalia's Street Tree Master List and drought-tolerant shrubs/groundcover (Wild Lilac, Evergreen Euonymus) recommended by the UC Master Gardeners of Tulare & Kings Counties. This landscaping will provide additional buffering against light trespass and glare, promoting ecological diversity and visual screening.

Additionally, the Site's Industrial General Plan designation anticipates industrial development, ensuring compatibility with existing industrial uses in the vicinity, as well as proximity to the Visalia Municipal Airport and routes like SR 198 and SR 99. The Master Plan's lighting approach, including energy-efficient LEDs with no uplight and strategic placement, aligns with these standards. Adherence to these regulations would minimize light pollution, trespass, and glare, reducing impacts to adjacent properties and the broader environment. With incorporation of City standards, the Project would result in a *less than significant impact.*

3.1.5 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts refer to the combined effects of the proposed Project with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects that could incrementally contribute to adverse effects on aesthetic resources. Under CEQA Guidelines § 15130, cumulative impacts are evaluated based on whether the Project's incremental contribution is "cumulatively considerable," meaning it would result in a significant cumulative effect when viewed in connection with other projects.

Cumulative Setting and Geographic Scope

The geographic scope for cumulative aesthetic impacts includes the western edge of the City of Visalia, particularly areas along SR 198 and within the City's SOI, where agricultural lands are transitioning to industrial and urban uses. This scope is appropriate because aesthetic impacts are primarily experienced from public viewpoints like highways, adjacent roadways, and nearby properties. The area is characterized by a mix of agricultural fields, existing industrial developments (warehouses and distribution centers in the vicinity of the Site), rural residential properties, and vacant lands. The City's 2030 General Plan designates much of this area for industrial growth, anticipating the conversion of farmland to support economic development while preserving scenic corridors and natural features like Valley Oak trees and waterways.

Key cumulative projects and trends include:

- **Regional Developments**: Ongoing and planned industrial expansions in western Visalia, such as annexations of nearby "county islands" for warehousing and distribution

(similar projects along SR 99 and SR 198), contribute to the urbanization of agricultural lands. These include recent approvals for logistics centers and manufacturing facilities within an approximately five-mile radius from the Project Site.

- **General Growth Trends**: Visalia's population and economic growth, as projected in the 2030 General Plan, are expected to increase industrial demand, leading to further conversion of agricultural land in the western SOI over the next 10-20 years. This includes infrastructure improvements like utility extensions and roadway widenings that could alter visual landscapes.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

The proposed Project would contribute to cumulative aesthetic changes by converting approximately 122 acres of agricultural land to industrial uses, introducing buildings up to 75 feet tall, parking areas, and associated lighting. When combined with other regional developments, this could result in a shift from rural-agricultural visual character to an urbanized industrial landscape, potentially affecting scenic vistas (views of the Sierra Nevada mountains and surrounding farmlands), scenic resources along SR 198, public views, and nighttime light/glare levels.

- **Scenic Vistas (Impact 3.1-1)**: Cumulatively, industrial expansions could partially obstruct distant mountain views and reduce the expanse of visible agricultural lands, which are identified as key scenic vistas in the General Plan. However, the Project's 500-foot setback from SR 198, combined with similar buffers required (per General Plan Policies PSCU-P-11 and PSCU-P-12), would preserve open space and greenspace along the highway corridor. Landscaping with native vegetation across cumulative projects would maintain visual continuity and mitigate obstruction. The flat topography and existing industrial context limit the incremental visibility of new developments from distant viewpoints. The Project's contribution to cumulative impacts on scenic vistas would not be cumulatively considerable.
- **Scenic Resources within a State Scenic Highway (Impact 3.1-2)**: SR 198, as an eligible scenic highway, could experience cumulative degradation if multiple projects encroach on its corridor without adequate setbacks. The Project avoids direct impacts by reserving land near the highway for a stormwater basin and landscaping, consistent with City policies. The Kelsey-Hurley Master Plan (Appendix B) extends these protections across the broader area, ensuring no damage to trees, rock outcroppings, or historic features. No Valley Oak trees would be removed without permits under the City's Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance, and nearby projects must comply similarly. The Project's effect would not be cumulatively considerable.

- **Visual Character and Quality (Impact 3.1-3)**: The cumulative conversion of agricultural lands to industrial uses could degrade the rural character at Visalia's urban fringe, altering public views from roadways like Kelsey Street and Hurley Avenue. However, the area is already transitioning, with existing warehouses in the vicinity of the Site. This ensures compatibility and minimizes visual disruption. The Project's location within a designated industrial "county island" aligns with planned growth, reducing its contribution to unplanned sprawl. Overall, cumulative effects on visual character would be managed through consistent application of City standards, resulting in a Project's contribution to not cumulatively considerable.
- **Light and Glare (Impact 3.1-4)**: Cumulative industrial growth could increase nighttime light pollution and glare, affecting rural skies and adjacent properties. The Project introduces LED fixtures with zero uplight and shielded designs, adhering to Title 24 and City Zoning Ordinance standards for minimizing spillover. Similar requirements apply to the nearby projects, including limits on light intensity at property lines and downward-directed lighting. With no residential neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the Site and buffering from waterways like Mill Creek, cumulative light trespass would be limited. Daytime glare from reflective surfaces would be reduced by landscaping and Site design across projects throughout the area. The Project's adherence to these standards ensures its contribution is not cumulatively considerable.

Conclusion

While cumulative development in western Visalia would contribute to the urbanization of agricultural landscapes, the proposed Project incorporates design features, setbacks, and landscaping that align with the 2030 General Plan and Zoning Ordinance to preserve scenic qualities and minimize visual disruptions. The Project's incremental effects on aesthetic resources would not be cumulatively considerable, as they are consistent with planned industrial growth and do not increase impacts beyond what is anticipated and mitigated at the regional level. Therefore, cumulative impacts on aesthetic resources would be less than significant.

3 - 2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

This section of the EIR identifies potential impacts of the proposed Project on Agricultural Resources. A California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) Model was utilized to support the evaluation (see Appendix C). One Notice of Preparation (NOP) comment letter was received from the California Department of Conservation (DOC) regarding this topic. The DOC letter outlines the requirements for assessing the loss of agricultural resources and provides suggestions for potential mitigation measures.

3.2.1 Environmental Setting

Central California is one of the world's premier growing regions. Agriculture is a vital economic resource for the City of Visalia and the surrounding areas. According to the EIR prepared for the Visalia 2030 General Plan Update in 2014, approximately 39,518 acres, or 65 percent, of the Visalia Planning Area is farmland producing fruit and nut crops, vegetables, nursery products (trees), apiary products (honey), seed crops (cotton), industrial crops (timber), field crops (alfalfa, barley, corn), and livestock.[19] The Project Site is located within the Visalia Planning Area.

The Project Site consists of approximately 122 acres and is currently used for agricultural purposes, specifically farmland. The Site is currently subject to two Williamson Act contracts; however, according to Tulare County's official land conservation records, Williamson Act Contract #9794 (Preserve #3382) and Contract #10351 (Preserve #3509) are both in non-renewal status. A Notice of Non-Renewal has been filed for each contract, and the contracts will expire at the end of the remaining non-renewal term rather than being renewed.

Under the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), the Site is designated as mainly Prime Farmland, with a small portion being Farmland of Local Importance (Figure 3-9).[20] The Project Site is surrounded by agricultural uses to the north and east, vacant land to the west, and commercial uses and SR 198 to the south.

19) Visalia 2030 General Plan Update EIR (2014)
20) California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program



Figure 3-9. Important Farmlands on the Site

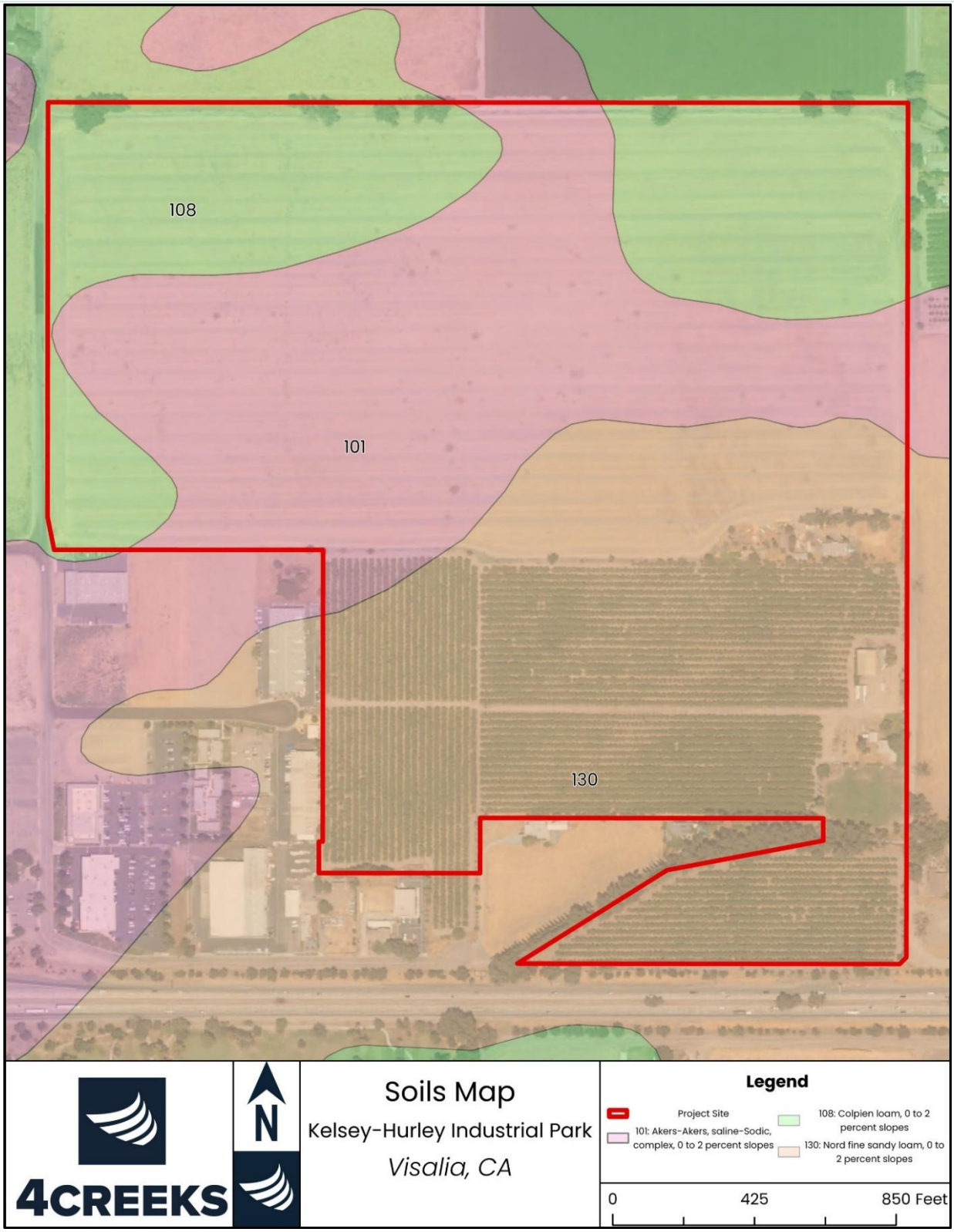


Figure 3-10. Soil Types on the Project Site

3.2.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal

United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) manages the nationwide classification and mapping of soils through its Soil Survey program. The USDA uses a hierarchical system called Soil Taxonomy to categorize soils based on measurable soil properties that reflect their formation processes, physical and chemical characteristics, and potential uses. This classification system aids in understanding soil suitability for agriculture, development, conservation, and other land uses.

The NRCS also develops Soil Mapping Units, which are used to delineate and describe soils on maps such as those available from the Web Soil Survey. Mapping units may include phases that describe slope, drainage, and other variations relevant to land use planning. The Project Site includes the following NRCS soil map units, which reflect local soil conditions and agricultural potential (Figure 3-10):

- Nord fine sandy loam: The Nord series consists of very deep, well drained soils that formed in mixed alluvium dominantly from granitic and sedimentary rocks and has slopes of 0 to 2 percent. It is well drained; has negligible to low runoff; and has moderate permeability but is moderately slow in saline-sodic phases.[21]
- Akers, Saline Sodic: The Akers series consists of very deep, well drained soils formed in alluvium derived from granitic rock. Akers soils are on terraces and have slopes of 0 to 2 percent. It is well drained; has negligible to low runoff; and has moderate permeability. Saline-sodic phases have moderately slow permeability.[22]
- Colpien loam: The Colpien series consists of very deep, moderately well drained soils formed in alluvium derived mainly from granitic rocks. Colpien soils are on terraces and have slopes of 0 to 2 percent. Colpien soils are moderately well drained; runoff is negligible to low; moderately slow permeability due to high content of mica in the soil.[23]

Farmland Protection Policy Act

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA), enacted as part of the 1981 Farm Bill under Subtitle I of Title XV of the Agriculture and Food Act, serves as a key federal measure to safeguard prime and unique farmland from being unnecessarily converted to non-agricultural uses through government programs. The Act requires federal agencies to evaluate the potential impacts of

21) USDA Nord Series Description
22) USDA Akers Series Description
23) USDA Colpien Series Description

their projects on farmland, ensuring that alternatives are considered to minimize irreversible losses.

State

California Land Conservation Act of 1965

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly referred to as the Williamson Act, allows local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners to restrict the activities on specific parcels of land to agricultural or open space uses. The landowners benefit from the Contract by receiving greatly reduced property tax assessments. The California Land Conservation Act is overseen by the DOC; however, local governments are responsible for determining specific allowed uses and enforcing the contract. The City of Visalia General Plan states that the City encourages the use of Williamson Act contracts on parcels located outside the UDB.

California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP)

The FMMP is implemented by the California DOC to conserve and protect agricultural lands within the State. The land included in this program is based on soil type, annual crop yields, and other factors that influence the quality of farmland. The FMMP mapping categories for the most important statewide farmland are as follows, defined by the California DOC[24]:

- **Prime Farmland** has the ideal physical and chemical composition for crop production. It has been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date and can produce sustained yields.
- **Farmland of Statewide Importance** has been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date and is only slightly poorer quality than Prime Farmland.
- **Unique Farmland** has been cropped at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date and does not meet the Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance criteria, but it has produced specific crops with high economic value.
- **Farmland of Local Importance** encompasses farmland that does not meet the criteria for the previous three categories. These may lack irrigation, produce major crops, be zoned as agricultural, and/or support dairy.
- **Grazing Land** has vegetation that is suitable for grazing livestock.
- **Urban and Built-up Land** is occupied by structures with a building density of at least 1 unit to 1.5 acres, or approximately 6 structures to a 10-acre parcel. This land is used for residential, industrial, commercial, construction, institutional, public administration, railroad

24) California Department of Conservation FMMP Definitions

and other transportation yards, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment, water control structures, and other developed purposes.

Local

Tulare County Right to Farm Ordinance

Tulare County adopted a "Right to Farm Ordinance" in Chapter 29 Article 3 of the Tulare County Code to protect the rights of commercial farming operations while promoting a "good neighbor policy" between these uses.[25] Under this ordinance, property owners and residents are made aware that they may experience inconveniences due to commercial agricultural operations.

Visalia Municipal Code Chapter 18.04

Chapter 18.04 of the Visalia Municipal Code establishes the Agricultural Land Preservation Program (Program), which is intended to establish a process for the required preservation of agricultural land through the acquisition of agricultural conservation easements or payment of an in-lieu fee. The Program is only mandatory for certain properties within the Tier II and Tier III growth boundaries.

City of Visalia General Plan

The 2030 General Plan includes the objectives and policies related to agricultural resources that correlate to the proposed Project:

Objective LU-O-11: Maintain Visalia as a separate and distinct community.

Objective LU-O-12: Provide for an orderly and efficient transition from rural to urban land uses.

Objective LU-O-13: Minimize urban sprawl and leap-frog development by encouraging compact, concentric and contiguous growth.

LU-P-14: Recognize the importance of agriculture-related business to the City and region, and support the continuation and development of agriculture and agriculture related enterprises in and around Visalia by:

- Implementing growth boundaries and cooperating with the County on agricultural preservation efforts;
- Accommodating agriculture-related industries in industrial districts;
- Facilitating successful farmers' markets;
- Helping to promote locally grown and produced agricultural goods, and the image of Visalia and Tulare County as an agricultural region.

25) Tulare County Right to Farm Ordinance

- *LU-P-19*: Ensure that growth occurs in a compact and concentric fashion by implementing the General Plan's phased growth strategy.

  The General Plan Land Use Diagram establishes three growth rings to accommodate estimated City population for the years 2020 and 2030. The Urban Development Boundary I (UDB I) shares its boundaries with the 2012 city limits. The Urban Development Boundary II (UDB II) defines the urbanizable area within which a full range of urban services will need to be extended in the first phase of anticipated growth with a target buildout population of 178,000. The Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) defines full buildout of the General Plan with a target buildout population of 210,000. Each growth ring enables the City to expand in all four quadrants, reinforcing a concentric growth pattern.

- *LU-P-20*: Allow annexation and development of residential, commercial, and industrial land to occur within the "Tier I" Urban Development Boundary (UDB) at any time, consistent with the City's Land Use Diagram.

- *LU-P-21*: Allow annexation and development of residential, commercial, regional retail, and industrial land to occur within the Urban Development Boundary (Tier II) and the Urban Growth Boundary (Tier III) consistent with the City's Land Use Diagram, according to the following phasing thresholds:

  - "Tier II": Tier II supports a target buildout population of approximately 178,000. The expansion criteria for land in Tier II is that land would only become available for development when building permits have been issued in Tier I at the following levels, starting from April 1, 2010:

  - Residential: after permits for 5,850 housing units have been issued; and
  - Commercial: after permits for 480,000 square feet of commercial space on designated Commercial Mixed Use, Downtown Mixed Use, Office, and Service Commercial land have been issued.
  - Regional *Retail*: New Regional Retail areas in the Tier II Growth Boundary shall be eligible for urban development upon satisfactory demonstration that the following criteria have been met:

  1. Existing Regional Retail Commercial zoned-land south of Caldwell Avenue. that was undeveloped as of the date of adoption of the General Plan has received at least 922,383sq.ft. of commercial building permits *[formula: 121 acres @ 43,560sq. ft. per gross acre = 5,270,760sq.ft. x .25 (assumed FAR for Regional Retail development) x 0.7 (recommended flex factor)]*

2. The uses and tenants proposed for the area will substantially further the community's goal of providing high level regional retail goods and services.
3. That there is sufficient road - way capacity and adequate public facilities and infrastructure to accommodate the proposed development.

The regional retail zone classification shall provide for permitted and conditional uses that are of a regional draw only. Uses that are not exclusively of a regional draw may be allowed where a finding is made that such uses are ancillary or associated with the regional uses. Uses of a neighborhood or convenience level draw only shall not be permitted.

- "Tier III": Tier III comprises full buildout of the General Plan. The expansion criteria for land in Tier III is that land would only become available for development when building permits have been issued in Tier I and Tier II at the following levels, starting from April 1, 2010.

- Residential: after permits for 12,800 housing units have been issued.
- Commercial: after permits for 960,000 square feet of commercial space on designated Commercial Mixed Use, Downtown Mixed Use, Office, and Service Commercial land have been issued; and
- Industrial: after permits for 2,800,000 square feet of commercial space on designated Industrial, Light Industrial, and Business Research Park land have been issued.

To complement residential neighborhood development, the City also may allow small annexations for sites less than 30 acres in size that are contiguous to the City limits to allow for efficient development of a neighborhood, commercial area or employment center, provided no General Plan amendment is required and infrastructure is available or can be extended at no cost to the City.

Triggers for proceeding from Tier I and Tier II to Tier III may be modified based on subsequent direction from the City Council.

Annexations are subject to review against regulations and policies in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 and the Tulare County Local Agency Formation Commission Policy and Procedure Manual regarding development and inventory of existing vacant land designated for urban uses in the city limits.

- *LU-P-28*: Continue to use natural and man-made edges, such as major roadways and waterways within the City's Urban Growth Boundary, as urban development limit and growth phasing lines.

- *LU-P-30*: Maintain greenbelts, or agricultural/ open space buffer areas, between Visalia and other communities by implementing growth boundaries and working with Tulare County and land developers to prevent premature urban growth north of the St. Johns River and in other sensitive locations within the timeframe of this General Plan.

  Techniques to be applied selectively at appropriate locations in consultation with landowners with the objective of preserving agricultural lands and open space around the City could include voluntary programs for establishing open space and conservation easements, purchasing development rights, support for agricultural land trusts and "land banking" and, if feasible, establishing a program for transfer of development rights. This program will need to be coordinated with post-2030 planning to avoid creating the potential for "leapfrog" development. See policy LU-P-27.

- *LU-P-31*: Promote the preservation of permanent agricultural open space around the City by protecting viable agricultural operations and land within the City limits in the airport and wastewater treatment plan environs.

  Land around the Airport may be developed with site-appropriate industrial uses during the planning period, providing it conforms to the land use compatibility requirements for the Visalia Municipal Airport environs established by the City.

- *LU-P-32*: Continue to maintain a 20-acre minimum for parcel map proposals in areas designated for Agriculture to encourage viable agricultural operations in the Planning Area.

- *LU-P-34*: Work with Tulare County and other state and regional agencies, neighboring cities, and private land trust entities to prevent urban development of agricultural land outside of the current growth boundaries and to promote the use of agricultural preserves, where they will promote orderly development and preservation of farming operations within Tulare County. Conduct additional investigation of the efficacy of agricultural conservation easements by engaging local, regional, and state agencies and stakeholders in order to further analyze their ongoing efforts and programs that attempt to mitigate impacts from the conversion of agricultural lands through the use of agricultural conservation easements. Support regional efforts to prevent urban development of agricultural lands, specifically at the county level. Tulare County's General Plan 2030 Update Policy contains two policies (AG-1.6 Conservation Easements and AG-1.18 Farmland Trust and Funding Sources) that discuss establishing and implementing an Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). The City supports the implementation of these measures by the County, in which the City may

then participate. Such a regional program could include a fee to assist and support agricultural uses, and would be most feasibly and strategically developed on a countywide or other regional basis.

In addition to supporting regional efforts to prevent urban development of agricultural lands, the City shall create and adopt a mitigation program to address conversion of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance in Tiers II and III. This mitigation program shall require a 1:1 ratio of agricultural land preserved to agricultural land converted and require agricultural land preserved to be equivalent to agricultural land converted. The mitigation program shall also require that the agricultural land preserved demonstrate adequate water supply and agricultural zoning, and shall be located outside the City UDB, and within the southern San Joaquin Valley. The mitigation program shall, to the extent feasible and practicable, be integrated with the agricultural easement programs adopted by the County and nearby cities. The City's mitigation program shall allow mitigation to be provided by purchase of conservation easement or payment of fee, but shall indicate a preference for purchase of easements. The mitigation program shall require easements to be held by a qualifying entity, such as a local land trust, and require the submission of annual monitoring reports to the City. The mitigation program shall specifically allow exemptions for conversion of agricultural lands in Tier I, or conversion of agricultural lands for agricultural processing uses, agricultural buffers, public facilities, and roadways.

- *LU-P-35*: Adopt the County's Right-to-Farm ordinance to support continued agricultural operations at appropriate locations within the City limits, with no new provisions.

  This ordinance should not limit urban development contemplated by the General Plan.

- *OSC-P-24*: To allow efficient cultivation, pest control and harvesting methods; require buffer and transition areas between urban development and adjoining or nearby agricultural land.

- *OSC-P-25*: Require new development to implement measures, as appropriate, to minimize soil erosion related to grading, site preparation, landscaping, and construction.

3.2.3 Thresholds of Significance

The thresholds of significance for this section are established by the CEQA Appendix G Checklist. Would the Project:

a) *Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?*
b) *Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?*
c) *Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?*
d) *Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?*
e) *Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?*

3.2.4 Impacts Discussion

Impact 3.2-1: 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?

Before Mitigation	Significant (permanent conversion of 118.8 acres of Prime Farmland; LESA score of 77.5)
Mitigation Measures	None feasible.
After Mitigation	**Significant and Unavoidable Impact**

The Project Site is currently in agricultural use and supports approximately 118.8 acres of Prime Farmland and 3.2 acres of Farmland of Local Importance. Implementation of the proposed Project would result in the permanent conversion of this farmland to industrial, commercial, and supporting infrastructure uses. Although the Project Site is located within the Tier I UDB and is designated as Industrial in the Visalia 2030 General Plan, the conversion of 118.8 acres of Prime Farmland represents a significant loss of an important agricultural resource. According to the EIR prepared for the Visalia 2030 General Plan Update in 2014, the Visalia Planning area contains 39,518 acres of Farmland, of which 33,991 acres are Prime Farmland. This conversion of 122 total acres of farmland would result in a 0.31 percent reduction in the total Farmland inventory. The conversion of 118.8 acres of Prime Farmland would result in a 0.35 percent

reduction in the Prime Farmland inventory in the Visalia Planning Area. While these percentages may appear relatively minor in the broader regional context, the permanent loss of productive farmland remains significant given the cumulative and irreversible nature of such conversions.

The Project's farmland conversion impacts were analyzed utilizing the California Agricultural LESA Model, which the California Department of Conservation developed to provide lead agencies with a methodology to ensure that significant effects on the environment of agricultural land conversions are quantitatively and consistently considered in the environmental review process.[26]

LESA Model

The LESA is composed of six different factors, which are divided into two sets: Land Evaluation (LE) and Site Assessment (SA) factors. Two LE factors (Land Capability Classification Rating and Storie Index Rating) are based upon measures of soil resources quality and intended to measure the inherent, soil-based qualities of land as they relate to agricultural suitability. Four SA factors (Project Size Rating, Water Resource Availability Rating, Surrounding Agricultural Lands Rating, and Surrounding Protected Resource Lands Rating) are intended to measure social, economic, and geographic attributes that also contribute to the overall value of agricultural land.

The two sets of factors are evenly weighted, meaning the two LE factors and four SA factors are of equal importance; however, for a given project, each of these six factors is separately rated on a 100-point scale. The factors are then weighted relative to one another and combined, resulting in a single numeric score for a given project, with a maximum attainable score of 100 points. This final project score becomes the basis for making a determination of the potential impact's level of significance for the Project, based upon a range of established scoring thresholds.

Land Evaluation Factors

The LESA includes two LE factors, discussed below, that are separately rated.

The Land Capability Classification Rating (LCC)

The LCC indicates the suitability of soils for most kinds of crops. Groupings are made according to the limitations of the soils when used to grow crops and the risk of damage to soils when used in agriculture. Soils are rated from Class I to Class VIII, with soils having the fewest

26) Public Resources Code §21095

limitations receiving the highest rating (Class I). Specific subclasses are also utilized to further characterize soils.

The Storie Index Rating

The Storie Index provides a numeric rating (based upon a zero to 100 scale) of the relative degree of suitability or value of a given soil for intensive agriculture. The rating is based upon soil characteristics only. Four factors that represent the inherent characteristics and qualities of the soil are considered in the Storie Index rating: profile characteristics, texture of the surface layer, slope, and other factors such as drainage or salinity.

Site Assessment Factors

The four SA factors that are separately rated and included in the LESA are discussed below.

The Project Size Rating

The Project Size rating is based upon identifying acreage figures for three separate groupings of soil classes within the project Site, and then determining what grouping generates the highest Project Size score. The Project Size Rating relies upon acreage figures that were tabulated under the LCC Rating.

The Water Resources Availability Rating

The Water Resources Availability rating is based upon identifying the various water sources that may supply a given property, and then determining whether different restrictions in supply are likely to take place in years that are characterized as being periods of drought and non-drought.

The Surrounding Agricultural Land Rating

Determination of the Surrounding Agricultural Land rating is based upon identification of a project's Zone of Influence (ZOI), which is defined as that land near a given project, both directly adjoining and within a defined distance away, that is likely to influence, and be influenced by, the agricultural land use of the subject project Site. The Surrounding Agricultural Land rating is designed to provide a measurement of the level of agricultural land use for lands close to a given project. The LESA rates the potential significance of the conversion of an agricultural parcel that has a large proportion of surrounding land in agricultural production more highly than one that has relatively small percentage of surrounding land in agricultural production. The definition of the ZOI that accounts for surrounding lands (a minimum of 0.25 mile from the project boundary) is the result of several iterations during model development for assessing an area that will generally be a representative sample of surrounding land use. See Figure 3-11.

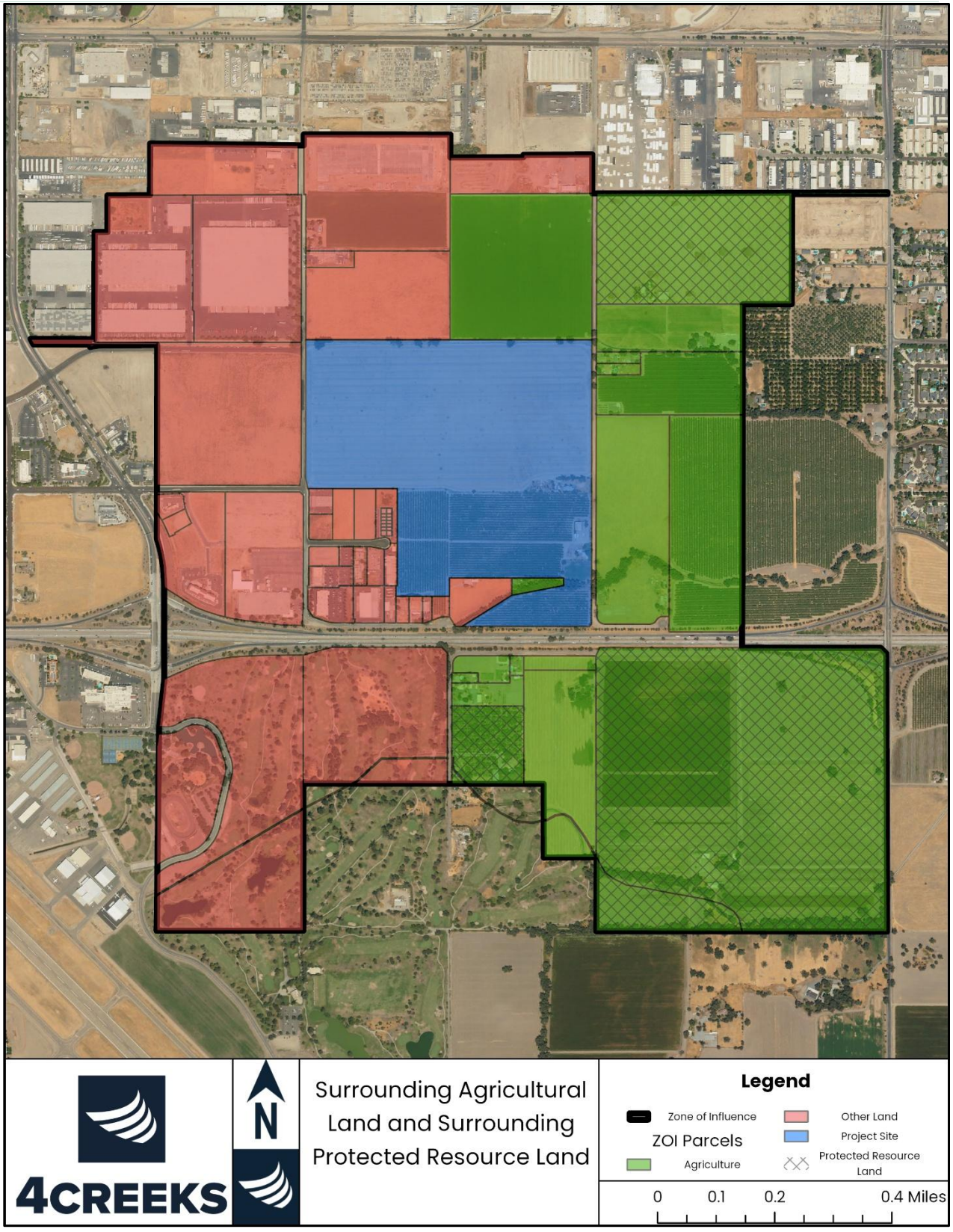


Figure 3-11. ZOI and Surrounding Agricultural Land

The Surrounding Protected Resource Land Rating

The Surrounding Protected Resource Land rating is essentially an extension of the Surrounding Agricultural Land rating, and it is scored in a similar manner. Protected resource lands are those lands with long-term use restrictions that are compatible with or supportive of agricultural uses of land. Included among them are the following:

- Williamson Act contracted lands
- Publicly owned lands maintained as a park, forest, or watershed resources
- Lands with agricultural, wildlife habitat, open space, or other natural resource easements that restrict the conversion of such land to urban and industrial uses

Final LESA Scoring

A single LESA score is generated for a given project after all the individual LE and SA factors have been scored and weighted. The LESA is weighted so that 50 percent of the total LESA score of a given project is derived from the LE factors and 50 percent is derived from the SA factors. The final LESA score was determined for the proposed Project and the modeling results are described in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1: Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model Scoring Summary

Factor	Factor Score	Factor Weight	Weighted Factor Points
Land Evaluation (LE)			
Land Capability Classification	100	0.25	25
Storie Index	90	0.25	22.5
LE Subtotal	**—**	**0.50**	**47.5**
Site Assessment (SA)			
Project Size	100	0.15	15
Water Resource Availability	100	0.15	15
Surrounding Agricultural Land	0	0.15	0
Surrounding Protected Resource Lands	0	0.05	0
SA Subtotal	**—**	**0.50**	**30**
Final LESA Score			**77.5**

Source: California Agricultural LESA Model; see Appendix C.

LESA Thresholds of Significance

The LESA is designed to make determinations of the potential significance of a project's conversion of agricultural lands during the CEQA process. Scoring thresholds are based upon both the total LESA score and the component LE and SA separate subscores. In this manner,

the scoring thresholds are dependent upon the attainment of a minimum score for the LE and SA subscores so that a single threshold is not the result of heavily skewed subscores (i.e., a site with a very high LE score but a very low SA score, or vice-versa). The LESA scoring thresholds are described in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2: LESA Scoring Thresholds

Total LESA Score	Scoring Decision
0 to 39 Points	Not considered significant
40 to 59 Points	Considered significant only if LE and SA subscores are each greater than or equal to 20 points
60 to 79 Points	Considered significant unless either the LE or SA subscore is less than 20 points
80 to 100 Points	Considered significant

Source: California Agricultural LESA Model; see Appendix C.

LESA Results and Impact Determination

According to the LESA Threshold of Significance, the total score of 77.5 for the proposed Project Site is considered significant unless either LE or SA subscore is less than 20 points, which it is not. However, the Project is located within the Tier I UDB, as defined by the City of Visalia General Plan. Pursuant to Visalia Municipal Code Chapter 18.04 (Agricultural Land Preservation Program), areas in Tier I are exempt from compliance with the requirements of this Ordinance. Therefore, the Project is not subject to the agricultural mitigation ratios or preservation requirements that would otherwise apply to farmland conversion under this local ordinance.

The Site is designated as Industrial in the Visalia General Plan, with a small portion allocated as Conservation that would be developed as the Project's stormwater detention basin. As a county island partially surrounded by incorporated City properties, the Project aligns with the General Plan's intent to promote urban development in Tier I areas. This designation anticipates and encourages the conversion of land to non-agricultural uses supporting efficient land use.

The loss of farmland was previously evaluated under the City's General Plan EIR, adopted in October 2014 (State Clearinghouse #2010041078). The General Plan identifies the need for the conversion of agricultural land to urban development and designates the Site for industrial use. The City has set aside three-tiered areas planned for development which contain land designated as Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance. The Project is within Tier I, which has been deemed as land to be converted from agricultural land to urban development without additional mitigation beyond the policies outlined in the General Plan.

However, despite the Project's consistency with the General Plan Designation and Tiered Growth Strategy, the LESA indicates a significant impact resulting from the conversion of Prime Farmland.

The exemption from agricultural preservation requirements under Visalia Municipal Code Chapter 18.04 provides no additional mitigation pathway. Tier I projects are exempt from the 1:1 preservation ratio and easement or in-lieu fee obligations that apply to Tiers II and III. This exemption reflects the City's policy that farmland conversion in already urbanized or committed areas, such as the Site, does not necessitate additional mitigation. Policy LU-P-34 does not apply to Tier I lands, and there is no feasible method to mitigate the loss of this Important Farmland. The potential impacts of converting agricultural land in Tier I were analyzed in the 2014 General Plan EIR. No new circumstances have emerged that would alter those findings, but the Project introduces site-specific impacts beyond those already considered. The Site is bordered by agricultural land to the north and east, vacant land to the west, and commercial uses and SR 198 to the south, with existing industrial development in the vicinity, which reduces its viability for long-term agricultural use, but the proposed conversion would still fragment larger agricultural operations or create incompatible edges, as the area is transitioning to urban uses consistent with the General Plan.

The absence of feasible additional mitigation measures supports the determination that the impact cannot be reduced below a level of significance. Given the exemption and the prior EIR coverage, no additional measures are available to further reduce impacts. The Project incorporates General Plan policies for compatibility with adjacent uses, such as setbacks and design standards, which indirectly support orderly development but do not mitigate the loss of Prime Farmland. These factors establish that the impact from Farmland conversion for the Project is significant and unavoidable.

Mitigation Measures

No feasible mitigation is available beyond compliance with existing regulations.

Impact 3.2-2: Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

Before Mitigation	Significant (development could begin before Williamson Act contracts in non-renewal expire)
Mitigation Measures	MM AG-1

After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

Agricultural Zoning

The Project Site is currently zoned AE-20 (Exclusive Agriculture, 20-acre minimum) under Tulare County, which permits agricultural uses. Although the Site is within the City of Visalia's Planning Area and Tier I UDB and designated as Industrial under the Visalia 2030 General Plan, the proposed Project would convert land currently zoned for agriculture to industrial, commercial, and infrastructure uses. The City's long-term land use plan anticipates this transition through annexation and pre-zoning to Industrial; however, until annexation and rezoning are finalized, the Project could be viewed as conflicting with current agricultural zoning designations in Tulare County. Upon annexation, the Site would be pre-zoned Industrial (I), consistent with the General Plan, and the Project would no longer conflict with agricultural zoning.

Willaimson Act Contract

According to Tulare County's official land conservation records, Williamson Act Contract #9794 (Preserve #3382) and Contract #10351 (Preserve #3509) are both in non-renewal status. A Notice of Non-Renewal has been filed for each contract, and both contracts are set to expire after the remaining term. If development would commence prior to expiration of the remaining non-renewal terms, cancellation of the contracts and diminishment of the agricultural preserve would be required, and both actions would need to be initiated and acted upon by the contract holder (Tulare County prior to annexation, or the City of Visalia if the contracts have been succeeded to by the City at the time of initiation) in accordance with California Government Code Sections 51280 et seq. and Section 51230 et seq., respectively. MM AG-1 will be implemented to ensure compliance with the Williamson Act.

Mitigation Measures

> **MM AG-1: Williamson Act Contract Compliance.** Prior to annexation, the Project Applicant shall coordinate with Tulare County to ensure compliance with the non-renewal process for the Williamson Act contracts. Since the contracts are in non-renewal status, the Applicant shall either:
>
> - Observe the remaining wind-down period and any required payments, ensuring development does not commence until the contracts have fully expired; or
> - If development commences prior to expiration of the contracts, petition the contract holder (Tulare County or City of Visalia) for cancellation of the contracts and diminishment of the agricultural preserve. The cancellation petition must be granted in

accordance with California Government Code Sections 51280 et seq., including the required statutory findings under Section 51282 and payment of the cancellation fee under Section 51283, and diminishment of the agricultural preserve must be approved in accordance with Government Code Sections 51230 et seq.

Documentation of compliance shall be provided to the City of Visalia.

Impact 3.2-3: 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))?

Before Mitigation	No Impact
Mitigation Measures	None Required
After Mitigation	**No Impact**

The Project Site is not zoned for forest land, timberland, or timberland Production. There is no forest land located on the Site, and the Project does not involve any activities related to forest resources. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land or timberland. *There is no impact.*

Impact 3.2-4: Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

Before Mitigation	No Impact
Mitigation Measures	None Required
After Mitigation	**No Impact**

The Project Site does not contain any forest land as defined under PRC § 12220(g) or Government Code. The Site is currently used for agricultural purposes and is planned for industrial development. Therefore, the Project would not result in the loss of forestland or the conversion of forest land to non-forest use. There is no *impact.*

Impact 3.2-5: 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?

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None Required
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

This impact was previously studied as part of the 2014 Visalia General Plan Update EIR, which analyzed potential urban-agricultural interface issues and farmland conversion at a programmatic level for areas designated for industrial and commercial development within the City's Planning Area. The 2014 EIR concluded that losing over 14,000 acres of the existing Important Farmland would be a significant and unavoidable impact at the programmatic level. The General Plan's Land Use Diagram and related policies seek to minimize these impacts. The three-tier growth management system will reinforce Visalia's compact form, minimizing the interface between farming and urban uses. The Plan establishes greenbelt buffers along the urban edge in some places, while providing requirements for buffering and screening of private development elsewhere.

For the proposed Project, the Site is located on the urban fringe and is adjacent to existing agricultural operations to the north, east, and south. Development of the Site for industrial and commercial uses could potentially create urban-agricultural interface issues, such as increased traffic, dust, and noise. However, the Project would not introduce residential occupants, but rather employees associated with industrial and commercial uses, which are not considered sensitive land uses that would generate conflicts with normal agricultural activities (pesticide application, irrigation, harvesting). Any potential for the Project to indirectly contribute to the conversion of surrounding agricultural lands would be speculative, as adjacent lands are already designated for specific uses under the City of Visalia General Plan and would require separate annexation and entitlement processes prior to any conversion. The extension of infrastructure (roads, utilities) to support the Project is consistent with the City's growth policies, which direct development to designated urban areas and do not inherently facilitate unplanned conversions. Therefore, the Project would not result in changes that could lead to the conversion of farmland into non-agricultural uses or forest land to non-forest uses. There is a *less than significant impact.*

3.2.5 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts refer to the combined effects of the proposed Project with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects that could incrementally contribute to adverse effects on agricultural resources. Under CEQA Guidelines § 15130, cumulative impacts are evaluated based on whether the Project's incremental contribution is "cumulatively considerable," meaning it would result in a significant cumulative effect when viewed in connection with other projects.

Cumulative Setting and Geographic Scope

The geographic scope for cumulative agricultural impacts includes the western edge of the City of Visalia and surrounding areas within Tulare County, particularly along SR 198 and SR 99, where agricultural lands are transitioning to industrial and urban uses. This scope is appropriate because farmland conversions are influenced by regional economic development, infrastructure expansions, and urban growth patterns that affect soil resources, agricultural viability, and land use compatibility across interconnected parcels. The area is characterized by Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance, mixed with existing industrial parks, orchards, fields, and emerging logistics facilities. The City's 2030 General Plan designates much of this area for industrial expansion to support economic growth, while emphasizing preservation tools like agricultural easements and buffers to mitigate losses outside designated growth boundaries.

Key cumulative projects and trends include:

- **Regional Developments**: Ongoing and planned industrial annexations and expansions in western Visalia, such as the Shirk and Riggin Industrial Park (284 acres converted from agricultural land for industrial uses)[27], the TeVelde annexation (over 300 acres added to the Visalia Industrial Park), a 75-acre annexation in the Visalia Industrial Park at the southwest corner of Shirk Street and Riggin Avenue,[28] and a 17-acre industrial site near the intersection of SR 99 and SR 198[29]. These projects, within a five-mile radius of the Project Site, involve similar conversions of Prime Farmland to warehousing, manufacturing, and logistics facilities.
- **General Growth Trends**: Visalia's population and economic growth, as projected in the 2030 General Plan, are driving increased demand for industrial space, leading to further annexation of "county islands" and conversion of agricultural land over the next 10-20 years. This includes infrastructure improvements like the Riggin Widening Project (from Kelsey

27) Shirk and Riggin Industrial Park EIR
28) Shirk And Riggin Annexation Project
29) Industrial Land Site

Street to Shirk Street)[30] and expansions along Highways 99 and 198, which facilitate urban encroachment into farmland areas.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

The proposed Project would contribute to cumulative agricultural changes by converting approximately 122 acres of farmland, including 118.8 acres of Prime Farmland, to industrial, commercial, and infrastructure uses. When combined with other regional developments, this could result in widespread loss of productive agricultural land, fragmentation of farming operations, increased urban-agricultural conflicts, and reduced regional agricultural output.

- **Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to Non-Agricultural Use (Impact 3.2-1):** Cumulatively, industrial expansions and annexations are converting thousands of acres of Prime Farmland across western Visalia and Tulare County, diminishing the area's agricultural base and economic contributions from farming. The Project adds 118.8 acres to this loss, aligning with the General Plan's Tier I growth strategy but contributing to the irreversible reduction in farmland inventory. While policies like LU-P-34 promote regional easements and a 1:1 mitigation ratio for Tiers II and III, Tier I exemptions limit mitigation here. The flat, fertile topography and shared water resources amplify cumulative effects, as conversions encourage further non-agricultural development. The Project's contribution to cumulative impacts on farmland conversion would be cumulatively considerable.
- **Conflict with Existing Zoning for Agricultural Use or a Williamson Act Contract (Impact 3.2-2)**: Cumulative projects often involve rezoning agricultural land or Williamson Act non-renewals, but most comply with processes like notices of non-renewal, cancellations under Government Code Sections 51280 et seq., and diminishment of agricultural preserves under Government Code Sections 51230 et seq. The Project, with its contracts in non-renewal status, incorporates MM AG-1 for compliance. The area's transition to industrial zoning under the General Plan minimizes conflicts. The Project's effect would not be cumulatively considerable.
- **Conflict with Existing Zoning for Forest Land, Timberland, or Timberland Production (Impact 3.2-3):** No forest land or timberland exists in the cumulative area, which is dominated by agricultural and urban uses. There are no cumulative impacts.
- **Result in the Loss of Forest Land or Conversion of Forest Land to Non-Forest Use (Impact 3.2-4):** As with Impact 3.2-3, the absence of forest resources in the region results in no cumulative impacts.
- Involve Other Changes That Could Result in Conversion of Farmland to Non-Agricultural Use or Forest Land to Non-Forest Use (Impact 3.2-5): Cumulative development could create interface issues like dust, noise, and traffic that pressure adjacent farms, potentially leading

30) Riggin Widening Project

to indirect conversions. However, the Project and similar developments incorporate buffers and comply with the County's Right-to-Farm Ordinance (Policy LU-P-35) and General Plan policies for compatibility (OSC-P-24). The industrial focus, without introducing sensitive residential uses, limits conflicts. The Project's effect would not be cumulatively considerable.

Conclusion

While cumulative development in western Visalia and Tulare County would contribute to the significant loss of agricultural resources, the proposed Project's conversion of Prime Farmland aligns with the 2030 General Plan's planned growth in Tier I areas but adds to the irreversible regional decline in farmland. The Project's incremental effects on farmland conversion would be cumulatively considerable, as they compound the impacts of other annexations and expansions. Therefore, cumulative impacts on agricultural resources would be *significant and unavoidable.*

3 - 3 Air Quality

This section of the EIR identifies potential impacts of the proposed Project on Air Quality Resources. An Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Health Risk Assessment technical report (prepared October 2025, revised June 2026) prepared by Core Environmental Consulting was utilized to support the evaluation (See Appendix D).

3.3.1 Environmental Setting

Topography

The topography of a region is important for air quality because mountains can block airflow that would help disperse pollutants and can channel air from upwind areas that transports pollutants to downwind areas. The San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB) is generally shaped like a bowl. It is open in the north and is surrounded by mountain ranges on all other sides. The Sierra Nevada mountains are along the eastern boundary (8,000 to 14,000 feet in elevation), the Coast Ranges are along the western boundary (3,000 feet in elevation), and the Tehachapi Mountains are along the southern boundary (6,000 to 8,000 feet in elevation).

Climate

Climate is important for air quality because of differences in the atmosphere's ability to trap pollutants close to the ground, creating adverse air quality, or to rapidly disperse pollutants over a wide area, preventing high concentrations from accumulating under different climatic conditions. The Air Basin has an "inland Mediterranean" climate and is characterized by long, hot, dry summers and short, foggy winters. Sunlight can be a catalyst in the formation of some air pollutants (such as ozone); the Air Basin averages over 260 sunny days per year. Dominant airflows provide the driving mechanism for transport and dispersion of air pollution. The mountains surrounding the Air Basin form natural horizontal barriers to the dispersion of air contaminants. The wind generally flows south-southeast through the valley and Tulare County, through the Tehachapi Pass and into the Mojave Desert Air Basin portion of Kern County. As the wind moves through the Air Basin, it mixes with the air pollution generated locally, generally transporting air pollutants from the north to the south in the summer and in a reverse flow in the winter.

Sensitive Receptors

Sensitive receptors are land uses or people considered to be more sensitive than others to air pollutants. The reasons for greater than average sensitivity include pre-existing health

problems, proximity to emissions sources, or duration of exposure to air pollutants. Residences, schools, hospitals, convalescent homes, and parks are considered to be relatively sensitive to poor air quality because children, elderly people, and the infirm are more susceptible to respiratory distress and other air quality-related health problems than the general public. Residential areas are considered sensitive to poor air quality because people usually stay home for extended periods of time, with associated greater exposure to ambient air quality. Recreational uses are also considered sensitive due to greater exposure to ambient air quality conditions because vigorous exercise associated with recreation places a high demand on the human respiratory system. The nearest sensitive receptors to the Site include the following:

- Single-family rural residences are located adjacent to the eastern Project boundary and within the southern triangular cutout portion of the Site.
- Single-family residential homes located directly to the east across Clancy Street (Road 88), with the closest home approximately 160 feet to the east.
- Hurley Elementary School located approximately 3,300 feet to the east.
- San Joaquin Valley College (SJVC) Visalia, a private career college located approximately ¼ mile southwest of the Site (students and employees fall outside the most sensitive age ranges of children and elderly).
- The City of Visalia General Plan Land Use Element designates an area as Multi-Family Residential approximately 2,300 feet southeast of the Project Site, which could result in new sensitive receptors.

Air Pollutant Types, Sources, and Effects

Criteria Air Pollutants

Concentrations of criteria air pollutants are used as indicators of air quality conditions. Air pollutants are termed criteria air pollutants if they are regulated by developing specific public health- and welfare-based criteria as the basis for setting permissible levels. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), criteria air pollutants are ozone, particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), carbon monoxide (CO), lead, and sulfur dioxide (SO_2).[31]

Ozone (O3)

A reactive gas consisting of three atoms of oxygen. In the stratosphere, ozone exists naturally and shields Earth from harmful ultraviolet radiation. In the troposphere, it is a product of the

31) 31 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Criteria Air Pollutants

photochemical process involving the sun's energy. It is a secondary pollutant that is formed when nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOC) react in the presence of sunlight. Ozone at the earth's surface causes numerous adverse health effects and is a major component of smog. High concentrations of ground-level ozone can adversely affect the human respiratory system and aggravate cardiovascular disease and many respiratory ailments. Ozone also damages natural ecosystems such as forests and foothill communities, agricultural crops, and some man-made materials, such as rubber, paint, and plastics.

Oxides of Nitrogen (NO_x)

A family of gaseous nitrogen compounds and a precursor to the formation of ozone and PM. The major component of NO_x, nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), is a reddish-brown gas that is toxic at high concentrations. NO_x results primarily from the combustion of fossil fuels under high temperature and pressure. On- and off-road motor vehicles and fuel combustion are the major sources of this air pollutant.

Particulate Matter (PM)

Also known as particle pollution, this is a complex mixture of extremely small particles and liquid droplets. Particle pollution is made up of a number of components, including acids (such as nitrates and sulfates), organic chemicals, metals, and soil or dust particles. The size of particles is directly linked to their potential for causing health problems. EPA is concerned about particles that are 10 micrometers in diameter or smaller because those are the particles that generally pass through the throat and nose and enter the lungs. Once inhaled, these particles can affect the heart and lungs and cause serious health effects. EPA groups particle pollution into three categories based on their size and where they are deposited:

Inhalable coarse particles (PM_{10}), such as those found near roadways and dusty industries, are between 2.5 and 10 micrometers in diameter. PM_{10} is deposited in the thoracic region of the lungs.

Fine particles ($PM_{2.5}$), such as those found in smoke and haze, are 2.5 micrometers in diameter and smaller. These particles can be directly emitted from sources such as forest fires, or they can form when gases emitted from power plants, industries, and automobiles react in the air. They penetrate deeply into the thoracic and alveolar regions of the lungs.

Ultrafine particles (UFP), are very small particles less than 0.1 micrometers in diameter largely resulting from the combustion of fossil fuels, meat, wood and other hydrocarbons. While UFP mass is a small portion of $PM_{2.5}$, its high surface area, deep

lung penetration, and transfer into the bloodstream can result in disproportionate health impacts relative to their mass.

PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$, and UFP include primary and secondary pollutants. Generally, $PM_{2.5}$ and UFP are emitted by combustion sources like vehicles, power generation, industrial processes, and wood burning, while PM_{10} sources include these same sources plus roads and farming activities. Fugitive windblown dust and other area sources represent a source of airborne dust in the Valley.

Acute and chronic health effects associated with high PM levels include the aggravation of chronic respiratory diseases, heart and lung disease, coughing, bronchitis, and respiratory illnesses in children.

Carbon Monoxide (CO)

An odorless, colorless gas that is highly toxic. It is formed by the incomplete combustion of fuels and is emitted directly into the air (unlike ozone). The main source of CO in the San Joaquin Valley is on-road motor vehicles. Other CO sources in the Valley include other mobile sources, miscellaneous processes, and fuel combustion from stationary sources. Because of the local nature of CO problems, ARB and EPA designate urban areas as CO nonattainment areas instead of the entire basin as with ozone and PM_{10}. Motor vehicles are by far the largest source of CO emissions. Emissions from motor vehicles have been declining since 1985, despite increases in vehicle miles traveled (VMT), with the introduction of new automotive emission controls and fleet turnover.

Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2)

A colorless, irritating gas with a "rotten egg" smell formed primarily by the combustion of sulfur-containing fossil fuels. The SJVAB is in attainment of both the Federal and California standards for SO_2. However, like airborne NO_x, suspended sulfur oxides (SO_x) particles contribute to the poor visibility that sometimes occurs in the Valley. These SO_x particles can also combine with other pollutants to form $PM_{2.5}$. The prevalence of low-sulfur fuel use in the Valley has minimized problems from this pollutant.

Lead (Pb)

A metal that is a natural constituent of air, water, and the biosphere. Lead is neither created nor destroyed in the environment, so it essentially persists forever. The health effects of lead poisoning include loss of appetite, weakness, apathy, and miscarriage; it can also cause lesions of the neuromuscular system, circulatory system, brain, and gastrointestinal tract.

Gasoline-powered automobile engines were a major source of airborne lead through the use of leaded fuels. The use of leaded fuel has been mostly phased out, with the result that ambient concentrations of lead have dropped dramatically. Lead concentrations were last systematically measured in the SJVAB in 1989, when the average concentrations were approximately five percent of the State lead standard.

Toxic Air Contaminants

A toxic air contaminant (TAC) is defined as an air pollutant that may cause or contribute to an increase in mortality or serious illness, or that may pose a hazard to human health. TACs are usually present in minute quantities in the ambient air; however, their high toxicity or health risk may pose a threat to public health even at low concentrations. There are no ambient air quality standards for TAC emissions. TACs are regulated in terms of health risks to individuals and populations exposed to the pollutants. The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments significantly expanded the EPA's authority to regulate Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAPs). Section 112 of the Clean Air Act lists 188 HAPs to be regulated by source category. Authority to regulate these pollutants was delegated to individual states. The ARB and local air districts regulate TACs and HAPs in California. The California Almanac of Emissions and Air Quality—2009 Edition presents the relevant concentration and cancer risk data for the 10 TACs that pose the most substantial health risk in California based on available data. The 10 TACs are acetaldehyde, benzene, 1,3-butadiene, carbon tetrachloride, hexavalent chromium, para-dichlorobenzene, formaldehyde, methylene chloride, perchloroethylene, and diesel particulate matter (DPM).

Hydrogen Sulfide (H_2S)

Associated with geothermal activity, oil and gas production, refining, sewage treatment plants, and confined animal feeding operations. Hydrogen sulfide is extremely hazardous in high concentrations; especially in enclosed spaces (800 ppm can cause death). OSHA regulates workplace exposure to H2S.

Sulfates (SO_4^{2-})

The fully oxidized ionic form of sulfur. Sulfates occur in combination with metal and/or hydrogen ions. In California, emissions of sulfur compounds occur primarily from the combustion of petroleum-derived fuels (gasoline and diesel fuel) that contain sulfur. This sulfur is oxidized to sulfur dioxide (SO_2) during the combustion process and subsequently converted to sulfate compounds in the atmosphere. The conversion of SO_2 to sulfates takes place comparatively rapidly and completely in urban areas of California due to regional meteorological features. The CARB sulfates standard is designed to prevent aggravation of respiratory symptoms. Effects of sulfate exposure at levels above the standard include a decrease in ventilatory function, aggravation of asthmatic symptoms, and an increased risk of

cardio-pulmonary disease. Sulfates are particularly effective in degrading visibility, and, due to the fact that they are usually acidic, can harm ecosystems and damage materials and property. Data collected in the SJVAB demonstrate levels of sulfates significantly less than the health standards.

Visibility Reducing Particles

A mixture of suspended particulate matter consisting of dry solid fragments, solid cores with liquid coatings, and small droplets of liquid. The standard is intended to limit the frequency and severity of visibility impairment due to regional haze and is equivalent to a 10-mile nominal visual range.

Vinyl Chloride (C_2H_3Cl, also known as VCM)

A colorless gas that does not occur naturally. It is formed when other substances such as trichloroethane (TCA), trichloroethylene (TCE), and perchloroethylene (PCE) are broken down. Vinyl chloride is used to make polyvinyl chloride (PVC) which is used to make a variety of plastic products, including pipes, wire and cable coatings, and packaging materials.\

Diesel Particulate Matter

The primary TAC of concern resulting from the Project would be DPM. As further described below, the ARB has identified DPM as a carcinogenic substance and estimates that DPM comprises approximately 70 percent of all airborne cancer risk in California.[32] The Project is not expected to generate any other substantial source of TACs.

DPM is emitted by diesel-fueled vehicles and equipment. DPM has been identified as a TAC by CARB based on its potential exposures and health concerns. The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) evaluated over 30 human epidemiological studies on the carcinogenic effects of diesel exhaust. These studies found that long-term occupational exposures to diesel exhaust were associated with a 40 percent increase, on average, in the relative risk of lung cancer.[33] These epidemiological studies strongly suggest a causal relationship between occupational diesel exhaust exposure and lung cancer.

A number of adverse long-term noncancer effects have been associated with exposure to diesel exhaust. Occupational studies have shown that there may be a greater incidence of cough, phlegm and chronic bronchitis among those exposed to diesel exhaust than among those not exposed. Reductions in pulmonary function have also been reported following

32) California Air Resources Board - Summary: Diesel Particulate Matter Health Impacts
33) Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment - Health Assessment for Diesel Exhaust

occupational exposures in chronic studies. Adverse short-term health effects have also been associated with exposures to diesel exhaust. Occupational exposures to DPM have been associated with significant cross-shift decreases in lung function. Increased cough, labored breathing, chest tightness, and wheezing have been associated with exposure to diesel exhaust in bus garage workers. A significant increase in airway resistance and increases in eye and nasal irritation were observed in human volunteers following one-hour chamber exposure to diesel exhaust.

Several pollutants listed above are not addressed in this analysis. An analysis of lead is not included in this section because the proposed Project would not generate a new, significant source of lead emissions. Visibility-reducing particles are not explicitly addressed in this analysis because particulate matter is addressed under the analysis for PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$. Given the nature of the proposed Project, no components of the Project would result in vinyl chloride or hydrogen sulfide emissions in any substantial quantity; therefore, these compounds are not further evaluated in this section.

Asbestos

Asbestos is the name given to several naturally occurring fibrous silicate minerals that have been mined for their useful properties, such as thermal insulation, chemical and thermal stability, and high tensile strength. The three most common types of asbestos are chrysotile, amosite, and crocidolite. Chrysotile, also known as white asbestos, is the most common type of asbestos found in buildings. Chrysotile makes up approximately 90 to 95 percent of all asbestos contained in buildings in the United States. Exposure to asbestos is a health threat; exposure to asbestos fibers may result in health issues such as lung cancer, mesothelioma (a rare cancer of the thin membranes lining the lungs, chest, abdominal cavity), and asbestosis (a non-cancerous lung disease that causes scarring of the lungs). Exposure to asbestos can occur during demolition or remodeling of buildings that were constructed prior to the 1977 ban on asbestos for use in buildings. Exposure to naturally occurring asbestos can occur during soil-disturbing activities in areas with deposits present.[34]

Valley Fever

Valley Fever, or coccidioidomycosis, is an infection caused by inhalation of spores of the fungus, Coccidioides immitis (*C. immitis*). Spores live in soil and can live for an extended time in harsh environmental conditions. Activities or conditions that increase the amount of fugitive dust, including dust storms, grading, and recreational off-road activities, contribute to greater exposure. The number of Valley Fever cases reported nationally has quadrupled in the past

34) California Air Resources Board - Asbestos Fact Sheet

decade. There were over 11,000 reported cases in 2015, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that an additional 150,000 cases go undiagnosed each year. About 28 percent of all cases occur in California.[35] There have been several outbreaks of Valley Fever in California in recent years. The distribution of *C. immitis* is not uniform, and growth sites are commonly small (a few tens of meters) and widely scattered. Known sites appear to have some ecological factors in common, suggesting that certain physical, chemical, and biological conditions are more favorable for *C. immitis* growth. Avoidance, when possible, of sites favorable for the occurrence of *C. immitis* is a prudent risk management strategy.

Exposure to *C. immitis* could occur during soil-disturbing activities in areas with deposits present; however, because most of the Project Site and immediately surrounding vicinity consists of cultivated fields, areas where fertilizers are used, and urbanized development, the Project Site would have low probability of *C. immitis* growth sites or exposure from disturbed soil. No further analysis is necessary.

Air Quality

Air quality is a function of both the rate and location of pollutant emissions under the influence of meteorological conditions and topographic features. Atmospheric conditions such as wind speed, wind direction, and air temperature inversions interact with the physical features of the landscape to determine the movement and dispersal of air pollutant emissions and, consequently, their effect on air quality.

Regional Air Quality

Air Pollutant Standards and Attainment Designations

The Clean Air Act (CAA) requires the EPA to set National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for criteria pollutants (described above). The EPA designates areas with air quality not meeting federal standards as "nonattainment". The CAA further classifies nonattainment areas based on the severity of nonattainment, with marginal, moderate, serious, severe, and extreme nonattainment classifications for ozone, and marginal to serious for particulate matter (PM).

States may also establish their own ambient air quality standards, provided the State standards are at least as stringent as the NAAQS. California has established California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 39606(b) and its predecessor statutes. CARB is the agency responsible for coordination and oversight of State and local air pollution control programs in California and for implementing the California Clean Air Act (CCAA) of 1988. The CCAA classifies ozone nonattainment areas as moderate, serious,

35) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Valley Fever Statistics

severe, and extreme based on severity of violations of State ambient air quality standards. For each class, the CCAA specifies air quality management strategies that must be adopted. For all nonattainment categories, attainment plans are required to demonstrate a five-percent-per-year reduction in nonattainment air pollutants or their precursors, averaged every consecutive three-year period, unless an approved alternative measure of progress is developed. Air Districts with air quality that is in violation of CAAQS are required to prepare an air quality attainment plan that lays out a program to attain the CCAA mandates.

Table 3-3 presents the NAAQS and CAAQS, and Table 3-4 presents the current attainment status of the SJVAB for each standard.

Table 3-3: Ambient Air Quality Standards

Pollutant	Averaging Time	California Standards[1]		National Standards[2]		
		Concentration[3]	Method[4]	Primary[3,5]	Secondary[3,6]	Method[7]
Ozone (O_3)	1 Hour	0.09 ppm (180 µg/m³)	Ultraviolet Photometry	-	Same as Primary Standard	Ultraviolet Photometry
	8 Hour	0.07 ppm (137 µg/m³)		0.07 ppm (137 µg/m³)		
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM_{10})	24 Hour	50 µg/m³	Gravimetric or Beta Attenuation	150 µg/m³	Same as Primary Standard	Inertial Separation and Gravimetric Annual Analysis
	Annual Arithmetic Mean	20 µg/m³		-		
Fine Particulate Matter ($PM_{2.5}$)[8]	24 Hour	No Separate State Standard	Gravimetric or Beta Attenuation	35 µg/m³	Same as Primary Standard	Inertial Separation and Gravimetric Annual Analysis
	Annual Arithmetic Mean	12 µg/m³		9.0 µg/m³	15.0 µg/m3	
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	1 Hour	20 ppm (23 mg/m³)	Non-Dispersive Infrared Photometry (NDIR)	35 ppm (40 mg/m³)	-	Non-Dispersive Infrared Photometry (NDIR)
	8 Hour	9.0 ppm (10 mg/m³)		9 ppm (10 mg/m³)	-	
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)[9]	1 Hour	0.18 ppm (339 µg/m³)	Gas Phase Chemiluminescence	0.100 ppm (188 µg/m³)	-	Gas Phase Chemiluminescence
	Annual Arithmetic Mean	0.030 ppm (57 µg/m³)		0.053 ppm (100 µg/m³)	Same as Primary Standard	
Sulfur Dioxide[10]	1 Hour	0.25 ppm (655 µg/m³)	Ultraviolet Fluorescence	0.075 ppm (196 µg/m³)	-	Ultraviolet Fluorescence; Spectrophotometry (Pararosaniline Method)
	3 Hour	-		-	0.5 ppm (1300 µg/m³)	
	24 Hour	0.04 ppm (105 µg/m³)		0.14 ppm (for certain areas)[10]	-	

	Annual Arithmetic Mean	-		0.030 ppm (for certain areas)[10]	0.010 ppm (10 ppb) [11]	
Lead[12,13]	30 Day Average	1.5 µg/m³	Atomic Absorption	-	-	High Volume Sampler and Atomic Absorption
	Calendar Quarter	-		1.5 µg/m3 (for certain areas)[13]	Same as Primary Standard	
	Rolling 3-Month Average	-		0.15 µg/m³		
Visibility Reducing Particles[14]	8 Hour	See footnote 14	Beta Attenuation and Transmittance through Filter Tape	No National Standard		
Sulfates	24 Hour	25 µg/m³	Ion Chromatography			
Hydrogen Sulfide	1 Hour	0.03 ppm (42 µg/m³)	Ultraviolet Fluorescence			
Vinyl Chloride[12]	24 Hour	0.01 ppm (26 µg/m³)	Gas Chromatography			

1. California standards for ozone, carbon monoxide (except 8-hour Lake Tahoe), sulfur dioxide (1 and 24 hour), nitrogen dioxide, and particulate matter (PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$, 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_{10}, the 24 hour standard is attained when the expected number of days per calendar year with a 24-hour average concentration above 150 µg/m3 is equal to or less than one. For $PM_{2.5}$, 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 CARB 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 February 7, 2024, the EPA lowered the primary annual $PM_{2.5}$ national standard from 12.0 µg/m³ to 9.0 µg/m³ (effective May 6, 2024). The secondary annual standard was retained at 15.0 µg/m³, and the 24-hour primary and secondary standards were retained at 35 µg/m³. Certain regulatory requirements associated with the 1997, 2006, and 2012 $PM_{2.5}$ standards remain in effect in designated areas. California has not established a 24-hour $PM_{2.5}$ standard.

9. 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 standards are in units of parts per billion (ppb). California standards are in units of parts per million (ppm). To directly compare the national standards to the California standards the units can be converted from ppb to ppm. In this case, the national standards of 53 ppb and 100 ppb are identical to 0.053 ppm and 0.100 ppm, respectively.

10. On June 2, 2010, a new 1-hour SO_2 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_2 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 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.

11. The EPA's 2024 SO_2 rulemaking established a new annual secondary national standard of 10 ppb (0.010 ppm), determined as an annual mean averaged over three years. The 1971 3-hour secondary standard of 0.5 ppm was retained.

12. The CARB 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/m3 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 CARB 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.

Source: EPA, NAAQS Table; CARB, Ambient Air Quality Standards; SJVAPCD, Ambient Air Quality Standards and Valley Attainment Status.

Table 3-4: San Joaquin Valley Air Basin Attainment Status

Pollutant	Designation/Classification	
	Federal Standards [a]	State Standards [b]
Ozone – One hour	Attainment[c]	Nonattainment/Severe
Ozone – Eight hour	Nonattainment/Extreme[d]	Nonattainment
PM 10	Attainment[e]	Nonattainment
PM 2.5	Nonattainment[f]	Nonattainment
Carbon Monoxide	Attainment/Unclassified	Attainment/Unclassified
Nitrogen Dioxide	Attainment/Unclassified	Attainment
Sulfur Dioxide	Attainment/Unclassified	Attainment
Lead (Particulate)	No Designation/Classification	Attainment
Hydrogen Sulfide	No Federal Standard	Unclassified
Sulfates	No Federal Standard	Attainment
Visibility Reducing Particles	No Federal Standard	Unclassified
Vinyl Chloride	No Federal Standard	Attainment

a. See 40 CFR Part 81
b. See CCR Title 17 Sections 60200–60210
c. Effective June 15, 2005, the EPA revoked the federal 1-hour ozone standard, including associated designations and classifications. The EPA had previously classified the SJVAB as extreme nonattainment for this standard, and approved the 2004 Extreme Ozone Attainment Demonstration Plan on March 8, 2010 (effective April 7, 2010). In

July 2016, the EPA determined that the Valley had attained the 1-hour ozone standard based on certified data for the 2012–2014 period. On September 25, 2025, the EPA approved the 2023 Maintenance Plan and Redesignation Request for the Revoked 1-Hour Ozone Standard, finalized the Valley's redesignation to attainment, and terminated all anti-backsliding obligations associated with the revoked standard.

d. Though the Valley was initially classified as serious nonattainment for the 1997 8-hour ozone standard, the EPA approved reclassification to extreme nonattainment in the Federal Register on May 5, 2010 (effective June 4, 2010). The Valley is also designated extreme nonattainment for the 2008 and 2015 8-hour ozone standards.

e. On September 25, 2008, the EPA redesignated the SJVAB to attainment for the PM_{10} NAAQS and approved the 2007 PM_{10} Maintenance Plan. The Valley remains subject to that approved maintenance plan.

f. The Valley is designated nonattainment for multiple federal $PM_{2.5}$ standards. The EPA designated the Valley nonattainment for the 1997 $PM_{2.5}$ NAAQS, and for the 2006 24-hour $PM_{2.5}$ NAAQS on November 13, 2009 (effective December 14, 2009). On January 15, 2015, the EPA designated the Valley moderate nonattainment for the 2012 annual $PM_{2.5}$ NAAQS (12.0 $\mu g/m^3$); the area was subsequently reclassified to serious. On February 7, 2024, the EPA lowered the primary annual $PM_{2.5}$ NAAQS to 9.0 $\mu g/m^3$ (effective May 6, 2024); CARB recommended that the SJVAB be designated nonattainment for the revised standard. Separately, the EPA determined that the Valley attained the 1997 annual $PM_{2.5}$ NAAQS by the December 31, 2024 attainment date and issued a clean data determination, effective March 2, 2026.

Source: SJVAPCD, Ambient Air Quality Standards and Valley Attainment Status; EPA, 40 CFR Part 81.

The Project Site is within the Tulare County portion of the SJVAB. To characterize the local ambient air quality, Table 3-5 presents data from the most representative, closest, and most current air monitoring station for which data were available: Visalia–W. Ashland Avenue. The most recently available full three years of data are used to accurately reflect the nonattainment status of the area. No recent data was available for CO or SO_2 because monitoring is not conducted for pollutants unlikely to exceed AAQS.

Table 3-5: Visalia-W. Ashland Ave Air Monitoring Station Data

Pollutant	Averaging Time	Item	2022	2023	2024
Ozone	1 Hour	Max 1 Hour (ppm)	0.114	0.100	0.103
		Days > State Standard (0.09 ppm)	8	3	8
	8 Hour	Max 8 Hour (ppm)	0.098	0.087	0.093
		Days > State/National Standard (0.070 ppm)	62	27	62
Nitrogen Dioxide	Annual	Annual Average (ppb)	ID	7	ID
	1 Hour	Max 1 Hour (ppb)	49.7	39.9	42.7
		Days > National Standard (100 ppb)	0	0	0
		Days > State Standard (0.18 ppm)	0	0	0
PM 2.5	24-Hour	Max 24 Hour Average Concentration ($\mu g/m^3$)	48.3	42.9	64.7
		Days > National 24-Hour Standard	17	6	8
	Annual	Annual average Concentration ($\mu g/m^3$)	14.8	11.6	12.9
PM 10	24-Hour	Max 24 Hour Average Concentration ($\mu g/m^3$)	132.7	108.8	173.0
		Days > State 24-Hour Standard	111	102	104
		Days > National 24-Hour Standard	0	0	1

	Annual	Annual Average Concentration (μg/m^3)	43.6	39.0	41.6

3.3.2 Regulatory Setting

International

A few international treaties were formed to control non-GHG air pollution; some examples include:

- **UNECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP) and its Protocols (Gothenburg Protocol)** Regional agreements to control criteria pollutants; implemented through national and regional policies.
- **Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.** Protects the ozone layer by controlling ozone-depleting substances (ODS), which are also powerful GHG. International phase outs of ODS have successfully benefited air quality and climate change.
- **MARPOL Convention.** Major treaty from the International Maritime Organization that sets emission limits for international shipping, including those in designated Emission Control Areas. While air quality is global by nature, project-specific emissions and impacts occur at a more localized level. Compliance is also managed entirely through federal, state, and regional mandates. Thus, no international treaties or plans have direct applicability to the Project-specific design, construction, or operation.

Federal

Clean Air Act

Congress established much of the basic structure of the Clean Air Act (CAA) in 1970, and made major revisions in 1977 and 1990.[36] Six common air pollutants (also known as criteria pollutants) are addressed in the CAA. These are particulate matter, ground-level ozone, CO, sulfur oxides, nitrogen oxides, and lead. The EPA calls these pollutants criteria air pollutants, because it regulates them by developing human health-based and/or environmentally based criteria (science-based guidelines) for setting permissible levels. The set of limits based on human health are called primary standards. Another set of limits intended to prevent environmental and property damage are called secondary standards.[37] The federal standards are called National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The air quality standards provide benchmarks for determining whether air quality is healthy at specific locations and whether

36) EPA - Summary of the Clean Air Act
37) EPA - National Ambient Air Quality Standards

development activities will cause or contribute to a violation of the standards. The criteria pollutants are:

- Ozone
- Particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$)
- Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2)
- Carbon monoxide (CO)
- Lead
- Sulfur dioxide

The federal standards were set to protect public health, including that of sensitive individuals; thus, the EPA is tasked with updating the standards as more medical research is available regarding the health effects of the criteria pollutants. Primary federal standards are the levels of air quality necessary, with an adequate margin of safety, to protect the public health.

The CAA also requires each state to prepare an air quality control plan referred to as a State Implementation Plan (SIP). The federal CAA amendments of 1990 added requirements for states with nonattainment areas to revise their SIPs to incorporate additional control measures to reduce air pollution. The SIP is periodically modified to reflect the latest emissions inventories, planning documents, and rules and regulations of the air basins, as reported by their jurisdictional agencies.[38]

State

Air pollutants are regulated at the national, State, and air basin or county level; each agency has a different level of regulatory responsibility. The EPA regulates at the national level. The CARB regulates at the State level. SJVAPCD regulates at the air basin level. The EPA is responsible for national and interstate air pollution issues and policies. The EPA sets national vehicle and stationary source emission standards, oversees approval of all SIPs, provides research and guidance for air pollution programs, and sets the NAAQS.

A SIP is a document prepared by each state describing existing air quality conditions and measures that will be followed to attain and maintain federal air standards. The SIP for the State of California is administered by the CARB, which has overall responsibility for Statewide air quality maintenance and air pollution prevention. California's SIP incorporates individual federal attainment plans for regional air districts—an air district prepares their federal attainment plan, which is sent to the ARB to be approved and incorporated into the California

38) EPA - State Implementation Plans

SIP. Federal attainment plans include the technical foundation for understanding air quality (emission inventories and air quality monitoring), control measures and strategies, and enforcement mechanisms.[39]

Areas designated nonattainment must develop air quality plans and regulations to achieve standards by specified dates, depending on the severity of the exceedances. For much of the country, implementation of federal motor vehicle standards and compliance with federal permitting requirements for industrial sources are adequate to attain air quality standards on schedule. For many areas of California, however, additional State and local regulation is required to achieve the standards. Regulations adopted by California are described below.

Low Emission Vehicle Program

The ARB first adopted Low Emission Vehicle (LEV) program standards in 1990. These first LEV standards ran from 1994 through 2003. LEV II regulations, running from 2004 through 2010, represented continuing progress in emission reductions. As the State's passenger vehicle fleet continues to grow and more sport utility vehicles and pickup trucks are used as passenger cars rather than work vehicles, the more stringent LEV II standards were adopted to provide reductions necessary for California to meet federally mandated clean air goals outlined in the 1994 SIP. In 2012, ARB adopted the LEV III amendments to California's LEV regulations. These amendments, also known as the Advanced Clean Cars Program, include more stringent emission standards for model years 2017 through 2025 for both criteria pollutants and GHGs for new passenger vehicles.[40]

California Air Resources Board Airborne Toxic Control Measure for Asbestos

In July 2001, the ARB approved an Airborne Toxic Control Measure (ATCM) for construction, grading, quarrying, and surface mining operations to minimize emissions of naturally occurring asbestos (NOA). The regulation requires application of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control fugitive dust in areas known to have NOA and requires notification to the local air district prior to commencement of ground-disturbing activities. The measure establishes specific testing, notification and engineering controls prior to grading, quarrying, or surface mining in construction zones where NOA are located on projects of any size. There are additional notification and engineering controls at work sites larger than 1 acre. These projects require the

39) CARB- State Implementation Plans
40) CARB - Advanced Clean Cars Program (LEV III)

submittal of a "Dust Mitigation Plan" and approval by the air district prior to the start of a project.[41]

Construction sometimes requires the demolition of existing buildings where construction occurs; the Project Site includes several small outbuildings associated with agricultural use which would be demolished as part of the proposed Project. In addition, asbestos is also found in a natural state, known as NOA. Exposure and disturbance of rock and soil that naturally contain asbestos can result in the release of fibers into the air and consequent exposure to the public. Asbestos most commonly occurs in ultramafic rock that has undergone partial or complete alteration to serpentine rock (serpentinite) and often contains chrysotile asbestos. In addition, another form of asbestos, tremolite, can be found associated with ultramafic rock, particularly near faults. Sources of asbestos emissions include unpaved roads or driveways surfaced with ultramafic rock, construction activities in ultramafic rock deposits, or rock quarrying activities where ultramafic rock is present. Exposure to NOA can occur during soil-disturbing activities in areas with deposits present.

Areas are subject to the regulation if they are identified on maps published by the DOC as ultramafic rock units or if the Air Pollution Control Officer or owner/operator has knowledge of the presence of ultramafic rock, serpentine, or NOA on the site. The measure also applies if ultramafic rock, serpentine, or asbestos is discovered during any operation or activity.[42]

Diesel Risk Reduction Plan

The ARB's Diesel Risk Reduction Plan has led to the adoption of new State regulatory standards for all new on-road, off-road, and stationary diesel-fueled engines and vehicles to reduce DPM emissions by about 90 percent overall from year 2000 levels. The projected emission benefits associated with the full implementation of this plan, including federal measures, are reductions in DPM emissions and associated cancer risks of 75 percent by 2010, and 85 percent by 2020.[43] California Air Resources Board Regulation for In-Use Off Road Diesel Vehicles On July 26, 2007, the ARB adopted a regulation to reduce DPM and oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) emissions from in-use (existing) off-road heavy-duty diesel vehicles in California. Such vehicles are used in construction, mining, and industrial operations. The regulation limits idling to no more than 5 consecutive minutes, requires reporting and labeling, and requires disclosure of the regulation upon vehicle sale. The ARB is enforcing that part of the rule with fines up to $10,000 per day for each vehicle in violation. Performance requirements of the rule are based on a fleet's average

41) CARB- Asbestos Airborne Toxic Control Measure (ATCM) for Construction, Grading, Quarrying, and Surface Mining Operations
42) CARB - Naturally Occurring Asbestos Program
43) CARB - Diesel Risk Reduction Plan

NO_x emissions, which can be met by replacing older vehicles with newer, cleaner vehicles or by applying exhaust retrofits. The regulation was amended in 2010 to delay the original timeline of the performance requirements, making the first compliance deadline January 1, 2014 for large fleets (over 5,000 horsepower), 2017 for medium fleets (2,501-5,000 horsepower), and 2019 for small fleets (2,500 horsepower or less).[44]

The latest amendments to the Truck and Bus regulation became effective on December 31, 2014. The amended regulation requires diesel trucks and buses that operate in California to be upgraded to reduce emissions. Newer heavier trucks and buses met particulate matter (PM) filter requirements beginning January 1, 2012. Mandatory replacement of lighter and older heavier trucks began January 1, 2015. As of January 1, 2023, nearly all trucks and buses were required to have 2010 model year engines or equivalent. The regulation applies to nearly all privately and federally owned diesel-fueled trucks and buses and to privately and publicly owned school buses with a gross vehicle weight rating greater than 14,000 pounds. The regulation provides a variety of flexibility options tailored to fleets operating low use vehicles, fleets operating in selected vocations like agricultural and construction, and small fleets of three or fewer trucks.[45]

On-Road Heavy-Duty Vehicle Program

The ARB has adopted standards for emissions from various types of new on-road heavy-duty vehicles. Section 1956.8, Title 13, California Code of Regulations contains California's emission standards for on-road heavy-duty engines and vehicles, and test procedures. The ARB has also adopted programs to reduce emissions from in-use heavy-duty vehicles including the Heavy-Duty Diesel Vehicle Idling Reduction Program, the Heavy-Duty Diesel In-Use Compliance Program, the Public Bus Fleet Rule and Engine Standards, and the School Bus Program and others.[46]

Regulations for Heavy-Duty Vehicles/Trucks

California Air Resources Board Airborne Toxic Control Measure to Limit Diesel-Fueled Commercial Motor Vehicle Idling

This ATCM adopted Section 2485 within Chapter 10, Article 1, Division 3, title 13 in the California Code of Regulations. The measure limits the idling of diesel vehicles (i.e., commercial trucks over 10,000 pounds) to reduce emissions of toxics and criteria pollutants. The driver of any vehicle subject to this section: (1) shall not idle the vehicle's primary diesel engine for greater

44) CARB - In-Use Off Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets Regulation
45) CARB - Truck and Bus Regulation
46) CARB - Heavy-Duty Vehicle Emissions Programs

than 5 minutes at any location; and (2) shall not idle a diesel-fueled auxiliary power system for more than 5 minutes to power a heater, air conditioner, or any ancillary equipment on the vehicle if it has a sleeper berth and the truck is located within 100 feet of a restricted area (homes and schools).

California Air Resources Board Requirements to Reduce Idling Emissions from New and In-Use Trucks.

Amendments were made to Title 13 in California Code of Regulations in Sections 1956.8, 2404, 2424, 2425, and 2485. Among other things, the amendments state: "All new 2008 and subsequent model year heavy-duty diesel engines shall be equipped with an engine shutdown system that automatically shuts down the engine after 300 seconds of continuous idling operation once the vehicle is stopped, the transmission is set to 'neutral' or 'park,' and the parking brake is engaged. If the parking brake is not engaged, then the engine shutdown system shall shut down the engine after 900 seconds of continuous idling operation once the vehicle is stopped and the transmission is set to 'neutral' or 'park.'" There are a few conditions where the engine shutdown system can be overridden to prevent engine damage.[47] Any trucks involved in the operation of the proposed Project that are model year 2008 or later would be equipped with this engine shutdown system, which would reduce air emissions.

Statewide Truck and Bus Regulation

(Regulation to Reduce Emissions of DPM, Oxides of Nitrogen and Other Criteria Pollutants, from In Use Heavy-Duty Diesel-Fueled Vehicles, Title 13, California Code of Regulations, Section 2025). On December 12, 2008, the ARB approved this regulation (Regulation to Reduce Emissions of DPM, Oxides of Nitrogen and Other Criteria Pollutants, from In-Use Heavy-Duty Diesel-Fueled Vehicles, Title 13, California Code of Regulations, Section 2025) to reduce emissions from existing on-road diesel trucks and buses operating in California. This regulation applies to all on-road heavy-duty diesel-fueled vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating greater than 14,000 pounds, agricultural yard trucks with off-road certified engines, and certain diesel-fueled shuttle vehicles of any gross vehicle weight rating. Out-of-state trucks and buses that operate in California are also subject to the regulation. Under the regulation, older, heavier trucks (i.e., those with pre-2000 year engines and a gross vehicle weight rating greater than 26,000 pounds), are required to have installed a PM filter and must be replaced with a 2010 engine between 2015 and 2020, depending on the model year.[48]

Airborne Toxic Control Measure for Transport Refrigeration Units and TRU Generator Sets

47) CARB - Requirements to Reduce Idling Emissions from New and In-Use Trucks
48) CARB - Statewide Truck and Bus Regulation

This measure was adopted by the CARB to reduce TAC emissions from in-use Transport Refrigeration Units (TRUs) and TRU generator sets used to power electrically driven refrigerated shipping.[49]

Regional

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) is the primary regulatory body, setting the mandatory compliance rules and the CEQA significance thresholds for the Project. A variety of other regional and local agencies contribute to air pollution control, but the regional air districts have the primary responsibility and expertise. They work with the other agencies to continually advance the latest science and strategies, conduct feasibility studies, and work actively with affected stakeholders to determine levels of pollution and control that are reasonably possible to achieve in each industry. All of the emissions inventories, regional transportation plans, and regulatory programs feed back into the regional air district attainment plans, and the latest technologies and control measures are applied to reduce emissions to the maximum extent reasonably possible. This is why the CEQA Guidelines state that, where available, significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make air quality significance determinations.[50]

The CAA requires areas with air quality violating the NAAQS to prepare an air quality control plan referred to as the State Implementation Plan (SIP). The SIP contains the strategies and control measures that states will use to attain the NAAQS. The CAA amendments of 1990 require states containing areas that violate the NAAQS to revise their SIP to incorporate additional control measures to reduce air pollution. The SIP is periodically modified to reflect the latest emissions inventories, planning documents, rules, and regulations of Air Basins as reported by the agencies with jurisdiction over them. The EPA reviews SIPs to determine if they conform to the mandates of the CAA amendments and will achieve air quality goals when implemented. If the EPA determines a SIP to be inadequate, it may prepare a Federal Implementation Plan (FIP) for the nonattainment area and impose additional control measures.

SIP is the State's plan for attaining the NAAQS. The contents of a typical SIP fall into several categories:

- State-adopted control measures which consists of either rules/regulations or source-specific requirements (orders and consent decrees);

49) CARB - Transport Refrigeration Unit Airborne Toxic Control Measure
50) SJVAPCD - Guidance for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts

- State-submitted comprehensive air quality plans, such as attainment plans, maintenance plans, rate of progress plans, and transportation control plans demonstrating how these state regulatory and source-specific controls, in conjunction with federal programs, will bring and/or keep air quality in compliance with federal air quality standards;
- State-submitted 'non-regulatory' requirements, such as emission inventories, small business compliance assistance programs, statutes demonstrating legal authority, and monitoring networks; and
- Additional requirements promulgated by EPA (in the absence of a commensurate State provision) to satisfy a mandatory section 110 or part D (Clean Air Act) requirement.

SJVAPCD attainment plans are a regional component of the SIP. SIP includes annual increases in air pollutant emissions resulting from regional growth (including construction-generated emissions) anticipated according to local land use plans (general plans, regional transportation plans). The SIP also assumes the incremental increase in emissions will be partially offset through the implementation of stationary, area, and indirect source control measures contained within the SIP.

As presented in Table 3-4, at the Federal level, the SJVAB is designated as extreme nonattainment for the 8-hour ozone standard and is designated serious nonattainment for Federal $PM_{2.5}$ standards. Consistent with CAA requirements, SJVAPCD has adopted attainment plans that demonstrate how the District will attain and maintain the NAAQS. These plans are developed through a public process, formally adopted by the State, and submitted by the Governor's designee to the EPA. The CAA requires EPA to review each plan and any plan revisions and to approve the plan or plan revisions if consistent with the CAA.

Each attainment plan includes a comprehensive and exhaustive list of regulatory and incentive-based measures to reduce emissions of ozone and particulate matter precursors throughout the Valley. Consistent with the direction of each plan, the SJVAPCD adopted regulatory measures that, in the majority of cases, exceed the plan commitment for a given source category.

Many of the rules implemented through the Extreme Ozone Attainment Demonstration Plan and 2007 Ozone Plan are the first of their type in the nation or are deemed the most stringent in the nation. SJVAPCD's strategy to reduce emissions also includes the proactive use of incentives to obtain reductions that would otherwise not be cost-effective for industry or are outside the District's regulatory authority. The path towards attainment is being further accelerated by Valley industry and municipal investments in cleaner technologies and emissions reductions implemented at the state and local level. These include a multitude of regulations developed by CARB, numerous transportation control measures implemented by

the metropolitan planning organizations, and many measures implemented by the federal government that were not included in attainment plans.[51]

SJVAPCD has established the following attainment plans to address criteria pollutants:

- 2004 Revisions to the Carbon Monoxide Maintenance Plan
- Ozone Plans
    - 2004 Extreme Ozone Attainment Demonstration Plan (withdrawn)
    - 2007 Plan for the 1997 8-Hour Ozone Standard
    - 2009 RACT SIP
    - 2013 Plan for the Revoked 1-Hour Ozone Standard
    - 2014 RACT SIP
    - 2016 Plan for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard
    - 2020 RACT Demonstration
    - 2022 Plan for the 2015 8-Hour Ozone Standard
    - 2023 Maintenance Plan and Redesignation Request for the Revoked 1-Hour Ozone Standard
- Particulate Matter Plans
    - 2006 PM10 Plan
    - 2007 PM10 Maintenance Plan
    - 2008 PM2.5 Plan
    - 2012 PM2.5 Plan
    - 2015 Plan for the 1997 PM2.5 Standard
    - 2016 Moderate Area Plan for the 2012 PM2.5 Standard
    - 2018 Plan for the 1997, 2006, and 2012 PM2.5 Standards52

As with CARB, SJVAPCD has established a wide variety of regulations, programs, and incentives to control air pollution at both the programmatic and project level. Some of the important SJVAPCD regulations that could relate to the Project include the following.

- **Regulation II – Permits to Operate:** requires applicable operations and pollutant sources to obtain an Authority to Construct or a Permit to Operate.
- **Rule 2280 – Portable Equipment Registration:** allows Applicants to register portable emission units (usually portable generators) as an alternative to the CARB program.

51) SJVAPCD - Air Quality Plans
52) SJVAPCD - Attainment Plans List

- **Rule 4001 – New Source Performance Standards:** establishes specific standards, criteria, and requirements for new sources of air pollution or modification of existing sources.
- **Rule 4002 – National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants:** Incorporates the National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants from Code of Federal Regulations.
- **Rule 4101 – Visible Emissions:** prohibits the emissions of visible air contaminants.
- **Rule 4601 – Architectural Coatings:** limits VOC emissions from architectural coatings application, storage, cleanup, and labeling.
- **Rule 4622 – Gasoline Transfer into Motor Vehicle Fuel Tanks:** limits emissions of gasoline vapors from the transfer of gasoline into motor vehicle fuel tanks.
- **Rule 4623 – Storage of Organic Liquids**: limits VOC emissions from the storage of organic liquids (including gasoline and diesel).
- **Rule 4624 – Transfer of Organic Liquid:** limits VOC emissions from the transfer of organic liquids (including gasoline and diesel).
- **Rule 4702 – Internal Combustion Engines:** limits NOx, CO, VOC, and SO_x from internal combustion engines.
- **Regulation VIII – Fugitive PM_{10} Prohibitions:** limits fugitive PM_{10} emissions from construction, demolition, excavation, extraction, other earthmoving activities, bulk materials, carryout and trackout, open areas, paved and unpaved roads, unpaved vehicle/equipment traffic areas, and agricultural sources.
- **Rule 9510 – Indirect Source Review:** requires development projects with emissions exceeding the mitigation threshold to incorporate onsite measures and/or pay mitigation fees to substantially reduce construction and operation PM_{10} and NO_x emissions.[53]

As with the CARB regulations, most of the applicable SJVAPCD regulations are enforced outside of the CEQA process, with various existing regulatory programs, and are therefore assumed to be included as project design features. No new compliance steps are being added through this CEQA analysis. Many of the key regulations are already incorporated into the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) and were generally not directly added as project design features or Mitigation Measures. Section 7 of the Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Health Risk Assessment (Appendix D), Modeling and Calculation Methodologies, lists specific non-default regulations, project design features, and/or mitigation measures that were included in the emissions modeling. Section 8 of the Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Health Risk Assessment (Appendix D), Potential Impacts, discusses Mitigations that are required to directly reduce

53) SJVAPCD - Rules and Regulations

potentially significant impacts (criteria pollutants, greenhouse gases, or health risks) to a less than significant level.

Major compliance steps that will be required for the Project, outside of the mitigation measures identified in this EIR, include:

- Complete the Indirect Source Review (ISR) process with SJVAPCD, including submittal of Air Impact Assessment Application and payment of fees.
- Prepare and submit a Dust Control Plan (DCP) detailing applicable measures from Regulation VIII to be used during construction and operation.
- Complete the permitting process with SJVAPCD, for each applicable land use, prior to building and operating.

The proposed industrial/warehouse buildings (approximately 1,748,900 SF), industrial-serving commercial pads (approximately 55,500 SF), and self-storage facility (approximately 29,645 SF) are unlikely to require permitting for most tenants because emissions would primarily result from mobile sources (vehicle trips) and energy use. The exact tenant uses are not yet known, and each lot will be subject to site plan review. Any future tenant proposing regulated equipment or processes would require separate SJVAPCD permitting at the time of tenant improvement.

However, if any of the final land uses include directly regulated sources or activities that would produce substantial emissions, they must first obtain an Authority to Construct and Permit to Operate from SJVAPCD. The permitting process ensures that all major air pollution control requirements are specifically encoded as permit conditions.

2030 City of Visalia General Plan

The 2030 General Plan includes the policies related to air quality resources that correlate to the proposed Project:

- *Policy AQ-P-2: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to require use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce particulate emission as a condition of approval for all subdivisions, development plans and grading permits, in conformance with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Fugitive Dust Rule.*
- *Policy AQ-P-5: When asbestos has been identified in the preliminary soils report, require all new development and public works projects to comply with all provisions of State and regional ATCM regulations for control of airborne asbestos emissions relating to construction, road maintenance, and grading activities.*
- *Policy AQ-P-7: Be an active partner with the Air District in its "Spare the Air" program. Encourage businesses and residents to avoid pollution-producing activities such as*

the use of fireplaces and wood stoves, charcoal lighter fluid, pesticides, aerosol products, oil-based paints, and automobiles and other gasoline engines on days when high ozone levels are expected, and promote low-emission vehicles and alternatives to driving.

- *Policy AQ-P-8: Update the Zoning Ordinance to strictly limit the development of drive-through facilities, only allowing them in auto-oriented areas and prohibiting them in Downtown and East Downtown.*
- *Policy AQ-P-9: Continue to mitigate short-term construction impacts and long-term stationary source impacts on air quality on a case-by-case basis and continue to assess air quality impacts through environmental review. Require developers to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce air pollutant emissions associated with the construction and operation of development projects. The SJVAPCD GAMAQI provides BMPs for determining and mitigating project air quality impacts and related thresholds of significance for use in environmental documents.*
- *Policy AQ-P-12: Support the implementation of Voluntary Emissions Reduction Agreements (VERA) with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (the District) for individual development projects that may exceed District significance thresholds. A VERA is a voluntary mitigation measure where a Project proponent provides pound-for-pound mitigation of emissions increases through a process that develops, funds, and implements emissions reduction projects, with the District serving a role of administrator of emissions reduction programs and verifier of successful mitigation effort. To implement a VERA, the Project proponent and the District enter into a contractual agreement in which the Project proponent agrees to mitigate project-specific emissions by providing funds for the District's Strategies and Incentives Program. The funds are disbursed in the form of grants for projects that achieve emissions reductions.*
- *Policy EJ-3.1: The City shall continue working with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to determine what, if any, mitigation measures can be implemented to reduce air pollution impacts to the Neighborhoods of Focus and residential areas adjacent to the State Route 99 and SR 198.*
- *Policy EJ-3.3: The City shall enforce California's five-minute maximum diesel truck idling law, require warehouse and distribution facilities to provide adequate onsite truck parking, and require refrigerated warehouses to provide generators for refrigerated trucks.*

- *Policy EJ-4.1: The City shall require new sensitive land uses and/or industrial and commercial land uses to incorporate setbacks, barriers, landscaping, or other design and development standards as necessary to minimize pollution exposure.*

3.3.3 Thresholds of Significance

The CEQA Guidelines define a significant effect on the environment as "a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in the environment." To determine if a project would have a significant impact on air quality, the type, level, and impact of emissions generated by the Project must be evaluated.

The following air quality significance thresholds are contained in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. A significant impact would occur if the Project would:

a) *Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan;*
b) *Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable national or state ambient air quality standard;*
c) *Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations; or*
d) *Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people.*

Health Basis of the Thresholds of Significance

In *Sierra Club v. County of Fresno* (2018) 6 Cal.5th 502 (*Friant Ranch*), the California Supreme Court held that an EIR must make a reasonable effort to connect a project's criteria pollutant emissions to the health consequences of those emissions, or to explain why that connection cannot be made.[54] The Court did not require project-level toxicological or epidemiological modeling. It requires a reasoned explanation of the relationship among the emissions a project would generate, the thresholds used to evaluate those emissions, and the potential for adverse health outcomes. This subsection establishes that relationship for the thresholds applied in Section 3.3 and Impacts 3.3-1 through 3.3-4 apply it to the Project's modeled emissions.

The health effects associated with each criteria pollutant, TAC, and other emission evaluated in this section are described in Section 3.3.1, Environmental Setting, under Air Pollutant Types, Sources, and Effects. Those effects include aggravation of asthma and other respiratory illness, reduced pulmonary function, cardiovascular effects, and, for DPM, increased lifetime cancer risk.

54) Sierra Club v. County of Fresno

Criteria pollutant emissions are evaluated against the SJVAPCD mass emission thresholds presented in Tables 3-6 and 3-7. Those thresholds are not arbitrary administrative conveniences. They represent the maximum annual mass of each pollutant a single project may emit without impeding the SJVAB's progress toward attainment of the NAAQS and CAAQS. The NAAQS and CAAQS are themselves the health-based standards: the EPA and CARB set them at concentrations determined, on the weight of the available medical and epidemiological evidence, to protect public health with an adequate margin of safety, including the health of sensitive populations such as children, the elderly, and persons with pre-existing respiratory or cardiovascular disease. Primary federal standards are established for that purpose alone. The SJVAPCD derived its project-level thresholds from the emission reductions its attainment plans must achieve to reach those concentrations, and the attainment plans are incorporated into the California SIP and reviewed by the EPA. A project whose emissions fall below the SJVAPCD thresholds therefore does not consume the emissions headroom the attainment plans rely on and does not delay the date on which Valley residents are exposed to air meeting the health-based standards.

The reason a further quantitative step is not feasible for ozone and secondary PM is a matter of atmospheric chemistry rather than analytical effort. Neither ROG nor NO_x is itself the pollutant that produces the respiratory effects of concern. Both are precursors that react over hours to days, across distances measured in tens of miles, under conditions of sunlight, temperature, and mixing height that vary independently of the Project. The concentration-response functions that relate ambient ozone or $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations to health endpoints operate on basin-wide ambient concentrations, and the incremental ambient concentration attributable to the Project's precursor emissions is smaller than the resolution of the regional photochemical models used to develop those functions. There is at present no generally accepted methodology for translating project-level precursor emissions into localized health outcomes, and none has been adopted by SJVAPCD for project-level analysis. In its amicus brief in Friant Ranch, SJVAPCD advised the Court that regional models are not reliable at the scale of a single project's emissions, and that the resolution and background-concentration dependence of those models introduce uncertainty exceeding the Project's own contribution. This limitation is inherent in the state of the science and is the reason SJVAPCD, like other California air districts, applies mass emission thresholds tied to attainment planning rather than project-level health outcome modeling.

Localized ambient concentrations of criteria pollutants are evaluated against the NAAQS, CAAQS, and Significant Impact Levels (SILs) under Impact 3.3-3, which are concentration-based health standards applied at the receptor. TAC emissions are evaluated through the HRA described under Impact 3.3-3, which uses AERMOD dispersion modeling and OEHHA-approved

exposure parameters to calculate cancer risk and chronic hazard index at individual receptors, including the residences along the southern and eastern Site boundaries. GHG emissions, addressed in Section 3.8, produce effects at a global rather than a localized scale and are evaluated on the basis of consistency with adopted State and local climate plans.

Taken together, these thresholds provide the framework for determining whether the Project's incremental contribution to pollutant concentrations or health risk is significant.

3.3.4 Impacts Discussion

Impact 3.3-1: Would the Project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Before Mitigation	Significant (unmitigated operational ROG exceeds the SJVAPCD threshold)
Mitigation Measures	MM AQ-1 through MM AQ-3
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

Projects that comply with relevant SJVAPCD attainment plans and generate emissions below established thresholds of significance do not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of applicable air quality plans. The proposed Project adheres to these standards through a combination of regulatory compliance, emissions modeling, and targeted mitigation measures, as detailed below and in the revised Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Health Risk Assessment Technical Study (Appendix D, Revised June 2026).

Regulatory Compliance Framework

Most applicable CARB and SJVAPCD regulations are enforced independently of the CEQA process via existing regulatory programs. These are assumed to be integrated as inherent Project design features, with no additional compliance steps introduced through this CEQA analysis. Key regulations are already embedded in the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod, version 2022.1.1.45), obviating the need for explicit inclusion as Project design features or mitigation measures unless specified otherwise. Compliance with SJVAPCD regulations will occur through multiple pathways:

- **Pre-Construction Requirements**: The Project construction contractor must submit a DCP prior to initiating construction. This plan will outline specific measures aligned with SJVAPCD Regulation VIII to minimize fugitive dust emissions.

- **Indirect Source Review**: The Applicant will complete the ISR process under SJVAPCD Rule 9510. For projects exceeding mitigation thresholds, this entails substantial reductions in NO_x and PM_{10} emissions, or payment of offsite mitigation fees to support equivalent reductions via incentive programs.
- **Permitting for Land Uses**: The proposed industrial/warehouse buildings, self-storage facility, and industrial-serving commercial pads are anticipated to generate emissions primarily from mobile sources (vehicle trips) and energy consumption. Should final land uses involve regulated sources or activities producing substantial emissions, an Authority to Construct and Permit to Operate must be obtained from SJVAPCD. These permits incorporate all major air pollution control requirements as enforceable conditions.
- **Lead Agency Oversight**: As Lead Agency, the City of Visalia will review Project plans and applications to verify alignment with General Plan policies and the City's Climate Action Plan, incorporating any site-specific conditions of approval. The Project must also incorporate the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen), which mandates measures for energy efficiency, water conservation, material resource efficiency, and environmental quality.[55]

In addition to regulatory adherence, SJVAPCD mandates a direct comparison of Project emissions against thresholds of significance for criteria pollutants.

Emissions Modeling and Analysis

The Project will generate air pollutant emissions during both construction and operational phases. Construction emissions primarily arise from equipment exhaust, worker vehicle trips, and fugitive dust from earthmoving activities. Operational emissions stem from mobile sources (employee, visitor, and heavy truck trips), area sources (landscaping equipment and consumer products) and energy consumption. Vehicle trips and onsite off-road equipment represent the majority of these operational emissions.

To quantify these emissions, the analysis utilized the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), Version 2022.1.1.45, a statewide tool developed by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) in collaboration with air districts. Detailed methodologies, including input parameters, assumptions, and calculation procedures, are provided in Section 7 (Methodologies) of Appendix D.=

55) International Code Council - 2022 CALGreen, Chapter 5 Nonresidential Mandatory Measures

CalEEMod Inputs and Modeling Assumptions

The Project's land uses were modeled conservatively using CalEEMod to account for uncertainties in future tenanting while ensuring a robust disclosure of impacts. These are detailed in Section 7 of the revised Appendix D:

- The primary industrial/warehouse structures were evaluated under *Unrefrigerated Warehouse-No Rail* land use subtype. This establishes a health-conservative analysis that captures elevated heavy-duty diesel truck trip distributions.
- Self-storage facilities were also modeled under the *Unrefrigerated Warehouse-No Rail* subtype. This represents a conservative surrogate since CalEEMod lacks a dedicated self-storage option and warehousing overestimates actual trip generation and energy usage.
- The industrial-serving commercial pads were evaluated using a low-intensity, industrial serving commercial surrogate *General Office* to accurately capture localized tenant support and office configurations while preventing the artificial inflation of public-facing retail trip generation rates.
- Paved areas modeled as *Parking Lot* and *Other Asphalt Surfaces* based on the parking and drive areas shown on the Site Plan.
- Stormwater basin and landscaping areas were modeled as *Other Non-Asphalt Areas*.

The CalEEMod model conservatively evaluated approximately 1,749,000 SF of industrial/warehouse, 60,630 SF of industrial-serving commercial, and 30,000 SF of self-storage (approximately 1,839,630 SF total). This slightly exceeds the Project's proposed 1,834,045 SF building program. Project construction timelines are variable, depending on final designs, permitting processes, and economic factors. For modeling purposes, CalEEMod assumed a start date of January 2027, with the default duration predicted by the model (approximately 15 years). This extended period accounts for phased development and overestimates short-term emissions intensity.

Construction modeling relied on CalEEMod defaults for equipment types, activities, and operational parameters, with the following Project-specific inputs:

- **Demolition:** Minimal material removal, limited to existing small structures on the Site.
- **Site Preparation:** 180 acres graded.
- **Grading:** 930 acres graded (cumulative across phases).
- **Paving:** 79.7 acres paved.
- Architectural Coatings:
- 2,758,913 SF of Non-Residential Interior Area Coated.
- 919,638 SF of Non-Residential Exterior Area Coated.

- 208,499 SF of Parking Area Coated.

These inputs ensure the analysis captures the full scope of potential activities while maintaining conservatism.

Modeling Scenarios

Emissions were modeled under two scenarios. The unmitigated scenario reflects Project buildout with only those regulatory requirements and Project design features already embedded in CalEEMod defaults. The mitigated scenario incorporates the additional measures described under Mitigation Measures, below, which were selected directly within the model. Both scenarios are reported in Tables 3-6 and 3-7 so that the effect of each measure on Project emissions is disclosed. Supplemental manual calculations were applied to refine estimates, including refinements to daily CO and annual PM_{10} exhaust based on onsite distance fractions. The ROG reduction credited to the VERA required under MM AQ-1 is applied outside the model, as described below. Details of these calculations are provided in Appendix D.

Criteria Pollutants Analyzed

This analysis evaluates the Project's potential impacts on the following criteria pollutants regulated under federal and state ambient air quality standards:

- Reactive organic gases (ROG)
- Oxides of nitrogen (NO_x)
- Carbon monoxide (CO)
- Sulfur dioxide (SO_2)
- Particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM_{10})
- Particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter ($PM_{2.5}$)

The Project will not directly emit ozone but will contribute precursor pollutants (ROG and NO_x) to its formation. No substantial emissions of other criteria pollutants (vinyl chloride, hydrogen sulfide, lead, or sulfates) are anticipated.

Projected Emissions Compared to Thresholds of Significance

Emissions are summarized below and compared to SJVAPCD thresholds of significance for criteria pollutants. These thresholds represent levels above which a project may have a significant air quality impact. Note that SO_x thresholds are established by SJVAPCD, though CalEEMod reports emissions as SO_2.

Construction Emissions

Unmitigated construction emissions for all criteria pollutants fall below SJVAPCD annual thresholds. However, initial modeling indicated that unmitigated PM_{10} exhaust from off-road construction equipment could result in cancer risks above the SJVAPCD significance threshold at nearby sensitive receptors, as evaluated in the HRA and discussed under Impact 3.3-3. MM AQ-3 was therefore incorporated, requiring Tier 4 Final engine standards for all diesel-fueled off-road equipment, which reduces DPM by approximately 84 percent and further decreases NO_x, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ from equipment exhaust. In addition, standard fugitive dust control measures, including watering of disturbed areas in accordance with SJVAPCD Regulation VIII and Rule 8021, further reduce PM_{10}. With these controls incorporated, construction-related criteria pollutant emissions are less than significant.

Table 3-6: Projected Construction Emissions Compared to SJVAPCD Thresholds of Significance

	CO (tpy)[4]	ROG (tpy)	SO_x (tpy)[3]	NO_x (tpy)	PM_{10} (tpy)	$PM_{2.5}$ (tpy)
Emissions Generated from Project Construction (Unmitigated)[1]	4.6	4.8	0.01	3.3	2.3	0.9
Emissions Generated from Project Construction (Mitigated)[2]	4.9	4.8	0.01	1.6	2.2	0.8
SJVAPCD Thresholds of Significance	100	10	27	10	15	15

1. Unmitigated values represent annual emissions from the CalEEMod Detailed Report (Appendix D) prior to application of mitigation measures

2. Mitigated values incorporate MM AQ-3 (Tier 4 Final engine standards for all diesel-fueled off-road construction equipment)

3. Threshold established by SJVAPCD for SOx; however emissions are reported as SO_2 by CalEEMod.

4. Mitigated CO emissions are slightly higher than unmitigated emissions. Tier 4 Final engines required under MM AQ-3 achieve substantial reductions in NOx and PM through selective catalytic reduction and diesel particulate filtration, but the associated changes in combustion timing and aftertreatment operation can result in a marginal increase in CO. Both mitigated and unmitigated CO emissions remain well below the SJVAPCD annual threshold of significance of 100 tons per year, and the net effect of MM AQ-3 across all criteria pollutants is a substantial reduction in emissions and associated health risk.

Sources: CalEEMod Outputs (Appendix D); SJVAPCD

Operation

Unmitigated annual operational ROG emissions exceed the SJVAPCD threshold of significance by approximately 0.8 tons per year, while all other criteria pollutants are below their respective thresholds without mitigation. Rather than closing that margin through a series of product-specific procurement controls, the Project would offset the exceedance through a Voluntary Emissions Reduction Agreement (VERA) with SJVAPCD, as required by MM AQ-1. A VERA is a

contractual agreement between a Project proponent and SJVAPCD under which the proponent provides funds to the District's Strategies and Incentives Program, and the District disburses those funds as grants for emissions reduction projects that achieve real, quantifiable, permanent, enforceable, and surplus reductions within the SJVAB. The District administers the program, verifying that the contracted reductions are achieved, and reports achievements to the Lead Agency. This approach is expressly supported by 2030 General Plan Policy AQ-P-12, which directs the City to support VERAs for individual development projects that may exceed District significance thresholds.

MM AQ-1 requires the Project Owner to secure, through a VERA, not less than 1.0 ton per year of ROG reductions at full buildout. Because the Project would be constructed in four phases over a multi-year period, the obligation is allocated on a floor-area basis so that it accrues incrementally as each building is permitted. Total building floor area at buildout is 1,834,045 SF (1,834.0 KSF), consisting of 1,748,900 SF of industrial/warehouse buildings, 55,500 SF of industrial-serving commercial pads, and 29,645 SF of self-storage, yielding an obligation of 1.1 pounds of ROG per year per 1,000 SF (KSF) of building floor area. Applied to the building program, the obligation is approximately 276 pounds per year each for Buildings 1 and 2, 383 pounds per year for Building 3, 375 pounds per year for Building 4, 613 pounds per year for Building 5, 61 pounds per year for the industrial-serving commercial pads, and 33 pounds per year for the self-storage facility, for a total of approximately 2,017 pounds (1.0 ton) per year. With the VERA incorporated, net annual operational ROG emissions would be 9.8 tons per year, below the SJVAPCD threshold of 10 tons per year.

Carbon monoxide emissions are reduced from 23.2 to 16.4 tons per year through MM AQ-2, which eliminates exhaust from gas-powered landscaping equipment, and the same measure accounts for the modest reduction in $PM_{2.5}$. NO_x, SO_x, and PM_{10} emissions are below thresholds without mitigation and are therefore reported at the same levels before and after mitigation. SO_x emissions remain negligible, originating primarily from limited natural gas and electricity use. With these measures incorporated, operational criteria pollutant emissions are less than significant.

Table 3-7: Projected Operational Emissions Compared to SJVAPCD Thresholds of Significance

	CO (tpy)	ROG (tpy)	SO_x (tpy)[3]	NO_x (tpy)	PM_{10} (tpy)	$PM_{2.5}$ (tpy)
Emissions Generated from Project Operation (Unmitigated)[1]	23.2	10.8	0.05	3.7	4.1	1.2
Emissions Generated from Project Operation (Mitigated)[2]	16.4	9.8	0.05	3.7	4.1	1.1

SJVAPCD Thresholds of Significance	100	10	27	10	15	15

1. Unmitigated values represent annual emissions from the CalEEMod Detailed Report (Appendix D) prior to application of mitigation measures.

2. Mitigated values incorporate MM AQ-1 (Voluntary Emissions Reduction Agreement) and MM AQ-2 (Zero Emission Landscaping Equipment Plan). Unmitigated ROG emissions exceed the SJVAPCD annual threshold by approximately 0.8 ton per year; the VERA required under MM AQ-1 secures not less than 1.0 ton per year of ROG reductions, bringing net ROG emissions below the threshold. The ROG co-benefit of MM AQ-2 is not credited, which is conservative. NO_x, SO_x, and PM_{10} emissions are below thresholds without mitigation and are reported at the same levels before and after mitigation.

3.Threshold established by SJVAPCD for SOx, however, emissions are reported as SO_2 by CalEEMod.

Sources: CalEEMod Outputs (Appendix D); SJVAPCD

Health Effects of the Project's Criteria Pollutant Emissions

As explained under Health Basis of the Thresholds of Significance in Section 3.3.3, the SJVAPCD mass emission thresholds against which Tables 3-6 and 3-7 are compared represent the level at which a single project's emissions would begin to obstruct the SJVAB's progress toward attaining the health-based NAAQS and CAAQS. With Mitigation Measures AQ-1 through AQ-3 incorporated, the Project's construction and operational emissions of all criteria pollutants and precursors would remain below those thresholds. The Project would therefore not delay attainment of the health-based ambient standards, and its emissions would not be expected to cause or contribute to the respiratory, cardiovascular, and other health effects described in Section 3.3.1. Consistent with *Friant Ranch*, no further quantification of health outcomes attributable to the Project's ozone precursor emissions is available, for the reasons described in Section 3.3.3.

Mitigation Measures

MM AQ-1. Voluntary Emissions Reduction Agreement: The Project Owner shall enter into a Voluntary Emissions Reduction Agreement (VERA) with SJVAPCD to offset operational Reactive Organic Gases (ROG) emissions associated with the Project.

- *Reduction Standard*: The VERA shall secure real, quantifiable, permanent, enforceable, and surplus ROG emissions reductions within the SJVAB at a rate of not less than 1.1 pounds of ROG per year per 1,000 square feet (KSF) of building floor area, and not less than 1.0 ton of ROG per year in total at full Project buildout. Reductions shall be secured through funding provided to the District's Strategies and Incentives Program, in an amount determined by SJVAPCD based on the District's then-current cost-effectiveness values for ROG reduction projects. If final building floor areas differ from those assumed in this EIR, the obligation for each building shall be recalculated at the rate stated above; in no case shall the total obligation at buildout be less than 1.0 ton of ROG per year.
- *Monitoring and Compliance*: Prior to the issuance of a building permit for each building within the Project, the Project Owner shall submit to the Lead Agency an executed VERA, or written confirmation from SJVAPCD that the VERA funding obligation attributable to that

building has been paid or otherwise secured. The Lead Agency shall not issue the building permit until such documentation is received. The VERA obligation shall be incorporated into all future lease agreements and property transfer documents so that it runs with each parcel.

- *Ongoing Verification*: The Project Owner shall provide the Lead Agency with copies of SJVAPCD's VERA implementation and verification reports documenting that the contracted emissions reductions have been achieved, and shall maintain those records for a minimum of three years and make them available to the Lead Agency upon request.

MM AQ-2. Zero Emission Landscaping Equipment Plan: The Project Owner shall implement a Zero Emission Landscaping Equipment Plan for all landscaping activities at the facility.

- *Operational Standard*: All landscaping equipment used on the Project Site shall meet the standards to qualify as zero emissions according to the CARB Amendments to the Small Off Road Engines (SORE) Regulation.
- *Monitoring and Compliance*: Prior to the issuance of a final Certificate of Occupancy, the Project Owner shall submit a signed Landscaping Equipment Use Commitment Letter to the Lead Agency (and/or Air District) stating that only zero emission landscaping equipment will be used. This commitment must be included in all future lease agreements and vendor contracts.
- *Ongoing Verification*: The Project Owner shall maintain records of all landscaping equipment, including data sheets and certification documentation, for a minimum of three years and make them available to the Lead Agency upon request to verify continuous compliance with the Operational Standard.

MM AQ-3. Tier 4 Off Road Engine Control Plan: The construction Contractor shall implement a Tier 4 Off Road Engine Control Plan for all diesel-fueled, off-road equipment used during Project construction.

- *Equipment Standard*: All diesel-fueled, off-road equipment used during Project construction shall meet Tier 4 Final Engine Standards.
- *Monitoring and Compliance*: Prior to the start of construction, the Contractor shall submit a signed Tier 4 Engine Commitment Letter to the Lead Agency (and/or Air District) stating that only off-road equipment and vehicles meeting Tier 4 Engine Standards will be used. This commitment must be included in all contractor and subcontract agreements throughout construction.
- *Ongoing Verification*: The Contractor shall maintain records of all off-road construction equipment, including data sheets and certification documentation, for a minimum of three years and make them available to the Lead Agency upon request to verify continuous compliance with the Equipment Standard.

Impact 3.3-2: Would the Project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable national or state ambient air quality standard?

Before Mitigation	Significant (unmitigated operational ROG exceeds the SJVAPCD threshold)
Mitigation Measures	MM AQ-1 through MM AQ-3
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

The SJVAB, in which the Project is located, is designated as nonattainment for several criteria pollutants under both federal and state ambient air quality standards. Under federal standards, the SJVAB is designated nonattainment for ozone and $PM_{2.5}$; the Valley was redesignated to attainment for PM_{10} in 2008 and is subject to an approved maintenance plan. Under state standards, the SJVAB is designated nonattainment for ozone, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$. This nonattainment status is due to a combination of regional factors, such as vehicle emissions, industrial activities, agricultural operations, and meteorological conditions that trap pollutants. Cumulative air quality impacts occur when multiple projects or sources contribute incrementally to exceedances of these standards, potentially exacerbating regional air pollution levels.

The Project is not connected to any specific past projects that would contribute to a cumulative increase in air pollution. The SJVAPCD emphasizes that air quality impacts are inherently cumulative due to the regional nature of pollutant transport and dispersion. According to SJVAPCD policy, a project's contribution to cumulative impacts is considered "cumulatively considerable" if its individual emissions exceed the district's significance thresholds for criteria pollutants or their precursors. Conversely, projects that emit below these thresholds and comply with federal and state attainment plans are deemed to have a less-than-cumulatively-considerable contribution, as they do not hinder the region's progress toward attainment.

As detailed in Impact 3.3-1, the Project's construction and operational emissions were modeled using CalEEMod with mitigation and found to be lower than the SJVAPCD thresholds. Therefore, the Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard. Impacts would be *less than significant with mitigation incorporated.*

Impact 3.3-3: Would the Project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Before Mitigation	Significant (unmitigated construction DPM cancer risk exceeds the SJVAPCD threshold at the maximally exposed individual)
Mitigation Measures	MM AQ-2 and MM AQ-3
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

The exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations can occur if the Project would result in localized exceedances of National or California Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS/CAAQS), or if Project emissions of Toxic Air Contaminants (TAC) exceed SJVAPCD thresholds of significance.

Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds for Ambient Air Quality

The thresholds of significance for ambient air quality are based on the NAAQS and CAAQS. A project is deemed to have a significant impact if its emissions are projected to cause or contribute to a violation of any NAAQS or CAAQS, including any applicable Significant Impact Levels (SILs) where available.

The most current NAAQS and CAAQS are detailed in Table 3-3 in Section 3.3.1, Environmental Setting. SJVAPCD employs SILs for ambient air quality analyses (AAQA), as specified in Application Review Policy (APR) 1925. Only Class II SILs are applicable for District use; Class I and Class III SILs are provided below for informational purposes.

Table 3-8: SIL Threshold Values

Pollutant	Averaging Period	SILs ($\mu g/m^3$)		
		Class I	Class II	Class III
PM 2.5	Annual	0.03	0.13	0.13
	24-Hour	0.27	1.2	1.2
Fugitive PM 2.5	Annual	-	0.63	-
	24-Hour	-	2.5	-
PM 10	Annual	0.32	1	-
	24-Hour	0.2	5	-
Fugitive PM 10	Annual	-	2.08	-
	24-Hour	-	10.4	-

Carbon Monoxide	8-Hour	-	500	-
	1-Hour	-	2000	-
Nitrogen Dioxide	Annual	0.1	1	-
	1-Hour	-	7.5	-
Sulfur Dioxide	Annual	0.08	1	-
	24-Hour	0.2	5	-
	3-Hour	1	25	-
	1-Hour	-	7.8	-
Source: SJVAPCD, APR 1925.				

SJVAPCD assesses the significance of project-related air quality impacts by evaluating whether onsite emission increases from construction or operational activities (permitted or non-permitted) exceed the 100 pounds per day (lb/day) screening level for any criteria pollutant, following implementation of all enforceable mitigation measures. If exceedances occur, SJVAPCD recommends conducting an AAQA, which employs air dispersion modeling to evaluate potential contributions to violations of ambient air quality standards (AAQS).

SJVAPCD Rule 9510 (Indirect Source Review, or ISR) provides applicability thresholds that are more conservative than the criteria pollutant significance thresholds or the AAQA screening level. These thresholds allow for initial screening of CEQA projects based on land use type and size. Projects below ISR thresholds ("small projects") are anticipated to neither violate AAQS nor contribute to existing or projected violations, nor exceed ambient air quality significance thresholds. For such projects, no emissions calculations or AAQA are required. Rule 9510 identifies relevant thresholds, including 2,000 square feet for commercial space and 25,000 square feet for light industrial space.

For projects meeting or exceeding ISR thresholds, SJVAPCD advises quantifying emissions to ascertain the need for an AAQA. This process aligns with SJVAPCD's methodology in APR 2030.

Thresholds for Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs)

The thresholds of significance for TAC emissions from the operations of both permitted and nonpermitted sources are combined and presented in the following table.

Table 3-9: Thresholds of Significance for Toxic Air Contaminants

Carcinogens	Maximally Exposed Individual risk equals or exceeds 20 in one million
Non-Carcinogens	**Acute:** Hazard Index equals or exceeds 1 for the Maximally Exposed Individual

	Chronic: Hazard Index equals or exceeds 1 for the Maximally Exposed Individual

Project Analysis for Ambient Air Quality Analysis

The Project was evaluated under APR 2030 to determine ISR applicability. The Project exceeds the ISR thresholds; thus, ISR applies and will be addressed separately from the CEQA process. This entails either substantial reductions in Project NO_x and PM_{10} emissions or payment of offsite mitigation fees to achieve equivalent reductions through incentive programs.

ISR applicability is tied to project scale and potential emissions. Accordingly, the AAQA screening proceeded as follows:

- Maximum daily criteria pollutant emissions from construction and operations were calculated per Impact 3.3-1 and documented in Appendix D (CalEEMod Results). These calculations incorporated mitigated emissions from Impact 3.3-1.
- For localized impacts, maximum daily CO emissions were adjusted for onsite contributions, per SJVAPCD policy. This adjustment incorporated ¼ mile offsite travel distance plus onsite travel distance (assumed as ¼ the longest Project side). The total onsite distance formula, accounting for round trips, is:

  Onsite Distance = (¼ mile offsite x 2) + (¼ longest Project side x 2)

- Annual VMT for each land use was divided by annual trips to derive average trip lengths. The onsite distance fraction was applied to maximum daily mobile CO emissions, yielding adjusted mitigated operational CO emissions of 13.1 lb/day. Other pollutants were not adjusted, as their unadjusted levels were well below screening thresholds.

The adjustment specifically accounts for the fraction of mobile source CO emissions occurring on the Site and within a nearby offsite area, ensuring the screening focuses on localized contributions that could lead to CO hotspots. Mobile sources, such as employee vehicles and trucks, are the primary CO emitters during Project operations. The SJVAPCD policy for development projects under Rule 9510 emphasizes this localized approach for CO, as it is a pollutant with potential for concentrated exceedances near high-traffic areas, even in attainment regions like the San Joaquin Valley for CO standards. The method prorates total daily mobile CO emissions by the ratio of local travel distance to average trip length, yielding the adjusted value.

After adjusting for onsite travel distance, the maximum daily CO emissions were near the 100 pounds per day threshold, with the majority of remaining CO emissions coming from landscaping equipment. MM AQ-2 was incorporated to reduce emissions to a less than significant level. This requires the Project owner to implement a Zero Emission Landscaping Equipment Plan for all landscaping activities at the facility.

New sales of most gasoline-powered Small Off Road Engines (SORE) are already banned by CARB starting with model year 2024. Manufacturers must obtain Zero Emission Equipment (ZEE) Certification from CARB for their battery electric models to be sold in California.[56]

However, existing equipment is still currently allowed to be sold and operated. MM AQ-2 supports implementation of the Amendments to the SORE Regulation and provides co-benefits for reducing other criteria pollutants and GHG. To facilitate the transition to ZEE, CARB and SJVAPCD run voucher programs.

It is reasonable to assume that, by the Project operational date, it will be feasible to operate ZEE for landscaping activities. Therefore, this mitigation measure is real, quantifiable, and enforceable.

MM AQ-2 yields a quantifiable reduction in Project CO emissions. As reported in Appendix D, unmitigated maximum daily operational CO emissions would total 187.6 pounds per day, of which approximately 80 pounds per day are attributable to area sources, principally gasoline-powered landscaping equipment. Replacement of that equipment with ZEE eliminates the area-source CO contribution, reducing maximum daily operational CO emissions to 107.6 pounds per day, a reduction of 80 pounds per day (43 percent). With the further adjustment of mobile-source CO for onsite travel distance described above, adjusted maximum daily operational CO emissions would be 13.1 pounds per day, as compared to a pre-mitigation adjusted value of approximately 93 pounds per day, near the 100 pound-per-day AAQA screening threshold.

As shown in the Tables 3-10 and 3-11, with adjustment for onsite travel distance and incorporation of MM AQ-2, none of the maximum daily criteria pollutant emissions from the Project would exceed 100 pounds per day for operation or construction. Therefore, the Project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations by resulting in a localized exceedance of NAAQS or CAAQS.

Table 3-10: Projected Daily Construction Emissions Compared to SJVAPCD AAQA Screening Threshold

	CO (lb/day)[4]	ROG (lb/day)	SO_x (lb/day)[3]	NO_x (lb/day)	PM_{10} (lb/day)	$PM_{2.5}$ (lb/day)
Emissions Generated from Project Construction (Unmitigated)[1]	42.1	43.5	0.07	28.0	20.9	11.2

56) CARB - 2021 Amendments to the Small Off Road Engine Regulations

Emissions Generated from Project Construction (Mitigated)[2]	44.0	43.4	0.07	12.9	19.9	10.2
SJVAPCD AAQA Screening Threshold (100 lb/day)	100	100	100	100	100	100

1. Unmitigated values represent the highest daily (peak season) emissions from the CalEEMod Detailed Report (Appendix D) prior to application of mitigation measures.

2. Mitigated values incorporate MM AQ-3 (Tier 4 Final off-road equipment)

3. Threshold established by SJVAPCD for SOx, however emissions are reported as SO_2 by CalEEMod.

4. Mitigated CO emissions are slightly higher than unmitigated emissions. Tier 4 Final engines required under MM AQ-3 achieve substantial reductions in NOx and PM through selective catalytic reduction and diesel particulate filtration, but the associated changes in combustion timing and aftertreatment operation can result in a marginal increase in CO. Both mitigated and unmitigated CO emissions remain well below the 100 pound-per-day screening level, and no ambient air quality analysis is triggered for CO during construction.

Sources: CalEEMod Outputs; SJVAPCD

Table 3-11: Projected Daily Operational Emissions Compared to SJVAPCD AAQA Screening Threshold

	CO (lb/day)	ROG (lb/day)	SO_x (lb/day)[4]	NO_x (lb/day)	PM_{10} (lb/day)	$PM_{2.5}$ (lb/day)
Emissions Generated from Project Operation (Unmitigated)[1]	187.6	67.6	0.31	21.3	23.7	6.7
Emissions Generated from Project Operation (Mitigated)[2]	107.6	67.6	0.30	21.3	23.6	6.6
Emissions Generated from Project Operation (Mitigated and Adjusted for Onsite Travel Distance)[3]	13.1	67.6	0.30	21.3	23.6	6.6
SJVAPCD AAQA Screening Threshold (100 lb/day)	100	100	100	100	100	100

1. Unmitigated values represent the highest daily (peak season) emissions from the CalEEMod Detailed Report (Appendix D) prior to application of mitigation measures.

2. Mitigated values incorporate MM AQ-2 (Zero Emission Landscaping Plan), which eliminates the area-source CO contribution of approximately 80.0 pounds per day associated with gasoline-powered landscaping equipment. MM AQ-1 offsets annual ROG emissions through a VERA and is therefore not credited against maximum daily emissions; daily ROG is reported at the unmitigated level, which is conservative and remains below the 100 pound-per-day screening threshold.

3. Maximum mobile daily CO emissions were adjusted to reflect onsite travel distance plus a ¼ mile offsite buffer, consistent with SJVAPCD APR 2030. Other pollutants were not adjusted, as their unadjusted levels are below the 100 pound-per-day screening threshold.

4. Threshold established by SJVAPCD for SOx, however, emissions are reported as SO_2 by CalEEMod.

Sources: CalEEMod Outputs; SJVAPCD

Project Analysis for Toxic Air Contaminant Impacts

A comprehensive HRA was conducted to evaluate potential health risks from Project-related TAC emissions during construction and operation, in accordance with the following guidance:

- Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) *Guidance Manual for Preparation of Health Risk Assessments* (2015).[57]
- SJVAPCD Application Review Policy (APR) 1906: *Framework for Performing Health Risk Assessments*.[58]
- SJVAPCD Guidance for Air Dispersion Modeling.[59]

Modeling Methodology

- **Air Dispersion Modeling**: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's AERMOD model was employed to estimate annual downwind DPM concentrations at receptors, using a normalized emission rate of 1 gram per second. Meteorological data were sourced from the SJVAPCD Visalia monitoring site, with District-recommended parameters applied. Forty representative worker and residential receptors were selected within a 1.5-km modeling domain radius. Terrain was integrated via the built-in WebGIS tool.
- **Risk Characterization**: Normalized AERMOD concentrations were imported into the CARB Hotspots Analysis and Reporting Program (HARP2) Air Dispersion Modeling and Risk Tool (ADMRT). These were scaled by actual DPM emissions from CalEEMod to derive ground-level concentrations. ADMRT calculated cancer risks and chronic HI using SJVAPCD-specified exposure parameters and Project-specific details.
- **Exposure Parameters**: OEHHA has not established a Reference Exposure Level (REL) for 8-hour chronic or acute DPM risks; thus, these HI values were not computed absent unusual conditions (receptors directly above emission points). Construction exposure duration was set to 15 years (per CalEEMod estimate). Operational exposure assumed a conservative 70 years per SJVAPCD guidance. Construction and operational risks were summed to identify the highest total at the MEI, yielding a health-conservative overestimate.

Detailed AERMOD and ADMRT inputs/outputs, receptor maps, and results are provided in Appendix D (HRA Results). Modeling files are available to reviewing agencies upon request.

The primary TAC of concern is DPM, emitted from on- and off-road diesel-fueled vehicles and equipment during both phases. Under the assumed warehouse-dominated land use, operational TAC emissions are limited to DPM from delivery vehicles. Should final industrial or commercial uses introduce additional TAC sources, further analysis and SJVAPCD permitting

57) Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment - Air Toxics Hot Spots Program Guidance Manual for Preparation of Health Risk Assessments
58) SJVAPCD - APR 1906: Framework for Performing Health Risk Assessments
59) SJVAPCD - APR 1925: Policy for District Rule 2201 AAQA Modeling

would be required to ensure compliance and less than significant impacts. Construction and operational risks were assessed as follows:

- **Emissions Estimation**: DPM emissions were quantified using CalEEMod (version 2022.1.1.45; see Appendix D for details). SJVAPCD treats PM_{10} exhaust as a surrogate for DPM.
- **Initial Findings**: Preliminary calculations revealed potential exceedance of the SJVAPCD cancer risk threshold due to proximity to sensitive receptors and exposure duration. MM AQ-3 (Impact 3.3-1) was applied to achieve less than significant levels.
- **Refinements**: Operational DPM emissions were calculated from truck idling, onsite travel, and offsite travel along mapped truck routes using EMFAC2021 emission factors, as described in Section 7.2 of Appendix D.

Appendix D's EMFAC-based calculations indicate maximum annual DPM emissions of 0.02 tons per year (tpy; 40 lb/yr) for construction and 0.006 tpy (12 lb/yr) for operations.

HRA Results and Site Context

The Site is surrounded by industrial, commercial, and agricultural uses, with a few residences located within the 1.5 km HRA modeling boundary. San Joaquin Valley College (SJVC) Visalia, a private career college is located about ¼ mile southwest. Schools are typically considered sensitive receptors, however, colleges include students and employees that are outside the sensitive age ranges of youth and elderly. There are residences located within the southern triangular cutout portion of the Project Site, as well as adjacent to the eastern boundary. These receptors are treated as sensitive and modeling indicated that localized pollutant concentrations would be highest at these locations, with the maximum total occurring at Receptor 33 (see Appendix D, Appendix B – Health Risk Assessment Results, and Receptor Map for Receptor 33 details). Results of the HRA are in Table 3-12 in comparison to the SJVAPCD thresholds of significance.

Absent mitigation, Project construction would be performed with conventionally powered off-road diesel equipment. CalEEMod outputs (Appendix D) indicate maximum annual construction PM_{10} exhaust of 0.13 tpy (267 lb/yr) unmitigated, compared to 0.02 tpy (40 lb/yr) with MM AQ-3 incorporated, an 84 percent reduction. Because modeled risk scales directly with emissions, the unmitigated construction-phase cancer risk at the maximally exposed individual (Receptor 33) would be approximately 60 in one million. Combined with the operational cancer risk of 1.2 in one million, which is not affected by MM AQ-3, the unmitigated total would be approximately 61 in one million, roughly three times the SJVAPCD threshold of 20 in one million. The unmitigated chronic hazard index would be approximately 0.02, which remains well below the threshold of 1. The potential exceedance is therefore driven entirely by construction-phase cancer risk, a function of the proximity of the residences along the

southern and eastern Site boundaries and the duration of construction exposure. MM AQ-3 requires all diesel-fueled, off-road construction equipment to meet Tier 4 Final engine standards, reducing DPM at the source and lowering the combined cancer risk to 10.8 in one million, as shown below.

Table 3-12: HRA Results Compared to Thresholds of Significance

Risk	Carcinogen (Risk in one million)	Chronic Hazard Index
Risk From Project (Construction and Operation combined), Unmitigated[1]	61.1	0.016
Risk From Project (Construction and Operation combined) — Mitigated[2]	10.8	0.003
Thresholds of Significance	20	1
Exceeds Threshold?, Unmitigated	YES	NO
Exceeds Threshold?, Mitigated	NO	NO

1. Unmitigated risk reflects construction PM_{10} exhaust emissions prior to application of MM AQ-3, scaled from the modeled results at Receptor 33 in proportion to the unmitigated and mitigated CalEEMod annual PM_{10} exhaust totals (0.13358 tpy and 0.02137 tpy, respectively). Operational risk is unchanged, as AQ-3 applies to construction equipment only.

2. Mitigated risk reflects AERMOD/ADMRT modeling results at Receptor 33 with MM AQ-3 incorporated (Appendix D– Health Risk Assessment Results).

With MM AQ-3 incorporated, TAC risks fall below SJVAPCD thresholds. Compliance with SJVAPCD regulations, including Regulation II (Permits to Operate), Regulation VIII (Fugitive PM_{10} Prohibitions), and Rule 9510 (Indirect Source Review), will further minimize emissions and risks.

Because the Project would not result in localized exceedances of NAAQS or CAAQS, and risks to sensitive receptors from TAC emissions would be below thresholds of significance, the Project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

Health Effects of the Project's Toxic Air Contaminant Emissions

For TAC emissions, the HRA provides the direct quantitative link between Project emissions and health outcomes that *Friant Ranch* contemplates. The HRA models DPM concentrations at individual receptors and converts them to lifetime cancer risk and chronic hazard index using OEHHA-approved exposure parameters, applying a 15-year construction exposure duration and a 70-year residential operational exposure duration consistent with SJVAPCD guidance. The SJVAPCD threshold of 20 in one million is a health-protective standard set so that a maximally exposed individual, exposed continuously across that period, would not experience a meaningful increase in cancer risk. As shown in Table 3-12, the mitigated combined

construction and operational cancer risk at the maximally exposed individual, Receptor 33, is 10.8 in one million, and the chronic hazard index is 0.003, both below the applicable thresholds. The Project's TAC emissions would therefore not be expected to result in adverse health outcomes at the nearest sensitive receptors.

Impact 3.3-4: Would the Project result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

Thresholds of Significance

A project with the potential to frequently expose members of the public to objectionable odors is considered to have a significant impact. Due to the subjective nature of odor perception, the multitude of influencing variables, and the diversity of potential sources, no quantitative or formulaic methodologies exist to determine significance. Assessments must therefore be conducted on a case-by-case basis, incorporating qualitative evaluations of project design elements and proximity to offsite receptors.

SJVAPCD GAMAQI provides a screening tool for qualitatively evaluating a project's potential to adversely affect nearby receptors. Table 3-13, adapted from GAMAQI, lists recommended screening distances for common odor sources. This list is not exhaustive; the Lead Agency should assess unlisted facilities or greater distances if local conditions or special circumstances warrant. If sensitive receptors were located closer than these screening distances, a more detailed analysis is required.

Table 3-13: Screening Levels for Potential Odor Sources (Distance to Sensitive Receptors)

Type of Facility	Screening Distance
Wastewater Treatment	2 Miles
Sanitary Landfill	1 Mile
Transfer Station	1 Mile
Composting Facility	1 Mile
Petroleum Refinery	2 Miles
Asphalt Batch Plant	1 Mile
Chemical Manufacturing	1 Mile
Fiberglass Manufacturing	1 Mile

Painting/Coating Operation (Auto Body Shops)	1 Mile
Food Processing Facility	1 Mile
Feed Lot/Dairy	1 Mile
Rendering Plant	1 Mile
Sources: SJVAPCD GAMAQI.	

GAMAQI offers further guidance for detailed assessments when a project may include substantial odor sources.

Project-Specific Analysis

The Project comprises warehouse/light industrial buildings, industrial-serving commercial pads, and a self-storage facility. None of these land uses appears on the GAMAQI screening table, indicating a low potential for substantial odor generation.

Potential odorous emissions could arise during construction and operations, primarily from diesel-fueled vehicles and equipment. However, modern engine controls render construction-related odors unlikely to generate nuisance complaints. Such odors would disperse rapidly and remain undetectable beyond Project boundaries. Emissions would be further minimized through compliance with applicable regulations, including:

- SJVAPCD Regulation II (Permits to Operate).
- SJVAPCD Regulation VIII (Fugitive PM_{10} Prohibitions).
- U.S. EPA and CARB engine and equipment standards.
- California Title 24 energy efficiency requirements.
- Standards for architectural coatings and consumer products.

Accordingly, the Project is not anticipated to constitute a substantial odor source and would not result in odorous emissions adversely affecting a substantial number of people.

Naturally Occurring Asbestos (NOA)

NOA, comprising asbestiform silicate minerals valued for tensile strength, flexibility, and resistance to heat and chemicals, poses a health risk as a known carcinogen. Inhalation may lead to lung cancer or mesothelioma. Disturbance during excavation, drilling, blasting, or aggregate processing could release fibers.

The Project Site is not proximate to any outcroppings or sites identified in the United States Geological Survey's *Reported Historic Asbestos Mines, Historic Asbestos Prospects, and Other*

Natural Occurrences of Asbestos in California.[60] Should indicators of NOA be encountered, work must cease immediately. The Applicant shall adhere to the California Geological Survey's *Guidelines for Geologic Investigations of Naturally Occurring Asbestos in California*. Any confirmed asbestos presence requires compliance with CARB's ATCM for Construction, Grading, Quarrying, and Surface Mining Operations.

The Project would not generate other emissions adversely affecting a substantial number of people. Impacts from odors and NOA are less than significant, with no additional mitigation required beyond existing regulatory compliance.

3.3.5 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative Setting and Geographic Scope

The cumulative setting for air quality encompasses the SJVAB, which is managed by the SJVAPCD. The SJVAB is designated as nonattainment for ozone (and its precursors, ROG and NO_x) and $PM_{2.5}$ under federal (NAAQS) standards, and for ozone, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ under state (CAAQS) standards. The Valley was redesignated to attainment for the PM_{10} NAAQS in 2008 and remains subject to an approved PM_{10} maintenance plan. This status reflects ongoing regional challenges from a combination of emissions sources, including vehicular traffic, industrial operations, agricultural activities, and meteorological conditions that promote pollutant accumulation and transport across the basin.

The geographic scope for cumulative air quality impacts is the entire SJVAB, as pollutants like ozone precursors and particulate matter can travel long distances and affect air quality on a regional scale. However, for localized impacts such as CO hotspots or TACs, the scope is more focused on the immediate vicinity of the Project Site, where emissions from nearby sources could interact with Project emissions. Cumulative projects considered in this analysis include planned and foreseeable developments within the City of Visalia and surrounding Tulare County areas. These include other industrial parks, commercial expansions, and transportation improvements that could contribute to increased VMT, equipment exhaust, and fugitive dust. No specific past projects are directly linked to the proposed Project, but the regional nonattainment status underscores the inherently cumulative nature of air quality degradation in the SJVAB.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

60) California Geological Survey - Special Publication 124: Guidelines for Geologic Investigations of Naturally Occurring Asbestos in California

Cumulative air quality impacts would occur if the Project, in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, results in a net increase in criteria pollutants or precursors that exacerbates nonattainment status, exposes sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations, or generates objectionable odors. As detailed in Impacts 3.3-1 through 3.3-4, the Project's individual construction and operational emissions for all criteria pollutants are below SJVAPCD thresholds of significance with incorporation of MM AQ-1 through AQ-3. These measures include Tier 4 off-road engines, zero-emission landscaping equipment, and a VERA with SJVAPCD offsetting operational ROG emissions.

Per SJVAPCD policy, air quality impacts are inherently cumulative due to pollutant dispersion across the basin. A project's contribution is considered cumulatively considerable if its individual emissions exceed district thresholds, as these thresholds are set to align with the SJVAPCD's attainment plans for NAAQS and CAAQS. Since the Project's mitigated emissions fall below these thresholds, its incremental contribution does not hinder regional attainment efforts.

When combined with cumulative projects, the Project could contribute to regional VMT growth, potentially elevating mobile-source emissions of ozone precursors and particulates. However, the Project's compliance with SJVAPCD Rule 9510 requires either onsite reductions in NO_x and PM_{10} or offsite mitigation fees to fund equivalent reductions through District incentive programs, further reducing the Project's contribution to regional emissions. The HRA in Appendix D confirms that Project-level TAC risks (primarily DPM), which SJVAPCD applies as the measure of cumulative significance, remain below thresholds, even when accounting for prolonged exposure durations and nearby receptors. Odor and NOA risks are minimal and localized, with no cumulative exacerbation anticipated given the Project's non-odorous land uses and distance from known NOA sites.

Overall, while cumulative development in the SJVAB could strain air quality, the Project's emissions are not cumulatively considerable, as they align with attainment plans and incorporate robust mitigation to minimize contributions.

Conclusion

The Project would result in a less than cumulatively considerable contribution to air quality impacts with mitigation incorporated. No additional mitigation is required beyond MM AQ-1 through AQ-3.

3 - 4 Biological Resources

3.4.1 Intro

This section evaluates potential impacts of the proposed Kelsey-Hurley Industrial Park Project on biological resources. The analysis is based on the Biological Evaluation prepared by Live Oak Associates, Inc., dated June 10, 2025, which is included in Appendix E, and considers special status plant and animal species, wildlife movement corridors, sensitive natural communities, jurisdictional waters, and designated critical habitat.

One NOP comment letter was received from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) regarding this topic. The CDFW letter, dated June 13, 2025, provides comments and recommendations on potential impacts to fish and wildlife resources from the proposed Kelsey-Hurley Industrial Park Project, emphasizing CDFW's role as a Trustee and Responsible Agency under CEQA. It recommends conducting biological surveys, habitat assessments, and protocol-level studies for special status species including Swainson's hawk, western burrowing owl, Crotch's bumble bee, California tiger salamander, American badger, western pond turtle, western spadefoot, vernal pool fairy shrimp, and vernal pool tadpole shrimp, with such assessments to be incorporated as part of the Draft EIR preparation to adequately determine presence or absence; implementing avoidance measures such as no-disturbance buffers; obtaining ITPs if take cannot be avoided; and addressing issues like artificial lighting, nesting birds, cumulative impacts, lake and streambed alterations, and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for federally listed species.

The letter also includes additional recommendations, such as mitigation for artificial lighting to minimize disruption to wildlife circadian rhythms, analysis of cumulative impacts on biological resources using an acceptable methodology, development of project alternatives informed by the results of biological studies to maximize avoidance and minimization of impacts, and potential requirements for Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreements under Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et seq. if Project activities could affect Mill Creek or Mill Creek Ditch.

3.4.2 Environmental Setting

The following description of the existing biological resources of the Site is based on a reconnaissance-level field survey conducted on April 15, 2025, and documented in the Biological Evaluation (Appendix E).

The Site is located in the southeastern portion of the San Joaquin Valley in Tulare County, California. The San Joaquin Valley is bordered by the Sierra Nevada to the east, the Tehachapi Mountains to the south, the California coastal ranges to the west, and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to the north. The region experiences a Mediterranean climate characterized by warm, dry summers with temperatures commonly exceeding 90 degrees Fahrenheit and cool, moist winters with temperatures rarely exceeding 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Annual precipitation in the vicinity averages approximately 10 inches, occurring almost entirely between October and March in the form of rain.

The principal drainage in the vicinity is Mill Creek, a distributary of the Kaweah River, which passes through the southern end of the Site as Mill Creek and along the northern boundary as Mill Creek Ditch. Mill Creek splits from the Kaweah River approximately eight miles upstream (east) of the Site and flows generally west through Visalia. Approximately 11 miles downstream (southwest) of the Site, it joins Cross Creek, a tributary to the Tule River.

The Site encompasses approximately 122 acres with level topography at an elevation of approximately 300 feet above sea level. Soils on the Site consist of Nord fine sandy loam (0 to 2 percent slopes), Akers- saline-sodic complex (0 to 2 percent slopes), and Colpien loam (0 to 2 percent slopes). The first two soil types are classified as hydric; however, due to a long history of agricultural disturbance, the Site is no longer expected to exhibit native soil characteristics supportive of wetland vegetation.

At the time of the reconnaissance survey, the Site was dominated by agricultural land uses and supported four principal biotic habitats/land use types: orchard, agricultural fields, ruderal/developed areas, and seasonal drainages (see Figure 4, Habitats/Land Cover in Appendix E). These habitats are described below.

Orchard

Several blocks of almond (*Prunus dulcis*) orchard were present on the Site. Vegetation consisted primarily of almond trees with an understory of common agricultural weeds dominated by cheeseweed (*Malva parviflora*), whitestem filaree (*Erodium moschatum*), and red-stemmed filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*). Orchards provide habitat value for native wildlife adapted to agricultural disturbances, including amphibians such as the Pacific tree frog (*Pseudacris regilla*); reptiles such as the western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), Pacific gopher snake (*Pituophis catenifer*), and California kingsnake (*Lampropeltis californiae*); nesting birds such as the American robin (*Turdus migratorius*), mourning dove (Zenaida macroura), and western kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*); foraging birds such as the white-crowned sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) and house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*); small mammals such as deer mice (*Peromyscus maniculatus*), California voles (*Microtus*

californicus), Botta's pocket gophers (*Thomomys bottae*), Audubon's cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*), and California ground squirrels (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*); foraging bats; and predators such as Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), sharp-shinned hawk (*Accipiter striatus*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), and striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*).

Agricultural Fields

Two agricultural fields were present: a large field at the north end historically planted to wheat (showing signs of recent discing) and a small, irrigated pasture along the eastern side. The large field was sparsely vegetated with wheat interspersed with non-native weeds such as red-stemmed filaree, cheeseweed, and bur clover (*Medicago polymorpha*). The irrigated pasture was dominated by barnyard barley (*Hordeum murinum*), Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), chickweed (*Stellaria media*), and curly dock (*Rumex crispus*). Wildlife expected in these fields includes species similar to those in orchards, such as Pacific tree frog, western fence lizard, Pacific gopher snake, savannah sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*), mourning dove, killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*), red-tailed hawk (Buteo jamaicensis), American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), Botta's pocket gophers, California voles, deer mice, raccoon, and coyote (*Canis latrans*).

Ruderal/Developed

These areas include existing residences, outbuildings, animal pens, and cleared areas. Vegetation consists of ornamental species such as pepper tree (*Schinus molle*), California fan palm (*Washingtonia filifera*), white mulberry (*Morus alba*), deodar cedar (*Cedrus deodara*), coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), and oleander (*Nerium oleander*), with herbaceous weeds such as common groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*), cheeseweed, and prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*). Wildlife includes species from adjacent habitats, plus structure-nesting birds such as house finch and black phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*), and disturbance-tolerant exotics such as Eurasian collared-dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*), Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*), house mouse (*Mus musculus*), and Norway rat (*Rattus norvegicus*)

Seasonal Drainage

Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch are heavily modified, confined to narrow, steep-sided channels carrying seasonal, regulated flows (dry during the April 2025 survey). Limited riparian vegetation includes valley oaks (*Quercus lobata*) along Mill Creek Ditch; valley oaks, black walnut (*Juglans hindsii*), and coast redwood along Mill Creek; and herbaceous species such as Johnson grass (*Sorghum halepense*), annual bluegrass *(Poa annua*), littleseed canarygrass *(Phalaris minor*), Italian rye grass (*Festuca perennis*), ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), milk thistle (*Silybum marianum*), curly dock, and Bermuda buttercup (*Oxalis pes-caprae*).

Based on aerial imagery and CDFW's 2025 data, which indicate historical occurrences of special status species nearby, these seasonal drainages may provide potential breeding, dispersal, or upland refugia habitat for amphibians such as the California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) and western spadefoot (*Spea hammondii*), as well as suitable conditions for branchiopods including vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*) and vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardi*). Additionally, the drainages and adjacent areas could serve as burrowing and foraging sites for the western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*) and Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*), particularly along the banks and boundaries where small mammal burrows or bunch grasses may be present.

Wildlife includes species from other habitats, plus riparian-associated birds such as Bullock's oriole (*Icterus bullockii*), European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), yellow-rumped warbler (Dendroica coronata), ruby-crowned kinglet (Regulus calendula), and white-crowned sparrow; mammals such as ornate shrew (*Sorex ornatus*), Virginia opossum, raccoon, and gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*); and roosting bats in large trees.

The Site has the potential to support special status species, as detailed in the Biological Evaluation. A query of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) identified special status species occurrences in the nine surrounding USGS quadrangles. No sensitive natural communities or designated critical habitat are present on the Site. The Site does not function as a regionally important wildlife movement corridor, and jurisdictional waters are limited to the seasonal drainages, which are subject to regulation under state and federal laws.

Special Status Plant Species

The Biological Evaluation prepared for the Project (Appendix E) identifies 16 special status plant species with records in the Project vicinity. These special status species include those listed as threatened, endangered, or of concern under federal or state regulations, such as the ESA or the NPPA, and may encompass rare endemics adapted to specific habitats like vernal pools, alkali sinks, or riparian zones commonly found in the San Joaquin Valley region. The evaluation was based on a reconnaissance-level field survey conducted on April 15, 2025, which involved transects across the Site to assess vegetation communities, soil types, and potential habitats. At the time of the survey, the Site consisted primarily of almond orchards, agricultural fields, ruderal/developed areas, and two seasonal drainages: Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch. Vegetation was dominated by crop species (almonds) and non-native weeds typical of disturbed agricultural lands, with only a few scattered native valley oak trees (Quercus lobata) observed along the drainages. No special status plant species were detected during the survey.

All 16 special status plant species are considered absent from the Site due to a lack of suitable habitat/soils, the Site's being situated outside of the species' known distribution, or a combination of these. The species, habitat, and occurrence on the Site is summarized in Table 3-14. Additional details for each species can be found in Appendix E. For instance, many of these species require undisturbed natural communities such as freshwater marshes, valley grasslands, or specific soil series that are not present on the Site, which has been extensively modified by decades of agricultural use. The Site's soils, mostly loamy and sandy types associated with intensive farming, further reduce the likelihood of sensitive plants to be within the Site. Additionally, the Project's design incorporates setbacks from Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch to preserve riparian corridors, minimizing any potential indirect effects on offsite habitats that could support these species. As a result, the Project is not expected to adversely affect these species, either directly (through vegetation removal or ground disturbance) or indirectly (changes in hydrology or introduction of invasive species). Impacts to special status plant species are therefore considered less than significant under CEQA, with no mitigation measures required.

Table 3-14: List of Special Status Plant Species That Could Occur in the Project Vicinity

Species	Status	Habitat	Occurrence on Project Site
California jewelflower (*Caulanthus californicus*)	FE, CE, CRPR 1B	Chenopod scrub, pinyon-juniper woodland, grassland	Absent
Hoover's spurge (*Euphorbia hooveri*)	FT, CRPR 1B	Vernal pools	Absent
San Joaquin Valley Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia inaequalis*)	FT, CE, CRPR 1B	Vernal pools	Absent
San Joaquin adobe sunburst (*Pseudobahia peirsonii*)	FT, CE, CRPR 1B	Grasslands, clay soils	Absent
Heartscale (*Atriplex cordulata var. cordulata*)	CRPR 1B	Saline/alkaline soils	Absent
Earlimart orache (*Atriplex cordulata var. erecticaulis*)	CRPR 1B	Grasslands	Absent
Brittlescale (*Atriplex depressa*)	CRPR 1B	Grasslands, wetlands	Absent
Lesser saltscale (*Atriplex minuscula*)	CRPR 1B	Grasslands, alkaline soils	Absent
Subtle orache (*Atriplex subtilis*)	CRPR 1B	Grasslands, low elevation	Absent
Recurved larkspur (*Delphinium recurvatum*)	CRPR 1B	Grasslands, alkaline soils	Absent
Spiny-sepaled button-celery (*Eryngium spinosepalum*)	CRPR 1B	Vernal pools	Absent
California satintail (*Imperata brevifolia*)	CRPR 2B	Wetland seeps, riparian	Absent (marginal habitat)
Alkali-sink goldfields (*Lasthenia chrysantha*)	CRPR 1B	Vernal pools	Absent
Coulter's goldfields	CRPR 1B	Coastal marshes, vernal pools	Absent

(*Lasthenia glabrata ssp. coulteri*)			
California alkali grass (*Puccinellia simplex*)	CRPR 1B	Saline flats, mineral springs	Absent
Sanford's arrowhead (*Sagittaria sanfordii*)	CRPR 1B	Freshwater marshes, ditches	Absent

Occurrence Designations and Status Codes

Present: *Species observed on the Site at time of field surveys or during recent past.*

Likely: *Species not observed on the site, but it may reasonably be expected to occur there on a regular basis.*

Possible: *Species not observed on the site, but it could occur there from time to time.*

Unlikely: *Species not observed on the site, and would not be expected to occur there except, perhaps, as a transient.*

Absent: *Species not observed on the site and precluded from occurring there because habitat requirements not met.*

Status Codes

FE *Federally Endangered* ***CE*** *California Endangered*

FT *Federally Threatened* ***CT*** *California Threatened*

FC *Federal Candidate* ***CCE*** *California Candidate Endangered*

CFP *California Fully Protected*

CSC *California Species of Special Concern*

CR *California Rare*

CRPR Codes

1A *Plants Presumed Extinct in California*

1B *Plants Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and Elsewhere*

2B *Plants Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California, but More Common Elsewhere*

Special Status Animal Species

The Biological Evaluation identifies 16 special status animal species with records in the Project vicinity. In response to the CDFW NOP comment letter, the American badger (*Taxidea taxus*, California Species of Special Concern) has been added because it occurs within the Project's geographic range and has a historical occurrence documented within 10 miles, for a total of 17 species. Of these, four are considered absent from or unlikely to occur on the Site due to the absence of suitable habitat, the Site's urban setting and other landscape factors, and/or the Site's location outside of the species' known distribution. The April 2025 reconnaissance-level survey did not include protocol-level assessments; based on the habitat assessments and focused surveys recommended by CDFW, several species identified in the Biological Evaluation as "Unlikely" or "Absent" have been revised to "Possible." For instance, sparsely vegetated areas in the southern portion of the Site may provide suitable habitat for the American badger. Occurrences are summarized in Table 3-15.

Table 3-15: List of Special Status Animal Species That Could Occur in the Project Vicinity

Species	Status	Habitat	Occurrence on Project Site
Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*)	CCE	Grasslands, scrub with flowering plants	Possible

Vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*)	FT	Vernal pools	Possible
Vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardi*)	FE	Vernal pools	Possible
California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*)	FT, CT	Grasslands with vernal pools, burrows	Possible
Western spadefoot (*Spea hammondii*)	FPT, CSC	Grasslands, vernal pools	Possible
American badger (*Taxidea taxus*)	CSC	Sparsely vegetated land cover with dry, friable soils supporting fossorial rodent prey	Possible
Western pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*)	FPT, CSC	Streams, ponds	Possible
Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)	CT	Nests in riparian/oak savanna; forages in grasslands/ag lands	Possible
Burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*)	CCE	Grasslands, scrub with burrows	Possible
Western yellow-billed cuckoo *(Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*)	FT, CE	Riparian woodland	Absent
Tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*)	CT	Nests near water in cattails, willows; or grain fields; forages in grasslands/ag lands	Possible (foraging only)
San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*)	FE, CT	Grasslands, scrub, some ag lands	Unlikely
Northern leopard frog (*Lithobates pipiens*)	CSC	Permanent/semi-permanent water	Absent
Northern California legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra*)	CSC	Sandy soils, scrub, oak woodland	Unlikely
Loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)	CSC	Open habitats with sparse shrubs and trees, cropland	Possible
Pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*)	CSC	Grasslands, chaparral, woodlands; roosts in rock crevices/trees/buildings/bridges	Possible
Western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*)	CSC	Open habitats; roosts in cliffs/buildings/tunnels	Possible (foraging only)

Occurrence Designations and Status Codes

Present: *Species observed on the Site at time of field surveys or during recent past.*

Likely: *Species not observed on the site, but it may reasonably be expected to occur there on a regular basis.*

Possible: *Species not observed on the site, but it could occur there from time to time.*

Unlikely: *Species not observed on the site, and would not be expected to occur there except, perhaps, as a transient.*

Status Codes

FE *Federally Endangered* ***CE*** *California Endangered*

FT *Federally Threatened* ***CT*** *California Threatened*

FC *Federal Candidate* ***CCE*** *California Candidate Endangered*

CFP *California Fully Protected*

CSC *California Species of Special Concern*

CR *California Rare*

Absent: *Species not observed on the site and precluded from occurring there because habitat requirements not met.*

3.4.3 Regulatory Setting

Federal

Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA)

The Federal ESA protects plants and animals listed as endangered or threatened by USFWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Section 9 of the ESA prohibits the taking of listed wildlife, where take is defined as "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, collect, or attempt to engage in such conduct" (50 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 17.3). For plants, this statute governs "removing, possessing, maliciously damaging, or destroying any listed plant on Federal land and removing, cutting, digging up, damaging, or destroying any listed plant on non-Federal land in knowing violation of state law" (16 U.S. Code [USC] 1538). Under Section 7 of ESA, Federal agencies are required to consult with USFWS if their actions, including permit approvals or funding, could adversely affect a listed (or proposed) species (including plants) or its Critical Habitat (see definition of Critical Habitat below). Through consultation and the issuance of a biological opinion (BO), the USFWS may issue an incidental take statement allowing take of the species that is incidental to an otherwise authorized activity, provided the activity will not jeopardize the continued existence of the species. Section 10 of ESA provides for issuance of ITPs where no other Federal actions are necessary provided a habitat conservation plan (HCP) is developed.[61]

Early consultation with the USFWS is recommended for projects that may have potential impacts on federally listed or proposed species, such as the California tiger salamander, western pond turtle (proposed), vernal pool fairy shrimp, and vernal pool tadpole shrimp. Take under the ESA is broadly defined is broadly defined to include habitat modification or degradation that could result in death or injury to a listed species by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, foraging, or sheltering.

The Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA; 16 USC 703–712)

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) implements international treaties between the United States and other nations devised to protect migratory birds, any of their parts, eggs, and nests from activities such as hunting, pursuing, capturing, killing, selling, and shipping, unless expressly authorized in the regulations or by permit. As authorized by the MBTA, the USFWS

61) Endangered Species Act of 1973

issues permits to qualified Applicants for the following types of activities: falconry, raptor propagation, scientific collecting, special purposes (rehabilitation, education, migratory game bird propagation, and salvage), take of depredating birds, taxidermy, and waterfowl sale and disposal. The regulations governing migratory bird permits can be found in 50 CFR part 13 General Permit Procedures and 50 CFR part 21 Migratory Bird Permits. The State of California has incorporated the protection of birds of prey in §§ 3800, 3513, and 3503.5 of the California Fish and Game Code.[62]

Clean Water Act

The objective of the Clean Water Act (1972) is to maintain, restore, and enhance the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. Under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, USACE regulates discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, as defined under the 2023 Revised Definition of 'Waters of the United States' Rule, as amended. Waters of the US, including navigable waters of the United States, interstate waters, tidally influenced waters, and all other waters where the use, degradation, or destruction of the waters could affect interstate or foreign commerce, tributaries to any of these waters, and wetlands that meet any of these criteria or that are adjacent to any of these waters or their tributaries.[63]

State

California Environmental Quality Act—Treatment of Listed Plant and Animal Species

Under CEQA, impacts on listed plant and animal species are evaluated to determine if the Project could result in significant environmental effects. CEQA Guidelines § 15065 requires mandatory findings of significance if a project has the potential to 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, or substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species. Species listed as threatened or endangered under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) are afforded heightened protection, and the CDFW must be consulted during the CEQA process to assess the adequacy of impact analysis and mitigation measures.

Birds of Prey (CA Fish and Game Code Section 3503.5)

Sections 3800, 3513, and 3503 of the California Fish and Game Code specifically protect birds of prey. Section 3800 states that it is unlawful to take nongame birds, such as those occurring naturally in California, which are not resident game birds, migratory game birds, or fully protected birds, except when in accordance with regulations of the commission or a mitigation

62) Migratory Bird Treaty Act
63) Clean Water Act

plan approved by CDFW for mining operations. Section 3513 explicitly prohibits taking or possessing any migratory nongame bird as designated in the MBTA. Section 3503 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibits the take, possession, or needless destruction of the nest or eggs of any bird. Additionally, Subsection 3503.5 prohibits taking, possessing, or destroying any birds and their nests in the orders Strigiformes (owls) or Falconiformes (hawks and eagles). These provisions, along with the Federal MBTA, serve to protect nesting raptors.

California Endangered Species Act (CESA)

The CESA (California Fish and Game Code §§ 2050–2116) generally parallels the main provisions of the ESA, but unlike its federal counterpart, CESA applies the take prohibitions to species proposed for listing (called "candidates" by the state). Section 2080 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibits the taking, possession, purchase, sale, and import or export of endangered, threatened, or candidate species, unless otherwise authorized by permit or in the regulations. Take is defined in Section 86 of the Fish and Game Code as "hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill." the CESA allows for take incidental to otherwise lawful development projects. State lead agencies are required to consult with CDFW to ensure that any action they undertake is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered, threatened, or candidate species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of essential habitat.[64]

This includes the need for ITPs under Fish and Game Code Section 2081(b) for candidate species, such as the western burrowing owl and Crotch's bumble bee, if take cannot be avoided through project design or mitigation measures. Candidate species receive the full legal protections afforded to endangered or threatened species during the candidacy period, ensuring that any potential take is authorized only after consultation with CDFW and demonstration that the permitted activity will not jeopardize the species' continued existence

California Fish and Game Code Section 1602 – Lake or Streambed Alteration

Under California Fish and Game Code Section 1602, entities must notify the CDFW prior to commencing any activity that may substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of, or substantially change or use any material from the bed, channel, or bank of, any river, stream, or lake, with a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement required if the activity could adversely affect fish or wildlife resources. This includes ephemeral, intermittent, or modified channels, such as canals and retention basins. The Biological Evaluation identifies seasonal drainages such as Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch as potentially jurisdictional waters. Although the Project

64) California Endangered Species Act

incorporates setbacks from these features, Phase I includes storm drain pipelines along Road 88 that would convey Site runoff across Mill Creek to the storm basin, and the Biological Evaluation notes that pipeline installation may result in minor impacts to Mill Creek. Accordingly, notification to CDFW and a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement may still be required if project activities could divert flows, alter beds or banks, or deposit materials (including debris, waste, or riparian vegetation removal) into these drainages. CDFW must comply with CEQA in issuing such agreements, and if the approved CEQA document does not fully describe project impacts on lakes or streams, additional analysis may be necessary.

California Fish and Game Code Sections 2080, 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 – Protection of Nesting Birds and Habitat

Even when not formally listed under CESA or FESA, native birds and their nests are protected under Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 of the California Fish and Game Code. These sections prohibit the take, possession, or needless destruction of birds, their nests, and eggs, including those in oak trees. Section 3503.5 specifically protects birds of prey (hawks, owls, and eagles), while Section 3513 aligns with federal MBTA protections for migratory birds. Section 2080 further prohibits the unauthorized take of species listed as threatened or endangered in California, which may include species that use oak woodland habitat. The Biological Evaluation identifies the potential for construction activities, including tree removal and trimming, to disturb nesting avian species, including the state-threatened Swainson's hawk and other raptors. It prescribes mitigation measures such as pre-construction surveys, avoidance during the nesting season (February 1 to August 31), and establishment of protective buffers (500 feet for raptors) around active nests to reduce impacts to less than significant levels and ensure compliance with these statutory protections.[65]

California Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA)

The NPPA (Fish and Game Code §§ 1900–1913) prohibits the unauthorized taking of rare and endangered plants in California. CDFW maintains a list of protected plant species and may require mitigation or conservation measures for impacts on these resources.[66]

California Fish and Game Code Sections 1360–1372 – Oak Woodlands Conservation Act

The Oak Woodlands Conservation Act, administered by the California Wildlife Conservation Board, provides funding incentives for the conservation and management of oak woodlands throughout the state. Under this Act, landowners, conservation organizations, and public

65) California Fish and Game Code
66) California Native Plant Protection Act

agencies may apply for funding to preserve or enhance oak woodlands in conjunction with voluntary conservation easements or management plans. While this Act does not regulate private development directly, it supports voluntary conservation efforts and can complement CEQA mitigation strategies for oak tree removal or habitat loss.[67]

Porter-Cologne Act

California's primary statute governing water quality and water pollution concerns with respect to both surface waters and groundwater is the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act of 1970 (Porter-Cologne Act). The Porter-Cologne Act grants the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and each of the nine RWQCBs power to protect water quality and implement the Clean Water Act within California. The applicable RWQCB for the proposed Project is the Central Valley RWQCB.[68]

Central Valley RWQCB

Because the proposed Project will disturb more than one acre of land, it is subject to NPDES permitting requirements overseen by the Central Valley RWQCB. As part of the NPDES General Construction Permit process, a site-specific Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be required. The SWPPP must identify BMPs to prevent sediment, construction materials, and other pollutants from entering stormwater runoff.[69]

Local

City of Visalia Municipal Code Chapter 12.24 – Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance

Chapter 12.24 of the Visalia Municipal Code establishes regulations to protect native oak trees (genus Quercus) within City limits. The ordinance applies to any Valley Oak (Quercus lobata) or other native oak species with a diameter at breast height (DBH) of six inches or greater. The removal, relocation, or pruning of protected oak trees requires a permit from the City of Visalia, and permit issuance is contingent on findings that the action is necessary and that impacts are minimized. Replacement planting or in-lieu fees may be required as mitigation for removal, based on tree size and species. The ordinance further mandates that development projects avoid disturbance to protected oak trees where feasible, incorporate tree protection zones into project design, and implement protective fencing and arborist-approved practices during construction. The ordinance supports broader urban forestry goals and contributes to the conservation of native habitat, aesthetic values, and ecosystem services within the City.

67) Oak Woodlands Conservation Act
68) Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act
69) NPDES General Permit Requirements

City of Visalia General Plan

The 2030 General Plan includes the following objectives and policies related to biological resources that correlate to the proposed Project:

Objective OSC-O-1: Create and protect open space for the preservation of natural resources.

Objective OSC-O-10: Protect and enhance natural vegetation throughout the Planning Area, especially types that are considered sensitive natural communities by the Department of Fish and Game.

- *Policy OSC-P-8*: Protect, restore and enhance a continuous corridor of native riparian vegetation along Planning Area waterways, including the St. Johns River; Mill, Packwood, and Cameron Creeks; and segments of other creeks and ditches where feasible, in conformance with the Parks and Open Space diagram of this General Plan.
- *Policy OSC-P-27*: Establish a "no net loss" standard for sensitive habitat acreage, including wetlands and vernal pools potentially affected by development.
- *Policy OSC-P-30*: Require assessments of biological resources prior to approval of any discretionary development projects involving riparian habitat, wetlands, or special status species habitat. Early in the development review process, consult with California Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other agencies.
- *Policy OSC-P-31*: Protect and enhance habitat for special status species, designated under state and federal law. Require protection of sensitive habitat areas and special status species in new development in the following order: (1) avoidance; (2) onsite mitigation, and (3) offsite mitigation.
- *Policy OSC-P-35*: Use native trees in street and public landscaping designs, where appropriate, to preserve Visalia's character.
- *Policy OSC-P-37*: Design selected Stormwater ponds and retention basins to serve a dual role as wildlife habitat by planting species appropriate for food and cover needs. Work with a trained professional in design, selection, and management of each site.
- *Policy OSC-P-38*: Revise the City's Valley Oak Ordinance to include cottonwood groves and other mature native trees, and update the map of landmark trees and distinctive biotic areas.

3.4.4 Thresholds of Significance

The thresholds of significance for this section are established by the CEQA Appendix G Checklist. Would the Project:

a) *Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?*
b) *Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?*
c) *Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?*
d) *Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?*
e) *Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?*
f) *Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?*

3.4.5 Impacts Discussion

Impact 3.4-1 Would the Project 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?

Before Mitigation	Significant (construction could result in take or disturbance of nesting birds and other special-status species)
Mitigation Measures	MM BIO-1.1 through MM BIO-10
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

Special Status Plant Species

As discussed in Section 3.4.1, Environmental Setting, the Biological Evaluation prepared for the Project (Appendix E) identifies 16 special status plant species with records in the Project vicinity, all of which are considered absent from the Site (see Table 3-14). The Project's design incorporates setbacks from Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch to preserve riparian corridors, minimizing any potential indirect effects on offsite habitats that could support these species. As a result, the Project is not expected to adversely affect these species, either directly (through vegetation removal or ground disturbance) or indirectly (changes in hydrology or introduction of invasive species). Impacts to special status plant species are therefore considered less than significant under CEQA, with no mitigation measures required.

Special Status Animal Species

The Biological Evaluation prepared for the Project identified 16 special status animal species with records in the Project vicinity, while a 17th was added from the CDFW letter recommending the addition of American badger (*Taxidea taxus*). Of the 17 special status animal species documented in the Project vicinity, 4 are considered absent from or unlikely to occur on the Site due to the absence of suitable habitat, the Site's urban setting and other landscape factors, and/or the Site's being situated outside of the species' known distribution. These species, the status of the species, habitat, and the occurrence on the Project Site is summarized in Table 3-15. Additional details for each species can be found in Appendix E. Because these species have no potential to occur on the Site, they are not expected to be affected by the Project, directly or indirectly. These are:

- Western Yellow-Billed Cuckoo
- San Joaquin Kit Fox
- Northern Leopard Frog
- Northern California Legless Lizard

Potentially Impacted Species

Two special status animal species, the tricolored blackbird and western mastiff bat, have the potential to forage on the Site from time to time but would not utilize the Site or immediately adjacent lands for breeding, roosting, or other activities in which they would be vulnerable to construction-related injury, mortality, or disturbance. Individuals of these species are unlikely to be injured or killed by construction activities because they are highly mobile while foraging and would be expected to avoid active work areas. The Project would not adversely affect either of these species through loss of foraging habitat. The Site does not offer unique habitat for these species, nor is it likely to represent an important part of any individual foraging range,

given its disturbed nature and urban setting. Similar and higher quality foraging habitats are abundant in the Project vicinity and elsewhere in the region.

The remaining 11 special status animal species have the potential to occur on the Site and could be adversely affected by the Project. The loggerhead shrike, a California Species of Special Concern, has some potential to nest on the Site. Project-related loss of habitat for this species would be less than significant, but construction could injure or kill nesting individuals or cause nest abandonment; this potentially significant impact would be reduced to less than significant through MMs BIO-1.1 through BIO-1.3.

The Swainson's Hawk, a California Threatened species, has been documented nesting in the Valley Oaks Golf Course, approximately 0.75 miles southwest of the Site across SR 198, and is frequently sighted in the general Project vicinity. There is some chance for individuals to utilize the Site for foraging and nesting. Swainson's hawks are highly mobile while foraging and would not be vulnerable to construction-related injury or mortality during this activity. The Project is not expected to adversely affect Swainson's hawk individuals or populations through the loss of potential nest trees because large trees potentially suitable for nesting will remain intact during Project development. Although the Project will result in the loss of agricultural fields that may be used by foraging Swainson's hawks, similar agricultural fields are everywhere in the region and would continue to provide large areas of similar foraging habitat after Project development. Loss of habitat for the Swainson's hawk is not considered a significant impact of the Project. However, if Swainson's hawks are nesting on or adjacent to the Site at the time of future buildout, individuals of this species could be injured or killed by construction activities or disturbed such that they would abandon their nests. Construction-related injury, mortality, or disturbance of nesting Swainson's hawks is considered a potentially significant impact of the Project. Activities resulting in the injury or mortality of one or more Swainson's hawks would violate the California Endangered Species Act and other state laws. MMs BIO-2.1 through BIO-2.3 would reduce the impact on Swainson's hawk to less than significant.

The Pallid Bat, a California Species of Special Concern, is rarely documented in the San Joaquin Valley, but two documented occurrences in the Valley occur within 10 miles of the Project Site. It is possible that pallid bats could occasionally forage on or over the Site and could potentially roost in onsite buildings and tree cavities associated with the Site's oak trees along Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch. The Project will not result in a significant loss of roosting or foraging habitat for the pallid bat. Although a few potential roost structures may be removed, numerous similar structures will remain available elsewhere in the Project vicinity. The Site does not offer unique foraging habitat for the pallid bat, nor is it likely to represent an important part of any individual foraging range, given its disturbed nature and urban setting. Similar and higher quality foraging habitats are abundant in the Project vicinity and elsewhere in the

region. However, any bats roosting in onsite buildings at the time of their removal could be injured or killed. Construction-related injury or mortality of the pallid bat is considered a potentially significant impact of the Project. MMs BIO-3.1 through BIO-3.4 would reduce the impact on the pallid bat to less than significant.

The Western burrowing owl, a State candidate species under the California Endangered Species Act, occurs within the Project's geographic range, with a historical occurrence documented within five miles of the Site. Suitable burrowing and foraging habitat may exist on or adjacent to the Site, particularly along Mill Creek, Mill Creek Ditch, and the Project boundary, including open grasslands, canals, irrigation ditches, and other infrastructure that supports small mammal burrows. Construction activities could result in direct take, burrow collapse, habitat loss, or disturbance leading to nest abandonment, constituting a potentially significant impact that may violate the California Endangered Species Act. MM BIO-4, which requires focused surveys following the 2012 Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation and, if necessary, consultation with the CDFW for avoidance, minimization, and potential ITP acquisition, would reduce the impact on the western burrowing owl to less than significant.

The Crotch's bumble bee, a State candidate species under the California Endangered Species Act, occurs within the Project's geographic range, with a historical occurrence documented within three miles of the site. Potential nesting and foraging habitat, such as grasslands, scrub, small mammal burrows, perennial bunch grasses, thatched annual grasses, brush piles, old bird nests, dead trees, and hollow logs, may be present on the Site. Project activities could result in direct take, habitat destruction, or disruption of nesting sites, constituting a potentially significant impact that may violate the California Endangered Species Act. MM BIO-5, which requires a habitat assessment followed by focused surveys per the Survey Considerations for California Endangered Species Act Candidate Bumble Bee Species (2023) and, if warranted, consultation with the CDFW for avoidance, minimization, and potential ITP acquisition, would reduce the impact on the Crotch's bumble bee to less than significant.

The California tiger salamander, a State and federally threatened species, occurs within the Project's geographic range, with a historical occurrence documented within seven miles of the site. Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch may provide suitable breeding habitat, while adjacent uplands could serve as dispersal or aestivation refugia, with the species capable of dispersing up to approximately 1.5 miles from seasonally flooded wetlands. Construction could result in direct take, habitat loss, hydrological alterations, or barriers to dispersal, constituting a potentially significant impact that may violate the California Endangered Species Act and federal Endangered Species Act. MM BIO-6, which requires a robust habitat assessment and, if suitable habitat is identified, protocol-level surveys following the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Interim Guidance on Site Assessment and Field Surveys for Determining Presence or a Negative

Finding of the California tiger salamander (2003), along with consultation with the CDFW for avoidance, minimization, and potential ITP acquisition, would reduce the impact on the California tiger salamander to less than significant.

The American Badger, a California Species of Special Concern, occurs within the Project's geographic range, with a historical occurrence documented within 10 miles of the site. Potential denning and foraging habitat, characterized by sparsely vegetated areas with dry, friable soils supporting fossorial rodent prey, may exist on the site, particularly in the southern section. Construction could result in direct take, den disturbance, or habitat loss, constituting a potentially significant impact that may violate the California Fish and Game Code. MM BIO-7, which requires focused field surveys in areas of potentially suitable habitat and consultation with the CDFW for avoidance, minimization, and mitigation if presence is indicated, would reduce the impact on the American badger to less than significant.

The Western Pond Turtle, a California Species of Special Concern and federally proposed threatened species, occurs within the Project's geographic range, with a historical occurrence documented within three miles of the site. Suitable aquatic habitat for breeding, basking, and overwintering, as well as upland nesting sites up to 500 meters from water bodies, may be present along Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch. Construction could result in direct take, habitat loss, nest disruption, reduced reproductive success, or increased mortality from noise, vibration, vegetation removal, or vehicle traffic, constituting a potentially significant impact that may violate the California Fish and Game Code and potentially the federal Endangered Species Act. MM BIO-8, which requires focused surveys in suitable habitat areas and consultation with the CDFW for avoidance, minimization, and mitigation if presence is indicated, would reduce the impact on the western pond turtle to less than significant.

The Western Spadefoot, a California Species of Special Concern and federally proposed threatened species, occurs within the Project's geographic range, with a historical occurrence documented within approximately one mile of the site. Potential breeding habitat in ephemeral depressions, seasonal wetlands, or grasslands without wetland vegetation may exist within or adjacent to Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch. Construction could result in direct take or habitat loss, constituting a potentially significant impact that may violate the California Fish and Game Code and potentially the federal Endangered Species Act. MM BIO-9, which requires a general habitat assessment and, if suitable habitat is identified, further surveys and consultation with the CDFW for avoidance, minimization, and mitigation, would reduce the impact on the western spadefoot to less than significant.

The Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp and Vernal Pool Tadpole Shrimp. The vernal pool fairy shrimp (federally threatened) and vernal pool tadpole shrimp (federally endangered) occur within the

Project's geographic range, with a historical occurrence documented within 1.5 miles of the site. Sections of Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch may provide suitable vernal pool or temporary water habitats where these branchiopods complete their lifecycle, with cysts remaining viable in dried substrates. Construction could result in direct take, habitat loss, or hydrological changes, constituting a potentially significant impact that may violate the federal Endangered Species Act. MM BIO-10, which requires a general habitat assessment followed by protocol-level surveys per the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Survey Guidelines for the Listed Large Branchiopods (2017) and consultation with the CDFW and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for avoidance, minimization, and mitigation including no-disturbance buffers, would reduce the impact on these branchiopods to less than significant.

Nesting Birds. Project activities could affect nesting birds protected under Fish and Game Code sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513, as well as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, through disturbance or destruction of active nests, eggs, or young during construction, constituting a potentially significant impact. MMs BIO-1.1, 1.2, and 1.3, which require pre-activity surveys within 10 days of ground disturbance (covering a sufficient area including potential indirect impact zones), establishment of behavioral baselines, continuous monitoring if nests are identified, and minimum no-disturbance buffers (250 feet for non-listed birds and 500 feet for non-listed raptors) unless variances are justified and approved by the CDFW, would reduce the impact on nesting birds to less than significant.

While the majority of special status plant and animal species documented in the Project vicinity are absent or unlikely to occur on the Site and would therefore experience no impacts from the Project, and potential effects on the tricolored blackbird and western mastiff bat are limited to negligible foraging habitat loss and are considered less than significant, the Project poses potentially significant construction-related risks to nesting birds (including loggerhead shrike and Swainson's hawk), pallid bat, western burrowing owl, CBB, California tiger salamander, American badger, western pond turtle, western spadefoot, and vernal pool branchiopods. With implementation of the following mitigation measures, impacts would be reduced to *less than significant.*

Mitigation Measures

MM BIO-1.1: Construction Timing for Nesting Birds and Raptors. If feasible, construction activities will take place entirely outside of the avian nesting season, defined here as February 1 to September 15.

MM BIO-1.2: Pre-construction Surveys for Nesting Birds and Raptors If construction must occur between February 1 and September 15, a qualified biologist will conduct surveys for active bird nests no more than 10 days prior to the start of ground or vegetation disturbance. The

survey area will encompass the Site and accessible surrounding lands within 500 feet, and the biologist will establish behavioral baselines for any active nests identified.

MM BIO-1.3: Avoidance of Active Nests. Should any active nests be discovered, a minimum no-disturbance buffer of 250 feet for non-listed birds and 500 feet for non-listed raptors will be established, identified on the ground with flagging or fencing, and maintained until the biologist has determined that the young have fledged and are capable of foraging independently. Nests will be monitored during construction, and buffers may be reduced only with CDFW approval based on site-specific monitoring.

MM BIO-2.1: Swainson's Hawk Surveys Prior to Construction. To ensure compliance with CESA and to accurately determine current occupancy within and adjacent to the Project area, a qualified biologist shall conduct protocol-level nesting surveys for Swainson's hawk following the most current Swainson's Hawk Technical Advisory Committee (SWHA TAC 2000) recommended survey methodology (or any subsequent CDFW-approved updates).[70] Surveys shall be conducted in the nesting season immediately preceding any ground-disturbing activities or vegetation removal if: (a) more than two years have elapsed since the surveys conducted for the Draft EIR, or (b) initial surveys for the DEIR were conducted outside the protocol timeframe or were otherwise incomplete. At minimum, one complete protocol survey season (typically three visits between March 1 and July 31) shall be performed in the year immediately prior to commencement of construction. Survey area shall include all suitable nesting habitat within 0.5 mile of proposed disturbance areas.

MM BIO-2.2: Swainson's Hawk Avoidance Buffer. If construction or ground-disturbing activities are proposed during the Swainson's hawk nesting season (March 1 – September 15), and an active Swainson's hawk nest is identified at any time (via protocol surveys or incidental observation) within 0.5 mile of the Project disturbance footprint, the following shall apply:

1) A minimum 0.5-mile no-construction-disturbance buffer shall be established and clearly delineated in the field around each active nest. Within this buffer, no construction activities, vegetation removal, grading, equipment staging, or other potentially disruptive actions shall occur.
2) The buffer may be reduced on a case-by-case basis only with written concurrence from CDFW and only after a qualified biologist, in coordination with CDFW, conducts site-specific disturbance monitoring and determines that the hawks are tolerant of activities at a lesser distance (typically not less than 0.25 mile for low-disturbance activities).

70) Swainson's Hawk Technical Advisory Committee

3) All buffers shall remain in effect until August 31 or until a qualified biologist, acceptable to CDFW, has confirmed that all young have fledged, are no longer dependent on the nest or parental care, and the adults have ceased defending the nest site.
4) Buffer boundaries shall be flagged or fenced in the field, and all construction personnel shall be briefed on the location and restrictions prior to commencing work.

MM BIO-2.3: (Swainson's Hawk Take Authorization). If complete avoidance of take (as defined by Fish and Game Code §86) is not feasible because a 0.5-mile buffer (or CDFW-approved reduced buffer) cannot be implemented while still accomplishing the Project, the Project proponent shall: a. Immediately cease activities that could result in take and consult with CDFW; b. Obtain an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) pursuant to Fish and Game Code §2081(b) prior to any activity that may result in take of Swainson's hawk; c. Fully implement all avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures required by the ITP, including but not limited to:

- Permanent protection and management of compensatory foraging habitat at a minimum ratio of 1:1 (1 acre preserved for every acre of foraging habitat permanently impacted within 10 miles of an active nest), or as otherwise specified by CDFW in the ITP;
- Funding of long-term management endowments for preserved lands;
- Pre-construction nest monitoring and biological construction monitoring as required by CDFW.

MM BIO-3.1: Construction Timing for Pallid Bat. To avoid potential impacts to maternity bat roosts, and if feasible, removal of the Site's buildings will occur outside of the period between April 15 and September 30. This is the time frame within which colony-nesting bats in the vicinity generally assemble, give birth, nurse their young, and ultimately disperse.

MM BIO-3.2: Pre-construction Surveys for Pallid Bat. Within 10 days prior to the removal of the Site's buildings, a qualified biologist will survey the buildings for roosting bats. The biologist will look for individuals, guano, and staining, and will listen for bat vocalizations. If necessary, the biologist will wait for nighttime emergence of bats from roost sites.

MM BIO-3.3: Avoidance of Maternity Roosts for Pallid Bat. Should any active maternity bat roosts be discovered, the biologist will identify a suitable construction-free buffer around the maternity roost. The buffer will be identified on the ground with flagging or fencing, and will be maintained until the biologist has determined that the nursery is no longer active

MM BIO-3.4: Humane Eviction of Non-breeding Bats. If any non-breeding bat colonies are found in buildings to be removed, the individuals will be humanely evicted, under the direction of a qualified biologist, to ensure that bats are not physically harmed during this process.

MM BIO-4: Western burrowing owl Mitigation. Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, a qualified biologist shall conduct burrowing owl surveys throughout the Project Site and a 500-

foot buffer in accordance with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's 2012 Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation[71] (or current successor protocol), consisting of four survey visits spanning the breeding season (February 1–August 31) and additional pre-construction surveys within 14 days prior to work initiation. All survey reports shall be submitted to CDFW.

If western burrowing owl or occupied/suitable burrows are detected, no-disturbance buffers shall be established and maintained as follows: 250 feet around occupied breeding burrows from February 1–August 31 and 150 feet during the non-breeding season (September 1–January 31); 150 feet around occupied non-breeding (wintering) burrows year-round; and 100 feet around suitable but unoccupied burrows until confirmed vacant. Buffers shall be demarcated with high-visibility staking or fencing, and all vegetation management, grading, and equipment activity shall be prohibited within these zones.

If avoidance of occupied burrows is not feasible, passive relocation (eviction) may only occur outside the breeding season (September 1–January 31) using one-way doors and under direct supervision of a qualified biologist, followed by burrow collapse after a minimum five-night clearance period confirming vacancy. Mandatory Worker Environmental Awareness Training shall be provided to all onsite personnel covering owl identification, buffer protection, and reporting requirements.

If take cannot be avoided, the Project proponent shall obtain an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) from CDFW pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(b) prior to any activity that may result in take. Permanent loss of suitable foraging habitat shall be compensated at a minimum 1:1 ratio through preservation of equivalent grassland habitat or purchase of credits at a CDFW-approved mitigation bank, as approved by CDFW. A final compliance report documenting survey results, buffer implementation, and any relocation or compensatory measures shall be submitted to CDFW within 90 days of construction completion.

MM BIO-5: Crotch's bumble bee Mitigation. Prior to ground disturbance, a qualified biologist shall conduct a habitat assessment throughout the Project Site to identify suitable Crotch's bumble bee (CBB) habitat and document potential nesting features, including small mammal burrows, perennial bunch grasses, thatched annual grasses, brush piles, old bird nests, dead trees, and hollow logs. If suitable habitat or nesting features are present, focused presence/absence surveys shall be conducted during the appropriate flight season (typically

71) CDFW Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation

March–October) following CDFW's 2023 Survey Considerations for California Endangered Species Act Candidate Bumble Bee Species, and survey reports shall be submitted to CDFW.[72]

If CBB or occupied/potential nesting sites are detected, impacts shall be avoided by establishing a minimum 30-foot no-disturbance buffer around each documented nesting feature or colony during the active season (March 1–October 31), with all ground disturbance, vegetation removal, and heavy equipment prohibited within buffers. Pre-construction clearance surveys shall be conducted within 7 days prior to work commencement in suitable habitat, and mandatory Worker Environmental Awareness Training shall inform all personnel of CBB identification and protection requirements.

If complete avoidance is not feasible and take cannot be avoided, the Project proponent shall obtain an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) from CDFW pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(b) prior to any activity that may result in take. Permanent loss of suitable foraging or nesting habitat shall be compensated at a minimum 1:1 ratio through preservation of equivalent grassland/scrub habitat or purchase of credits at a CDFW-approved mitigation bank, as approved by CDFW. A final compliance report documenting implementation of all measures shall be submitted to CDFW within 90 days of construction completion.

MM BIO-6: California tiger salamander Mitigation. Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, a qualified biologist shall conduct a full habitat assessment for California tiger salamander within the Project Site and a 1.5-mile buffer, focusing on Mill Creek, Mill Creek Ditch, seasonal wetlands, stock ponds, and surrounding upland aestivation habitat. If suitable breeding or dispersal habitat is present, protocol-level presence/absence surveys shall be conducted in accordance with current USFWS and CDFW protocols, and all survey reports shall be submitted to both CDFW and USFWS.[73]

If California tiger salamanders or occupied breeding habitat is detected, all direct impacts to breeding sites shall be avoided by establishing a minimum 300-foot no-disturbance buffer around any occupied or potential breeding pond or wetland capable of holding water for at least 10 weeks, with upland aestivation habitat protected within a 1,000-foot radius of the breeding site unless a site-specific variance is approved by USFWS/CDFW. High-visibility exclusion fencing shall be installed around the entire impact area and monitored daily during construction, pre-construction clearance surveys shall be conducted within 48 hours of work

72) CDFW Survey Considerations for California Endangered Species Act Candidate Bumble Bee Species
73) USFW Interim Guidance on Site Assessment and Field Surveys for Determining Presence or a Negative Finding of the California tiger salamander

commencement, and all onsite personnel shall complete mandatory Worker Environmental Awareness Training that addresses California tiger salamander biology and protection measures.

If complete avoidance is not feasible, the Project proponent shall obtain incidental take authorization from CDFW through an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(b) and, if federal nexus exists, Section 7 or Section 10(a)(1)(B) authorization from USFWS prior to any activity that may result in take. Permanent loss of occupied breeding or upland habitat shall be compensated at a minimum 3:1 ratio through purchase of credits at a USFWS/CDFW-approved conservation bank serving the Project area, permanent preservation of equivalent offsite habitat, or restoration/creation of breeding and upland habitat under an approved mitigation plan. A final compliance report documenting implementation of all avoidance, minimization, and compensatory measures shall be submitted to CDFW and USFWS within 90 days of construction completion.

MM BIO-7: American Badger Mitigation. Prior to ground disturbance, a qualified biologist shall conduct focused daytime surveys for American badger dens in all areas of suitable habitat (open grasslands, dry friable soils, and areas with abundant ground squirrel or pocket gopher burrows), particularly in the southern portion of the Project Site, following CDFW-accepted protocols. Survey results shall be submitted to CDFW.

If badger sign or dens are detected, a minimum 100-foot no-disturbance buffer shall be established around any active den during the breeding season (February 15–July 1) and a 50-foot buffer around inactive dens year-round until the den is confirmed vacated by excavation or natural collapse. If avoidance of an occupied den is not feasible, passive relocation (humane eviction) shall be conducted only between July 1 and February 15 (outside the pup-rearing period) by a qualified biologist through one-way door installation and monitoring for a minimum of five consecutive nights, followed by den excavation under direct biologist supervision to confirm vacancy.

Exclusion fencing or flagging shall demarcate all buffers, and pre-construction clearance surveys shall be conducted within 14 days prior to work in adjacent areas. All onsite personnel shall receive Worker Environmental Awareness Training regarding badger identification and protection requirements.

If permanent loss of suitable foraging habitat exceeds 5 acres, compensatory mitigation shall be provided at a 1:1 ratio through preservation of equivalent habitat or purchase of credits at a CDFW-approved conservation bank, subject to CDFW approval. A final compliance report documenting survey results and measure implementation shall be submitted to CDFW within 90 days of construction completion.

MM BIO-8: Western Pond Turtle Mitigation. Prior to ground disturbance, a qualified biologist shall conduct focused presence/absence surveys for western pond turtle in all suitable aquatic habitat (Mill Creek, Mill Creek Ditch, ponds, and slow-moving channels) and associated upland nesting habitat within the Project Site plus a 500-meter buffer, following current CDFW-approved protocols (visual surveys, basking surveys, and trapping if required). Survey reports shall be submitted to CDFW.

If western pond turtle is detected or suitable habitat is confirmed present, a minimum 200-foot no-disturbance buffer shall be established around all aquatic habitat used for foraging, basking, or overwintering, and a 500-meter no-disturbance buffer shall be established around known or potential upland nesting areas from March 1 through August 31, unless CDFW approves a reduced buffer based on site-specific conditions. High-visibility exclusion fencing shall be installed and maintained around work limits adjacent to suitable habitat to prevent turtle entry into construction areas, with daily monitoring and immediate repair as needed. Pre-construction clearance surveys shall be conducted, and any turtles found within the work area shall be relocated by a permitted biologist under CDFW authorization to suitable habitat outside the impact zone. In-channel work shall be restricted to the dry season (June 15–October 15) where feasible, with dewatering and turtle relocation protocols implemented if water is present. Mandatory Worker Environmental Awareness Training covering turtle identification, protected status, and required protective measures shall be provided to all personnel, and a 10-mph speed limit shall be enforced on unpaved roads within 500 meters of aquatic habitat to minimize road mortality.

If complete avoidance is not feasible and take cannot be avoided, the Project proponent shall obtain any required take authorization from USFWS (if the species is federally listed at the time of construction) and CDFW concurrence prior to any activities that may result in take. Permanent loss of aquatic or upland habitat shall be compensated at a minimum 3:1 ratio through purchase of credits at a CDFW-approved conservation bank, permanent protection of offsite habitat, or habitat restoration/creation as approved by CDFW. A final compliance report documenting implementation of all measures shall be submitted to CDFW within 90 days of construction completion.

MM BIO-9: Western Spadefoot Mitigation. Prior to ground disturbance, a qualified biologist shall conduct a habitat assessment and, if suitable habitat is present, protocol-level surveys following current CDFW guidelines, with results submitted to CDFW.

If western spadefoot or suitable breeding habitat is identified, the Project shall avoid impacts by establishing a minimum 300-foot no-disturbance buffer around occupied or potential breeding sites (ephemeral pools, seasonal wetlands, or slow-moving portions of Mill Creek and

Mill Creek Ditch), prohibiting construction activities within buffers during the active season (typically January–July), installing and maintaining exclusion fencing, enforcing a 5-mph speed limit on unpaved roads near suitable habitat during nighttime and post-rain periods, and requiring all onsite personnel to complete a mandatory Worker Environmental Awareness Program covering species identification and protective measures.

If complete avoidance is not feasible and take cannot be avoided, the Project proponent shall obtain any required take authorization from USFWS (if the species is federally listed at the time of construction) and CDFW concurrence prior to any activities that may result in take. Permanent loss of occupied or suitable habitat shall be compensated at a minimum 3:1 ratio through purchase of credits at a CDFW-approved conservation bank, permanent protection of offsite habitat, or restoration/creation of equivalent habitat, as approved by CDFW. A final compliance report documenting implementation of all measures shall be submitted to CDFW within 90 days of construction completion.

MM BIO-10: Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp and Vernal Pool Tadpole Shrimp Surveys and Avoidance. Prior to the initiation of any ground-disturbing activities, a qualified biologist shall conduct a general habitat assessment of the Project Site and immediate vicinity, including sections of Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch, to evaluate the presence of suitable vernal pool or temporary water habitats capable of supporting vernal pool fairy shrimp or vernal pool tadpole shrimp. This assessment shall identify features such as ephemeral depressions, seasonal wetlands, or other temporary waters that may hold water between November and early May, allowing for the species' lifecycle completion, with cysts potentially remaining viable in dried substrates.

If the habitat assessment determines that suitable or potential habitat is present, the qualified biologist shall conduct protocol-level surveys in accordance with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's "Survey Guidelines for the Listed Large Branchiopods"[74]. Surveys shall be timed appropriately during the wet season (typically November through May) to detect active individuals or, if necessary, during the dry season for cyst sampling to confirm presence or extent of occurrence.

Survey results shall be documented in a report submitted to the City of Visalia, CDFW, and USFWS. If vernal pool fairy shrimp or vernal pool tadpole shrimp are detected or presumed present based on survey findings, the Project proponent shall consult with CDFW and USFWS well in advance of any development or ground-disturbing activities. Consultation shall focus on developing and implementing appropriate avoidance and minimization measures,

74) USFWS Survey Guidelines for the Listed Large Branchiopods

including but not limited to the establishment of adequate no-disturbance buffers around identified habitats to prevent direct take, habitat loss, or hydrological alterations. If take cannot be fully avoided, the Project proponent shall obtain necessary authorizations, such as an Incidental Take Permit pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(b) from CDFW and/or Section 7 or 10(a) permits under the federal Endangered Species Act from USFWS and implement any required compensatory mitigation to ensure compliance with state and federal laws. All mitigation measures derived from consultation shall be incorporated into the Project's construction plans and monitored by a qualified biologist throughout the duration of Project activities to verify effectiveness and compliance.

Impact 3.4-2: Would the Project 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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

The Biological Evaluation prepared for the Project indicates that the Site does not contain or adjoin any sensitive natural communities as defined by the CDFW or the USFWS. Sensitive natural communities are unique assemblages of plants and animals that are considered "sensitive" and must be addressed under CEQA review. A query of relevant databases, including the CNDDB, confirmed no records of sensitive natural communities on or adjacent to the Site.

Limited riparian habitat is present along the two seasonal drainages on the Site, Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch. These drainages are heavily modified, confined to narrow, steep-sided channels with regulated seasonal flows. Riparian vegetation is sparse and consists primarily of a few native valley oak trees (*Quercus lobata*), along with non-native and ornamental species such as black walnut (*Juglans hindsii*), coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), and herbaceous weeds like Johnson grass (*Sorghum halepense*) and curly dock (*Rumex crispus*). This marginal riparian area does not qualify as a sensitive natural community due to its disturbed condition, urban surroundings, and predominance of non-native species.

The Project design incorporates setbacks from Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch to avoid direct impacts to these features and their associated riparian vegetation. No development is proposed within these setbacks, and large trees potentially suitable for riparian-associated

wildlife will remain intact. As a result, the Project would not result in substantial adverse effects to riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities. Impacts are considered *less than significant* under CEQA, and no mitigation is required.

Impact 3.4-3: Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on State or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

The Biological Evaluation prepared for the Project indicates that no State or federally protected wetlands are present on the Site. While the Site contains two seasonal drainages, Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch, which are likely jurisdictional waters regulated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, Section 1602 of California Fish and Game Code by the CDFW, and as waters of the State, by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), these features do not meet the criteria for wetlands. Wetlands are defined by the presence of hydric soils, hydrophytic vegetation, and wetland hydrology. Although some Site soils are classified as hydric, long-term agricultural disturbance has altered the soil characteristics, and the drainages lack dominant hydrophytic vegetation and consistent wetland hydrology due to regulated seasonal flows and dry conditions observed during the April 2025 survey.

The Project design incorporates setbacks from Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch, and no filling, realignment, or removal of either drainage is proposed. However, Phase I includes storm drain pipelines along Road 88 that would convey Site runoff across Mill Creek to the storm basin located south of the drainage. As identified in the Biological Evaluation, installation of this pipeline may result in minor, temporary disturbance to the bed, channel, or bank of Mill Creek. Because Mill Creek is likely jurisdictional to the CDFW and the RWQCB, and may also meet the definition of a water of the U.S., this work would require notification to the CDFW under Fish and Game Code Section 1602 and may require a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement, Waste Discharge Requirements or a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Central Valley RWQCB, and authorization under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act from the USACE if a jurisdictional determination confirms the feature is a water of the U.S.

Potential indirect effects, such as hydrological interruption from construction activities or stormwater runoff, would be minimized through compliance with standard BMPs including the development of a SWPPP under the NPDES Construction General Permit. No vernal pools, marshes, or other wetland types were identified on the Site, and queries of relevant databases confirmed the absence of such features. Therefore, the Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on protected wetlands, and impacts are *less than significant* under CEQA.

Impact 3.4-4: Would the Project 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?

Before Mitigation	Significant (construction could disturb active bird nests and bat maternity roosts)
Mitigation Measures	MM BIO-1.1 through MM BIO-3.4
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

The Biological Evaluation prepared for the Project indicates that the Site does not function as a regionally important wildlife movement corridor. The Site is situated in an urban-agricultural interface on the edge of the City of Visalia, surrounded by existing development, agricultural fields, and roadways, including SR 198 to the south. Wildlife movement in the region is already constrained by these features, and the Site's disturbed habitats (primarily orchards and fields) do not provide essential connectivity between larger habitat blocks. The two seasonal drainages, Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch, are narrow, modified channels with limited riparian vegetation and regulated flows, which do not serve as significant corridors for terrestrial or aquatic wildlife. No migratory fish species are expected to occur due to the seasonal and intermittent nature of the drainages, which were dry during the April 2025 survey and lack perennial water sources supportive of fish populations.

The Project incorporates setbacks from Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch, preserving these features and avoiding direct barriers to any potential localized movement along them. Post-development, the Site would consist of industrial buildings and infrastructure, but similar urbanized areas in the vicinity already exist without substantially impeding regional wildlife movement. Therefore, the Project would not interfere substantially with wildlife corridors or the movement of native resident or migratory species, and impacts in this regard are less than significant.

However, the Site has the potential to support native wildlife nursery sites, including bird nests (Swainson's hawk and loggerhead shrike) and bat maternity roosts (pallid bat), which could be impeded by construction activities through disturbance, destruction, or abandonment. Without mitigation, this could result in a potentially significant impact. Implementation of MMs BIO-1.1 through BIO-3.4, which include construction timing restrictions, pre-construction surveys, avoidance buffers for active nests and maternity roosts, and humane eviction of non-breeding bats, would reduce potential impacts to nursery sites to a *less than significant level with mitigation.*

Impact 3.4-5: Would the Project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

The Biological Evaluation prepared for the Project concludes that the Project is consistent with City of Visalia General Plan policies related to biological resources. The City of Visalia General Plan includes several policies aimed at protecting habitats, special status species, and trees, such as OSC-O-1 (creating and protecting open space for natural resources), OSC-O-10 (protecting sensitive natural communities), OSC-P-8 (protecting riparian corridors with setbacks), OSC-P-27 (no net loss of sensitive habitat), OSC-P-30 (requiring biological assessments), OSC-P-31 (protecting special status species through avoidance and mitigation), and OSC-P-38 (revising the Valley Oak Ordinance to include other native trees). The Project incorporates setbacks from Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch, preserving riparian areas and native valley oak trees, and will include mitigation measures to protect special status species like Swainson's hawk, loggerhead shrike, and pallid bat. The biological assessment conducted satisfies assessment requirements, and no sensitive habitats or critical habitat designations are present on the Site. The Project aligns with these policies.

Additionally, the City of Visalia's Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance (Municipal Code Chapter 12.24) protects valley oaks by prohibiting willful destruction without a permit and regulating encroachment during construction. The Project design avoids removal or disturbance of the few native valley oak trees along the drainages, ensuring compliance with the ordinance. No permits for tree removal are required, as trees will remain intact within the setbacks.

Therefore, the Project would not conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, and impacts are less than significant under CEQA. No mitigation is required.

Impact 3.4-6: Would the Project conflict with the provisions of an adopted habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan?

Before Mitigation	No Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**No Impact**

The Biological Evaluation prepared for the Project concludes that the Project is not subject to any HCPs or Natural Community Conservation Plans. A review of relevant databases, including those maintained by CDFW and USFWS confirms that no adopted HCPs, Natural Community Conservation Plans, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plans encompass the Site or its immediate vicinity in the City of Visalia, Tulare County. The Kern Water Bank HCP[75] applies only to a limited area in Allensworth in southern Tulare County, which is not applicable to the Project Site. Other regional efforts, such as the Central Valley Joint Venture, are conservation partnerships rather than formal adopted plans under CEQA. The Project would not conflict with any such provisions, and there is no impact under CEQA.

3.4.6 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts refer to the combined effects of the proposed Project with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects that could incrementally contribute to adverse effects on biological resources. Under CEQA Guidelines § 15130, cumulative impacts are evaluated based on whether the Project's incremental contribution is "cumulatively considerable," meaning it would result in a significant cumulative effect when viewed in connection with other projects.

Cumulative Setting and Geographic Scope

The geographic scope for cumulative biological resources impacts encompasses western Visalia and adjacent portions of unincorporated Tulare County within approximately a 10-mile radius of the Project Site. This scope is the appropriate scale because most special status species that could occur on or near the Site (Swainson's hawk, burrowing owl, California tiger

75) Kern Water Bank Habitat Conservation Plan / Natural Community Conservation Plan

salamander, Crotch's bumble bee, and vernal pool branchiopods) have foraging, breeding, or dispersal ranges that extend several miles, and regional habitat conversion affects population connectivity and viability across the San Joaquin Valley floor. The cumulative context is characterized by the ongoing conversion of agricultural and open lands to urban and industrial uses, as anticipated in the City of Visalia 2030 General Plan and Tulare County General Plan.

Key cumulative projects and trends include:

- Ongoing and planned industrial, commercial, and residential development in western Visalia and county islands along SR 99 and SR 198, including multiple warehouse/distribution centers, logistics parks, and annexations approved or under review within the past five years.
- Continued agricultural-to-urban conversion in the City's SOI, driven by population growth and economic development objectives in the Visalia 2030 General Plan.
- Infrastructure improvements (road widenings, utility extensions, and stormwater facilities) that fragment remaining habitat patches and alter local hydrology.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

The proposed Project would convert approximately 122 acres of actively farmed agricultural land (orchards, fields, ruderal areas, and two modified seasonal drainages) into industrial uses. In combination with other regional development, this would contribute to the cumulative loss and fragmentation of agricultural habitats that currently support foraging, dispersal, and limited breeding opportunities for special status species in the western Visalia area.

- **Special status Species (Impact 3.4-1):** Cumulative development has resulted in, and will continue to result in, permanent loss of foraging habitat for raptors such as Swainson's hawk, burrowing owl, and loggerhead shrike; potential upland refugia and dispersal habitat for California tiger salamander and western spadefoot; nesting and foraging resources for CBB; denning habitat for American badger; roosting habitat for pallid bat; and limited aquatic and riparian-associated habitat for western pond turtle and vernal pool branchiopods. The Visalia area has already experienced substantial habitat conversion, and remaining agricultural lands represent an increasingly important resource for these species. However, the Project Site is heavily disturbed, supports only common agricultural wildlife, and does not contain high-quality or unique habitat. The Project incorporates substantial setbacks from Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch, preserves existing valley oak trees, and implements comprehensive mitigation measures (BIO-1.1 through BIO-10) that require protocol-level surveys, species-specific avoidance buffers, take authorization where required, and compensatory habitat preservation or mitigation bank credits. These measures align with or exceed regional standards applied to similar cumulative projects. Accordingly, the Project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts on special status species would not be cumulatively considerable.

- **Riparian Habitat and Sensitive Natural Communities (Impact 3.4-2):** No sensitive natural communities are present on the Site, and riparian vegetation along Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch is sparse and disturbed. Cumulative projects in the area typically preserve or buffer major waterways consistent with General Plan policies. The Project's setbacks and tree preservation ensure no direct loss of riparian habitat, and indirect effects (lighting, runoff) are minimized through required design features and compliance with NPDES and City standards also applied region-wide. The Project's contribution to cumulative riparian or sensitive community impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.
- **Wetlands and Jurisdictional Waters (Impact 3.4-3):** No wetlands or vernal pools occur on the Site. Cumulative impacts to jurisdictional waters in the region are addressed through consistent application of Clean Water Act Section 404/401, Fish and Game Code Section 1602, and Porter-Cologne requirements across projects. The Project avoids direct impacts to Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch via setbacks and BMPs, with the exception of the Road 88 storm drain pipeline crossing of Mill Creek, which would result in minor, temporary disturbance subject to the same permitting framework applied to other regional projects. Therefore, its contribution to cumulative wetland or jurisdictional water impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.
- **Wildlife Movement and Nursery Sites (Impact 3.4-4):** The Site does not function as a regional wildlife movement corridor. Cumulative urbanization has already constrained movement in western Visalia, but remaining agricultural lands and creek corridors continue to provide localized connectivity. The Project preserves creek setbacks and implements nesting bird and bat roost protection measures required of all regional projects. Its incremental contribution to cumulative movement or nursery site impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.
- **Local Policies and Ordinances (Impact 3.4-5) and Adopted Conservation Plans (Impact 3.4-6):** The Project is consistent with the Visalia General Plan and Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance and is not located within any adopted HCP or NCCP. Cumulative projects are subject to the same policies and mitigation requirements; therefore, no cumulative conflict would occur.

Conclusion

Cumulative development in western Visalia will continue the long-term trend of agricultural land conversion, resulting in incremental loss of habitat for special status species and minor fragmentation of local movement opportunities. However, the Project Site supports only disturbed, low-value agricultural habitat; incorporates creek setbacks and tree preservation; and implements robust, species-specific mitigation that meets or exceeds measures required of other cumulative projects in the area. The Project's incremental effects on biological resources would therefore not be cumulatively considerable when viewed in the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Cumulative impacts on biological resources would be less than significant.

3 - 5 Cultural Resources

This section identifies potential impacts of the proposed Project on cultural, archaeological, and historical resources. Cultural resources include prehistoric-era archaeological sites, historic-era archaeological sites, Native American traditional cultural properties, sites of religious and cultural significance, and historical buildings, structures, objects, and sites. The importance of any single cultural resource is defined by the context in which it was first created, current public opinion, and modern yet evolving analysis. A Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment was prepared for the Project by Soar Environmental Consulting, Inc. (March 17, 2025, revised in April 2026) and is the basis for analysis for the discussion (see Appendix F). Tribal consultations pursuant to AB 52 are addressed in Section 3.13 – Tribal Cultural Resources.

One Notice of Preparation (NOP) comment letter was received from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) regarding this topic. The NAHC letter, dated May 30, 2025, states the importance of early consultation with California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project's geographic area to avoid inadvertent discoveries of Native American human remains and to protect TCRs It also recommends consulting legal counsel for compliance with AB 52, SB 18, and other applicable laws.

3.5.1 Environmental Setting

Physical Environment

The Site is located on the western edge of the City of Visalia in Tulare County, within the San Joaquin Valley. The San Joaquin Valley is a long, narrow, northwest-trending alluvial valley that lies between the Sierra Nevada Range to the east and the Coast Ranges to the west. The region was historically covered with native annual and perennial grasslands, San Joaquin saltbush scrub, valley oak savanna, riparian forest, and tule marsh. The climate consists of hot, dry summers with cool, moist winters that provide the best climate for the fruit orchards currently located within the southern portion of the Site. The Site is best characterized historically as a rural ranching and agricultural region with large populations of both large and small mammals.

Cultural Setting

Cultural resources include prehistoric-era archaeological sites, historic-era archaeological sites, Native American traditional cultural properties, sites of religious and cultural significance, and historical buildings, structures, objects, and sites. The importance of any single cultural resource is defined by the context in which it was first created, current public opinion, and modern yet evolving analysis. From the analytical perspective, temporal and geographic

considerations help to define the historical context of the Site. The importance or significance of a cultural resource is in part described by the context in which it originated or developed. A historic context is information about historic trends and properties grouped by an important theme in prehistory or history of a community, state, or the nation during a particular period of time. A context links an existing property to important historic trends, and this allows a framework for determining the significance of a property. In California, historians have divided the past into broad categories based on climate models, archaeological dating, and written histories. Paleontologists divide time into much larger segments, with defined and named periods of time shortening in timespan as the modern era is reached.

Prehistoric Context

During the Early Holocene (9700-4000 B.C.), large game hunters occupied the area, with Tulare Basin finds like Western Clovis points indicating occupation before 11,300 B.P. The Middle Holocene (4000-1000 B.C.) features Pinto-like points and groundstone tools, with uncertain societal associations. Olsen and Payen (1968) outlined four southern San Joaquin Valley complexes: Positas (3300-2600 B.C.) with shaped mortars, pestles, milling stones, perforated cobbles, and sea snail beads; Pacheco (2600 B.C.-300 A.D.), including Phase B (2600-1600 B.C.) with biface points, abalone ornaments, and sea snail beads, and Phase A (1600 B.C.-300 A.D.) with varied beads, perforated teeth, bone awls/whistles/saws, large points, and abundant milling tools; Gonzaga (300-1000 A.D.) with extended burials, bowl mortars, shaped pestles, squared/tapered points, bone tools/saws, and shell ornaments/beads; and Panoche (1500 A.D.-European contact, mid-late 1700s) with fewer milling stones, varied mortars/pestles, small side-notched points, clamshell beads, and bone awls/whistles/saws/tubes.[76]

Ethnographic Context

Penutian-speaking Yokuts tribal groups occupied the southern San Joaquin Valley region and much of the nearby Sierra Nevada. Ethnographic information about the Yokuts was collected

76) 76 Olsen, W.H. and L.A. Payen. 1968 Archeology of the Little Panoche Reservoir, Fresno County, California

primarily by Powers[77], Kroeber[78], Gayton[79], Driver[80], Latta[81], and Harrington[82]. Existing research emphasizes the central Yokuts tribes in the valley and Sierra foothills, while northern tribes declined due to the Gold Rush and southern tribes were removed to missions and later absorbed into multi-tribal communities on the Sebastian Indian Reservation, Tule River Reservation, and Santa Rosa Rancheria. This has resulted in a scarcity of detail on southern Valley tribes compared to central foothills groups, though general indigenous lifeways were similar across Yokuts territory, particularly in environmentally influenced subsistence, adaptation, religion, and beliefs.

The San Joaquin Valley floor, including the Site, was occupied by Southern Valley Yokuts divided into autonomous tribelets with poorly defined boundaries. The Telamni occupied the lower Kaweah River delta in the vicinity of present-day Visalia and likely included the Site, while the Wukchumni occupied the Kaweah River foothills to the east and the Tachi occupied the northern and western margins of Tulare Lake. The Yokuts are linguistically related to northern San Joaquin Valley occupants. Settlement patterns were consistent, with winter villages along lakeshores and streams circa A.D. 1800, and dispersal to family camps on elevated valley spots or near foothill gathering areas.

Most Yokuts groups were organized as distinct tribelets—land-owning entities centered on a village, linked by shared territory and common ancestry, with populations of 150 to 500 people[83]. Each was led by a chief assisted by a winatum (herald and assistant chief) and a shaman as religious officer, who wielded substantial influence despite lacking direct political authority[84]. Subsistence varied by environment but centered on acorns and gathered seeds, supplemented by lake and river foods like fish and wildfowl for Valley tribes; patterns included

77) 77 Powers, Stephen. 1971 The Yokuts Dance for the Dead. In R.F. Heizer and M.A. Whipple, editors, pp. 513-519, The California Indians: A Source Book (second edition). Berkeley, University of California Press (original 1877)
78) 78 Kroeber, Alfred L. 1925 Handbook of the Indians of California. California Book Company Limited, Berkeley, California.
79) 79 Gayton, A.H. 1930 Yokuts-Mono Chiefs and Shamans. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 24. Berkeley, 361-420.
80) 80 Driver, H.E. 1937 Cultural Element Distributions: VI, Southern Sierra Nevada. University of California Anthropological Records 1(2):53-154. Berkeley, California.
81) 81 Latta, F. F. 1977 Handbook of the Yokuts Indians. Bear State Books, Santa Cruz, California.
82) 82 Harrington, John Peabody. n.d. Yokuts ethnographic notes. National Anthropological Archives.
83) 83 Kroeber, Alfred L. 1925 Handbook of the Indians of California. California Book Company Limited, Berkeley, California.
84) 84 Gayton, A.H. 1930 Yokuts-Mono Chiefs and Shamans. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 24. Berkeley, 361-420.

winter aggregation in large villages using stored staples, followed by dispersal to extended family camps for seasonal gathering. Despite varying estimates influenced by Euro-American diseases and disruption, the Yokuts were among Native California's largest groups, comprising 27 percent of the state's aboriginal population at contact[85], with many descendants still residing in the southern San Joaquin Valley.

Historic Context

California's historic era is divided into the Spanish Mission Period (1769-1821), Mexican Rancho Period (1821-1848), and American Period (1848-present). The mission system established 21 missions to convert and assimilate indigenous peoples under Spanish rule. Spaniards first entered the San Joaquin Valley in 1772 under Pedro Fages; in 1776, Franciscan friar Francisco Garcés named the Kern River, visited the Yokuts village of Woilu, and performed the valley's first European baptism. Lieutenant Gabriel Moraga explored in 1806, naming the Kings and San Joaquin rivers to identify mission sites. Mission expansion ceased after Mexico's independence in the 1820s. Americans arrived in 1827 with Jedediah Smith's expedition, which encountered Yokuts and trapped along rivers; subsequent trappers depleted fur-bearing animals by 1837.

Visalia was settled in 1852, coinciding with Tulare County's formation from Mariposa County. By 1858, it joined the Overland Stage route from St. Louis to San Francisco, serving Kern River gold miners with a livestock-based economy. The Southern Pacific Railroad's arrival in 1872 shifted agriculture to field crops; Visalia incorporated in 1874. Increased irrigation converted grain fields to smaller farms for citrus, grapes, olives, and deciduous fruits, which remain key to the region's economy today.

3.5.2 Regulatory Setting

This section defines 'cultural resources' as prehistoric or historical archaeological sites and historical objects, buildings, or structures. Following 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §60.4, “historical” in this report applies to cultural resources at least 50 years old. The significance or importance of a cultural resource is dependent upon whether the resource qualifies for inclusion at the local level in a local register of historical resources, at the state level in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), or the Federal level in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Cultural resources that are determined to be eligible for inclusion in the CRHR are called “historical resources” (CEQA Guidelines [14 CCR] Section 15064.5[a]). Under these regulations the determination of eligibility is partially based on the consideration of the

85) 85 Cook, Sherburne F. 1978 Historical Demography. In Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 8, California, R. F. Heizer, editor, pp. 91-98. Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution.

criteria of significance as defined in 14 CCR 15064.5(a)(3). Cultural resources eligible for the NRHP are deemed "historic properties."

Federal

National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act was adopted in 1966 to preserve historical and archeological sites in the United States. The Act created the NRHP, the list of National Historic Landmarks, and the State Historic Preservation Offices.

State

Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) – Tribal Consultation Requirements

Assembly Bill 52, enacted in 2014, amended CEQA to create a separate category of cultural resources known as 'tribal cultural resources' (PRC §21074), defined as sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, included in a local register of historical resources, or determined by the Lead Agency to be significant. A project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource (TCR) is considered to have a significant effect on the environment (PRC §21084.2), and public agencies shall, when feasible, avoid damaging effects to any TCR (PRC §21084.3(a)).

AB 52 applies to projects for which a notice of preparation, notice of negative declaration, or mitigated negative declaration is filed on or after July 1, 2015.[86] Key requirements include:

1) Within 14 days of determining that an application for a project is complete or deciding to undertake a project, the Lead Agency must provide formal notification to designated contacts or tribal representatives of traditionally and culturally affiliated California Native American tribes that have requested notice, including a brief project description, Lead Agency contact information, and notification that the tribe has 30 days to request consultation (PRC §21080.3.1(d));
2) Consultation must begin within 30 days of receiving a tribe's request and before releasing a negative declaration, mitigated negative declaration, or EIR (PRC §21080.3.1(b), (d), (e));
3) Mandatory topics of consultation, if requested, include alternatives to the project, recommended mitigation measures, and significant effects (PRC §21080.3.2(a));

86) California Assembly Bill 52

4) Discretionary topics include the type of environmental review necessary, significance of tribal cultural resources, significance of project impacts on them, and appropriate preservation or mitigation measures (PRC §21080.3.2(a));
5) Information submitted by a tribe during consultation is confidential and not disclosed publicly without written consent, consistent with Government Code §§6254(r) and 6254.10, and must be in a confidential appendix if published (PRC §21082.3(c)(1));
6) If a project may significantly impact a tribal cultural resource, the environmental document must discuss whether the project impacts an identified resource and whether feasible alternatives or mitigation measures avoid or lessen the impact (PRC §21082.3(b));
7) Consultation concludes when parties agree on measures to mitigate or avoid significant effects or when a party concludes mutual agreement cannot be reached after good faith effort (PRC §21080.3.2(b));
8) Agreed-upon mitigation measures must be recommended for inclusion in the environmental document and mitigation monitoring program (PRC §21082.3(a));
9) If recommended mitigation is not included or consultation does not occur, the Lead Agency must consider feasible mitigation (PRC §21082.3(e));
10) Examples of feasible mitigation include avoidance and in-place preservation (planning to avoid resources, incorporating them into greenspace), treating resources with cultural dignity (protecting character, traditional use, and confidentiality), permanent conservation easements, and repatriation of Native American remains (PRC §21084.3(b), Civil Code §815.3(c), PRC §5097.991);
11) An EIR cannot be certified, nor a negative or mitigated negative declaration adopted, unless consultation has occurred and concluded, the tribe failed to engage, or the tribe did not request consultation within 30 days (PRC §21082.3(d)).

California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR)

California State law also provides for the protection of cultural resources by requiring evaluations of the significance of prehistoric and historic resources identified in CEQA documents. Under CEQA, a cultural resource is considered an important historical resource if it meets any of the criteria found in Section 15064.5(a) of the CEQA Guidelines. Criteria identified in the CEQA Guidelines are similar to those described under the NHPA. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) maintains the CRHR.[87] Properties listed in, or formally determined eligible for, the NRHP are automatically listed in the CRHR. State Landmarks and Points of Interest are also automatically listed. The CRHR can also include properties designated under local preservation ordinances or identified through local historical resource surveys.

Health and Safety Code, Section 7050.5

87) California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 11.5

Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code requires that construction or excavation be stopped in the vicinity of discovered human remains until the county coroner can determine whether the remains are those of a Native American.[88] If the remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner must contact the NAHC within 24 hours. PRC § 5097.98 and CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5(e) specify the procedures to be followed in case of the discovery of human remains on non-federal land. The disposition of Native American burials falls within the jurisdiction of the NAHC.

Senate Bill 18 – Local Government Tribal Consultation (Government Code Sections 65092, 65351, 65352, 65352.3, and 65352.4)

These regulations regulate the consultation with California Native American tribes having traditional lands located within the jurisdiction of applicable cities and counties.[89] The intent of the underlying legislation was to provide all California Native American tribes that are on the contact list maintained by the NAHC an opportunity to consult with specific local governments for the purpose of preserving and protecting their sacred places. Such consultations apply to the preparation, adoption and amendment of general plans. Such consultations apply to the preparation, adoption, and amendment of general plans and specific plans. The Project does not propose the adoption or amendment of a general plan or specific plan; therefore, SB 18 consultation is not required for the Project.

The NOP, which briefly describes the proposed Project, including a map of the Project area, was sent to the State Clearinghouse, responsible and trustee agencies, Native American tribes, and other interested parties, providing an opportunity to comment on the proposed Project. The NAHC provided a comment letter dated May 30, 2025, in response to the NOP, outlining AB 52 and SB 18 requirements generally applicable to CEQA projects.

1) If a local government considers a proposal to adopt or amend a general plan or a specific plan, or to designate open space it is required to contact the appropriate tribes identified by the NAHC by requesting a "Tribal Consultation List." If a tribe, once contacted, requests consultation the local government must consult with the tribe on the plan proposal. A tribe has 90 days from the date of receipt of notification to request consultation unless a shorter timeframe has been agreed to by the tribe (Government Code §65352.3(a)(2));
2) No statutory time limit on consultation;
3) Confidentiality of information on the identity, location, character, and use of sacred places and features (Government Code §65352.3(b));

88) California Health and Safety Code § 7050.5.
89) California Government Code § 65352.3. Senate Bill 18

4) Consultation concludes when parties mutually agree on preservation or mitigation measures or when a party concludes mutual agreement cannot be reached after good faith effort (Tribal Consultation Guidelines, Governor's Office of Planning and Research (2005) at p. 18).

California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS)

The California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) is a statewide system for managing information on the full range of historical resources identified in California.[90] CHRIS is a cooperative partnership between the citizens of California, historic preservation professionals, twelve Information Centers, and various agencies. This system bears the following responsibilities: integrate newly recorded sites and information on known resources into the California Historical Resources Inventory; furnish information on known resources and surveys to governments, institutions, and individuals who have a justifiable need to know; and supply a list of consultants who are qualified to do work within their area.

Typically, the initial step in addressing cultural resources in the project review process involves contacting the appropriate Information Center to conduct a record search. A record search should identify any previously recorded historical resources and previous archaeological studies within the project area, as well as provide recommendations for further work, if necessary. Depending on the nature and location of the project, the Project proponent or Lead Agency may be required to contact appropriate Native American representatives to aid in the identification of traditional cultural properties.

If known cultural resources are present within the Project area, or if the Project area has not been previously investigated for the presence of such resources, the Information Center may recommend a survey for historical, archaeological, and paleontological sites. Cultural resources that may be adversely affected by an undertaking should be evaluated for significance. For archaeological sites, a significance evaluation typically involves conducting test excavations. For historical sites or standing structures, historical research should be conducted and an architectural evaluation may be warranted. If significant, the resource should be protected from adverse impacts. Data recovery excavations may be warranted in the case of unavoidable damage to archaeological sites. If human burials are present, the appropriate coroner's office should be contacted. A professional archaeologist and appropriate Native American representatives should also be consulted.

When an initial study identifies the existence, or the probable likelihood, of Native American human remains within the project, a Lead Agency shall work with the appropriate Native Americans as identified by the Native American Heritage Commission as provided in PRC

90) California Historical Resources Information System

5097.98. The Applicant may develop an agreement for treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and any items associated with Native American burials with the appropriate Native Americans as identified by the Native American Heritage Commission

California Environmental Quality Act

Under CEQA, a historical resource is a resource listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the CRHR. Historical resources may include, but are not limited to, "any object, building, structure, Site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a Lead Agency determines to be historically or archaeologically significant" (PRC §5020.1[j]). In addition, a resource included in a local register of historical resources or identified as significant in a local survey conducted per the state guidelines is also considered a historic resource under California PRC (PRC) Section 5020.1.

CEQA details appropriate measures for the evaluation and protection of cultural resources in §15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines.[91] According to CEQA guidelines §15064.5 (a)(3), the criteria for listing on the CRHR includes the following:

1) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage.
2) Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past.
3) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values.
4) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

According to CEQA guidelines §21074 (a)(1), criteria for tribal cultural resources includes the following:

1) Sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either of the following:
   A. *Included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources.*
   B. *Included in a local register of historical resources as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 5020.1.*

The NAHC recommends provisions in mitigation and monitoring plans for inadvertent discoveries, including ceasing work in sensitive areas, evaluation by a certified archaeologist

91) California Code of Regulations, Title 14, § 15064.5

and culturally affiliated Native American monitor, disposition of non-burial items in consultation with affiliated Native Americans, and treatment of human remains per Health and Safety Code §7050.5, PRC §5097.98, and CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(d)-(e).

Protection of cultural resources within California is additionally regulated by PRC §5097.5, which prohibits the destruction, defacing, or removal of any historic or prehistoric cultural features on land under the jurisdiction of State or local authorities.

Local

City of Visalia Historic Preservation Ordinance

The Historic Preservation Ordinance, adopted in 1979 and updated in 2001, established the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC). HPAC is responsible for periodically updating the Local Register, nominating properties to the State and Federal Registers, and reviewing planning and development actions related to historic structures or in the Historic District. With regard to zoning changes and applications for planned development permits within the historic district, HPAC's recommendations are forwarded to the Planning Commission for its consideration. For applications for construction, exterior alteration, enlargement, or sign permits within the historic district or for "exceptional" or "focus" structures outside the district, HPAC has the power to approve, modify, or disapprove applications based on the criteria set forth in the Ordinance. Where HPAC has disapproved an application, the Building Official may only issue permits when authorized by the City Council. HPAC also reviews all applications for the demolition or moving of structures within the historic district or listed on the Local Register. The Historic Preservation Ordinance allows HPAC to deny demolition or moving permits for buildings listed as "exceptional" on the Local Register, and to apply a six-month moratorium on demolition for other historically-listed structures, during which time alternatives are to be sought. In general, owners are encouraged to maintain historic structures and make every reasonable effort to find compatible uses for them.

City of Visalia General Plan

The General Plan includes the following objectives, and policies that are potentially applicable to the proposed Project:

- *Policy LU-P-48*: Preserve established and distinctive neighborhoods throughout the City by maintaining appropriate zoning and development standards to achieve land use compatibility in terms of height, massing and other characteristics; providing design guidelines for high-quality new development; supporting housing rehabilitation programs; and other means.

Objective H-O-1: Assure the recognition of the City's history through the preservation of historic sites, structures and featuring zoning overlay designation and discretionary review procedures for the Historic District.

Objective H-O-2: Maintain historic residential areas as healthy, cohesive neighborhood units, and assure consistency of appearance within the historic area through conservation plans and historic preservation guidelines.

Objective H-O-3: Support efforts to use the Local Register of Historic Structures and the Historic District to identify and promote community history through the use of walking tours and other public outreach.

Objective H-O-4: Promote the maintenance and identification of historic resources in the community as key components of tourism and increased economic diversity for the City.

Objective H-O-5: Promote the benefits of historic property ownership through programs such as tax incentives, available grants and loans, including but not limited to Federal Tax credits and similar programs for properties within the Historic District or on the Local Register of Historic Structures.

Objective OSC-O-11: Preserve and protect historic features and archaeological resources of the Visalia planning area including its agricultural surrounding for aesthetic, scientific, educational and cultural values.

- *OSC-P-39: Establish requirements to avoid potential impacts to sites suspected of being archeologically, paleontologically, or historically significant or of concern, by:*
    - Requiring a records review for development proposed in areas that are considered archaeologically or paleontologically sensitive;
    - Determining the potential effects of development and construction on archaeological or paleontological resources (as required by CEQA);
    - Requiring pre-construction surveys and monitoring during any ground disturbance for all development in areas of historical and archaeological sensitivity (defined as areas identified according to the National Historic Preservation Act as part of the Section 106 process); and
    - Implementing appropriate measures to avoid the identified impacts, as conditions of project approval. In the event that previously unidentified historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources are discovered during construction, grading activity in the immediate area shall cease and materials and their surroundings shall not be altered or collected. A qualified archaeologist or paleontologist must make an immediate evaluation and avoidance measures, or appropriate mitigation should be completed,

according to CEQA Guidelines. The State Office of Historic Preservation has issued recommendations for the preparation of Archaeological Resource Management Reports that will be used as guidelines.

3.5.3 Thresholds of Significance

The following cultural significance thresholds are contained in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. A significant impact would occur if the Project would:

a) *Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of aa historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?*
b) *Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?*
c) *Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?*

3.5.4 Impacts Discussion

Impact 3.5-1: Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Before Mitigation	Significant (ground disturbance could uncover buried historical or cultural resources)
Mitigation Measures	MM TRI-1 and MM TRI-2
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

A Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment (CRA) was prepared for the Project by Soar Environmental Consulting, Inc. in March 2025. The CRA included a records search through the CHRIS at the SSJVIC, a Sacred Lands File search and Native American contacts list request through the NAHC, and a pedestrian survey of the Site.

The CHRIS records search identified five cultural resources within a 0.5-mile radius of the Site and one resource (P-54-003662, described as the San Joaquin Valley College building circa 1970s/1980s) mapped within the Site. However, the CRA determined that the mapping of P-54-003662 within the Site was an error, as the building is actually located outside the Site to the southwest. The pedestrian survey identified no existing cultural resources, including no historical resources, within the Site. No additional resources listed in the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, California Points of Historical Interest, California Inventory of Historic Resources, or California State Historic Landmarks were identified

within the Site or the 0.5-mile radius. A review of historic maps and aerials identified three historic-era structures within the Site, but none are listed on the National Register of Historic Places or California Register of Historical Resources. These structures lack sufficient integrity and do not meet the criteria for eligibility under the National Register of Historic Places or California Register of Historical Resources.

To determine potential eligibility for listing, these structures were evaluated in the CRA against the criteria for the NRHP and CRHR. The evaluation process involved: (1) assessing historical significance under the four criteria (Criterion A: association with significant events; Criterion B: association with important persons; Criterion C: distinctive characteristics of type, period, or method of construction; and Criterion D: potential to yield important information in history or prehistory); and (2) evaluating the seven aspects of integrity (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association) to determine if the structures retain enough of their original character to convey historical significance.

The evaluation concluded that the structures do not meet any of the four significance criteria, as they are common examples of mid-20th-century agricultural buildings without notable associations to broad historical patterns, influential individuals, or unique architectural/engineering features, and they lack archaeological potential for yielding new information. Furthermore, the structures lack sufficient integrity due to extensive modifications (additions, material replacements, and functional alterations over time), changes in setting from ongoing agricultural use, and degradation of original materials and workmanship. As a result, these structures do not meet the criteria for eligibility under the NRHP or CRHR.

The Site currently consists of agricultural fields, orchards, and associated farm structures, none of which meet the definition of a historical resource under CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5. As no historical resources are present on the Site, the Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of any such resource. As previously described, according to the records search and Site survey, there are no recorded cultural resources within the Project area. Project construction and operation would occur on existing disturbed lands (most recently in agricultural use); however, further disturbance associated with the Project could potentially discover buried sensitive historical, archaeological or cultural resources. This would be a potentially significant impact. However, MMs TRI-1 and TRI-2 will be included to reduce the impact to a less than significant level. There is a *Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation.*

Mitigation Measures

Implement MM TRI-1 and MM TRI-2 (see Section 3.13, Tribal Cultural Resources).

Impact 3.5-2: Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Before Mitigation	Significant (ground disturbance could uncover subsurface archaeological resources)
Mitigation Measures	MM TRI-1 through MM TRI-3
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

A Phase I CRA was prepared for the Project by Soar Environmental Consulting, Inc., in March 2025. The CRA included a records search through the SSJVIC, a Sacred Lands File search and Native American Contacts List Request through the NAHC, and a pedestrian survey of the Site.

The records search identified five cultural resources within a 0.5-mile radius of the Site, with one recorded resource located within the Project boundaries. However, the CRA determined that the mapping of P-54-003662 within the Site was an error, as the building is actually located outside the Site to the southwest. The CRA concluded that no site testing or additional mitigation measures are required at this time, as no resources were observed during the survey. Nevertheless, given the potential for subsurface archaeological resources to be encountered during ground-disturbing activities such as grading or excavation, the implementation of standard procedures for handling unanticipated discoveries is necessary to ensure that any potential impacts are reduced to a less than significant level.

The City of Visalia General Plan includes policies to protect cultural resources, such as OSC-P-39, which requires records reviews for archaeologically or paleontologically sensitive areas, determination of effects, pre-construction surveys and monitoring in sensitive areas per Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and implementation of avoidance or mitigation measures as project approval conditions; in the event of discoveries during construction, grading shall cease for evaluation and mitigation per CEQA Guidelines and State Office of Historic Preservation recommendations. Consistent with this policy and CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5, MMs TRI-1, TRI-2, and TRI-3 shall be incorporated to address any inadvertent discoveries. There is a *Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation.*

Mitigation Measures

MMs TRI-1, TRI-2, and TRI-3, discussed in *Section 3.13, Tribal Cultural Resources.*

Impact 3.5-3: Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

Before Mitigation	Significant (ground disturbance could uncover human remains)
Mitigation Measures	MM TRI-4
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5, and PRC § 5097.98 mandate the process to be followed in the event of an accidental discovery of any human remains in a location other than a dedicated cemetery. Specifically, California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that in the event that human remains are discovered within a project site, disturbance of the Site shall remain halted until the coroner has conducted an investigation into the circumstances, manner and cause of any death, and the recommendations concerning the treatment and disposition of the human remains have been made to the person responsible for the excavation, or to his or her authorized representative, in the manner provided in Section 5097.98 of the PRC. If the coroner determines that the remains are not subject to his or her authority and if the coroner recognizes or has reason to believe the human remains to be those of a Native American, he or she shall contact, by telephone within 24 hours, the Native American Heritage Commission. Although soil-disturbing activities associated with the Project could result in the discovery of human remains, compliance with existing law would reduce the potential for impacts.

According to the Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment, the records search indicated one recorded cultural resource within the Project area However, the CRA determined that the mapping of P-54-003662 within the Site was an error, as the building is actually located outside the Site to the southwest. Project development would occur on existing disturbed agricultural lands; however, further disturbance could potentially uncover human remains. This would be a potentially significant impact. However, MM TRI-4, discussed in Section 3.13, *Tribal Cultural Resources*, will reduce the impact to a *less than significant level with mitigation.*

Mitigation Measures

MM TRI-4, discussed in *Section 3.13, Tribal Cultural Resources.*

3.5.5 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts refer to the combined effects of the proposed Project with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects that could incrementally contribute to

adverse effects on cultural resources. Under CEQA Guidelines § 15130, cumulative impacts are evaluated based on whether the Project's incremental contribution is "cumulatively considerable," meaning it would result in a significant cumulative effect when viewed in connection with other projects.

Cumulative Setting and Geographic Scope

The cumulative setting for cultural resources encompasses the City of Visalia and surrounding Tulare County areas, where development activities could potentially disturb archaeological sites, historical resources, or human remains. This region has a rich cultural history, including prehistoric Native American occupation by Yokuts tribal groups and historic-era agricultural and ranching activities, as documented in the Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment (Appendix F). The geographic scope for cumulative cultural impacts is focused on areas within Visalia and Tulare County where ground-disturbing activities from multiple projects could interact, potentially leading to the incremental loss or degradation of cultural resources. Cumulative projects considered include planned industrial, commercial, and residential developments in Visalia and Tulare County, such as other annexations, transportation improvements, and agricultural conversions, which may involve excavation or grading. No specific past projects are directly linked to the proposed Project Site, but regional development trends underscore the potential for cumulative effects on undiscovered subsurface resources, given the area's ethnographic and historic significance.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Cumulative cultural resource impacts would occur if the Project, in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, results in a net loss of significant archaeological sites, historical resources, or human remains that diminishes the region's cultural heritage. As detailed in Impacts 3.5-1 through 3.5-3, the Project's individual impacts on cultural resources are less than significant with incorporation of MMs TRI-1 through TRI-4. These measures include procedures for halting work upon discovery of resources or human remains, consulting qualified specialists, and complying with state laws such as California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and PRC § 5097.98.

Per CEQA Guidelines § 15130 and City of Visalia General Plan Policy OSC-P-39, cultural impacts are site-specific but can be cumulatively considerable if multiple projects fail to identify and mitigate discoveries during ground disturbance. The Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment found no surface resources on the Site but noted the potential for subsurface finds due to the region's prehistoric and ethnographic context. When combined with cumulative projects, the Project could contribute to regional ground disturbance, potentially uncovering buried resources. However, the Project's compliance with CEQA, AB 52 tribal consultation

requirements, and local policies ensures that any discoveries are handled appropriately, with no net cumulative loss. The records search through the Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center and Native American Heritage Commission confirmed no known resources on the Site, and similar surveys are required for other regional projects. Overall, while cumulative development in Visalia and Tulare County could increase the risk of resource disturbance, the Project's contributions are not cumulatively considerable, as they align with regulatory frameworks and incorporate standard mitigation to minimize effects.

Conclusion

The Project would result in a less than cumulatively considerable contribution to cultural resource impacts with mitigation incorporated. No additional mitigation is required.

3 - 6 Energy

This section of the EIR evaluates potential impacts of the proposed Project on Energy Resources. No NOP comment letters were received pertaining to Energy.

3.6.1 Environmental Setting

Energy Basics

Electricity is generally measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh) or megawatt-hours (MWh), natural gas in British Thermal Units (BTU) or cubic feet, and fuel, such as gasoline or diesel, in gallons or liters. Fuel, such as gasoline or diesel, is measured in gallons or liters.

Electricity

Electricity, a consumptive utility, is a man-made resource. The production of electricity requires the consumption or conversion of energy resources, including water, wind, oil, gas, coal, solar, geothermal, and nuclear resources, into energy. The delivery of electricity involves a number of system components, including substations and transformers that lower transmission line power (voltage) to a level appropriate for onsite distribution and use. The electricity generated is distributed through a network of transmission and distribution lines commonly called a power grid. Conveyance of electricity through transmission lines is typically responsive to market demands. Electricity is used primarily for lighting, appliances, and other uses associated with the proposed Project.

Natural Gas

Natural gas is a combustible mixture of simple hydrocarbon compounds (primarily methane) that is used as a fuel source. Natural gas consumed in California is obtained from naturally occurring reservoirs, mainly located outside the State, and delivered through high-pressure transmission pipelines. The natural gas transportation system is a nationwide network, and, therefore, resource availability is typically not an issue. Natural gas is used primarily for heating, water heating, and cooking purposes and is typically associated with commercial and residential uses.

Fuel

Fuel is used primarily for powering off-road equipment, trucks, and passenger vehicles. The typical fuel types used are diesel and gasoline.

Electricity Generation, Distribution, and Use

State of California

The State of California generates approximately 278,338 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of electricity, in 2024, which is the most recent year of reporting information available.[92] Approximately 34 percent of the energy generation is sourced from natural gas, 62.23 percent from renewable sources (solar, wind, and geothermal), and the remaining 3.76 percent is sourced from coal, nuclear, oil, and other nonrenewable sources.

Electricity and natural gas are distributed through the various electric load-serving entities (LSEs) in California. These entities include investor-owned utilities (IOUs), publicly owned LSEs, rural electric cooperatives, community choice aggregators, and electric service providers.[93]

Project Site

Southern California Edison (SCE) provides electricity to the Project. SCE, a subsidiary of Edison International, serves approximately 180 cities in 15 counties across central and Southern California. SCE receives electric power from a variety of sources.

Natural Gas Generation, Distribution, and Use

State of California

Natural gas is used for everything from generating electricity to cooking and space heating to alternative transportation fuel. In 2024, total natural gas consumption in California was 2,087.5 Trillion BTUs.[94] Natural gas-fired generation has become a major source of electricity in California, as it fuels about 34 percent of electricity consumption in the State in 2024. Because natural gas is a resource that provides load when the availability of hydroelectric power generation and/or other sources decrease, use varies greatly from year to year. The availability of hydroelectric resources, the emergence of renewable resources for electricity generation, and overall consumer demand are the variables that shape natural gas use in electric generation

Project Site

92) California Energy Commission. Total System Electric Generation
93) California Public Utilities Commission. Energy Action Plans
94) California Gas Report. 2024

No natural gas service is proposed for Project operation. The CalEEMod modeling in Appendix D conservatively includes default natural gas consumption (approximately 31.8 million kBTU per year), which overstates operational energy use.

Fuel Use

State of California

The main category of fuel use in California is transportation fuel, specifically gasoline and diesel. Gasoline is the most used transportation fuel in California. Diesel is the second largest transportation fuel used in California. Nearly all heavy-duty trucks, delivery vehicles, buses, trains, ships, boats and barges, farm, construction and heavy-duty military vehicles and equipment have diesel engines. In the year 2021, it was estimated that 11,681 million gallons of gasoline and 1,904 million gallons of diesel were sold in California.[95]

Project Site

Existing agricultural activity on the Project Site would consume gasoline and diesel fuel to power vehicles and water pumps. The construction and operation of the Project will use both diesel and gasoline.

3.6.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal

Federal Energy Policy and Conservation Act

In 1975, Congress enacted the Federal Energy Policy and Conservation Act, which established the first fuel economy standards for on-road motor vehicles in the United States.[96] Pursuant to the act, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is responsible for establishing additional vehicle standards. In 2012, new fuel economy standards for passenger cars and light trucks were approved for model years 2017 through 2021 (77 FR 62624–63200). In 2020, the Trump Administration sought to lower corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) standards issued by the Obama Administration to require, for example, a fleet average of 40 mpg by 2026 instead of 55 mpg by 2025. On April 1, 2022, the Department of Transportation updated CAFE standard back up near Obama Administration levels, with a new fleet average of 49 mpg by 2026. Fuel economy is determined based on each manufacturer's average fuel economy for the fleet of vehicles available for sale in the United States.

95) U.S. EIA California Prices, Sales Volumes & Stocks
96) Energy Policy and Conservation Act. Public Law 94-163

Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007: On December 19, 2007, the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA) was signed into law.[97] In addition to setting increased corporate average fuel economy standards for motor vehicles, the EISA includes the following other provisions related to energy efficiency:

- Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) (Section 202)
- Appliance and lighting efficiency standards (Sections 301–325)
- Building energy efficiency (Sections 411–441)

The RFS requires ever-increasing levels of renewable fuels to replace petroleum. The U.S. EPA is responsible for developing and implementing regulations to ensure that transportation fuel sold in the United States contains a minimum volume of renewable fuel. The RFS program regulations were developed in collaboration with refiners, renewable fuel producers, and many other stakeholders.

The RFS program was created under the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and established the first renewable fuel volume mandate in the United States. As required under the Energy Policy Act, the original RFS program (RFS1) required 7.5 billion gallons of renewable fuel to be blended into gasoline by 2012. Under the EISA, the RFS program was expanded in several key ways that laid the foundation for achieving significant reductions of GHG emissions through the use of renewable fuels, for reducing imported petroleum, and for encouraging the development and expansion of our nation's renewable fuels sector. The updated program (RFS2) includes the following:

- EISA expanded the RFS program to include diesel, in addition to gasoline.
- EISA increased the volume of renewable fuel required to be blended into transportation fuel from 9 billion gallons in 2008 to 36 billion gallons by 2022.
- EISA established new categories of renewable fuel and set separate volume requirements for each one.
- EISA required the EPA to apply lifecycle GHG performance threshold standards to ensure that each category of renewable fuel emits fewer GHGs than the petroleum fuel it replaces.

Additional provisions of the EISA address energy savings in government and public institutions, promoting research for alternative energy, additional research in carbon capture, international energy programs, and the creation of "green" jobs.

97) Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. Public Law 110-140

EPA and NHTSA Light-Duty Vehicle GHG Emission Standards and CAFE Standards Final Rule

Congress first passed the Corporate Average Fuel Economy law in 1975 to increase the fuel economy of cars and light-duty trucks. The law has become more stringent over time. On May 19, 2009, former President Barack Obama put in motion a new national policy to increase fuel economy for all new cars and trucks sold in the United States. On April 1, 2010, the EPA and the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) announced a joint final rule establishing a national program that would reduce GHG emissions and improve fuel economy for new cars and trucks sold in the United States.

The first phase of the national program would apply to passenger cars, light-duty trucks, and medium-duty passenger vehicles, covering model years 2012 through 2016. They require these vehicles to meet an estimated combined average emissions level of 250 grams of CO_2 per mile, equivalent to 35.5 miles per gallon if the automobile industry were to meet this CO_2 level solely through fuel economy improvements. Together, these standards would cut CO_2 emissions by an estimated 960 million metric tons and 1.8 billion barrels of oil over the lifetime of the vehicles sold under the program (model years 2012-2016).

The EPA and the NHTSA issued final rules on a second phase joint rulemaking, establishing national standards for light-duty vehicles for model years 2017 through 2025 in August 2012.[98] The new standards for model years 2017 through 2025 apply to passenger cars, light-duty trucks, and medium-duty passenger vehicles. The final standards are projected to result in an average industry fleet wide level of 163 grams/mile of CO_2 in model year 2025, which is equivalent to 54.5 miles per gallon (mpg) if achieved exclusively through fuel economy improvements.

The EPA and NHTSA issued final rules for the first national standards to reduce GHG emissions and improve fuel efficiency of heavy-duty trucks and buses on September 15, 2011, which became effective November 14, 2011. For combination tractors, the agencies are proposing engine and vehicle standards that began in the 2014 model year and achieve up to a 20 percent reduction in CO_2 emissions and fuel consumption by the 2018 model year. For heavy-duty pickup trucks and vans, the agencies are proposing separate gasoline and diesel truck standards, which phase in starting in the 2014 model year and achieve up to a 10 percent reduction for gasoline vehicles, and a 15 percent reduction for diesel vehicles by 2018 model year (12 and 17 percent respectively if accounting for air conditioning leakage). Lastly, for

98) U.S. EPA and NHTSA Final Rule for Model Year 2017 and Later Light-Duty Vehicle Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards

vocational vehicles, the engine and vehicle standards would achieve up to a 10 percent reduction in fuel consumption and CO_2 emissions from the 2014 to 2018 model years.

The State of California has received waivers from the EPA under Section 209 of the CAA to adopt its own, more stringent vehicle emission standards; certain waivers were disapproved by Congress in 2025 and are the subject of ongoing litigation. Although global climate change did not become an international concern until the 1980s, efforts to reduce energy consumption began in California in response to the oil cris in the 1970s, resulting in the incidental reduction of GHG emissions. In order to manage the State's energy needs and promote energy efficiency, AB 1575 created the California Energy Commission (CEC) in 1975.

State

State of California Energy Action Plan

The CEC and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) approved the first State of California Energy Action Plan in 2003. The plan established shared goals and specific actions to ensure the provision of adequate, reliable, and reasonably priced electrical power and natural gas supplies; it also identified cost-effective and environmentally sound energy policies, strategies, and actions for California's consumers and taxpayers. In 2005, the CEC and CPUC adopted a second Energy Action Plan to reflect various policy changes and actions of the prior 2 years. At the beginning of 2008, the CEC and CPUC determined that it was not necessary or productive to prepare a new energy action plan. This determination was based, in part, on a finding that the state's energy policies have been significantly influenced by the passage of AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (discussed below). Rather than produce a new energy action plan, the CEC and CPUC prepared an "update" that examines the state's ongoing actions in the context of global climate change.

Assembly Bill 32 (2006) and Senate Bill 32 (2016)

In 2006, the State Legislature enacted AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006.[99] AB 32 requires California to reduce its GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. In 2016, the Legislature enacted SB 32, which extended the horizon year of the state's codified GHG reduction planning targets from 2020 to 2030, requiring California to reduce its GHG emissions to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030.[100] In accordance with AB 32 and SB 32, the CARB prepares scoping plans to guide the development of statewide policies and regulations for the reduction of GHG emissions. Many of the policy and regulatory concepts identified in the scoping plans focus on increasing energy efficiencies, using renewable resources, and reducing the

99) 99 AB 32 Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006
100) 100 Senate Bill 32

consumption of petroleum-based fuels (such as gasoline and diesel). As such, the state's GHG emissions reduction planning framework creates co-benefits for energy-related resources.

California Building Standards

The current Title 24, Part 6 standards, referred to as the 2025 Title 24 Building Energy Efficiency Standards, became effective on January 1, 2026. In general, single-family residences built to the 2025 standards are anticipated to use approximately 7% less energy due to energy efficiency measures than those built to the 2022 standards; once rooftop solar electricity generation is factored in, single-family residences built under the 2025 standards use approximately 40% less energy than those under the 2022 standards (CEC 2024). Nonresidential buildings built to the 2025 standards are anticipated to use an estimated 10% less energy than those built to the 2022 standards (CEC 2024). Title 24 also includes Part 11, the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen). CALGreen establishes minimum mandatory standards and voluntary standards pertaining to the planning and design of sustainable site development, energy efficiency (in excess of the California Energy Code requirements), water conservation, material conservation, and interior air quality. T The 2025 CALGreen standards are the current applicable standards. For nonresidential projects, some of the key mandatory CALGreen 2025 standards involve requirements related to bicycle parking, designated parking for clean air vehicles, electric vehicle charging stations, shade trees, water conserving plumbing fixtures and fittings, outdoor potable water use in landscaped areas, recycled water supply systems, construction waste management, and excavated soil and land clearing debris (24 CCR Part 11).

3.6.3 Thresholds of Significance

Consistent with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the proposed Project will have a significant impact related to energy if it will:

a) *Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?*
b) *Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?*

3.6.4 Impacts Discussion

Impact 3.6-1: Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

The information provided below is derived from the Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Health Risk Assessment prepared by Core Environmental Consulting on October 2025, and revised in June 2026. A discussion of the proposed Project's anticipated energy usage is presented below.

Construction

For purposes of a conservative analysis, the anticipated construction schedule for the Project will begin in 2027 and last for the default duration estimated by CalEEMod, which spans the phased construction activities. It is important to note that if the construction schedule were to shift to later years, construction energy demand would decrease due to ongoing improvements in technology and more stringent regulatory requirements, as older, less efficient equipment is replaced by newer, cleaner alternatives. Even in a scenario where construction phases overlap, the impacts related to energy consumption would not be materially different from the phased approach analyzed, as concurrent activities would not result in increased fuel or electricity use beyond that required for sequential construction.

The Project would involve demolition, site preparation, grading, building construction, architectural coating, and paving across approximately 122 acres at the Site. Energy during construction would be required for the manufacture and transportation of building materials, Site preparation (demolition, clearing, and grading), and on- and offsite improvements, including infrastructure for industrial buildings, industrial-serving commercial pads, a self-storage facility, and the stormwater basin. Primary energy sources would include petroleum-based fuels such as diesel and gasoline for off-road equipment and on-road vehicles.

Typical onsite equipment would include diesel-powered machinery, such as trucks, excavators, loaders, forklifts, and cranes. Based on modeling using CalEEMod, the standard methodology from the CARB OFFROAD2017-ORION emissions inventory model is used to calculate construction equipment diesel usage. The daily diesel fuel consumption for each type of construction equipment, as presented in the subsequent table, is determined using the following formula:

Daily Diesel Fuel Consumption (lb/day)= (Number of Equipment Units per Day) × (Hours of Use per Day) × (Horsepower Rating) × (Load Factor) × (Brake Specific Fuel Consumption [BSFC])

- Number of Equipment Units per Day: This represents the quantity of each equipment type utilized on a given day during construction activities, provided by CalEEMod.
- Hours of Use per Day: This indicates the average operational hours for each equipment unit within a single day, provided by CalEEMod.
- Horsepower Rating: This is the engine power output of the equipment, measured in horsepower (HP), as specified by the manufacturer or modeled in the emissions estimation tool.
- Load Factor: This is a dimensionless value (ranging from 0 to 1) that accounts for the average load on the engine during operation, reflecting real-world usage patterns rather than full-load conditions. Load factors are provided by the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) based on equipment type and typical duty cycles.
- Brake Specific Fuel Consumption (BSFC): This is a measure of engine fuel efficiency, expressed in pounds of fuel per horsepower-hour (lb/hp-hr). It quantifies the amount of fuel required to produce one horsepower of work over one hour. The BSFC values used are standardized assumptions in CalEEMod:
- For equipment with less than 100 HP: BSFC = 0.408 lb/hp-hr
- For equipment with 100 HP or greater: BSFC = 0.367 lb/hp-hr

This calculation yields daily fuel consumption in pounds (lb). Conversion to gallons divides by diesel density (~7.109 lb/gal). The formula ensures a conservative estimate of fuel use, which is critical for assessing air quality impacts, greenhouse gas emissions, and energy consumption during the construction phase. The full calculations are provided in Appendix I.

Table 3-16: Daily Diesel Fuel Consumption

Phase Name	Equipment Type	Number per Day	Hours per Day	Horsepower	Load Factor	Daily Diesel Fuel (gallons)
Demolition	Concrete/Industrial Saws	1	8	33	0.73	11.06
Demolition	Excavators	3	8	36	0.38	18.84
Demolition	Rubber Tired Dozers	2	8	367	0.4	121.26
Site Preparation	Rubber Tired Dozers	3	8	367	0.4	181.88
Site Preparation	Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes	4	8	84	0.37	57.08
Grading	Excavators	2	8	36	0.38	12.56
Grading	Graders	1	8	148	0.41	25.06
Grading	Rubber Tired Dozers	1	8	367	0.4	60.63

Grading	Scrapers	2	8	423	0.48	167.71
Grading	Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes	2	8	84	0.37	28.54
Building Construction	Cranes	1	7	367	0.29	38.46
Building Construction	Forklifts	3	8	82	0.2	22.59
Building Construction	Generator Sets	1	8	14	0.74	4.76
Building Construction	Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes	3	7	84	0.37	37.46
Building Construction	Welders	1	8	46	0.45	9.51
Paving	Pavers	2	8	81	0.42	31.24
Paving	Paving Equipment	2	8	89	0.36	29.42
Paving	Rollers	2	8	36	0.38	12.56
Architectural Coating	Air Compressors	1	6	37	0.48	6.12

Table 3-17: Total Diesel Fuel Consumption Estimate

Phase Name	Days	Daily Fuel (gallons)	Total Fuel (gallons)
Demolition	200	151.16	30,232
Site Preparation	120	238.96	28,676
Grading	310	294.5	91,295
Building Construction	3,100	112.78	349,586
Paving	220	73.22	16,109
Architectural Coating	220	6.12	1,345
Project Total	4,170	**876.73**	**517,244**

Construction equipment is estimated to consume approximately 517,244 gallons of diesel fuel over the entire construction period. Vendor and worker vehicle trips would generate additional fuel use. These trips are projected to total approximately 25,021,326 VMT. The total VMT for construction-related vehicle trips is estimated using CalEEMod data, by multiplying the number of workers or vendor trips by the average daily commute or delivery distance.

Table 3-18: Construction VMT

Phase Name	Trip Type	Daily Trips	Trip Length (miles)	Daily VMT (miles)	Total VMT (miles)
Demolition	Worker	15	7.7	116	23,100
Site Preparation	Worker	17.5	7.7	135	16,170
Grading	Worker	20	7.7	154	47,740
Building Construction	Worker	766	7.7	5,902	18,294,684
Building Construction	Vendor	301	6.8	2,050	6,354,566
Paving	Worker	15	7.7	116	25,410
Architectural Coating	Worker	153	7.7	1,180	259,656
Project Total	**All Types**	**1,287**		**9,651**	**25,021,326**

The fuel consumption associated with construction-related vehicle trips has been calculated using VMT data, applying default fuel economy rates from CalEEMod based on CARB EMFAC2025 data. Worker trips (LDA, LDT1, LDT2 mix: 25/50/25 percent) utilize gasoline with a weighted average of 22.91 miles per gallon (mpg). Vendor trips (HHDT, MHDT mix: 50/50 percent) utilize diesel with a weighted average of 7.48 mpg. … Total Project fuel use comprises 814,756 gallons of gasoline and 850,109 gallons of diesel for vendor trips, and will use a total of 1,367,353 gallons of diesel (including construction equipment).

Table 3-19: Construction Fuel Usage

Phase Name	Trip Type	Total VMT (miles)	Fuel Type	Daily Fuel (gallons)	Total Fuel (gallons)
Demolition	Worker	23,100	Gasoline	5.0	1,008
Site Preparation	Worker	16,170	Gasoline	5.9	706
Grading	Worker	47,740	Gasoline	6.7	2,084
Building Construction	Worker	18,294,684	Gasoline	257.6	798,516
Building Construction	Vendor	6,354,566	Diesel	274.2	850,109
Paving	Worker	25,410	Gasoline	5.0	1,109
Architectural Coating	Worker	259,656	Gasoline	51.5	11,333

		25,021,326			**Gasoline: 814,756** **Diesel: 850,109**

Electricity use during construction would be limited to temporary needs, such as lighting, pumps, and tools. Chapter 8.36 of the Visalia Municipal Code restricts construction hours to 6:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. weekdays and 9:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. weekends, minimizing lighting requirements. Temporary office trailers (720 square feet) are estimated to consume about 5,500 kWh over a 12-month peak period.

Compliance with CARB idling regulations (13 CCR § 2485 for on-road vehicles and § 2449 for off-road equipment), including the ATCM exemption for trucks equipped with diesel engines meeting the optional nitrogen oxides (NO_x) idling emissions standard when operating outside of 100 feet of restricted areas (residences, schools), would reduce unnecessary fuel consumption. Trucks starting with model year 2008 are clean-idle certified, allowing them to operate within the Project Site longer than five minutes if needed. Equipment maintenance requirements and commercial incentives for efficiency (minimizing rental and fuel costs) further ensure practical optimization. The Project's construction would thus not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary energy use. Construction-related energy impacts would be *less than significant.*

Operational

Operation of the proposed Project would consume electricity on an annual basis per CalEEMod modeling in the revised June 2026 AQ Study. Operation of the proposed Project would consume an estimated 11,564,077 kWh of electricity on an annual basis (Appendix D). The Project's buildings and related improvements and infrastructure would be designed and constructed in accordance with the City's latest adopted energy efficiency standards, which are based on the State's Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24, Part 6). These standards include minimum energy efficiency requirements related to building envelopes, mechanical systems (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning [HVAC] and water heating systems), and indoor and outdoor lighting. Moreover, as specified in Chapter 5, Part 11 of the Title 24 standards, the proposed Project would be required to incorporate electrical conduit to facilitate future installation of EV charging infrastructure. In addition, as specified in Subchapter 6, Part 6 of the Title 24 standards, the proposed Project would be required to either include rooftop solar systems or design the proposed buildings to structurally accommodate future installation of a rooftop solar system. As such, the design of the proposed Project would facilitate the future commitment to renewable energy resources. Therefore, building energy consumption would not be considered wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary.

CalEEMod estimates Project VMT to be 11,185,684 miles annually from all land uses. Using CARB EMFAC2025 fleet mix data, detailed in Appendix I, Project-related vehicle trips would consume an estimated 470,054 gallons of gasoline and 25,838 gallons of diesel annually.

In addition, the proposed Project would include the installation of bicycle parking fixtures consistent with the City of Visalia Municipal Code requirements for new development, encouraging the use of alternative modes of transportation for worker commutes. Regional access to the Project Site is provided via SR 198, just south of the Site. As a result, the proposed Project would be located within one mile of a major transportation corridor that provides regional access. Transportation fuel consumption would not be wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary. Impacts would be less than significant.

Impact 3.6-2: Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

The Project would be designed and constructed in accordance with the 2025 Title 24, Part 6, and CALGreen (Title 24, Part 11), ensuring energy-efficient features such as high-performance envelopes, LED lighting, efficient electric HVAC systems, and provisions for EV charging infrastructure (electrical conduit per Chapter 5 of Part 11). Rooftop solar PV systems or structural readiness would comply with Subchapter 6's requirements, directly supporting state renewable energy mandates under Senate Bill 100 and the Scoping Plan. These measures would reduce operational energy demand by minimizing reliance on fossil fuels and promoting clean electricity integration.

Transportation energy use, including VMT from employee, vendor, and freight trip, would align with the City's Vehicle Miles Traveled Guidelines (2025) and the Scoping Plan's zero-emission transportation goals through features like bicycle parking (per Visalia Municipal Code) and proximity to SR 198 facilitating efficient regional access. The Project's location and design would not induce excessive VMT or obstruct renewable fuel adoption under the RFS. Existing agricultural fuel use (gasoline and diesel for vehicles and pumps) would transition to Project-related construction and operational demands, compliant with federal fuel economy standards.

The Project supports Visalia General Plan Policy LU-P-40 by incorporating shade trees along Mill Creek setbacks and drought-tolerant plants. It is consistent with Tulare County CAP and Visalia CAP by promoting Energy Star equipment and clean energy transitions.

The Project's energy profile would not conflict with or obstruct federal, state, or local plans. Operational emissions from energy use would be reduced by efficiency gains and renewable integration, contributing to broader GHG reduction targets. No mitigation is required.

3.6.5 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts refer to the combined effects of the proposed Project with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects that could incrementally contribute to adverse effects on energy resources. Under CEQA Guidelines § 15130, cumulative impacts are evaluated based on whether the Project's incremental contribution is "cumulatively considerable," meaning it would result in a significant cumulative effect when viewed in connection with other projects.

Cumulative Setting and Geographic Scope

The cumulative setting for energy encompasses the service area of SCE and the broader California energy market, where increased demand from development could strain electricity, natural gas, and fuel resources. The geographic scope for cumulative energy impacts is the City of Visalia and surrounding Tulare County areas, as energy consumption from local projects affects the regional grid and fuel supply chains. Cumulative projects considered in this analysis include planned and foreseeable developments within the City of Visalia and surrounding Tulare County areas. These include other industrial parks, commercial expansions, and transportation improvements that could contribute to increased electricity demand, vehicle miles traveled, and fuel use. No specific past projects are directly linked to the proposed Project, but regional growth trends reflect the cumulative nature of energy consumption in the area.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Cumulative energy impacts would occur if the Project, in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, results in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources or obstructs state or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency. As detailed in Impacts 3.6-1 and 3.6-2, the Project's individual construction and operational energy use is less than significant, with compliance to Title 24 standards.

Per CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, energy impacts are inherently cumulative due to shared grid and fuel infrastructure. A project's contribution is considered cumulatively considerable if it exacerbates regional inefficiencies or conflicts with plans like SB 100. Since the Project incorporates energy-efficient designs (solar-ready rooftops, EV infrastructure), its incremental contribution does not hinder statewide renewable goals or local CAPs.

When combined with cumulative projects, the Project could contribute to regional VMT growth, potentially elevating transportation fuel use. However, the Project's proximity to SR 198 and bicycle facilities aligns with the Scoping Plan's emphasis on efficient land use, ensuring no net cumulative inefficiency. Overall, while cumulative development in Visalia and Tulare County could increase energy demand, the Project's energy use is not cumulatively considerable, as it aligns with federal, state, and local efficiency plans and incorporates measures to minimize consumption.

Conclusion

The Project would result in a less than cumulatively considerable contribution to energy impacts. No additional mitigation is required.

3 - 7 Geology and Soils

This section of the EIR identifies potential impacts of implementing the proposed Project on geology and soils. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) (see Appendix G) was prepared by Paul Humphrey, EP, and a Phase II subsurface investigation and excavation summary letter (Appendix H) was prepared by Advanced Environmental Concepts, Inc. (AEC) for this Project and used in this section. No NOP comment letters were received pertaining to this topic.

3.7.1 Environmental Setting

Geologic Setting

Visalia is part of the Central Valley, one of several geomorphic provinces in California. Central Valley is in a basin bounded by the Sierra Nevada foothills and mountains to the east and the Coast Ranges to the west, and is filled with deep layers of sediment from the Sierra Nevada. The Visalia area is basically flat, lying at an elevation of approximately 330 feet above sea level. The St. Johns River flows through the northeastern portion of the City. The river, as well as smaller streams and canals, form alluvial fans. Continental deposits shed from the surrounding mountains form an alluvial wedge that thickens from the valley margins toward the axis of the structural trough. This depositional axis is below to slightly west of the series of rivers, lakes, sloughs, and marshes, which mark the current and historic axis of surface drainage in the San Joaquin Valley. Sediments comprising the Kaweah Subbasin include younger and older alluvium, flood-basin deposits, lacustrine and marsh deposits and continental deposits. Younger alluvium consists of a heterogeneous complex of interstratified discontinuous beds of unsorted to fairly well sorted clay, silt, sand, and gravel. This unit is very permeable but largely above the water table. Older alluvium consists of poorly sorted lenticular deposits of clay, silt, sand, and gravel, which may be loosely consolidated to cemented. Older alluvium is moderately to highly permeable and yields large quantities of water to wells. The unit is a major aquifer in the subbasin. Flood basin deposits are relatively impermeable silt and clay with some moderately to poorly permeable sand layers. This unit is not an important source of ground water, but locally, may yield sufficient supplies for domestic and stock use. Lacustrine and marsh deposits are reduced deposits of silt, clay, and fine sand. In the subsurface, lacustrine clay interfingers as tongues with continental and alluvial deposits. The lacustrine and marsh deposits include the Corcoran Clay which underlies the subbasin at depths ranging between about 300 and 900 feet. Continental deposits consist of poorly sorted lenticular deposits of clay, silt, sand, and gravel. These deposits are moderately to poorly permeable and yield low to large quantities of water to wells. Land subsidence of one to four feet due to deep

compaction of fine-grained units has occurred in the subbasin. (California's Groundwater Bulletin 118, 2006).[101]

Topography

The Project Site is located at the western edge of the City of Visalia, specifically the southeast corner of North Kelsey Street and West Hurley Avenue. The immediate area is primarily agriculture with two seasonal drainages: Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch. The Site is generally flat and averages approximately 300 feet above mean sea level. The topography in the area consists of a slight slope to the west/southwest.

Soils

According to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Web Soil Survey, the soil on the Project Site consists of three soil types. 1) Nord fine sandy loam consists of very deep, well drained soils that formed in mixed alluvium dominantly from granitic and sedimentary rocks and has slopes of 0 to 2 percent. It is well drained; has negligible to low runoff; and has moderate permeability but is moderately slow in saline-sodic phases. 2)Akers Saline Sodic consists of very deep, well drained soils formed in alluvium derived from granitic rock. Akers soils are on terraces and have slopes of 0 to 2 percent. It is well drained; has negligible to low runoff; and has moderate permeability. Saline-sodic phases have moderately slow permeability. 3) Colpien Loam consists of very deep, moderately well drained soils formed in alluvium derived mainly from granitic rocks. Colpien soils are on terraces and have slopes of 0 to 2 percent. Colpien soils are moderately well drained; runoff is negligible to low; moderately slow permeability due to high content of mica in the soil.

A site-specific Phase I ESA (March 2025) corroborates moderate to moderately slow permeability across these units, consistent with their granitic alluvium origins, and notes no observed expansive phases or instability in undisturbed areas.

The Phase I ESA identified stained soil beneath two aboveground storage tanks (one diesel, one waste oil) in a pole barn as a Recognized Environmental Condition (REC). Phase II sampling (Appendix H) detected:

- Diesel-range hydrocarbons at 2,200 mg/kg, above the commercial screening level.
- Arsenic at 2.7 mg/kg. This exceeds the cancer-risk Environmental Screening Level (ESL) of 0.31 mg/kg but is within the typical background range for California soils (approximately 12 mg/kg).

101) DWR 2006. California's Groundwater: Bulletin 118

The visibly stained area was estimated at approximately 1.1 cubic yards. On September 16, 2025, approximately 20.73 tons of soil were excavated from the stained area, and confirmation samples showed no detections of VOCs, TPH-gasoline, or TPH-diesel. The excavation was backfilled with compacted soil from a nearby field, and the excavated soil was disposed of at the Waste Connections Avenal Regional Landfill.

Faults

The City of Visalia is in a seismically stable region of the State. While the southern San Joaquin Valley contains some small faults, the closest of these are 30 miles away, and none are known to be active. In comparison to many regions in California, Visalia exhibits relatively little tectonic activity. The major fault systems in the area include the San Andreas Fault, located 75 miles away from Visalia, and the Owens Valley Fault Group, located east of the Sierras and more than 125 miles away from the City.

Asbestos

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous material once commonly used as a fireproofing and insulating agent in building construction before the EPA banned such uses in the 1970s. Asbestos can also be atmospherically deposited from vehicle brake shoes. NOA can be found in serpentinite or other metamorphosed ultramafic rocks such as dunite, peridotite, and pyroxenite. According to large scale mapping of ultramafic rocks in California, no known ultramafic rock outcrops are present in the City of Visalia. The Phase I ESA noted that, due to the age of the onsite buildings, asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) and lead-based paint may be present. Demolition of existing structures would be subject to the asbestos survey and notification requirements of SJVAPCD Rule 4002.

3.7.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal

Federal Clean Water Act – Section 402(p): National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit Program

Section 402 of the Clean Water Act established the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program, which regulates point source discharges of pollutants into waters of the United States. Under Section 402(p), stormwater discharges associated with construction activities that disturb one acre or more of soil are required to obtain coverage under a General NPDES Construction Permit. This permit is administered by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs).

To obtain permit coverage, project Applicants must prepare and implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP outlines Best Management Practices (BMPs) that will be used to prevent sediment and other construction-related pollutants from entering stormwater runoff. Compliance with the SWPPP is mandatory throughout the construction phase and subject to monitoring and reporting requirements. The goal of the SWPPP is to protect water quality by minimizing pollutant discharges to receiving waters, consistent with the federal Clean Water Act and state water quality standards.

Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act

The Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act was enacted in 1977 to "reduce the risks to life and property from future earthquakes in the United States through the establishment and maintenance of an effective earthquake hazards and reduction program."[102] To accomplish this, the act established the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP). This program was significantly amended in November 1990 by the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program Act (NEHRPA), which refined the description of agency responsibilities, program goals, and objectives.

NEHRP's mission includes improved understanding, characterization, and prediction of hazards and vulnerabilities; improvement of building codes and land use practices; risk reduction through post-earthquake investigations and education; development and improvement of design and construction techniques; improvement of mitigation capacity; and accelerated application of research results.

The NEHRP Reauthorization Act of 2004 designated the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) as the Lead Agency of the program.

Paleontological Resources Preservation Act

The primary legislation pertaining to fossils from National Park Service (NPS) and other federal lands is the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act of 2009 (PRPA) (16 U.S.C. § 470aaa 1-11) which was enacted on March 30, 2009 within the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009. PRPA directs the Department of Agriculture (U.S. Forest Service) and the Department of the Interior (National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, and Fish and Wildlife Service) to manage and protect paleontological resources on Federal land using scientific principles and expertise.

State

California Building Code

102)102 Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-124)

The California Building Code (CBC) contains general building design and construction requirements relating to fire and life safety, structural safety, and access compliance. CBC provisions provide minimum standards to safeguard life or limb, health, property, and public welfare by regulating and controlling the design, construction, quality of materials, use and occupancy, location and maintenance of all buildings and structures, and certain equipment

Seismic Hazards Mapping Act

Under the Seismic Hazards Mapping Act, the State Geologist is responsible for identifying and mapping seismic hazards zones as part of the California Geological Survey (CGS). The CGS provides zoning maps of non-surface rupture earthquake hazards (including liquefaction and seismically induced landslides) to local governments for planning purposes. These maps are intended to protect the public from the risks associated with strong ground shaking, liquefaction, landslides or other ground failure, and other hazards caused by earthquakes. For projects within seismic hazard zones, the Seismic Hazards Mapping Act requires developers to conduct geological investigations and incorporate appropriate mitigation measures into project designs before building permits are issued.[103]

California Environmental Quality Act

CEQA requires lead agencies to consider the potential effects of a project on unique paleontological resources. CEQA requires an assessment of impacts associated with the direct or indirect destruction of unique paleontological resources or sites that are of value to the region or the state.

Public Resources Code Section 5097.5

PRC § 5097.5 prohibits any person from knowingly and willfully excavating upon, removing, destroying, injuring, or defacing any historic or prehistoric ruins, burial grounds, archaeological or vertebrate paleontological site (including fossilized footprints, inscriptions, rock art, or any other archaeological, paleontological, or historical feature) situated on public lands, except with the express permission of the public agency having jurisdiction over those lands. Violation of this section is a misdemeanor. This statute applies to the Project if any ground-disturbing activities occur on or affect public lands, such as rights-of-way or waterways adjacent to the Site, and reinforces CEQA's protections for paleontological resources by imposing penalties for unauthorized disturbances.

Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act

103) California Geological Survey Seismic Hazards Mapping Act (Public Resources Code §§ 2690–2699.6)

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act (formerly the Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone Act), signed into law December 1972, requires the delineation of zones along active faults in California. The purpose of the Alquist-Priolo Act is to regulate development on or near active fault traces to reduce the hazards associated with fault rupture and to prohibit the location of most structures for human occupancy across these traces.[104]

Local

City of Visalia Municipal Code (California Building Code)

The City of Visalia Municipal Code has adopted the 2025 CBC, as promulgated by the California Building Standards Commission (CBSC), which is based on the 2024 International Building Code with California amendments.

General Plan Seismic Safety Element

The existing Visalia General Plan incorporates the Seismic Safety Element completed in 1974 by the Five-County Seismic Safety Committee, with participation from the Tulare Council of Governments. The Safety Element determines that ground shaking is the main potential hazard in the southern Central Valley, and the risk of ground shaking in the Visalia area is low. The Element includes a number of policies, calling for the creation of a public relations and education program to build awareness; development of an Earthquake Disaster Plan; consideration of seismic hazards in the environmental impact assessment process; and adoption and enforcement of the Uniform Building Code, among others.

Tulare County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

A hazard mitigation plan is a formal document that outlays the plans to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property from natural or man-made hazards. Visalia participates in the preparation of the Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJLHMP) which covers Tulare County and participating cities. The plan has been designed to meet four goals. (1) significantly reduce life loss and injuries, (2) minimize damage to structures and property, as well as disruption of essential services and human activities, (3) protect the environment, and (4) promote hazard mitigation as an integrated public policy.[105]

City of Visalia General Plan

The 2030 General Plan includes the policies related to geology and soils that correlate to the proposed Project:

104) California Department of Conservation. Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act (Public Resources Code §§ 2621–2630)
105) Tulare County 2023 Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

- *Policy OSC-P-25*: Require new development to implement measures, as appropriate, to minimize soil erosion related to grading, site preparation, landscaping, and construction.
- *Policy OSC-P-39*: Establish requirements to avoid potential impacts to sites suspected of being archeologically, paleontologically, or historically significant or of concern, by:
    - Requiring a records review for development proposed in areas that are considered archaeologically or paleontologically sensitive;
    - Determining the potential effects of development and construction on archaeological or paleontological resources (as required by CEQA);
    - Requiring pre-construction surveys and monitoring during any ground disturbance for all development in areas of historical and archaeological sensitivity; and
    - Implementing appropriate measures to avoid the identified impacts, as conditions of project approval.

  In the event that previously unidentified historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources are discovered during construction, grading activity in the immediate area shall cease and materials and their surroundings shall not be altered or collected. A qualified archaeologist or paleontologist must make an immediate evaluation and avoidance measures or appropriate mitigation should be completed, according to CEQA Guidelines. The State Office of Historic Preservation has issued recommendations for the preparation of Archaeological Resource Management Reports that will be used as guidelines.

3.7.3 Thresholds of Significance

The CEQA Guidelines define a significant effect on the environment as "a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in the environment. To determine if a project would have a significant impact on geology and soils, the Project's potential to expose people or structures to geologic hazards, or to affect soils and paleontological resources, must be evaluated.

The following geology/soils significance thresholds are contained in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. A significant impact would occur if the Project would:

a) *Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving*:
    i) *Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or*

based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

iv) Landslides?

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the Project, and potentially result in on- or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?

d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct and indirect risks to life or property?

e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

3.7.4 Impacts Discussion

> **Impact 3.7-1: Would the Project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: (i) rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault (refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42); (ii) strong seismic ground shaking; (iii) seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction; or (iv) landslides?**

Before Mitigation	Significant (strong seismic ground shaking; site-specific geotechnical design not yet established)
Mitigation Measures	MM GEO-1
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

i) Because the Project is in an area of relatively low seismic activity and no known active faults cross the Site, the Project would not be subject to fault rupture. The potential for strong seismic ground shaking on the Project Site is not a significant environmental concern due to the infrequent seismic activity of the area and the distance to the faults. The Project does not propose any components which could cause substantial adverse effects in the event of an earthquake. Additionally, the Project has no potential to cause the rupture of an earthquake fault indirectly or directly. As such, the Project would result in *no impact* related to the risk of loss, injury, or death involving a rupture of a known earthquake fault.

ii) Although the Project Site is in an area of low seismic activity, ground shaking from regional seismic events could still occur and potentially affect future structures developed onsite. The proposed Project does not include any activities or components that could feasibly cause strong seismic ground shaking, either directly or indirectly. However, given the potential for regional seismic events and the Project's scale, appropriate engineering measures are necessary to ensure structural safety and minimize risks associated with ground shaking.

MM GEO-1 shall be implemented, requiring that a site-specific Geotechnical Evaluation be conducted prior to issuance of grading permits. The evaluation shall identify any soil conditions or geological constraints that could exacerbate ground shaking hazards and shall recommend appropriate design measures in accordance with the California Building Code and the Seismic Design Criteria applicable to the site. All recommendations from the geotechnical evaluation shall be incorporated into the final grading and construction plans and verified by the City as part of the plan check process. With implementation of MM GEO-1, potential impacts related to

strong seismic ground shaking would be reduced to a less than significant level. There is a *Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation.*

iii) The risk of liquefaction within the Visalia Planning Area, outside wetland areas, is low because the soil types are generally unsuitable for liquefaction. The area's low potential for seismic activity would further reduce the likelihood of liquefaction occurrence. Because the Site is within an area of low seismic activity, and the soils associated with the Project area are unsuitable for liquefaction, the Project would result in a *less than significant impact.*

iv) The Planning Area of Visalia is considered at an insignificant risk of small landslides. Additionally, the Project Site is generally flat, and the area has no slopes. No geologic landforms exist on or near the Site that would result in a landslide event. As a result, there is a very low potential for landslides. The Project would result in *no impact.*

Mitigation Measures

MM GEO-1: Preparation and Compliance with a Geotechnical Evaluation. Prior to the issuance of any grading permits, the Project Applicant shall retain a qualified geotechnical engineer to prepare a site-specific Geotechnical Evaluation for the Project Site. The evaluation shall assess subsurface conditions, including soil properties, seismic ground shaking potential, liquefaction susceptibility, soil stability and collapse potential, expansive soil potential, and other geologic hazards as applicable, in accordance with the most recent edition of the California Building Code and any applicable City of Visalia guidelines. All recommendations of the Geotechnical Evaluation shall be incorporated into the final grading and building plans and verified by the City during plan check.

Impact 3.7-2: Would the Project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Before Mitigation	Significant (construction could expose soils to wind and water erosion)
Mitigation Measures	MM HYD-2
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

Although the Project Site is relatively flat and the potential for erosion is low, construction-related activities—including grading, excavation, and site preparation—could temporarily expose soils to wind and water erosion. The removal of vegetation and movement of topsoil during Site development increases the potential for sediment discharge and loss of topsoil if not properly managed.

To address these risks, the Project will be required to implement MM HYD-2, which includes preparation and implementation of an SWPPP consistent with the NPDES General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities. The SWPPP must identify erosion and sediment control BMPs, including but not limited to fiber rolls, silt fences, stabilized construction entrances, and temporary cover measures.

Additionally, an erosion control plan will be required and reviewed by the City of Visalia Engineering Division prior to the issuance of grading permits to ensure consistency with City standards for on- and offsite drainage and sediment control.

Implementation of the SWPPP and erosion control plan will ensure that construction-related erosion is effectively managed and that post-construction stormwater flows do not result in long-term erosion or sedimentation impacts. With these measures in place, the potential for substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil would be reduced to a *Less than Significant with Mitigation.*

Mitigation Measures

MM HYD-2, discussed in *Section 3.10, Hydrology and Water Quality.*

> **Impact 3.7-3: Would the Project 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?**

Before Mitigation	Significant (grading, excavation, and structural loading could locally alter soil stability)
Mitigation Measures	MM GEO-1
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

The Project Site is located in an area with relatively flat topography and soils that are generally considered stable, with a low potential for landslides, lateral spreading, liquefaction, subsidence, or collapse. Regional soil data indicate that the Visalia area is underlain by alluvial soils with low clay content and minimal expansion potential. No major faults or unstable geologic units have been mapped in the immediate vicinity of the Site.

The Phase I ESA identified two onsite RECs: stained soil beneath two aboveground storage tanks, and a bermed concrete pad (possibly a former equipment wash or chemical mixing area) adjacent to a domestic well. Phase II soil and soil gas sampling at the concrete pad detected no compounds above commercial screening levels, and no further investigation was

recommended. The hydrocarbon-stained soil beneath the tanks was excavated and backfilled with compacted soil (Appendix H). These conditions are addressed in Section 3.9 and do not affect soil stability.

However, construction activities such as grading, excavation, and loading of structures could locally alter soil stability and increase geotechnical risks if subsurface conditions vary across the site. To ensure that potential soil instability is adequately addressed, MM GEO-1 will be implemented. This measure requires a site-specific Geotechnical Evaluation prior to the issuance of grading permits, which will identify any site-specific geologic or soil constraints and recommend engineering design measures to reduce the risk of instability, in accordance with the California Building Code.

The recommendations from the geotechnical evaluation will be incorporated into the Project's grading and building plans, and construction will be monitored to verify implementation. With incorporation of these design measures, the Project would not be expected to result in unstable conditions or expose people or structures to substantial risks related to landslides, liquefaction, lateral spreading, or collapse.

Therefore, with implementation of MM GEO-1, impacts related to soil stability would be reduced to *Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.*

Mitigation Measures

MM GEO-1, discussed in *Impact 3.7-1.*

Impact 3.7-4: Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct and indirect risks to life or property?

Before Mitigation	Significant (localized moderately expansive soils may be present)
Mitigation Measures	MM GEO-1
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

Soils within the Visalia area generally have low clay content and an expansion index ranging from 0 to 20, which is considered to represent a very low potential for expansion. Based on regional soil data, the Project Site is not known to contain expansive soils that would pose significant risks to structures or infrastructure.

However, expansive soil characteristics can vary within a Project Site, and localized areas of moderately expansive soils may still be present. To address this potential variability and ensure

that any site-specific conditions are properly accounted for, the Project will implement MM GEO-1, which requires a site-specific Geotechnical Evaluation prior to the issuance of grading permits.

The geotechnical report will evaluate soil expansion potential in accordance with the California Building Code and Uniform Building Code standards and recommend foundation designs or other engineering controls as needed to mitigate any identified risks. All recommendations will be incorporated into the Project's design and construction plans.

With implementation of MM GEO-1, impacts related to expansive soils would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measures

MM GEO-1, discussed in *Impact 3.7-1.*

Impact 3.7-5: Would the Project have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

Before Mitigation	No Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**No Impact**

The Project as proposed would not include septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems, as the Site is located within an area where connection to municipal sewer infrastructure is feasible. The proposed buildings and facilities will tie into the City of Visalia's existing sewer services. Soil capability for septic systems is not relevant since no such systems are proposed. This eliminates any potential impact related to soil inadequacy for wastewater disposal, resulting in *no impact* under CEQA.

Impact 3.7-6: Would the Project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Before Mitigation	Significant (excavation below cultivation depth could encounter unknown paleontological resources)
Mitigation Measures	MM GEO-2
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

There are no known unique geologic features or documented paleontological resources within the Project area. The Site consists of previously disturbed agricultural land, and the likelihood of encountering significant paleontological resources is considered low. The ESA's historical records review (Section 4.4 of Appendix G) confirms no prior ground-disturbing activities beyond agriculture, aligning with low paleontological sensitivity.

Due to the anticipated depth of excavation being further than the depth of normal cultivation, the potential exists for accidental discovery of previously unknown subsurface resources during ground-disturbing activities. Therefore, compliance with standard inadvertent discovery protocols will ensure that any such finds are properly managed. Following MM GEO-2, the Project is not expected to directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or geologic feature.

Mitigation Measures

MM GEO-2: Unanticipated Discovery of Paleontological Resources. If paleontological resources (fossilized plant or animal remains) are discovered during ground-disturbing activities, work shall stop within 50 feet of the find, and a qualified paleontologist shall be retained to assess the significance of the discovery. If the resource is determined to be significant, the paleontologist shall prepare and implement a recovery plan consistent with the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology's standard guidelines, which may include salvage, recordation, and curation of the specimen at an accredited repository. No further ground disturbance shall occur in the immediate vicinity of the discovery until the paleontologist has determined that the resource has been adequately documented or recovered.

3.7.5 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts refer to the combined effects of the proposed Project with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects that could incrementally contribute to adverse effects on geology and soils. Geologic impacts are generally site-specific; however, regional subsidence associated with groundwater overdraft can be cumulative.

Cumulative Setting and Geographic Scope

The cumulative setting for geology and soils encompasses the City of Visalia and surrounding Tulare County areas, where development activities could potentially exacerbate soil erosion, instability, or seismic hazards across shared geologic formations. The region is part of the Kaweah subbasin, characterized by alluvial deposits with low seismic activity, moderate permeability, and historical subsidence. Soils in the area, such as Nord fine sandy loam, Akers saline-sodic, and Colpien loam, are generally stable with low expansion and liquefaction potential, but susceptible to erosion if disturbed. The geographic scope for cumulative geology and soils impacts is focused on the Kaweah subbasin and local watersheds, as erosion, subsidence, and groundwater-related failures can propagate regionally through interconnected alluvial systems and drainage features like Mill Creek. Cumulative projects considered include planned and foreseeable developments within the City of Visalia and surrounding Tulare County areas, such as other industrial parks, commercial expansions, and transportation improvements that involve ground disturbance and could contribute to increased erosion or subsidence. No specific past projects are directly linked to the proposed Project Site, but regional trends in agricultural conversion and urban expansion underscore the inherently cumulative nature of geologic degradation in the San Joaquin Valley, including potential for compounded subsidence from over-pumping.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Cumulative geology and soils impacts would occur if the Project, in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, results in a net increase in erosion, soil instability, or loss of unique geologic or paleontological resources that compromises regional stability or safety. As detailed in Impacts 3.7-1 through 3.7-6, the Project's individual impacts related to seismic hazards, erosion, instability, expansive soils, and paleontological resources are less than significant with incorporation of MM GEO-1 (geotechnical evaluation), MM GEO-2 (Paleontological Resources), and MM HYD-2 (SWPPP for erosion control). These measures address site-specific risks, such as localized hydrocarbon-impacted soils resolved through Phase II excavation, ensuring no residual contamination contributes to instability.

Per CEQA Guidelines § 15130, geologic impacts are inherently cumulative due to shared subsurface conditions and potential for basin-wide subsidence or erosion from multiple developments. A project's contribution is considered cumulatively considerable if its ground disturbance exceeds regulatory thresholds or hinders regional hazard mitigation efforts. Since the Project's mitigated impacts fall below these thresholds, its incremental contribution does not exacerbate regional subsidence or erosion.

When combined with cumulative projects, the Project could contribute to regional ground disturbance, potentially elevating erosion or subsidence risks through increased impervious surfaces or groundwater demands. However, the Project's compliance with the California Building Code, NPDES requirements, and the Tulare County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan ensures no net cumulative increase in hazards, with SWPPPs and geotechnical designs preventing offsite migration of sediments or contaminants. The absence of unique geologic features or paleontological resources on the Site, as confirmed by records reviews, further minimizes cumulative effects. Overall, while cumulative development in Visalia and Tulare County could strain geologic stability, the Project's impacts are not cumulatively considerable, as they align with state and local hazard mitigation plans and incorporate robust measures to minimize contributions.

Conclusion

The Project would result in a less than cumulatively considerable contribution to geology and soils impacts with mitigation incorporated. No additional mitigation is required beyond Mitigation Measures GEO-1, GEO-2, and HYD-2.

3 - 8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

This section of the EIR identifies potential impacts of the proposed Project on Greenhouse Gas Emissions. A revised Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Health Risk Assessment (June 2026) was utilized to support the evaluation (see Appendix D).

3.8.1 Environmental Setting

Climate Change

Climate change is a global issue. The earth's climate is changing and multiple lines of evidence show changes in weather, oceans, and ecosystems, such as:

- Changing temperature and precipitation patterns.
- Increases in ocean temperatures, sea level, and acidity.
- Melting of glaciers and sea ice.
- Changes in the frequency, intensity, and duration of extreme weather events.
- Shifts in ecosystem characteristics, like the length of the growing season, timing of flower blooms, and migration of birds.

These changes are due to the buildup of GHG in our atmosphere and the warming of the planet due to the greenhouse gas effect. The earth's temperature depends on the balance between energy entering and leaving the planet's system. When sunlight reaches the earth's surface, it can either be reflected back into space or absorbed by the earth. Incoming energy that is absorbed by the earth warms the planet. Once absorbed, the planet releases some of the energy back into the atmosphere as heat (also called infrared radiation). Solar energy that is reflected back to space does not warm the earth. Certain gases in the atmosphere absorb energy, slowing or preventing the loss of heat to space. Those gases are known as "greenhouse gases." They act like a blanket, making the earth warmer than it would otherwise be. This process, commonly known as the "greenhouse effect," is natural and necessary to support life. However, the recent buildup of GHG in the atmosphere from human activities has changed the earth's climate and resulted in dangerous effects to human health and welfare and to ecosystems.

Climate Change Effects in California

While there is general consensus across most scientific bodies regarding the reality of climate change, predictions of future effects are more speculative and the science is continually evolving. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), California is likely to experience the following effects.

Temperatures in California have risen almost 3 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) since the beginning of the 20th century. The six warmest years on record have all occurred since 2014. Under a higher emissions pathway, historically unprecedented warming is projected during this century.

California snowpack plays a critical role in water supply and flood risk. Projected earlier melting of the snowpack due to rising temperatures could have substantial negative impacts on water-dependent sectors and ecosystems. Global sea level is projected to rise, with a likely range of 1-4 feet by 2100. This will increase coastal flooding and impact management of water supplies and transportation.

One of California's most serious climate hazards is flooding, as a result of extreme precipitation, and the number of these events has been steadily increasing. On the other end, drought is another serious climate hazard. Abnormally low snowpack and record warmth, combined with below average precipitation, has led to severe droughts in recent years. Recent dry years have caused large drops in groundwater levels in some areas of the Central Valley, threatening the agricultural industry that is a staple of California economy and US food supplies. Droughts and increased temperature have also exacerbated wildfires, with some of the worst wildfires in history occurring recently. Wildfire damage also increases the risks of mudslides and flooding when heavy rain occurs.

Greenhouse Gases

Greenhouse gases (GHG) are gases that absorb and emit radiation within the thermal infrared range, trapping heat in the earth's atmosphere. There are no "attainment" concentration standards established by the Federal or State government for GHG. In fact, GHGs are not generally thought of as traditional air pollutants because GHG, and their impacts, are global in nature, while air pollutants affect the health of people and other living things at ground level, in the general region of their release to the atmosphere. Some GHG occur naturally and are emitted into the atmosphere through both natural processes and human activities. Other GHGs are created and emitted solely through human activities. The principal GHG that enter the atmosphere because of human activities are carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), and fluorinated carbons. Common GHG include the following.

- **Water Vapor:** Although not considered a pollutant, water vapor is the most important, abundant, and variable GHG. In the atmosphere, it maintains a climate necessary for life. The main source of water vapor is evaporation from the ocean (approximately 85 percent). Other sources include sublimation (change from solid to gas) from ice and snow, evaporation from other water bodies, and transpiration from plant leaves.

- **Ozone:** Unlike other GHG, ozone is relatively short-lived and therefore is not global in nature. It is difficult to make an accurate determination of the contribution of ozone precursors (nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds) to global climate change.
- **Aerosols:** Suspensions of particulate matter in a gas emitted into the air through burning biomass (plant material) and fossil fuels. Aerosols can warm the atmosphere by absorbing and emitting heat and can cool the atmosphere by reflecting light. Cloud formation can also be affected by aerosols. Sulfate aerosols are emitted when fuel- containing sulfur is burned. Black carbon (or soot) is emitted during biomass burning or incomplete combustion of fossil fuels. Particulate matter regulation has been lowering aerosol concentrations in the United States; however, global concentrations are likely increasing.
- **Chlorofluorocarbons (CFC):** Gases formed synthetically by replacing all hydrogen atoms in methane (CH_4) or ethane (C_2H_6) with chlorine and/or fluorine atoms. CFCs are nonflammable, nontoxic, insoluble, and chemically unreactive in the troposphere (the level of air at the earth's surface). CFCs were first synthesized in 1928 for use as cleaning solvents, refrigerants, and aerosol propellants. They destroy stratospheric ozone; therefore, their production was phased out under the Montreal Protocol, adopted in 1987.
- **Carbon Dioxide (CO_2):** an odorless, colorless gas, which has both natural and anthropogenic sources. Natural sources include the following: respiration of bacteria, plants, animals, and fungus, evaporation from oceans, volcanic out gassing, and decomposition of dead organic matter. Anthropogenic sources of carbon dioxide are from burning coal, oil, natural gas, and wood. Concentrations of CO_2 were approximately 423 parts per million (ppm) in 2005, which is an increase of 1.4 ppm per year since 1960.
- **Methane (CH_4):** A flammable gas and the main component of natural gas. When one molecule of CH_4 is burned in the presence of oxygen, one molecule of carbon dioxide and two molecules of water are released. There are no direct ill health effects from CH_4. A natural source of CH_4 is from the anaerobic decay of organic matter. Geological deposits, known as natural gas fields, also contain CH_4, which is extracted for fuel. Other sources are from cattle, fermentation of manure, and landfills.
- **Nitrous Oxide (N_2O):** Also known as laughing gas, it is a colorless GHG. Higher concentrations of N_2O can cause euphoria, dizziness, and slight hallucinations. N_2O is produced by microbial processes in soil and water, including those reactions that occur in fertilizer containing nitrogen. In addition to agricultural sources, some industrial processes (nitric acid production, nylon production, fossil fuel-fired power plants, and vehicle emissions) also contribute to its atmospheric load. It is used in racecars, rocket engines, and as an aerosol spray propellant.
- **Fluorinated Gases:** Gases that are synthetic, powerful GHG emitted from a variety of industrial processes.
- **Hydrofluorocarbons (HFC):** Synthetic man-made chemicals that are used as a substitute for CFCs for automobile air conditioners and refrigerants.

- **Perfluorocarbons (PFC):** These have stable molecular structures and do not break down through the chemical processes in the lower atmosphere. High-energy ultraviolet rays, roughly 60 kilometers above the earth's surface, are able to destroy the compounds. PFCs have long lifetimes, ranging between 10,000 and 50,000 years. Two common PFCs are tetrafluoromethane and hexafluoroethane. Concentrations of tetrafluoromethane in the atmosphere are over 70 parts per trillion (ppt). The two main sources of PFCs are primary aluminum production and semiconductor manufacturing.
- **Sulfur Hexafluoride (SF_6):** an inorganic, colorless, odorless, nontoxic, nonflammable gas. Concentrations in the 1990s were roughly 4 ppt. SF_6 is used for insulation in electric power transmission and distribution equipment, in semiconductor manufacturing, the magnesium industry, and as a tracer gas for leak detection.[106]

3.8.2 Regulatory Setting

International

- **Paris Agreement –** Aims to limit global warming to well below 2°C, preferably to 1.5°C, through nationally determined contributions (NDCs) for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.[107] The United States withdrew from the Paris Agreement, effective January 2026.
- **Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol –** Phases down production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), powerful GHGs, to reduce their climate impact. [108]
- **UNFCCC Kyoto Protocol (currently not actively implemented by the US) –** Aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by industrialized countries by 5.2% below 1990 levels by 2012.[109]
- **International Maritime Organization (IMO) Strategy on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships –** Addresses GHG emissions from international shipping through regulations like energy efficiency standards and market-based measures.[110]
- **Global Methane Pledge –** A joint commitment by over 100 countries to reduce methane emissions by 30% by 2030 compared to 2020 levels.[111]

Federal

Federal Clean Air Act

106) U.S. EPA. 2024. Overview of Greenhouse Gases
107) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. 2015. Paris Agreement.
108) United Nations Environment Programme. 2016. Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol
109) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. 1997. Kyoto Protocol.
110) International Maritime Organization. 2023. Revised GHG Reduction Strategy for Global Shipping
111) U.S. Department of State. 2021. Global Methane Pledge.

The primary federal air quality law intended to reduce and control air pollution nationwide.[112] In Massachusetts v. EPA 549 U.S. 497 (2007), the U.S. Supreme Court (Supreme Court) found that four GHGs, including CO_2, are air pollutants subject to regulation under Section 202(a)(1) of the CAA. On December 7, 2009, the EPA Administrator signed a final action under the CAA, finding that six GHGs (i.e., CO_2, CH_4, N_2O, HFCs, PFCs, and SF_6) constitute a threat to public health and welfare, and that the combined emissions from motor vehicles cause and contribute to global climate change, which threatens the public health and welfare.[113] These findings do not impose requirements on industry or other entities. However, this was a prerequisite for implementing federal clean vehicle standards for GHG emissions standards discussed below.

Federal Clean Vehicle Standards

Established by the EPA and NHTSA, these directly regulate GHG emissions and fuel economy for vehicles sold in the United States, setting the regulatory floor that vehicles accessing the project site must meet. [114] While previous phases (2012-2025) focused on combined CO_2 and fuel economy standards (CAFÉ), the EPA finalized its Multipollutant Emissions Standards for Model Years 2027 and Later Light-Duty and Medium-Duty Vehicles in March 2024. This final rule sets aggressive standards through model year 2032 and is specifically designed to accelerate the adoption of zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs), thereby directly impacting the mobile source GHG emissions generated by the Project's employee vehicles and light fleet.

Consolidated Appropriations Act (Mandatory GHG Reporting)

On September 22, 2009, the EPA issued the Final Mandatory Reporting of Greenhouse Gases Rule, which became effective January 1, 2010. Under the rule, suppliers of fossil fuels or industrial GHGs, manufacturers of vehicles and engines, and facilities that emit 25,000 metric tons or more per year of GHG emissions are required to submit annual reports to the EPA.[115]

New Source Review

The EPA issued a final rule on May 13, 2010, that established thresholds for GHGs that define when permits under the New Source Review Prevention of Significant Deterioration and Title V Operating Permit programs are required for new and existing industrial facilities. The EPA estimates that facilities responsible for nearly 70 percent of the national GHG emissions from

112) U.S. EPA. 2024. Clean Air Act Overview
113) U.S. EPA 2009. Endangerment and Cause or Contribute Findings for Greenhouse Gases under § 202(a) of the Clean Air Act.
114) U.S. EPA. 2024. Multi-Pollutant Emissions Standards for Model Years 2027 and Later Light-Duty and Medium-Duty Vehicles
115) U.S. EPA. 2009. Mandatory Greenhouse Gas Reporting Rule

stationary sources will be subject to permitting requirements under this rule. This includes the nation's largest GHG emitters—power plants, refineries, and cement production facilities.[116]

Standards of Performance for Greenhouse Gas Emissions for New Stationary Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units

As required by a settlement agreement, the EPA proposed new performance standards for CO_2 emissions for new, affected, fossil fuel-fired electric utility generating units on March 27, 2012. New sources greater than 25 megawatts would be required to meet an output-based standard of 1,000 pounds of CO_2 per megawatt-hour (MWh) based on the performance of widely used natural gas combined cycle technology.[117]

State

Cap-and-Trade

Cap-and-trade refers to a policy tool where emissions are limited to a certain amount and can be traded or provides flexibility on how the emitter can comply. The Western Climate Initiative partner jurisdictions developed a comprehensive initiative to reduce regional GHG emissions to 15 percent below 2005 levels by 2020. The partners are California, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and Québec. Currently only California and Québec are participating in the Cap-and-Trade Program.[118]

Assembly Bill (AB) 1493 Pavley Clean Car Regulations

Enacted in 2002, AB 1493 directed CARB to adopt regulations to achieve the maximum feasible and cost-effective reduction of GHG emissions from motor vehicles; CARB approved the regulations in 2004. These standards are now harmonized with the federal standards but allow for California's ZEV mandates.[119]

Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006

Created a comprehensive, multiyear program to reduce GHG emissions in California and required CARB to develop a Scoping Plan to reduce GHGs to achieve the goal of reducing emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.[120]

116) U.S. EPA. 2010. Prevention of Significant Deterioration and Title V Greenhouse Gas Tailoring Rule.
117) U.S. EPA. 2012. Standards of Performance for Greenhouse Gas Emissions for New Stationary Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units.
118) Western Climate Initiative. 2024. Western Climate Initiative Cap-and-Trade Program
119) CARB. 2004. Assembly Bill 1493 (Pavley) Clean Car Standard
120) California Legislature. 2006. Assembly Bill 32: Global Warming Solutions Act

Senate Bill 32 California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2016

Codifies a 2030 GHG emissions reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels. [121]

Senate Bill 375—the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008

Senate Bill (SB) 375 was signed into law on September 30, 2008. According to SB 375, the transportation sector is the largest contributor of GHG emissions, which emits over 40 percent of the total GHG emissions in California. SB 375 does the following: 1. Requires metropolitan planning organizations to include sustainable community strategies in their regional transportation plans for reducing GHG emissions, 2. Aligns planning for transportation and housing, and 3. Creates specified incentives for the implementation of the strategies.[122]

Senate Bill 1368—Emission Performance Standards

In 2006, the State Legislature adopted SB 1368, which was subsequently signed into law by the Governor. SB 1368 directs the California Public Utilities Commission to adopt a performance standard for GHG emissions for the future power purchases of California utilities. SB 1368 seeks to limit carbon emissions associated with electrical energy consumed in California by forbidding procurement arrangements for energy longer than 5 years from resources that exceed the emissions of a relatively clean, combined cycle natural gas power plant. The California Public Utilities Commission adopted the regulations required by SB 1368 on August 29, 2007.[123]

Senate Bill 1078—Renewable Electricity Standards

On September 12, 2002, former Governor Gray Davis signed SB 1078, requiring California to generate 20 percent of its electricity from renewable energy by 2017.[124] SB 107 changed the due date to 2010 instead of 2017. On November 17, 2008, Former Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed Executive Order S-14-08, which established an RPS target for California requiring that all retail sellers of electricity serve 33 percent of their load with renewable energy by 2020. Former Governor Schwarzenegger also directed the ARB (Executive Order S-21-09) to adopt a regulation by July 31, 2010, requiring the State's load serving entities to meet a 33 percent renewable energy target by 2020. The ARB approved the Renewable Electricity Standard on September 23, 2010 by Resolution 10-23.

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121) California Legislature. 2016. Senate Bill 32
122) California Legislature. 2008. Senate Bill 375: Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act
123) California Legislature. 2006. Senate Bill 1368: Emission Performance Standards
124) California Legislature. 2002. Senate Bill 1078: Renewable Portfolio Standard

SBX-7-7—The Water Conservation Act of 2009

The legislation directs urban retail water suppliers to set individual 2020 per capita water use targets and begin implementing conservation measures to achieve those goals. Meeting this Statewide goal of 20 percent decrease in demand has resulted in a reduction of almost 2 million acre-feet in urban water use.

Senate Bill 100—The 100 Percent Clean Energy Act of 2018

The legislation directs the CPUC, CEC, and the ARB to plan for 100 percent of total retail sales of electricity in California to come from eligible renewable energy resources and zero-carbon resources by December 31, 2045. This Act amends Sections 399.11, 399.15, and 399.30 of, and adds Section 454.53 to, the Public Utilities Code, relating to energy.

Executive Order S-3-05

Former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger announced on June 1, 2005, through Executive Order S-3-05, the following reduction targets for GHG emissions:

- By 2010, reduce GHG emissions to 2000 levels.
- By 2020, reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels.
- By 2050, reduce GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels.[125]

The 2050 reduction goal represents what some scientists believe is necessary to reach levels that will stabilize the climate. The 2020 goal was established to be a mid-term target.

Executive Order S-01-07—Low Carbon Fuel Standard

The Governor signed Executive Order S 01-07 on January 18, 2007.[126] The order mandates that a Statewide goal shall be established to reduce the carbon intensity of California's transportation fuels by at least 10 percent by 2020. In particular, the Executive Order established a Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) and directed the Secretary for Environmental Protection to coordinate the actions of the CEC, ARB, University of California, and other agencies to develop and propose protocols for measuring the "lifecycle carbon intensity" of transportation fuels. The ARB adopted the LCFS on April 23, 2009.

Executive Order S-13-08

Executive Order S-13-08 states that "climate change in California during the next century is expected to shift precipitation patterns, accelerate sea level rise and increase temperatures, thereby posing a serious threat to California's economy, to the health and welfare of its

125) California Governor's Office. 2005. Executive Order S-3-05
126) California Governor's Office. 2007. Executive Order S-01-07: Low Carbon Fuel Standard

population and to its natural resources."[127] Pursuant to the requirements in the order, the 2009 California Climate Adaptation Strategy was adopted, which is the "first Statewide, multi-sector, region-specific, and information-based climate change adaptation strategy in the United States." Objectives include analyzing risks of climate change in California, identifying and exploring strategies to adapt to climate change, and specifying directions for future research.

Executive Order B-30-15

On April 29, 2015, Former Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. issued an Executive Order to establish a California GHG reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.[128] The Governor's Executive Order aligns California's GHG reduction targets with those of leading international governments ahead of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris late 2015. The Executive Order sets a new interim Statewide GHG emission reduction target to reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 in order to ensure California meets its target of reducing GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050, and directs the ARB to update the Climate Change Scoping Plan to express the 2030 target in terms of metric ton (MT) CO_2e.

California Regulations and Building Codes

California has a long history of adopting regulations to improve energy efficiency in new and remodeled buildings. These regulations have kept California's energy consumption relatively flat even with rapid population growth and are viewed as some of the most stringent requirements in the nation.

Scoping Plan

The Scoping Plan was first approved by CARB in 2008, then updated in 2014, 2017, and 2022.[129] The original plan describes the approach California will take to reduce GHGs to 1990 levels by 2020. The 2017 Scoping Plan update incorporates the 2030 targets set by Executive Order B-30-15, and codified by SB 32, to reduce GHG emissions to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030. Key programs include the Cap-and-Trade Regulation; the Low Carbon Fuel Standards; substantially cleaner cars, trucks, and freight movement using cleaner, renewable energy; and strategies to reduce methane emissions from agricultural and other wastes. The 2022 Scoping Plan Update includes strategies and regulations to achieve carbon neutrality in California no later than 2045, an 85 percent reduction of GHG emissions compared to 1990 levels. Policies and programs include direct emission reduction measures; building code updates; market-based measures such as the Cap-and-Trade Program; incentives; and removal of CO_2 from

127) California Governor's Office. 2008. Executive Order S-13-08
128) California Governor's Office. 2015. Executive Order B-30-15
129) CARB 2022. 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality

the atmosphere via carbon capture, utilization and storage technologies, and carbon sequestration through natural and working lands.

California Code of Regulations Title 13: Motor Vehicles

California Code of Regulations, Title 13: Division 3, Chapter 10, Article 1, Section 2485: Airborne Toxic Control Measure to Limit Diesel-Fueled Commercial Motor Vehicle Idling.[130] This measure seeks to reduce public exposure to diesel particulate matter (DPM) and other air contaminants by establishing idling restrictions, emission standards, and other requirements for heavy-duty diesel engines and alternative idle reduction technologies to limit the idling of diesel-fueled commercial motor vehicles. Any person that owns, operates, or causes to operate any diesel-fueled commercial motor vehicle must not allow a vehicle to idle for more than 5 consecutive minutes at any location, or operate a diesel-fueled auxiliary power system for greater than 5 minutes at any location when within 100 feet of a restricted area.

California Code of Regulations, Title 13: Division 3, Chapter 9, Article 4.8, Section 2449: General Requirements for In-Use Off Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets.

This measure regulates NOX, DPM, and other criteria pollutant emissions from in-use off-road diesel-fueled vehicles. This measure also requires each fleet to meet fleet average requirements or demonstrate that it has met "best available control technology" requirements. Additionally, this measure requires medium and large fleets to have a written idling policy that is made available to operators of the vehicles informing them that idling is limited to 5 consecutive minutes or less.[131]

Title 20 Appliance Efficiency Regulations

Regulations California Code of Regulations, Title 20: Division 2, Chapter 4, Article 4, Sections 1601-1608: Appliance Efficiency Regulations regulates the sale of appliances in California.[132] The Appliance Efficiency Regulations include standards for both federally regulated appliances and non-federally regulated appliances. Twenty-three categories of appliances are included in the scope of these regulations. The standards within these regulations apply to appliances that are sold or offered for sale in California, except those sold wholesale in California for final retail sale outside the State and those designed and sold exclusively for use in recreational vehicles or other mobile equipment.

Title 24 California Code of Regulations (CCR)

130) California Code of Regulations. Title 13, § 2485
131) California Code of Regulations. Title 13, § 2449
132) California Code of Regulations. Title 20, §§ 1601-1608.

Part 6 of Title 24, California Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential buildings, was first adopted in 1978 and has been updated periodically since. The current 2025 Building Energy Efficiency Standards became effective on January 1, 2026.[133] Title 24, Part 11, California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) is a comprehensive and uniform regulatory code for all residential, commercial, and school buildings. It went into effect in 2011 and the most recently updated to the 2025 California Green Building Code Standards. Note that CALGreen is a code managed by the California Building Standards Commission (CBSC), with the California Energy Commission (CEC) responsible for updating its energy-related components.

Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance

The Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO) was required by AB 1881 Water Conservation Act.[134] The bill required local agencies to adopt a local landscape ordinance at least as effective in conserving water as the MWELO by January 1, 2010. Reductions in water use of 20 percent consistent with (SBX-7-7) 2020 mandate are expected for the MWELO. New development projects that include landscaped areas of 500 square feet or more are subject to MWELO. The update requires:

- More efficient irrigation systems;
- Incentives for graywater usage;
- Improvements in onsite stormwater capture;
- Limiting the portion of landscapes that can be planted with high water use plants; and
- Reporting requirements for local agencies.

Senate Bill 97 and the CEQA Guidelines Revisions

Passed in August 2007, SB 97 added Section 21083.05 to the PRC.[135] The code states "(a) On or before July 1, 2009, the Office of Planning and Research shall prepare, develop, and transmit to the Resources Agency guidelines for the mitigation of GHG emissions or the effects of GHG emissions as required by this division, including, but not limited to, effects associated with transportation or energy consumption. (b) On or before January 1, 2010, the Resources Agency shall certify and adopt guidelines prepared and developed by the Office of Planning and Research pursuant to subdivision (a)."

133) California Energy Commission. 2025. 2025 Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24, Part 6).
134) California Legislature. 2006. Assembly Bill 1881: Water Conservation Act
135) California Legislature. 2007. Senate Bill 97

Section 21097 was also added to the PRC, which provided an exemption until January 1, 2010 for transportation projects funded by the Highway Safety, Traffic Reduction, Air Quality, and Port Security Bond Act of 2006 or projects funded by the Disaster Preparedness and Flood Prevention Bond Act of 2006, in stating that the failure to analyze adequately the effects of GHGs would not violate the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Natural Resources Agency completed the approval process, and the Amendments became effective on March 18, 2010.

The 2010 CEQA Amendments provide guidance to public agencies regarding the analysis and mitigation of the effects of GHG emissions in CEQA documents. The CEQA Amendments fit within the existing CEQA framework by amending existing CEQA Guidelines to reference climate change.

California Supreme Court GHG Ruling

In a November 30, 2015 ruling, the California Supreme Court in *Center for Biological Diversity v. California Department of Fish and Wildlife* invalidated the EIR for the Newhall Ranch project due to insufficient evidence in the administrative record supporting that project's GHG analysis, among other reasons. The Court endorsed the use of AB 32's Statewide emission reduction goals as a legally permissible significance threshold for analyzing a project's GHG impacts under CEQA. However, comparisons to the AB 32 Scoping Plan must be supported by a reasoned explanation based on substantial evidence.

In other words, the Court approved the methodology used in the EIR's analysis in terms of reductions from projected BAU emissions consistent with AB 32's Statewide reductions mandate (rather than against some absolute numeric limit above the project site's baseline emissions), but the Court held the GHG analysis lacked supporting substantial evidence and a cogent explanation correlating the project-specific reductions to AB 32's mandated Statewide reductions so as to demonstrate consistency with the latter's goals under the approved methodology. The Court made the following key points with respect to its holding on the GHG analysis under CEQA, as summarized below: Specifically, the Court held that:

- ***Substantiation of Project Reductions from BAU.*** A Lead Agency may use a BAU comparison based on the Scoping Plan's methodology so long as it also substantiates the reduction a particular project must achieve to comply with Statewide goals (page 25). In so doing, the Lead Agency needs to ensure the administrative record establishes a "firm ground for the efficiency comparison" by documenting with substantial evidence in the record the EIR's conclusion that the individual project's percent emissions savings over BAU satisfies the EIR's significance criterion of consistency with the Scoping Plan's 29 percent Statewide savings by 2020. In so doing, this alleviates the analytical gap by establishing, through substantial evidence and reasoned explanation, a quantitative equivalence

between the Scoping Plan's Statewide comparison and the EIR's individual project-level comparison.

- ***Compliance with Regulatory Programs or Performance Based Standards.*** A Lead Agency "might assess consistency with AB 32's goal in whole or part by looking to compliance with regulatory programs designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from particular activities" (page 26).
- ***Compliance with GHG Reduction Plans or Climate Action Plans.*** A Lead Agency may utilize "geographically specific GHG emission reduction plans" such as Climate Action Plans (CAPs) or GHG emission reduction plans to provide a basis for the tiering or streamlining of project-level CEQA analysis (page 26).
- ***Compliance with Local Air District Thresholds.*** A Lead Agency may rely on "existing numerical thresholds of significance for greenhouse gas emissions" adopted by, for example, local air districts (page 27).

California Cap-and-Trade Program

The Cap-and-Trade program is a market-based mechanism to reduce GHG emissions by setting a declining cap on overall emissions from covered sectors (electricity, large industrial sources, transportation fuels). Facilities may be directly covered if their emissions exceed a certain threshold (25,000 MT CO_2e/year).[136]

Regional

SJVAPCD Guidance

At the regional level, SJVAPCD provides the formal methodology for assessing project-level GHG emissions under CEQA. SJVAPCD has not been able to determine a specific quantitative level of GHG emissions increase, above which a project would have a significant impact, and below which it would have an insignificant impact. In the absence of scientific evidence supporting establishment of a numerical threshold, the SJVAPCD policy applies performance-based standards to assess project-specific GHG emission impacts on global climate change. In its GAMAQI, the SJVAPCD policy provides for a tiered approach in assessing significance of Action specific GHG emission increases:

- **Tier I:** Actions complying with an approved GHG emission reduction plan or GHG mitigation program which avoids or substantially reduces GHG emissions within the geographic area in which the Action is located would be determined to have a less than significant individual and cumulative impact for GHG emissions. Such plans or programs must be specified in law or approved by the Lead Agency with jurisdiction over the affected resource and supported by a CEQA compliant environmental review document adopted by the Lead Agency. Actions complying with an approved GHG emission reduction plan or GHG

136) CARB 2024. California Cap-and-Trade Program

mitigation program would not be required to implement Best Performance Standards (BPS).

- **Tier II:** Actions implementing BPS would not require quantification of Action specific GHG emissions. Consistent with CEQA Guideline, such Actions would be determined to have a less than significant individual and cumulative impact for GHG emissions.
- **Tier III:** Actions not implementing BPS would require quantification of Action specific GHG emissions and demonstration that Action specific GHG emissions would be reduced or mitigated by at least 29%, compared to Business as Usual (BAU), including GHG emission reductions achieved since the 2002-2004 baseline period, consistent with GHG emission reduction targets established in ARB's AB 32 Scoping Plan. Actions achieving at least a 29% GHG emission reduction compared to BAU would be determined to have a less than significant individual and cumulative impact for GHG.

The City of Visalia serves as the CEQA Lead Agency for all topics, including GHG. While SJVAPCD's GAMAQI continues to reference its 2015 tiered approach (which has not been updated since that time and still relies on AB 32-era metrics), the City has adopted a CAP that functions as a qualified GHG reduction plan under CEQA Guidelines § 15064(h)(3) and 15183.5. The CAP establishes a suite of measures and development-level requirements that, when met, ensure a project's incremental contribution to climate change is not cumulatively considerable. Because the Project does not trigger a quantitative mass-emissions threshold under the CAP, consistency with the CAP checklist is sufficient to determine significance. This EIR therefore relies upon consistency with the City CAP and the CARB 2022 Scoping Plan to assess the significance of GHG impacts. A detailed Project-specific consistency evaluation is provided in the impacts section and in Appendix D.

Rule 2301

While the CCAP indicated that the GHG emission reduction program would be called the San Joaquin Valley Carbon Exchange, the District incorporated a method to register voluntary GHG emission reductions into its existing Rule 2301—Emission Reduction Credit Banking through amendments of the rule. Amendments to the rule were adopted on January 19, 2012.[137] The purposes of the amendments to the rule include the following:

- Provide an administrative mechanism for sources to bank voluntary GHG emission reductions for later use.
- Provide an administrative mechanism for sources to transfer banked GHG emission reductions to others for any use.

137) SJVAPCD Rule 2301: Emission Reduction Credit Banking

- Define eligibility standards, quantitative procedures, and administrative practices to ensure that banked GHG emission reductions are real, permanent, quantifiable, surplus, and enforceable.

Tulare County Association of Governments, 2018 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

The Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) 2018 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) includes a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) component in accordance with SB 375, the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008. TCAG adopted the 2018 SCS/RTP on August 20, 2018. In so doing, the TCAG Board of Directors made a determination that, if implemented, the SCS would achieve the per capita passenger vehicle GHG emissions targets established by its Board of Directors. The 2020 target is a 5 percent per capita reduction and the 2035 target is a 10 percent per capita reduction from the 2005 base year. The ARB accepted the determination that the TCAG 2018 SCS, if implemented, would achieve the region's per capita GHG emission reduction targets for 2020 and 2035.

The 2018 SCS/RTP strives to reduce air emissions from passenger vehicle and light-duty truck travel by better coordinating transportation expenditures with forecasted development patterns and, if feasible, help meet ARB GHG targets for the region. SB 375 requires the ARB to develop regional GHG emission reduction targets for passenger vehicles. The ARB is to establish targets for the automobile and light-duty truck sector for 2020 and 2035 for each region covered by one of the State's 18 metropolitan planning organizations. Regional metropolitan planning organizations are responsible for preparing an SCS within their RTP. The key purpose of SB 375 and the TCAG SCS is to reduce per capita emissions originating from passenger vehicles and light-duty trucks. Accordingly, the 2018 SCS/RTP:

- Describes sources of emissions in the Tulare County region, 2020 and 2035 emission reduction targets established by the ARB for the San Joaquin Valley, and modeling techniques used to estimate and forecast emissions;
- Identifies Statewide strategies to reduce transportation-related emissions and their anticipated effect within the Tulare County region;
- Identifies regional strategies that complement the SCS by reducing emissions in other sectors (energy consumption);
- Quantifies the effect of policies and programs in the RTP that reduce transportation-related emissions in the region; and
- Compares the emissions reductions anticipated with implementation of the SCS/RTP with the regional targets.

The GHG emission targets for lowering emissions in the San Joaquin Valley, as set by the ARB and approved by the TCAG Board of Directors, call for a 5 percent reduction in per capita

emissions from passenger vehicles and light trucks by 2020 and a 10 percent reduction by 2035 through land use and transportation planning. Based on the analysis of strategies included in the 2018 SCS/RTP, CO_2 emissions were anticipated to be 12.3 percent lower than 2005 levels by 2020 and 16.0 percent lower by 2035, exceeding the targets established by the ARB in 2010.

2030 City of Visalia General Plan

The 2030 General Plan includes the policies related to Greenhouse Gasses that correlate to the proposed Project:

Objective AQ-O-3 Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases that contribute to global climate change in accord with federal and State law.

- *Policy AQ-P-12: Support the implementation of Voluntary Emissions Reduction Agreements (VERA) with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (the District) for individual development projects that may exceed District significance thresholds. A VERA is a voluntary mitigation measure where a Project proponent provides pound-for-pound mitigation of emissions increases through a process that develops, funds, and implements emissions reduction projects, with the District serving a role of administrator of emissions reduction programs and verifier of successful mitigation effort. To implement a VERA, the Project proponent and the District enter into a contractual agreement in which the Project proponent agrees to mitigate project-specific emissions by providing funds for the District's Strategies and Incentives Program. The funds are disbursed in the form of grants for projects that achieve emissions reductions.*
- *Policy AQ-P-13: Where feasible, replace City vehicles with those that employ low emission technology.*
- *Policy AQ-P-14: Promote and expand the trip-reduction program for City employees to reduce air pollution and emissions of greenhouse gas. The program may include carpooling and ride sharing; reimbursement of transit costs; encouragement of flexible work schedules, telecommuting, and teleconferencing.*
- *Policy AQ-P-15: Maintain an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions from City operations and track related solid waste, energy, economic, and environmental data. Update the inventory periodically as additional data and methodologies become available.*
- *Policy AQ-P-16: Support State efforts to reduce greenhouse gases and emissions through local action that will reduce motor vehicle use, support alternative forms of transportation, require energy conservation in new construction, and energy*

management in public buildings, in compliance with AB 32. By proposing compact development, mixed use centers, walkable neighborhoods, green building technology, and jobs-housing balance, the City will be helping to implement many of the strategies and programs in the San Joaquin Valley 2007 Ozone Plan.

- *Policy AQ-P-17: Prepare and adopt a Climate Action Plan that incorporates a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Reduction Plan. The GHG Emissions Reduction Plan will quantify current and anticipated future emissions and focus on feasible actions the City can take to minimize the adverse impacts of General Plan implementation on climate change and air quality.*

City of Visalia Climate Action Plan

The City of Visalia CAP was adopted in December 2013 and provides a policy document that includes strategies for reducing GHG emissions.[138] The CAP includes objectives and policies from the General Plan that address long-term emissions reduction efforts and the timeframe of the CAP extends through 2030. Visalia's CAP includes a baseline GHG emissions inventory of community and municipal sector GHG emissions, identification and analysis of existing and proposed GHG reduction measures, and GHG emission reduction targets to help Visalia work toward the State's goal of an 80 percent reduction below baseline emissions by 2050. The CAP sets 2020 and 2030 GHG emission reduction targets, and includes reduction actions for energy, transportation, and waste and resource conservation. Additionally, the CAP includes targets and action steps for the municipal and community sectors. The CAP was prepared concurrently with the updated General Plan, was evaluated in the General Plan EIR together with the General Plan update and includes objectives and specific policies from the proposed General Plan to address long-term emissions reduction efforts by the City. The CAP sets five major long-term objectives for the City government and community as a whole:

- Reduce net GHG emissions from both municipal operations and community activities;
- Promote cleaner and healthier air to breathe;
- Help the City and its residents save on energy costs;
- Reduce vulnerability to changes in energy availability and price; and
- Increase public awareness of climate change issues.

The CAP sets a reduction target of 15 percent below 2005 baseline year level by 2020 and 30 percent below 2005 baseline year level by 2030. In order to meet these reduction targets the CAP includes a comprehensive set of actions and programs: Energy Systems, Transportation,

138) City of Visalia. 2013. Visalia Climate Action Plan

Water and Resource Conservation, Transportation/Land Use, and Waste and Resource Conservation. The CAP functions as a qualified GHG reduction plan for CEQA purposes. The Project's consistency with the CAP is evaluated in detail through a CAP checklist in the impacts section and in Appendix D.

3.8.3 Thresholds of Significance

The Lead Agency utilizes the criteria in CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Environmental Checklist to determine whether greenhouse emissions impacts are significant environmental effects. Would the project:

a) *Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?*
b) *Conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?*

3.8.4 Impacts Discussion

Guidance and Thresholds of Significance

The City of Visalia has adopted a Climate Action Plan (CAP) that functions as a qualified GHG reduction plan under CEQA Guidelines § 15064(h)(3) and 15183.5. Because the Project does not trigger a quantitative mass-emissions threshold under the CAP, consistency with the CAP checklist is sufficient to determine significance. For a comprehensive evaluation, consistency with the CARB 2022 Scoping Plan.

The revised Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Health Risk Assessment (Appendix D, June 2026) quantifies Project GHG emissions using CalEEMod, consistent with CEQA Guidelines §15064.4. Significance is determined through plan consistency rather than comparison to a numeric screening threshold. The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's GAMAQI GHG guidance has not been updated since 2015 and continues to reference AB 32-era metrics; the City's CAP serves as the primary local framework for the CEQA determination.

Impact 3.8-1: Would the Project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Before Mitigation	Significant (CAP and Scoping Plan consistency depends on verified GHG reduction design commitments)
Mitigation Measures	MM GHG-1
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

The Project would generate GHG emissions during both construction and operation. Construction emissions would occur primarily from the combustion of diesel fuel in off-road equipment and on-road vehicles. Operational emissions would result from mobile sources, energy use (electricity and, as modeled in CalEEMod, natural gas), water and wastewater, solid waste, and small quantities of refrigerants. These emissions were quantified using CalEEMod, as described in Appendix D, and are disclosed consistent with CEQA Guidelines §15064.4. Table 3-20 presents construction and operational GHG emissions (MT CO_2e per year) estimated from CalEEMod.

Table 3-20: Project Greenhouse Gas Emissions

	BCO_2	$NBCO_2$	CO_2T	CH_4	N_20	R	CO_2e
Construction Emissions (worst year)	-	1,417	1,417	0.05	0.13	1.0	1,456
Operational Emissions	288	8,225	8,513	29.6	0.5	4.6	9,421

BCO_2 = biogenic carbon dioxide; $NBCO_2$ = non-biogenic (anthropogenic) carbon dioxide; CO_2T = total carbon dioxide; CH_4 = methane; N_2O = nitrous oxide; R = refrigerants; CO_2e = carbon dioxide equivalents (total)

GHG Significance Framework

Significance is determined via consistency with the City of Visalia CAP and the CARB 2022 Scoping Plan. Because the Project is consistent with both (with incorporation of MM GHG-1), and because GHG emissions were quantified for disclosure consistent with CEQA Guidelines §15064.4, the Project would not generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment. Impacts would be *less than significant with mitigation incorporated.*

Mitigation Measures

MM GHG-1: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Design and Operational Verification. Prior to the issuance of building permits, the Lead Agency (City of Visalia) shall verify that all applicable greenhouse gas reduction requirements, including California Energy Code compliance, CALGreen electric vehicle infrastructure, water-efficient landscaping, and waste diversion facilities, have been incorporated into the final Project construction plans and operational specifications.

Monitoring and Compliance: Prior to final plan-check approval, the Project Applicant shall submit a GHG Reduction Design Verification Letter to the City of Visalia Planning Division. This documentation must systematically list each applicable CAP and Scoping Plan commitment and demonstrate how it is integrated into the final Project design or tenant operational statements. The City will review, confirm, and countersign the verification letter. Any long-term operational or ongoing maintenance commitments must be legally incorporated into all future tenant agreements and lease disclosures.

Ongoing Verification: The Project Owner or operating tenant shall maintain comprehensive records of ongoing compliance measures onsite for a minimum of three years and make them available to the Lead Agency upon request.

Impact 3.8-2: Would the Project conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Before Mitigation	Significant (CAP and Scoping Plan consistency depends on verified GHG reduction design commitments)
Mitigation Measures	MM GHG-1
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

As demonstrated in the CAP Consistency Checklist and CARB 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Assessment below, with incorporation of MM GHG-1, the Project would be consistent with the City CAP and would be consistent with the CARB 2022 Scoping Plan, except that the Project would be only partially consistent with the Scoping Plan's VMT reduction goals, as explained in the conclusion of this impact. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs. Impacts would be *less than significant with mitigation incorporated.*

City of Visalia Climate Action Plan Consistency

The City of Visalia CAP establishes a framework for reducing community-wide GHG emissions through land use planning, energy efficiency, renewable energy, transportation strategies, and water conservation. The Project's consistency with applicable CAP actions is summarized below.

Table 3-21: City of Visalia CAP Consistency Assessment

CAP Action	Consistency Assessment
Promote purchasing of energy efficient home and office appliances and equipment. (City)	CONSISTENT. The Project supports this initiative by equipping all operational office zones, break rooms, and specialized facilities within the dry warehouses and commercial envelopes with high-efficiency hardware. All indoor installations will meet or exceed current California Energy Code (Title 24, Part 6) building efficiency baselines.
Continue to promote community-wide rooftop solar. Continue exploring the potential to collaborate with regional partners on a community-wide solar bulk purchase agreement. (City)	CONSISTENT. The Project directly contributes to regional green power generation by integrating structural solar-ready design elements across the major warehouse footprints. Structural roof load capacities and electrical routing panels will be engineered to fully satisfy the mandatory renewable energy readiness standards of CALGreen (Title 24, Part 11) and the California Energy Code.
Continue working to reduce the amount of water used for landscaping through the development of a local Ordnance, updates to the Landscape Standards, and enforcement of the Water Conservation Ordinance. (City)	CONSISTENT. The Project includes an engineered stormwater retention basin and a dedicated approximately 468,499 square-foot operational landscaping footprint. All site-wide landscape irrigation architectures, plant selections, and low-flow irrigation control nodes will be explicitly designed to conform with the City of Visalia WELO.
Investigate and integrate transit oriented development into all of the City's relevant long-term planning goals and projects when applicable. (City)	CONSISTENT. By clustering light industrial uses, warehousing, and logistics options directly adjacent to major regional shipping corridors (such as SR 198 and SR 99), the Project prevents industrial sprawl and optimizes freight distribution networks.
Continue working to expand the development of plug-in electric vehicle (PEV) through the development of infrastructure.	CONSISTENT. The Project will implement mandatory commercial EV infrastructure components within its private parking courts as dictated by the latest CALGreen tier requirements. This includes designating and striping required percentages of Clean Air/EV-Ready parking stalls, installing sub-grade conduit paths, and implementing active charging station nodes.

CARB 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency

The Project's consistency with applicable CARB 2022 Scoping Plan strategies is summarized below.

Table 3-22: CARB 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Assessment

Scoping Plan Action	Consistency Assessment
Building Decarbonization: The Scoping Plan calls for a rapid transition of all new construction away from fossil fuels.	CONSISTENT. The Project will be designed and built in full compliance with the latest California Energy Code (Title 24, Part 6) and CALGreen (Title 24, Part 11) standards. By incorporating high-efficiency building envelopes, energy-conserving lighting, and the required structural solar photovoltaic (PV) readiness, the project design minimizes reliance on fossil-fuel-generated grid energy.
Zero-Emission Transportation: The Scoping Plan relies heavily on the full transition to ZEVs for all vehicle types and mandates VMT reduction.	CONSISTENT. The Project directly supports the state's aggressive clean transportation milestones by incorporating mandatory CALGreen electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure into the warehouse parking assets. While the Scoping Plan targets the rapid deployment of light-duty passenger ZEVs, the Project is structurally engineered to support the zero-emission transition for commercial fleets. The design provides clean, unpaved conduit pathways and EV-ready parking stalls capable of accommodating the future integration of zero-emission medium- and heavy duty trucks as state mandates like the Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT) regulation take effect.
Environmental Justice: The Scoping Plan formalizes the need to achieve climate goals in concert with local air quality improvements and environmental equity.	CONSISTENT. The Project directly advances the public health and equity objectives of the Scoping Plan by minimizing localized Toxic Air Contaminant (TAC) exposures for nearby residents. MM AQ-3 mandates the use of Tier 4 Final engine controls for all heavy-duty off-road construction equipment, reducing DPM by approximately 84 percent. Additional emissions reductions are achieved with MM AQ-2 (localized) and MM AQ-1 (regional ROG reductions through the VERA).

Consistency with Other Applicable GHG Reduction Policies

In addition to the CAP and Scoping Plan, the Project would be consistent with AB 1493 (Pavley Clean Car), AB 32/SB 32 statutory targets, and the California Cap-and-Trade Program.

- **AB 1493 (Pavley Clean Car): CONSISTENT.** The Project supports AB 1493 goal of reducing GHG from motor vehicles by adhering to CALGreen standards for EV infrastructure, which supports the transition to cleaner and zero-emission vehicles used by employees.
- **AB 32/SB 32 (Statutory Targets): CONSISTENT.** SB 32 established a statewide target of reducing GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. CEQA does not require individual projects to independently demonstrate attainment of statewide targets; rather, consistency may be demonstrated through compliance with an adopted local climate action plan and State-mandated building and transportation regulations. The City's CAP, CALGreen, Title 24 Energy Code updates, and CARB regulations collectively advance SB 32 objectives.
- **California Cap-and-Trade Program: CONSISTENT.** The Project supports the market based goals of the program by minimizing its reliance on fossil fuel energy and electricity, ensuring that its emissions growth does not undermine the State's overall declining GHG cap.

- The Project demonstrates consistency with the City of Visalia Climate Action Plan, CARB's 2022 Scoping Plan, and other applicable State plans, policies, and regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions, with the exception of the VMT reduction strategies discussed below. As described in Impact 3.12-2, the Project would generate 36.83 VMT per service population, exceeding the City's threshold of 26.0, and MM TRANS-1 would only partially reduce Project VMT. The Project is therefore only partially consistent with the Scoping Plan's goal of reducing VMT. This partial consistency would not result in a conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions, for the following reasons:
- The Scoping Plan's VMT reduction strategies are statewide and regional goals that are implemented through regional transportation and land use planning. They do not establish a project-level VMT requirement that the Project would violate or obstruct.
- The Site is within the Tier I UDB and is designated Industrial in the 2030 General Plan. The growth the Project accommodates was therefore anticipated in the General Plan and the CAP, and the Project would not induce growth beyond that planned for the Site.
- MM TRANS-1 requires a TDM Plan that achieves the maximum feasible VMT reduction and, at a minimum, a 10.5 percent reduction, with annual monitoring and reporting to the City.
- The Project would implement the Scoping Plan's other applicable strategies. These include compliance with the 2025 Title 24, Part 6 and CALGreen standards, solar-ready building design, CALGreen EV infrastructure capable of supporting future zero-emission trucks, water-efficient landscaping consistent with the City's WELO, and Tier 4 Final construction equipment under MM AQ-3. MM GHG-1 would verify that these commitments are incorporated into the final Project design and tenant agreements.

Because the Project would comply with the CAP and would implement the applicable Scoping Plan strategies, it would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. Impacts would be *less than significant with mitigation incorporated.*

Mitigation Measures

MM GHG-1, discussed in *Impact 3.8-1.*

3.8.5 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts refer to the combined effects of the proposed Project with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects that could incrementally contribute to adverse effects on GHG emissions. Under CEQA Guidelines § 15130, cumulative impacts are evaluated based on whether the Project's incremental contribution is "cumulatively considerable," meaning it would result in a significant cumulative effect when viewed in connection with other projects.

Cumulative Setting and Geographic Scope

The cumulative setting for greenhouse gas emissions is global, as GHG emissions contribute to climate change worldwide regardless of their origin. However, for CEQA purposes, the geographic scope is typically statewide or regional, focusing on contributions to California's GHG inventory and consistency with statewide reduction targets. The San Joaquin Valley region, including Tulare County and the City of Visalia, contributes to cumulative GHG emissions through agricultural operations, industrial development, goods movement, and transportation activities. Ongoing regional challenges such as wildfire events and prolonged drought conditions further influence the emissions profile and climate vulnerability of the area.

Cumulative projects considered in this analysis include planned and reasonably foreseeable industrial, logistics, commercial, residential, and transportation developments within the City of Visalia and broader Tulare County that could increase VMT, energy consumption, and associated GHG emissions. While no specific past projects are directly linked to the proposed Project Site, regional growth trends projecting continued increases in Valley-wide emissions underscore the inherently cumulative nature of GHG contributions from land development and infrastructure projects.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Cumulative GHG impacts would occur if the Project, in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, results in a net increase in emissions that hinders achievement of statewide reduction targets or exacerbates climate change effects. As detailed in Impacts 3.8-1 and 3.8-2, the Project's individual GHG emissions are less than significant with incorporation of MM GHG-1. Per CEQA Guidelines § 15130 and the City of Visalia's adopted Climate Action Plan (a qualified GHG reduction plan under CEQA Guidelines §15183.5), GHG impacts are inherently cumulative due to their global nature and long atmospheric lifetimes. A project's contribution is considered cumulatively considerable if it conflicts with adopted plans such as the City CAP or the CARB 2022 Scoping Plan.

Because the Project is consistent with the City CAP and the CARB 2022 Scoping Plan (with incorporation of MM GHG-1), its incremental contribution does not impede statewide 2030 or 2045 climate targets.

When combined with other cumulative projects in Visalia and Tulare County, the Project could contribute to regional increases in VMT and energy demand. However, the Project's incorporation of solar-ready design, EV infrastructure, water-efficient landscaping, waste diversion facilities, and clean construction equipment aligns with Scoping Plan strategies for building decarbonization, zero-emission transportation, and environmental justice. These features ensure that the Project's contribution, when viewed together with other development,

does not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase in GHG emissions or conflict with adopted reduction plans.

Conclusion

The Project would result in a less than cumulatively considerable contribution to GHG impacts with mitigation incorporated. No additional mitigation is required beyond MM GHG-1.

3 - 9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

This section of the EIR identifies potential impacts of implementing the proposed Project due to hazards or hazardous materials. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (See Appendix G) was prepared by Paul Humphrey, EP and a Phase II Subsurface Investigation (Appendix H) was prepared by Advanced Environmental Concepts, Inc. for this Project and used in this section. No NOP comment letters were received pertaining to this topic.

3.9.1 Environmental Setting

Project Site

The Project Site encompasses approximately 122 acres located at the southeast corner of North Kelsey Street and West Hurley Avenue in the western portion of the City of Visalia, Tulare County, California. The Site was formerly used for agricultural purposes, including almond orchards and fallow fields, with some ruderal and developed areas, including an inactive milking barn and associated farm structures. Two seasonal drainages occur on the Site: Mill Creek, which traverses the southern portion of the Site, and Mill Creek Ditch, along the northern boundary. The Site is bordered by agricultural land to the north and east (with rural residences east of Road 88), vacant land to the west, and SR 198 and commercial uses to the south. SR 99 is located approximately 1 mile to the west.

A Phase I ESA was conducted for the Site in conformance with ASTM Practice E1527-21, identified three Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs):

- Stained soil beneath two aboveground storage tanks (ASTs), one diesel and one waste oil, in a pole barn west of the inactive milking barn.
- A bermed concrete pad northwest of the 29709 Road 88 residence that may have been used as an equipment wash or agricultural chemical mixing area.
- The offsite Goshen Avenue and Shirk Road Site TCE groundwater plume, a southern portion of which appears to extend beneath the northwest corner of the Site.

The Phase I ESA also noted that asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paint may be present in the onsite buildings due to their age. Phase II soil and soil gas sampling at the concrete pad did not detect compounds above commercial screening levels, and no further investigation was recommended. Soil beneath the ASTs contained diesel-range hydrocarbons above commercial screening levels. On September 16, 2025, AEC supervised the excavation of approximately 20.73 tons of soil. Confirmation samples showed no detections of VOCs, TPH-gasoline, or TPH-diesel, and the excavation was backfilled with compacted soil from a nearby field. AEC concluded that no further action is required (Appendix H).

Hazardous Materials

A hazardous material is a substance or combination of substances which, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical, or infectious characteristics, may either (1) cause or significantly contribute to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious, irreversible, or incapacitating illness; or (2) pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health and safety, or the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported, or disposed of.[139]

Hazardous materials include a variety of substances such as lubricants, herbicides and pesticides, solvents, gasoline, household cleaning products, refrigerants and radioactive substances. Some are common to industrial and commercial processes, while others are commonly used in households. A hazardous waste is simply the spent or used hazardous material that requires disposal.[140] Improper transport, storage, handling, use and disposal of hazardous waste can have significant impacts on the environment and human health.

The Project Site's historical agricultural use likely involved the application of herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers, which are classified as hazardous materials under federal and state regulations (Resource Conservation and Recovery Act [RCRA] and California Health and Safety Code). Proposed industrial uses, including warehousing, distribution, and light manufacturing, may introduce additional hazardous materials such as solvents, fuels, and lubricants. The industrial-serving commercial components could involve limited quantities of cleaning agents, solvents, and other materials associated with permitted or conditionally permitted Industrial zone uses. The City of Visalia enforces hazardous materials management through its adoption of the California Fire Code and local ordinances requiring spill prevention, storage in secondary containment, and compliance with the Tulare County Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) for hazardous waste handling.

Hazardous Sites

The Phase I ESA identified two onsite RECs related to historical activities in the farm compound at 29709 Road 88 and one offsite REC affecting groundwater beneath the northwest corner of the Site.

The first onsite REC is stained soil beneath two ASTs (one diesel, one waste oil). A Phase II investigation and remediation action was undertaken by AEC in 2025. Soil sampling confirmed elevated total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) concentrations in the stained area, with diesel-range hydrocarbons exceeding the commercial-use screening level, and arsenic was

139) California Health and Safety Code § 25501 (Definition of Hazardous Material)
140) California Code of Regulations, Title 22, § 66261.3

detected at a concentration within the typical background range for California soils. AEC excavated and disposed of approximately 20.73 tons of soil on September 16, 2025, and backfilled the excavation with soil obtained from a nearby field and compacted. The removed soil was transported to the Waste Connections Avenal Regional Landfill. Confirmation samples collected from the floor of the excavation showed no detections of VOCs, TPH-gasoline, or TPH-diesel (AEC 2025).

The second onsite REC is the bermed concrete pad. Phase II soil and soil gas sampling at this location did not detect compounds above applicable commercial-use screening levels, and AEC recommended no further investigation (AEC 2025).

Other than the ASTs described above, no USTs or permitted hazardous waste facilities were identified on the Site through review of standard environmental record sources, including the Environmental Risk Information Services (ERIS) database, DTSC EnviroStor, and GeoTracker.

The offsite REC is associated with the Goshen Avenue and Shirk Road Site (6941 and 6707 West Goshen Avenue, Visalia, California), listed in the DTSC EnviroStor and Response databases as an active remediation site, approximately 0.55 miles northeast of the Site's northeast corner. This site consists of two adjacent parcels where VOCs, including trichloroethylene (TCE), trichloroethane (TCA), dichloroethylene (DCE), and perchloroethylene (PCE), were historically released into the environment via spills or discharges into dry wells. Groundwater contamination has migrated downgradient, impacting underlying aquifers. An Imminent and Substantial Endangerment Determination and order was issued by DTSC on April 26, 1991. Remediation efforts, initiated in Fall 1991, included offsite Focused Remedial Investigations/Feasibility Studies (FRI/FS), installation of 16 deep monitoring wells at six cluster locations, and ongoing groundwater extraction and treatment. Regular sampling of monitoring wells, as well as domestic and agricultural wells, continues to delineate the plume extent, which remains active as of the latest available data (DTSC 2025).

According to DTSC records reviewed in the Phase I ESA, the plume extends from the source parcels to the west-southwest, and a southern portion of the plume appears to extend beneath the northwest corner of the Site. Three groundwater monitoring wells associated with the Goshen Avenue and Shirk Road Site are located in the northwest corner of the Site. One has gone dry, and the remaining two have shown low and decreasing levels of TCE since at least 2015, with depth to groundwater of 146 and 158 feet below ground surface. Based on these low TCE levels, the depth to groundwater, and ongoing monitoring and assessment by the responsible party, the Phase I ESA concluded that further assessment of the Site is not warranted at this time and did not identify a vapor-phase migration concern. The remainder of the Site is not located within an area of vapor encroachment concern, per the Phase I ESA.

Surrounding properties are predominantly agricultural and light industrial, with no other RECs noted on adjacent properties.

Wildfire Hazards

In California, responsibility for wildfire prevention and suppression is shared by federal, state, and local agencies. Federal agencies are responsible for federal lands in Federal Responsibility Areas. The State of California has determined that some non-federal lands in unincorporated areas with watershed value are of statewide interest and have classified those lands as State Responsibility Areas (SRA), which are managed by CAL FIRE. All incorporated areas and other unincorporated lands are classified as Local Responsibility Areas (LRA). While nearly all of California is subject to some degree of wildfire hazard, there are specific features that make certain areas more hazardous. CAL FIRE is required by law to map areas of significant fire hazards based on fuels, terrain, weather, and other relevant factors (PRC §s 4201–4204 and California Government Code Sections 51175–51189). The primary factors that increase an area's susceptibility to fire hazards include slope, vegetation type and condition, and atmospheric conditions. CAL FIRE maps fire hazards based on zones, referred to as Fire Hazard Severity Zones. CAL FIRE maps three SRA zones: 1) Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zones; 2) High Fire Hazard Severity Zones; and 3) Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Only the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones are mapped for the LRA. Each of the zones influences how people construct buildings and protect property to reduce risk associated with wildland fires. Under state regulations, areas within very high fire hazard risk zones must comply with specific building and vegetation management requirements intended to reduce property damage and loss of life within these areas. According to LRA mapping, no land within or adjacent to the City of Visalia or the Project Site is designated as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.[141] The Project Site is located in an urbanized area surrounded by agricultural and developed lands, with minimal wildland fuels present. Development of the Project would not introduce substantial new wildfire risks, as it involves industrial buildings with non-combustible materials, setbacks from vegetated areas, and incorporation of fire-resistant design features consistent with local building codes.

Airports

The nearest airport to the Project Site is Visalia Municipal Airport, a general aviation facility located at 9501 W Airport Dr, Visalia, CA 93277, approximately 0.8 miles southwest of the Site.

141) California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. 2022. Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps

The Visalia Municipal Airport serves general aviation, cargo, and limited commercial flights, with ongoing operations generating noise levels mapped in community noise equivalent level (CNEL) contours. Current noise contour maps (based on 2019 data from the Airport Master Plan) indicate that the Site falls outside the 65 dB CNEL contour, a threshold commonly used to define significant airport noise exposure under CEQA and ALUCP policies. Regarding safety, the Site is encompassed by existing approach and departure surfaces but does not overlap with current high-risk safety zones. However, long-term airport planning, including potential runway extensions or increased operations, projects expansion of safety zones into portions of the Site. These future zones, as depicted in ALUCP figure VIS-2 (Safety Compatibility Zones),[142] could impose restrictions on building height, density, and land uses to mitigate aviation hazards such as structural interference, glare from reflective surfaces, or wildlife attractants.

Schools

The nearest school to the Project Site is Hurley Elementary School (Visalia Unified School District), located at 6600 West Hurley Avenue, approximately 3,300 feet east of the Site.

3.9.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S. Code [U.S.C.] §9601 et seq.).

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA, or the Superfund Act) authorizes the President to respond to releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances into the environment.[143]

Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) sets and enforces Occupational Safety and Health Standards to ensure safe working conditions. OSHA provides training, outreach, education, and compliance assistance to promote safe workplaces. The proposed Project would be subject to OSHA requirements during construction and maintenance.[144]

Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 (15 U.S.C. §2601 et seq.).

142) Tulare County Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan
143) Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (42 U.S.C. § 9601 et seq.)
144) U.S. Department of Labor. Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. § 651 et seq.)

The Toxic Substances Control Act was enacted by Congress in 1976 and authorized the EPA to regulate any chemical substances determined to cause an unreasonable risk to public health or the environment.[145]

State

Hazardous Waste Control Law, Title 26.

The Hazardous Waste Control Law creates hazardous waste management program requirements. The law is implemented by regulations contained in Title 26 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), which contains requirements for the following aspects of hazardous waste management:

- Identification and classification;
- Generation and transportation;
- Design and permitting of recycling, treatment, storage, and disposal facilities;
- Treatment standards;
- Operation of facilities and staff training; and
- Closure of facilities and liability requirements.

California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Chapter 11.

Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations contains regulations for identifying and classifying hazardous wastes. The CCR defines waste as hazardous if it has the following characteristics: ignitability, corrosivity, reactivity, and/or toxicity.[146]

California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC)

Cal/EPA has regulatory responsibility under Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) for administration of the state and federal Superfund programs for the management and cleanup of hazardous materials. The DTSC is responsible for regulating hazardous waste facilities and overseeing the cleanup of hazardous waste sites in California. The Hazardous Waste Management Program (HWMP) regulates hazardous waste through its permitting, enforcement and Unified Program activities. HWMP maintains the EPA authorization to implement the RCRA program in California, and develops regulations, policies, guidance and technical assistance/training to assure the safe storage, treatment, transportation and disposal of hazardous wastes. The State Regulatory Programs Division of DTSC oversees the technical implementation of the state's Unified Program, which is a consolidation of six

145) California Health and Safety Code §§ 25100
146) California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4.5

environmental programs at the local level, and conducts triennial reviews of Unified Program agencies to ensure that their programs are consistent statewide and conform to standards.

Hazardous Substance Account Act (1984), California Health and Safety Code Section 25300 ET SEQ (HSAA)

This act, known as the California Superfund, has three purposes: 1) to respond to releases of hazardous substances; 2) to compensate for damages caused by such releases; and 3) to pay the state's 10 percent share in CERCLA cleanups. Contaminated sites that fail to score above a certain threshold level in the EPA's ranking system may be placed on the California Superfund list of hazardous wastes requiring cleanup.[147]

California Code of Regulations

- Title 3 of the CCR pertains to the application of pesticides and related chemicals. Parties applying regulated substances must continuously evaluate application equipment, the weather, the treated lands and all surrounding properties. Title 3 prohibits any application that would:
- Contaminate persons not involved in the application
- Damage non-target crops or animals or any other public or private property
- Contaminate public or private property or create health hazards on said property
- Title 8 of the CCR establishes California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal OSHA) requirements related to public and worker protection. Topics addressed in Title 8 include materials exposure limits, equipment requirements, protective clothing, hazardous materials, and accident prevention. Construction safety and exposure standards for lead and asbestos are set forth in Title 8.
- Title 14 of the CCR establishes minimum standards for solid waste handling and disposal.
- Title 17 of the CCR establishes regulations relating to the use and disturbance of materials containing naturally occurring asbestos.
- Title 19 of the CCR establishes a variety of emergency fire response, fire prevention, and construction and construction materials standards.
- Title 22 of the CCR sets forth definitions of hazardous waste and special waste. The section also identifies hazardous waste criteria and establishes regulations pertaining to the storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous waste.
- Title 26 of the CCR is a medley of State regulations pertaining to hazardous materials and waste that are presented in other regulatory sections. Title 26 mandates specific management criteria related to hazardous materials identification, packaging, and

147) California Health and Safety Code §§ 25300

disposal. In addition, Title 26 establishes requirements for hazardous materials transport, containment, treatment, and disposal. Finally, staff training standards are set forth in Title 26.

- Title 27 of the CCR sets forth a variety of regulations relating to the construction, operation and maintenance of the State's landfills. The title establishes a landfill classification system and categories of waste. Each class of landfill is constructed to contain specific types of waste (household, inert, special, and hazardous).

California Fire Code

The California Fire Code is Part 9 of Title 24, California Code of Regulations, also referred to as the California Building Standards Code. 2025 California Fire Code incorporates the 2024 International Fire Code of the International Code Council with necessary California amendments. The purpose of the California Fire Code is to establish the minimum requirements consistent with nationally recognized good practices to safeguard the public health, safety and general welfare from the hazards of fire, explosion or dangerous conditions in new and existing buildings, structures and premises, and to provide safety and assistance to fire fighters and emergency responders during emergency operations.[148]

California Health and Safety Code

- Division 11 of the Health and Safety Code establishes regulations related to a variety of explosive substances and devices, including high explosives and fireworks. Section 12000 et seq. establishes regulations related to explosives and explosive devices, including permitting, handling, storage, and transport (in quantities greater than 1,000 pounds).
- Division 12 establishes requirements for buildings used by the public, including essential services buildings, earthquake hazard mitigation technologies, school buildings, and postsecondary buildings.
- Division 20 of the Health and Safety Code establishes DTSC authority and sets forth hazardous waste and underground storage tank regulations. In addition, the division creates a State superfund framework that mirrors the Federal program.
- Division 26 of the Health and Safety Code establishes California Air Resources Board (CARB) authority. The division designates CARB as the air pollution control agency per Federal regulations and charges the Board with meeting Clean Air Act requirements.

California Health and Safety Code and UBC Section 13000 et seq.

State fire regulations are set forth in §13000 et seq. of the California Health and Safety Code, which is divided into "Fires and Fire Protection" and "Buildings Used by the Public."[149] The regulations provide for the enforcement of the UBC and mandate the abatement of fire

148) California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 9
149) California Health and Safety Code §§ 13000

hazards. The code establishes broadly applicable regulations, such as standards for buildings and fire protection devices, in addition to regulations for specific land uses, such as childcare facilities and high-rise structures.

California Vehicle Code §31600 (Transportation of Explosives)
Establishes requirements related to the transportation of explosives in quantities greater than 1,000 pounds, including licensing and route identification.[150]

Cal/EPA Cortese List
The provisions in Government Code Section 65962.5 are commonly referred to as the "Cortese List" (after the Legislator who authored the legislation that enacted it).[151] The list, or a site's presence on the list, has bearing on the local permitting process as well as on compliance with the CEQA. The Cortese List identifies the following:

- Hazardous Waste and Substance Sites
- Cease and desist order Sites
- Waste Constituents above Hazardous Waste Levels outside the Waste Management Unit Sites
- Leaking Underground Tank (LUST) Cleanup Sites
- Other Cleanup Sites
- Land Disposal Sites
- Military Sites
- WDR Sites
- Permitted Underground Storage Tank (UST) Facilities Sites
- Monitoring Wells Sites
- DTSC Cleanup Sites

Regional

Tulare County Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
The Tulare County Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJLHMP) is a comprehensive framework developed to identify and mitigate risks associated with natural and human-made hazards within Tulare County. The most recent update to the MJLHMP was

150) California Vehicle Code § 31600
151) California Government Code § 65962.5

adopted by the Tulare County Board of Supervisors on March 14, 2023. The MJLHMP serves multiple purposes:

- Risk Assessment: It provides a detailed analysis of potential hazards, including earthquakes, floods, wildfires, droughts, and hazardous material incidents, assessing their likelihood and potential impacts on the community.
- Mitigation Strategies: The plan outlines specific actions and projects aimed at reducing or eliminating the long-term risk to human life and property from identified hazards.
- Regulatory Compliance: By maintaining an up-to-date hazard mitigation plan, Tulare County ensures eligibility for federal disaster relief and mitigation funding programs, such as those administered by FEMA.
- Community Engagement: The development and updates of the MJLHMP involve collaboration with local jurisdictions, stakeholders, and the public to ensure that the plan reflects the community's needs and priorities.

City of Visalia General Plan

The 2030 General Plan includes the policies related to Hazards and Hazardous Materials that correlate to the proposed Project:

- *Policy S-P-17*: Require remediation and cleanup of sites contaminated with hazardous substances.
- *Policy S-P-18*: Promote the reduction, recycling, and safe disposal of household hazardous wastes through public education and awareness and maintain adequate collection programs. Coordinate with hazardous waste recyclers to increase the frequency of hazardous waste collection events.
- *Policy S-P-19*: Coordinate with the Tulare County Environmental Health Division and other appropriate regulatory agencies during the review process of all proposals for the use of hazardous materials or those involving properties that may have toxic contamination, such as petroleum, hydrocarbons, CAM 17 metals, asbestos, and lead.
- *Policy S-P-20*: Only permit development of facilities that produce, handle, store or transport hazardous materials in areas and in a manner that protects public health, safety, and the environment.
- *Policy S-P-22*: Manage vegetation in areas within and adjacent to public rights-of-way and in close proximity to critical facilities in order to reduce the risk of tree failure and property damage and avoid creation of wind acceleration corridors within vegetated areas.

- *Policy S-P-24*: Require that all buildings and suites/units have visible street addressing and signage in accordance with City of Visalia's Addressing Policy.
- *Policy S-P-25*: Working with city water provider, ensure availability of adequate water supplies to meet public health and safety needs, and for resource protection, by maintaining the following order of priority for water use:
    - Potable water supply, fire protection, and domestic use
    - Resource protection and preservation
    - Industrial, irrigation, and commercial uses
    - Water-oriented or water-enhanced recreation
    - Air conditioning
- *Policy S-P-26*: Integrate the Tulare County Hazard Mitigation Plan, in particular the hazard analysis and mitigation strategy sections, into the development review process, the emergency operations plan, and capital improvement program, as appropriate.
- *Policy S-P-27*: Implement a fuel modification program, which also includes residential maintenance requirements and enforcement, plan submittal and approval process, guidelines for planting, and a listing of undesirable plant species. Require builders and developers to submit their plans, complete with proposed fuel modification zones, to the Fire Department for review and approval prior to beginning construction.

Tulare County Environmental Health Division

In Visalia, the Tulare County Environmental Health Division (TCEHD) is the local agency responsible for the implementation of the state-mandated Unified Hazardous Waste and Hazardous Materials Management Regulatory Program. Tulare County has prepared a Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP) and a MJLHMP which serves as the County's emergency response plan for hazardous materials emergency incidents. In addition, the TCEHD acts as Lead Agency to ensure proper remediation of leaking underground petroleum storage tank sites and certain other contaminated sites. TCEHD provides three permanent Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) drop-off facilities in the County including one in Visalia, and operates mobile collection events throughout the year. These services are available free of charge to any Tulare County resident. The City of Visalia Fire Department provides some oversight of hazardous materials. The Fire Department is responsible for conducting inspections for code compliance and fire-safe practices and for investigation of fire and hazardous materials incidents. The Fire Department regulates explosive and hazardous materials under the Uniform Fire Code, and permits the handling, storage and use of any explosive or other hazardous material.

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

The SJVAPCD is a public health agency whose mission is to improve the health and quality of life for all Valley residents through efficient, effective and entrepreneurial air quality-management strategies. SJVAPCD's ten core values include: protection of public health; active and effective air pollution control efforts with minimal disruption to the Valley's economic prosperity; outstanding customer service; ingenuity and innovation; accountability to the public; open and transparent public process; recognition of the uniqueness of the Valley; continuous improvement; effective and efficient use of public funds; and respect for the opinions and interests of all Valley residents. To achieve these core values the SJVAPCD has adopted air quality plans pursuant to the California CAA and a comprehensive list of rules to limit air quality impacts. The air plans currently in effect in the SJVAB and specific rules that apply to the proposed Project are listed and described further below. The SJVAPCD is responsible for controlling emissions primarily from stationary sources. The SJVAPCD, in coordination with the eight countywide transportation agencies, is also responsible for developing, updating, and implementing air quality attainment plans for the SJVAB. The SJVAPCD also regulates asbestos demolition and other hazardous materials handling.

Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA)

The California Environmental Protection Agency designates specific local agencies as Certified Unified Program Agencies (CUPA), typically at the county level. The Tulare County Environmental Health Division (TCEHD) is the agency that has been designated the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) for the County. Each designated CUPA is responsible for the implementation of six statewide programs within its jurisdiction. These programs include:

- Underground storage of hazardous substances (USTs)
- HMBP requirements
- Hazardous Waste Generator requirements
- California Accidental Release Prevention (Cal-ARP) program
- Uniform Fire Code hazardous materials management plan
- Above Ground Storage Tanks (Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures Plan only) Implementation of these programs involves:
- Permitting and inspection of regulated facilities
- Providing educational guidance and notice of changing requirements stipulated in State or Federal laws and regulations
- Investigations of complaints regarding spills or unauthorized releases

3.9.3 Thresholds of Significance

The thresholds of significance for this section are established by the CEQA Checklist Item:

a) *Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.*
b) *Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.*
c) *Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.*
d) *Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.*
e) *For a project located within an airport land use plan or where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area.*
f) *Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.*
g) *Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.*

3.9.4 Impacts Discussion

Impact 3.9-1: Would the Project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Before Mitigation	Significant (construction-phase hazardous materials could be released in stormwater runoff)
Mitigation Measures	MM HYD-2
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

This impact is associated with hazards caused by the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials or through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.

Construction

The proposed Project consists of construction and operation of an industrial park that will feature warehouses, industrial-serving commercial pads, a self-storage facility, and a detention basin on approximately 122 acres. Project construction activities may involve the use and transport of hazardous materials. These materials may include fuels, oils, mechanical fluids, and other chemicals used during construction. Transportation, storage, use, and disposal of hazardous materials during construction activities would be required to comply with applicable federal, State, and local statutes and regulations. Compliance would ensure that human health and the environment are not exposed to hazardous materials. In addition, the Project would be required to comply with MM HYD-2 (refer to Section 3.10), which ensures the Project adheres to the NPDES permit program through the submission and through implementation of a SWPPP during construction activities. The Phase I ESA identified three RECs, as described in Section 3.9.1. Hydrocarbon-impacted soil beneath the ASTs was excavated in September 2025, with confirmation samples below screening levels, and sampling at the concrete pad required no further action. Therefore, after mitigation, no significant impacts would occur during construction activities.

Operation

The operational phase of the proposed Project would occur after construction is completed and tenants occupy the structures on a day-to-day basis. The proposed Project includes land uses that are considered compatible with the surrounding uses, including five primary industrial buildings, industrial-serving commercial pads, a self-storage facility, and associated infrastructure including a stormwater basin. These land uses may involve routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials associated with industrial activities (solvents, paints, lubricants, and cleaning agents for manufacturing, repair, or assembly operations), as well as common commercial and household hazardous materials such as cleaners, petroleum products, and waste oils from the commercial pads.

However, the proposed Project would not create a significant hazard through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials, nor would a significant hazard to the public or to the environment through the reasonably foreseeable upset and accidental conditions involving the likely release of hazardous materials into the environment occur.

Handling and use of hazardous materials and the disposal of the resulting hazardous wastes would be required to follow the applicable laws and regulations, as described in the Regulatory Setting section herein. Hazardous materials would typically be stored in their original containers prior to use. As required, the hazardous materials would be stored in each building, in locations according to compatibility and in storage enclosures (flammable material storage

cabinets and spill containment areas) or in areas or rooms specially designed, protected, and contained for such storage, in accordance with applicable regulations. Hazardous materials would be handled and used in accordance with applicable regulations by personnel that have been trained in the handling and use of the material and that have received proper hazard-communication training. Hazardous materials reporting (California Hazardous Materials Business Planning, California Proposition 65 notification, and Emergency Planning and Community-Right-to-Know Act reporting) would be completed as required.

Compliance with all federal, State, and local regulations, and the City of Visalia General Plan Implementing Policies in the Safety and Noise Element would ensure that the Project would not cause an adverse effect on the environment with respect to the use, storage, or disposal of hazardous substances generated from future development or uses. In addition, MM HYD-2 will ensure impacts remain less than significant. The offsite Goshen Avenue and Shirk Road Site (approximately 0.55 miles northeast), an ENVIROSTOR/RESPONSE site with historical volatile organic compound (VOC) groundwater impacts, does not pose a vapor encroachment risk to the Site based on the Phase I ESA, although a portion of the plume extends beneath the northwest corner of the Site, TCE levels in onsite monitoring wells are low and decreasing, and the Phase I ESA concluded that further assessment is not warranted.

Mitigation Measures

MM HYD-2 will be implemented.

> **Impact 3.9-2: Would the Project 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?**

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

The Project Site was previously used for agricultural purposes, including a farm compound with an inactive milking barn. A Phase I ESA conducted in March 2025 identified RECs, including an offsite groundwater plume approximately 0.55 miles northeast of the Site containing VOCs such as trichloroethylene (TCE), trichloroethane (TCA), dichloroethylene (DCE), and perchloroethylene (PCE) from historical industrial activities at 6941 and 6707 West Goshen Avenue. This plume is subject to ongoing remediation by the DTSC, with regular monitoring of onsite and downgradient wells.

Onsite, hydrocarbon-impacted soil was identified beneath a metal canopy west of the milking barn, likely from historical farm operations involving petroleum products. This condition was addressed through excavation and offsite disposal in September 2025, as documented in Appendix H. Post-remediation verification sampling confirmed no residual contamination exceeding regulatory thresholds, eliminating the onsite REC.

Anticipated uses include distribution operations and light manufacturing, which may involve the storage, use, and transport of hazardous materials such as fuels, solvents, lubricants, and chemicals commonly associated with warehouse and industrial activities. Reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions could include spills, leaks from storage tanks or containers, or releases during transport or handling. However, the Project would be subject to stringent federal, state, and local regulations governing hazardous materials, including:

- HMBP Requirements under California Health and Safety Code Sections 25500 et seq., administered by the Tulare County Environmental Health Division, requiring inventory, emergency response plans, and secondary containment for hazardous materials exceeding specified thresholds.
- Hazardous waste generator registration and reporting through the Tulare County CUPA, and hazardous waste facility permits from DTSC for any facility that treats, stores, or disposes of hazardous waste.
- Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plans under 40 CFR Part 112 for sites with above-ground petroleum storage capacity greater than 1,320 gallons.
- NPDES General Industrial Permit (Order No. 2014-0057-DWQ) for stormwater discharges from industrial activities, requiring pollution prevention plans to minimize releases.
- City of Visalia Municipal Code Chapter 8.32, which enforces compliance with state hazardous materials laws and requires site-specific risk assessments for industrial uses.

These regulations mandate secondary containment, employee training, spill response protocols, and regular inspections, minimizing the risk of releases. The Project's design includes setbacks from Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch to prevent impacts to surface waters, and stormwater management via onsite bioswales and basins per the City's Stormwater Management Ordinance.

Given the Site's history of successful remediation and the regulatory framework ensuring safe handling of hazardous materials in industrial zones, the Project would not create a significant hazard through foreseeable upsets or accidents.

Impact 3.9-3: Would the Project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

The Project is located approximately 3,300 feet from an existing school. During construction, the contractor will use fuel trucks to refuel onsite equipment and may use paints and solvents to a limited degree. The storage, transport, and use of these materials will comply with Local, State, and Federal regulatory requirements. There is the potential for small leaks due to refueling of construction equipment; however, standard construction BMPs included in the SWPPP will reduce the potential for the release of construction-related fuels and other hazardous materials by controlling runoff from the Site and requiring proper disposal or recycling of hazardous materials. Because no existing or proposed school is located within one-quarter mile of the Site, the Project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous materials within one-quarter mile of a school.

Pursuant to the Phase I ESA for the Site (Appendix G), three RECs were identified. The first is stained soil beneath two aboveground storage tanks (ASTs), one for diesel and one for waste oil, in a pole barn west of the inactive milking barn. The second is a bermed concrete pad northwest of the 29709 Road 88 residence that may have been used as an equipment wash or agricultural chemical mixing area. The third is the offsite Goshen Avenue and Shirk Road Site, an ENVIROSTOR/RESPONSE site approximately 0.55 miles northeast of the Site's northeast corner, where a southern portion of the TCE groundwater plume appears to extend beneath the northwest corner of the Site.

Phase II sampling (Appendix H) found diesel-range hydrocarbons in the soil beneath the ASTs above the commercial screening level. On September 16, 2025, approximately 20.73 tons of impacted soil were excavated and disposed of offsite. Confirmation samples showed no detections of VOCs, TPH-gasoline, or TPH-diesel, and AEC concluded that no further action is required. Soil and soil gas sampling at the concrete pad detected no compounds above commercial screening levels, and no further investigation was recommended. Low and decreasing levels of TCE have been detected in the two remaining onsite monitoring wells associated with the Goshen Avenue and Shirk Road Site, with depth to groundwater of 146 to 158 feet. The Phase I ESA concluded that further assessment is not warranted and did not

identify a vapor migration concern. Ongoing remediation of that plume is overseen by DTSC. None of these conditions involves emissions or handling of hazardous materials at or from the Site, and all are located beyond the one-quarter-mile threshold from the nearest school.

Impact 3.9-4: Would the Project 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?

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

The Site is not included on any list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, also known as the Cortese List. This list encompasses sites subject to investigation or remediation by the DTSC, the SWRCB or RWQCBs, or applicable federal programs. A comprehensive records review conducted as part of the Phase I ESA for the Site (Appendix G) included searches of standard environmental record sources such as the DTSC Envirostor database, SWRCB GeoTracker database, and federal lists (National Priorities List, Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Information System). No listings were identified for the Site under these sources.

The Phase I ESA did identify one offsite REC approximately 0.55 miles northeast of the Site's northeast corner: the Goshen Avenue and Shirk Road Site, an active DTSC Envirostor and Response site involving historical releases of VOCs such as TCE, TCA, DCE, and PCE into groundwater. Remediation at that site includes ongoing groundwater extraction, treatment, and monitoring of onsite and downgradient wells, with no evidence of migration to the Site's soils or groundwater. Although a southern portion of the plume appears to extend beneath the northwest corner of the Site, TCE concentrations in the onsite monitoring wells are low and decreasing, groundwater is 146 to 158 feet below ground surface, and the Phase I ESA did not identify a vapor-migration concern. This offsite condition does not place the Site on the Cortese List and would not create a significant hazard from Project implementation.

Impact 3.9-5: 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 or excessive noise for people residing or working in the Project area?

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

The Visalia Municipal Airport, a public use airport, is approximately 0.8 miles southwest of the Site. and the Site lies within the Airport Influence Area as defined by the Tulare County Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan (ALUCP). The ALUCP establishes policies to ensure compatible land uses within areas affected by airport operations, including safety zones that restrict development to minimize hazards to aviation and ground-based occupants. The Site's proximity to the airport, well within the two-mile threshold specified in the CEQA Guidelines, necessitates evaluation of potential safety hazards and noise exposure associated with aircraft operations.

Project Characteristics

The Project proposes annexation of approximately 122 acres into the City of Visalia, and development of five primary industrial buildings, industrial-serving commercial pads, a self-storage facility, and associated infrastructure including a stormwater basin. Operations would involve moderate employee occupancy and truck traffic, but no high intensity uses such as fuel storage or emissions plumes that could directly attract birds or create visual hazards to pilots. Construction would occur in phases, introducing temporary activity near airport flight paths.

Noise Exposure

Aircraft overflights would expose Project workers and any future occupants to airport noise, but existing 65 dB CNEL contours confirm the Site's location outside significant noise zones. The Airport Master Plan projects no substantial increase in noise levels at the Site through 2040, even with moderate growth in operations. Industrial and commercial uses proposed under the Project are compatible with land uses in the Land Use Compatibility Matrix, which permits business and industrial activities without mitigation. The Project would not expose people working in the Project area to excessive noise levels from the airport.

Safety Hazards

The Project would be subject to Tulare County Airport Land Use Commission consistency review of the annexation, pre-zoning, and development applications. Structures exceeding FAA 14 CFR

Part 77 notification criteria would require filing FAA Form 7460-1 and receipt of a Determination of No Hazard prior to building permit issuance; given the Site's distance from the runway, this would likely include buildings up to 75 feet. With compliance with these requirements, the Project would not result in a safety hazard for people working in the Project area.

Impact 3.9-6: Would the Project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

The Project Site is located in an area of the City of Visalia that has not previously experienced wildfire or other hazards requiring large-scale evacuation. To keep Tulare County residents and businesses informed of emergencies and other time-sensitive messages, the County utilizes Alert TC. Notifications may include severe weather warnings, wildfire alerts, and road closures/detours. Fire Station 55 is the nearest fire station to the Project Site, located approximately 2 miles to the northeast at 6921 West Ferguson Avenue. Based on this distance from the Fire Department's fire station, the response time for a fire engine traveling at an average speed of 35 mph would be approximately 3.5 minutes. There are not currently any fire hydrants on the Project Site; however, the proposed Project would be required to comply with the City's Hydrant Ordinance[152], including providing the mandated number of hydrants with adequate fire flow pressure (a minimum flow of 2,000 gallons per minute at 20 psi residual pressure).

During construction, construction equipment and vehicles would access and leave the Project Site, which in turn could potentially impede evacuation or Emergency Vehicle Access (EVA). The City does not currently have any established evacuation routes; however, the General Plan designates SR 198, SR 99, and SR 63 as evacuation routes consistent with the County EOP. The State Routes are located approximately .25 miles south, 1 mile west, and 7.5 miles east from the Project Site, respectively. In addition to these State Routes that would be likely evacuation routes in the event of a wildfire emergency, there are other main arterial roads that are in the vicinity and readily accessible, which could reasonably be assumed to serve as emergency evacuation routes in the Project vicinity. The proposed Project's primary access roads (Kelsey Street, Clancy Street, and Hurley Avenue) allow adequate egress/ingress to the Project Site in

152) Visalia Hydrant Ordinance

the event of an emergency. These streets would connect to an internal road network within the Project Site, providing ample access for emergency vehicles in the case of an emergency.

Given the availability of multiple State Routes identified as evacuation routes available to the proposed Project area, as well as several alternative main arterial roadways that provide access to these evacuation routes for the Project and the surrounding community, the proposed Project would not substantially impair any adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan during either construction or long-term operation.

Construction activities would result in truck deliveries, hauling of materials, and construction worker trips. These activities would be phased over time and would occur within approved construction limits and haul routes. Any temporary lane closures, traffic control measures, or work within existing roadways would be subject to review and approval by the City Engineer to ensure that emergency access and evacuation routes remain available at all times. Construction staging and traffic control plans would be required to maintain adequate access for emergency vehicles, and coordination among the City's Engineering, Police, and Fire Departments would ensure that emergency response capabilities are not compromised during construction. As a result, construction of the Project would not substantially impair emergency access or evacuation routes.

During Project operation, traffic would consist of passenger vehicles and truck trips associated with the proposed industrial, commercial, and self-storage uses. The internal roadway network and access points have been designed to meet applicable City standards and would be constructed accordingly, providing adequate turning radii, roadway widths, and clear access for emergency vehicles. The Project's proximity to major arterials and SR 198, combined with multiple points of ingress and egress, would allow emergency responders to access the site efficiently under emergency conditions. Ongoing coordination among the City's Engineering, Police, and Fire Departments would ensure that emergency access to and from the Project Site is maintained over the life of the Project.

Impact 3.9-7: Would the Project expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

The Project Site is not located in or near a State Responsibility Area (SRA) and does not contain lands classified as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) Maps for the Local Responsibility Area (LRA), the Project Site is classified as LRA Unzoned, which means that the Project Site is located outside of areas identified by CAL FIRE as having substantial or very high risk.

The Unit Strategic Fire Plan for the CAL FIRE Tulare Unit designates the Project Site as being located within an Agriculture area by Tulare County. The closest mapped FHSZ is an SRA Moderate Zone located approximately 15 miles east of the Project Site, at the outer city limits of the City of Exeter. There is a Fire Responsibility Area Moderate Zone located approximately 18 miles to the southwest of the Project Site near Corcoran. The nearest VHFHSZ is located over 20 miles east of the Project Site near Lake Kaweah.

In addition, the City of Visalia General Plan does not designate the Project Site as being in a fire hazard area. According to General Plan Figure 8-4, Fire Hazards and Public Safety Services, there is an area of moderate fire susceptibility located along North Plaza Drive between West Ferguson Avenue and Goshen Avenue, which is located approximately 3,900 feet northwest of the Project Site. The Project Site is not in a wildfire-prone area. Additionally, the Project Site is not located within a wildland-urban interface (WUI) area and has not previously experienced wildfire. The area surrounding the Project Site is mostly agricultural and industrial land. As such, the Project Site is surrounded either by urban development or by managed land that does not contain steep terrain or unmanaged open space areas that could be prone to wildfires.

Slope and wind speed can influence the spread of fires. Upslope topography eventually increases the spread rate of the fire in all fuel beds over flat conditions. The Project Site is predominantly flat with a gentle slope to the west/southwest. The nearest air monitoring station that measures meteorological data is the Visalia Municipal Airport Station. According to the CARB, this station has an average wind speed of 6.9 mph and an annual maximum of 12 mph. While these wind speeds could potentially spread wildfires, the Project Site and vicinity are not in or near a WUI zone and are bordered by urban development on two sides, with similar development planned in the area in the immediate future. Annual prevailing winds in the City of Visalia are from the northwest; therefore, the prevailing winds would blow fire embers away from the Project Site and would not exacerbate fire risk. As such, the Project Site and its surroundings do not embody conditions that would exacerbate wildfire in this regard

The Project Site would be annexed into the City; as such, the Visalia Fire Department (VFD) would maintain responsibility for fire prevention and suppression over the Project Site. The proposed Project would be adequately served by fire protection services from VFD.

Furthermore, Project structures would be required to comply with applicable provisions of the California Fire Code with respect to emergency access and use of building materials that would limit the spread of wildfire to the greatest extent feasible. The City requires all new development and subdivisions to meet California Fire Code provisions, and the VFD reviews all development applications during the plan check process. Additionally, the City undertakes vegetation management activities that, in accordance with General Plan Policy S-P-27, require builders and developers to submit their plans, complete with proposed fuel modification zones, to the Fire Department for review and approval prior to beginning construction.

Compliance with applicable State and local plans, laws, and regulations and adherence to General Plan Policy S-P-27 would further reduce any potential risk of impacts related to wildland fire hazards.

3.9.5 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts refer to the combined effects of the proposed Project with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects that could incrementally contribute to adverse effects on hazards and hazardous materials. Under CEQA Guidelines § 15130, cumulative impacts are evaluated based on whether the Project's incremental contribution is "cumulatively considerable," meaning it would result in a significant cumulative effect when viewed in connection with other projects.

Cumulative Setting and Geographic Scope

The cumulative setting for hazards and hazardous materials encompasses the City of Visalia and surrounding Tulare County areas, where development activities could potentially increase the risk of hazardous materials releases or exposure through combined effects on soil, groundwater, or air quality. The region has a history of agricultural and industrial land uses, with potential for subsurface contamination from pesticides, fuels, and VOCs, as identified in regulatory databases like DTSC EnviroStor and SWRCB GeoTracker. The geographic scope for cumulative hazards impacts is focused on the local watershed and aquifer systems, as releases can migrate through groundwater or surface water pathways like Mill Creek. Cumulative projects considered include planned industrial, commercial, and transportation developments in Visalia and Tulare County that may involve hazardous materials handling. No specific past projects are directly linked to the proposed Project Site, but regional trends in site remediation, such as the ongoing cleanup at the Goshen Avenue and Shirk Road Site (0.55 miles northeast), underscore the potential for cumulative effects on groundwater quality.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Cumulative hazards and hazardous materials impacts would occur if the Project, in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, results in a net increase in risks from releases, exposure, or interference with emergency plans. As detailed in Impacts 3.9-1 through 3.9-7, the Project's individual impacts are less than significant with incorporation of MM HYD-2. These measures ensure compliance with NPDES and stormwater regulations to prevent releases

Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 and City of Visalia General Plan Policy S-P-17, hazards impacts can be cumulative if multiple sites contribute to regional contamination plumes or overload emergency response capacities. A project's contribution is considered cumulatively considerable if it exacerbates offsite migration or hinders remediation efforts. Since the Project's onsite REC have been addressed and no significant new hazards are introduced, its incremental contribution does not amplify regional risks.

When combined with cumulative projects, the Project could contribute to regional materials handling, potentially elevating release risks through increased traffic or storage. However, the Project's compliance with CUPA requirements, HMBPs, and Tulare County MJLHMP reduces the potential for cumulative hazards, with spill prevention and emergency protocols preventing offsite effects. Overall, while cumulative development in Visalia and Tulare County could heighten materials risks, the Project's impacts are not cumulatively considerable, as they align with federal, state, and local frameworks.

Conclusion

The Project would result in a less than cumulatively considerable contribution to hazards and hazardous materials impacts with mitigation incorporated. No additional mitigation is required beyond MM HYD-2.

3 - 10 Hydrology and Water Quality

This section of the EIR identifies potential impacts on Hydrology and Water Quality from the proposed Project. No NOP comment letters were received pertaining to this topic.

3.10.1 Environmental Setting

Hydrologic System

The Project Site is situated in the southeastern portion of the San Joaquin Valley, within the Kaweah River watershed, approximately 300 feet above mean sea level. The regional hydrologic system is characterized by a Mediterranean climate, featuring hot, dry summers and cool, moist winters. Surface water flows are seasonal, driven primarily by winter storms, and the flat topography of the Valley facilitates slow drainage, contributing to potential flooding during high-rainfall events. The Kaweah River, originating in the Sierra Nevada, is the primary regional watercourse, with distributaries such as Mill Creek providing local drainage. Groundwater recharge occurs mainly through infiltration from precipitation, irrigation return flows, and managed recharge projects, while discharge supports agricultural, municipal, and industrial uses.

Surface Water

Surface water on the Project Site is limited to two seasonal drainages: Mill Creek, which traverses the southern portion of the Site, and Mill Creek Ditch, a distributary of Mill Creek, along the northern boundary. Mill Creek is a distributary of the Kaweah River, splitting approximately eight miles upstream (east) and conveying winter runoff westward through Visalia before joining Cross Creek (a Tule River tributary) 11 miles downstream (southwest). Flows are ephemeral, peaking during wet-season storms and drying by late spring. No perennial streams or standing water bodies occur on the Site, and water quality is influenced by agricultural runoff, with potential for sediment and nutrient loading.

California Water Service (Cal Water), the water purveyor which serves a majority of Visalia and its surroundings, does not use surface water for its potable water supply. However, it purchases surface water from the Tulare Irrigation District for groundwater recharge purposes.

Groundwater Basin Hydrology

The Kaweah Subbasin encompasses approximately 439,220 acres (686 square miles) in the southern San Joaquin Valley, bounded by the Kings Subbasin to the north, Tule Subbasin to the south, Sierra Nevada foothills to the east, and Tulare Lake Subbasin to the west. It is designated as critically overdrafted and high priority under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

(SGMA), with a sustainable yield of approximately 578,000 AFY based on long-term water budget modeling. The Subbasin experiences chronic overdraft, evidenced by declining water levels, land subsidence, and interconnected surface water depletion. Management is coordinated by three Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs): Greater Kaweah GSA (GKGSA, 217,600 acres including the Project Site), Mid-Kaweah GSA (MKGSA, 104,320 acres), and East Kaweah GSA (EKGSA, 117,300 acres).[153] The 2024 GSPs emphasize recharge projects, conservation, and allocations. In WY 2024, groundwater storage increased by 94,000 AF, reflecting progress toward sustainability goals despite ongoing SGMA implementation challenges, including a potential State Water Resources Control Board probationary designation.[154]

Groundwater

The Project will be supplied groundwater by Cal Water Visalia District (District), which serves a majority of the City of Visalia and its surroundings. The District overlies the Kaweah Subbasin (DWR Basin No. 5-22.11) and a minor portion of the Tule Subbasin (DWR Basin No. 5-22.13), both part of the San Joaquin Valley Groundwater Basin. The District relies entirely on groundwater for its potable supply, pumping from 62 active wells across three systems: Visalia (59 wells in Kaweah Subbasin), Tulco (1 well in Kaweah Subbasin), and Mullen (2 wells in Tule Subbasin).

Pumping data from Water Year (WY) 2024 shows an extraction of 29,721 acre-feet (AF) in the District, similar to the average 29,451 (AFY) the district pumped from the previous five WY (2019-2023). In WY 2024, District pumping met all needs without shortages. Supplies are projected to support demands through 2045, due to inclusion in GSP water budgets and conversion of irrigated agriculture to urban land uses.

There are six groundwater level representative monitoring wells (RMWs) located in the District per the 2024 GSPs. The current Minimum Thresholds (MTs) in these RMWs average 64 feet below Fall 2024 water levels. In WY 2024, the Subbasin reported one groundwater level MT exceedance, which was not within the Visalia System.

Additionally, the City of Visalia, Tulare County, and the Tulare Irrigation District have formed a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to establish the Mid-Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA). Under this JPA, the Board of Directors is responsible for developing, adopting, and implementing a Groundwater Sustainability Plan, as mandated by SGMA.

153) Greater Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency
154) Kaweah Subbasin 2024 Groundwater Sustainability Plans

Stormwater Drainage

Stormwater on the Project Site currently drains via sheet flow across agricultural fields and orchards toward Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch, with no formal conveyance infrastructure. The flat topography (0–2% slopes) promotes infiltration and slow runoff, but intense storms can cause localized ponding on hydric soils. The Site lies outside designated floodways but is subject to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Permit for stormwater during development.[155] Proposed improvements include onsite bioswales, detention basins (one 6.92-acre basin south of Mill Creek), and piping along Road 88 to manage peak flows, ensuring compliance with City of Visalia standards for post-development runoff rates not exceeding pre-development levels.[156] The stormwater pond will have a capacity of 11.5 AF. The Site was calculated to require a total of 11 AF of stormwater drainage.

Flooding and Inundation

The Project Site is located in FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Panel 06107C0909E, which has the majority of the Site within an X Flood zone. Zone X areas are of minimal flood hazard, outside the 0.2% annual chance floodplain (500-year flood), where the risk of flooding is low (less than 0.2% annually) and typically does not require mandatory flood insurance.

A small portion (approximately 1.6 acres) of the Project Site is located within a Special Flood Hazard Area, Zone AE. Zone AE designates areas subject to inundation by the base flood (the flood having a 1% annual chance of being equaled or exceeded, also known as the 100-year flood). These zones generally require flood insurance and elevation of structures above the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) to mitigate risks.

No history of flooding is documented on the Site, though the regional Kaweah River system poses risks during extreme events. Proposed detention basins and setbacks from drainages will reduce onsite flood risk, consistent with Tulare County Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan strategies for flood-prone agricultural areas.

3.10.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal

Clean Water Act

155) California State Water Resources Control Board - Construction Stormwater Program
156) City of Visalia Stormwater Management Program

The federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. §1251 et seq.) was enacted in 1972 to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters.[157] It provides the framework for regulating pollutant discharges into surface waters of the United States. Key sections applicable to the proposed Project include:

Section 303 –Water Quality Standards and TMDLs

Requires states to develop water quality standards for all surface waters and to establish Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for pollutants in impaired water bodies. These standards serve as the regulatory basis for controlling discharges to ensure that water quality objectives are maintained.

Section 401 – Water Quality Certification

Requires Applicants for any federal permit or license that may result in a discharge into navigable waters to obtain a Water Quality Certification from the applicable state authority. In California, this authority is the RWQCB. Section 401 certification ensures that proposed activities will comply with state water quality standards and beneficial uses.

Section 402 – National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)

Establishes the NPDES permit program, which regulates point source discharges of pollutants into waters of the United States. The Project will disturb more than one acre and is therefore required to obtain NPDES coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board's General Construction Permit. A SWPPP must also be prepared and implemented to reduce construction-related stormwater discharges.

Section 404 – Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material

Administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, this section regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands. If the Project involves any placement of fill into jurisdictional features (such as canals, wetlands, or drainages), a Section 404 permit may be required, along with a corresponding Section 401 certification.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

The National Flood Insurance Act (1968) makes available federally subsidized flood insurance to owners of flood-prone properties. To facilitate identifying areas with flood potential, FEMA has developed Flood Insurance Rate Maps that can be used for planning purposes.

157) US EPA Summary of the Clean Water Act

State

Department of Water Resources (DWR)

DWR's major responsibilities include preparing and updating the California Water Plan to guide development and management of the State's water resources; planning, designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining the State Water Resources Development System; regulating dams; providing flood protection; assisting in emergency management to safeguard life and property; educating the public; and serving local water needs by providing technical assistance. In addition, DWR cooperates with local agencies on water resources investigations; supports watershed and river restoration programs; encourages water conservation; explores conjunctive use of ground and surface water facilities; facilitates voluntary water transfers; and, when needed, operates a State drought water bank.

California Water Quality Porter-Cologne Act

California's primary statute governing water quality and water pollution concerns with respect to both surface waters and groundwater is the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act of 1970. The Porter-Cologne Act grants the SWRCB and each of the nine RWQCBs power to protect water quality and further develop the Clean Water Act within California. The applicable RWQCB for the proposed Project is the Central Valley RWQCB.

Each RWQCB must formulate and adopt a water quality control plan (Basin Plan) for its region. The regional plans must conform with the policies set forth in the Porter-Cologne Act and established by the State water policy adopted by the SWRCB. The Porter-Cologne Act also provides that a RWQCB may include within its regional plan water discharge prohibitions applicable to particular conditions, areas, or types of waste.

Water Code Section 10910 (SB 610)

Water Code section 10910 (SB 610) requires that a Lead Agency obtain a water supply assessment from an applicable public water system for certain projects subject to the California Environmental Quality Act, which are defined as (a) a residential development of more than 500 dwelling units; (b) a shopping center or business employing more than 1,000 persons or having more than 500,000 square feet of floor space; (c) a commercial office building employing more than 1,000 persons or having more than 250,000 square feet; (d) a hotel or motel with more than 500 rooms; (e) an industrial or manufacturing establishment housing more than 1,000 persons or having more than 650,000 square feet or 40 acres; (f) a

mixed use project containing any of the foregoing; or (g) any other project that would have a water demand at least equal to a 500 dwelling unit project.[158]

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)

In 2014, California enacted the SGMA (Water Code §10720 et seq.).[159] SGMA requires that groundwater basins designated by the state DWR as high priority and/or critically overdrafted must be managed under a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) that avoids "undesirable results" as defined in the Act within 20 years from January 31, 2020. The GSP must be developed by a GSA approved by the DWR.

Regional

Central Valley RWQCB

Because the proposed Project will disturb more than one acre of land, it is subject to NPDES permitting requirements overseen by the Central Valley RWQCB. As part of the NPDES General Construction Permit process, a site-specific Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be required. The SWPPP must identify best management practices (BMPs) to prevent sediment, construction materials, and other pollutants from entering stormwater runoff.

City of Visalia General Plan

The City of Visalia General Plan contains the following goals and policies related to water resources:

- *Policy PSCU-P-59*: Require new developments to incorporate floodwater detention basins into project designs where consistent with the Stormwater Master Plan and the Groundwater Recharge Plan.
- *Policy PSCU-P-60*: Control urban and stormwater runoff, and point and non-point discharge of pollutants. As part of the City's Stormwater Management Program, adopt and implement a Stormwater Management Ordinance to minimize stormwater runoff rates and volumes, control water pollution, and maximize groundwater recharge. New development will be required to include Low Impact Development features that reduce impermeable surface areas and increase infiltration. Such features may include, but are not limited to:
    - Canopy trees or shrubs to absorb rainwater;
    - Grading that lengthens flow paths over permeable surfaces and increases runoff travel time to reduce the peak hour flow rate;

158) California Water Code § 10910
159) Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

- Partially removing curbs and gutters from parking areas where appropriate to allow stormwater sheet flow into vegetated areas;
- Use of permeable paving in parking lots and other areas characterized by significant impervious surfaces;
- Onsite stormwater detention, use of bioswales and bioretention basins to facilitate infiltration; and
- Integrated or subsurface water retention facilities to capture rainwater for use in landscape irrigation and other non-potable uses.

- *Policy PSCU-P-49*: Require that industrial development projects submit plans for water recycling and conservation and demonstrate how water use will meet requirements of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System during the plan review process.

3.10.3 Thresholds of Significance

The thresholds of significance for this section are established by the CEQA Appendix G Checklist. Would the Project:

a) *Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?*
b) *Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?*
c) *Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:*
    i. *result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or offsite;*
    ii. *substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;*
    iii. *create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or*
    iv. *impede or redirect flood flows?*
d) *In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?*
e) *Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?*

3.10.4 Impacts Discussion

Impact 3.10-1: Would the Project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

Before Mitigation	Significant (construction and operational runoff could degrade water quality in Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch)
Mitigation Measures	MM HYD-1 through MM HYD-3
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

The Project Site encompasses approximately 122 acres of former agricultural land at the western edge of the City of Visalia, adjacent to two seasonal drainages: Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch. These features are classified as waters of the State and potentially waters of the U.S. under the federal Clean Water Act. Previous land uses on the Site include almond orchards, agricultural fields, and ruderal/developed areas. The Project proposes a detention basin on the conservation-designated portion (APN 081-071-042). Development will include 15-foot setbacks from the drainages to minimize direct impacts.

Construction

Construction activities, including Site preparation, grading, excavation, and trenching would temporarily disturb soils and increase the potential for erosion and sedimentation into Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch. These activities could result in short-term discharges of sediment, construction debris, fuels, lubricants, and other pollutants, potentially violating water quality standards under the NPDES General Construction Permit or degrading surface water quality in downstream receiving waters. The Central Valley RWQCB administers this permit, which requires preparation and implementation of a SWPPP for projects disturbing one or more acres.

To ensure compliance and minimize potential water quality impacts during construction, the Project shall implement MM HYD-1 and MM HYD-2. These measures require submittal of a Notice of Intent (NOI) to the SWRCB prior to any grading or construction activity, submittal of a copy of the NOI to the City prior to issuance of grading permits for Phase I, and preparation and implementation of a site-specific SWPPP that includes BMPs such as dust control, erosion and sediment controls (silt fencing, straw bales, erosion control blankets, provisional detention basins), soil stabilization, spill prevention, and routine monitoring. With implementation of these measures, temporary construction-related discharges would be controlled and would not violate water quality standards or substantially degrade surface or ground water quality.

Operation

Operational-phase stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces (buildings, parking lots, and driveways) would increase pollutant loading, including oils, metals, and particulates from vehicle use and industrial activities. The Project's industrial zoning and anticipated tenants (distribution and light manufacturing operations) could introduce additional contaminants, if not properly managed. Without mitigation, runoff could substantially degrade surface water quality in Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch, violating RWQCB waste discharge requirements or the federal Clean Water Act's Section 303(d) Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for impaired waters in the Tulare Lake Basin. Post-construction stormwater controls would be required under the Phase II Small MS4 Permit, applicable industrial tenants would obtain coverage under the Industrial General Permit (IGP), and MM HYD-3 would ensure long-term maintenance of post-construction controls.

The Project is consistent with the City of Visalia General Plan policies on hydrology and water quality, including Policy PSCU-P-59 (require new developments to incorporate floodwater detention basins into project designs). With compliance with the NPDES General Construction Permit and NPDES Phase II Small MS4 Permit, temporary construction impacts would be minimized, and long-term operational discharges would not violate standards or substantially degrade surface or ground water quality. Groundwater quality would remain unaffected, as the Project relies on municipal potable supply from the California Water Service Visalia District and does not involve dewatering or subsurface discharges.

Mitigation Measures

MM HYD-1: Construction Stormwater NOI and Compliance. Prior to the issuance of any construction/grading permit and/or the commencement of any clearing, grading, or excavation, the Applicant shall submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) for discharge from the Project site to the California SWRCB Stormwater Permit Unit.

- Prior to issuance of grading permits for Phase I the Applicant shall submit a copy of the NOI to the City.
- The City shall review noticing documentation prior to approval of the grading permit.
- City monitoring staff will inspect the site during construction for compliance.

MM HYD-2: Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) Implementation. The Applicant shall require the building contractor to prepare and submit a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to the City 45 days prior to the start of work for approval. The contractor is responsible for understanding the State General Permit and instituting the SWPPP during construction. A SWPPP for site construction shall be developed prior to the initiation of grading and implemented for all construction activity on the Project site in excess of one (1) acre, or

where the area of disturbance is less than one acre but is part of the Project's plan of development that in total disturbs one or more acres. The SWPPP shall identify potential pollutant sources that may affect the quality of discharges to Stormwater and shall include specific BMPs to control the discharge of material from the site. The following BMP methods shall include, but would not be limited to:

- Dust control measures will be implemented to ensure success of all onsite activities to control fugitive dust;
- A routine monitoring plan will be implemented to ensure success of all onsite erosion and sedimentation control measures;;
- Provisional detention basins, straw bales, erosion control blankets, mulching, silt fencing, sand bagging, and soil stabilizers will be used;
- Soil stockpiles and graded slopes will be covered after two weeks of inactivity and 24 hours prior to and during extreme weather conditions; and,
- BMPs will be strictly followed to prevent spills and discharges of pollutants onsite, such as material storage, trash disposal, construction entrances, etc.

MM HYD-3: Development Maintenance Manual for Post-Construction Stormwater Controls. A Development Maintenance Manual for the Project shall include comprehensive procedures for maintenance and operations of any stormwater facilities to ensure long-term operation and maintenance of post-construction stormwater controls. The maintenance manual shall require that stormwater BMP devices be inspected, cleaned, and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's maintenance conditions. The manual shall require that devices be cleaned prior to the onset of the rainy season (i.e., mid-October) and immediately after the end of the rainy season (i.e., mid-May). The manual shall also require that all devices be checked after major storm events. The Development Maintenance Manual shall include the following:

- Runoff shall be directed away from trash and loading dock areas;
- Bins shall be lined or otherwise constructed to reduce leaking of liquid wastes;
- Trash and loading dock areas shall be screened or walled to minimize offsite transport of trash; and,
- Impervious berms, trench catch basin, drop inlets, or overflow containment structures nearby docks and trash areas shall be installed to minimize the potential for leaks, spills or wash down water to enter the drainage system.

Impact 3.10-2: Would the Project substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the Project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

The Project Site is underlain by the Kaweah Subbasin (Subbasin) of the San Joaquin Valley Groundwater Basin, a critically overdrafted basin pursuant to Bulletin 118. The Project would be served entirely by potable groundwater supplies from the California Water Service Visalia District (District), with no onsite groundwater extraction proposed. Development would convert approximately 122 acres of previously agricultural land (primarily almond orchards) to industrial, commercial, and self-storage uses, including up to 1.75 million SF of warehouse space, approximately 55,500 SF of industrial-serving commercial, a self-storage facility, and associated infrastructure including a stormwater basin. The Project includes annexation into City limits and subdivision into 10 parcels, with full buildout anticipated by 2030. While impervious surfaces associated with buildings, parking, and driveways would reduce natural groundwater recharge potential compared to existing pervious agricultural uses, the Project's water demand represents a small fraction of District-wide projections, and the District's groundwater supply is projected to remain sufficient under normal, single-dry, and multiple-dry year conditions through 2045, consistent with the Kaweah Subbasin GSP requirements under SGMA. No substantial interference with recharge or impediment to sustainable management would occur.

Assumptions

The Water Supply Assessment (WSA) (Appendix J) prepared for the Project relies on the following assumptions:

1. Full Project buildout and occupancy by 2030, phased incrementally from 2026 (Table 3-23).

Table 3-23: Phased Project Buildout (SF)

Land Use Type	Phase I (2026)	Phase II (2027)	Phase 3 (2028)	Phase 4 (2029)	Cumulative (2030+)
Industrial	599,500	592,300	557,100		1,748,900
Self-Storage				29,645	29,645

Industrial Serving Commercial	28,900	26,600			55,500
Landscape Area	106,513	109,900	220,751	31,335	468,499

2. Historical agricultural water use on the Site estimated using U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) data and California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Land Use Viewer, with calculations in Appendix B of WSA.
3. Industrial Water Use: Due to the anticipated industrial uses at the Project site currently unknown, a water demand factor of **0.11 gallons per day per square foot (gpd/sq ft)** will be used. This demand factor is sourced from Water Systems Consulting, Inc.'s *2021 Technical Memorandum: Updated Demand Factors for Water Vision Santa Barbara*. [160]This technical memorandum incorporated service data from a wide range of industrial sectors, including construction-related businesses, manufacturing, wholesale trade, warehousing and storage, and other industrial uses.
4. Self-Storage Water Use: The water demand factor for the self-storage use was developed by the U.S. Energy Information Administration 2012 Commercial Buildings Energy Consumption Survey and estimated as **0.0093 gpd/sq ft**[161].
5. Industrial-Serving Commercial Pads Water Use: The water demand factor for the industrial-serving commercial pads was developed by the City of Modesto as a part of the City of Modesto's 2017 Water Master Plan and is estimated at 0.056 **gpd/sq ft**[162]. This factor is applied to the total approximately 55,500 SF of industrial-serving commercial pads.
6. Landscaping Water Use: Outdoor landscaping demands calculated per the Maximum Applied Water Allowance (MAWA) Calculator for non-residential uses, assuming drought-tolerant plants and high-efficiency irrigation. The water usage in AFY is calculated using the following equation:

Landscape Water Usage = $ETo \times [(ETAF \times LA) + (1-ETAF) \times SLA]$

where:

ETo = The regional reference evapotranspiration rate

ETAF = Evapotranspiration Adjustment Factor

- For Special Landscaped Areas = 1.0
- For Non-Residential Areas = 0.45

160) 160 Technical Memorandum Updated Water Demand Factors for the General Plan - City of Santa Barbara

161) 161 EIA Commercial Buildings Energy Consumption Survey Data

162)162 City of Modesto Water Master Plan

- For Residential Areas = 0.55

LA = Total landscape area (including SLA)

SLA = Special Landscape Area

Table 3-24: Estimated Proposed Project Annual Landscaping Water Demand

Phase	Area of Land Use (acres)	Annual Reference Evapotranspiration Rate (in)	Evapotranspiration Adjustment Factor	Landscape Water Usage (AFY)
1 (2026)	2.4	50.7	0.45	**4.6**
2 (2027)	2.5			**4.8**
3 (2028)	5.1			**9.6**
4 (2029)	0.72			**1.4**
Cumulative (2030+)	10.72			**20**

7. Distribution System Losses: Although distribution system losses from the newly-constructed portion of the system's infrastructure associated with the Proposed Project would initially be expected to be minimal, it is conservatively assumed that distribution system losses associated with delivering water to the Proposed Project will ultimately be consistent with the proportion of real and apparent losses and non-revenue water per the most recent (2023) water loss audit that Cal Water has submitted to DWR for the Visalia System, 2.7% (DWR, 2024). It should be noted that while these losses represent a demand on the system, water lost through the distribution system returns to the underlying Subbasin and thus is not a true demand on the groundwater supply. However, for purposes of this WSA, all water loss is conservatively considered a demand.
8. No recycled water or alternative supplies; 100% reliance on District groundwater.

These assumptions ensure a conservative analysis, overestimating Project demand.

Project Water Demand

The Project's annual water demand at full buildout would be 240 AFY (Table 3-25).

Table 3-25: Project Water Demand

Land Use Type	Water Use Factor	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030+ (gpd)	2030+ (AFY)
Industrial (gpd)	0.11	65,945	65,153	61,281	0	192,379	**210**
Self-Storage (gpd)	0.0093	0	0	0	276	276	**0.31**
Industrial-Serving Commercial (gpd)	0.056	0	3,395	0	0	3,287	**3.8**
Landscape Area (AFY)		4.6	4.8	9.6	1.4		**20**

System Losses (2.7%)	**6.4**
Total	**240 AFY**

Current and historical groundwater demand data for the Proposed Project site were not available and were therefore estimated using the MAWA method. The calculations and assumptions can be found in Appendix B of the WSA. Based on these calculations, it is estimated that historical water use for irrigation at the Proposed Project site ranged from 129 AFY to 335 AFY between 2019 and 2023 and averaged 294 AFY, resulting in the Project reducing the overall water demand.

However, because the historical water use demands were met directly with local groundwater supplies and not supplied by Cal Water, the total proposed Project demands conservatively do not subtract out the existing site demands (although the source is technically the same).

City-Wide Future Estimated Water Use

The District's service area had a total water demand of 29,550 AFY in 2024, with historical groundwater pumping averaging 30,000 AFY annually. The District's water use from 2003 to 2013 remained fairly consistent, at an average of approximately 32,340 AFY. A decrease in water use occurred from 2014 through 2016, and 2022 through 2023, corresponding with the droughts and mandatory state-wide water use restrictions and water conservation targets. (Cal Water, 2025).

The 2020 UWMP projects District-wide demand growth to 44,529 AFY by 2045 under normal conditions, driven by population growth.[163] In addition to the proposed Project, other planned developments were added in the projected water demand. Including all projects, total projected demand reaches 46,152 AFY by 2045 (Table 3-26). Single-dry and multiple-dry year projections increase demands by 10–20% due to reduced imports, but remain below supply thresholds (Tables 8–10 of Appendix J).

Table 3-26: Projected Future Water Demand for the Visalia District

Land Use	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
District 2020 UWMP Demands	32,520	35,276	38,310	41,258	44,529
Proposed Project Demands	0	240	240	240	240
Other Planned Developments Demands	0	582	760	1,216	1,383
Total District Demands	**32,520**	**36,097**	**39,309**	**42,714**	**46,152**

163) Visalia District June 2021 - 2020 Urban Water Management Plan

Comparison of Project Demand to Water Supply Sources

This evaluation compares projected water supplies and demands for the District, incorporating the Proposed Project and other planned developments, across normal, single-dry, and multiple-dry hydrologic scenarios through 2045. The analysis adheres to California Water Code §10910(c)(3) requirements, extending to a conservative five-year drought assessment aligned with UWMP standards under §10635. Tables 8, 9, and 10 of the WSA show that available groundwater supplies, as projected in the District's 2020 UWMP and corroborated by the GKGSA and MKGSA 2024 GSPs, fully meet demands under all conditions. No shortfalls are anticipated, with supplies equaling inclusive demands (Proposed Project: 240 AFY; other developments: up to 1,383 AFY by 2045).

Potential future shortfalls from droughts, infrastructure issues, or regulatory restrictions would be addressed via the District's Water Shortage Contingency Plan (WSCP), which establishes reduction targets from 10% to over 50% across six stages (Cal Water, 2021a). The District maintains no resolutions or ordinances limiting allocations to specific uses. Historical implementation during the 2013–2017 drought achieved a 15% demand reduction, while Stage 2 activation in 2021–2022 under Executive Order N-10-21 yielded a 2.5% decrease.

Statewide mandates under Senate Bill 606 and Assembly Bill 1668, following Executive Order B-37-16, enhance efficiency beyond 2020 targets from Senate Bill X7-7. These include annual Urban Water Use Objectives (UWUOs) reported since 2024, drought risk assessments for five-year periods (§10635(b)), and yearly supply-demand evaluations (§10632(a)), all integrated into the 2020 WSCP. The State Water Resources Control Board's July 2024 regulation enforces UWUOs by January 2027. The District's 2024 UWUO Report indicated usage 7.6% below targets (DWR, 2024a), improving from 0.2% above in 2023 (DWR, 2023).

Therefore, given: (1) that the District’s 2020 UWMP does not identify supply shortfalls for the District under any hydrologic conditions evaluated, (2) the projected reliability of the groundwater available to the District, (3) the demonstrated effectiveness of the District’s WSCP in the case of supply shortages, and (4) the increasing efficiency and drought planning requirements from the State, sufficient water supply is estimated to be available to Cal Water to meet future demands within the District service area including those associated with the Proposed Project.

The Proposed Project's demand (240 AFY at buildout) is conservatively estimated and additive to 2020 UWMP projections. Groundwater supplies are deemed reliable per the 2020 UWMP and 2024 GSPs, supporting all demands through 2045 under varied hydrologic scenarios, including five-year droughts. State mandates will drive continued efficiency gains.

Therefore, sufficient groundwater is available to serve anticipated District demands, including the Proposed Project. The Project Site lies within GKGSA jurisdiction, with the broader District under MKGSA. Current usage aligns with both GSPs; however, future policies, such as urban allocations, extraction reporting, or fees by GKGSA, MKGSA, or entities like the State Water Resources Control Board, could constrain access. Should limitations arise, Cal Water may implement mitigation to preserve reliability.

> **Impact 3.10-3: Would the Project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the Site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would: (i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; (ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site; (iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or (iv) impede or redirect flood flows?**

Before Mitigation	Significant (new impervious surfaces could increase erosion, siltation, and polluted runoff)
Mitigation Measures	MM HYD-1 through MM HYD-3
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

i. result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or offsite;

Construction activities, including grading, excavation for foundations and utilities, and the installation of approximately 60-70% impervious surfaces (buildings, parking lots, and drive aisles), would disturb up to 100 acres of soil at any given time during the 12-18 month construction period. Site soils, classified primarily as Nord fine sandy loam, Akers Saline Sodic, and Colpien Loam, could be susceptible to sheet and rill erosion if exposed during the region's typical winter rainy season. Without controls, stormwater runoff could transport sediments offsite into adjacent agricultural lands to the south and west or into the onsite drainages, potentially degrading water quality in downstream waters of the U.S.

To address these risks, the Project shall implement MM HYD-1 and MM HYD-2. These measures require the Applicant to submit a NOI to the SWRCB Stormwater Permit Unit and prepare and submit a SWPPP to the City at least 45 days prior to the start of work. The SWPPP shall identify potential pollutant sources and include specific BMPs such as dust control, routine monitoring of erosion and sedimentation controls, provisional detention basins, straw bales, erosion control blankets, mulching, silt fencing, sand bagging, soil stabilizers, covering of soil stockpiles,

and strict spill prevention measures. The SWPPP shall be implemented for all construction activity disturbing one or more acres (or less if part of a larger plan of development). With these measures in place, construction-related erosion and siltation impacts would be reduced to less than significant.

During operations, the fully developed Site will generate minimal erosion potential, as disturbed soils will be stabilized under impervious cover or landscaping. Increased imperviousness will elevate peak runoff rates; however, the detention basin and bioswales will capture flows to pre-Project hydrology, preventing siltation in Mill Creek. The Project would not alter the course of Mill Creek or Mill Creek Ditch due to the required 15-foot setbacks.

o ensure long-term performance of post-construction stormwater controls and prevent polluted runoff from operational areas (including trash and loading dock areas), the Project shall implement MM HYD-3. This measure requires preparation of a Development Maintenance Manual that mandates regular inspection, cleaning, and maintenance of all stormwater BMP devices (including the detention basin and bioswales) before and after the rainy season and after major storm events. The manual shall also require that runoff be directed away from trash and loading dock areas, that bins be lined to reduce leaking, that these areas be screened or walled, and that impervious berms, trench catch basins, drop inlets, or overflow containment structures be installed to minimize the potential for leaks, spills, or wash-down water to enter the drainage system.

With implementation of Mitigation Measures HYD-1, HYD-2, and HYD-3, the Project would not result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or offsite, would not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on- or offsite, would not create or contribute runoff that exceeds the capacity of existing or planned stormwater systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff, and would not impede or redirect flood flows.

ii. substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;

The Site is situated on the western edge of the City of Visalia within the Kaweah River watershed. Mill Creek traverses the southern portion of the Site and Mill Creek Ditch runs along the northern boundary. Both flow generally west and southwest toward Cross Creek. These features are likely jurisdictional waters of the State and may also be waters of the U.S. (Appendix E). They convey seasonal, regulated flows, with minimal baseflow outside of winter storm events.

Project implementation would substantially alter the Site's drainage pattern through mass grading, channelization of internal swales to direct flows toward the detention basin, and the

addition of approximately 60-70% impervious surfaces (building footprints covering ~35% of the Site, parking stalls, and extensive drive aisles). This would increase the peak runoff rate for the 100-year, 24-hour design storm, potentially elevating downstream flows in Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch during moderate events. Without controls, concentrated discharges could exacerbate localized ponding along N. Kelsey Street and W. Hurley Avenue. The Project would not alter the course of Mill Creek or Mill Creek Ditch, as development setbacks would preserve their alignment and riparian buffers, ensuring no impacts to jurisdictional features.

To prevent flooding, the Project incorporates onsite stormwater management. All runoff would be routed via a centralized conveyance system (Figure 2-12), including permeable bioswales along parking perimeters and underground detention pipes to the detention basin, designed to capture and attenuate the full 100-year, 24-hour storm event. The basin would include vegetated side slopes (seeded with native grasses for erosion control).

Based on the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM Panel 06107C0909E), a small portion of the Project Site is located within a Special Flood Hazard Area designated as Zone AE, which is subject to a 1 percent annual chance of flooding (100-year flood).[164] This Zone AE area affects a limited portion of the southern Project Site, and a small portion of Industrial Building 5 would be located within this mapped floodplain. The remainder of the Project Site is located within Zone X, which represents areas of minimal flood hazard and lies outside both the 1 percent and 0.2 percent annual chance floodplains.

Project development within Zone AE would be required to comply with applicable FEMA and City floodplain management regulations, including minimum finished floor elevation requirements, flood-resistant construction standards, and any required permits to ensure that structures are adequately protected from flood hazards and do not impede flood flows. Site elevations generally range from approximately 300 feet above mean sea level, and no documented history of site-wide inundation has been identified in Tulare County flood records.

During operation, the Project would not substantially increase flood risk on- or offsite. Stormwater runoff would be managed through the onsite detention basin and associated drainage improvements designed in accordance with City standards. Operational activities would have negligible additional runoff or flooding risks, as potential spills would be contained by site grading, berms, and treatment features such as the basin forebay and sediment traps. With adherence to applicable floodplain regulations and implementation of the proposed

164) FEMA Flood Maps

drainage facilities, the Project would not result in substantial flooding hazards or adverse flood impacts.

iii. create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or

The proposed Kelsey-Hurley Industrial Park Project involves the development of approximately 122 acres. These improvements will result in a substantial increase in impervious surfaces across the Site, which will in turn generate increased volumes of stormwater runoff. Pollutants commonly associated with industrial and commercial uses—such as oils, greases, heavy metals, and sediments—may be carried into the stormwater system during rain events.

To manage runoff, the Project includes the construction of an onsite stormwater detention basin in the southeastern portion of the site. The Project also proposes new stormwater infrastructure, including pipelines along Kelsey Street, Road 88, Crowley Avenue, and internal routes, designed to collect and convey runoff efficiently to the basin (Figure 2-12). While the infrastructure has been planned to accommodate anticipated flows, proper maintenance and post-construction controls are essential to ensure long-term capacity and water quality compliance.

While the drainage system is designed to accommodate anticipated stormwater volumes, long-term effectiveness will depend on proper operation and maintenance of the detention basin and associated features. MM HYD-3 requires preparation and implementation of a Development Maintenance Manual to ensure that post-construction stormwater facilities function as intended.

iv. impede or redirect flood flows?

The Project Site comprises approximately 122 acres of flat, former agricultural land at the southwest edge of the City of Visalia, within the Kaweah River watershed but distant from major rivers (nearest: Kaweah River, ~5 miles southeast), with no perennial streams or rivers onsite. Mill Creek traverses the southern portion of the Site and Mill Creek Ditch runs along the northern boundary. These features, which are likely jurisdictional waters of the State and could also meet the definition of waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act pending a USACE jurisdictional determination, currently convey low-volume runoff from surrounding farmlands westward toward Cross Creek, with minimal baseflow outside of winter storm events.

Per FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM Panel 06107C0909E), a small portion of the Project Site, is located within a Special Flood Hazard Area (Zone AE), which is subject to a 1% annual

chance of flooding (100-year flood). A small portion of Industrial Building 5 will be within the Zone AE area. The remainder falls in Zone X (minimal flood hazard, outside 0.2% annual chance floodplain).

The Project would not impede or redirect flood flows, as it maintains setbacks from Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch, avoiding channel alterations or encroachments. As shown in Figure 2-12, Phase I of the Project will include pipelines to carry the collected rainwater from the Site across Mill Creek and into the storm basin. Grading and impervious surfaces would route runoff via internal bioswales and permeable pavements to the onsite basins to detain the 100-year, 24-hour storm.

Compliance with City floodplain regulations and FEMA National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) standards, including elevation certificates for structures in the Zone AE area, ensures floodwater is neither impeded nor redirected. The Site's "county island" location poses no risk to adjacent urban areas, with any operational flows contained and treated.

Mitigation Measures

MMs HYD-1, HYD-2, and HYD-3 discussed in *Impact 3.10-1.*

> **Impact 3.10-4: In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, would the Project risk release of pollutants due to Project inundation?**

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

The proposed Project is located inland and not near an ocean or large body of water; therefore, a tsunami would not affect it. In addition, the Project site is situated in a relatively flat, agricultural area with no topographic conditions that would result in exposure to mudflow or debris flow hazards.

Approximately 1.6 acres of the southern Site, including a small portion of Building 5, are located within Special Flood Hazard Area Zone AE, and the remainder of the Site is within Zone X. Development within Zone AE would be required to comply with FEMA National Flood Insurance Program and City floodplain management requirements, including elevation of finished floors above the Base Flood Elevation and elevation certification. Hazardous materials used or stored onsite would be subject to federal, state, and local storage, handling, and spill prevention

requirements. With compliance with these requirements, the risk of pollutant release due to inundation would be less than significant.

Impact 3.10-5: Would the Project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

Before Mitigation	No Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**No Impact**

The Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of applicable water quality control plans or sustainable groundwater management plans. The Site is located within the Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region of the Central Valley, governed by the Central Valley RWQCB Water Quality Control Plan for the Tulare Lake Basin. The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Division 7 of the California Water Code) empowers the RWQCB to enforce these standards through waste discharge requirements and prohibitions on unpermitted discharges.

Project construction and operations would comply with the federal Clean Water Act's NPDES via coverage under the SWRCB Construction General Permit, given the >1-acre disturbance. A Site-specific SWPPP, prepared by a Qualified SWPPP Developer and implemented by a Qualified SWPPP Practitioner, would identify pollutant sources (sediments from grading, oils from vehicle maintenance) and deploy BMPs such as silt fences, vegetated swales, and treatment control measures.

During Project operations, applicable industrial uses would be required to obtain coverage under the SWRCB IGP, as applicable.[165] Compliance with the IGP would require preparation and implementation of an Industrial SWPPP identifying industrial stormwater pollutant sources, exposure pathways, and Site-specific operational BMPs. These BMPs would include good housekeeping measures, spill prevention and response procedures, employee training, structural controls, and routine inspections to minimize the potential discharge of pollutants in stormwater. Where required by the IGP, stormwater monitoring, sampling, and reporting would be conducted to verify permit compliance and effectiveness of BMPs.

Post-construction, the Project's Low Impact Development features, including permeable pavements, bioswales, and the detention basin on Parcel 10, align with City of Visalia General

165) Industrial Stormwater Program - California State Water Resources Control Board

Plan Policies PSCU-P-59 (incorporate floodwater detention for recharge) and PSCU-P-60 (minimize runoff via canopy trees, permeable paving, and bioretention to enhance infiltration and reduce imperviousness). Additionally, Policy PSCU-P-49 requires submission of water recycling/conservation plans during review, demonstrating NPDES compliance for industrial discharges. The Phase I storm drain crossing of Mill Creek may require a Section 401 Water Quality Certification or Waste Discharge Requirements, as described in Impact 3.4-3.

Regarding groundwater, the Site overlies the Kaweah Subbasin, a high-priority and critically overdrafted basin under the SGMA. Management falls to the Mid-Kaweah GSA, a joint powers authority of the Cities of Visalia and Tulare and Tulare Irrigation District. The Mid-Kaweah GSP aims to achieve sustainable yield by 2040 through groundwater monitoring, recharge projects, and demand reduction. The Project qualifies for a Water Supply Assessment under Water Code Section 10910 (SB 610), as an industrial development exceeding 650,000 square feet. The assessment concluded Cal Water can supply projected demands via existing groundwater. Onsite recharge via the detention basin support GSP implementation goals. No dewatering or extraction is proposed that would alter aquifer dynamics.

3.10.5 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts refer to the combined effects of the proposed Project with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects that could incrementally contribute to adverse effects on the hydrology and water quality. Under CEQA Guidelines §15130, cumulative impacts are evaluated based on whether the Project's incremental contribution is "cumulatively considerable," meaning it would result in a significant cumulative effect when viewed in connection with other projects.

Cumulative Setting and Geographic Scope

The cumulative setting for hydrology and water quality encompasses the Kaweah Subbasin and surrounding Tulare County areas, where development activities could potentially alter drainage patterns, increase stormwater runoff, or exacerbate groundwater overdraft. The Kaweah Subbasin is critically overdrafted, with a sustainable yield of 578,000 AFY, and is managed under SGMA by three GSAs (Greater Kaweah GSA, Mid-Kaweah GSA, East Kaweah GSA) through 2024 GSPs emphasizing recharge and conservation. Surface water quality is influenced by agricultural runoff into features like Mill Creek, with potential for sediment and nutrient loading under the Central Valley RWQCB Basin Plan. The geographic scope for cumulative impacts is the Kaweah River watershed, as runoff and recharge effects can propagate regionally. Cumulative projects considered include planned industrial, commercial, and residential developments in Visalia and Tulare County, such as other annexations and infrastructure expansions that may increase impervious surfaces or water demand. No specific

past projects are directly linked to the proposed Project Site, but regional trends in urbanization underscore the potential for cumulative effects on water quality and groundwater sustainability.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Cumulative hydrology and water quality impacts would occur if the Project, in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, results in a net degradation of surface or groundwater quality, depletion of supplies, or interference with sustainable management. As detailed in Impacts 3.10-1 through 3.10-5, the Project's individual impacts are less than significant with incorporation of MMs HYD-1, HYD-2, and HYD-3. These measures include SWPPP implementation to control erosion and pollutants.

Per CEQA Guidelines §15130, hydrology impacts are inherently cumulative due to shared watersheds and aquifers. A project's contribution is considered cumulatively considerable if it exceeds NPDES thresholds or hinders GSP goals. Since the Project's mitigated runoff remains at pre-development levels and demand is minor relative to Subbasin yield, its incremental contribution does not impede sustainability.

When combined with cumulative projects, the Project could contribute to regional impervious growth, potentially elevating runoff or demand. However, the Project's detention basin and bioswales enhance recharge, ensuring no net cumulative quality degradation or supply interference. The WSA confirms supplies meet demands through 2045, even in dry years. Overall, while cumulative development in Visalia and Tulare County could strain resources, the Project's impacts are not cumulatively considerable, as they align with federal, state, and local frameworks and incorporate measures to minimize contributions.

Conclusion

The Project would result in a less than cumulatively considerable contribution to hydrology and water quality impacts with mitigation incorporated. No additional mitigation is required beyond MMs HYD-1 through HYD-3.

3 - 11 Noise

This section of the EIR evaluates potential impacts of the proposed Project on Noise. No NOP comment letters were received pertaining to Noise.

3.11.1 Environmental Setting

Characteristics of Noise

Noise is generally defined as unwanted or objectionable sound. Sound becomes unwanted when it interferes with normal activities, when it causes actual physical harm or when it has adverse effects on health. The effects of noise on people can include general annoyance, interference with speech communication, sleep disturbance, and, hearing impairment. Noise effects can be caused by pitch or loudness. *Pitch* is the number of complete vibrations or cycles per second of a wave that result in the range of tone from high to low; higher-pitched sounds are louder to humans than lower-pitched sounds. *Loudness* is the intensity or amplitude of sound.

Sound is produced by the vibration of sound pressure waves in the air. Sound pressure levels are used to measure the intensity of sound and are described in terms of decibels. The decibel (dB) is a logarithmic unit, which expresses the ratio of the sound pressure level being measured to a standard reference level. The 0 point on the dB scale is based on the lowest sound level that the healthy, unimpaired human ear can detect. Changes of 3 dB or less are only perceptible in laboratory environments. Audible increases in noise levels generally refer to a change of 3 dB or more, as this level has been found to be barely perceptible to the human ear in outdoor environments. Only audible changes in existing ambient or background noise levels are considered potentially significant.

The human ear is not equally sensitive to all frequencies within the audible sound spectrum, so sound pressure level measurements can be weighted to better represent frequency-based sensitivity of average healthy human hearing. One such specific “filtering” of sound is called “A-weighting.” A-weighted decibels (dBA) approximate the subjective response of the human ear to a broad frequency noise source by discriminating against very low and very high frequencies of the audible spectrum. They are adjusted to reflect only those frequencies that are audible to the human ear. Because decibels are logarithmic units, they cannot be added or subtracted by ordinary arithmetic means. For example, if one noise source produces a noise level of 70 dB, the addition of another noise source with the same noise level would not produce 140 dB; rather, they would combine to produce a noise level of 73 dB.

Noise Descriptors

There are many ways to rate noise for various intervals, but an appropriate rating of ambient noise affecting humans also accounts for the annoying effects of sound. Equivalent continuous sound level (Leq) is the total sound energy of time-varying noise over a sample period. However, the predominant rating scales for human communities in the State of California are the Leq and Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) or the day-night average level (Ldn) based on dBA. CNEL is the time-varying noise over a 24-hour period, with a 5 dBA weighting factor applied to the hourly Leq for noises occurring from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. (defined as relaxation hours) and a 10 dBA weighting factor applied to noise occurring from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. (defined as sleeping hours). Ldn is similar to the CNEL scale but without the adjustment for events occurring during the evening hours. CNEL and Ldn are within one dBA of each other and are normally exchangeable. The noise adjustments are added to the noise events occurring during the more sensitive hours.

Other noise rating scales of importance when assessing the annoyance factor include the maximum noise level (Lmax), which is the highest exponential time-averaged sound level that occurs during a stated time period. The noise environments discussed in this analysis are specified in terms of maximum levels denoted by Lmax for short-term noise impacts. Lmax reflects peak operating conditions and addresses the annoying aspects of intermittent noise.

Noise Propagation

From the noise source to the receiver, noise changes both in level and frequency spectrum. The most obvious is the decrease in noise as the distance from the source increases. The manner in which noise reduces with distance depends on whether the source is a point or line source, as well as ground absorption, atmospheric conditions (wind, temperature gradients, and humidity) and refraction, and shielding by natural and manmade features. Sound from point sources, such as an air conditioning condenser, a piece of construction equipment, or an idling truck, radiates uniformly outward as it travels away from the source in a spherical pattern.

The attenuation or sound drop-off rate is dependent on the conditions of the land between the noise source and receiver. To account for this ground-effect attenuation (absorption), two types of site conditions are commonly used in noise models: soft-site and hard-site conditions. Soft-site conditions account for the sound propagation loss over natural surfaces such as normal earth and ground vegetation. For point sources, a drop-off rate of 7.5 dBA per each doubling of the distance (dBA/DD) is typically observed over soft ground with landscaping, as compared with a 6 dBA/DD drop-off rate over hard ground such as asphalt, concrete, stone and very hard packed earth. For line sources, such as traffic noise on a roadway, a 4.5 dBA/DD

is typically observed for soft-site conditions compared to the 3 dBA/DD drop-off rate for hard-site conditions.

Traffic Noise

The level of traffic noise depends on the three primary factors: (1) the volume of the traffic, (2) the speed of the traffic, and (3) the number of trucks in the flow of traffic. Generally, the loudness of traffic noise is increased by heavier traffic volumes, higher speeds, and greater number of trucks. Vehicle noise is a combination of the noise produced by the engine, exhaust, and tires. Because of the logarithmic nature of noise levels, a doubling of the traffic volume (assuming that the speed and truck mix do not change) results in a noise level increase of 3 dBA. Based on the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) community noise assessment criteria, this change is "barely perceptible"; for reference, a doubling of perceived noise levels would require an increase of approximately 10 dBA. The truck mix on a given roadway also has an effect on community noise levels. As the number of heavy trucks increases and becomes a larger percentage of the vehicle mix, adjacent noise levels increase.

Stationary Noise

A stationary noise producer is any entity in a fixed location that emits noise. Examples of stationary noise sources include machinery, engines, energy production, and other mechanical or powered equipment and activities such as loading and unloading or public assembly that may occur at commercial, industrial, manufacturing, or institutional facilities. Furthermore, while noise generated by motor vehicles on public roads is preempted from local regulation, the use of these vehicles is considered a stationary noise source when operated on private property such as at a construction site, a truck terminal, or warehousing facility. The emitted noise from the producer can be mitigated to acceptable levels either at the source or on the adjacent property through the use of proper planning, setbacks, block walls, acoustic-rated windows, dense landscaping, or by changing the location of the noise producer.

The effects of stationary noise depend on factors such as characteristics of the equipment and operations, distance and pathway between the generator and receptor, and weather. Stationary noise sources may be regulated at the point of manufacture (equipment or engines), with limitations on the hours of operation, or with provision of intervening structures, barriers or topography.

Construction activities are a common source of stationary noise. Construction-period noise levels are higher than background ambient noise levels but eventually cease once construction is complete. Construction is performed in discrete steps, each of which has its own mix of equipment and, consequently, its own noise characteristics. These various sequential phases would change the character of the noise generated on each construction

site and, therefore, would change the noise levels as construction progresses. Despite the variety in the type and size of construction equipment, similarities in the dominant noise sources and patterns of operation allow construction-related noise ranges to be categorized by work phase. Table 3-27 shows typical noise levels of construction equipment as measured at a distance of 50 feet from the operating equipment.

Table 3-27: Noise Levels of Noise-Generating Construction Equipment

Type of Equipment	dBA at 50 feet
Impact Pile Driver	95
Vibratory Pile Driver	95
Pavers	89
Scrapers	89
Auger Drill Rig	85
Dozers	85
Loaders	85
Graders	85
Pneumatic Tools	85
Tractors	84
Dump Truck	84
Cranes	83
Portable Generators	82
Air Compressors	81
Excavators	81
Generators	81
Backhoes	80
Concrete/Industrial Saws	76
Forklifts	75
Rollers	74
Welders	74
Pickup Truck	55

dBA = A-Weighted Decibel

Source: FHWA Construction Noise Handbook (dBA at 50 feet). Noise levels beyond 50 feet were estimated using the inverse square law based on given values for dBA at 50 feet.[166]

Noise from Multiple Sources

Because sound pressure levels in decibels are based on a logarithmic scale, they cannot be added or subtracted in the usual arithmetical way. Therefore, sound pressure levels in decibels are logarithmically added on an energy summation basis. In other words, adding a new noise

166) FHWA Highway Construction Noise Handbook

source to an existing noise source, both producing noise at the same level, will not double the noise level. Instead, if the difference between two noise sources is 10 dBA or more, the louder noise source will dominate, and the resultant noise level will be equal to the noise level of the louder source. In general, if the difference between two noise sources is 0–1 dBA, the resultant noise level will be 3 dBA higher than the louder noise source, or both sources if they are equal. If the difference between two noise sources is 2–3 dBA, the resultant noise level will be 2 dBA above the louder noise source. If the difference between two noise sources is 4–10 dBA, the resultant noise level will be 1 dBA higher than the louder noise source.

Characteristics of Vibration

Groundborne vibration consists of rapidly fluctuating motion through a solid medium, specifically the ground, which has an average motion of zero and in which the motion's amplitude can be described in terms of displacement, velocity, or acceleration. The effect of groundborne vibration typically only causes a nuisance to people, but in extreme cases, excessive groundborne vibration has the potential to cause structural damage to buildings. Although groundborne vibration can be felt outdoors, it is typically only an annoyance to people indoors where the associated effects of the shaking of a building can be notable. Groundborne noise is an effect of groundborne vibration and only exists indoors, since it is produced from noise radiated from the motion of the walls and floors of a room and may also consist of the rattling of windows or dishes on shelves. Several different methods are used to quantify vibration amplitude such as the maximum instantaneous peak in the vibration velocity, which is known as the peak particle velocity (PPV) or the root mean square (rms) amplitude of the vibration velocity. Because of the typically small amplitudes of vibrations, vibration velocity is often expressed in decibels—denoted as LV—and is based on the reference quantity of 1 microinch per second. To distinguish vibration levels from noise levels, the unit is written as "VdB."

Typically, developed areas are continuously affected by vibration velocities of 50 VdB or lower. Human perception to vibration starts at levels as low as 67 VdB. Annoyance due to vibration in residential settings starts at approximately 70 VdB.

Offsite sources that may produce perceptible vibrations are usually caused by construction equipment, steel-wheeled trains, and traffic on rough roads, while smooth roads rarely produce perceptible groundborne noise or vibration. Construction activities, such as blasting, pile driving and operating heavy earthmoving equipment, are common sources of groundborne vibration. Construction vibration impacts on building structures are generally assessed in terms of PPV. Typical vibration source levels from construction equipment are shown in Table 3-28.

Table 3-28: Vibration Levels Generated by Construction Equipment

Equipment	PPV (inches/second) at 25 feet	rms Velocity in Decibels (VdB) at 25 feet
Pile driver (sonic)	Typical 0.170, Upper Range 0.734	Typical 93, Upper Range 105
Pile driver (impact)	Typical 0.644, Upper Range 1.518	Typical 104, Upper Range 112
Vibratory Roller	0.21	94
Vibratory Roller (large)	0.21	94
Clam shovel drop (slurry wall)	0.202	94
Compactor	0.138	90
Vibratory Roller (Small)	0.101	88
Hoe Ram	0.089	87
Large bulldozer	0.089	87
Caisson drill	0.089	87
Loaded trucks	0.076	86
Loaded Truck	0.076	86
Auger Drill Rig	0.051	82
Backhoe	0.051	82
Crane (Mobile)	0.051	82
Excavator	0.051	82
Grader	0.051	82
Loader	0.051	82
Concrete Mixer	0.046	81
Paver	0.046	81
Pickup Truck	0.046	81
Jackhammer	0.035	79
Hydromill (slurry wall)	In Soil 0.008, in Rock 0.017	In Soil 66, in Rock 75
Small bulldozer	0.003	58
Scraper	0.002	58
Water Trucks	0.001	57

PPV = peak particle velocity
rms = root mean square
VdB = velocity in decibels
Source: Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment, Federal Transit Administration, September 2018.[167]

The propagation of groundborne vibration is not as simple to model as airborne noise. This is because noise in the air travels through a relatively uniform medium, while groundborne

167) Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual

vibrations travel through the earth, which may contain significant geological differences. Factors that influence groundborne vibration include:

- **Vibration source:** Type of activity or equipment, such as impact or mobile, and depth of vibration source;
- **Vibration path:** Soil type, rock layers, soil layering, depth to water table, and frost depth; and
- **Vibration receiver:** Foundation type, building construction, and acoustic absorption.

Among these factors that influence groundborne vibration, there are significant differences in the vibration characteristics when the source is underground compared to at the ground surface. In addition, soil conditions are known to have a strong influence on the levels of groundborne vibration. Among the most important factors are the stiffness and internal damping of the soil and the depth to bedrock. Vibration propagation is more efficient in stiff clay soils than in loose sandy soils, and shallow rocks seem to concentrate the vibration energy close to the surface and can result in groundborne vibration problems at large distance from the source. Factors such as layering of the soil and depth to the water table can have significant effects on the propagation of groundborne vibration. Soft, loose, sandy soils tend to attenuate more vibration energy than hard, rocky materials. Vibration propagation through groundwater is more efficient than through sandy soils. There are three main types of vibration propagation: surface, compression, and shear waves. Surface waves, or Rayleigh waves, travel along the ground's surface. These waves carry most of their energy along an expanding circular wave front, similar to ripples produced by throwing a rock into a pool of water. P-waves, or compression waves, are body waves that carry their energy along an expanding spherical wave front. The particle motion in these waves is longitudinal (i.e., in a "push-pull" fashion). P-waves are analogous to airborne sound waves. S-waves, or shear waves, are also body waves that carry energy along an expanding spherical wave front. However, unlike P-waves, the particle motion is transverse, or side-to-side and perpendicular to the direction of propagation.

As vibration waves propagate from a source, the vibration energy decreases in a logarithmic nature and the vibration levels typically decrease by 6 VdB per doubling of the distance from the vibration source. As stated above, this drop-off rate can vary greatly depending on the soil type, but it has been shown to be effective enough for screening purposes, in order to identify potential vibration impacts that may need to be studied through actual field tests. The vibration level (calculated below as "PPV") at a distance from a point source can generally be calculated using the vibration reference equation:

$$PPV = PPV_{ref} * (25/D)^n \ (in/sec)$$

Where: PPV_{ref} = reference measurement at 25 feet from vibration source

D = distance from equipment to the receptor

n = vibration attenuation rate through ground

According to Chapter 12 of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment manual, an "n" value of 1.5 is recommended to calculate vibration propagation through typical soil conditions.

Existing Noise Environment

The Project Site is bordered by agricultural land to the north and east, rural residences east of Road 88, vacant land to the west, and service commercial uses and SR 198 to the south, with industrial development in the vicinity. The dominant noise source currently impacting the Project Site and surrounding area is traffic on adjacent roadways. Airport-related noise from the Visalia Municipal Airport (approximately 0.8 miles southwest of the Project) is minimal, with existing contours below 65 dB Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL; equivalent to Ldn for this analysis).

Existing Noise Levels

Traffic Noise

The 2014 Visalia General Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report provides the data on roadway noise levels in the Planning Area, modeled using the Federal Highway Administration's Traffic Noise Model (TNM) based on 2011 traffic volumes. These levels are expressed as Ldn (Day-Night Average Sound Level) at 50 feet from the roadway centerline, which is a standard metric for evaluating community noise exposure under CEQA and the City of Visalia Noise Ordinance (Visalia Municipal Code Chapter 8.36).

Table 3-29 below summarizes existing Ldn levels for the closest major roadways to the Project Site. The Future (2030) noise levels were projected by the Visalia General Plan Draft EIR. To calculate noise level at the Site, the formula for geometric spreading loss is used:

$$\Delta L = 10 \times \log_{10}(d2/d1)$$

Where:

d1 = Reference distance (50 feet)

d2 = Receptor distance (500 feet)

ΔL = Attenuation in dB

Table 3-29: Future Traffic Noise Levels

Roadway	Segment Relevant to Project Site	Future (2030) Ldn at 50 ft (dB)	Distance From Project (ft)	Noise Level at Site (dB)
SR 198	Road 80 to Shirk Street	80.0	500	70
Plaza Drive	SR 198 to Goshen Avenue	72.1	1,675	56.85
Shirk Road	SR 198 to Goshen Avenue	74.2	2,500	57.21
Goshen Avenue	Road 80 to Shirk Street	74.7	2,700	57.38

Source: Visalia General Plan Draft EIR (2014), Table 3.10-11, pp. 3.10-27 to 3.10-30.
Ldn values modeled for 2011 baseline.

Existing Stationary Noise Levels

There are no existing stationary sources of noise on the Project Site.

Noise-Sensitive Land Uses

Noise-sensitive land uses generally consist of those uses where exposure to noise would result in adverse effects, as well as uses for which quiet is an essential element of their intended purpose. Residential dwellings are of primary concern, because of the potential for increased and prolonged exposure of individuals to both interior and exterior noise levels. Other typical noise-sensitive land uses include hospitals, convalescent facilities, hotels, religious institutions, libraries, and other uses where low noise levels are essential. The closest noise-sensitive land uses are single-family residences within the southern triangular cutout portion of the Site and across Clancy Street (Road 88) to the east. The nearest neighborhood is 2,800 feet east of the Site.

3.11.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal

Noise Control Act

The adverse impact of noise was officially recognized by the federal government in the Noise Control Act of 1972, which serves three purposes:[168]

- Promulgating noise emission standards for interstate commerce
- Assisting State and local abatement efforts
- Promoting noise education and research

168) Noise Control Act

The Federal Office of Noise Abatement and Control (ONAC) was initially tasked with implementing the Noise Control Act. However, the ONAC has since been eliminated, leaving the development of federal noise policies and programs to other federal agencies and interagency committees.

Among the agencies now regulating noise are the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), which limits noise exposure of workers to 90 dB Leq or less for 8 continuous hours or 105 dB Leq or less for 1 continuous hour[169]; the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), which assumed a significant role in noise control through its various operating agencies; and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which regulates noise of aircraft and airports. Surface transportation system noise is regulated by a host of agencies, including the FTA. Finally, the federal government actively advocates that local jurisdictions use their land use regulatory authority to arrange new development in such a way that "noise-sensitive" uses are either prohibited from being sited adjacent to a highway, or alternatively, that developments are planned and constructed in such a manner that minimize potential noise impacts.

Since the federal government has preempted the setting of standards for noise levels that can be emitted by transportation sources, local jurisdictions are limited to regulating the noise generated by the transportation system through nuisance abatement ordinances and land use planning.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Occupational Noise Exposure

OSHA, Occupational Noise Exposure; Hearing Conservation Amendment (Federal Register 48 [46], 9738–9785, 1983) stipulates that protection against the effects of noise exposure shall be provided for employees when sound levels exceed 90 dBA over an 8-hour exposure period. Protection shall consist of feasible administrative or engineering controls. If such controls fail to reduce sound levels to within acceptable levels, personal protective equipment shall be provided and used to reduce exposure of the employee. Additionally, a Hearing Conservation Program must be instituted by the employers whenever employee noise exposure equals or exceeds the action level of an 8-hour time-weighted average sound level of 85 dBA Leq. The Hearing Conservation Program requirements consist of periodic area and personal noise monitoring, performance and evaluation of audiograms, provision of hearing protection, annual employee training, and record keeping.

Federal Transit Administration Standards and Guidelines

169) 1910.95 - Occupational Noise Exposure

FTA has established industry accepted standards for vibration impact criteria and impact assessment. These guidelines are published in its Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment document (FTA 2018). The FTA guidelines include thresholds for construction vibration impacts for various structural categories as shown in Table 3-30.

Table 3-30: Federal Transit Administration Construction Vibration Impact Criteria

Building Category	PPV (inches/second)	Approximate VdB
I. Reinforced-Concrete, Steel or Timber (no plaster)	0.5	102
II. Engineered Concrete and Masonry (no plaster)	0.3	98
III. Non-engineered Timber and Masonry Buildings	0.2	94
IV. Buildings Extremely Susceptible to Vibration Damage	0.12	90

PPV = peak particle velocity
VdB = velocity in decibels
Source: Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment.

State

California General Plan Guidelines

Established in 1973, the California Department of Health Services Office of Noise Control was instrumental in developing regularity tools to control and abate noise for use by local agencies. One significant model is the "Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Environments Matrix," which allows the local jurisdiction to delineate compatibility of sensitive uses with various incremental levels of noise. Government Code Section 65302 mandates that the legislative body of each county and city in California adopt a noise element as part of its comprehensive general plan. The local noise element must recognize the land use compatibility guidelines published by the State Department of Health Services. The guidelines rank noise/land use compatibility in terms of normally acceptable, conditionally acceptable, normally unacceptable, and clearly unacceptable.

California Building Code – Noise Insulation Standards

The California Building Code (CBC), codified in Title 24, Part 2 of the California Code of Regulations[170], includes noise insulation standards that are particularly relevant to the construction of residential buildings. Chapter 12, Section 1207 of the CBC requires that interior noise levels attributable to exterior sources not exceed 45 dBA CNEL (Community Noise Equivalent Level) in any habitable room of new residential dwellings, hotels, motels, dormitories, or other sleeping quarters. These standards are mandatory for residential projects located

170) California Building Code, Title 24, Part 2

within airport noise contours or near major transportation sources such as highways and railroads. The CBC requires design features such as enhanced wall assemblies, sound-rated windows, and mechanical ventilation systems when necessary to achieve compliance with these indoor noise limits. Compliance with these provisions is enforced through the building permit process.

Local

City of Visalia Noise Ordinance

Chapter 8.36 of the Visalia Municipal Code[171] contains a number of regulations that would apply to noise generated by the proposed project's temporary construction activities and long-term operations. Regulations that are relevant to the analysis of the proposed project's potential construction and operational noise impacts are addressed below:

Section 8.36.040: Exterior Noise Standards–Fixed Noise Sources

A. It is unlawful for any person at any location within the City to create any noise, or to allow the creation of any noise, on property owned, leased, occupied or otherwise controlled by such person which causes the exterior noise level, when measured at the property line of any affected noise-sensitive land use, to exceed any of the categorical noise level standards as set forth in the following table.

Table 3-31: City of Visalia Noise Standards, dBA

Category	Cumulative Number of Minutes in any one hour time period	Evening and Daytime, 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.	Nighttime, 7 p.m. to 6 a.m.
1	30	50	45
2	15	55	50
3	5	60	55
4	1	65	60
5	0	70	65

B. In the event the measured ambient noise level without the alleged offensive source in operation exceeds an applicable noise level standard in any category above, the applicable standard or standards shall be adjusted so as to equal the ambient noise level.

171) Visalia Municipal Code Chapter 8.36

C. Each of the noise level standards specified above shall be reduced by five dB for pure tone noises, noises consisting primarily of speech or music, or for recurring impulsive noises.
D. If the intruding noise source is continuous and cannot reasonably be discontinued or stopped for a time period whereby the ambient noise level without the source can be measured, the noise level measured while the source is in operation shall be compared directly to the noise level standards.

The Visalia Municipal Code defines a "fixed noise source" as "a device, machine or combination thereof which creates sound which is affixed or installed on real property, including but not limited to residential, agricultural, industrial and commercial machinery and equipment, pumps, fans, compressors, air conditioners and refrigeration equipment." Based on this definition, the proposed project's construction vehicles would not be considered "fixed noise sources." Thus, Section 8.36.040 standards would not apply to the proposed project's construction vehicle activities.

Section 8.36.050: Exterior Noise Standards–Mobile Noise Sources Prohibition Against Use

According to Municipal Code Section 8.36.050, it is unlawful to operate any of the below-listed devices, appliances, equipment or vehicles on public or private property abutting noise-sensitive land uses between the weekday hours of 7:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., or between the weekend hours of 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m.

A. Power-assisted leaf blowers, lawn mowers, edgers or other power equipment used for the maintenance of property;
B. Vehicle equipment, which equipment is not expressly regulated by State or federal statute, such as car radios or sound amplification equipment which is audible more than twenty-five (25) feet from the exterior of the vehicle;
C. Construction equipment including jackhammers, portable generators, pneumatic equipment, trenchers, or other such equipment, except for emergency repair purposes as provided in Section 8.36.070.

8.36.060: Residential Interior Noise Standards

Municipal Code Section 8.36.060 sets out noise standards based on noise levels experienced within a dwelling unit. Relevant portions of that section are set out below.

A. It is unlawful for any person, at any location within the City, to operate or cause to be operated, any source of sound or to allow the creation of any noise which causes the

noise level when measured inside a dwelling unit to exceed any of the categorized noise level standards as set forth in the following table.

Table 3-32: City of Visalia Residential Interior Noise Standards, dBA

Category	Cumulative Number of Minutes in any one hour time period	Evening and Daytime, 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.	Nighttime, 7 p.m. to 6 a.m.
1	5	45	35
2	1	50	40
3	1	50	45

B. In the event the measured ambient noise level without the alleged offensive source in operation exceeds an applicable noise level standard in any category above, the applicable standard or standards shall be adjusted so as to equal the ambient noise level.
C. Each of the noise level standards specified above shall be reduced by five dB for pure tone noises, noises consisting primarily of speech or music, or for recurring impulsive noises.

City of Visalia General Plan

The current noise element of the City's General Plan establishes goals and policies intended to limit community exposure to excessive noise levels. Visalia's current General Plan identifies noise sources such as roadways, rails, and airports within the city and includes land use compatibility guidelines.

Objective N-O-1: Strive to achieve an acceptable noise environment for present and future residents of Visalia.

Objective N-O-2: Protect the City's economic base by preventing the encroachment of incompatible land uses near known noise-producing industries, railroads, airports and other sources.

Objective N-O-3 Protect noise-sensitive land uses such as schools, hospitals, and senior care facilities from encroachment of and exposure to excessive levels of noise.

- *Policy N-P-2*: Promote the use of noise attenuation measures to improve the acoustic environment inside residences where existing single-family residential development is located in a noise-impacted environment such as along an arterial street or adjacent to a noise-producing use.

- *Policy N-P-3*: Establish performance standards for noise reduction for new housing that may be exposed to community noise levels above 65 dB DNL/CNEL, as shown on the Noise Contour Maps, based on the target acceptable noise levels for outdoor activity levels and interior spaces in Tables 8-2 and 8-3. Noise mitigation measures that may be considered to achieve these noise level targets include but are not limited to the following:
    - Construct façades with substantial weight and insulation;
    - Use sound-rated windows for primary sleeping and activity areas;
    - Use sound-rated doors for all exterior entries at primary sleeping and activity areas;
    - Use minimum setbacks and exterior barriers;
    - Use acoustic baffling of vents for chimneys, attics, and gable ends;
    - Install a mechanical ventilation system that provides fresh air under closed window conditions.
- *Policy N-P-4*: Where new development of industrial, commercial or other noise-generating land uses (including roadways, railroads, and airports) may result in noise levels that exceed the noise level exposure criteria established by Tables 8-2 and 8-3, require a noise study to determine impacts, and require developers to mitigate these impacts in conformance with Tables 8-2 and 8-3 as a condition of permit approval through appropriate means. Noise mitigation measures may include but are not limited to:
    - Screen and control noise sources, such as parking and loading facilities, outdoor activities, and mechanical equipment.
    - Increase setbacks for noise sources from adjacent dwellings.
    - Retain fences, walls, and landscaping that serve as noise buffers.
    - Use soundproofing materials and double glazed windows.
    - Use open space, building orientation and design, landscaping and running water to mask sounds.
    - Control hours of operation, including deliveries and trash pickup, to minimize noise impacts.
    - Alternative acoustical designs that achieve the prescribed noise level reduction may be approved, provided a qualified Acoustical Consultant submits information demonstrating that the alternative designs will achieve and maintain the specific targets for outdoor activity areas and interior spaces. As a last resort, developers may propose to construct noise walls along State highways and arterials

when compatible with aesthetic concerns and neighborhood character. This would be a developer responsibility, with no City funding.

- *Policy N-P-7*: Use the land use compatibility zone guidelines contained in the Airport Master Plan or more current information on airport noise to assess noise compatibility of airport operation with proposed land uses.

The City's noise land use compatibility standards are established by Table 8-3 and Table 8-4 of the City's adopted General Plan (shown in Tables 3-33 and 3-34, respectively, below). The tables do not contain quantitative standards for light industrial land uses (as receivers) such as the proposed Project (since light industrial land uses are not considered to be noise-sensitive). The City General Plan's guidance surrounding the siting of industrial uses primarily concerns minimizing the noise impacts of new and existing industrial uses on noise-sensitive uses (residences, schools, churches, hospitals, etc.), not the effect of noise impacts to industrial uses (as a receiving use). However, it is worth noting that State's 2017 General Plan Guidelines suggest that noise environments up to 75 dBA CNEL are "normally acceptable" for industrial uses.

Table 3-33: Transportation Noise Sources

Noise-Sensitive Land Use	Outdoor Activity Areas[1]	Interior Spaces	
	DNL/CNEL[2], dB	DNL/CNEL[2], dB	Leq dB[3]
Residential	65	45	--
Transient Lodging	65	45	--
Hospitals, Nursing Homes	65	45	--
Theaters, Auditoriums, Music Halls	--	--	35
Churches, Meeting Halls	65	--	45
Office Buildings	--	--	45
Schools, Libraries, Museums	--	--	45

1. Outdoor activity areas generally include backyards of single-family residences and outdoor patios, decks or common recreation areas of multi-family developments.
2. The CNEL is used for quantification of aircraft noise exposure as required by CAC Title 21.
3. As determined for a typical worst-case hour during periods of use.

Source: Visalia General Plan

Table 3-34: Stationary Noise Sources [1]

	Daytime (7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.)	Nighttime (10:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.)
Hourly Equivalent Sound Level (Leq), dBA	50	45

Maximum Sound Level (Lmax), dBA	70	65

1. As determined at the property line of the receiving noise-sensitive use.
Source: Visalia General Plan

3.11.3 Thresholds of Significance

The Lead Agency utilizes the criteria in CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Environmental Checklist to determine whether noise impacts resulting from the implementation of the proposed project would be considered significant if the project would cause:

a) *Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?*
b) *Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?*
c) *For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?*

3.11.4 Impacts Discussio

Impact 3.11-1: Would the Project result in generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

Before Mitigation	Significant (construction and operational noise could exceed Municipal Code limits at residential receptors)
Mitigation Measures	MM NOISE-1
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

Construction Noise

Noise would be generated by construction of the proposed Project, which is estimated to occur over an approximately three-year period. Phase I is scheduled to begin in 2027, and Phase 4 is expected to be complete in November 2029, full buildout is expected by 2030. The proposed Project is anticipated to utilize a standard five-day work week, and construction would occur during standard daytime hours, which are generally between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Construction would not occur during hours prohibited by Section 8.36.050(C) of the Visalia Municipal Code, which prohibits operation of construction equipment on property abutting

noise-sensitive land uses between 7:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. on weekdays and between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m. on weekends. As such, construction activities would not have the potential to result in exceedances of the FTA nighttime construction noise criteria, as no nighttime construction is proposed.

Noise from grading activities is typically the foremost concern when evaluating a Project's construction noise impact, as grading activities often require extensive use of heavy-duty, diesel-powered earthmoving equipment. For the proposed Project, grading would have the greatest and loudest construction vehicle requirements, as a fleet of grading vehicles would be required to grade the approximately 122-acre Site over the course of construction. Other construction phases would have reduced vehicle requirements. For example, construction of the proposed warehouse buildings could at times require a crane truck, several construction forklifts, and skid steer loaders, but these vehicles are much less powerful than the types of heavy-duty scrapers, graders, and bulldozers that would be required to grade the Project Site.

The nearest sensitive receptors include two single-family homes on the southern boundary of the Site, approximately 60 feet from the nearest grading area (parking lot), and a group of single-family homes across Clancy Street (Road 88) to the east, approximately 130 feet from the nearest grading area (parking lot). The nearest neighborhood is located 2,800 feet east of the Site. The loudest grading activities would be characterized by extensive use of scrapers, which would be utilized across the Project Site to level the Site and establish proper slopes and drainages. Graders and bulldozers may operate in conjunction with scraper activities.

Other construction phases would result in noise levels that are less than the grading-related noise levels because they would utilize equipment that is less noisy than the equipment utilized by this analysis or because they would involve activities that are located farther from receptors than the activities analyzed herein. To ensure that construction noise does not exceed the Visalia Municipal Code's applicable daytime and nighttime noise limits for residential land uses, MM NOISE-1 shall be implemented. This measure requires submission of an in-depth acoustical study, prepared by a qualified acoustic professional, for review and approval by the Planning and Community Preservation Department prior to issuance of building permits. The study shall demonstrate that construction activities would not result in exceedances of applicable noise limits and shall evaluate key factors, including the location, orientation, and type of noise-generating equipment (heavy machinery and generators); anticipated hours and duration of activities, with consideration for peak traffic periods and seasonal variations; predicted noise levels at sensitive receptors, modeled using established acoustical standards (Federal Highway Administration or California Department of Transportation methodologies); and potential cumulative noise impacts from concurrent nearby projects, if applicable.

Based on the study's results, the Project Applicant shall incorporate design features or noise reduction measures to achieve compliance, including but not limited to locating noise-generating equipment as far as feasible from sensitive receptors with site layout adjustments to minimize direct line-of-sight exposure; constructing earthen berms, solid walls, or vegetative screening to attenuate noise propagation; enclosing stationary noise sources within acoustically rated barriers or sound-attenuating enclosures; installing low-noise equipment such as mufflers on engines, vibration isolators, or quieter alternative technologies where practicable; implementing temporal restrictions limiting high-impact activities to daytime hours and prohibiting them on weekends or holidays unless approved; and conducting pre- and post-construction noise monitoring with reporting to the City as needed. These measures shall be detailed in all relevant plans, specifications, and permitting documents, with compliance enforced through permit conditions and prior written approval required for any deviations. Implementation of MM NOISE-1 would reduce potential construction noise impacts to a less than significant level.

Operational

Operational noise from the proposed Project would primarily arise from increased traffic on adjacent roadways (N Kelsey Street, W Hurley Avenue, and Clancy Street), onsite truck loading/unloading, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) units on warehouse buildings, and occasional outdoor activities at the industrial-serving commercial pads strategically located in the northwest and northeast corners of the Site. The Project's land uses are anticipated to generate approximately 3,253 net new daily vehicle trips, as estimated from the Traffic Impact Study (Appendix K).

Existing and future ambient noise levels at the Site boundary from regional roadways are summarized in Table 3-35, based on the City of Visalia's 2030 General Plan traffic noise projections modeled at 50 feet from the roadway centerline and adjusted for distance to the Site using the geometric spreading loss formula. These levels represent background contributions from SR 198 and nearby arterials, ranging from 57 to 70 dBA Ldn, which are compatible with the Site's industrial designation under the City of Visalia General Plan Noise Element (up to 70 dBA Ldn exterior for industrial uses).

Table 3-35: Existing and Projected Traffic Noise Levels

Roadway	Segment Relevant to Project Site	Future (2030) Ldn at 50 ft (dB)	Distance From Project (ft)	Noise Level at Site (dB)
SR 198	Road 80 to Shirk Street	80.0	500	70
Plaza Drive	SR 198 to Goshen Avenue	72.1	1,675	56.85

Shirk Road	SR 198 to Goshen Avenue	74.2	2,500	57.21
Goshen Avenue	Road 80 to Shirk Street	74.7	2,700	57.38

Source: Visalia General Plan Draft EIR (2014), Table 3.10-11, pp. 3.10-27 to 3.10-30.
Ldn values modeled for 2011 baseline.

Onsite operational sources, including HVAC units and loading docks would be screened following General Plan policies and building enclosures. Occasional outdoor activities at the flexible commercial pad development would be infrequent and similarly screened.

The Project is consistent with the City of Visalia General Plan Noise Element, which designates the Site as compatible for industrial uses and requires buffers for adjacent sensitive receptors (Objective N-O-3). To verify that operational noise sources would not exceed applicable standards, MM NOISE-1 shall be implemented, as described above. This measure's acoustical study shall specifically address operational phases, evaluating factors such as the location, orientation, and type of noise-generating equipment (HVAC systems); predicted noise levels at sensitive receptors; and cumulative impacts. Required reduction measures, such as equipment enclosures, berms or walls, low-noise technologies, and monitoring, would ensure compliance with Visalia Municipal Code noise limits for residential land uses. Therefore, with implementation of MM NOISE-1, operational noise impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

MM NOISE-1: Acoustical Study and Noise Reduction Measures. When specific uses within the Project area are proposed that could result in a noise-related conflict between an industrial or other stationary noise source and existing or future noise-sensitive receptors, prior to the issuance of building permits, an in-depth acoustical study prepared by a qualified acoustic professional shall be required by the City and submitted for review and approval to the Planning and Community Preservation Department. The study shall demonstrate that the construction and operational phases of the Project would not result in exceedances of the Visalia Municipal Code's applicable daytime and nighttime noise limits for residential land uses. The study shall evaluate, at a minimum, the following factors:

- The location, orientation, and type of noise-generating equipment, including heavy machinery, generators, and HVAC systems;
- The anticipated hours and duration of construction activities, with consideration for peak traffic periods and seasonal variations;
- Predicted noise levels at sensitive receptors, modeled using established acoustical standards;
- Potential cumulative noise impacts from concurrent nearby projects, if applicable.

Based on the results of the acoustical study, the Project Applicant shall incorporate, at a minimum, design features or noise reduction measures to ensure compliance with applicable noise performance criteria. These measures shall be detailed in all relevant plans, specifications, and permitting documents, and verified through post-construction monitoring if required by the City. Measures and design features may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Locating noise-generating equipment as far as feasible from sensitive receptors, incorporating site layout adjustments to minimize direct line-of-sight exposure.
- Constructing earthen berms, solid walls, or vegetative screening to attenuate noise propagation toward nearby residential land uses.
- Enclosing stationary noise sources (compressors or generators) within acoustically rated barriers or sound-attenuating enclosures;
- Installing low-noise equipment, such as mufflers on engines, vibration isolators, or quieter alternative technologies where practicable;
- Implementing temporal restrictions limiting high-impact activities to daytime hours and prohibiting them on weekends or holidays unless approved by the City.
- Conducting pre-construction noise monitoring to establish baseline conditions and post-construction monitoring to confirm efficacy of implemented measures, with reporting to the City as needed.

Compliance with this measure shall be enforced through permit conditions, and any deviations must receive prior written approval from the Planning and Community Preservation Department to ensure ongoing protection of residential noise environments.

Impact 3.11-2: Would the Project result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

Construction

Construction of the proposed Project would require a variety of large, steel-tracked and rubber-tired earthmoving equipment, and compaction of building pads, parking areas, and roadways would likely require vibratory rollers. Vibration levels at a receptor were estimated from the FTA reference levels in Table 3-28 using the vibration reference equation in Section

3.11.1 with an "n" value of 1.5, which corresponds to a drop-off of 30 VdB per tenfold increase in distance.

The nearest receptors are two single-family residences on the southern boundary of the Site, approximately 60 feet from the nearest grading area (parking lot), and a group of single-family residences across Clancy Street (Road 88) to the east, approximately 130 feet from the nearest grading area. The equipment with the highest vibration levels expected on the Site is the vibratory roller, which generates approximately 0.21 in/sec PPV and 94 VdB at 25 feet. Large bulldozers generate 0.089 in/sec PPV and 87 VdB at 25 feet, and loaded trucks generate 0.076 in/sec PPV and 86 VdB at 25 feet. Table 3-36 presents the estimated vibration levels at the nearest residences.

Table 3-36: Estimated Construction Vibration Levels at Nearest Residences

Equipment	Reference PPV at 25 feet (in/sec)	Reference VdB at 25 feet	PPV at 60 feet (in/sec)	VdB at 60 feet	PPV at 130 feet (in/sec)	VdB at 130 feet
Vibratory Roller	0.21	94	0.057	83	0.018	72
Large Bulldozer	0.089	87	0.024	76	0.008	65
Loaded Truck	0.076	86	0.020	75	0.006	64

PPV = peak particle velocity; VdB = vibration decibels.
Source: FTA, Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual (2018), Table 7-4, and the vibration reference equation in Section 3.11.1.

Structural damage

The FTA threshold for buildings extremely susceptible to vibration damage is 0.12 in/sec PPV, and the threshold for non-engineered timber and masonry buildings, which is likely the category of the nearby rural residences, is 0.2 in/sec PPV. The highest estimated PPV at the nearest residences is 0.057 in/sec (a vibratory roller at 60 feet), which is below both thresholds. A vibratory roller would exceed 0.12 in/sec PPV only within approximately 36 feet, and there are no buildings within that distance of Project construction activities. Therefore, construction of the Project would not expose surrounding buildings to potentially damaging levels of groundborne vibration.

Operation

Given the nature of the proposed uses, primarily industrial warehousing, distribution, self-storage, and industrial-serving commercial use, and the fact that such land uses are located hundreds of feet from the Project Site's boundaries, implementation of the Project would not include any permanent sources that would expose persons in the Project vicinity to groundborne vibration levels that could be perceptible without instruments at any existing

sensitive land use in the Project vicinity. Additionally, the proposed Project's related truck and vehicle travel would not be considered a significant source of vibration. Perceptible vibration from vehicular traffic typically occurs under conditions such as rough or deteriorated roadway surfaces, uneven pavement, or potholes, which can amplify vibration transmission through the ground. In contrast, travel on smooth, paved roadways rarely generates vibration levels that are detectable at offsite receptors. Project-related truck and vehicle trips would occur on existing maintained roadways and would be intermittent in nature. Therefore, Project operational activities would not generate excessive groundborne vibration levels as measured at offsite receptors, and this impact would be *less than significant.*

> **Impact 3.11-3: For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the Project expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels?**

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

> **For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?**

The Site is located approximately 0.8 miles northeast of the Visalia Municipal Airport, a public use airport, and lies within the Airport Influence Area as defined by the Tulare County Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan (ALUCP). The ALUCP establishes policies to ensure compatible land uses within areas affected by airport operations, including safety zones that restrict development to minimize hazards to aviation and ground-based occupants. The Site's proximity to the airport, well within the two-mile threshold specified in the CEQA Guidelines, necessitates evaluation of potential safety hazards and noise exposure associated with aircraft operations.

Existing Conditions

The Visalia Municipal Airport serves general aviation, cargo, and limited commercial flights, with ongoing operations generating noise levels mapped in community noise equivalent level (CNEL) contours. Current noise contour maps (based on 2019 data from the Airport Master

Plan) indicate that the Site falls outside the 65 dB CNEL contour, a threshold commonly used to define significant airport noise exposure under CEQA and ALUCP policies. Regarding safety, the Site is encompassed by existing approach and departure surfaces but does not overlap with current high-risk safety zones. However, long-term airport planning, including potential runway extensions or increased operations, projects expansion of safety zones into portions of the Site. These future zones, as depicted in ALUCP Figure VIS-2 (Safety Compatibility Zones), could impose restrictions on building height, density, and land uses to mitigate aviation hazards such as structural interference, glare from reflective surfaces, or wildlife attractants.

Project Characteristics

The Project proposes annexation of approximately 122 acres into the City of Visalia, and development of industrial warehouses, industrial-serving commercial, a self-storage facility, and a detention basin. Structures would reach up to 75 feet in height. Operations would involve moderate employee occupancy and truck traffic, but no high intensity uses such as fuel storage or emissions plumes that could directly attract birds or create visual hazards to pilots. Construction would occur in phases, introducing temporary activity near airport flight paths.

Noise Exposure

Aircraft overflights would expose Project workers and any future occupants to airport noise, but existing 65 dB CNEL contours confirm the Site's location outside significant noise zones. The Airport Master Plan projects no substantial increase in noise levels at the Site through 2040, even with moderate growth in operations. Industrial and commercial uses proposed under the Project are compatible with land uses in the Land Use Compatibility Matrix, which permits business and industrial activities without mitigation. No residential uses are proposed, further reducing sensitivity. The Project would not expose people working in the Project area to excessive noise levels from the airport.

3.11.5 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts refer to the combined effects of the proposed Project with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects that could incrementally contribute to adverse effects on noise. Under CEQA Guidelines § 15130, cumulative impacts are evaluated based on whether the Project's incremental contribution is "cumulatively considerable," meaning it would result in a significant cumulative effect when viewed in connection with other projects.

Cumulative Setting and Geographic Scope

The cumulative setting for noise encompasses the City of Visalia and surrounding Tulare County areas, where development activities could potentially increase ambient noise levels

from traffic, construction, and operations. The region is characterized by mixed urban, industrial, and agricultural uses, with dominant noise sources from roadways (SR 198, Plaza Drive) and the Visalia Municipal Airport (0.8 miles southwest). The geographic scope for cumulative noise impacts is focused on areas within 1–2 miles, as noise attenuates rapidly with distance and barriers. Cumulative projects considered include planned industrial parks, commercial expansions, and transportation improvements in Visalia and Tulare County that could elevate VMT or equipment use. No specific past projects are directly linked to the proposed Project Site, but regional growth trends underscore the potential for cumulative effects on sensitive receptors, such as residences 60 feet south.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Cumulative noise impacts would occur if the Project, in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, results in a net increase in ambient levels exceeding City standards or causing substantial temporary/permanent exposure. As detailed in the impacts discussion, the Project's individual noise impacts are less than significant with incorporation of MM NOISE-1.

Noise attenuates rapidly with distance, so noise impacts are generally localized. However, noise from multiple sources or projects near the same receptors can combine to produce a cumulative effect. Consistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15130, a project's contribution is considered cumulatively considerable if it would cause or substantially contribute to an exceedance of applicable noise standards at a sensitive receptor. For this Project, the applicable standards are the exterior noise standards for residential land uses in Visalia Municipal Code Chapter Section 8.36.040, which range from 50 dBA (daytime) and 45 dBA (nighttime) for noise present 30 minutes in any hour to 70 dBA (daytime) and 65 dBA (nighttime) for noise that is never to be exceeded; the Section 8.36.050 restrictions on the hours of construction equipment operation near noise-sensitive land uses; and, for construction vibration, the FTA damage and annoyance criteria. Because the Project's mitigated noise levels would comply with these standards, and construction vibration would remain below the FTA damage threshold (0.12 in/sec PPV), the Project's incremental contribution to cumulative noise and vibration would not be cumulatively considerable.

When combined with cumulative projects, the Project could contribute to regional VMT growth, potentially elevating roadway noise. However, the Project's setbacks, enclosures, and low-impact operations ensure no net cumulative exceedance. Overall, while cumulative development in Visalia and Tulare County could raise ambient noise, the Project's noise is not

cumulatively considerable, as it aligns with federal, state, and local frameworks and incorporates measures to minimize contributions.

Conclusion

The Project would result in a less than cumulatively considerable contribution to noise impacts with mitigation incorporated. No additional mitigation is required beyond MM NOISE-1.

3 - 12 Transportation

This section of the EIR identifies potential impacts on Transportation due to implementing the proposed Project. A Traffic Study (TIS) (See Appendix K) was prepared for the Project by Ruettgers & Schuler Civil Engineers in September 2025 and updated in June 2026 and September 2026. The TIS identifies the Project as Etchegaray Farms Industrial, and the September 2026 TIS was used in this section. Following submission of the initial TIS and associated Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) letter in September 2025, the City of Visalia provided review comments on the VMT analysis. These comments were addressed in a response memorandum dated January 30, 2026 (see Appendix L), and the VMT Analysis letter was revised accordingly to incorporate updated regional VMT data, significance thresholds, and additional mitigation measures. The June 2026 updated TIS incorporates updates to the Site Plan square footages and land use mix while confirming that overall trip generation remains consistent with prior iterations. The September 2026 update expands the executive summary to summarize the LOS and queue findings, adds a review of Site access and onsite circulation, and adds supporting traffic count, collision, cumulative project, and signal warrant data to the appendix. The trip generation, intersection LOS, signal warrant, and queue length results are unchanged from the June 2026 update.

3.12.1 Environmental Setting

Roadway Facilities

State

- *SR 99* is a six-lane, north–south divided highway. SR 99 intersects SR 198 approximately 1 mile from the study area.
- *SR 198* is a four-lane, east–west divided highway connecting to U.S. Highway 101 (US 101) in the west near King City and the Sequoia National Park entrance in the east. SR 198 provides connection for residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural land uses from the Central Coast to the Central Valley through the counties of Monterey, Fresno, Kings, and Tulare. SR 198 intersects the north–south routes Interstate 5 (I-5) and SR 99.

Local

- *Clancy Street/Road 88* is a north-south deferred collector that extends north from SR 198. In the vicinity of the Project, it exists as a two-lane roadway and provides access to agricultural and industrial land uses.

- *Crowley Avenue* is an east-west local roadway that extends from Neeley Street to Kelsey Street. In the vicinity of the Project, it exists as a two-lane roadway and provides access to agricultural and commercial land uses.
- *Goshen Avenue* is an east-west arterial that extends east from SR 99. In the vicinity of the Project, it exists as a four-lane roadway and provides access to industrial and commercial land uses.
- *Hurley Avenue* is an east-west collector that extends from Plaza Drive to Kelsey Street. In the vicinity of the Project, it exists as a two-lane roadway and provides access to agricultural and industrial land uses. As part of the Project, it will be extended from Kelsey Street to Clancy Street. Hurley Avenue is also proposed by the City's General Plan to be extended from Clancy Street to Shirk Street.
- *Kelsey Street* is a north-south collector that extends north from Mineral King Avenue. In the vicinity of the Project, it exists as a two-lane roadway and provides access to agricultural, educational, and industrial land uses.
- *Plaza Drive* is a north-south arterial that extends north from Airport Drive. In the vicinity of the Project, it exists as a six-lane roadway and provides access to commercial, educational, and industrial land uses.
- *Shirk Street/Road 92* is a north-south arterial that exists north of Avenue 272. In the vicinity of the Project, it exists as a two-lane roadway and provides access to residential, retail, and agricultural land uses.

Study Area

The Project study scope was approved by the City of Visalia on April 4, 2025. Based on the number of peak hour trips calculated (between 200-499 trips in the peak hour), the study falls into Category II traffic impact analysis. Category II requires all signalized and major intersections to be studied within a ½ mile radius of the Project. The following intersections were included in the study:

1) N Kelsey Street & W Goshen Avenue
2) N Clancy Street & W Goshen Avenue
3) N Kelsey Street & W Hurley Avenue
4) N Clancy Street/Road 88 & W Hurley Avenue
5) Road 92/N Shirk Street & W Hurley Avenue
6) Plaza Drive & W Hurley Avenue
7) Plaza Drive & E Crowley Avenue
8) Plaza Drive & SR 198 Eastbound Ramps
9) Plaza Drive & SR 198 Westbound Ramps
10) N Shirk Street/Road 92 & SR 198 Eastbound Ramps

11) N Shirk Street/Road 92 & SR 198 Westbound Ramps
12) N Kelsey Street & E Crowley Avenue

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

Pursuant to SB 743 (2013), CEQA requires analysis of transportation impacts using VMT metrics for land development projects, replacing LOS metrics. The VMT analysis for the Project was conducted in accordance with the City of Visalia VMT Thresholds and Implementation Guidelines (September 30, 2021). The Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) Travel Demand Model was used to estimate Project-attributable VMT, incorporating all Project land uses.

For mixed-use developments, the regional VMT per service population is 31.0, with a significance threshold of 26.0 (84% of the existing regional average). The Project's estimated VMT per service population exceeds this threshold, requiring a 29.3% reduction to achieve a less than significant impact level.

Vehicle Level of Service (LOS)

Although CEQA now recognizes VMT as the primary analysis methodology for transportation impacts, intersection LOS and queueing were also analyzed in this section. This analysis will determine the operational effects of the proposed Project on nearby intersections and identify any necessary improvements, to be installed by the Project Applicant or funded through a proportionate fair-share contribution by the Project Applicant. This analysis is in accordance with applicable legal requirements related to nexus. LOS analysis is still appropriate and necessary to determine consistency with General Plan policies as they relate to LOS and to determine necessary roadway infrastructure improvements and capacity.

Analysis of intersection deficiencies was based on the concept of LOS, which is a qualitative measure used to describe operational conditions. LOS A (best) represents minimal delay, and F (worst) represents heavy delay and a facility that is operating at or near its functional capacity. Intersection LOS for this study were determined using Synchro software from Trafficware. Table 3-37 relates the operational characteristics associated with each LOS category for signalized and unsignalized intersections.

Table 3-37: Signalized and Unsignalized Intersection LOS Criteria

LOS	Description	Signalized (Average control delay per vehicle in sec/vehicle)	Unsignalized (Average control delay per vehicle in sec/vehicle)

A	Free Flow or Insignificant Delays: Vehicles are completely unimpeded in their ability to maneuver within the traffic stream. Control delay at signalized intersections is minimal.	≤ 10	≤ 10
B	Stable Operation or Minimal Delays: The ability to maneuver within the traffic stream is only slightly restricted, and control delay at signalized intersections are not significant.	>10 and ≤20	>10 and ≤15
C	Stable Operation or Acceptable Delays: The ability to maneuver and change lanes is somewhat restricted, and average travel speeds may be about 50 percent of the free flow speed.	>20 and ≤35	>15 and ≤25
D	Approaching Unstable or Tolerable Delays: Small increases in flow may cause substantial increases in delay and decreases in travel speed.	>25 and ≤55	>25 and ≤35
E	Unstable Operation or Significant Delays: Significant delays may occur and average travel speeds may be 33 percent or less of the free flow speed.	>35 and ≤80	>35 and ≤50
F	Forced Flow or Excessive Delays: Congestion, high delays, and extensive queueing occur at critical signalized intersections with urban street flow at extremely low speeds.	>80	>50
Source: City of Visalia. Visalia General Plan Circulation Element.			

Project deficiencies were determined by comparing conditions with the proposed Project to those without the proposed Project. Project-related deficiencies at study intersections are created when traffic from the proposed Project causes the LOS to fall below the maintaining agency's LOS threshold or causes deficient intersections to deteriorate further based on applicable thresholds. The LOS threshold for the City's intersections analysis is LOS D. A Project-induced deficiency occurs if the addition of Project traffic would cause an intersection operating at LOS A, B, C, or D to begin to operate at LOS E or F. For intersections already operating at LOS E or F without Project traffic, any addition of Project traffic resulting in increased delays of 5.0 seconds or more would also result in a deficiency.

Queueing

Queues that exceed the turn pocket length can create potentially hazardous conditions by blocking or disrupting through-traffic in adjacent travel lanes. However, these potentially hazardous queues are generally associated with left-turn movements. Locations where the right-turn pocket storage is exceeded are generally not considered hazardous because the right-turn movements generally receive "green indications" at the same time as the adjacent through movement. Therefore, any additional vehicles that spill out of the right-turn pocket will

likely not hinder nor disrupt the adjacent through traffic, as would be the case in most left-turn pockets. Queue length analysis was conducted using the equations provided in the City of Visalia Traffic Guidelines. The September 2026 TIS (Appendix K, Tables 5a and 5b) presents the AM and PM queue length analysis results for the current Site Plan, including the industrial-serving commercial pads in the northwest and northeast corners.

Bus Routes

- *Route 15* is a local bus service that operates between the Visalia Transit Center and Goshen Elementary School. On weekdays, the bus route operates from 6:00 a.m. to 10:20 p.m. On weekends, service is available from 7:30 a.m. to 6:35 p.m. Near the Project, the route runs along Kelsey Street between Hillsdale Avenue and Goshen Avenue. A bus stop is located within the study area near the intersection of Hillsdale Court and Kelsey Street. The proposed sidewalks along Kelsey Street and interior Site connections will facilitate pedestrian access to this stop for Project employees and visitors.
- *Route 17* is a local bus service that operates between the Visalia Medical Clinic and the intersection of Kelsey Street and Hillsdale Court near the Project. On weekdays, the bus route operates from 6:00 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. On weekends, service is available from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Near the Project, the route runs along Shirk Street north of SR 198, along Plaza Drive south of Goshen Avenue to Crowley Avenue. Bus stops within the study area are located at the intersection of Hillsdale Court and Kelsey Street. The proposed sidewalks will improve connectivity to these stops.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Highway Design Manual and National Association of City Transportation Officials Urban Bikeway Design Guide define four major types of bicycle facilities[172][173]:

- Class I: Multiuse Path—These paths provide a completely separate right-of-way and are designated for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians with vehicle cross-flow minimized.
- Class II: Bicycle Lane—These bicycle lanes provide a restricted right-of-way and are designated for the use of bicycles for one-way travel with a striped lane on a street or highway. These bicycle lanes are generally a minimum of 5 feet wide, and vehicle/pedestrian crossflow is permitted.

172) Caltrans Highway Design Manual
173) NACTO- Urban Bikeway Design Guide

- Class III: Bicycle Route with Sharrows—These bikeways provide right-of-way designated by signs or pavement markings for shared use with motor vehicles. These bikeways include sharrows or "shared-lane markings" to highlight the presence of bicyclists.
- Class IV: Buffered Bicycle Lanes—These bicycle lanes consist of a physically separate lane for increased comfort and protection of bicyclists. These bicycle lanes can be physically separated by a barrier, such as planters or on-street parking, grade-separated from the roadway, or a painted buffer area. These can also be called cycle tracks and can allow for one-way or two-way bicycle travel.

Project Site

Within the study area, there are limited existing pedestrian and bicycle improvements. As part of the Project, sidewalks will be added on Hurley Avenue, Kelsey Street, Crowley Avenue (including on the interior of the Site to serve the industrial-serving commercial pads), and Clancy Street.

As a part of the larger Mill Creek Trail, a Class I bike path will be added on the southern portion of the Site, near the basin. Class II bike lanes will be added along Clancy Street and Hurley Avenue.

Emergency Access and Routes Study Area

The Tulare County Preparedness Guide provides guidelines regarding disaster preparedness and evacuation planning for Tulare County residents. Although there are no specific designated evacuation routes, the recommended evacuation routes during an emergency would likely be the main Highways nearby, such as SR 198 in the east–west direction and SR 99 in the north–south direction. Although not expressly designated as such, given their nature and location, these roads would likely act as the main evacuation routes into and out of the Project vicinity.

Access to the proposed Project would be established through the construction of the unsignalized driveways on Kelsey Street, Hurley Avenue, Crowley Avenue, and Clancy Street/Road 88. The TIS (Appendix K) found that the Site access points on Kelsey Street, Hurley Avenue, and Crowley Avenue conform to the City's standards for spacing and location in the City of Visalia Design and Improvement Standards, Detail C-32 (Drive Approach Locations). The TIS also found that onsite circulation provides adequate access to buildings and driveways. Emergency access would be provided via these access points.

3.12.2 Regulatory Setting

State

California Department of Transportation Level of Service Goals

Caltrans builds, operates, and maintains the State highway system, including the interstate highway system. Caltrans's mission is to improve mobility Statewide. The department operates under strategic goals to provide a safe transportation system, optimize throughput and ensure reliable travel times, improve the delivery of State highway projects, provide transportation choices, and improve and enhance the State's investments and resources. Caltrans controls the planning of the State highway system and accessibility to the system. Caltrans establishes LOS goals for highways and works with local and regional agencies to assess impacts and develop funding sources for improvements to the State highway system. Caltrans requires encroachment permits from agencies for new development before any construction work may be undertaken within the State's right-of-way. For projects that would impact traffic flow and levels of service on State highways, Caltrans reviews measures to mitigate the traffic impacts. SB 743 requires that project VMT be analyzed for CEQA purposes and determination of significant impacts. Caltrans has identified an LOS objective of C/D (i.e., on the "cusp" between levels of service C and D) as the acceptable service level for signalized intersections.

Senate Bill 743

SB 743, signed into law in 2013, significantly changed the way transportation impacts are analyzed under CEQA.[174] As of July 1, 2020, SB 743 requires public agencies to transition from evaluating transportation impacts based on LOS to VMT. VMT measures the amount and distance of vehicle travel associated with a project rather than intersection delay or congestion. Under SB 743, a project may have a significant transportation impact if it results in a substantial increase in VMT compared to existing conditions or applicable thresholds. The intent of SB 743 is to align transportation impact analysis with the State's greenhouse gas reduction goals and to encourage infill, mixed-use, and transit-oriented development.

Regional

Tulare County Regional Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS)

The TCAG its 2022 RTP/SCS to provide a long-range vision for regional growth, mobility, and sustainability.[175] The RTP/SCS integrates transportation investment planning with land use strategies to reduce per capita GHG emissions, consistent with SB 375. It promotes compact development, transit-oriented design, and multimodal transportation options that reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles. Projects consistent with the RTP/SCS generally support regional VMT and GHG reduction goals and may be considered less likely to result in significant VMT-related impacts under CEQA.

174) Senate Bill 743 - California Legislative Information
175) TCAG 2022 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

City of Visalia Vehicle Miles Traveled Thresholds and Implementation Guidelines

To comply with SB 743, the City of Visalia adopted its VMT Thresholds and Implementation Guidelines in 2021 (updated in 2025), developed by LSA Associates.[176] These guidelines establish local VMT significance thresholds and screening criteria for land use and transportation projects. Projects that fall below certain size or location thresholds, or that are located in low-VMT areas, may be presumed to result in a less than significant impact under CEQA. For projects not screened out, a full VMT analysis is required, and mitigation may include measures such as enhanced transit service, pedestrian/bike infrastructure improvements, TDM programs, and mixed-use development design. The guidelines ensure consistency in how VMT is measured and mitigated within the City's jurisdiction.

City of Visalia General Plan

The City of Visalia General Plan contains the following goals and policies related to transportation:

Objective T-O-5: Plan and develop a transportation system for Visalia that contributes to community livability, recognizes and respects community characteristics, and minimizes negative impacts on adjacent land uses.

- *Policy T-P-23*: Require that all new developments provide right-of-way, which may be dedicated or purchased, and improvements (including necessary grading, installation of curbs, gutters, sidewalks, parkway/landscape strips, bike and parking lanes) or other City street design standards. Design standards will be updated following General Plan adoption.
- *Policy T-P-24*: Require that proposed developments make necessary offsite improvements if the location and traffic generation of a proposed development will result in congestion on major streets or failure to meet LOS D during peak periods or if it creates safety hazards.
- *Policy T-P-25*: Require that where arterial streets are necessary through residential areas, residential development shall be oriented away (side-on or rear-on) from such streets and be properly buffered so that traffic carrying capacity of the street will be preserved and the residential environment will be protected from the adverse characteristics of the arterial street.

176) City of Visalia Procedures for Traffic Impact Analysis

- *Policy T-P-26*: Require that future commercial developments or modifications to existing developments be designed with limited points of automobile ingress and egress, including shared access, onto major streets.
- *Policy T-P-27*: Work with Caltrans to modify the SR 198 Route Concept Report to ensure that the facility is designated as a six-lane freeway from Downtown Visalia east to Lovers Lane.
- *Policy T-P-28*: Promote traffic safety by requiring that ingress and egress to shopping centers be carefully designed, with minimal use of left-turn movements into and out of these centers.
- *Policy T-P-29*: Require, where possible, that arterials and collectors form four-leg, right-angle intersections. Jogged, offset, and skewed intersections at major streets in near proximity shall be avoided, where possible.
- *Policy T-P-34*: Develop design and development standards to improve transit service in the community, such as wider sidewalks to accommodate bus stops and bus shelters at intersections; bus pads with shelter and shading vegetation; widened rights-of way for buses; dedicated bus lanes; onsite transit stops for commercial public, institutional and industrial facilities; and bus facilities adjacent to daycare centers, schools, and major residential areas.
- *Policy T-P-35*: Schedule public transportation improvement projects in the Capital Improvements Program.
- *Policy T-P-39*: Develop bikeways consistent with the Visalia Bikeway Plan and the General Plan's Circulation Element.
    - Provide Class I bikeways (right-of-way for bicyclists and pedestrians separated from vehicles) along the St. Johns River, Cameron Creek, Packwood Creek, Mill Creek, Modoc Ditch, the Santa Fe Railroad right-of- way and the San Joaquin Railroad right-of-way.
    - Provide Class II bikeways (striped bike lanes) along selected collector and arterial streets.
    - Provide Class III bikeways (shared use bike routes) along selected local, collector, and arterial streets.
- *Policy T-P-41*: Integrate the bicycle transportation system into new development and infill redevelopment. Development shall provide short term bicycle parking and long term bicycle storage facilities, such as bicycle racks, stocks, and rental bicycle lockers. Development also shall provide safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian access to

high activity land uses such as schools, parks, shopping, employment, and entertainment centers.

- *Policy T-P-44:* Increase the safety of those traveling by bicycle by:
    - Sweeping and repairing bicycle paths and lanes on a regular basis;
    - Ensuring that bikeways are signed and delineated according to Caltrans or City standards, and that lighting is provided as needed;
    - Providing bicycle paths and lanes on bridges and overpasses;
    - Ensuring that all new and improved streets have bicycle-safe drainage grates and are free of hazards such as uneven pavement or gravel;
    - Providing adequate signage and markings warning vehicular traffic of the existence of merging or crossing bicycle traffic where bike lanes and routes make transitions into or across roadways.
- *Policy T-P-45*: Require that collector streets that are identified to function as links for the bicycle transportation system be provided with Class II bikeways (bike lanes) or signed as Class III bike route facilities.
- *Policy T-P-48*: Require construction of minimum sidewalk widths and pedestrian "clear zones" consistent with the Complete Streets cross-sections in this General Plan and with the City's Engineering and Street Design Standards for each designated street type.
- *Policy T-P-50*: Provide pedestrian facilities that are accessible to persons with disabilities and ensure that roadway improvement projects address accessibility and use universal design concepts.
- *Policy* OSC-P-23: Where no urban development exists, maintain a minimum riparian habitat development setback from the discernible top of the bank—50 feet for both sides of the Mill, Packwood and Cameron Creek corridors and 25 feet for both sides of Modoc, Persian and Mill Creek Ditches—provided that where riparian trees are located within 100 feet of the discernible top of the banks of the Creek corridors and 50 feet from the banks for the ditches, the setback shall be wide enough to include five feet outside the drip line of such trees. Restore and enhance the area within the setback with native vegetation.
    - Where existing development or land committed to development prohibits the 50-foot setback on Mill, Packwood, and Cameron Creek corridors, provide the maximum amount of land available for a development setback.
    - Where existing development or land committed to development prohibits the 25-foot setback along Modoc, Persian, and Mill Creek Ditches, provide the maximum amount of land available for a development setback.

Visalia Active Transportation Plan

The Active Transportation Plan (ATP) is meant to provide the means to support active transportation, specifically bicycling and walking, as an alternative mode of transportation for work, daily activities, and recreational trips.[177] The Mill Creek Trail is listed in the ATP as a trail with opportunities for key linkages to other trails.

Overall Circulation System Planning

Objective T-O-4: Ensure that new development pays its fair share of the costs of new and improved transportation facilities.

Implementation Plan

- *Policy 1.9*: Require proposed new development to create landscape and lighting districts to fund the maintenance of infrastructure, including active transportation elements, along major roadways.
- *Policy 2.3*: Include facilities that support active transportation in all new development projects. This should include pedestrian/bicycle connections from contemporary subdivision designs to surrounding arterials and collectors, bicycle parking at shopping, employment, and recreational centers, and bikeways on new collector and arterial roadways.
- *Policy 2.5*: Ensure that on-street parking does not conflict with Class II bike lanes and restrict parking near intersections and crosswalks to improve visibility and enhance safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- *Policy 2.6*: Identify safety counter measures at areas of high collision activity. Recommend and implement safety improvements.
- *Policy 8.3*: Encourage new large scale commercial, office, and industrial development to provide a variety of support facilities such as secure and convenient bicycle parking and shower/locker facilities.

Engineering Design and Improvement Standards

SD-3 of the City's Engineering Design and Improvement Standards outlines the Sight Distance Requirements for Arterial and Collector Streets.[178]

177) City of Visalia - Active Transportation Plan
178) City of Visalia - Engineering Documents

3.12.3 Thresholds of Significance

The Lead Agency utilizes the criteria in CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Environmental Checklist to determine whether transportation and traffic impacts are significant environmental effects.

Would the Project:

a) *Conflict with a program plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?*
b) *Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?*
c) *Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?*
d) *Result in inadequate emergency access?*

3.12.4 Impacts Discussion

Impacts related to transportation resulting from implementation of the proposed Project are discussed below. The impact analysis is based on the TIS prepared for the proposed Project and review of the General Plan and the 2022 RTP/SCS. Additionally, the impact analysis is based on review of the City's VMT Threshold and Implementation Guidelines, and applicable federal, State, and local policies and regulations.

Project VMT

Screening thresholds from the City's VMT Guidelines related to the proposed land use are broken into the following three steps:

1) TPA Screening: As described in the OPR Technical Advisory, projects located within 0.5 mile from an existing major transit stop or within half of a mile from an existing stop along a high quality transit corridor can be screened out.
2) Low VMT Area Screening: Projects that are consistent with the City's General Plan and are located within low VMT efficient areas can be screened out. These areas are identified in the City's guidelines.
3) Low Project Type Screening: Projects that are consistent with the City's General Plan and generate fewer than 1,000 daily trips could be considered not to lead to a significant impact and can be screened out. For projects that are not consistent with the City's General Plan, the trip threshold is 500 daily trips.

A land use project must only meet one of the above screening thresholds to be presumed to not result in a significant impact under CEQA pursuant to SB 743. However, the proposed Project does not meet any of the screening thresholds. Therefore, a complete VMT analysis is required to further evaluate the proposed Project's potential VMT impacts.

Because the Project Site would be annexed into the City, the evaluation of VMT was conducted in accordance with the City's adopted VMT Thresholds and Implementation Guidelines, consistent with other recently approved/annexed projects. These guidelines provide direction regarding the methodologies and thresholds to be used for VMT analysis within the City. The guidelines also provide basic principles for conducting VMT analysis based on OPR Technical Advisory, with revisions made to reflect local characteristics of the City, specifically nonresidential/office/retail land uses. The County's thresholds of significance, as adopted by the City, are summarized below:

- Residential–exceeds a level of 16 percent below existing regional average VMT per capita;
- Office–exceeds a level of 16 percent below existing regional average VMT per employee;
- Mixed-Use–exceeds a level of 16 percent below existing regional average VMT per service population;
- Retail–any net increase in total VMT;
- Other (consistent with some refinements made to reflect the predominantly rural character of General Plan)–any net increase in VMT per employee; and
- Other (not consistent with General Plan)–exceeds a level of 16 percent below existing regional average VMT per employee.

Based on the available land use category options, and consistent with the VMT analysis prepared for the Project (Appendix L), the proposed Project was evaluated as a mixed-use development because it combines industrial/warehouse, industrial-serving commercial, and self-storage uses. Project VMT was therefore measured per service population. The proposed Project involves an industrial use, is consistent with the City's Industrial land use designation for the Project Site and should be treated as "consistent with General Plan."

Therefore, the proposed Project would result in a significant CEQA transportation impact if the Project VMT per service population exceeds the City's threshold of 26.0 VMT per service population, which is 84 percent of the existing regional average of 31.0 VMT per service population. For consistency with the City, the VMT metric for the proposed Project conditions was calculated by using the same TCAG Travel Demand Model and recommended methodology. The TCAG model is a tool used to forecast travel patterns in Tulare County based on estimated future land use and roadway network changes, as well as determination of VMT.

Trip Generation

Trip generation estimates are based on the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual, 12th Edition.[179] A trip is defined as a single or one-directional vehicle movement with either origin or destination at the Project Site. In other words, a trip can be either "to" or "from" the site and therefore, a single visitor to a site is counted as two. Trips generated by the proposed project are estimated for the AM and PM commuter peak hours between 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on a typical weekday. Trips generated were based on the following ITE Land Uses:

- ITE Land Use 150 (Warehousing), using the fitted-curve equations, for the warehouse buildings.
- ITE Land Use 151 (Mini-Warehouse), using the average rates, for self-storage.
- ITE Land Use 770 (Business Park), using the average rates, for the industrial-serving commercial pads.

As shown in Table 1 of the TIS (Appendix K), the Project is estimated to generate 3,253 daily trips. This includes 244 AM peak hour trips (191 inbound and 53 outbound) and 262 PM peak hour trips (74 inbound and 188 outbound). The TIS evaluates approximately 1,748,900 square feet of warehouse use, 58,600 square feet of business park use, and 29,700 square feet of mini-warehouse use. The business park and mini-warehouse square footages are greater than the approximately 55,500 SF of industrial-serving commercial pads and approximately 29,645 square feet of self-storage identified in the Project's Master Plan (Appendix B). The trip generation estimate is therefore conservative.

Impact 3.12-1: Would the Project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

The Project would develop an approximately 122-acre industrial park on the Site, located east of Kelsey Street and south of Hurley Avenue in the City of Visalia. The Project would generate new vehicle trips, including heavy truck traffic associated with industrial uses, and would

179) ITE Trip and Parking Generation Resources

introduce new access points onto Kelsey Street, Hurley Avenue, Crowley Avenue, and Clancy Street/Road 88.

The TIS was prepared for the Project in September 2025 and updated in June 2026 and September 2026 by Ruettgers & Schuler Civil Engineers (Appendix K). The TIS evaluated potential impacts to the local circulation system under the following conditions:

- Existing (2026 baseline).
- Opening year (2029).
- Five-year (2034).
- Future long-term (2046), for Caltrans facilities only.

The analysis incorporated Project phases, cumulative growth, and related capital improvement projects, and utilized the City of Visalia's LOS methodology and queue storage criteria. A separate VMT analysis was conducted by Ruettgers & Schuler Civil Engineers using the TCAG Travel Demand Model. That analysis included all Project land uses and compared Project VMT per service population to the City's threshold of significance of 84 percent of the existing regional average (Appendix L).

The analysis addresses roadway capacity, transit access, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and consistency with applicable plans, including the City of Visalia General Plan Circulation Element, Active Transportation Plan, and Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy.

Pursuant to PRC 21099(b)(2), automobile delay, as described solely by level of service or similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion, shall not be considered a significant impact on the environment under CEQA, except in locations specifically identified in the CEQA Guidelines, if any. This provision aligns with SB 743's emphasis on reducing GHG emissions and promoting multimodal transportation through VMT analysis. Although LOS is not a CEQA threshold for significance, it is analyzed herein to determine consistency with the City's General Plan policies and to identify necessary roadway infrastructure improvements. These policies require proposed developments to make necessary offsite improvements if the development would result in failure to meet LOS D during peak periods (Policy T-P-24).

Construction

Construction activities would involve grading, paving, and building across the Site over an approximately three-year period, with peak daily trips estimated at 150–200 (including worker and haul trucks). Temporary lane closures or detours may occur along Hurley Avenue and adjacent roadways, but no full roadway shutdowns are anticipated. Peak daily construction trips (estimated at up to 200) are substantially lower than the Project's 3,253 operational daily

trips. These impacts are considered minimal because construction traffic is temporary and phased over three years, with activities not overlapping with full Project operations. Haul routes would follow City-approved paths, and traffic management plans would minimize disruptions to existing roadways. Construction traffic would therefore not substantially worsen operations at study intersections, several of which operate below LOS D under existing conditions.

Bicycle

Existing bicycle facilities in the Project vicinity are limited. No Class II (striped bike lanes) or Class III (shared roadway markings) facilities are present on Hurley Avenue, Kelsey Street, Clancy Street, or Crowley Avenue. Due to the absence of these facilities, construction would not result in temporary closures of bicycle routes. Construction impacts to bicycle facilities would be less than significant.

Pedestrian

Pedestrian improvements are sparse in the vicinity. No continuous sidewalk network exists along Project frontages. Haul routes would be managed per City Construction Traffic Management Guidelines to minimize disruptions. Construction impacts to pedestrian facilities would be less than significant.

Transit

The nearest Visalia Transit bus stop is located on Hillsdale Court and Kelsey Street. Routes 15 and 17 operate along Kelsey Street. Construction would not obstruct direct access to these stops, as work would be confined to the Site and frontages. Construction impacts to transit facilities would be less than significant.

Roadway

Construction traffic would add minimal volumes to study intersections, as peak daily trips are estimated at 150–200 (including worker and haul trucks). These volumes are considered minimal because construction traffic would be temporary and phased over an approximately three-year period, with activities not overlapping with full Project operations, thereby avoiding cumulative effects on the circulation system. Because peak construction volumes would be substantially lower than the Project's operational volumes evaluated in the TIS, construction traffic would not be expected to cause study intersections to degrade below LOS D or to substantially worsen operations at intersections already operating below LOS D. Haul routes would follow City-approved paths to avoid sensitive areas. Impacts to roadway capacity during construction would be less than significant.

Operation

Upon buildout, the Project would generate approximately 3,253 daily trips, including 244 AM peak hour trips and 262 PM peak hour trips. New internal roadways would connect to Hurley Avenue and Crowley Avenue (primary east-west) and Kelsey Street and Clancy Street (primary north-south). The LOS and queueing results of the TIS are summarized below.

Bicycle

No bicycle-related deficiencies are anticipated due to the proposed Project. Bicycle connectivity would be improved by the bicycle facilities that are proposed as part of the Project, including a Class I multiuse path along the southern portion of the Site near the detention basin as an extension of the larger Mill Creek Trail, as well as Class II bicycle lanes along Clancy Street and Hurley Avenue. These enhancements provide dedicated facilities for bicyclists while minimizing conflicts with vehicular traffic. Therefore, operational impacts related to bicycle facilities would be less than significant.

Pedestrian

Proposed pedestrian improvements include new sidewalks and pedestrian ramps. New sidewalk improvements would be located adjacent to the Site along Hurley Avenue, the east side of Kelsey Street, both sides of Clancy Street, and both sides of Crowley Avenue (including within the interior of the Site).These improvements are expected to enhance pedestrian connectivity and safety, particularly in relation to adjacent agricultural and developed areas. Additionally, the Project would comply with the ATP by dedicating a setback along Mill Creek for a planned Class I bikeway/pedestrian trail. Therefore, no pedestrian-related deficiencies are anticipated due to the proposed Project. Operational impacts to pedestrian facilities associated with the Project would be less than significant.

Transit

Visalia Transit Routes 15 and 17 provide local bus service proximate to the Site. Route 15 operates along Kelsey Street between Hillsdale Avenue and Goshen Avenue, with a bus stop located near the intersection of Hillsdale Court and Kelsey Street. Route 17 serves the area along Shirk Street north of SR 198 and Plaza Drive south of Goshen Avenue to Crowley Avenue, with additional stops at Hillsdale Court and Kelsey Street. These routes operate daily, supporting connectivity to key destinations such as the Visalia Transit Center and the Visalia Medical Clinic. The proposed Project would enhance access to these transit services through the installation of sidewalks, and bicycle lanes discussed above, facilitating safer and more direct linkages to existing and future bus stops. Therefore, no transit-related deficiencies are anticipated due to the proposed Project. Operational impacts related to circulation system performance in terms of transit facilities would be less than significant.

Queueing

According to the TIS, queue length analysis was conducted for all study intersections using the equations provided in the City of Visalia Traffic Guidelines. The analysis evaluated existing conditions, future baseline scenarios (2026, 2029, 2034, and 2046), and future scenarios with the addition of Project traffic. As shown in Tables 5a and 5b of the TIS (Appendix K), most turn movements result in queue lengths that do not exceed available storage lengths across all scenarios. Storage lengths are exceeded prior to the addition of Project traffic at the following locations:

- Plaza Drive & E Crowley Avenue: eastbound right-turn and westbound left-turn movements.
- Plaza Drive & SR 198 WB Ramps: westbound right-turn and southbound right-turn movements.
- Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps: southbound right-turn movement.
- Plaza Drive & SR 198 EB Ramps: eastbound left-turn and southbound left-turn movements.
- Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 EB Ramps: southbound left-turn movement.

The addition of Project traffic lengthens some of these queues. For example, in 2026 the PM southbound right-turn queue at Plaza Drive & SR 198 WB Ramps increases from 978 to 1,030 feet, and the PM southbound left-turn queue at Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 EB Ramps increases from 296 to 318 feet. However, the TIS concludes that these storage deficiencies exist prior to the addition of Project traffic in 2026, 2029, or 2034, and it does not recommend Project-specific improvements. Exceedances of right-turn pocket storage are generally not considered hazardous, as these movements typically receive green indications concurrent with adjacent through movements, minimizing disruptions to mainline traffic. Each of the left-turn movements identified above already exceeds its storage length under baseline conditions in at least one peak hour. Therefore, no queue-related deficiencies attributable to the Project are anticipated, and no improvements are recommended. Operational impacts related to queueing would be less than significant.

Level of Service

The City of Visalia General Plan Policy T-P-24 and the City's TIS Guidelines establish a minimum acceptable LOS standard of LOS D. An LOS operational analysis was conducted in accordance with the significance criteria provided in the City's TIS Guidelines, using Synchro software to evaluate conditions during the AM and PM peak hours. Project deficiencies were determined based on criteria established in the City's TIS Guidelines. Under these criteria, a deficiency occurs if Project traffic causes an intersection operating at LOS A, B, C, or D (without the Project) to degrade to LOS E or F. A deficiency also occurs if Project traffic increases delay by 5.0 seconds or more at an intersection already operating at LOS E or F.

Table 3-38: Study Intersections Operating Below LOS D by Analysis Scenario

Scenario	Peak Hour	Study Intersection	Traffic Control	Control Delay (sec/veh)	LOS
Existing (2026) Conditions	AM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps	AWSC	68.4	**F**
	PM	Plaza Drive & E Crowley Avenue	Signal	82.2	**F**
	PM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps	AWSC	49.7	**E**
Existing (2026) Conditions Plus Project	AM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps	AWSC	79.2	**F**
	PM	Plaza Drive & E Crowley Avenue	Signal	82.9	**F**
	PM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps	AWSC	59.8	**F**
Opening Year 2029 (Cumulative) Conditions	AM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps	AWSC	59.9	**F**
	PM	Plaza Drive & E Crowley Avenue	Signal	97.7	**F**
	PM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps	AWSC	66.2	**F**
Opening Year 2029 (Cumulative) Conditions Plus Project	AM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps	AWSC	69.1	**F**
	PM	Plaza Drive & E Crowley Avenue	Signal	98.8	**F**
	PM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps	AWSC	76.5	**F**

Five-Year 2034 (Cumulative) Conditions	AM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps	AWSC	100.8	**F**
	PM	Plaza Drive & E Crowley Avenue	Signal	177.3	**F**
	PM	Plaza Drive & SR 198 WB Ramps	Signal	56.0	**E**
	PM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps	AWSC	100.7	**F**
	PM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 EB Ramps	AWSC	35.5	**E**
Five-Year 2034 (Cumulative) Conditions Plus Project	AM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps	AWSC	102.6	**F**
	PM	Plaza Drive & E Crowley Avenue	Signal	188.0	**F**
	PM	Plaza Drive & SR 198 WB Ramps	Signal	63.3	**E**
	PM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps	AWSC	110.9	**F**
	PM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 EB Ramps	AWSC	40.2	**E**
Future 2046 (Cumulative) – Caltrans Facilities Only Conditions	AM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps	AWSC	205.6	**F**
	AM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 EB Ramps	AWSC	82.6	**F**
	PM	Plaza Drive & SR 198 WB Ramps	Signal	83.8	**F**
	PM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps	AWSC	221.5	**F**

	PM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 EB Ramps	AWSC	104.8	**F**
Future 2046 (Cumulative) Plus Project – Caltrans Facilities Only Conditions	AM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps	AWSC	223.4	**F**
	AM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 EB Ramps	AWSC	84.9	**F**
	PM	Plaza Drive & SR 198 WB Ramps	Signal	108.7	**F**
	PM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps	AWSC	224.3	**F**
	PM	Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 EB Ramps	AWSC	115.6	**F**

AWSC = All Way Stop Controlled
LOS = Level of Service
Signal = signalized intersection.
The Future 2046 (Cumulative) scenarios evaluate Caltrans facilities only. Plaza Drive & E Crowley Avenue and the remaining local study intersections were not analyzed under those scenarios and are therefore not shown for 2046.

Source: TIS prepared for the Project, September 2026 (Appendix K), Tables 3a and 3b.

Several intersections operate below LOS D with and without the Project. As shown in Table 3-38, the addition of Project traffic would cause the Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps intersection to degrade from LOS E to LOS F during the PM peak hour under Existing (2026) conditions. Project traffic would also increase control delay by 5.0 seconds or more at intersections already operating at LOS E or F in the following scenarios:

- Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps: AM and PM 2026, AM and PM 2029, PM 2034, and AM 2046.
- Plaza Drive & E Crowley Avenue: PM 2034.
- Plaza Drive & SR 198 WB Ramps: PM 2034 and PM 2046.
- Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 EB Ramps: PM 2046.

The TIS concludes that the Project does not degrade LOS in any analysis scenario. However, under the deficiency criteria described above, these increases constitute Project-related LOS

deficiencies for purposes of General Plan consistency. Pursuant to PRC § 21099(b)(2), these LOS deficiencies do not constitute significant environmental impacts under CEQA. Consistent with Policy T-P-24, the Project Applicant would be required, as a condition of approval, to pay its proportionate fair share toward improvements at these intersections.

Consistency with the City of Visalia Active Transportation Plan (ATP)

The Project does not conflict with the ATP (adopted March 6, 2017). The ATP identifies a planned Class I multi-use path (multiuse trail) along Mill Creek as a key active transportation facility, including segments in the southeast area of Visalia near the Project Site (south of Hurley Avenue and east of Kelsey Street). The Project directly supports this recommendation by dedicating a setback along Mill Creek on the southern portion of the Site (near the detention basin) to accommodate the planned Class I bikeway/pedestrian trail as an extension of the larger Mill Creek Trail system.

In addition, the Project proposes Class II bicycle lanes along Clancy Street and Hurley Avenue, which align with the ATP's planned bikeway network improvements in the vicinity. These facilities enhance bicycle connectivity, reduce conflicts with vehicular traffic, and promote safe non-motorized travel consistent with the ATP's goals of encouraging walking, bicycling, and other active modes. The dedication of the Mill Creek setback and construction of the proposed bicycle lanes are required as a condition of approval. With implementation of these features, the Project fully complies with and implements the ATP.

Impact 3.12-2: Would the Project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

Before Mitigation	Significant (36.83 VMT per service population exceeds the City threshold of 26.0)
Mitigation Measures	MM TRANS-1
After Mitigation	**Significant and Unavoidable Impact**

CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b), establishes VMT as the primary metric for evaluating a project's transportation impacts under CEQA. This provision, implemented statewide following Senate Bill 743 (2013), requires lead agencies to analyze land use projects' effects on automobile and light truck VMT, replacing LOS or other delay-based metrics as the principal measure of significance. The City of Visalia, as the Lead Agency, has adopted VMT Thresholds and Implementation Guidelines that set the significance threshold for mixed-use projects at 84 percent of the existing regional average VMT per service population, as

determined by TCAG. For this Project, the threshold is 26.0 VMT per service population (84 percent of TCAG's regional average of 31.0).

A VMT analysis was prepared for the Project in accordance with the City's VMT Guidelines and dated January 30, 2026 (Appendix L). The analysis utilized TCAG's Travel Demand Model to estimate Project-generated VMT, incorporating all proposed land uses. Results indicate that the Project would generate 36.83 VMT per service population, exceeding the threshold of 26.0 by 10.83 VMT per service population. This exceedance constitutes a potentially significant transportation impact under CEQA, as the Project would increase VMT relative to existing conditions and the regional baseline, contributing to regional congestion, air quality degradation, and GHG emissions.

To address this impact, feasible mitigation measures were evaluated consistent with the City's VMT Guidelines, drawing from the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions (December 2021)[180], which is the edition relied upon in the VMT analysis (Appendix L). The maximum reductions and quantification methods identified for each measure below reflect the December 2021 edition of the Handbook.

The following CAPCOA transportation measures were evaluated for feasibility and effectiveness in reducing Project VMT. These focus on commute trip reduction and land use strategies, with estimated reductions based on CAPCOA quantification methods for suburban mixed-use contexts. Given the Project's industrial focus, feasibility varies based on site constraints, employee numbers, and operational needs.

- **T-2: Increase Job Density**. Increases employment per acre to improve jobs-housing balance and reduce commute distances. The CAPCOA method assumes an elasticity of -0.07, meaning that a 1 percent increase in density results in a 0.07 percent reduction in VMT. For suburban sites, this could yield 10-25 percent VMT reduction if density is doubled, applicable to mixed-use developments where higher employment density promotes shorter trips and mode shifts to transit or active transport. However, the Project's design is fixed for logistics efficiency, where increasing density may not be feasible without redesigning buildings or reducing open space, potentially conflicting with zoning and operational requirements for the industrial buildings and pads.
- **T-5: Implement Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Program, Voluntary**. Employer voluntarily promotes alternatives like flexible hours or telework through incentives, education, or

180) CAPCOA Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions, Assessing Climate Vulnerabilities, and Advancing Health and Equity: Designed for Local Governments, Communities, and Project Developers

infrastructure support to discourage single-occupancy vehicle trips. The CAPCOA method assumes a 4 percent reduction in commute VMT, where voluntary participation can lead to mode shifts but depends on employee engagement. Applicable to mixed-use industrial projects with office/retail components, as it can integrate with existing transit routes, however, the effectiveness is low without enforcement mechanisms.

- **T-6: Implement CTR Program – Mandatory**. Requires CTR with target, mandating employers to implement programs monitoring and achieving trip reductions through alternatives like carpooling or transit. The method assumes a 26 percent reduction in commute VMT with monitoring enhancing compliance through mandatory reporting and penalties. Feasible if integrated with e-TRIP for large employers at the Site, and the mandatory aspects enhance compliance in industrial contexts with high employee counts.
- **T-7: Implement CTR Marketing**. Educational campaigns to inform employees of travel options beyond single-occupancy vehicles. Reductions can be up to 4 percent. Feasible due to the low-cost digital/poster campaigns.
- **T-8: Provide Ridesharing Program**. Matching services for carpools to replace single-occupancy trips. Reductions up to 8 percent in VMT, and it is effective for large employee bases in suburban industrial sites by reducing trip numbers. Feasible at the Site with apps or a website to encourage shared rides among warehouse workers.
- **T-9: Implement Subsidized or Discounted Transit Program**. Provide transit passes. or subsidies to employees. Reductions of up to 5.5 percent if near routes, and it is applicable in suburban areas. Feasible but limited by suburban transit coverage at the Site.
- **T-10: Provide End-of-Trip Bicycle Facilities**. Providing lockers/showers and secure parking to encourage biking. Reductions of up to 4.4 percent, supporting active transport in suburban settings with proposed bike lanes. Feasible at the Site to complement Class II lanes on Clancy Street and Hurley Avenue.
- **T-11: Provide Employer-Sponsored Vanpool.** Subsidize vanpools for groups of employees. Percent VMT reductions up to 20.4 percent for long commutes. Feasible for warehouse workers, with moderate effectiveness due to suburban distances but lack of enforcement.
- **T-12: Price Workplace Parking.** Charge for employee parking to discourage solo driving. Reductions of up to 20 percent by increasing driving costs, applicable in industrial settings but may face resistance with free parking norms. Potentially feasible at the Site.
- **T-13: Implement Employee Parking Cash-Out**. Offer cash instead of free parking, allowing employees to opt out for payment. Reductions of up to 12 percent. Feasible at the Site for large employers.
- **T-18: Pedestrian Network Improvements.** Enhancing sidewalks and connectivity (new sidewalks along Hurley Avenue, Kelsey Street, Clancy Street, and Crowley Avenue) could yield a 6.4 percent reduction.

- **T-21-A: Implement Conventional Carshare Program.** Provide shared conventional vehicles onsite for short trips, reducing personal vehicle use. The percent reduction is capped at 0.15 percent. Applicable to mixed-use components like retail and warehouse, but insufficient.
- **T-21-B: Implement Electric Carshare Program.** Provide shared electric vehicles onsite, combining mode shift with low-emission benefits. The percent reduction is capped at 0.18 percent. Applicable to the Project for sustainability, but insufficient.

Table 3-39 quantifies the maximum VMT reduction associated with each of the CAPCOA measures described above and compares the resulting Existing plus Project VMT per service population to the City's threshold of significance. The unmitigated Existing plus Project condition is 36.83 VMT per service population, and the threshold of significance is 26.0 VMT per service population (84 percent of TCAG's regional average of 31.0 VMT per service population), which corresponds to the 29.3 percent reduction identified in the VMT analysis (Appendix L).

Table 3-39: CAPCOA VMT Reduction Measures

CAPCOA Measure	Maximum VMT Reduction (%)	Feasibility	Effectiveness	Mitigated Existing plus Project VMT per Service Population[1]	Exceeds Threshold of 26.0?	Additional VMT Reduction Still Required (%)
Unmitigated Existing plus Project Condition	**—**	**—**	**—**	**36.83**	**Yes**	**29.3**
T-2: Increase Job Density[2]	25.0	Low	Moderate	27.62	Yes	5.9
T-5: Implement CTR Program, Voluntary	4.0	High	Low	35.36	Yes	26.5
T-6: Implement CTR Program, Mandatory[3]	26.0	High	Moderate	27.25	Yes	4.6
T-7: Implement CTR Marketing	4.0	High	Low	35.36	Yes	26.5

T-8: Provide Ridesharing Program	8.0	High	Low to Moderate	33.88	Yes	23.3
T-9: Implement Subsidized or Discounted Transit Program	5.5	Moderate	Moderate	34.80	Yes	25.3
T-10: Provide End-of-Trip Bicycle Facilities	4.4	High	Low	35.21	Yes	26.2
T-11: Provide Employer-Sponsored Vanpool[3]	20.4	High	Moderate	29.32	Yes	11.3
T-12: Price Workplace Parking	20.0	Moderate	High	29.46	Yes	11.8
T-13: Implement Employee Parking Cash-Out	12.0	Moderate	Moderate	32.41	Yes	19.8
T-18: Pedestrian Network Improvements	6.4	High	Moderate	34.47	Yes	24.6
T-21-A: Implement Conventional Carshare Program	0.15	Moderate	Low	36.77	Yes	29.3
T-21-B: Implement Electric Carshare Program	0.18	Moderate	Low	36.76	Yes	29.3
Combined non-discretionary onsite measures (T-18 and T-10,	**10.5**	**High**	**Moderate**	**32.96**	**Yes**	**21.1**

applied sequentially)[4]						

1. Mitigated VMT per service population is calculated as 36.83 multiplied by (1 minus the maximum percent reduction). The additional VMT reduction still required is calculated relative to the mitigated value and the 26.0 threshold.
2. T-2 is shown at the upper end of the 10 to 25 percent range identified by the CAPCOA method; feasibility is low for the Project because building and pad configurations are fixed for logistics operations.
3. T-6 and T-11 reflect reductions in commute VMT rather than total Project VMT; the values shown are therefore conservative upper bounds when applied to the Project as a whole.
4. The combined measures row reflects the two non-discretionary onsite improvements required by MM TRANS-1, pedestrian network improvements (T-18, capped at 6.4 percent) and end-of-trip bicycle facilities (T-10, capped at 4.4 percent). Consistent with the CAPCOA Handbook direction that measure reductions be applied sequentially rather than added, the combined reduction is calculated as 1 minus the product of 0.936 and 0.956, or 10.5 percent. The remaining measures required by MM TRANS-1 would provide additional reduction, but the CAPCOA quantification methods for those measures depend on the percentage of eligible employees, which cannot be determined at this time; no additional reduction is therefore credited.

As shown in Table 3-39, no individual CAPCOA measure, and no reasonably achievable combination of measures, would reduce Existing plus Project VMT to or below the City's threshold of significance of 26.0 VMT per service population. Even the most effective individual measures (T-6 and T-2) would still require an additional 4.6 to 5.9 percent reduction to reach the threshold. Neither measure is fully feasible at the Site given the Project's industrial land use, suburban location, and limited transit coverage. The impact would therefore remain significant and unavoidable following implementation of MM TRANS-1.

The VMT reduction measures listed above are in line with the land use being proposed and as described in the CAPCOA GHG Handbook. However, as stated in the Handbook, it is possible to combine certain reduction measures, but it is not always beneficial or accurate. The two primary reasons noted in the handbook state that the application of subsequent measures will often result in diminishing returns. Also, the implementation of multiple reduction measures may lead to “competition between measures.” This means that both measures may reduce VMT individually, but together, one may counter some of the benefit of the other. Therefore, due to overlapping effects, the combined effectiveness of the proposed TDM and parking strategies is conservatively assumed to be less than the sum of individual reductions. The measures reduction can be added sequentially, with a reduction in effectiveness based on the previously applied reduction. Due to the unknown nature of the percentage of employees eligible, determination of an exact percentage reduction is not feasible.

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Rule 9410

SJVAPCD Rule 9410 (Employer-Based Trip Reduction, or e-TRIP)[181] applies to employers with 100 or more eligible employees at a worksite in incorporated cities with populations of at least 10,000. The rule requires development and implementation of an e-TRIP Plan to reduce VMT from employee commutes by promoting alternatives like carpooling, transit, vanpooling, biking, and teleworking. Eligible employees are those working at least 2,040 hours per year. For this Project, the approximately 1,748,900 square feet of industrial/warehouse uses and other uses are likely to exceed 100 employees, triggering compliance. The Master Plan (Appendix B) estimates an employment density of 1,500 square feet per employee for the industrial buildings, or approximately 1,166 employees. The e-TRIP Plan must include annual commute surveys, onsite documentation, and reporting to SJVAPCD, potentially achieving 5-15 percent VMT reductions for commute trips through mandatory TDM elements. This rule aligns with CAPCOA measures and is feasible as a regulatory requirement.

Transportation Impact Mitigation Discussion

MM TRANS-1 is included to address the significant VMT impact identified in the analysis, as required by CEQA to reduce impacts to the extent feasible. It was selected because the Project's VMT exceedance (requiring 29.3 percent reduction) is unattainable through design alone, necessitating a combination of onsite and regional strategies. Measures were chosen from the CAPCOA Handbook based on applicability to mixed-use industrial projects, focusing on TDM to target commute and customer trips. Qualitative elements (pedestrian improvements) were prioritized for immediate feasibility, while fair-share fees to TCAG support broader programs. Given the limited guidance in the CAPCOA Handbook on combining strategies, emphasizing diminishing returns and potential incompatibilities, the mitigation requires three feasible strategies. This allows selection of compatible high-feasibility options without assuming additive reductions beyond conservative estimates. Even with optimal combinations, the required 29.3 percent reduction cannot be achieved due to the Project's industrial nature and suburban location, resulting in residual significant impacts.

Fair-share fees to TCAG are included in MM TRANS-1 to contribute to regional TDM programs, such as transit expansions or VMT offset banks, which reduce regionwide VMT through infrastructure not feasible at the Project scale. These fees are calculated based on the Project's proportional VMT impact (using TCAG's fee schedule or Project-specific modeling) and support equitable mitigation. Other measures, like pedestrian enhancements and bicycle facilities, are detailed for onsite implementation to promote mode shift.

SJVAPCD Rule 9410

Two of the measures required by MM TRANS-1 are non-discretionary onsite improvements whose reductions can be quantified without assumptions regarding employee participation: pedestrian network improvements (CAPCOA T-18, capped at 6.4 percent) and end-of-trip bicycle facilities (CAPCOA T-10, capped at 4.4 percent). Consistent with the CAPCOA Handbook direction that measure reductions be applied sequentially rather than added, the combined reduction from these two measures is 10.5 percent (1 minus the product of 0.936 and 0.956). Applied to the unmitigated Existing plus Project condition of 36.83 VMT per service population, this yields 32.96 VMT per service population, which remains above the City's threshold of significance of 26.0 VMT per service population. A further reduction of 21.1 percent would be required to reach the threshold.

The remaining measures required by MM TRANS-1, including compliance with SJVAPCD Rule 9410 and the selection of at least three additional TDM strategies, would provide additional VMT reduction. As stated in the VMT analysis (Appendix L), however, the CAPCOA quantification methods for those measures depend on the percentage of eligible employees, which cannot be determined until tenants and staffing levels are known. No additional quantified reduction is therefore credited in this analysis, and the 10.5 percent reduction identified above is a conservative estimate of the reduction that MM TRANS-1 would achieve. Even accounting for the unquantified benefit of the remaining measures, the required 29.3 percent reduction would not be achieved, and residual impacts remain due to measure incompatibility and the caps on stacking described above.

Qualitative considerations, including the Project's location within the City's Sphere of Influence (adjacent to existing industrial uses and SR 198), support regional manufacturing goals, and inclusion of onsite amenities industrial-serving commercial pads to reduce offsite trips, were factored into the analysis. However, these do not offset the quantitative VMT exceedance. The Project's consistency with the City's General Plan Circulation Element and annexation entitlements ensures alignment with local planning objectives, but CEQA requires mitigation of the identified VMT impact.

Mitigation Measures

MM TRANS-1: Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan and VMT Reduction. Prior to issuance of the first building permit, the Project Applicant shall submit a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan to the City of Visalia for review and approval. The TDM Plan shall incorporate a combination of feasible VMT reduction measures from the CAPCOA Handbook, selected for compatibility and to avoid overestimation of reductions due to diminishing returns or measure competition. The Plan shall include, at a minimum:

- Compliance with SJVAPCD Rule 9410 (e-TRIP), including development of an e-TRIP Plan with annual commute surveys and reporting for employers with 100 or more eligible employees.
- Onsite pedestrian and bicycle enhancements per the Project Site plan, including new sidewalks along Hurley Avenue, Kelsey Street, Clancy Street, and Crowley Avenue (CAPCOA T-18); end-of-trip bicycle facilities such as lockers and showers (CAPCOA T-10); and Class II bicycle lanes along Clancy Street and Hurley Avenue.
- At least three additional TDM measures from the following high-feasibility options. Three measures are required because no single CAPCOA measure, and no onsite design measure alone, achieves the 29.3 percent reduction needed to reach the City's threshold of significance; requiring at least three feasible strategies in addition to the mandatory measures above maximizes the reduction reasonably achievable at an industrial Site while allowing selection of measures that are compatible and do not credit the same travel behavior twice. The Applicant shall demonstrate compatibility by quantifying the combined reduction sequentially rather than additively, consistent with the CAPCOA Handbook, and shall not claim full credit for measures that compete for the same trips—specifically, a Mandatory CTR Program (T-6) may encompass ridesharing (T-8) and vanpool (T-11) elements and these shall not be credited additively at full value where they overlap, and priced workplace parking (T-12) and parking cash-out (T-13) act on the same parking-cost mechanism and shall not both be credited at full value:
- T-6: Mandatory CTR Program with monitoring and targets for trip reduction.
- T-8: Ridesharing program with matching services and incentives.
- T-9: Subsidized or discounted transit program, providing passes for Routes 15 and 17.
- T-11: Employer-sponsored vanpool subsidies.
- T-12: Priced workplace parking for employees.
- T-13: Employee parking cash-out program.
- Contribution to regional TDM programs via fair-share fees to TCAG, calculated based on the Project's proportional VMT impact (using TCAG's Regional Transportation Impact Fee Program or equivalent), to fund basin-wide VMT reductions such as transit improvements. Where a VMT mitigation bank, VMT exchange, or comparable regional VMT offset program is established and available to the Project at the time of TDM Plan approval, the Applicant may satisfy all or part of this regional contribution through purchase of credits from, or participation in, that program, subject to City verification that the credits represent real, quantified, and enforceable VMT reductions.

The TDM Plan shall achieve the maximum feasible reduction in Project VMT and shall demonstrate, using the CAPCOA methodology, the reduction in Existing plus Project VMT achieved toward the City's threshold of significance of 26.0 VMT per service population (84 percent of TCAG's regional average of 31.0 VMT per service population). Because that 29.3 percent reduction is not fully attainable at this Site, "sufficient" reduction for purposes of this

measure is defined as achieving the maximum feasible VMT reduction and, at a minimum, the quantified reduction credited in this EIR—a 10.5 percent sequential reduction from the non-discretionary onsite pedestrian and bicycle measures (CAPCOA T-18 and T-10) required above. The TDM Plan shall include monitoring provisions, with annual reporting to the City demonstrating implementation and estimated VMT reductions (conservatively calculated sequentially to account for diminishing returns). If annual monitoring demonstrates that implemented measures are achieving less than the reduction committed to in the approved TDM Plan, and in no case less than the 10.5 percent floor identified above, the Applicant shall implement additional compatible measures from the list above until the committed reduction is restored.

Impact 3.12-3: Would the Project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

The Project Site is located at the southeast corner of North Kelsey Street and West Hurley Avenue in Visalia, California, encompassing approximately 122 acres. The Site would be annexed into City limits and zoned Industrial, consistent with the Visalia General Plan Land Use Designation.

Geometric design features of the Project, including Site access points and internal circulation, were evaluated in accordance with the City of Visalia Guidelines and the Caltrans Highway Design Manual. Primary access to the Site would occur via full-access driveways on Kelsey Street, Hurley Avenue, Crowley Avenue, and Clancy Street/Road 88 (Clancy Street), with locations and configurations that align with existing roadway geometries and avoid sharp curves or sight distance obstructions. These driveways are designed to serve the mix of industrial buildings and industrial-serving commercial pads. Internal roadways within the Site would feature standard 26-foot-wide two-way aisles with 90-degree parking and 35-foot turning radii for truck maneuvering. Building setbacks would range from 0 feet (side and rear) to 25 feet (major road frontage) from property lines, in compliance with Industrial zoning standards (maximum building height of 75 feet). No sharp curves, steep grades, or other geometric features that could impede safe vehicle operations are proposed.

The TIS analyzed study intersections within a ½-mile radius of the Site, including the primary access intersection (N Kelsey Street & W Hurley Avenue). Under all analyzed scenarios (2026 through 2034), this intersection operates at LOS A during both AM and PM peak hours, with no Project-attributable degradation. Queue lengths at nearby intersections do not exceed storage capacities in a manner caused by the Project, and right-turn movements (common for Site access) pose minimal disruption risks due to concurrent green phasing with through traffic. The TIS also confirms that the Site access points conform to the City's spacing and location standards (Design and Improvement Standards, Detail C-32), which further enhances sight lines and reduces conflict points. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities would minimize hazards for non-vehicular users. These include new sidewalks, Class II bike lanes along Clancy Street and Hurley Avenue, and a Class I multiuse path along the southern Site boundary (extension of the Mill Creek Trail).

The TIS also included a traffic signal warrant analysis consistent with City of Visalia policy. Intersections were evaluated for Warrant 1 (Eight-Hour Vehicular Volume) and Warrant 2 (Four-Hour Vehicular Volume) as defined by the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Both all-way stop-controlled intersections at Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 WB Ramps and Rd 92 (Shirk Street) & SR 198 EB Ramps meet Warrants 1 and 2 under Existing conditions, before the addition of Project traffic, and continue to meet them under Existing plus Project conditions. These two intersections also meet the peak hour signal warrant during the AM and PM peak hours under 2026, 2029, and 2034 plus Project scenarios. None of the other unsignalized study intersections meet the peak hour signal warrant in any scenario analyzed (Tables 4a through 4d of the TIS, Appendix K). Because the warrants at the Rd 92 ramp intersections are met under Existing conditions, the need for signalization is not created by the Project. These intersections are part of the State highway system, and any future signalization or other traffic control changes would be subject to Caltrans review and approval.

The TIS also summarizes Caltrans collision data, dated August 14, 2025, for October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2024. The data cover SR 198 between postmiles 4.000 and 6.500 and the SR 198 ramps at Plaza Drive and at Shirk Street/Road 92. During this period:

- The westbound SR 198 segment had 104 collisions, three of which resulted in fatalities.
- The eastbound SR 198 segment had 107 collisions, none of which resulted in fatalities.
- The four SR 198 ramps at Plaza Drive had 19 collisions combined, none of which resulted in fatalities.
- The SR 198 ramps at Shirk Street/Road 92 had seven collisions combined, none of which resulted in fatalities.

The TIS does not identify any collision-related improvements for the Project. The Project would not alter the geometry of the SR 198 mainline or its ramps, and Project access would be provided from local roadways that conform to the City's driveway spacing and location standards.

Regarding incompatible uses, the Site is currently agricultural, with occasional farm equipment (tractors and harvesters) accessing adjacent roadways. However, the Project's conversion to industrial and commercial uses would eliminate onsite agricultural operations, thereby reducing farm equipment traffic in the vicinity. Surrounding lands include active agricultural fields. These fields are accessed via Hurley Avenue, Clancy Street/Road 88, and Shirk Street/Road 92, which are designated collector arterials capable of accommodating mixed traffic. Industrial truck traffic generated by the Project is compatible with these roadways, as the area is within an established industrial corridor proximate to SR 198.

Impact 3.12-4: Would the Project result in inadequate emergency access?

Before Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact
Mitigation Measures	None required.
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact**

The Project Site is located at the southeast corner of North Kelsey Street and West Hurley Avenue in western Visalia, California. The Site has not previously experienced wildfire or other hazards requiring large-scale evacuation. Access to the Site would be provided by full-access driveways. These driveways would meet City standards for width and turning radii, ensuring compatibility with emergency vehicles, including fire apparatus up to 10 feet wide.

Internal circulation within the Site would consist of 26-foot-wide two-way aisles designed for heavy truck traffic, with no cul-de-sacs, gates, or barriers that could impede emergency response. No features, such as sharp curves or sight distance obstructions, would compromise emergency ingress or egress.

The City's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), adopted in 2011, is used in conjunction with Tulare County's EOP, which incorporates the County's updated 2011 Evacuation Plan.[182] To keep Tulare County residents and businesses informed of emergencies and other time-sensitive messages, the County utilizes Alert TC, which may include severe weather warnings, wildfire

181) 182 City of Visalia EOP

alerts, and road closures/detours. The nearest fire station to the Site is Fire Station 55, operated by the Visalia Fire Department and located approximately 2 miles to the northeast at 921 West Ferguson Avenue. Based on this distance and an average response speed of 35 miles per hour, the estimated response time for a fire engine would be approximately 3.5 minutes. These stations are staffed 24 hours, maintaining average response times of 5–7 minutes citywide.

The Site's location enhances emergency access, with direct connectivity to SR 198 for rapid regional response. In addition to SR 198, other main arterial roads in the vicinity, such as Plaza Drive, provide readily accessible alternative emergency evacuation routes. The Project's primary access roads (Kelsey Street, Clancy Street, Hurley Avenue, and Crowley Avenue) allow adequate egress/ingress to the Site in the event of an emergency, connecting to an internal road network that provides ample access for emergency vehicles.

During construction, construction equipment and vehicles accessing and leaving the Site could potentially impede evacuation or EVA. However, the City does not currently have any established evacuation routes beyond the General Plan designations, and the proposed Project's construction would not substantially impair these routes or any adopted emergency response or evacuation plan. While construction would involve truck deliveries, hauling of materials, and construction crews, and Project operations would generate both passenger vehicle and truck trips associated with the industrial and industrial-serving commercial uses, all improvement plans and work in existing roadways would require approval by the City Engineer prior to implementation. Additionally, complying with an approved traffic/pedestrian control plan will reduce impacts. The proposed streets have been designed and would be constructed to applicable City specifications, ensuring adequate Site access for emergency vehicles. In the event of an emergency response, the City's Engineering, Police, and Fire Departments would coordinate to maintain adequate access to and from the Site. The TIS confirms that the primary access intersection (N Kelsey Street & W Hurley Avenue) operates at LOS A under all analyzed scenarios, with no Project-attributable degradation that could affect emergency response times.

3.12.5 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts refer to the combined effects of the proposed Project with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects that could incrementally contribute to adverse effects on transportation. Under CEQA Guidelines § 15130, cumulative impacts are evaluated based on whether the Project's incremental contribution is "cumulatively considerable," meaning it would result in a significant cumulative effect when viewed in connection with other projects.

Cumulative Setting and Geographic Scope

The cumulative setting for transportation encompasses the City of Visalia and surrounding Tulare County areas, where development activities could potentially increase VMT, degrade LOS at intersections, or affect multimodal facilities. This region includes major transportation corridors such as SR 99 and SR 198, serving commercial, industrial, and agricultural land uses in the southern San Joaquin Valley. The geographic scope for cumulative transportation impacts is focused on the Tulare County regional transportation network, as traffic from multiple projects could interact across shared roadways, transit routes, and active transportation facilities. Cumulative projects considered include planned industrial, commercial, and transportation developments in Visalia and Tulare County, such as other annexations, warehouse expansions, and infrastructure improvements (extensions of Hurley Avenue to Shirk Street) that may increase regional VMT or affect intersection operations. No specific past projects are directly linked to the proposed Project Site, but regional growth trends underscore the potential for cumulative effects on VMT, congestion, and multimodal access.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Cumulative transportation impacts would occur if the Project, in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, results in a substantial increase in regional VMT, degradation of circulation system performance, or hazards to multimodal users.

As detailed in Impact 3.12-2, the Project's individual impacts on VMT are significant and unavoidable even with incorporation of MM TRANS-1. This measure includes a TDM Plan, compliance with SJVAPCD Rule 9410, onsite pedestrian and bicycle enhancements, and fair-share contributions to regional TDM programs. These measures aim to reduce VMT through mode shifts and regional improvements.

Per CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3 and the City's VMT Thresholds and Implementation Guidelines, transportation impacts are assessed using VMT metrics, which inherently consider regional cumulative effects by comparing Project-generated VMT to basin-wide thresholds. The VMT analysis (Appendix L) utilized the TCAG Travel Demand Model, incorporating cumulative growth projections. The Project generates 36.83 VMT per service population, exceeding the threshold of 26.0 (84% of the regional average of 31.0), requiring a 29.3% reduction that is unattainable through feasible measures. When combined with cumulative projects, the Project contributes to regional VMT increases, potentially exacerbating congestion, air quality issues, and GHG emissions. However, the Project's compliance with SB 743 requirements, the City's General Plan Circulation Element, and the ATP ensures alignment with regulatory frameworks to minimize effects on transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. The TIS (Appendix K) evaluated cumulative

scenarios for 2029, 2034, and 2046. The addition of Project traffic would increase delay at several intersections already operating below LOS D. This is addressed under Impact 3.12-1 for General Plan consistency and, pursuant to PRC § 21099(b)(2), is not a significant impact under CEQA. No Project-attributable queueing hazards were identified, and the primary access intersection at N Kelsey Street & W Hurley Avenue operates at LOS A under all analyzed scenarios. Overall, cumulative development in Visalia and Tulare County could increase regional VMT and strain the circulation system. The Project's contributions are cumulatively considerable, as they exceed established thresholds despite mitigation.

Conclusion

The Project would result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to transportation impacts with mitigation incorporated.

3 - 13 Tribal Cultural Resources

This section of the Draft EIR evaluates the potential impacts to Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs) associated with Project implementation. A Phase I Cultural Resources Survey was prepared for the Project (March 17, 2025, revised in April 2026) (Appendix F). In addition, the City of Visalia notified applicable Tribes to request consultation on the Project, pursuant to AB 52.

One NOP comment letter was received from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) regarding this topic. The NAHC letter, dated May 30, 2025, states the importance of early consultation with California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project's geographic area to avoid inadvertent discoveries of Native American human remains and to protect tribal cultural resources. It also recommends consulting legal counsel for compliance with AB 52, SB 18, and other applicable laws.

3.13.1 Environmental Setting

Physical Environment

The Site is located in western edge of the City of Visalia in Tulare County, within the San Joaquin Valley. The San Joaquin Valley is a long, narrow, northwest-trending alluvial valley that lies between the Sierra Nevada Range to the east and the Coast Ranges to the west. The region was historically covered with native annual and perennial grasses, including San Joaquin saltbush, valley oak savanna, riparian forest, and tule marsh. The climate consists of hot, dry summers with cool, moist winters that provide the best climate for the fruit orchards currently located within the southern portion of the Site. The Site is best characterized historically as a rural ranching and agricultural region.

Ethnographic Context

Penutian-speaking Yokuts tribal groups occupied the southern San Joaquin Valley region and much of the nearby Sierra Nevada. Ethnographic information about the Yokuts was collected primarily by Powers, Kroeber, Gayton, Driver, Latta, and Harrington. Existing research emphasizes the central Yokuts tribes in the valley and Sierra foothills, while northern tribes declined due to the Gold Rush and southern tribes were removed to missions and later absorbed into multi-tribal communities on the Sebastian Indian Reservation, Tule River Reservation, and Santa Rosa Rancheria. This has resulted in a scarcity of detail on southern Valley tribes compared to central foothills groups, though general indigenous lifeways were similar across Yokuts territory, particularly in environmentally influenced subsistence, adaptation, religion, and beliefs.

The San Joaquin Valley floor, including the Site, was occupied by Southern Valley Yokuts divided into autonomous tribelets with poorly defined boundaries. The Telamni occupied the lower Kaweah River delta in the vicinity of present-day Visalia and likely included the Site, while the Wukchumni occupied the Kaweah River foothills to the east and the Tachi occupied the northern and western margins of Tulare Lake. The Yokuts are linguistically related to northern San Joaquin Valley occupants. Settlement patterns were consistent, with winter villages along lakeshores and streams circa A.D. 1800, and dispersal to family camps on elevated valley spots or near foothill gathering areas.

Most Yokuts groups were organized as distinct tribelets—land-owning entities centered on a village, linked by shared territory and common ancestry, with populations of 150 to 500 people. Each was led by a chief assisted by a winatum (herald and assistant chief) and a shaman as religious officer, who wielded substantial influence despite lacking direct political authority. Subsistence varied by environment but centered on acorns and gathered seeds, supplemented by lake and river foods like fish and wildfowl for Valley tribes; patterns included winter aggregation in large villages using stored staples, followed by dispersal to extended family camps for seasonal gathering. Despite varying estimates influenced by Euro-American diseases and disruption, the Yokuts were among Native California's largest groups, comprising 27 percent of the state's aboriginal population at contact, with many descendants still residing in the southern San Joaquin Valley.

3.13.2 Regulatory Setting

Historical Resources

Historical resources are defined by CEQA as resources that are listed in or eligible for the CRHR, resources that are listed in a local historical resource register, or resources that are otherwise determined to be historical under PRC § 21084.1 or CEQA Section 15064.5. Under these definitions, Historical Resources can include archaeological resources and TCRs.

Archaeological Resources

As stated above, archaeological resources may be considered historical resources. If they do not meet the qualifications under the PRC 21084.1 or CEQA Section 15064.5, they may instead determined to be “unique” as defined by PRC Section 21083.2. A unique archaeological resource is an artifact, object, or Site that: (1) contains information (for which there is a demonstrable public interest) needed to answer important scientific research questions; (2) has a special and particular quality, such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type; or (3) is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historical event or person.

Tribal Cultural Resource

TCRs can include Site features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, or objects which are of cultural value to a California Native American tribe. A TCR is either listed on or eligible for the CRHR or a local historic register or determined by the Lead Agency to be treated as TCR.

State

Assembly Bill 52 – Tribal Consultation Requirements

AB 52 established a new category of environmental resources under CEQA known as TCRs. AB 52 also expanded the process for consulting with California Native American tribes during CEQA review and mandated early tribal consultation for certain types of projects.

Under AB 52, a Lead Agency must notify any California Native American tribe that has previously requested notification of projects within the agency's jurisdiction. The notification must be provided within 14 days of determining that a project application is complete or a decision is made to undertake a project. Tribes have 30 days from receipt of the notification to request formal consultation.

TCRs are defined as sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a tribe that are either:

- Listed or eligible for listing in the CRHR; or
- Included in a local register of historical resources as defined in PRC § 5020.1(k); or
- Determined by the Lead Agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant to a California Native American tribe.

Through consultation, the Lead Agency and the requesting tribe evaluate whether the project may have a significant impact on TCRs and, if so, identify feasible mitigation measures to avoid or minimize that impact. Mitigation measures agreed upon through consultation may include avoidance, preservation in place, or other culturally appropriate actions.

If consultation is not requested or if consultation concludes without agreement, the Lead Agency must still consider whether the project may cause a significant impact to TCRs under CEQA. AB 52 is intended to foster early and meaningful dialogue between lead agencies and tribes to protect cultural heritage and ensure that tribal knowledge informs project planning and environmental review.

Native American Heritage Commission

PRC § 5097.91 established the NAHC, the duties of which include inventorying places of religious or social significance to Native Americans and identifying known graves and cemeteries of

Native Americans on private lands.[183] Section 5097.98 of the PRC specifies a protocol to be followed when the NAHC receives notification of a discovery of Native American human remains from a county coroner.[184]

Health and Safety Code, Section 7050.5

Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code requires that construction or excavation be stopped in the vicinity of discovered human remains until the county coroner can determine whether the remains are those of a Native American.[185] If the remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner must contact the NAHC within 24 hours. PRC § 5097.98 and CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5(e) specify the procedures to be followed in case of the discovery of human remains on non-federal land. The disposition of Native American burials falls within the jurisdiction of the NAHC.

Senate Bill 18 – Local Government Tribal Consultation (Government Code Sections 65092, 65351, 65352, 65352.3, and 65352.4).[186]

These regulations regulate the consultation with California Native American tribes having traditional lands located within the jurisdiction of applicable cities and counties. The intent of the underlying legislation was to provide all California Native American tribes that are on the contact list maintained by the NAHC, an opportunity to consult with specific local governments for the purpose of preserving and protecting their sacred places. Such consultations apply to the preparation, adoption and amendment of general plans and specific plans. The Project does not propose the adoption or amendment of a general plan or specific plan; therefore, SB 18 consultation is not required for the Project.

The NOP, which briefly describes the proposed Project, including a map of the Project area, was distributed to the State Clearinghouse, responsible and trustee agencies, Native American tribes, and other interested parties, providing an opportunity to comment on the proposed Project. No comments were received from Native American tribes during the NOP scoping period.

3.13.3 Thresholds of Significance

The CEQA Guidelines define a significant effect on the environment as "a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in the environment." To determine if a project would

182) California Public Resources Code § 5097.91
183) California Public Resources Code § 5097.98
184) California Health and Safety Code § 7050.5
185) Senate Bill No. 18

have a significant impact on TCRs, the potential for Project activities to cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a TCR must be evaluated.

The following TCR significance thresholds are contained in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. A significant impact would occur if the Project would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a TCR, defined in PRC § 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in the local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1j(k) or

ii) A resource determined by the Lead Agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the Lead Agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

3.13.4 Impacts Discussion

Impact 3.13-1: Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a TCR, defined in PRC § 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is: (i) listed or eligible for listing in the CRHR, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in PRC § 5020.1(k); or (ii) a resource determined by the Lead Agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of PRC § 5024.1, considering the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?

Before Mitigation	Significant (ground disturbance could damage or destroy undiscovered TCRs)
Mitigation Measures	MM TRI-1 through MM TRI-4
After Mitigation	**Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**

The Project involves the development of an approximately 122-acre Site for industrial, commercial, and related uses, including annexation into the City of Visalia and construction of warehouses, industrial-serving commercial pads, a self-storage facility, and associated

infrastructure. The Site is currently used for agricultural purposes, including almond orchards and fields, with two seasonal drainages (Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch). Ground-disturbing activities associated with the Project, such as grading, excavation, and construction, have the potential to encounter previously unidentified TCRs.

A Phase I CRA was prepared for the Project by Soar Environmental Consulting, Inc. (March 17, 2025, revised in April 2026). The CRA included a records search through the CHRIS at the SSJVIC, a Sacred Lands File search and Native American Contacts List request through the NAHC, and a pedestrian survey of the Site conducted on February 19, 2025. The records search identified five cultural resources within 0.5 miles of the Site and one recorded resource (P-54-003662, the San Joaquin Valley College building) mapped within the Project boundaries; however, the CRA determined that the mapping of P-54-003662 within the Site was an error, as the building is located outside the Site to the southwest. The pedestrian survey identified no existing surface resources on the Site. The CRA concluded that no site testing or mitigation measures are required at this time, unless previously undiscovered cultural resources are detected during construction.

Pursuant to AB 52, the City of Visalia, as the Lead Agency under CEQA, initiated tribal consultation with California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the Project. The NAHC Sacred Lands File search, completed on February 11, 2025, did not identify any sacred lands within or near the Site; however, tribes may identify resources of cultural value during consultation. To date, no tribes have identified specific TCRs on the Site that meet the criteria under PRC § 21074. Nonetheless, the potential for inadvertent discovery of TCRs during ground-disturbing activities remains, as subsurface resources could be present given the Site's location in the San Joaquin Valley, an area with known prehistoric and historic Native American occupation by groups such as the Yokuts. Without mitigation, the Project could result in a substantial adverse change to the significance of a tribal cultural resource through destruction or alteration during construction.

Mitigation Measures

MM TRI-1: Tribal Monitoring. Prior to any ground disturbance, the Applicant shall offer tribes identified by the NAHC as culturally affiliated with the Project area the opportunity to provide a Tribal Monitor during ground-disturbing activities (with tribal participation dependent upon the tribe's availability and interest). Where a tribe elects to participate, the Tribal Monitor shall conduct a surface inspection of the Site prior to any ground disturbance and shall monitor the Site during grading activities. The Tribal Monitor shall provide pre-construction information to supervisory personnel and any excavation contractor, which will include information on potential cultural material finds and on the procedures to be enacted if resources are found.

Prior to any ground disturbance, all construction personnel shall receive Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) cultural resources training conducted by a qualified archaeologist.

MM TRI-2: Discovery of Historical or Archaeological Cultural Resources. In the event that historical or archaeological cultural resources are discovered during Project-related activities, work shall stop within 100 feet of the find, and a qualified archaeologist shall determine whether the resource requires further study. The qualified archaeologist shall determine the measures that shall be implemented to protect the discovered resources including, but not limited to, excavation of the finds and evaluation of the finds in accordance with § 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines. Measures may include avoidance, preservation in-place, recordation, additional archaeological testing, and data recovery, among other options. Any previously undiscovered resources found during Project-related activities within the Project area shall be recorded on appropriate California Department of Parks and Recreation 523 forms and evaluated for significance. No further ground disturbance shall occur in the immediate vicinity of the discovery until approved by the qualified archaeologist. The Lead Agency and culturally affiliated tribes identified by the NAHC shall be contacted upon the discovery of cultural resources to begin coordination on the disposition of the find(s). If the find is determined to be Native American in origin, the Lead Agency shall consult with the culturally affiliated tribe(s) to determine whether the find constitutes a TCR and to identify appropriate treatment. Treatment of any significant cultural resources shall be undertaken with the approval of the Lead Agency.

MM TRI-3: Disposition of Recovered Archaeological Artifacts. Upon coordination with the Lead Agency, any archaeological artifacts recovered shall be donated to an appropriate tribal custodian or a qualified scientific institution where they would be afforded protection under applicable cultural resources laws and guidelines.

MM TRI-4: Human Remains Discovery Protocol. If human remains are discovered during Project-related activities or operational activities, further excavation or disturbance shall be prohibited pursuant to Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code. The specific protocol, guidelines, and channels of communication outlined by the NAHC, in accordance with Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code, Section 5097.98 of the PRC (Chapter 1492, Statutes of 1982, SB 297), and SB 447 (Chapter 44, Statutes of 1987) shall be followed. Section 7050.5(c) shall guide the potential Native American involvement, in the event of discovery of human remains, at the direction of the Tulare County Coroner.

Level of Significance

There is a *Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation*.

3.13.5 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts refer to the combined effects of the proposed Project with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects that could incrementally contribute to adverse effects on TCRs. Under CEQA Guidelines § 15130, cumulative impacts are evaluated based on whether the Project's incremental contribution is "cumulatively considerable," meaning it would result in a significant cumulative effect when viewed in connection with other projects.

Cumulative Setting and Geographic Scope

The cumulative setting for TCRs encompasses the City of Visalia and surrounding Tulare County areas, where development activities could potentially disturb sites, features, or objects of cultural value to California Native American tribes. This region is part of the traditional territory of the Yokuts tribal groups, with a history of prehistoric occupation and ethnographic significance. The geographic scope for cumulative TCR impacts is focused on the southern San Joaquin Valley, as ground-disturbing activities from multiple projects could interact across shared cultural landscapes and ethnographic territories. Cumulative projects considered include planned industrial, commercial, and transportation developments in Visalia and Tulare County, such as other annexations and infrastructure expansions that may involve excavation. No specific past projects are directly linked to the proposed Project Site, but regional development trends underscore the potential for cumulative effects on undiscovered subsurface resources.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Cumulative TCR impacts would occur if the Project, in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, results in a net loss of significant sites, features, or objects with cultural value to California Native American tribes. As detailed in Impact 3.13-1, the Project's individual impacts on TCRs are less than significant with incorporation of MMs TRI-1 through TRI-4. These measures include tribal monitoring during ground disturbance, procedures for handling discoveries, coordination with tribes and the NAHC, and appropriate treatment of any finds.

Per CEQA Guidelines § 15130, TCR impacts are site-specific but can be cumulatively considerable if multiple projects fail to mitigate discoveries or consult with tribes. The Phase I CRA found no surface tribal cultural resources on the Site, and the Sacred Lands File search was negative, the CRA noted the potential for subsurface finds due to the region's Yokuts history. When combined with cumulative projects, the Project could contribute to regional ground disturbance, potentially uncovering buried resources. However, the Project's compliance with AB 52 tribal consultation requirements and local policies ensures that any

discoveries are handled appropriately, with no net cumulative loss. Overall, while cumulative development in Visalia and Tulare County could increase the risk of resource disturbance, the Project's contributions are not cumulatively considerable, as they align with regulatory frameworks and incorporate standard mitigation to minimize effects.

Conclusion

The Project would result in a less than cumulatively considerable contribution to TCR impacts with mitigation incorporated. No additional mitigation is required beyond MMs TRI-1 through TRI-4.

CHAPTER 4 PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

This chapter of the EIR for the Project identifies the Project objectives and evaluates a reasonable range of alternatives to the Project, as required by CEQA Guidelines § 15126.6.[187] The analysis focuses on alternatives that could feasibly attain most of the basic Project objectives while avoiding or substantially lessening the significant environmental effects identified in Chapter 3, particularly the significant and unavoidable impacts related to the conversion of Prime Farmland under Impact 3.2-1 and VMT under Impact 3.12-2 (conflict with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)). The alternatives were selected based on their potential to reduce VMT by altering land use intensity, mix, or location, while considering feasibility factors such as economic viability, regulatory constraints, and consistency with the City of Visalia General Plan.

4 - 1 Project Objectives

The Project objectives emphasize economic growth, efficient land use, and infrastructure integration in the City's Sphere of Influence. The objectives are as follows:

1) Promote Economic Development and Job Creation: Develop an industrial park to provide high-quality employment opportunities in manufacturing, warehousing, and industrial-serving commercial, supporting the City's goal of attracting businesses and reducing unemployment in Tulare County.
2) Implement the Site's Industrial General Plan Land Use Designation: Convert agricultural land to industrial and commercial uses by implementing the Site's Industrial General Plan land use designation, maximizing economic productivity while annexing the Site to the City for municipal services.
3) Enhance Regional Connectivity and Infrastructure: Improve transportation infrastructure, including new sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and road extensions, to support efficient goods movement near SR 198, while integrating with existing utilities and stormwater systems.
4) Achieve Sustainable Development: Incorporate measures to minimize environmental impacts.

186) 187 CEQA Guidelines § 15126.6

5) Incorporate Industrial-Supporting Commercial Services: Include industrial-supporting commercial services to serve onsite workers and reduce offsite trips, creating a self-contained industrial hub.

4 - 2 Alternatives Considered but Rejected

The following alternatives were considered but rejected as infeasible or ineffective in reducing significant impacts:

- **Alternative Site Location:** Relocating the Project to a more urbanized area within Visalia was evaluated but rejected due to lack of available parcels of sufficient size for large-scale warehousing, as identified in the City's General Plan Land Use Element. This alternative would not meet Objective 2 (implementing the Site's Industrial General Plan land use designation) and could increase VMT by displacing jobs farther from regional highways.
- **Full Residential Conversion:** Converting the Site to residential uses to improve jobs-housing balance was rejected, as it conflicts with the City's designation of the area for industrial growth and would not meet Objectives 1 and 3 (economic development and infrastructure for goods movement).

4 - 3 Description of Alternatives

The analysis evaluates the No Project Alternative (required by CEQA Guidelines § 15126.6(e)) and two other feasible alternatives that could reduce VMT impacts.

Alternative 1: No Project Alternative

Under this alternative, the Project would not proceed, and the Site would remain in its existing condition as agricultural land. No annexation, infrastructure improvements, or development would occur. Existing uses would continue under Tulare County jurisdiction, with potential for ongoing agricultural operations.

Alternative 2: Reduced Intensity Alternative

This alternative reduces the Project's scale by approximately 50 percent to lower trip generation and VMT. The five primary industrial buildings would have their total area reduced by half (to approximately 874,450 SF), the industrial-serving commercial pads would be reduced to roughly half the square footage (approximately 27,750 SF total), and the self-storage facility would be scaled proportionally (to approximately 14,823 SF). Total buildout would occur on a reduced development footprint (approximately half the proposed area). Phasing would be halved, with retained industrial-supporting commercial elements but fewer employees (estimated 50 percent reduction from the Project's job generation). Infrastructure

(sidewalks and bike lanes) would be scaled proportionally. This alternative maintains the Site location and general design but prioritizes lower density to reduce overall trip generation.

The City's adopted CEQA significance threshold is an efficiency metric (VMT per service population) rather than an absolute VMT metric. A proportional reduction in building area and employees would lower both the total VMT generated and the service population by roughly the same amount, leaving the resulting VMT per service population essentially unchanged. The Project's reported value of 36.83 VMT per service population was derived from a TCAG Travel Demand Model run reflecting the full Project, and no separate model run has been performed for a reduced-intensity development. Accordingly, absent site-specific travel demand modeling demonstrating otherwise, this alternative would not be expected to reduce the Project's VMT per service population below the City's threshold of 26.0 or to avoid the significant and unavoidable VMT impact, although it would reduce the magnitude of total VMT, trip generation, and other scale-dependent impacts.

Alternative 3: Enhanced Mixed-Use Alternative

This alternative shifts the land use mix to include approximately 20 percent residential (200 multi-family units on roughly 24–28 acres, replacing part of the industrial building area), with the remaining acreage for reduced industrial/commercial uses. This would include approximately 1.4 million SF of industrial/warehouse buildings, the full complement of industrial-serving commercial pads (approximately 55,500 SF), and the self-storage facility. This promotes jobs-housing balance to reduce commute VMT (consistent with CAPCOA T-1: Increase Residential Density). Infrastructure and TDM measures required under MM TRANS-1 remain as in the Project, but with added onsite amenities like parks or gathering spaces to encourage internal trips. The Site layout would be adjusted, with residential clustered near the industrial-serving commercial pads to maximize internalization of trips.

4 - 4 Alternatives Analysis

Each alternative is compared to the Project across environmental topics from Chapter 3, with emphasis on VMT. Impacts are categorized as: Less Than Project (reduced impact), Similar to Project, or Greater Than Project (increased impact).

Table 4-1: Alternative Impacts

Impact Category	Alt 1: No Project Alternative	Alt 2: Reduced Intensity Alternative	Alt 3: Enhanced Mixed-Use Alternative

Aesthetics (Section 3.1)	Less Than Project - No new structures or lighting; maintains rural viewshed.	Similar to Project - Scaled-down structures reduce visual massing but maintain industrial character.	Similar to Project - Adds residential but maintains scale.
Agriculture and Forestry (Section 3.2)	Less Than Project - Preserves farmland; avoids conversion of Prime Farmland.	Less Than Project - Converts approximately 60 acres of Prime Farmland (50 percent less than the Project's 118.8 acres); this reduced conversion would still be expected to result in a significant and unavoidable impact under the LESA model, though at a lower magnitude than the Project.	Similar to Project - Similar farmland conversion.
Air Quality (Section 3.3)	Less Than Project - No construction or operational emissions; avoids exceedances of SJVAPCD thresholds.	Less Than Project - 50 percent lower emissions.	Similar to Project - Reduced commute VMT would lower mobile-source emissions, but added residential area-source emissions (consumer products, landscaping) would partially offset reductions.
Biological Resources (Section 3.4)	Less Than Project - Maintains habitat for species.	Less Than Project - Smaller footprint reduces habitat loss.	Similar to Project.
Cultural Resources (Section 3.5)	Less Than Project - No ground disturbance; avoids potential impacts to resources.	Similar to Project - Reduced disturbance but similar risks.	Similar to Project.
Energy (Section 3.6)	Less Than Project - No new demand; avoids increased electricity/gas use.	Less Than Project - Lower demand.	Similar to Project - Added residential demand offset by efficiency.
Geology and Soils (Section 3.7)	Less Than Project - No excavation; avoids erosion risks.	Less Than Project - Less excavation.	Similar to Project.
Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Section 3.8)	Less Than Project - No operational GHG; avoids substantial annual emissions.	Less Than Project - Reduced emissions (roughly half of Project levels) from lower intensity.	Less Than Project - Jobs-housing balance and internal capture from industrial-serving commercial pads and residential reduce commute GHG.
Hazards and Hazardous Materials (Section 3.9)	Similar to Project - Existing Site conditions (the offsite Goshen Avenue and Shirk Road Site TCE groundwater plume extending beneath the northwest corner of the Site) persist, but no new risks.	Similar to Project - Same Site conditions.	Similar to Project - Same Site conditions.

Hydrology and Water Quality (Section 3.10)	Less Than Project - No impervious surfaces; maintains existing drainage.	Less Than Project - Fewer impervious surfaces.	Similar to Project - Added residential increases runoff but mitigated similarly.
Noise (Section 3.11)	Less Than Project - No construction or traffic noise.	Less Than Project - Lower traffic volumes.	Greater Than Project - Residential sensitive receptors increase noise conflicts.
Transportation (Section 3.12)	Less Than Project - Maintains existing VMT; fully avoids significant impact.	Similar to Project - Total VMT and trip generation would be roughly 50 percent lower, but VMT per service population (the City's significance metric) would remain essentially unchanged at approximately 36.83.	Less Than Project - Improved jobs-housing balance and internal trip capture would reduce VMT to approximately 29.46 VMT per service population; however, this remains above the City's threshold of 26.0, and the significant and unavoidable VMT impact would remain.
Tribal Cultural Resources (Section 3.13)	Less Than Project - No disturbance.	Similar to Project.	Similar to Project.
Ability to Meet Project Objectives	Does not meet any objectives; perpetuates underutilization of the Site.	Partially meets all; achieves economic development and infrastructure at reduced scale but may limit total job creation (Objective 1) and full commercial support space.	Meets most; enhances Objective 5 (industrial-supporting commercial and mixed-use elements for trip reduction) but may dilute pure industrial focus and job creation intensity (Objective 1).
Environmentally Superior?	Yes, as it avoids all Project impacts, but is not feasible under CEQA for failing to meet objectives (Guidelines § 15126.6(c)).	Yes (excluding No Project); reduces total VMT and effects across most topics (air quality, GHG, biological resources, noise) while attaining most Project objectives. Does not reduce VMT per service population below the threshold, so the significant and unavoidable VMT impact remains.	No; reduces VMT through land use mix but increases other impacts (noise) and would introduce residential demand for public services, schools, and parks not evaluated for the Project, requiring additional analysis for residential components.

4 - 5 Environmentally Superior Alternative

Alternative 2 (Reduced Intensity Alternative) is the environmentally superior alternative (excluding the No Project Alternative). While it would not reduce the Project's VMT per service population below the City's threshold—because that threshold is an efficiency metric that is largely insensitive to a proportional reduction in Project scale—it substantially reduces scale-

dependent impacts, including total VMT and trip generation, air quality and GHG emissions, biological resources, and noise, while attaining most Project objectives. It maintains the core industrial park character with scaled industrial-serving commercial pads. Because the significant and unavoidable VMT impact would remain, this alternative would still require a Statement of Overriding Considerations if approved. The superiority determination is based on comparative impact reductions across the full range of environmental topics rather than on any change in the VMT per service population metric.

CHAPTER 5 OTHER MANDATORY CEQA SECTIONS

5 - 1 Growth-Inducing Impacts

CEQA Guidelines § 15126.2(e)[188] requires an EIR to discuss the ways in which a proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Growth inducement may occur through the elimination of obstacles to growth, the extension of infrastructure with capacity beyond project needs, the creation of substantial new employment, or economic effects that stimulate additional development. Under CEQA, growth inducement is not inherently adverse; the relevant inquiry is whether induced growth would occur in a manner inconsistent with adopted plans or would strain resources and services.

Direct Growth Effects

The Project would develop approximately 1.75 million SF of industrial/warehouse space, approximately 55,500 SF of industrial-serving commercial pads, and an approximately 29,645-square-foot self-storage facility, generating substantial new employment in the warehousing, distribution, light manufacturing, and service sectors. This employment growth is consistent with the Visalia 2030 General Plan, which projects industrial employment in the Planning Area to increase from 12,296 jobs in 2010 to 17,741 jobs by 2030, a 44 percent increase, and which identifies the western industrial area as a key regional employment center. The Project does not include a residential component and would not directly induce population growth or housing construction. To the extent new employees relocate to the Visalia area, the associated housing demand would be accommodated within the residential capacity already planned under the General Plan's tiered growth strategy and analyzed in the 2014 General Plan EIR.

Removal of Obstacles to Growth

The Project includes annexation of an approximately 122-acre unincorporated "county island" into the City of Visalia and the extension of municipal infrastructure to serve the Site, including water line extensions, sewer main extensions, storm drainage improvements, and roadway improvements. These extensions could incidentally facilitate development of adjacent parcels by improving infrastructure availability in the vicinity. However, the utility extensions are sized

187) CEQA Guidelines § 15126.2

to serve the Project, all stormwater is directed to the onsite basin, and the surrounding lands to the north and east remain designated for the uses contemplated in the General Plan. The annexation itself implements the City's adopted growth strategy: the Site lies within the Tier I UDB and the City's SOI, is designated Industrial in the General Plan, and its urbanization was analyzed in the certified 2014 General Plan EIR. Development pressure on nearby agricultural parcels attributable to the Project is addressed in Sections *3.2 (Agricultural Resources)* and *5.4 (Cumulative Impacts).*

Economic Growth Effects

By increasing the supply of modern industrial space in a region with a low industrial vacancy rate, the Project may stimulate complementary economic activity, such as trucking, logistics services, and supplier businesses. This economic stimulus is an intended outcome of the Project objectives and the City's economic development policies, and would occur within areas planned for such growth.

Conclusion

The Project is growth-accommodating rather than growth-inducing. It implements planned industrial growth within the UDB, does not extend infrastructure with substantial excess capacity into unplanned areas, and does not directly generate population growth or housing demand beyond that anticipated in the General Plan. Growth-inducing impacts would be less than significant.

5 - 2 Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

CEQA Guidelines § 15126.2(c) requires an EIR to describe any significant impacts that cannot be avoided or reduced to a less than significant level even with the implementation of feasible mitigation measures. As detailed in Chapter 3, all Project impacts would be less than significant, or less than significant with mitigation incorporated, with the exception of the following two impacts:

Conversion of Prime Farmland (Impact 3.2-1)

Implementation of the Project would permanently convert approximately 118.8 acres of Prime Farmland and 3.2 acres of Farmland of Local Importance to non-agricultural use. The LESA analysis yielded a score of 77.5, indicating a significant impact. Although the Site lies within the Tier I Urban Development Boundary, is designated Industrial in the 2030 General Plan, and is exempt from the agricultural preservation requirements of Visalia Municipal Code Chapter 18.04, no feasible mitigation exists to offset the permanent loss of this Important Farmland. The

Project's contribution to regional farmland conversion is also cumulatively considerable. This impact is significant and unavoidable at both the Project and cumulative levels.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (Impact 3.12-2)

The Project would generate 36.83 VMT per service population, exceeding the City's adopted threshold of 26.0 VMT per service population (84 percent of the TCAG regional average of 31.0). Achieving the threshold would require a 29.3 percent reduction, which is unattainable through feasible measures; MM TRANS-1 would achieve only a partial reduction. The Project's contribution to regional VMT is likewise cumulatively considerable. This impact is significant and unavoidable at both the Project and cumulative levels.

Pursuant to PRC § 21081[189] and CEQA Guidelines § 15091[190] and 15093, the City of Visalia may not approve the Project unless it adopts findings for each significant and unavoidable impact and a Statement of Overriding Considerations concluding that the Project's economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits outweigh its unavoidable adverse environmental effects.

5 - 3 Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes

CEQA Guidelines § 15126.2(d) requires an EIR to consider significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by a proposed project, including uses of nonrenewable resources, commitments of future generations to similar uses, and irreversible damage that could result from accidents associated with the project.

Development of Land to Urban Use

Development of the Project would permanently convert approximately 122 acres of agricultural land, including 118.8 acres of Prime Farmland, to industrial, commercial, and infrastructure uses. Once graded, paved, and developed with buildings and utilities, the Site could not practicably be returned to agricultural production. This represents an irreversible commitment of the land to urban use, as discussed in Sections 3.2 and 5.2.

Consumption of Nonrenewable Resources

Construction of the Project would consume nonrenewable resources, including diesel fuel and gasoline for construction equipment and worker trips, aggregate, concrete, asphalt, steel, and other building materials. Operation of the Project would result in long-term consumption of

188) PRC § 21081
189) CEQA Guidelines § 15091

electricity, transportation fuels, and water. As discussed in Section 3.6, the Project incorporates measures to avoid wasteful or inefficient energy consumption, including compliance with Title 24 and CALGreen standards, solar readiness, and EV charging infrastructure; however, the use of these resources is irreversible.

Potential for Irreversible Damage from Accidents

Operation of the industrial park may involve the routine transport, use, and storage of hazardous materials such as fuels, solvents, and lubricants. As discussed in *Section 3.9*, compliance with federal, State, and local hazardous materials regulations would reduce the risk of accidental releases to a less than significant level; the potential for environmental damage from accidents is therefore considered low.

Conclusion

The irreversible conversion of Prime Farmland constitutes a significant irreversible environmental change, consistent with the significant and unavoidable determination in *Section 5.2*. The commitment of energy and construction materials is consistent with that of similar planned industrial development and would not be wasteful or unjustified given the Project's consistency with the General Plan and its incorporation of efficiency measures.

5 - 4 Cumulative Impacts

CEQA Guidelines § 15130[191] requires an EIR to discuss cumulative impacts when a project's incremental effect, combined with the effects of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects, is cumulatively considerable. A detailed cumulative impact analysis is provided at the conclusion of each topical section in Chapter 3; this section summarizes those analyses.

The cumulative setting comprises the western City of Visalia and surrounding Tulare County, an area transitioning from agricultural to industrial and urban uses consistent with the 2030 General Plan. Reasonably foreseeable cumulative projects considered in the analysis include the Shirk and Riggin Industrial Park, the TeVelde annexation (over 300 acres added to the Visalia Industrial Park), an approximately 75-acre annexation at the southwest corner of Shirk Street and Riggin Avenue, an approximately 17-acre industrial site near the SR 99/SR 198 interchange, and regional infrastructure improvements including the Riggin Avenue widening.

190) CEQA Guidelines § 15130

For most environmental topics (aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, and tribal cultural resources), Chapter 3 concludes that the Project's incremental contribution would not be cumulatively considerable, and cumulative impacts would be less than significant, in most cases with implementation of the Project-specific mitigation measures identified for each topic. These conclusions reflect the Project's compliance with regional regulatory frameworks (including SJVAPCD rules and attainment plans, NPDES requirements, SGMA groundwater sustainability planning, and the City's General Plan policies) that apply uniformly to cumulative development, together with site-specific design features such as drainage setbacks, the onsite detention basin, and vegetative barriers.

Two cumulative impacts would be significant and unavoidable. First, the Project's conversion of 118.8 acres of Prime Farmland, combined with the thousands of acres being converted by other industrial annexations and expansions in western Visalia and Tulare County, would contribute considerably to the irreversible regional decline in farmland inventory. Second, the Project's VMT exceedance, combined with regional VMT growth from cumulative development, would contribute considerably to regional congestion, air quality degradation, and GHG emissions; MM TRANS-1 would reduce but not eliminate this contribution. These cumulative determinations are consistent with the project-level significant and unavoidable findings summarized in *Section 5.2* and would require adoption of a Statement of Overriding Considerations.

5 - 5 Effects Found Not to Be Significant

CEQA Guidelines § 15128[192] requires an EIR to briefly indicate the reasons that various possible significant effects were determined not to be significant and were therefore not discussed in detail in the EIR. An IS was prepared for the Project (Appendix A) and circulated with the NOP (SCH No. 2025050880). Based on the IS, the following Appendix G topics were determined to result in no impact or a less than significant impact and were not carried forward for detailed analysis in Chapter 3:

- **Land Use and Planning**. The Project would not physically divide an established community; the Site is a county island surrounded by City territory, and development would consolidate the urban pattern. The Project is consistent with the General Plan Industrial designation and Tier I Urban Development Boundary, and annexation with pre-zoning to Industrial would

191) CEQA Guidelines § 15128

resolve the existing plan/zoning inconsistency. No habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan applies to the Site.

- **Mineral Resources.** The Site contains no known mineral resources of value to the region or state and is not delineated as a locally important mineral resource recovery site in the General Plan or any applicable plan. No impact would occur.
- **Population and Housing.** The Project includes no housing and would not displace existing housing or substantial numbers of people; the only existing structures are an inactive milking barn and associated farm buildings. Employment growth would be consistent with General Plan projections for the industrial sector and would not induce substantial unplanned population growth.
- **Public Services.** The Project would incrementally increase demand for fire and police protection upon annexation, which would be addressed through the City's existing service framework and payment of applicable development impact fees. As a non-residential development, the Project would not generate students or substantial demand for schools, parks, or other public facilities requiring new or altered facilities whose construction could cause significant environmental impacts.
- **Recreation.** The Project would not increase the use of existing parks or recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration would occur, as it generates no residential population. The Project would contribute a segment of the planned Mill Creek Trail (Class I bike path) along the southern portion of the Site, a beneficial recreational effect.
- **Utilities and Service Systems.** As described in Section 2.5, water, sewer, and storm drainage infrastructure would be extended to serve the Project without capacity constraints requiring new or expanded facilities beyond those evaluated in this EIR. The Water Supply Assessment (Appendix J) demonstrates sufficient groundwater supplies through 2045 under normal, single-dry, and multiple-dry year conditions, and Project water demand (240 AFY) is a small fraction of District-wide projections; groundwater and stormwater issues are further addressed in Section 3.10. Solid waste generated by the Project would be handled in compliance with AB 341 and AB 1826 diversion requirements.
- **Wildfire.** The Site is flat, historically agricultural land within an urbanizing area; it is not located in or near an SRA or a VHFHSZ. Wildland fire hazards are addressed as part of the hazards analysis in Section 3.9, which concluded impacts would be less than significant with compliance with applicable regulations.

CHAPTER 6 MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

Mitigation Measure	Responsible Party	Timing	Verification
AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES			
MM AG-1: Williamson Act Contract Compliance. Prior to annexation, the Project Applicant shall coordinate with Tulare County to ensure compliance with the non-renewal process for the Williamson Act contracts, including any required payments or waiting periods during the wind-down phase. Since the contracts are in non-renewal status, the Applicant shall either: • Observe the remaining wind-down period and any required payments, ensuring development does not commence until the contracts have fully expired; or • If development commences prior to expiration of the contracts, petition the contract holder (Tulare County or City of Visalia) for cancellation of the contracts and diminishment of the agricultural preserve. The cancellation petition must be granted in accordance with California Government Code Sections 51280 et seq., including the required statutory findings under Section 51282 and payment of the cancellation fee under Section 51283, and diminishment of the agricultural preserve must be approved in accordance with Government Code Sections 51230 et seq. Documentation of compliance shall be provided to the City of Visalia.	Project Applicant	Prior to annexation	
AIR QUALITY			
MM AQ-1: Voluntary Emissions Reduction Agreement. The Project Owner shall enter into a Voluntary Emissions Reduction Agreement (VERA) with SJVAPCD to offset operational Reactive Organic Gases (ROG) emissions associated with the Project. • Reduction Standard: The VERA shall secure real, quantifiable, permanent, enforceable, and surplus ROG emissions reductions within the SJVAB at a rate of not less than 1.1 pounds of ROG per year per 1,000 square feet (KSF) of building floor area, and not less than 1.0 ton of ROG per year in total at full Project buildout. Reductions shall be secured through funding provided to the District's Strategies and Incentives Program, in an amount determined by	Project Owner / Tenants	Prior to issuance of each building permit; ongoing during operations	

SJVAPCD based on the District's then-current cost-effectiveness values for ROG reduction projects. If final building floor areas differ from those assumed in this EIR, the obligation for each building shall be recalculated at the rate stated above; in no case shall the total obligation at buildout be less than 1.0 ton of ROG per year. • **Monitoring and Compliance: Prior to the issuance of a building permit for each building within the Project, the Project Owner shall submit to the Lead Agency an executed VERA, or written confirmation from SJVAPCD that the VERA funding obligation attributable to that building has been paid or otherwise secured. The Lead Agency shall not issue the building permit until such documentation is received. The VERA obligation shall be incorporated into all future lease agreements and property transfer documents so that it runs with each parcel**. • **Ongoing Verification: The Project Owner shall provide the Lead Agency with copies of SJVAPCD's VERA implementation and verification reports documenting that the contracted emissions reductions have been achieved, and shall maintain those records for a minimum of three years and make them available to the Lead Agency upon request.**			
MM AQ-2: Zero Emission Landscaping Equipment Plan. The Project Owner shall implement a Zero Emission Landscaping Equipment Plan for all landscaping activities at the facility. Operational Standard: All landscaping equipment used on the Project Site shall meet the standards to qualify as zero emissions according to the CARB Amendments to the Small Off Road Engines (SORE) Regulation. Monitoring and Compliance: Prior to the issuance of a final Certificate of Occupancy, the Project Owner shall submit a signed Landscaping Equipment Use Commitment Letter to the Lead Agency (and/or Air District) stating that only zero emission landscaping equipment will be used. This commitment must be included in all future lease agreements and vendor contracts. Ongoing Verification: The Project Owner shall maintain records of all landscaping equipment, including data sheets and certification documentation, for a minimum of three years and make them available to the Lead Agency upon request to verify continuous compliance with the Operational Standard.	Project Owner / Landscaping Contractor	Prior to final Certificate of Occupancy; ongoing	
MM AQ-3: Tier 4 Off Road Engine Control Plan. The construction Contractor shall implement a Tier 4 Off Road Engine Control Plan for all diesel-fueled, off-road equipment used during Project construction. Equipment Standard: All diesel-fueled, off-road equipment used during Project construction shall meet Tier 4 Final Engine Standards.	Construction Contractor	Prior to start of construction; during all construction phases	

Monitoring and Compliance: Prior to the start of construction, the Contractor shall submit a signed Tier 4 Engine Commitment Letter to the Lead Agency (and/or Air District) stating that only off-road equipment and vehicles meeting Tier 4 Engine Standards will be used. This commitment must be included in all contractor and subcontract agreements throughout construction. Ongoing Verification: The Contractor shall maintain records of all off-road construction equipment, including data sheets and certification documentation, for a minimum of three years and make them available to the Lead Agency upon request to verify continuous compliance with the Equipment Standard.			
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES			
MM BIO-1.1: Construction Timing for Nesting Birds and Raptors. If feasible, construction activities will take place entirely outside of the avian nesting season, defined here as February 1 to September 15.	Project Applicant / Construction Contractor	During construction planning and scheduling	
MM BIO-1.2: Pre-construction Surveys for Nesting Birds and Raptors. If construction must occur between February 1 and September 15, a qualified biologist will conduct surveys for active bird nests no more than 10 days prior to the start of ground or vegetation disturbance. The survey area will encompass the Site and accessible surrounding lands within 500 feet, and the biologist will establish behavioral baselines for any active nests identified.	Qualified Biologist (retained by Project Applicant)	Within 10 days prior to start of construction during nesting season	
MM BIO-1.3: Avoidance of Active Nests. Should any active nests be discovered, a minimum no-disturbance buffer of 250 feet for non-listed birds and 500 feet for non-listed raptors will be established, identified on the ground with flagging or fencing, and maintained until the biologist has determined that the young have fledged and are capable of foraging independently. Nests will be monitored during construction, and buffers may be reduced only with CDFW approval based on site-specific monitoring.	Qualified Biologist / Project Applicant	Upon discovery of active nests; maintained until young fledge	
MM BIO-2.1: Swainson's Hawk Surveys Prior to Construction. To ensure compliance with CESA and to accurately determine current occupancy within and adjacent to the Project area, a qualified biologist shall conduct protocol-level nesting surveys for Swainson's hawk following the most current Swainson's Hawk Technical Advisory Committee (SWHA TAC 2000) recommended survey methodology (or any subsequent CDFW-approved updates). Surveys shall be conducted in the nesting season immediately preceding any ground-disturbing activities or vegetation removal if: (a) more than two years have elapsed since the surveys conducted for the Draft EIR, or (b) initial surveys for the Draft EIR were conducted outside the protocol timeframe or were otherwise incomplete. At minimum, one complete protocol survey season (typically three visits between March 1 and July 31)	Qualified Biologist (Project Applicant)	Nesting season immediately preceding any ground-disturbing activities	

shall be performed in the year immediately prior to commencement of construction. Survey area shall include all suitable nesting habitat within 0.5 miles of proposed disturbance areas.			
MM BIO-2.2 (Swainson's Hawk Avoidance Buffer): If construction or ground disturbing activities are proposed during the Swainson's hawk nesting season (March 1 – September 15), and an active Swainson's hawk nest is identified at any time (via protocol surveys or incidental observation) within 0.5 mile of the Project disturbance footprint, the following shall apply: 1. A minimum 0.5-mile no-construction-disturbance buffer shall be established and clearly delineated in the field around each active nest. Within this buffer, no construction activities, vegetation removal, grading, equipment staging, or other potentially disruptive actions shall occur. 2. The buffer may be reduced on a case-by-case basis only with written concurrence from CDFW and only after a qualified biologist, in coordination with CDFW, conducts site-specific disturbance monitoring and determines that the hawks are tolerant of activities at a lesser distance (typically not less than 0.25 mile for low-disturbance activities). 3. All buffers shall remain in effect until August 31 or until a qualified biologist, acceptable to CDFW, has confirmed that all young have fledged, are no longer dependent on the nest or parental care, and the adults have ceased defending the nest site. 4. Buffer boundaries shall be flagged or fenced in the field, and all construction personnel shall be briefed on the location and restrictions prior to commencing work.	Project Applicant / Qualified Biologist	Upon identification of active nest during nesting season; maintained until young are independent	
MM BIO-2.3: Swainson's Hawk Take Authorization. If complete avoidance of take (as defined by Fish and Game Code §86) is not feasible because a 0.5-mile buffer (or CDFW-approved reduced buffer) cannot be implemented while still accomplishing the Project, the Project proponent shall: a. Immediately cease activities that could result in take and consult with CDFW; b. Obtain an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) pursuant to Fish and Game Code §2081(b) prior to any activity that may result in take of Swainson's hawk; c. Fully implement all avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures required by the ITP, including but not limited to: • Permanent protection and management of compensatory foraging habitat at a minimum ratio of 1:1 (1 acre preserved for every acre of foraging habitat permanently impacted within 10 miles of an active nest), or as otherwise specified by CDFW in the ITP; • Funding of long-term management endowments for preserved lands; • Pre-construction nest monitoring and biological construction monitoring as required by CDFW.	Project Applicant / Qualified Biologist	Prior to any activity that may result in take of Swainson's hawk	
MM BIO-3.1: Construction Timing for Pallid Bat. To avoid potential impacts to maternity bat roosts, and if feasible, removal of the Site's buildings will occur outside of the period between April 15 and	Project Applicant / Qualified Biologist	During construction planning and scheduling	

September 30. This is the time frame within which colony-nesting bats in the vicinity generally assemble, give birth, nurse their young, and ultimately disperse.			
MM BIO-3.2: Pre-construction Surveys for Pallid Bat. Within 10 days prior to the removal of the Site's buildings, a qualified biologist will survey the buildings for roosting bats. The biologist will look for individuals, guano, and staining, and will listen for bat vocalizations. If necessary, the biologist will wait for nighttime emergence of bats from roost sites.	Project Applicant / Qualified Biologist	Conduct surveys within 10 days prior to the removal of the Site's buildings.	
MM BIO-3.3: Avoidance of Maternity Roosts for Pallid Bat. Should any active maternity bat roosts be discovered, the biologist will identify a suitable construction-free buffer around the maternity roost. The buffer will be identified on the ground with flagging or fencing, and will be maintained until the biologist has determined that the nursery is no longer active.	Project Applicant / Qualified Biologist	Upon identification of active roost	
MM BIO-3.4: Humane Eviction of Non-breeding Bats. If any non-breeding bat colonies are found in buildings to be removed, the individuals will be humanely evicted, under the direction of a qualified biologist, to ensure that bats are not physically harmed during this process.	Project Applicant / Qualified Biologist	Ongoing During Construction	
MM BIO-4: Western burrowing owl Mitigation. Prior to any ground disturbing activities, a qualified biologist shall conduct burrowing owl surveys throughout the Project Site and a 500-foot buffer in accordance with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's 2012 Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (or current successor protocol), consisting of four survey visits spanning the breeding season (February 1–August 31) and additional pre-construction surveys within 14 days prior to work initiation. All survey reports shall be submitted to CDFW. If western burrowing owl or occupied/suitable burrows are detected, no-disturbance buffers shall be established and maintained as follows: 250 feet around occupied breeding burrows from February 1–August 31 and 150 feet during the non-breeding season (September 1–January 31); 150 feet around occupied non-breeding (wintering) burrows year-round; and 100 feet around suitable but unoccupied burrows until confirmed vacant. Buffers shall be demarcated with high-visibility staking or fencing, and all vegetation management, grading, and equipment activity shall be prohibited within these zones. If avoidance of occupied burrows is not feasible, passive relocation (eviction) may only occur outside the breeding season (September 1–January 31) using one-way doors and under direct supervision of a qualified biologist, followed by burrow collapse after a minimum five-night clearance period confirming vacancy. Mandatory Worker Environmental Awareness Training shall be provided to all onsite personnel covering owl identification, buffer protection, and reporting requirements. If take cannot be avoided, the Project proponent shall obtain an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) from CDFW pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(b) prior to any activity that may result in take. Permanent loss of suitable foraging habitat shall be compensated at a minimum 1:1 ratio through	Project Applicant / Qualified Biologist	Prior to any ground disturbing activities	

preservation of equivalent grassland habitat or purchase of credits at a CDFW approved mitigation bank, as approved by CDFW. A final compliance report documenting survey results, buffer implementation, and any relocation or compensatory measures shall be submitted to CDFW within 90 days of construction completion.			
MM BIO-5: Crotch's bumble bee Mitigation. Prior to ground disturbance, a qualified biologist shall conduct a habitat assessment throughout the Project Site to identify suitable Crotch's bumble bee (CBB) habitat and document potential nesting features, including small mammal burrows, perennial bunch grasses, thatched annual grasses, brush piles, old bird nests, dead trees, and hollow logs. If suitable habitat or nesting features are present, focused presence/absence surveys shall be conducted during the appropriate flight season (typically March–October) following CDFW's 2023 Survey Considerations for California Endangered Species Act Candidate Bumble Bee Species, and survey reports shall be submitted to CDFW. If CBB or occupied/potential nesting sites are detected, impacts shall be avoided by establishing a minimum 30-foot no-disturbance buffer around each documented nesting feature or colony during the active season (March 1–October 31), with all ground disturbance, vegetation removal, and heavy equipment prohibited within buffers. Pre-construction clearance surveys shall be conducted within 7 days prior to work commencement in suitable habitat, and mandatory Worker Environmental Awareness Training shall inform all personnel of CBB identification and protection requirements. If complete avoidance is not feasible and take cannot be avoided, the Project proponent shall obtain an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) from CDFW pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(b) prior to any activity that may result in take. Permanent loss of suitable foraging or nesting habitat shall be compensated at a minimum 1:1 ratio through preservation of equivalent grassland/scrub habitat or purchase of credits at a CDFW-approved mitigation bank, as approved by CDFW. A final compliance report documenting implementation of all measures shall be submitted to CDFW within 90 days of construction completion.	Project Applicant / Qualified Biologist	Prior to any ground disturbing activities	
MM BIO-6: California tiger salamander Mitigation. Prior to any ground disturbing activities, a qualified biologist shall conduct a full habitat assessment for California tiger salamander within the Project Site and a 1.5-mile buffer, focusing on Mill Creek, Mill Creek Ditch, seasonal wetlands, stock ponds, and surrounding upland aestivation habitat. If suitable breeding or dispersal habitat is present, protocol-level presence/absence surveys shall be conducted in accordance with current USFWS and CDFW protocols, and all survey reports shall be submitted to both CDFW and USFWS. If California tiger salamanders or occupied breeding habitat is detected, all direct impacts to breeding sites shall be avoided by establishing a minimum 300-foot no-disturbance buffer around	Project Applicant / Qualified Biologist	Prior to any ground disturbing activities	

any occupied or potential breeding pond or wetland capable of holding water for at least 10 weeks, with upland aestivation habitat protected within a 1,000-foot radius of the breeding site unless a site-specific variance is approved by USFWS/CDFW. High-visibility exclusion fencing shall be installed around the entire impact area and monitored daily during construction, pre-construction clearance surveys shall be conducted within 48 hours of work commencement, and all onsite personnel shall complete mandatory Worker Environmental Awareness Training that addresses California tiger salamanders biology and protection measures**.** If complete avoidance is not feasible, the Project proponent shall obtain incidental take authorization from CDFW through an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(b) and, if federal nexus exists, Section 7 or Section 10(a)(1)(B) authorization from USFWS prior to any activity that may result in take. Permanent loss of occupied breeding or upland habitat shall be compensated at a minimum 3:1 ratio through purchase of credits at a USFWS/CDFW-approved conservation bank serving the Project area, permanent preservation of equivalent offsite habitat, or restoration/creation of breeding and upland habitat under an approved mitigation plan. A final compliance report documenting implementation of all avoidance, minimization, and compensatory measures shall be submitted to CDFW and USFWS within 90 days of construction completion.			
MM BIO-7: American Badger Mitigation. Prior to ground disturbance, a qualified biologist shall conduct focused daytime surveys for American badger dens in all areas of suitable habitat (open grasslands, dry friable soils, and areas with abundant ground squirrel or pocket gopher burrows), particularly in the southern portion of the Project site, following CDFW-accepted protocols. Survey results shall be submitted to CDFW. If badger sign or dens are detected, a minimum 100-foot no-disturbance buffer shall be established around any active den during the breeding season (February 15–July 1) and a 50- foot buffer around inactive dens year-round until the den is confirmed vacated by excavation or natural collapse. If avoidance of an occupied den is not feasible, passive relocation (humane eviction) shall be conducted only between July 1 and February 15 (outside the pup rearing period) by a qualified biologist through one-way door installation and monitoring for a minimum of five consecutive nights, followed by den excavation under direct biologist supervision to confirm vacancy. Exclusion fencing or flagging shall demarcate all buffers, and pre-construction clearance surveys shall be conducted within 14 days prior to work in adjacent areas. All onsite personnel shall receive Worker Environmental Awareness Training regarding badger identification and protection requirements.	Project Applicant / Qualified Biologist	Prior to any ground disturbing activities	

If permanent loss of suitable foraging habitat exceeds 5 acres, compensatory mitigation shall be provided at a 1:1 ratio through preservation of equivalent habitat or purchase of credits at a CDFW-approved conservation bank, subject to CDFW approval. A final compliance report documenting survey results and measure implementation shall be submitted to CDFW within 90 days of construction completion.			
MM BIO-8: Western Pond Turtle Mitigation. Prior to ground disturbance, a qualified biologist shall conduct focused presence/absence surveys for western pond turtle in all suitable aquatic habitat (Mill Creek, Mill Creek Ditch, ponds, and slow-moving channels) and associated upland nesting habitat within the Project Site plus a 500-meter buffer, following current CDFW-approved protocols (visual surveys, basking surveys, and trapping if required). Survey reports shall be submitted to CDFW. If western pond turtle is detected or suitable habitat is confirmed present, a minimum 200-foot no-disturbance buffer shall be established around all aquatic habitat used for foraging, basking, or overwintering, and a 500-meter no-disturbance buffer shall be established around known or potential upland nesting areas from March 1 through August 31, unless CDFW approves a reduced buffer based on site-specific conditions. High-visibility exclusion fencing shall be installed and maintained around work limits adjacent to suitable habitat to prevent turtle entry into construction areas, with daily monitoring and immediate repair as needed. Pre-construction clearance surveys shall be conducted, and any turtles found within the work area shall be relocated by a permitted biologist under CDFW authorization to suitable habitat outside the impact zone. In-channel work shall be restricted to the dry season (June 15– October 15) where feasible, with dewatering and turtle relocation protocols implemented if water is present. Mandatory Worker Environmental Awareness Training covering turtle identification, protected status, and required protective measures shall be provided to all personnel, and a 10-mph speed limit shall be enforced on unpaved roads within 500 meters of aquatic habitat to minimize road mortality. If complete avoidance is not feasible and take cannot be avoided, the Project proponent shall obtain any required take authorization from USFWS (if the species is federally listed at the time of construction) and CDFW concurrence prior to any activities that may result in take. Permanent loss of aquatic or upland habitat shall be compensated at a minimum 3:1 ratio through purchase of credits at a CDFW approved conservation bank, permanent protection of offsite habitat, or habitat restoration/creation as approved by CDFW. A final compliance report documenting implementation of all measures shall be submitted to CDFW within 90 days of construction completion.	Project Applicant / Qualified Biologist	Prior to any ground disturbing activities	
MM BIO-9: Western Spadefoot Mitigation. Prior to ground disturbance, a qualified biologist shall conduct a habitat assessment and, if suitable habitat is present, protocol-level surveys following	Project Applicant / Qualified Biologist	Prior to any ground disturbing activities	

current CDFW guidelines, with results submitted to CDFW. If western spadefoot or suitable breeding habitat is identified, the Project shall avoid impacts by establishing a minimum 300-foot no-disturbance buffer around occupied or potential breeding sites (ephemeral pools, seasonal wetlands, or slow-moving portions of Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch), prohibiting construction activities within buffers during the active season (typically January–July), installing and maintaining exclusion fencing, enforcing a 5-mph speed limit on unpaved roads near suitable habitat during nighttime and post-rain periods, and requiring all onsite personnel to complete a mandatory Worker Environmental Awareness Program covering species identification and protective measures. If complete avoidance is not feasible and take cannot be avoided, the Project proponent shall obtain any required take authorization from USFWS (if the species is federally listed at the time of construction) and CDFW concurrence prior to any activities that may result in take. Permanent loss of occupied or suitable habitat shall be compensated at a minimum 3:1 ratio through purchase of credits at a CDFW-approved conservation bank, permanent protection of offsite habitat, or restoration/creation of equivalent habitat, as approved by CDFW. A final compliance report documenting implementation of all measures shall be submitted to CDFW within 90 days of construction completion.			
MM BIO-10: Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp and Vernal Pool Tadpole Shrimp Surveys and Avoidance: Prior to the initiation of any ground-disturbing activities, a qualified biologist shall conduct a general habitat assessment of the Project Site and immediate vicinity, including sections of Mill Creek and Mill Creek Ditch, to evaluate the presence of suitable vernal pool or temporary water habitats capable of supporting vernal pool fairy shrimp or vernal pool tadpole shrimp. This assessment shall identify features such as ephemeral depressions, seasonal wetlands, or other temporary waters that may hold water between November and early May, allowing for the species' lifecycle completion, with cysts potentially remaining viable in dried substrates. If the habitat assessment determines that suitable or potential habitat is present, the qualified biologist shall conduct protocol-level surveys in accordance with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's "Survey Guidelines for the Listed Large Branchiopods". Surveys shall be timed appropriately during the wet season (typically November through May) to detect active individuals or, if necessary, during the dry season for cyst sampling to confirm presence or extent of occurrence. Survey results shall be documented in a report submitted to the City of Visalia, CDFW, and USFWS. If vernal pool fairy shrimp or vernal pool tadpole shrimp are detected or presumed present based on survey findings, the Project proponent shall consult with CDFW and USFWS well in advance of any development or ground-disturbing activities. Consultation shall focus on developing and	Project Applicant / Qualified Biologist	Prior to any ground disturbing activities	

implementing appropriate avoidance and minimization measures, including but not limited to the establishment of adequate no-disturbance buffers around identified habitats to prevent direct take, habitat loss, or hydrological alterations. If take cannot be fully avoided, the Project proponent shall obtain necessary authorizations, such as an Incidental Take Permit pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(b) from CDFW and/or Section 7 or 10(a) permits under the federal Endangered Species Act from USFWS, and implement any required compensatory mitigation to ensure compliance with state and federal laws. All mitigation measures derived from consultation shall be incorporated into the Project's construction plans and monitored by a qualified biologist throughout the duration of Project activities to verify effectiveness and compliance.			
GEOLOGY AND SOILS			
MM GEO-1: Preparation and Compliance with a Geotechnical Evaluation. Prior to the issuance of any grading permits, the Project Applicant shall retain a qualified geotechnical engineer to prepare a site-specific Geotechnical Evaluation for the Project Site. The evaluation shall assess subsurface conditions, including soil properties, seismic ground shaking potential, liquefaction susceptibility, soil stability and collapse potential, expansive soil potential, and other geologic hazards as applicable, in accordance with the most recent edition of the California Building Code and any applicable City of Visalia guidelines. All recommendations of the Geotechnical Evaluation shall be incorporated into the final grading and building plans and verified by the City during plan check.	Project Applicant	Prior to issuance of any grading permits	
MM GEO-2: Unanticipated Discovery of Paleontological Resources. If paleontological resources (fossilized plant or animal remains) are discovered during ground-disturbing activities, work shall stop within 50 feet of the find, and a qualified paleontologist shall be retained to assess the significance of the discovery. If the resource is determined to be significant, the paleontologist shall prepare and implement a recovery plan consistent with the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology's standard guidelines, which may include salvage, recordation, and curation of the specimen at an accredited repository. No further ground disturbance shall occur in the immediate vicinity of the discovery until the paleontologist has determined that the resource has been adequately documented or recovered.	Project Applicant / Qualified Paleontologist	Upon discovery of paleontological resources during any Project-related ground disturbance	
GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS			
MM GHG-1: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Design and Operational Verification. Prior to the issuance of building permits, the Lead Agency (City of Visalia) shall verify that all applicable greenhouse gas reduction requirements, including California Energy Code compliance, CALGreen electric vehicle	Project Applicant	Prior to issuance of building permits	

infrastructure, water-efficient landscaping, and waste diversion facilities, have been incorporated into the final Project construction plans and operational specifications. *Monitoring and Compliance*: Prior to final plan-check approval, the Project Applicant shall submit a GHG Reduction Design Verification Letter to the City of Visalia Planning Division. This documentation must systematically list each applicable CAP and Scoping Plan commitment and demonstrate how it is integrated into the final Project design or tenant operational statements. The City will review, confirm, and countersign the verification letter. Any long-term operational or ongoing maintenance commitments must be legally incorporated into all future tenant agreements and lease disclosures. *Ongoing Verification*: The Project Owner or operating tenant shall maintain comprehensive records of ongoing compliance measures onsite for a minimum of three years and make them available to the Lead Agency upon request.			
HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY			
MM HYD-1: Construction Stormwater NOI and Compliance. Prior to the issuance of any construction/grading permit and/or the commencement of any clearing, grading, or excavation, the Applicant shall submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) for discharge from the Project site to the California SWRCB Stormwater Permit Unit. • Prior to issuance of grading permits for Phase I the Applicant shall submit a copy of the NOI to the City. • The City shall review noticing documentation prior to approval of the grading permit. • City monitoring staff will inspect the site during construction for compliance.	Project Applicant	Prior to any construction/grading permit and commencement of ground disturbance	
MM HYD-2: Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) Implementation. The Applicant shall require the building contractor to prepare and submit a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to the City 45 days prior to the start of work for approval. The contractor is responsible for understanding the State General Permit and instituting the SWPPP during construction. A SWPPP for site construction shall be developed prior to the initiation of grading and implemented for all construction activity on the Project site in excess of one (1) acre, or where the area of disturbance is less than one acre but is part of the Project's plan of development that in total disturbs one or more acres. The SWPPP shall identify potential pollutant sources that may affect the quality of discharges to Stormwater and shall include specific BMPs to control the discharge of material from the site. The following BMP methods shall include, but would not be limited to: • Dust control measures will be implemented to ensure success of all onsite activities to control fugitive dust;	Construction Contractor	Prior to commencement of construction; implemented and maintained throughout all construction phases	

• A routine monitoring plan will be implemented to ensure success of all onsite erosion and sedimentation control measures; • Provisional detention basins, straw bales, erosion control blankets, mulching, silt fencing, sand bagging, and soil stabilizers will be used; • Soil stockpiles and graded slopes will be covered after two weeks of inactivity and 24 hours prior to and during extreme weather conditions; and, • BMPs will be strictly followed to prevent spills and discharges of pollutants onsite, such as material storage, trash disposal, construction entrances, etc.			
MM HYD-3: Development Maintenance Manual for Post-Construction Stormwater Controls. A Development Maintenance Manual for the Project shall include comprehensive procedures for maintenance and operations of any stormwater facilities to ensure long-term operation and maintenance of post-construction stormwater controls. The maintenance manual shall require that stormwater BMP devices be inspected, cleaned, and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's maintenance conditions. The manual shall require that devices be cleaned prior to the onset of the rainy season (i.e., mid-October) and immediately after the end of the rainy season (i.e., mid-May). The manual shall also require that all devices be checked after major storm events. The Development Maintenance Manual shall include the following: • Runoff shall be directed away from trash and loading dock areas; • Bins shall be lined or otherwise constructed to reduce leaking of liquid wastes • Trash and loading dock areas shall be screened or walled to minimize offsite transport of trash; and, • Impervious berms, trench catch basin, drop inlets, or overflow containment structures nearby docks and trash areas shall be installed to minimize the potential for leaks, spills or wash down water to enter the drainage system.	Project Owner / Property Management	Prior to first occupancy permit; ongoing during Project operations and maintenance	
NOISE			
MM NOISE-1: Acoustical Study and Noise Reduction Measures. When specific uses within the Project area are proposed that could result in a noise-related conflict between an industrial or other stationary noise source and existing or future noise-sensitive receptors, prior to the issuance of building permits, an in-depth acoustical study prepared by a qualified acoustic professional shall be required by the City and submitted for review and approval to the Planning and Community Preservation Department. The study shall demonstrate that the construction and operational phases of the Project would not result in exceedances of the Visalia Municipal Code's applicable daytime	Project Applicant	Prior to issuance of building permits for uses with potential noise conflicts; during construction and operations as applicable	

and nighttime noise limits for residential land uses. The study shall evaluate, at a minimum, the following factors: • The location, orientation, and type of noise-generating equipment, including heavy machinery, generators, and HVAC systems; • The anticipated hours and duration of construction activities, with consideration for peak traffic periods and seasonal variations; • Predicted noise levels at sensitive receptors, modeled using established acoustical standards; • Potential cumulative noise impacts from concurrent nearby projects, if applicable. Based on the results of the acoustical study, the Project Applicant shall incorporate, at a minimum, design features or noise reduction measures to ensure compliance with applicable noise performance criteria. These measures shall be detailed in all relevant plans, specifications, and permitting documents, and verified through post-construction monitoring if required by the City. Measures and design features may include, but are not limited to, the following: • Locating noise-generating equipment as far as feasible from sensitive receptors, incorporating site layout adjustments to minimize direct line-of-sight exposure. • Constructing earthen berms, solid walls, or vegetative screening to attenuate noise propagation toward nearby residential land uses. • Enclosing stationary noise sources (compressors or generators) within acoustically rated barriers or sound-attenuating enclosures; • Installing low-noise equipment, such as mufflers on engines, vibration isolators, or quieter alternative technologies where practicable; • Implementing temporal restrictions limiting high-impact activities to daytime hours and prohibiting them on weekends or holidays unless approved by the City. • Conducting pre-construction noise monitoring to establish baseline conditions and post-construction monitoring to confirm efficacy of implemented measures, with reporting to the City as needed. Compliance with this measure shall be enforced through permit conditions, and any deviations must receive prior written approval from the Planning and Community Preservation Department to ensure ongoing protection of residential noise environments.			
TRANSPORTATION			

MM TRANS-1: Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan and VMT Reduction. Prior to issuance of the first building permit, the Project Applicant shall submit a TDM Plan to the City of Visalia for review and approval. The TDM Plan shall incorporate a combination of feasible VMT reduction measures from the CAPCOA Handbook, selected for compatibility and to avoid overestimation of reductions due to diminishing returns or measure competition. The Plan shall include, at a minimum: • **Compliance with SJVAPCD Rule 9410 (e-TRIP), including development of an e-TRIP Plan with annual commute surveys and reporting for employers with 100 or more eligible employees.** • **Onsite pedestrian and bicycle enhancements per the Project Site plan, including new sidewalks along Hurley Avenue, Kelsey Street, Clancy Street, and Crowley Avenue (CAPCOA T-18); end-of-trip bicycle facilities such as lockers and showers (CAPCOA T-10); and Class II bicycle lanes along Clancy Street and Hurley Avenue.** • **At least three additional TDM measures from the following high-feasibility options, with the combined reduction quantified sequentially rather than additively consistent with the CAPCOA Handbook, and without claiming full credit for measures that compete for the same trips (a Mandatory CTR Program (T-6) may encompass ridesharing (T-8) and vanpool (T-11) elements, and priced workplace parking (T-12) and parking cash-out (T-13) shall not both be credited at full value):** ○ **T-6: Mandatory CTR Program with monitoring and targets for trip reduction.** ○ **T-8: Ridesharing program with matching services and incentives.** ○ **T-9: Subsidized or discounted transit program, providing passes for Routes 15 and 17.** ○ **T-11: Employer-sponsored vanpool subsidies.** ○ **T-12: Priced workplace parking for employees.** ○ **T-13: Employee parking cash-out program.** • **Contribution to regional TDM programs via fair-share fees to TCAG, calculated based on the Project's proportional VMT impact (using TCAG's Regional Transportation Impact Fee Program or equivalent). Where a VMT mitigation bank, VMT exchange, or comparable regional VMT offset program is established and available to the Project at the time of TDM Plan approval, the Applicant may satisfy all or part of this regional contribution through that program, subject to City verification that the credits represent real, quantified, and enforceable VMT reductions.** • **The TDM Plan shall achieve the maximum feasible reduction in Project VMT and, at a minimum, the 10.5 percent sequential reduction from the onsite pedestrian and bicycle**	Project Applicant / Future Employers and Tenants	Prior to issuance of the first building permit; ongoing implementation and annual reporting	

measures (CAPCOA T-18 and T-10) credited in this EIR. The TDM Plan shall include monitoring provisions, with annual reporting to the City demonstrating implementation and estimated VMT reductions. If annual monitoring demonstrates that implemented measures are achieving less than the reduction committed to in the approved TDM Plan, and in no case less than the 10.5 percent floor, the Applicant shall implement additional compatible measures from the list above until the committed reduction is restored. Note: Even with implementation of all feasible measures in TRANS-1, the Project's VMT impact remains significant and unavoidable due to the industrial nature of the Project and its suburban location.			
TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES			
MM TRI-1: Tribal Monitoring. Prior to any ground disturbance, the Applicant shall offer tribes identified by the NAHC as culturally affiliated with the Project area the opportunity to provide a Tribal Monitor during ground-disturbing activities (with tribal participation dependent upon the tribe's availability and interest). Where a tribe elects to participate, the Tribal Monitor shall conduct a surface inspection of the Site prior to any ground disturbance and shall monitor the Site during grading activities. The Tribal Monitor shall provide pre-construction information to supervisory personnel and any excavation contractor, which will include information on potential cultural material finds and on the procedures to be enacted if resources are found. Prior to any ground disturbance, all construction personnel shall receive Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) cultural resources training conducted by a qualified archaeologist.	Project Applicant; Tribal Monitor(s) from culturally affiliated tribe; Qualified Archaeologist	Prior to any ground disturbance; during all ground-disturbing activities	
MM TRI-2: Discovery of Historical or Archaeological Cultural Resources. In the event that historical or archaeological cultural resources are discovered during Project-related activities, work shall stop within 100 feet of the find, and a qualified archaeologist shall determine whether the resource requires further study. The qualified archaeologist shall determine the measures that shall be implemented to protect the discovered resources including, but not limited to, excavation of the finds and evaluation of the finds in accordance with § 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines. Measures may include avoidance, preservation in-place, recordation, additional archaeological testing, and data recovery, among other options. Any previously undiscovered resources found during Project-related activities within the Project area shall be recorded on appropriate California Department of Parks and Recreation 523 forms and evaluated for significance. No further ground disturbance shall occur in the immediate vicinity of the discovery until approved by the qualified archaeologist. The Lead Agency and culturally affiliated tribes identified by the NAHC shall be contacted upon the discovery of cultural resources to begin coordination on the disposition of the find(s). If the find is determined	Project Applicant / Contractor	Upon discovery of historical or archaeological cultural resources during any Project-related ground disturbance or operations	

to be Native American in origin, the Lead Agency shall consult with the culturally affiliated tribe(s) to determine whether the find constitutes a TCR and to identify appropriate treatment. Treatment of any significant cultural resources shall be undertaken with the approval of the Lead Agency.			
MM TRI-3: Disposition of Recovered Archaeological Artifacts. Upon coordination with the Lead Agency, any archaeological artifacts recovered shall be donated to an appropriate tribal custodian or a qualified scientific institution where they would be afforded protection under applicable cultural resources laws and guidelines.	Project Applicant	Upon recovery of archaeological artifacts; prior to Project completion or as coordinated with Lead Agency	
MM TRI-4: Human Remains Discovery Protocol. If human remains are discovered during Project-related activities or operational activities, further excavation or disturbance shall be prohibited pursuant to Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code. The specific protocol, guidelines, and channels of communication outlined by the NAHC, in accordance with Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code, Section 5097.98 of the PRC (Chapter 1492, Statutes of 1982, SB 297), and SB 447 (Chapter 44, Statutes of 1987) shall be followed. Section 7050.5(c) shall guide the potential Native American involvement, in the event of discovery of human remains, at the direction of the Tulare County Coroner.	Project Applicant / Contractor	Upon discovery of human remains during any Project-related activities or operations	

CHAPTER 7 LIST OF PREPARERS AND CONSULTANTS

This chapter identifies the Lead Agency staff, EIR preparer, and technical consultants who contributed to this Draft EIR, together with the technical appendices each prepared.

7.1 - Lead Agency

City of Visalia

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Jarred Olsen, AICP — Principal Planner

Josh Dan — Senior Planner

7.2 - EIR Preparer

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EIR PREPARER

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CONTRIBUTION

Draft EIR

Appendix A EIR Public Involvement (NOP, EIR Public Scoping Comments, Initial Study)

Appendix B Master Plan

Appendix C LESA Model

Appendix I Energy Calculations

7.3 - Technical Consultants

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AIR QUALITY, GHG, AND HRA

PERSONNEL

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Appendix D Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Health Risk Assessment

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Appendix E Biological Study

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Appendix F Cultural Resources Assessment

Paul Humphrey, EP

PHASE I ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT

CONTRIBUTION

Appendix G Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report

AEC

PHASE II SITE INVESTIGATION

CONTRIBUTION

Appendix H Phase II Excavation Letter

EKI Environment & Water, Inc.

WATER SUPPLY

CONTRIBUTION

Appendix J Water Supply Assessment Report

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TRANSPORTATION

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Ian J. Parks, PE — Principal Engineer

Mark Assi — Associate Specialist

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Appendix K Traffic Impact Study

Appendix L VMT Analysis Letter

7.4 - Technical Appendices

Table 7-1 lists each technical appendix to this Draft EIR and the firm responsible for its preparation.

Table 7-1: Technical Appendices and Preparers

Appendix	Title	Prepared By
A	EIR Public Involvement (NOP, EIR Public Scoping Comments, Initial Study)	4Creeks, Inc.
B	Master Plan	4Creeks, Inc.
C	LESA Model	4Creeks, Inc.
D	Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Health Risk Assessment	Core Environmental Consulting
E	Biological Study	Live Oak Associates, Inc.
F	Cultural Resources Assessment	Soar Environmental Consulting, Inc.
G	Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report	Paul Humphrey, EP
H	Phase II Excavation Letter	AEC
I	Energy Calculations	4Creeks, Inc.

Appendix	Title	Prepared By
J	Water Supply Assessment Report	EKI Environment & Water, Inc.
K	Traffic Impact Study	Provost & Pritchard Civil Engineers
L	VMT Analysis Letter	Provost & Pritchard Civil Engineers

CHAPTER 8 REFERENCES

8 - 1 Footnotes

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8 - 3 Technical Reports Prepared for the Project

The following technical studies were prepared in support of this EIR and are reproduced in full in the appendices. The tables below identify where the data, analyses, and conclusions relied upon in this EIR are located within each report.

Page numbers refer to the internal pagination of each report as bound in the appendices. The "EIR §" column identifies the chapter or section of this EIR that relies on each item.

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Appendix B – Kelsey-Hurley Industrial Park Master Plan

4Creeks, Inc. (2026). Kelsey-Hurley Industrial Park Master Plan. Prepared for the City of Visalia. July 2026.

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California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) Model Worksheets. Prepared for the Project.

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Appendix D – Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Health Risk Assessment

Core Environmental Consulting. (2026). Technical Report (Revised): Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Health Risk Assessment for the California Environmental Quality Act. June 2026.

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3.3	Sections 3.2 and 3.3: Criteria Pollutants and Other Pollutants	6–8
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Live Oak Associates, Inc. (2025). Biological Evaluation, Etchegaray Industrial Park, Tulare County, California. June 10, 2025.

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Appendix G – Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report

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Advanced Environmental Concepts, Inc. (2025). Summary Letter: Excavation of Hydrocarbon-Impacted Soil. September 26, 2025.

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EKI Environment & Water, Inc. (2025). Water Supply Assessment for the Kelsey-Hurley Industrial Park Project, November 2025.

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Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group. September 2025, updated September 2026.

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Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group. January 30, 2026.

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