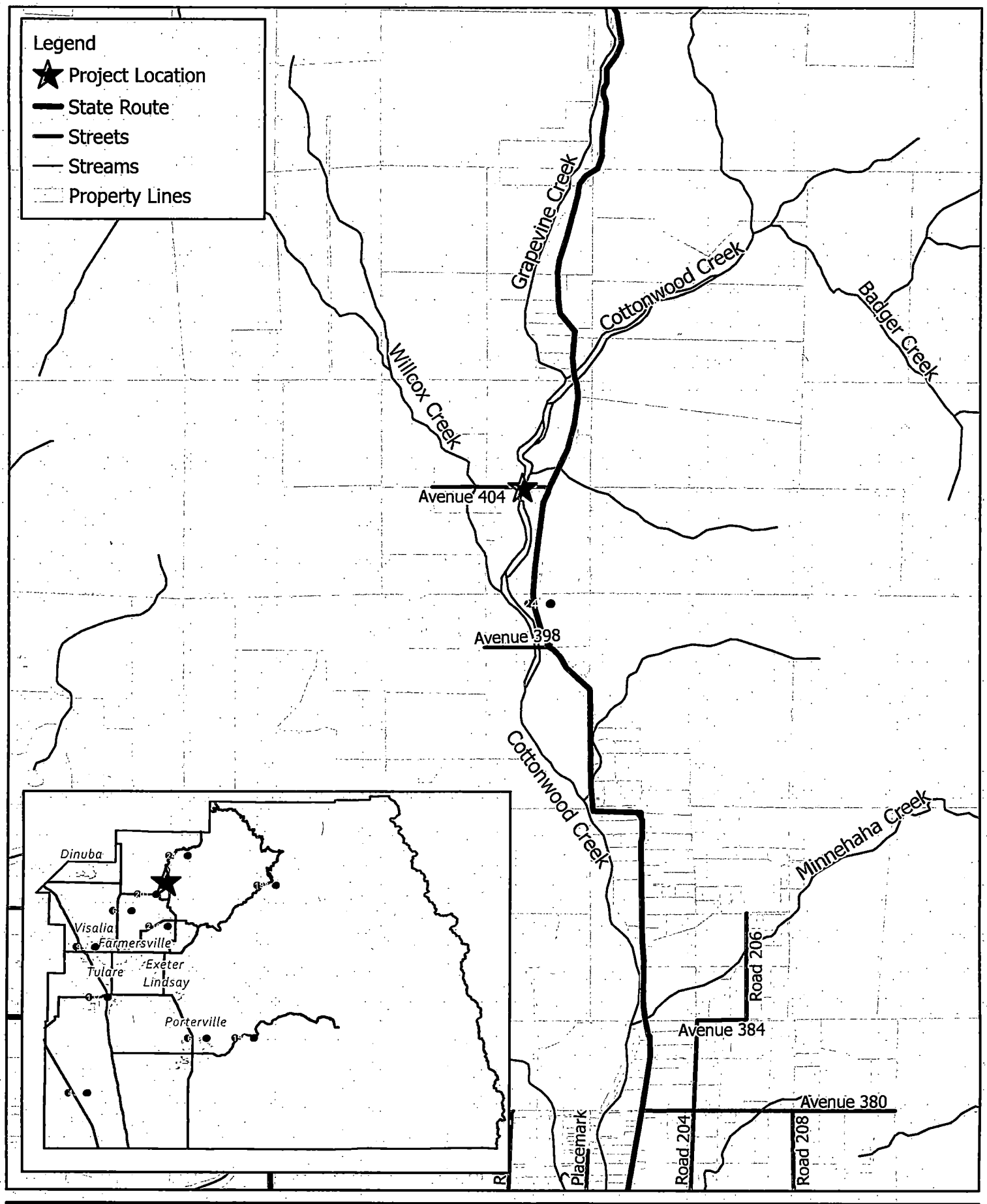

Avenue 404 Over Cottonwood Creek Bridge Project
Vicinity Map

Reasons why project is exempt: The Project is consistent with the following CEQA exemptions: Statutory Exemption 15269 (a)(b) for emergency projects to repair or replace property or facilities damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster and necessary to maintain service essential to public health, safety, or welfare; Class 2 Section 15302(c), Replacement or Reconstruction, as activities associated with the Project would include replacement of an existing facility with negligible or no expansion of capacity; Class 4 Section 15304(f), Minor Alterations to Land minor public or private alterations in the conditions of land, water, and/or vegetation which may involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees, and minor trenching and backfilling where the surface is restored to current conditions; and a Class 6 15306 Information Collection for geotechnical investigations as the data collection would not result in serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource, and whereas the boring activities would be backfilled and surfaces would be restored to existing conditions. Additionally, consistent with Section 15304, Application by Public Agencies, the County of Tulare Board of Supervisors adopted an exemption for the construction of the aforementioned facilities per the Tulare County Guidelines for the Implementation of California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, Number 300 Section 111. CATEGORICAL EXEMPTIONS Class 2: Replacement or Reconstruction (c). As such, Sections 15302 and 15304 are applicable and appropriate for this Project.

Environmental Assessment Officer: Reed Schenke, P.E., RMA Director/ EAO

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: County of Tulare

Project Planner/Representative: Jennifer Cervantes, Engineer I **Telephone:** 559-624-7169

Signature: Gary A Mills Date: 6/3/2025 Title: Chief Environmental Planner
Gary A. Mills

Signature: Michael Washam Date: 6/4/2025 Title: Associate RMA Director, Designee
Michael G. Washam, A.C.E.

☒ Signed by Lead Agency Date submitted to LCI:

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

Fee Exempt per Government Code Section 6103

To: ☒ Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

☒ Tulare County Clerk
Room 105, Courthouse
221 South Mooney Blvd.
Visalia, CA 93291

FILED
TULARE COUNTY

JUN 5 2025

ASSESSOR / CLERK-RECORDER
BY:

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING AT TULARE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE

Lead Agency: County of Tulare c/o Resource Management Agency
5961 S. Mooney Blvd.
Visalia, CA 93277 (559) 624-7000
Attn: *gmills@tularecounty.ca.gov* and *jwillis@tularecounty.ca.gov*

Applicant(s): Tulare County Public Works
5961 South Mooney Blvd.
Visalia, CA 93277 (559) 624-7000

Project Title: Avenue 404 over Cottonwood Creek Bridge Replacement Project

Project Location - Specific: The project site is located approximately 8 miles northwest of the City of Woodlake within unincorporated Tulare County.

Project Location - Section, Township, Range: Section 22, Township 16S, Range 26E, MDBM

Project Location - City: northwest of Woodlake **Project Location - County:** Tulare

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The proposed Project aims to replace the 1939 bridge over Cottonwood Creek that was damaged and failed due to catastrophic floodwater flows in March of 2023. In response, a temporary one-lane bridge was installed in 2023 on Avenue 404 over Cottonwood Creek. The temporary single span bridge was built approximately 65 feet downstream from the former bridge to provide temporary access across Cottonwood Creek until a permanent structure can be constructed.

The proposed replacement bridge would be a multi-span cast-in-place reinforced concrete slab bridge or a multi-span precast prestressed (PC/PS) voided slab bridge, measuring approximately 105-feet long by 19-feet wide. The creek banks would be stabilized with riprap, and the new replacement bridge would be built in the same location as the original bridge. Construction is anticipated to start in the fall of 2027 and should be completed in approximately 8 months. During this time, Avenue 404 would remain open since the temporary bridge is located downstream of the proposed replacement bridge. Thus, this Project would enhance public safety, provide emergency access and security, and improve transportation infrastructure for the general population in the region, accommodating both general traffic and large agricultural equipment, vital to the area.

Prior to construction, geotechnical investigations will be performed to determine existing conditions and to test the suitability of the ground to support replacement piers and abutments of the new replacement bridge structure. Geotechnical investigation would include four (4) borings, one boring at each proposed pier and abutment location. No permanent impacts from the geotechnical investigation are anticipated to occur. The borings will be approximately 80 feet deep and 8-10 inches wide. Upon completion, borings will be refilled with soil cutting and natural materials to maintain existing conditions and in accordance with County requirements. Boring activities will take place during the dry season. Beneficiaries of the Project include users of the bridge crossing.

Exempt Status: (*check one*)

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- ☒ Declared Emergency **(Sec. 21080(b)(3);**
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- ☐ Common Sense Rule: CEQA guidelines 15061(b)(3)
- ☒ Categorical Exemption: **Class 2 Section 15302(c) Replacement or Reconstruction; Class 4 Section15304(f) Minor Alterations to Land; and Class 6 Information Collection 15306**
- ☒ Statutory Exemptions: **Emergency Projects 15269(a)(b);**