



County of Fresno

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND PLANNING
STEVEN E. WHITE, DIRECTOR

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

APPLICANT: Ashish Biswas

APPLICATION NOS.: Initial Study No. 8357 and Unclassified Conditional Use Permit No. 3758

DESCRIPTION: Modification of an existing Interstate Freeway Interchange Commercial Development Master Plan to allow a development consisting of an approximately 4,942 square-foot convenience store, a 5,289 square-foot canopy with fueling gas stations, onsite parking, and related improvements on a 1.01-acre parcel in the AE-40 (Exclusive Agricultural, 40-acre minimum parcel size) Zone District.

LOCATION: The project site is located at the northwest quadrant of Interstate Highway 5 and State Route 198 (Dorris Avenue), approximately eight miles northeast of the nearest city limits of the City of Coalinga (APN 065-260-27S) (Sup. Dist. 4).

I. AESTHETICS

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

- A. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista; or

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The subject parcel is fallow agricultural land and is located in an area marked by relatively large-sized agricultural parcels and highway commercial development. Orchard and field crops are located to the north and west, and commercial developments (restaurants and gas stations) and Interstate 5 are located to the south and east of the subject property. There is no scenic vista on or near the property to be potentially impacted by this proposal.

- B. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway; or

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Interstate 5 is designated as a Scenic Highway in the Fresno County General Plan. According to General Plan Policy OS-L.3, intensive land development proposals shall

provide for maintenance of a natural open space area 200 feet in depth parallel to the right-of-way of a Scenic Highway. In this case, the subject parcel is located approximately 980 feet west of the western edge of the Interstate Highway 5 right-of-way. Therefore, the subject proposal will not impact scenic quality of the highway. Additionally, no trees, rock outcropping, or historic buildings exist on or near the project site to be potentially impacted by this proposal.

- C. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality; or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The proposal would include a 5,942 square-foot building consisting of mini-mart/restaurants, a 5,289 square-foot canopy with gasoline fueling stations for automobiles. Related improvements include underground fuel storage tanks, on-site parking, and circulation areas.

Visibility of the proposed gas service station and proposed convince store from neighboring properties located to the north and west, including Interstate Highway 5, will be screened from view by existing structural improvements located on the four other parcels that comprise the existing Interstate Freeway Interchange Commercial Development which is the subject of this proposal.

The proposed building and fuel canopy will be visible from neighboring properties located to the north and west; however, considering the proximity of the subject parcel to existing commercial uses authorized for other Interstate Freeway Interchange Commercial Developments in the area, this proposal is not anticipated to have a negative aesthetic impact on the surrounding area.

- D. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Any outdoor lighting that might have the potential of generating glare in the area is limited by Zoning Ordinance section 820.3.020 which requires it to be “directed downward and shielded so that all direct light and glare is confined within the boundaries of the subject parcel, thereby minimizing off-site glare” and that “light sources shall be shielded to direct light rays onto the subject parcel only. The light source, whether bulb or tube, shall not be directly visible from an abutting property or public street rights-of-way.”

II. AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site

Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:

- A. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use; or
- B. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract; or
- C. Conflict with existing zoning for forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production; or
- D. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; or
- 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 forestland to non-forest use?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The subject 1.1-acre parcel is not located on forest land, is classified as Urban and Built-Up Land on the Fresno County Important Farmland Map (2016), and is not enrolled under a Williamson Act Land Conservation Contract.

The subject parcel is part of the northwest quadrant of the Dorris Avenue and Interstate 5 interchange. Land within a designated interchange is indicated for a future commercial use that will cater to the motorists and truckers traveling on Interstate 5. Designated as a major interchange in the Fresno County General Plan, sections of the northwest and southwest quadrants closer to the interchange are developed with commercial uses, including fueling stations, restaurants and motels. The subject proposal does not conflict with the current AE-40 zoning on the property and is allowed on the subject property through discretionary land use approval.

III. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:

- A. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable Air Quality Plan; or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The Applicant provided an *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas (AQ/GHG) Study* completed for the project by Yorke Engineering, LLC dated *December 30, 2024*, and was provided to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) for comments. The District expressed no concerns with AQ/GHG Study.

The construction and operation of the proposed project (workshop) would contribute the following criteria pollutant emissions: NO_x (nitrogen dioxide), VOC (volatile organic compound), PM₁₀, (particulate matters) PM_{2.5} (particulate matters), SO_x (sulfur dioxide), and CO (carbon mono-oxide).

As discussed in Section III, B. below, emissions of NO_x, VOC, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, SO_x, and CO associated with the construction and operation of workshop would not exceed the District's significance thresholds. Additionally, the building would comply with the latest Title 24 energy efficiency requirements and result in less energy consumption and resulting air pollutant emissions associated with electricity generation.

Given the above discussion, the project would result in less than significant impacts related to conflicting with or obstructing the implementation of the SJVAPCD's Air Quality Plans.

- B. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard; or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The primary pollutants of concern during project construction and operation are NO_x (nitrogen dioxide), VOC (volatile organic compound), PM₁₀, (particulate matters) PM_{2.5} (particulate matters), SO_x (sulfur dioxide), and CO (carbon mono-oxide). The SJVAPCD's annual emission significance thresholds used for the project are: 10 tons per year NO_x, 10 tons per year VOC, 15 tons per year PM₁₀, 15 tons per year PM_{2.5}, 27 tons per year SO_x, and 100 tons per year CO. The SJVAPCD's daily emission significance thresholds for all pollutants used for the project is 100 pounds/day

Per the AQ/GHG Study, the annual construction air pollutant emissions (ton per year) associated with the project would be less than 1 for ROG, 1.1 for NO_x, 1.3 for CO, and less than 1 for SO_x, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} which are less than the threshold of significance. Likewise, the daily construction air pollutant emissions (pounds per day) associated with the project would be 7 for ROG, 14 for NO_x, 16 for CO, and less than 1 for SO_x, 3 for PM₁₀, and 2 for PM_{2.5} which are less than the threshold of significance.

Regarding the project operation, the term "project operations" refers to the full range of activities that can or may generate criteria pollutant and GHG emissions when the project is functioning in its intended use. For projects, such as office parks, shopping centers, apartment buildings, residential subdivisions, and other indirect sources, motor vehicles traveling to and from the project represent the primary source of air pollutant

emissions. The Project would result in emissions from onsite fueling activities, vehicle trips travelling to the site, landscaping, and other sources.

The annual operational air pollutant emission (ton per year) associated with the project would be 5 for ROG, 2 for NO_x, 13 for CO, less than 1 for SO_x, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} which are less than the threshold of significance. Likewise, the daily operational air pollutant emissions (pounds per day) associated with the project would be 31 for ROG, 11 for NO_x, 84 for CO, less than 1 for SO_x, 1 for PM₁₀, and less than 1 for PM_{2.5} which are less than the threshold of significance.

Based on the above discussion, the project impact on regional air quality would be less than significant.

C. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations; or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The nearest residential receptor is a single-family residence over 2,624 feet west to the southwest of the Project. The nearest worker receptor is Motel 6 less than 328 feet to the north of the Project. Hotel guests have short-term exposure due to the low duration of stays.

Health risk for construction activities and operational mobile sources were calculated using the SJVAPCD's December 2022 Prioritization Calculator.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's (SJVAPCD) current thresholds of significance for TAC emissions from the operations of both permitted and non-permitted sources are as follows:

- Cancer Score: Maximally Exposed Individual risk equals or exceeds 10 in one million.
- Chronic Score: Hazard Index equals or exceeds 1 for the Maximally Exposed Individual.
- Acute Score: Hazard Index equals or exceeds 1 for the Maximally Exposed Individual.

To calculate total project screening health risk the construction emissions were amortized over 70 years and added to the operational emissions. Construction and mobile related health risk is substantially below the health risk threshold for cancer, chronic, and acute exposures at the nearest sensitive residential use located 2,624 feet from the project. Inhalation risk from project construction and mobile sources for cancer is 6.3 (less than 10), for chronic is 0.009 (less than 1) and for acute is 0.000 (less than 1).

For the operations phase of the proposed fueling and convenience market, health risk was assessed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The CARB recommends providing 50-foot separation for typical gas dispensing facilities from sensitive land uses. The closest sensitive receptors are hotel uses (Motel 6) located approximately 328 feet to

the north of the project site. As such, the proposed fueling stations are outside of the CARB recommended 50-foot separation distance.

The potential health risks linked to fueling activities were evaluated using the 2022 CARB & CAPCOA Gasoline Service Station Industrywide Risk Assessment Look-up Tool. Cancer risk (residential) from fueling emission is 0.05 (less than 10), cancer risk (employee) is 0.50 (less than 10), chronic risk is 0.02 (less than 1) and 0.02 (less than 1) for acute score.

The project's total screening risk score calculated as the maximum screening risk values from the operational and construction mobile sources added to the maximum screening risk values from the fueling emissions is 6.8 for cancer risk, 0.02 for chronic risk and 0.2 for acute risk.

In Summary, the Project would not result in significant health risk related impacts to local receptors. The combined construction and operations health risks associated with the Project are likewise below the thresholds. Receptors located further than the analyzed receptors would experience less health risk and likewise result in less than significant adverse health risks.

C. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

During construction of the project, diesel equipment operating at the site may generate some nuisance odors asphalt paving, and architectural coating (painting).; however, these odors would be temporary and would dissipate over distance and as construction equipment moves around the site. Further, construction related odors would permanently cease upon completion of work. During the operations phase of the Project, the proposed workshop may use paints and solvents that have an olfactory presence, but it would be typical of small-scale use that would not pose a public nuisance. In addition, the SJVAPCD addresses nuisances under Rule 4102 - Nuisance. This rule prohibits the discharge of air contaminants or other materials that cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of people or the public, or that endanger the comfort, repose, health, or safety of any such persons or the public. The project will comply with Rule 4102 and would not result in other emissions that would significantly affect a substantial number of people.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; or

- 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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; or
- 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; or
- 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; or
- E. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance; or
- 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?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The subject parcel is in an agricultural area and is currently fallow. Parcels in the immediate surroundings (including the subject parcel) have been disturbed with farming operations and commercial operations, and do not provide habitat for State or federally listed species. Additionally, no riparian features, wetlands, or waters under the jurisdiction of United States exist on the property.

The proposal was routed to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for review and comments. No concerns were expressed by either agency. Therefore, no impacts were identified in regard to: 1) any candidate, sensitive, or special-status species; 2) any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by CDFW or USFWS; 3) federally-protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act; or 4) the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or native wildlife nursery sites.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- A. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5; or
- B. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5; or
- C. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED:

The project site is in an area designated as “moderately” sensitive for archeological resources. Therefore, to reduce potential impacts to cultural resources to a less than significant level, a standard Mitigation Measure would require that in case of an archeological find during grading and construction activities, all work shall be halted until the proper authorities have been notified for further action.

Mitigation Measure

1. *In the event that cultural resources are unearthed during ground disturbing activity, all work shall be halted in the area of the find, and an Archeologist shall be called to evaluate the findings and make any necessary mitigation recommendations. If human remains are unearthed during ground disturbing activity, no further disturbance is to occur until the Fresno County Coroner has made the necessary findings as to origin and disposition. If such remains are determined to be Native American, the Coroner must notify the Native American Commission within 24 hours.*

VI. ENERGY

Would the project:

- A. Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation; or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The project development would not result in significant environmental impacts due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources (gas, electricity, gasoline, and diesel) during construction or operation of the project. No qualitative analysis for energy impacts was required for the project. Since the project does not propose special designs, unusual project characteristics, or deviate from existing regulations, including development standards, CalGreen, Building Energy Efficient Standards, etc., it is anticipated that the project would not be consume more energy compared to the comparable construction activities.

- B. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

All construction activities will comply with the existing regulations, including those which apply to renewable energy or energy efficiency. With compliance to current green building standards, the project will not conflict or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy, or energy efficiency.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:

- A. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:
 - 1. 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?
 - 2. Strong seismic ground shaking?
 - 3. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?
 - 4. Landslides?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The area is designated as Seismic Design Category D (Special Area) in the United States Geological Survey (USGS). Although no agency expressed concerns or complaints related to ground shaking, ground failure, liquefaction or landslides, construction of the project will be subject to the Seismic Design Category D Standards.

- B. Result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil; or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Grading activities resulting from the project development may result in loss of some topsoil due to compaction and over covering of soil for construction of buildings and structures for the project. However, the impact would be less than significant due to the project requiring approval of an Engineered Grading Plan and a Grading Permit prior to any on-site grading work.

- C. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse; or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Landslides and other forms of slope failure form in response to long-term uplift, mass wasting, and disturbance of slopes. The topographical features of the site are mild and do not provide the possibility of on or off-site land sliding on-site.

The potential for seismic-related ground failure (lateral spreading and liquefaction) occurring on the project site is minimal. The project site is not in an area identified by Fresno County as being susceptible to liquefaction. In addition, the intensity of ground

shaking from a large, distant earthquake is expected to be relatively low on the project site and, therefore, would not be severe enough to induce liquefaction on-site..

- D. 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; or

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Per Figure 7-1 of the 2000 Fresno County General Plan Background Report, the project site is not located within an area of known risk of expansive soils. However, the project development will implement all applicable requirements of the most recent California Building Standards Code and will consider any potential hazards associated with shrinking and swelling of expansive soils.

- 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; or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The 1-5 Property Services, Inc., is the provider of sewer services for the Northwest & Southwest Quadrants at Interstate 5 and Highway 198.

The Fresno County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division, reviewed the proposal and expressed no concerns related to soils or wastewater disposal, as the project will connect to a community sewer system operated by the I-5 Property Services, Inc. The entity has issued a Will-Serve letter to provide sewer service to the subject proposal.

- F. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

No paleontological resources were identified in the project analysis. See discussion in Section V. CULTURAL RESOURCES above.

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

- A. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment; or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Project construction and operational activities would generate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. In the *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas (AQ/GHG) Study prepared for the project by Yok Engineering, LLC and dated September 10, 2024*, GHG emissions were estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2022.1.1.26.

Per the AQ/GHG Study, the principal source of construction GHG emissions would be internal combustion engines of construction equipment, on-road construction vehicles, and workers' commuting vehicles. The estimated construction GHG emissions for the Project would be 239 MTCO_{2e}. Because impacts from construction activities occur over a relatively short period of time, they contribute a relatively small portion of the overall lifetime project GHG emissions. Construction emissions were amortized over a 30-year project lifetime and results in amortized construction emissions of 8 MTCO_{2e}.

Operational GHG emissions are produced from vehicle trips, electricity usage, water consumption, natural gas for space and water heating, and gasoline powered landscaping and maintenance equipment and would be 24MT/year.

The project is an ancillary use to the existing religious facility (temple) and would not generate additional vehicle trips. The proposed project is estimated to result in GHG emissions of approximately 23 MT/year CO_{2e}. This total, divided by the estimated the service population (800 persons per year) from the existing temple congregation would equate to an estimated 0.03 MT/year/SP CO_{2e}. This is consistent with the 2030 General Plan per capita target of 4.0 MT/year/SP CO_{2e} to meet the long-term goal of carbon neutrality by 2045. Impacts would be less than significant for the proposed project.

- B. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The project construction and operational emissions are not anticipated to conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions.

Per the AQ/GHG Study, the project would be designed and operated in accordance with the applicable Title 24 regulations and the latest energy code standards, which impose energy and water conservation measures. Much of the energy usage in the project would consist of lighting and climate controls. Adherence to the energy requirements will ensure conformance with the State's and County of Fresno's goal of promoting energy and lighting efficiency. As such, the project would be consistent with the County's sustainability policies and regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs. Therefore, the Project would be considered consistent with the County's plans, policies, and regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases and would result in a less than significant impact from GHG emissions.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

- A. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials; or
- 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; or
- C. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school; or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The project is a commercial center consisting of a convenience store with gasoline fueling stations for automobiles.

Fresno County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division review of the proposal requires that prior to the issuance of building permits, the Applicant shall: 1) submit complete plans and specifications regarding the proposed installation of underground storage tanks; and 2) handle all hazardous wastes in accordance with requirements set forth in the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 22, Division 4.5. These requirements will be included as Project Notes.

The project is not located within one quarter-mile of a school. The closest public school is located approximately 15 miles to the northeast in the City of Mendota.

- 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; or

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project site is not listed as a hazardous materials site in the California Department of Toxic Substances Control Site (Envirostor). The project would not create hazards 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, result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area; or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The subject parcel is located approximately 1,686 feet northwest of the Harris Ranch Airport and is located in Zone 6 traffic pattern. Fresno Coalition of Government's Airport Land Use Commission. The ALUC reviewed the initial project routing and expressed no

concerns with the project but required that a finding of consistency be made by the ALUC prior to project approval.

- F. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan; or

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The Interstate 5 and State Route (SR) 198 are maintained by the California Department of Transportation. The agency did not identify any concerns regarding emergency response or evacuation plan for the project.

- G. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The subject parcel is not located within a wildland area.

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

- A. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?
- B. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin; or

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project will use an estimated 5,000-gallon water per day and will connect to a public water system operated by I-5 Property Services, Inc. The entity has issued a Will-Serve letter to provide water to the subject proposal. With the sustainable water supply from I-5 Property Services, Inc., no impact on water quality standards or groundwater supply will occur from this proposal.

- 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:
 1. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off site?
 2. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on or off site?

3. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or

4. Impede or redirect flood flows?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The subject property is fallow agricultural land. No stream or river exists on or near the property to be impacted by this proposal. As noted above in Section VI.B. Geology and Soils, any changes to the existing drainage pattern resulting from this proposal will be subject to review and approval of an Engineered Grading and Drainage Plan and a Grading Permit or Voucher from the Development Engineering Section of the Development Services Division. Also, any additional run-off generated by this proposal will be required to be retained on site per County Standards.

D. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation; or

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

According to FEMA FIRM Panel 3075H, the project site is not subject to flooding from the 1% chance storm (100-year storm).

E. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

A. Physically divide an established community?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

This proposal will not physically divide a community. The subject parcel is located approximately 8.6 miles northeast of the nearest city limits of the City of Coalinga.

B. Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The subject parcel is designated Agriculture and is located within the Westside Freeway Corridor Overlay in the Fresno County General Plan. The area of the property is designated as major commercial interchange along Interstate 5 and State Route 198 (Dorris Avenue) and encompasses one-square mile of land centered on the freeway interchange structure. Westside Freeway Corridor Overlay allows commercial uses within this interchange area by discretionary permits. Divided into four quadrants, the northwest and southwest quadrants of this interchange have been developed with commercial centers to cater the needs of highway traffic.

The subject proposal consists of a convenience store with gasoline fueling station on a 1.01-acre parcel within the southwest quadrant. The project is consistent with the following General Plan Policies:

Regarding consistency with Policy LU-A.3, the project will provide fueling and retail services for highway traffic near Interchange 5 and State Route 198 where such services are deficient; loss of farmland will not result from this proposal, as the project site is located within a designated commercial interchange approved by a discretionary land use approval; this proposal will utilize potable community water provided by I-5 Property Services, Inc; and the subject parcel is located approximately 7.8 miles from the City of Coalinga, which has the ability to provide an adequate workforce.

Regarding consistency with Policy LU-D.1 and Policy LU-D.2, the project is in an established Freeway Interchange Master Plan intended to provide for commercial and service-related uses. The subject is service-related use and will serve the needs of freeway users and the surrounding agricultural community.

Regarding consistency with Policy HS-B.1 which requires identification of any fire hazards, and Policies HS-F.1, 2 and 3 which requires handling of hazardous material information, hazardous materials, hazardous wastes, and response to hazardous materials incidents, the proposal will meet these policies and has been discussed in Section VIII.A.B.C. Hazards and Hazardous Materials.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- A. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state; or
- B. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local General Plan, Specific Plan or other land use plan?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The subject parcel is not located in an identified mineral resource area identified in Policy OS-C.2 of the General Plan.

XIII. NOISE

Would the project result in:

- 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; or
- B. Generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels; or
- 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; or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The Fresno County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division, reviewed this proposal and did not identify any potential noise-related impacts.

Retail activities related to this proposal would mirror existing fueling station, restaurant and lodging activities already occurring on adjoining parcels and would not represent a significant noise impact.

Any noise impacts related to construction are expected to be short-term. Construction noise is considered exempt from compliance with the Fresno County Noise Ordinance provided that noise-generating construction activity is limited to the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. A Project Note would require that development of the proposal shall comply with the Fresno County Noise Ordinance related to construction noise.

The site is approximately 1,686 feet north of the Harris Ranch Airport and is subject to the review and approval of the Airport Land Use Commission.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

- A. Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?; or
- B. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

FINDING: NO IMPACT

This proposal will not construct or displace housing and will not otherwise induce population growth.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project:

- A. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically-altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically-altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the following public services:
 - 1. Fire protection;

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

According to the Fresno County Fire Protection District (CalFIRE) the project development will: 1) be subject to the California Code of Regulations Title 24 – Fire Code; and 2) require approval of County-approved site plans by the Fire District prior to issuance of building permits by the County; 3) require annexation to Community Facilities District (CFD) No. 2010-01 of the Fresno County Fire Protection District. This requirement will be included as a Project Note and will be addressed through mandatory Site Plan Review.

- 2. Police protection;
- 3. Schools; or
- 4. Parks; or
- 5. Other public facilities?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project will not result in the need for additional public services related to schools and parks. No concerns related to this proposal were expressed by the California Highway Patrol.

XVI. RECREATION

Would the project:

- A. Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated; or
- B. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project will not require construction or expansion of recreational facilities, or the use of existing neighborhood parks.

XVII. TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:

- A. Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities; or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

A Traffic Assessment Report (Report) was prepared for the project by Armen Hovanesian Transportation Consulting and dated March 11, 2024. According to the Report, the project area was evaluated for the effects of the project on the non-vehicular transportation system for Pedestrian Facilities, Bicycle Facilities, and Transit Services was conducted.

Regarding Pedestrian Facilities, within a ¼-mile radius of the project site, sidewalks and crosswalks are provided on most roadways, however there are not any retail developments as pedestrian destinations.

Likewise, within a ¼-mile radius of the project site there are no bicycle facilities and Transit services in the area are provided by Fresno County Rural Transit Agency. The nearest transit stop is located at the intersection of Dorris Avenue and Interstate 5 Freeway ramps. This transit stop provides access to Huron Inter-City Transit Route line.

According to the *Report*, Traffic volume counts were obtained for vehicular turning movements at the following four study intersections: Dorris Avenue & Interstate 5 Northbound Off Ramp; Dorris Avenue & Interstate 5 Southbound Off Ramp; Dorris Avenue & East Access Road; and Dorris Avenue & East Access Road. The project is forecasted to result in 232 net new AM peak trips and 225 net new PM peak hour trips. The total daily net new trips will be 2536.

Operational analyses of vehicle average control delays, levels of service, and queueing were conducted at the study intersections for the following conditions and their traffic volume: Existing Traffic Conditions; Existing Plus Project Traffic Conditions, Future (2029) Without Project Traffic Conditions, and Future (2029) Plus Project Traffic Conditions.

According to the Report, with the addition of the project traffic to the future traffic, the level of services for all traffic movements at the study intersections will remain substantially the same, or experience minor change. Therefore, the project does not add any substantial amount of traffic to the study intersections.

The project does not have major adverse effects on access, safety, and circulation on the roadway system within the study area or at the analyzed intersections.

The Fresno County Transportation Planning Unit concurred with the Report's conclusions by indicating that the project will primarily cater to pass-by trips, with no significant impact anticipated. The proposal is to be classified as local-service retail establishments designed to serve customers passing by the project site. The proposal does not qualify as destination businesses offering unique services or products likely to attract long-distance vehicle trips.

- B. Be in conflict or be inconsistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b); or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Upon reviewing the Traffic Assessment Report (Report), the Fresno County Transportation Planning Unit concluded that the project qualifies as local-serving retail and pass by trips falls well below OPR's regional-serving retail threshold. Consequently, the project is expected to have a less-than-significant impact on VMT and can be screened out from further VMT analysis.

- C. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment); or
- D. Result in inadequate emergency access?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project site will gain access from State Route 198 (Dorris Avenue) via a private road easement. This existing access point creates no sharp curves or dangerous intersection with State Route 198. The California Department of Transportation and the Fresno County Fire Protection District did not identify any concerns with the use of this access point during business operation or during emergencies.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- A. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:
 - 1. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k); or

2. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1? (In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.)

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The project site is in an area determined to be highly sensitive to archeological resources. Pursuant to Assembly Bill (AB) 52, project information was routed to the Picayune Rancheria of the Chukchansi Indians, Dumna Wo Wah Tribal Government, Table Mountain Rancheria and Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi Yokut Tribe offering them an opportunity to consult under Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21080.3(b) with a 30-day window to formally respond to the County letter. No tribe requested consultation. Mitigation Measures included in Section V. CULTURAL RESOURCES of this report will safeguard Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs) in case unexpected resources are discovered on the property.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

- A. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects; or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

See discussion in Section VII. E. GEOLOGY AND SOILS above. The project will not result in the relocation or construction of new electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities.

- B. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years; or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

See discussion in Section X. B. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY above.

- C. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments; or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

See discussion in Section VII. E. GEOLOGY AND SOILS above.

- D. Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals; or
- E. Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

All solid wastes produced by the proposed facility will be collected for the local landfill through regular trash collection service.

The operation of the project development will generate solid waste which include garbage and recycling waste. Trash and recycling receptacles will be onsite and picked up weekly by local disposal company. The amount of solid waste generated will have a less than significant impact on the capacity of local landfill sites.

XX. WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

- A. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects; or
- B. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire; or
- C. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment; or
- D. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project site is not within the State Responsibility Area (SRA) and is not located on lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zone.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Would the project:

- A. Have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number, or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory; or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The project impacts cultural resources have been reduced to a less than significant level with the incorporation of Mitigation Measures discussed in Section V. CULTURAL RESOURCES above.

- B. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable (“cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects); or

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Each of the projects located within Fresno County has been or would be analyzed for potential impacts, and appropriate project-specific Mitigation Measures are developed to reduce that project’s impacts to less than significant levels. Projects are required to comply with applicable County policies and ordinances. The incremental contribution by the proposed project to overall development in the area is less than significant.

The project will adhere to the permitting requirements and rules and regulations set forth by the Fresno County Grading and Drainage Ordinance, San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District, and California Code of Regulations Fire Code at the time development occurs on the property. No cumulatively considerable impacts relating to Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Air quality or Transportation were identified in the project analysis. Impacts identified for Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, and Transportation will be mitigated by compliance with the Mitigation Measures listed in Sections V. and XVII of this report.

- C. Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings either directly or indirectly?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

No substantial impacts on human beings, either directly or indirectly, were identified in the analysis.

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

Based upon Initial Study No. 8357 prepared for Conditional Use Permit Application No. 3758, staff has concluded that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

It has been determined that there would be no impacts to mineral resources, population and housing, recreation, or wildfire.

Potential impacts related to aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, noise, public services, transportation, and utilities and service systems have been determined to be less than significant.

Potential impacts to cultural resources have been determined to be less than significant with the identified Mitigation Measures.

A Mitigated Negative Declaration is recommended and is subject to approval by the decision-making body. The Initial Study is available for review at 2220 Tulare Street, Suite A, street level, located on the southwest corner of Tulare and "M" Streets, Fresno, California.

AP:

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