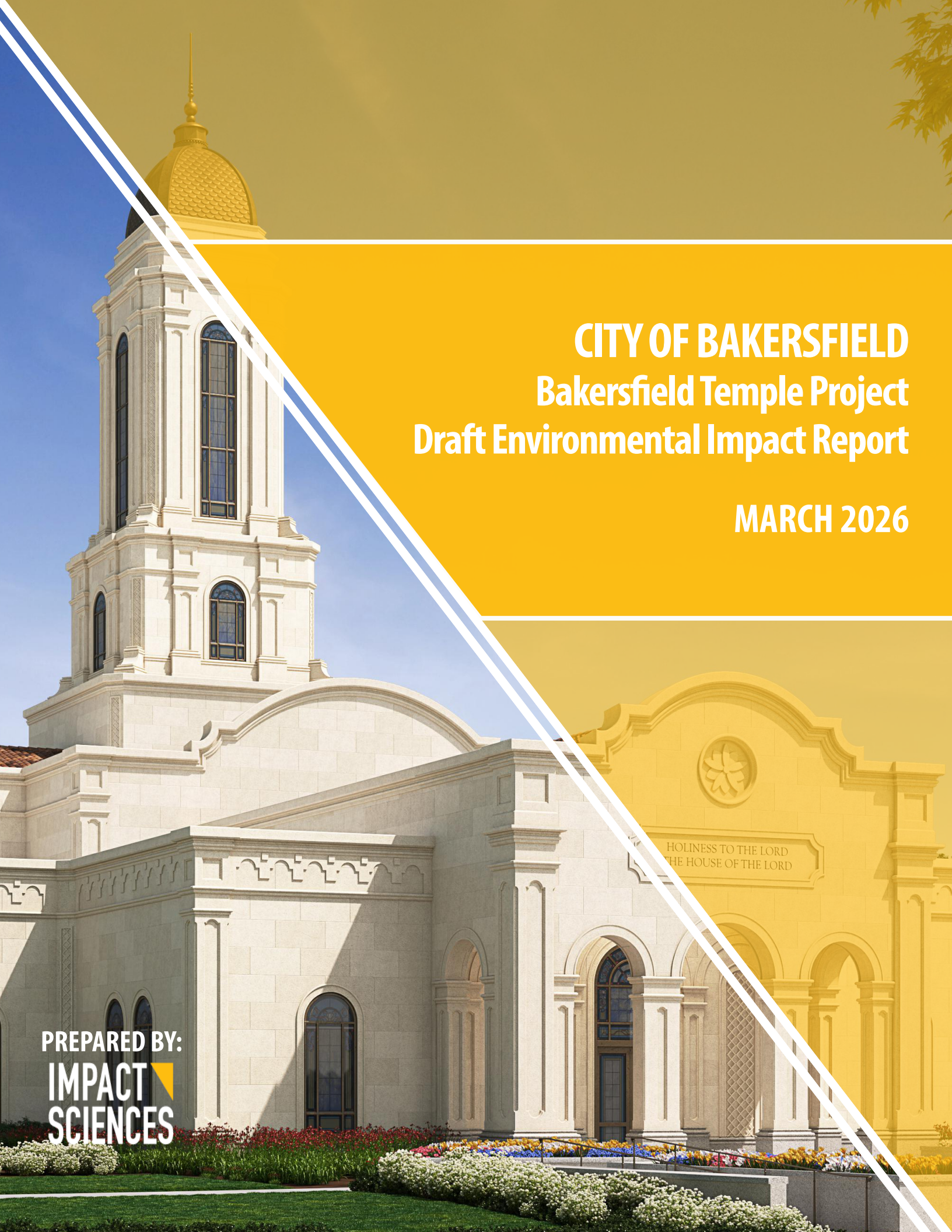
CITY OF BAKERSFIELD

Bakersfield Temple Project
Draft Environmental Impact Report

MARCH 2026



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BAKERSFIELD TEMPLE PROJECT

Draft Environmental Impact Report
State Clearinghouse No. 2025090952

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Bakersfield Temple Project (referred to herein as the "Project" or "proposed Project") Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the Project. This Draft EIR has been prepared as a "Project EIR" pursuant to Section 15161 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, and in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Statute (California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.), *State CEQA Guidelines* (Title 14, California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3, Section 15000 et seq.), and the rules, regulations, and procedures for implementation of CEQA as adopted by the City of Bakersfield (City). It is intended to serve as an informational document for public agency decision makers and the general public on the objectives and components of the proposed Project, significant environmental impacts that may be associated with the implementation of the Project, and appropriate feasible mitigation measures and alternatives that may be adopted to reduce or eliminate these significant impacts. The City of Bakersfield is the lead agency under CEQA and is responsible for preparing the Project's EIR (State Clearinghouse No. 2025090952). The City, as the lead agency, will review and consider the EIR in its decision to approve, conditionally approve, revise, or deny the proposed Project.

The City of Bakersfield, which has the principal responsibility for processing and making a decision on the proposed Project, and other public agencies (i.e., responsible and trustee agencies) that may use the EIR in their decision-making or permitting processes will consider the information in this Draft EIR along with comments and responses that are generated during the CEQA process. Responsible and trustee agencies are identified in **Section 2.0, Project Description**. In addition, the EIR is the primary reference document in the formulation and implementation of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the Project.

In accordance with CEQA, public agencies are required to make findings for each environmental impact of the project identified in the EIR. If the lead agency and responsible and trustee agencies decide that the benefits of the proposed project outweigh any identified unmitigated significant environmental effects, they will be required to adopt a statement of overriding considerations supporting their actions.

The actions involved in the implementation of the Project are described in **Section 2.0, Project Description**. Other agencies that may have discretionary approval over the Project, or components thereof, are also described in **Section 2.0**.

ES.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The City of Bakersfield (City) is an incorporated municipality that is the principal urban center of Kern County. Situated in the central portion of the southern San Joaquin Valley, the City has regional access provided by Interstate 5 approximately 7.7 miles to the southwest, State Route 58 approximately 0.4 mile to the north, and State Route 99 approximately 5.4 miles to the east. The San Joaquin Valley is bounded by the Sierra Nevada to the east, the Tehachapi Mountains to the south, and the Temblor Range, part of the California Coast Ranges, to the west. Bakersfield is situated along the Kern River, which flows from the Sierra Nevada through the valley.

The 13.07 gross-acre Project Site is located at the northwest corner of Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue at 12310 Stockdale Highway in the City (Assessor Parcel Numbers [APNs] 500-780-12 and 500-780-13). These parcels would be consolidated and resubdivided into three parcels pursuant to Vesting Tentative Parcel Map No. 12637. The Project Site is located in the western portion of the City and is generally bound by a commercial medical facility to the west; a private high school, church, and commercial storage facility to the south across Stockdale Highway; a 14-acre public park to the east across Jewetta Avenue; and a single-family residential subdivision to the north.

ES.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Applicant) proposes to develop a religious campus on an approximately 13.07-gross-acre (11.76-net-acre) vacant, graded site in two phases. Phase 1 would include the construction and operation of an approximately 29,630-square-foot temple with a steeple reaching a height of approximately 123 feet 6 inches. Phase 1 also includes site improvements such as 199 parking stalls; plazas; landscaped gardens; ancillary buildings such as the 1,113-square-foot clothing center, an 857-square-foot grounds building, and a screened equipment yard. Phase 2 would include the construction of an approximately 16,370-square-foot meetinghouse with a steeple reaching a height of 66 feet 4 inches, alongside an additional 93 parking stalls (totaling 292 stalls at full buildout), and ancillary facilities which include an approximately 1,800-square-foot outdoor pavilion and a 485-square-foot refuse enclosure, and expanded landscaping. The temple and meetinghouse would operate on complementary schedules to avoid overlapping peak events. The Project also includes off-site street frontage improvements along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue within the public right-of-way, including curb, gutter, and new sidewalks along the full length of both frontages, as well as maintenance of existing Class II bicycle lanes along both roadways.

ES.2.1 Project Objectives

The underlying purpose of the proposed Project is to establish a local Bakersfield-area temple and meetinghouse. The primary objectives of the Project include:

1) Design, build, and maintain a temple and meetinghouse whose physical and functional features symbolize the core beliefs of the Church and its members, and that provide places of worship consistent with these beliefs

2) Locate the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions to optimize their accessibility to the Church's members, taking into account their location relative to:

    - The existing Church membership within and near the Bakersfield community
    - The projected growth in Church membership
    - The nearest existing temples where local Church members now need to travel to worship

3) Place the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions in a location where they are compatible with surrounding uses

4) Site the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions in a stable community that will have long-term uses

5) Situate the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions to provide optimal accessibility to major highways, roadways, and arterial streets

6) Ensure that the proposed site for the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions will conform to the extent reasonably possible with existing land use and zoning regulations and will minimize the number and type of discretionary local approvals needed to facilitate a timely completion of construction and opening of the Church's places of worship

ES.2.2 Requested Approvals

Discretionary and ministerial entitlements, reviews, and approvals required from the City of Bakersfield and other responsible agencies for implementation of the Project include the following:

- Site Plan Review No. 24-0027 for approval of the site design and associated building permits.
- Zone Modification No. 24-0032 to allow steeple heights as proposed (temple: 123 feet 6 inches; meetinghouse: 66 feet 4 inches) where a maximum of 60 feet is otherwise permitted in the C-O (Commercial and Professional Office) zone district.
- Vesting Tentative Parcel Map No. 12637 to subdivide the 13.07 gross acres (11.76 net acres) into 3 parcels.
- Other discretionary and ministerial permits as deemed necessary, including grading, excavation, building, and public rights-of-way permits.
- San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD): Authority to Construct / Permit to Operate for the emergency generator.
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB): National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit.

ES.3 SCOPE OF THE EIR

This Draft EIR addresses the potential environmental effects of the Project and alternatives to the Project. The scope of the Draft EIR includes issues identified by the City of Bakersfield and raised by agencies and the general public in response to the scoping process and Notice of Preparation (NOP), as described below.

ES.3.1 Scoping Process

In compliance with the *State CEQA Guidelines*, the City of Bakersfield has taken steps to maximize opportunities for the public to participate in the environmental process. An Initial Study (**Appendix 1.0-1**) was prepared to analyze the potential physical environmental impacts of the proposed Project and detail the Potentially Significant Impacts that would be analyzed in greater detail in the Project's EIR. The Initial Study was circulated on September 17, 2025, for public review. An NOP (**Appendix 1.0-2**) was also circulated on September 17, 2025, to solicit comments and inform the public of the proposed Project. The proposed Project was described, potential environmental effects associated with implementation were identified, and agencies and the public were invited to review and comment on the Notice of Preparation. The review period for the Initial Study and the NOP closed on October 20, 2025. A public scoping meeting was held at Bakersfield Council Chambers on October 15, 2025, to receive public input on the scope of the environmental review. At the time of preparation of this EIR, the City received six comment letters during the IS/NOP public review period, including letters from three members of the public and agency letters from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), the California Department of Conservation–

Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM), and the Brighton Parks Ad Hoc Committee. All comment letters received during the IS/NOP public review period are included in **Appendix 1.0-3**.

The following environmental issues were identified through the scoping process as having potential impacts associated with implementation of the Project and are addressed in this Draft EIR:

- 3.1, Aesthetics
- 3.2, Air Quality
- 3.3, Biological Resources
- 3.4, Cultural, Tribal Cultural, & Paleontological Resources
- 3.5, Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- 3.6, Land Use and Planning
- 3.7, Noise & Vibration
- 3.8, Transportation

Specific impact topics were identified for each of these environmental issues and are discussed in this Draft EIR with respect to existing conditions, potential impacts, the significance of these potential impacts, and proposed mitigation for significant impacts.

Other sections required by CEQA include a discussion of growth inducement, cumulative impacts, significant irreversible environmental changes, and significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided. A discussion of alternatives to the proposed Project is also presented in this Draft EIR.

ES.3.2 Areas of Controversy Known to the Lead Agency

Based on comments received during the IS/NOP circulation period (**Appendix 1.0-3**) and the October 15, 2025, public scoping meeting, the primary areas of controversy known to the City include the proposed temple steeple height and associated Zone Modification request (Zone Modification No. 24-0032), and the nighttime illumination of the temple building and its potential effects on adjacent residential land uses, particularly the Brighton Parks community located immediately north of the Project Site. These issues are analyzed in **Section 3.1, Aesthetics**, which addresses visual and design impacts and is supported by a Visual Impact Assessment (**Appendix 3.1**), and **Section 3.6, Land Use and Planning**, which addresses the underlying C-O zoning designation and the proposed Zone Modification. Tribal cultural resources raised by the NAHC during the scoping period are addressed in **Section 3.4, Cultural, Tribal Cultural, and Paleontological Resources**, which is also supported by a Cultural Resources Assessment (**Appendix 3.4-1**) and Tribal Consultation documentation (**Appendix 3.4-2**).

ES.3.3 Issues to be Resolved

In accordance with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15123(b)(3), the EIR must identify issues to be resolved, including the choice among alternatives and whether or how to mitigate the significant effects. The City must decide whether to approve, conditionally approve, or deny the proposed Project. Key issues to be resolved by the City's decision-makers include:

- Whether the recommended mitigation measures should be adopted or modified.
- Whether the proposed Project or one of the alternatives (including the Environmentally Superior Alternative) best meets the Project objectives while balancing environmental, economic, and social factors.
- Whether to approve the requested discretionary entitlements, including the Vesting Tentative Parcel Map and the Zone Modification for the proposed steeple heights.

ES.4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

ES.4.1 Summary Table

Table ES-1, Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures, summarizes each potentially significant environmental effect of the proposed Project, the recommended mitigation measures, or alternatives that would reduce or avoid the effect and the level of significance after mitigation. Significance determinations are based on criteria established in accordance with Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, as further described in **Section 3.0, Environmental Impact Analysis**. The reader is referred to the full text of this Draft EIR for a detailed description of the environmental effects of the proposed Project and feasible mitigation measures.

ES.4.2 Potential Impacts Not Found to be Significant

In accordance with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15128, this Draft EIR identifies the possible significant effects that were determined not to be significant and are, therefore, not discussed in detail. Through the scoping process, the City of Bakersfield determined that an EIR was required to evaluate the potentially significant environmental effects of the proposed Project. The following environmental topics were determined not significant and are discussed in **Section 4.0, Effects Found Not to be Significant**:

- Aesthetics (Scenic Vistas and Scenic Highways)
- Agricultural Resources
- Biological Resources (Wetlands and Habitat Conservation Plans/Natural Community Conservation Plan)

- Energy
- Geology and Soils (excluding Paleontological Resources)
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning (Physical Barriers)
- Mineral Resources
- Noise (Private Airstrip or an Airport Land Use Plan)
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation (Emergency Access)
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

ES.4.3 Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(b) requires an EIR to describe any significant impacts, including those that can be mitigated but not reduced to a level of insignificance. As detailed in **Section 3.0, Environmental Impact Analysis**, all potentially significant impacts identified for the proposed Project would be reduced to a less than significant level with the implementation of the recommended mitigation measures outlined in **Table ES-1**. Therefore, no significant and unavoidable environmental impacts would occur with implementation of the proposed Project.

ES.5 MITIGATION MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

State law and the City of Bakersfield CEQA procedures require the preparation of a mitigation monitoring and reporting program designed to ensure that mitigation measures adopted as conditions of approval to mitigate or avoid significant environmental effects are carried out. Mitigation measures identified within this Draft EIR have been described in sufficient detail to provide the necessary information to identify the party (or parties) responsible for carrying out mitigation, when it is to be implemented, and how the mitigation is to be monitored. A mitigation monitoring program will be considered by the City of Bakersfield with the Final EIR.

Table ES-1
Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Project Impacts	Level of Significance Without Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance after Mitigation
Aesthetics			
AES-1: 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 point.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
AES-2: Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
Air Quality			
AQ-1: Would implementation of the proposed Project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
AQ-2: Would implementation of the proposed Project 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?	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
AQ-3: Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	Potentially significant	**MM AQ-1**: Prior to the issuance of any grading or building permits, the Project Applicant shall verify that all diesel-powered off-road construction equipment exceeding 25 horsepower used during Project construction is equipped with engines meeting U.S. EPA Tier 4 Final standards, unless the construction contractor can demonstrate to the City of Bakersfield Building Division that such equipment is not commercially available locally. The construction contractor shall prepare and maintain a complete inventory of all equipment to be used on-site, including the engine tier ratings, and shall	Less than significant with mitigation incorporated

Project Impacts	Level of Significance Without Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance after Mitigation
		submit this inventory to the City of Bakersfield Building Division for review and approval before construction begins. During construction, the contractor shall ensure that all applicable equipment is clearly labeled or otherwise documented to demonstrate compliance with Tier 4 Final standards.	
AQ-4: Would the proposed project include sources that could create other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
Biological Resources			
BIO-1: 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?	Potentially significant	**MM BIO-1: Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP).** Prior to Project-related construction activities, the Project Applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to initiate and conduct a WEAP designed to educate on-site workers about critical environmental concerns associated with the Project. This training shall be mandatory for on-site personnel and shall be administered on the first day of work, before any Project activities commence. The WEAP shall emphasize recognition and protection of special-status species potentially present within the Project Site and immediately adjacent suitable habitat, including burrowing owl, Nelson's antelope squirrel, San Joaquin kit fox, other special-status wildlife, and nesting birds. The program shall include the following elements: • A presentation developed by or in consultation with a qualified biologist addressing sensitive biological resources that may be present within the Project Site, the rationale for their protection, and the consequences of non-compliance. • Brochures or booklets with written descriptions, photographs of protected species, and site rules for the protection of biological resources. • Contact information for the Project's biological monitor with instructions for workers to report questions or concerns. • An acknowledgement form signed by each worker confirming receipt of training and commitment to comply with biological resources protection requirements.	Less than significant with mitigation incorporated

Project Impacts	Level of Significance Without Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance after Mitigation
		The Project Applicant shall ensure all on-site personnel receive WEAP training throughout the Project construction. A training log shall be maintained on-site and signed by personnel immediately after WEAP training to document compliance. **MM BIO-2: Biological Monitor.** Prior to Project-related construction activities, the Project Applicant shall designate a qualified biologist as the biological monitor in the event of an observation of a special-status species within the Project Site during the pre-construction and take-avoidance surveys. This monitor shall be required to be on-site at all times during activities involving vegetation clearance or ground disturbance. Their primary responsibility shall be to ensure that any potential impacts to biological resources are either avoided or minimized to the greatest extent possible. Once the Project approaches a phase where it is determined by the biological monitor that potential impacts to biological resources are no longer present, as determined by their expertise, they may request a reduction or discontinuation of biological monitoring in that specific area. The biological monitor shall also be vested with the authority to halt specific Project activities if they suspect violations of avoidance or minimization measures, or if there are concerns about compliance with local, state, or federal laws. **MM BIO-3: Take-Avoidance Surveys for Special-Status Species.** Prior to Project-related construction activities, and within fourteen (14) days before the start of work, the Project Applicant shall retain qualified biologist(s) to conduct take-avoidance surveys of the Project Site and immediately adjacent suitable habitat. The surveys shall confirm the presence or absence of special-status species that have the potential to occur on-site based on existing habitat conditions, including but not necessarily limited to: • monarch butterfly (Danaus plexippus) • Crotch's bumble bee (Bombus crotchii) • Nelson's antelope squirrel (Ammospermophilus nelsoni) • giant kangaroo rat (Dipodomys ingens) • San Joaquin kit fox (Vulpes macrotis mutica) • short-nosed kangaroo rat (Dipodomys nitratoides brevinasus) • American badger (Taxidea taxus) • San Joaquin coachwhip (Masticophis flagellum ruddocki)	

Project Impacts	Level of Significance Without Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance after Mitigation
		• coast horned lizard (Phrynosoma blainvillii) • Swainson's hawk (Buteo swainsoni) • white-tailed kite (Elanus leucurus) • California jewelflower (Caulanthus californicus) • Kern mallow (Eremalche parryi ssp. kernensis) • San Joaquin woollythreads (Monolopia congdonii) If San Joaquin kit foxes or active dens are detected, the Project Applicant shall establish exclusion zones and buffers consistent with USFWS guidance: a minimum of 50 feet for potential or atypical dens, and a minimum of 100 feet for known dens, demarcated with USFWS-approved exclusion fencing, and, for natal or pupping dens, the Project Applicant shall immediately notify USFWS; no ground-disturbing activities shall occur in the vicinity of a natal or pupping den without prior USFWS authorization. If any of the above special-status species, or other special-status species or their active dens, burrows, or nests, are detected during the surveys, the qualified biologist shall establish appropriate, species-specific environmentally sensitive area buffers around the den, burrow or nest. If avoidance of any detected special-status species or its habitat is not feasible, the Project Applicant shall immediately notify the City of Bakersfield to determine appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures. For non-listed California Species of Special Concern, construction may resume once the City approves a species-specific minimization plan; formal consultation and take permits from USFWS or CDFW are not legally required. If the species is formally listed or protected by the FESA or CESA (i.e., Threatened, Endangered, Candidate, or Fully Protected), consultation with the USFWS and/or CDFW as applicable shall be initiated to determine appropriate measures. All ground-disturbing activities within established buffer areas shall be suspended and shall not resume until the Project Applicant has obtained all required incidental take authorization under the federal Endangered Species Act and/or California Endangered Species Act as applicable to the species detected (recognizing that FESA take prohibitions generally do not apply to listed plants on private land lacking a federal nexus). Mitigation may include off-site habitat conservation, participation in a conservation bank, or other measures	

Project Impacts	Level of Significance Without Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance after Mitigation
		approved by the agencies. Construction within the established buffer areas shall not proceed until all necessary agency approvals are obtained. The biologist(s) conducting the surveys shall record a comprehensive list of plant and wildlife species observed on-site. Survey reports shall be submitted within 14-30 days of survey completion, with immediate reporting of any state or federally listed species to the City of Bakersfield and the appropriate resource agencies, specifically the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and/or the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. **MM BIO-4: Pre-Construction Nesting Bird Surveys and Avoidance.** Prior to the commencement of any ground-disturbing activity or vegetation clearing, the Project Applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to implement the following measures: • Timing and Survey Requirements: To the maximum extent practicable, all initial ground-disturbing activities and vegetation removal shall occur outside of the local avian nesting season, generally defined as February 1 through August 31, or as otherwise determined by a qualified biologist based on local conditions. If construction or vegetation removal must occur during the nesting season, a qualified biologist shall conduct a focused survey for active nests within the Project Site and adjacent off-site habitat (including neighboring trees) within a surrounding buffer of at least 250 feet (or greater, as determined by the biologist based on site conditions and disturbance levels). This survey shall be conducted no more than five (5) days prior to the start of ground disturbance or vegetation removal in that area. • Avoidance and Buffers: If an active nest is identified, a temporary, environmentally sensitive area buffer shall be established around the nest location. No grading, vegetation removal, heavy equipment use, or construction activity shall occur within the buffer until the qualified biologist determines the nest is no longer active (i.e., the young have fledged and left the nest). Minimum avoidance buffer distances shall be: 50 feet for non-raptor (passerine) nests, 300 feet for non-listed raptor nests, and up to one-half mile for state or federally listed raptor species (e.g., Swainson's hawk), as approved by CDFW and/or USFWS. The	

Project Impacts	Level of Significance Without Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance after Mitigation
		qualified biologist shall serve as a construction monitor during periods when construction occurs near active nest areas and shall have the authority to halt or modify work as necessary to prevent impacts to nesting birds. • Reporting: A survey report documenting the methods, results, established buffers, and compliance monitoring shall be submitted to the City of Bakersfield within thirty (30) days of survey completion, or prior to construction if any active nest is discovered. Immediate reporting of any state or federally listed species shall be made to the City of Bakersfield, CDFW, and/or USFWS, who will provide guidance regarding avoidance, minimization, or permitting requirements under the federal and state Endangered Species Acts. **MM BIO-5: Pre-Construction Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*) Surveys**. Prior to Project-related construction activities, the Project Applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to conduct pre-construction surveys for burrowing owl in accordance with the Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (CDFW 2012). Surveys shall be conducted to determine the presence or absence of burrowing owl within the Project Site and immediately adjacent suitable habitat. Number of Visits and Timing: If within the breeding season (February 1–August 31), conduct four survey visits: (1) at least one visit between February 15 and April 15, and (2) a minimum of three visits, at least three weeks apart, between April 15 and July 15, with at least one visit after June 15. If surveys are conducted outside the breeding season, conduct at least four visits spread evenly throughout the non-breeding season. Survey Method: Surveys shall cover the entire Project Site using straight-line transects spaced 7–20 meters apart, adjusted for vegetation height and density. At the start of each transect and at least every 100 meters, surveyors shall scan the visible Project area with binoculars. All potential burrows shall be recorded if evidence of burrowing owl use is present (e.g., owls, pellets, prey remains, whitewash, or decoration). Observers shall also listen for burrowing owl calls during surveys.	

Project Impacts	Level of Significance Without Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance after Mitigation
		• Time of Day: Surveys shall be conducted between morning civil twilight and 10:00 AM, and two hours before sunset until evening civil twilight, to maximize detection probability. • Avoidance: If any signs of burrowing owl presence are detected, vegetation clearing and ground-disturbing activities shall be prohibited in the affected area. The City of Bakersfield, CDFW, and USFWS shall be contacted immediately to formulate avoidance or minimization strategies. If burrowing owls are detected, the Project Applicant shall implement avoidance buffers consistent with CDFW's 2012 Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation. If avoidance is not feasible, the Project Applicant shall consult with CDFW to develop a relocation and/or compensatory mitigation plan, which may include passive relocation, establishment of artificial burrows, or off-site conservation easements. No ground-disturbing activities shall occur until CDFW has approved the plan. Documentation of compliance shall be submitted to the City of Bakersfield prior to construction. • Reporting: A survey report documenting methods, results, maps of burrow locations, and avoidance measures shall be submitted to CDFW within fourteen (14) days of survey completion or construction monitoring. The biologist(s) shall also record a comprehensive list of species observed and report observations of special-status species to the City of Bakersfield, CDFW, and/or USFWS for guidance regarding avoidance, minimization, or permitting requirements.	
BIO-2: 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?	No impact	No mitigation measures are required.	No impact
BIO-3: 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	See Mitigation Measures MM BIO-3 through MM BIO-5.	Less than significant with mitigation incorporated

Project Impacts	Level of Significance Without Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance after Mitigation
BIO-4: Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
Cultural, Tribal Cultural & Paleontological Resources			
CR-1: Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5.	No impact	No mitigation measures are required.	No impact
CR-2: Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5.	Potentially significant	**MM CR-1**: The Project Applicant shall retain a qualified archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards to conduct a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training for all construction personnel prior to the start of ground disturbance. The training shall review the types of cultural resources that may be encountered and the proper protocols for halting work. The archaeologist shall remain on-call during the construction phase of the Project. If archaeological resources are encountered during ground-disturbing activities, work within 100 feet of the find shall be halted, and the archaeologist shall evaluate the find. If necessary, the evaluation shall include preparation of archaeological testing for California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) eligibility. Results of the archaeological testing shall be reviewed and approved by both the qualified archaeologist and the City of Bakersfield Planning Division. If the discovery proves to be significant under CEQA and cannot be avoided by the Project, additional work shall be warranted, such as data recovery excavation. Such measures shall be identified in a treatment plan prepared by the archaeologist and approved by the City of Bakersfield to mitigate any such significant impacts to archaeological resources.	Less than significant with mitigation incorporated
CR-3: Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
CR-4: 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,	Potentially significant	**MM TCR-1**: In the event that potential tribal cultural resources (TCRs) are discovered during Project construction, all work shall cease within 50 feet of the find. The Project Applicant shall immediately notify the City of Bakersfield Planning Division. The City shall contact Native American tribes	Less than significant with mitigation incorporated

Project Impacts	Level of Significance Without Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance after Mitigation
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 5020.1(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 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.		that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area to facilitate a prompt evaluation of the find. If the resource is determined to be a TCR as defined by Public Resources Code Section 21074, the City shall consult with the affiliated tribe(s) to determine appropriate treatment measures. Consistent with Public Resources Code Section 21084.3, preservation in place shall be the preferred mitigation. If preservation in place is not feasible, appropriate treatment may include, but is not limited to, culturally appropriate recovery, documentation, or reburial, as determined through consultation. Work in the area of the find may only resume following completion of consultation and implementation of agreed-upon treatment measures.	
CR-5: Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature.	Potentially significant	**MM PR-1:** Prior to the start of grading, a qualified paleontologist shall conduct a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training for construction crews regarding the identification of fossil remains. In the event that ground-disturbing activities unearth paleontological resources, the Project Applicant shall immediately notify the City of Bakersfield Planning Division, and all work shall cease in the area of the find until a qualified paleontologist assesses the discovery. Construction activity may continue unimpeded on other portions of the Project Site. The paleontologist shall perform and adhere to all applicable performance standards and practices from the 2021 Society for Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP) standard procedures. The paleontologist shall prepare a monitoring plan, subject to City review and approval, that identifies the location, time frame, and extent of monitoring required during earthmoving activities, particularly in areas where excavation may reach Pleistocene deposits. Any paleontological resources discovered shall be recovered, curated, and documented in accordance with federal, state, and local guidelines, including SVP standards and applicable CEQA requirements. The City, as Lead Agency, shall approve the treatment plan prior to resuming work in the area of the find.	Less than significant with mitigation incorporated

Project Impacts	Level of Significance Without Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance after Mitigation
Greenhouse Gas Emissions			
GHG-1: Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
GHG-2: Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gas emissions.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
Land Use and Planning			
LAN-1: 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.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
Noise & Vibration			
NOI-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.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
NOI-2: Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
Transportation			
TR-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 measures are required.	Less than significant
TR-2: Conflict or be inconsistent with *CEQA Guidelines* section 15064.3, subdivision (b).	Less than significant	No mitigation measures are required.	Less than significant
TR-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 measures are required.	Less than significant

ES.6 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

As required by Section 15126.6 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed Project that would attain most of the basic project objectives but would avoid or substantially lessen any of its significant environmental effects must be examined. Project alternatives aim to identify and disclose ways to mitigate or avoid significant environmental effects that may result from the proposed Project. No impacts were found to be significant and unavoidable in **Section 3.0, Environmental Impact Analysis**. The alternatives considered are summarized below. Project alternatives are further discussed in **Section 5.0, Alternatives**.

Alternative 1 – No Project/No Development

For purposes of this EIR, the No Project Alternative (Alternative 1) assumes the development of the proposed temple and meetinghouse would not occur. The existing 13.07-acre lot would remain graded, unpaved and flat. No physical changes would be implemented.

Alternative 2 – Site A Project Alternative

The Site A Project Alternative (Alternative 2) would locate the proposed temple and ancillary improvements at 5600 Panorama Drive (APN 438-010-02), a 6.2-acre property which the Applicant owns. Due to the smaller lot size, this alternative cannot accommodate the proposed meetinghouse, which would be excluded from the project program. Implementation of this alternative would also require the demolition of an existing, operating 25,000-square-foot meetinghouse currently on the site. Site A is surrounded by residences to its west, north, east and southeast and a high school to its southwest. The site is designated by the City of Bakersfield as Low Density Residential (LR) and zoned as Single-Unit Dwelling (R-1). It is located 6.5 miles from the City's center, is less than one mile from Highway 178, and is situated at the northwest corner of the intersection of Panorama Drive and Fairfax Road.

Alternative 3 – Site B Project Alternative

The Site B Project Alternative (Alternative 3) would place the proposed Project at an approximately 14-acre site located at the southeast corner of the intersection of McKee Road and Stine Road (APN 514-020-01). Site B Project Alternative is bordered by residential neighborhoods to the north, east and west, by an elementary school to the south, and by a high school to the northwest. Large vacant tracts of land comprising farmland lie further south of and near this site. Site B Project Alternative is 10 miles south of the City center in the outskirts of the City, and reflects a lower development and population density than the areas surrounding the proposed Project Site and Site A Project Alternative. Site B Project Alternative is not proximate to a major highway compared to the Project Site; McKee Road is classified as a collector

roadway and Stine Road is classified as an arterial roadway. The size, shape, topography and other site conditions render the Site B Project Alternative suitable for the proposed Project. This Project Alternative Site is zoned Mixed-Use Transit (MX-2), which allows Regional Commercial (C-2) uses and would require a conditional use permit to authorize the proposed Project's religious assembly uses, as well as a Zone Modification to allow the proposed steeple heights of 123 feet 6 inches for the temple and 66 feet 4 inches for the meetinghouse.

Alternative 4 – Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office)

The Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office) Alternative (Alternative 4) would involve designing, building and operating on the proposed Project Site a four-story, 50-foot-tall, 200,000-square-foot medical office building with 818 parking spaces (34 accessible parking spaces), landscaping, 300 trees, and lighting for the parking areas. Alternative 4 would have professional medical, medical specialty, and/or medical administrative uses, and could also accommodate the Church's family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution uses. The City's Zoning Code permits each of these uses, and the alternative's improvements conform to the City's development standards for this zone.

Environmentally Superior Alternative

As required by *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(e)(2), the EIR must identify an environmentally superior alternative. Alternative 1 (No Project/No Development) would result in no environmental impacts across all issue areas and is therefore the environmentally superior alternative overall. However, CEQA requires that if the No Project Alternative is identified as the environmentally superior alternative, the EIR must also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the remaining alternatives. Based on the comparative analysis, Alternative 3 (Site B Project Alternative) is identified as the environmentally superior alternative among the build alternatives. It would result in impacts that are similar to the Project across all environmental issue areas for the full project program, and would still achieve the Project's fundamental purpose of establishing a local Bakersfield-area temple and meetinghouse.

ES.7 REVIEW OF THE DRAFT EIR

The Draft EIR has been distributed to responsible and trustee agencies, other affected agencies, surrounding cities, and other interested parties in accordance with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15086. The Notice of Completion for the Draft EIR was also distributed as required by CEQA. During the 45-day public review period, the Draft EIR, including the technical appendices, is available for review at the City of Bakersfield Development Services Department, 1715 Chester Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93301, during the City's regular business hours, and on the City's website at:

https://www.bakersfieldcity.us/279/Environmental-Documents

Written comments on the Draft EIR should be addressed to:

Roque Nino, Principal Planner
City of Bakersfield Development Services Department – Planning Division
1715 Chester Avenue, 2nd Floor
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Upon completion of the 45-day public review period, written responses to all significant environmental issues raised will be prepared and made available for review at least 10 days prior to consideration of the Final EIR before the City Council. These environmental comments and their responses will be included as part of the Final EIR for consideration by decision makers for the Project.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

This introduction is intended to provide the reader with general information regarding (1) the proposed development of a religious campus in the City of Bakersfield (Project); (2) purpose of an environmental impact report (EIR); (3) standards for EIR adequacy; (4) format and content of this EIR; and (5) EIR procedural requirements for the proposed Project. This section is intended to educate the reader regarding the intent, format, and content of this EIR so that it can be easily understood. Technical studies that support the analysis in this EIR are included as appendices.

All discretionary projects within the State of California are required to undergo an environmental review to determine the environmental impacts associated with implementation of the project in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

CEQA was enacted in 1970 by the California legislature to disclose to decision makers and the public the significant environmental effects of proposed activities and ways to avoid or reduce the environmental effects by requiring implementation of feasible alternatives or mitigation measures. CEQA applies to all California governmental agencies at all levels, including local agencies, regional agencies, state agencies, boards, commissions, and special districts. The City of Bakersfield (City) is the CEQA lead agency for the Project and, as such, is required to conduct an environmental review to analyze the potential environmental effects associated with the proposed Project.

One of the primary objectives of CEQA is to enhance public participation in the planning process. Community members are encouraged to participate in the environmental review process, request to be notified of meetings and release of documents, monitor newspapers for formal announcements, and submit substantive comments at every possible opportunity afforded by the lead agency. The environmental review process provides ample opportunity for the public to participate through scoping, public review of CEQA documents, and public hearings.

1.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

This Draft EIR analyzes the potential environmental effects of the Project, which involves development of a religious campus on currently vacant graded land in two phases. Phase 1 includes construction and operation of a temple with site improvements such as parking, plazas, gardens, and related accessory structures. Phase 2 includes construction of a meetinghouse and expanded parking and landscaping.

The Project Site is located at the northwest corner of Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, and is surrounded by commercial, institutional, recreational, and residential uses. Further detail is provided in **Section 2.0, Project Description**.

1.3 PROJECT APPROVALS REQUESTED

As defined by CEQA, a Lead Agency is the public agency with the principal responsibility for approving a project. The City is the Lead Agency for consideration and approval of the Project and is responsible for preparing, circulating, and certifying the EIR and for making discretionary decisions on the entitlements listed below. The City will hold a public hearing to consider certification of the EIR. The City must certify the Final EIR before making its decision on the Project.

The Project would require permits and approvals prior to construction. These permits and approvals are identified below and may be subject to change as the project entitlement process proceeds:

- City of Bakersfield
    - Site Plan Review No. 24-0027 for approval and associated building permits.[1]
    - Zone Modification No. 24-0032 to allow steeple heights as proposed (temple: 123 feet 6 inches, meetinghouse: 66 feet 4 inches) where 60 feet is permitted in a C-O (Commercial and Professional Office) zone district.[2]
    - Vesting Tentative Parcel Map No. 12637 consisting of 3 parcels on 13.07 acres (11.76 net acres).
    - Other discretionary and ministerial permits and approvals that may be deemed necessary, including, but not limited to, grading permits, excavation permits, building permits, public rights-of-way permits, etc.
- San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
    - Authority to Construct/ Permit to Operate for the diesel-powered emergency generator

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1 The Project is being processed pursuant to the provisions of the Bakersfield Municipal Code, Title 17 (Zoning Ordinance), that was in effect on February 9, 2024, when the application for the Site Plan Review and Zone Modification were deemed complete. At that time, religious institutions were a permitted use by right within the C-O (Commercial Office) zone.

2 The Project applicant has submitted a zone modification request for the proposed steeple height. The environmental impacts associated with this request are evaluated in the EIR. Any mitigation measures or conditions imposed on the zone modification will be documented and considered as part of the Project decision-making process.

- Authority to Construct / Permit to Operate for HVAC system (if applicable)

- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
  - Construction General Permit (NPDES)
  - Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) compliance for Notice of Intent

1.4 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The environmental review process, as required under CEQA, is summarized below. The steps are presented in sequential order:

1. **Notice of Preparation (NOP) Distributed**. Immediately after deciding that an EIR is required, the lead agency files an NOP soliciting input on the EIR scope to "responsible," "trustee," and involved federal agencies; to the State Clearinghouse, if one or more state agencies is a responsible or trustee agency; and to parties previously requesting notice in writing. A scoping meeting to solicit public input on the issues to be assessed in the EIR, while not always required, may be conducted by the lead agency.

2. **Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) Prepared.** The Draft EIR must contain a (1) table of contents or index, (2) summary, (3) project description, (4) environmental setting, (5) environmental impacts (direct, indirect, cumulative, growth-inducing and unavoidable impacts), (6) alternatives, (7) mitigation measures, (8) irreversible changes, and (9) organizations and persons consulted.

3. **Public Notice and Review.** The lead agency must prepare a Notice of Availability (NOA) of an EIR. The Notice must be posted in the County Clerk's office for 30 days (Public Resources Code Section 21092.3) and sent to anyone requesting it. The minimum public review period for a Draft EIR is 30 days. The Draft EIR must be posted for a public review period of 45 days, unless a shorter period is approved by the State Clearinghouse (Public Resources Code 21091). Distribution of the Draft EIR may be required through the State Clearinghouse.

4. **Notice of Completion**. The lead agency must file a Notice of Completion with the County Clerk's Office as soon as it completes a Draft EIR.

5. **Final EIR**. A Final EIR must include (1) the Draft EIR or a revision thereof, (2) copies of comments received during public review, (3) a list of persons and entities commenting, and (4) responses to comments.

6. **Certification of Final EIR.** Prior to approving a project, the lead agency shall certify that (1) the Final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA, (2) the Final EIR was presented to the decision-making body of the lead agency, and (3) the decision-making body reviewed and considered the information in the Final EIR. A Notice of Determination must be filed with the county clerk within five days of the certification of the Final EIR.

7. **Lead Agency Project Decision**. The lead agency may (1) disapprove a project because of its significant environmental effects; (2) require changes to a project to reduce or avoid significant environmental effects; or (3) approve a project despite its significant environmental effects, if the proper findings and statement of overriding considerations are adopted.

8. **Findings / Statement of Overriding Considerations.** For each significant impact of the project identified in the EIR, the lead or responsible agency must find, based on substantial evidence, that either (1) the project has been changed to avoid or substantially reduce the magnitude of the impact; (2) changes to the project are within another agency's jurisdiction and such changes have or should be adopted; or (3) specific economic, social, or other considerations make the mitigation measures or project alternatives infeasible. If an agency approves a project with unavoidable significant environmental effects, it must prepare a written Statement of Overriding Considerations that sets forth the specific social, economic, or other reasons supporting the agency's decision.

9. **Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP).** When an agency makes findings on significant effects identified in the EIR, it must adopt a reporting or monitoring program for mitigation measures that were adopted or made conditions of project approval to mitigate significant effects.

10. **Notice of Determination**. An agency must file a Notice of Determination after deciding to approve a project for which an EIR is prepared. A local agency must file the notice with the county clerk. The notice must be posted for 30 days and sent to anyone previously requesting notice. Posting of the notice starts a 30-day statute of limitations on CEQA challenges.

1.4.1 Notice of Preparation and Initial Study

One of the primary objectives of CEQA is to enhance public participation in the planning process. Community members are encouraged to participate in the environmental review process, request to be notified of meetings and release of documents, monitor newspapers for formal announcements, and submit substantive comments at every possible opportunity afforded by the lead agency. The environmental review process provides various opportunities for the public to participate through scoping, public review of CEQA documents, and public hearings.

In compliance with the *State CEQA Guidelines*, the City has taken steps to maximize opportunities to participate in the environmental process. A Notice of Preparation (NOP) was posted with the Kern County Clerk on September 17, 2025, to solicit comments and inform the public of the Project. An Initial Study (IS) was prepared and circulated with the NOP to focus the EIR on topics identified as potentially significant. The Project was described, potential environmental effects associated with Project implementation were identified, and agencies and the public were invited to review and comment on the IS/NOP. The IS/NOP review and comment period closed on October 20, 2025. A public scoping meeting was held in Bakersfield Council Chambers on October 15, 2025, to receive public input on the scope of the environmental review. For purposes of environmental analyses in this Draft EIR, the Project baseline is defined as the existing physical condition on the Project Site at the time the NOP was filed.

1.4.2 Draft EIR

The Project has been made available on the City website in accordance with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15086. The Notice of Completion for the Draft EIR was also distributed as required by CEQA. During the 45-day public review period, the Draft EIR is available for review City's website at:

https://www.bakersfieldcity.us/279/Environmental-Documents.

Written comments on the Draft EIR may be submitted via:

Mail: City of Bakersfield
Development Services Department – Planning Division
Attn: Roque Nino, Principal Planner
1715 Chester Avenue, 2nd Floor
Bakersfield, CA 93301

E-mail: rnino@bakersfieldcity.us

Pursuant to *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15088, the City will prepare written responses to any comments that raise significant environmental issues received during the noticed comment period and include those responses in the Final EIR. The public will also be provided with opportunities to present oral and written comments at future hearings and meetings on the Project. The City may, but is not required to, provide written responses to comments submitted after the circulation period for the Draft EIR.

1.4.3 Final EIR and Certification

Following the close of the public review period on the Draft EIR, the City will prepare and publish a Final EIR, which will contain a summary of all written and recorded oral comments on this EIR received during the public review period for the Draft EIR and written responses to those comments that raise

environmental concerns, along with copies of the letters received, and any necessary revisions to the EIR. The Draft EIR, comments on the EIR, and a list of persons, organizations, and public agencies that commented on the Draft EIR, response to comments, and any revisions to the Draft EIR will constitute the Final EIR. The Final EIR will be available for public review prior to consideration of certification of the document by the decision-makers. The City, in an advertised public meeting(s), will consider the documents and then, if found adequate, certify the Final EIR as completed in compliance with CEQA and the *State CEQA Guidelines*.

1.5 AREAS OF CONTROVERSY / ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

Potential areas of controversy and issues to be resolved by the City's decision-makers may include those environmental issue areas where the potential for an unavoidable and significant impact has been identified. Based on the comments received during the IS/NOP circulation period and the public scoping meeting, issues known to be of concern in the community, and therefore, potential areas of controversy, include the proposed temple steeple height and the associated zone modification, and nighttime illumination of the temple building. These issues are analyzed in Section 3.1, Aesthetics, which addresses design impacts, and Section 3.6, Land Use and Planning, which addresses the underlying zoning. Section 3.1, Aesthetics, is supported by a visual simulation report that is also available as an appendix to this Draft EIR.

1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE EIR

An IS has been prepared pursuant to *State CEQA Guidelines* section 15063(c)(3), which states that an initial study may be used to focus an EIR on the effects of a proposed project that are determined to be significant. Please refer to **Appendix 1.0-1, Initial Study**. The EIR is organized into the following sections so the reader can easily obtain information about the Project and its specific issues:

- **Executive Summary:** This section provides a summary of the Project's potential environmental impacts that would result from implementation of the Project and development project, proposed mitigation measures where applicable, and the level of significance of the impact before and after mitigation.

- **Section 1.0, Introduction:** This section contains an overview of the purpose and focus of the Draft EIR, a discussion of the intended use of this Draft EIR, a description of the organization of the Draft EIR, and a discussion of the public review process and potential areas of controversy.

- **Section 2.0, Project Description:** This section describes the Project, including Project location, Project background, Project objectives and components.

- **Section 3.0, Environmental Impact Analysis**: This section is the primary focus of this Draft EIR. The environmental issue is considered in a separate section, which contains a discussion of the environmental setting, the regulatory setting, the methodology, and the thresholds of significance. It also includes the analyses of environmental impacts of the Project, mitigation measures, conclusions regarding the level of significance after mitigation, and cumulative impacts for the following environmental topics and environmental issues:
  - **Section 3.1, Aesthetics:** Changes to views, scenic resources, and visual quality
  - **Section 3.2, Air Quality:** Changes in pollutants affecting air quality
  - **Section 3.3, Biological Resources:** Changes to biological resources
  - **Section 3.4, Cultural, Tribal Cultural, and Paleontological Resources:** Changes to historic resources and impacts to archaeological or paleontological resources and human remains and impacts to tribal cultural resources potentially related to one or more California Native American tribes
  - **Section 3.5, Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Changes to greenhouse gas emissions and conformance to applicable greenhouse gas plans, policies, and regulations
  - **Section 3.6, Land Use and Planning:** Changes to land use and zoning
  - **Section 3.7, Noise and Vibration:** Changes in noise and vibration levels due to construction, traffic, and proposed uses
  - **Section 3.8, Transportation**: Changes in transportation conditions and vehicle miles traveled, review of emergency access, potential hazardous design features, and potential conflict with alternative transportation (e.g., bicycles and public transportation)
- **Section 4.0, Effects Found Not to be Significant:** This section provides a summary of significant and unavoidable impacts of the Project.
- **Section 5.0, Alternatives**: This section provides analysis of a range of reasonable alternatives to the Project in accordance with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126(f). The range of alternatives considered is based on their ability to feasibly attain most of the Project objectives and avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the Project:
  - **Alternative 1:** No Project/No Development
  - **Alternative 2:** Site A Project Alternative

  - **Alternative 3:** Site B Project Alternative
  - **Alternative 4:** Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office)

- **Section 6.0, Other CEQA Considerations:** This section provides a summary of significant and unavoidable impacts of the Project and a discussion of potential growth-inducing effects.

- **Section 7.0, List of Preparers:** This section lists the individuals involved in preparing the EIR and organizations and persons consulted.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Applicant) proposes to develop a religious campus on an approximately 13.07-gross-acre (11.76-net-acre) vacant, graded site in two phases. Phase 1 would include the construction and operation of an approximately 29,630-square-foot temple with a steeple reaching a height of approximately 123 feet 6 inches. Phase 1 also includes site improvements such as 199 parking stalls; plazas; landscaped gardens; ancillary building such as the 1,113-square-foot clothing center, an 857-square-foot grounds building, and a screened equipment yard. Phase 2 would include the construction of an approximately 16,370-square-foot meetinghouse with a steeple reaching a height of 66 feet 4 inches, alongside an additional 93 parking stalls (totaling 292 stalls at full buildout), and ancillary facilities which include an approximately 1,800-square-foot outdoor pavilion and a 485-square-foot refuse enclosure, and expanded landscaping. The temple and meetinghouse would operate on complementary schedules to avoid overlapping peak events, and the Project also includes street frontage improvements along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, including right-of-way dedication, curb, gutter, and new sidewalks along both frontages. This section provides a detailed description of the Project, its location, objectives, required approvals, and construction phasing, consistent with the requirements of the *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines* Section 15124.

2.2 PROJECT LOCATION AND SITE CHARACTERISTICS

2.2.1 Location

The Project is located at the northwest corner of Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue at 12310 Stockdale Highway in the City (Project Site). The Project Site encompasses approximately 13.07 gross acres (11.76 net acres available for development after accounting for public easements and right-of-way dedications) and includes Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 500-780-12 and 500-780-13, which parcels would be subdivided into three parcels under applicant's vesting parcel map. Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, classified as Arterial and Collector roadways, respectively, provide direct local access to the Project Site.

2.2.2 Regional Context

The City is the principal urban center of Kern County and is situated in the central portion of the southern San Joaquin Valley. The San Joaquin Valley is bounded by the Sierra Nevada to the east, the Tehachapi Mountains to the south, and the Temblor Range, part of the California Coast Ranges, to the west.

Waterways in proximity to the Project Site include the Cross Valley Canal and the Kern River, located approximately 0.2 miles to the south. Regional access is provided by Interstate 5 (approximately 7.7 miles southwest), State Route 58 (approximately 0.4 mile north), and State Route 99 (approximately 5.4 miles east). Together with Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, these corridors provide connectivity between the Project Site, the Bakersfield metropolitan area, and the broader Central Valley region. **Figure 2.0-1, Regional Vicinity Map**, illustrates the Project Site's regional context.

2.2.3 Existing Conditions and Site Characteristics

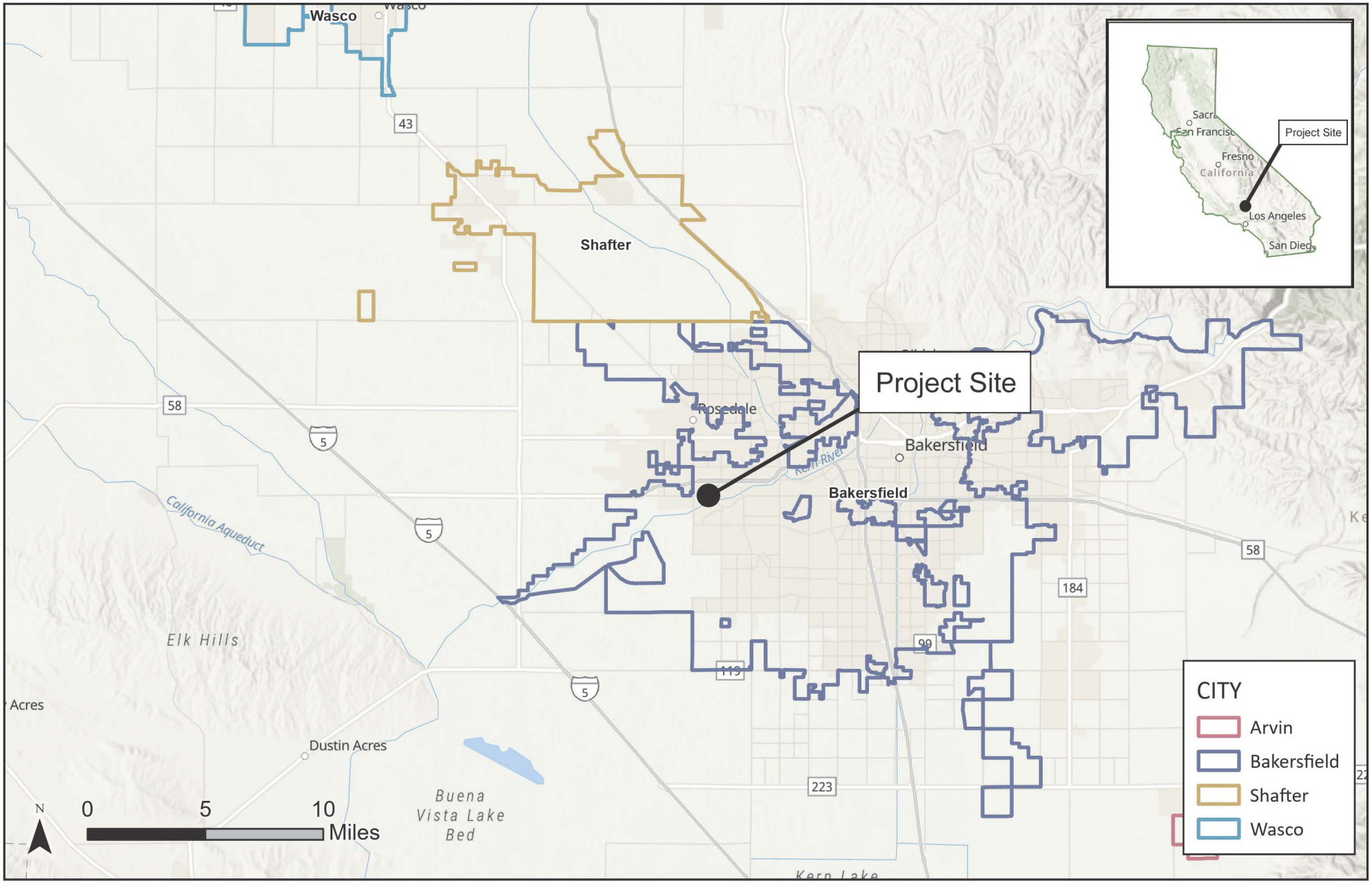
The Project Site is vacant, graded, and flat, with an elevation of approximately 366 feet above mean sea level (see **Figure 2.0-2, Aerial Photograph of the Project Site**). There are no aquatic features present on-site. The Project Site lies within the Richfield Weir–Kern River watershed and the San Joaquin Valley groundwater basin and is primarily located within an area of minimal flood hazard.

Soils are mapped as Wasco sandy loam, an alluvial, well-drained soil type typically associated with floodplain and alluvial-fan deposits. The Project Site is located within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin, which is characterized by an arid climate with hot, dry summers, cool winters, and mean annual precipitation of approximately six inches.

No structures currently exist on the Project Site (see **Figure 2.0-3, Existing Site Views**). The property is designated Office Commercial (O-C) in the City's General Plan and zoned Commercial and Professional Office (C-O). The Project Site is situated along an arterial roadway within an established suburban context.

2.2.4 Surrounding Land Uses

The Project Site is located within an urbanized area of West Bakersfield and is surrounded by a mix of residential, commercial, institutional, and recreational uses. Adjacent and nearby uses include a commercial medical facility to the west; a private high school, church, and commercial storage facility to the south across Stockdale Highway; a 14-acre public park to the east across Jewetta Avenue; and a single-family residential subdivision immediately north of the Project Site. Zoning designations in the vicinity include Commercial and Professional Office (C-O) and Commercial and Planned Commercial Development (C-2/PCD) to the west; Single-Dwelling Residential (R-1) and Planned Commercial Development (PCD) to the south and southeast; Open Space (OS) to the east; and Planned Unit Development (PUD) to the north. Views of the abutting land uses to the west and north of the Project Site are shown on **Figure 2.0-4, Surrounding Views**.



SOURCE: Esri, 2025

FIGURE 1

Regional Vicinity Map

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SOURCE: Esri, 2025

FIGURE **2.0-2**

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Aerial Photograph of the Project Site

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Photo #1 View of the eastern portion of the site looking west.



Photo #2 View of northern portion of the site looking south.



Photo #3 View of the western portion of the site looking east.



Photo #4 View of the southern portion of the site looking north.



Photo #5 View of the southeastern corner of the site looking north.

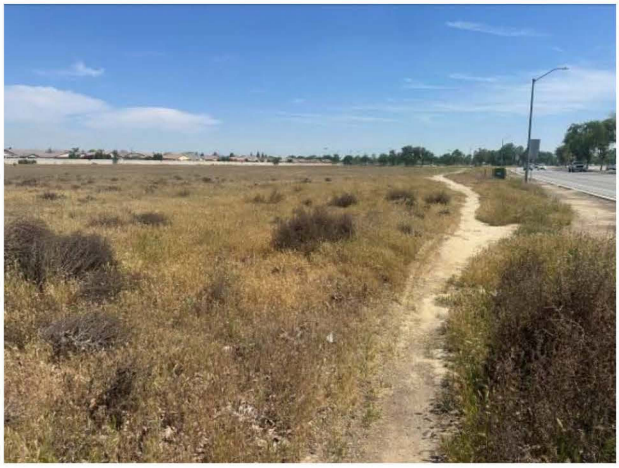


Photo #6 View of the southwestern corner of the site looking east.

SOURCE: Terracon, 2025

FIGURE **2.0-3**

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Existing Site Views



Looking northwest from Stockdale Highway toward medical office building to the west of the Project Site.



Looking north from Jewetta Avenue toward single-family residences to the north of the Project Site.

SOURCE: Google Earth, 2025

FIGURE **2.0-4**

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Surrounding Views

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2.2.5 Utility Service Providers

The Project Site is within the City's municipal utility service area. Potable water is provided by the City's Water Resources Department under contract with California Water Service. Wastewater collection and conveyance are provided by the City's Wastewater Division. Electrical service is provided by Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and natural gas service is provided by Southern California Gas Company. Telecommunications services are available from multiple carriers.

2.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

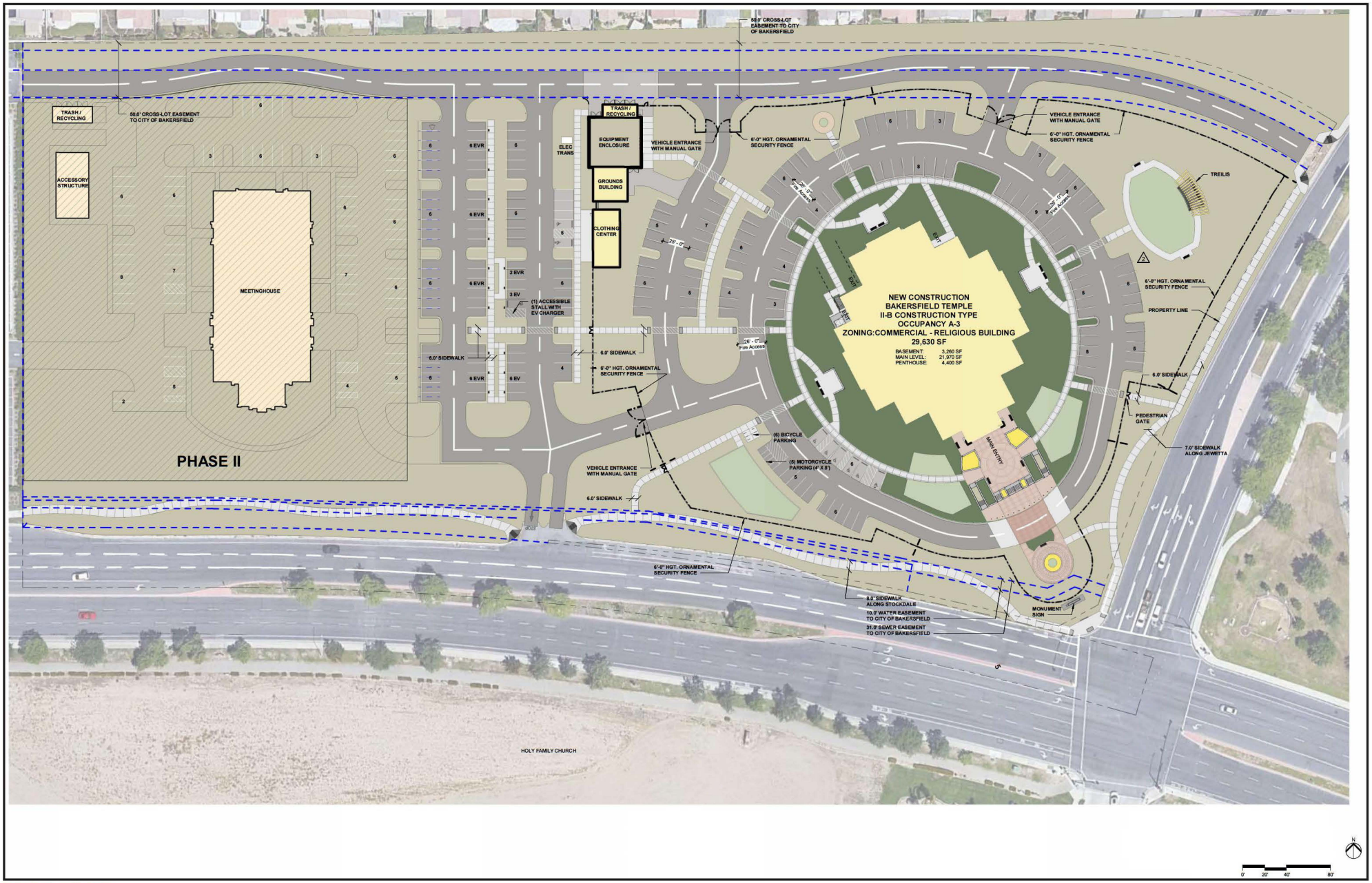
The proposed Project would be constructed in two phases. Phase 1 would include a temple and associated site improvements, including ancillary buildings (a clothing center, grounds building, and refuse enclosure), a trellis structure, plazas, landscaped gardens, circulation features, and 199 parking stalls. Phase 2 would include a meetinghouse and additional facilities, consisting of an outdoor pavilion, a refuse enclosure, expanded landscaping, and 93 additional parking stalls (totaling 292 stalls at full buildout). In addition to the on-site work, the Project includes street frontage improvements along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, including dedication of right-of-way as required by the City, curb, gutter, and new sidewalks along the full length of both frontages. The Project would also preserve the existing Class II bicycle lanes along both the Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue frontages. All frontage improvements will be constructed by the Project applicant at its own cost prior to Project occupancy. A summary of development at the Project Site is provided in **Table 2.0-1, Project Site Development Summary**.

Table 2.0-1
Project Site Development Summary

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Total
Impervious Area	190,017 sf (4.36 acres)	71,502 sf (1.64 acres)	**261,519 sf (6 acres)**
Landscape Area	203,661 sf (4.67 acres)	53,013 sf (1.22 acres)	**256,674 sf (5.89 acres)**
Overall Area	**393,578 sf (9.03 acres)**	**124,515 sf (2.86 acres)**	**518,093 sf (11.89 acres)**

sf = square feet
Source: HKS Architects, Inc., October 17, 2024.

As shown in **Table 2.0-1**, Phase 1 would account for the majority of site development. Overall, the Project balances impervious surfaces (6 acres) with landscaped areas (5.89 acres), providing about half of the Project Site for gardens, open space, and circulation features. The site plan is illustrated in **Figure 2.0-5, Site Plan**, for the two phases. Phase 1 impervious areas consist of 32,085 square feet of structures, 122,938 square feet of parking lot and drive areas and 34,994 square feet of sidewalks, plazas and planter walls.



SOURCE: HKS, 2025

FIGURE **2.0-5**

Site Plan

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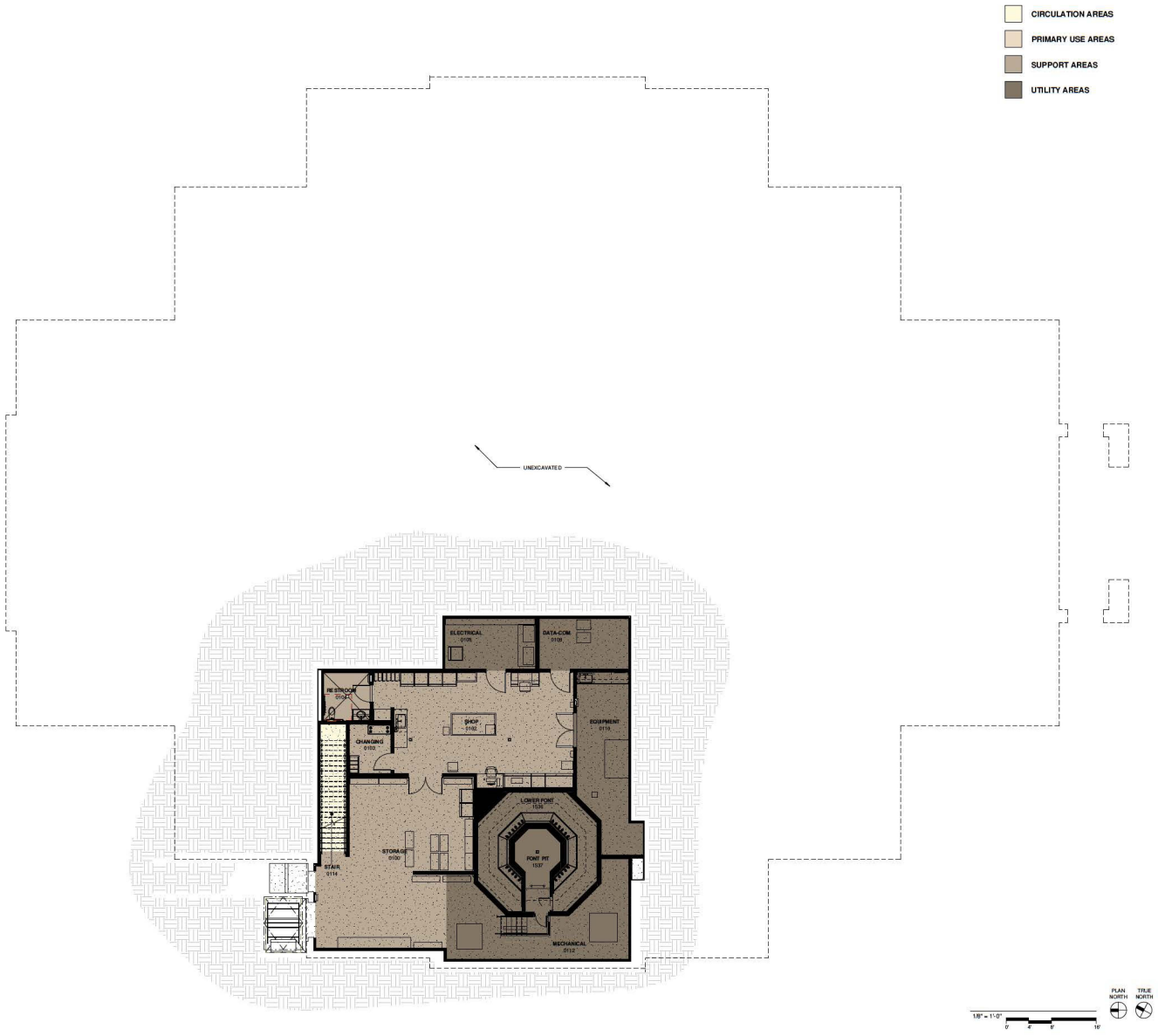
2.3.1 Phase 1: Temple and Site Improvements

Phase 1 of the proposed Project would develop the eastern portion of the Project Site with the construction of the temple and related site improvements. The temple footprint is centrally oriented in the eastern portion of the Project Site, with its main entrance facing south toward Stockdale Highway. Vehicular circulation is organized around a circular drive aisle that encircles the temple grounds, creating a formal drop-off and approach sequence.

The approximately 29,630-square-foot temple building would include an approximately 3,260-square-foot lower level, an approximately 21,970-square-foot main floor, and an approximately 4,400-square-foot mechanical penthouse. The building would have a primary parapet height of 24 feet 6 inches, with accent walls at the quadrants rising to 36 feet. The mechanical penthouse, inset from the exterior walls and centrally located, would extend to a parapet height of 45 feet at the base of the steeple. The steeple would reach a height of approximately 123 feet 6 inches. The proposed temple's lower level, main floor, mechanical penthouse, and roof plan are illustrated in **Figure 2.0-6, Temple Lower Level**; **Figure 2.0-7, Temple Main Floor**; **Figure 2.0-8, Temple Mechanical Penthouse**; and **Figure 2.0-9, Temple Roof Plan**.

Site improvements during Phase 1 would include parking areas with 199 stalls (ultimately contributing to a total of 292 stalls at full buildout), consisting of 155 standard stalls, 9 ADA accessible stalls, 9 EV charging stalls, 26 EV-ready stalls, as well as motorcycle and bicycle parking stalls. Paved walking paths, plazas, and gardens that would be publicly accessible during daytime hours. Additional facilities would include a grounds maintenance building, a screened equipment yard housing a chiller and diesel-powered emergency generator, and a clothing center building to provide sacred clothing for rent or purchase. The grounds building and equipment yard would also provide shop storage, tankless water heaters, small mechanical compressors, garage/shop space, and a secure staging area. Refuse enclosures would be constructed with concrete masonry unit walls, brick facing, concrete container pads, and gates conforming to City standards. The clothing center building and grounds building are illustrated in **Figure 2.0-10, Clothing Center Building,** and **Figure 2.0-11, Grounds Building**.

A cross-lot roadway would also be constructed along the northern perimeter of the site, providing vehicular access from a new driveway on Jewetta Avenue to the adjoining parcel west of the Project Site and enabling shared access to parking facilities. The temple grounds would be fenced for security after hours. **Table 2.0-2, Phase 1 Building Information**, provides a summary of the proposed structures and sizes.



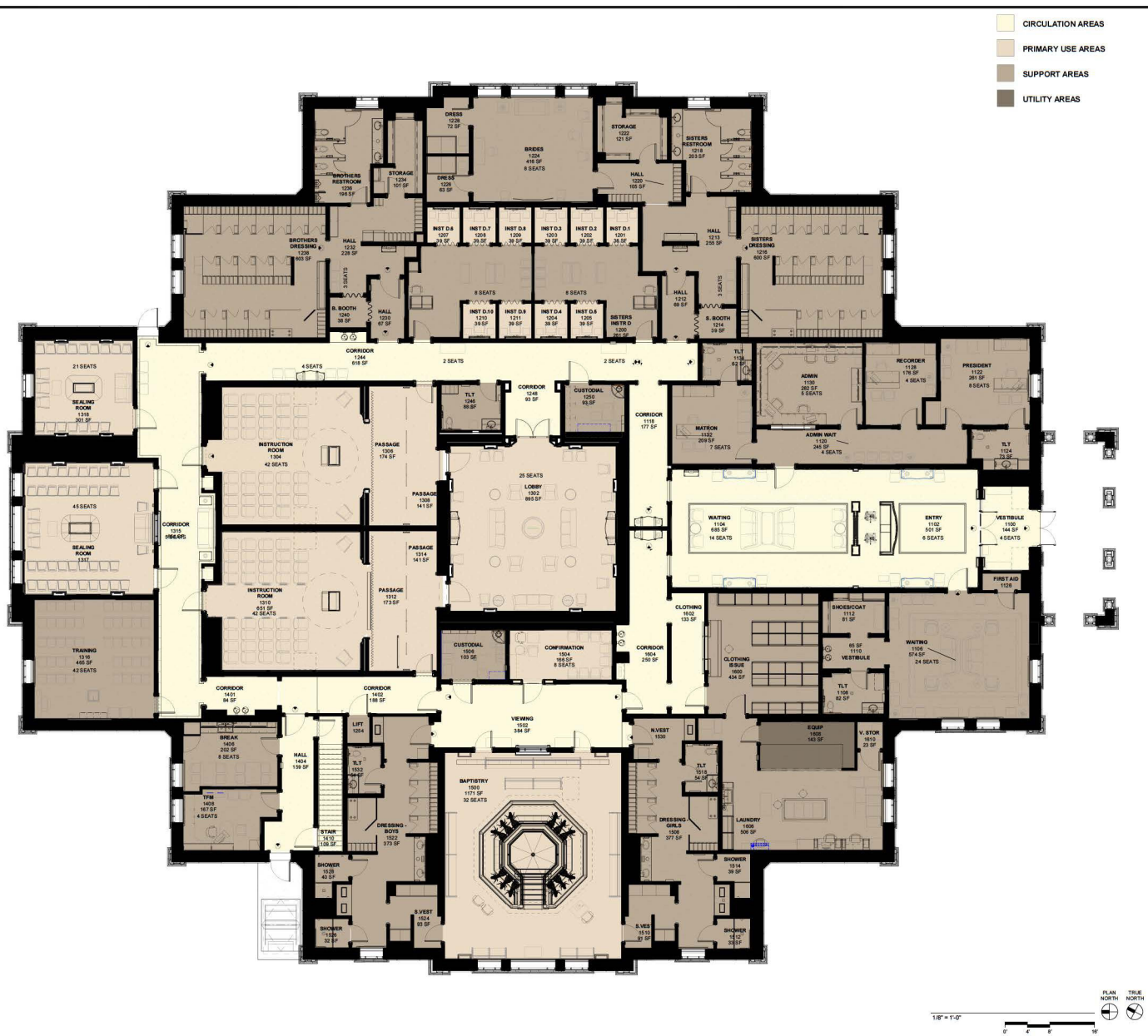
SOURCE: HKS, 2025

FIGURE **2.0-6**

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Temple Lower Level

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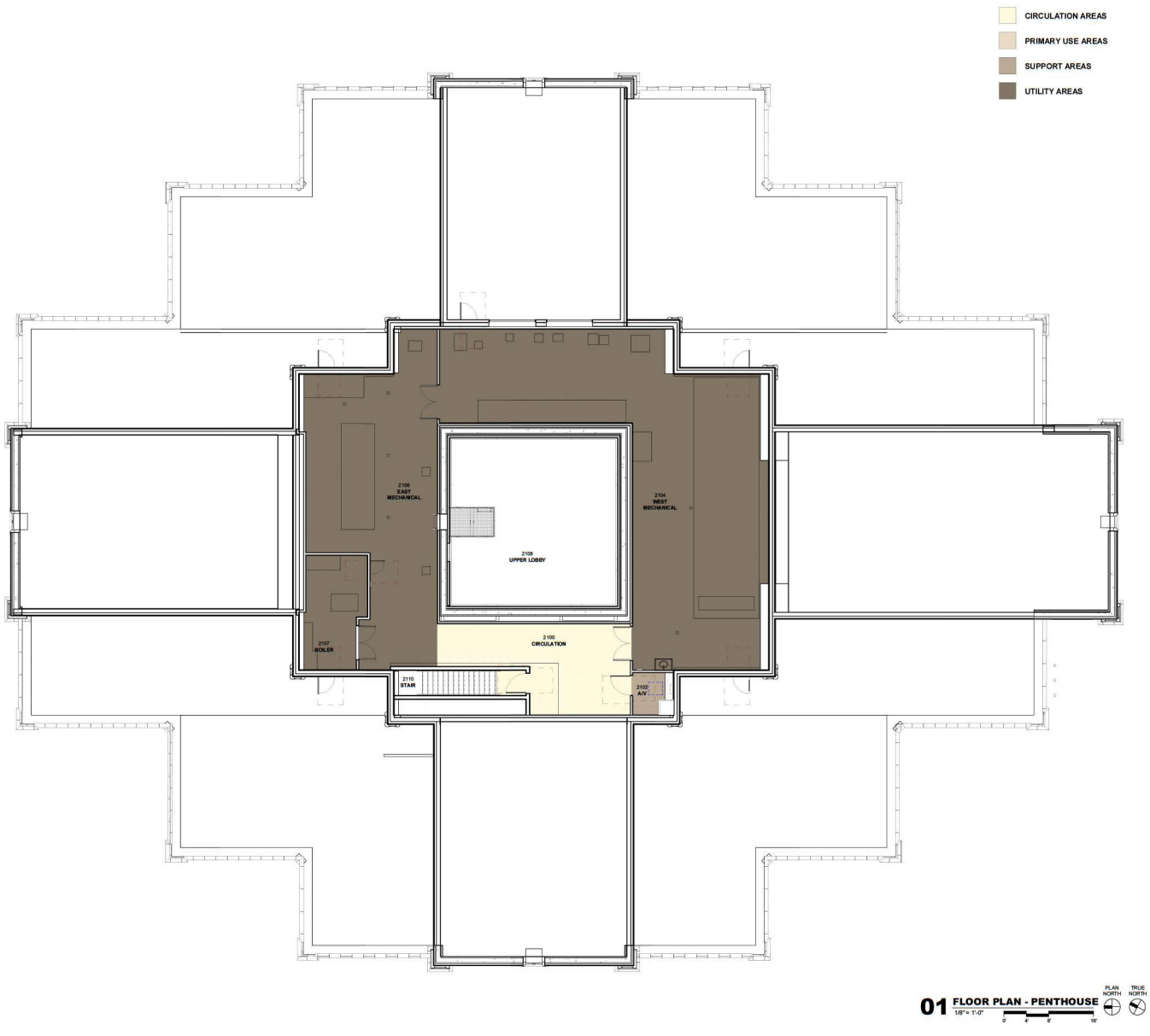
SOURCE: HKS, 2025

FIGURE **2.0-7**

Temple Main Floor

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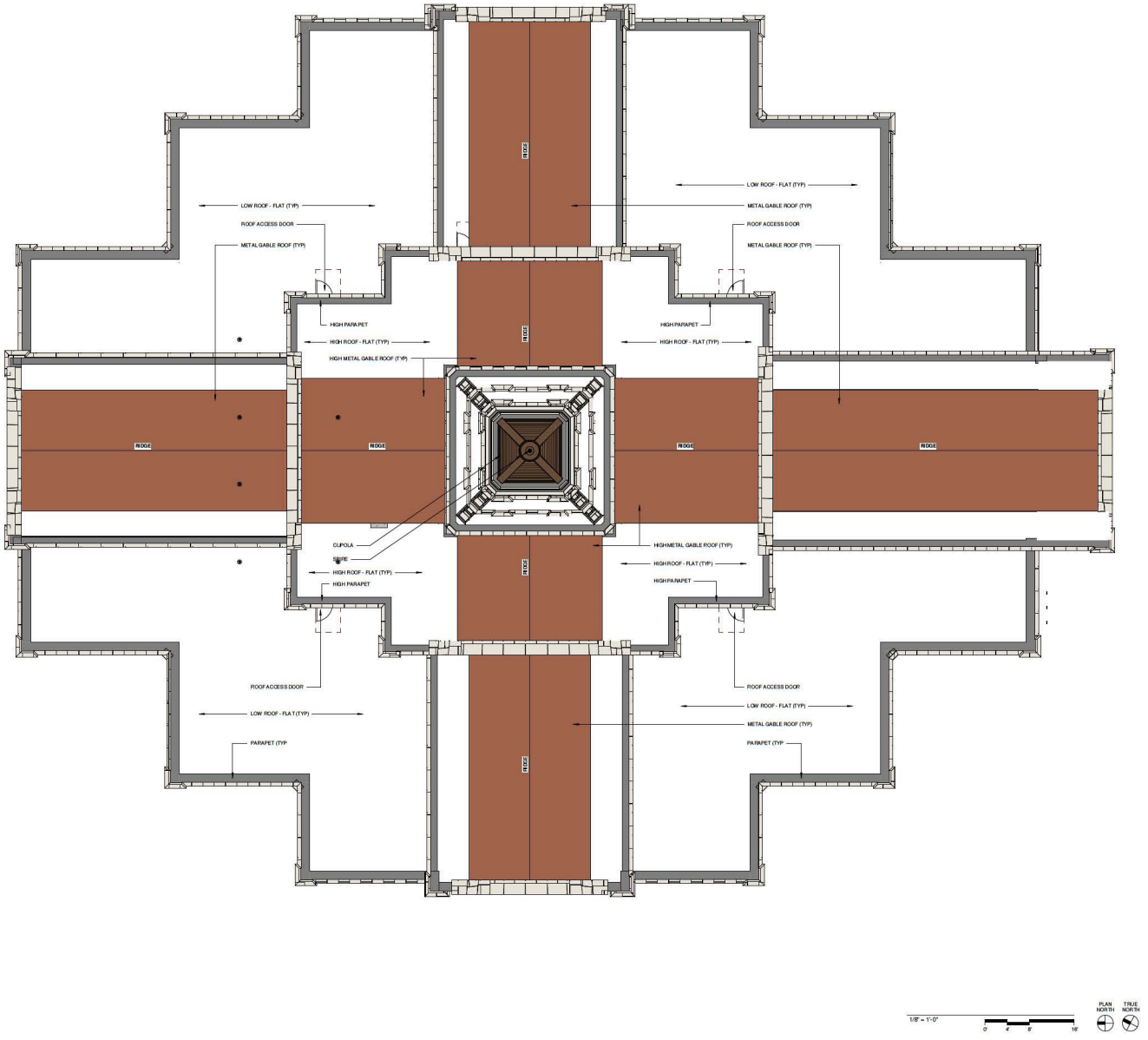
SOURCE: HKS, 2025

FIGURE **2.0-8**

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Temple Mechanical Penthouse

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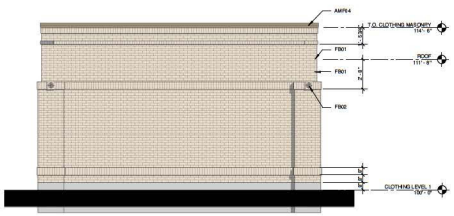
SOURCE: HKS, 2025

FIGURE **2.0-9**

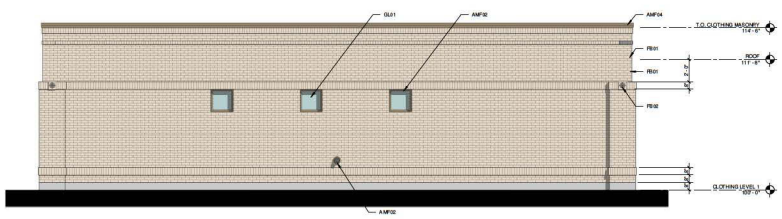
Temple Roof Plan

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06 CLOTHING CENTER - SOUTH
1/4" = 1'-0"



05 CLOTHING CENTER - EAST
1/4" = 1'-0"

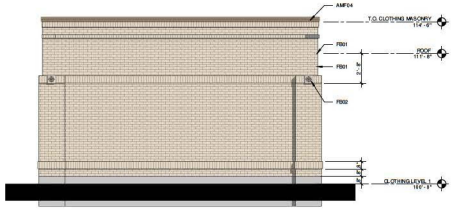
GROUNDS BUILDING
EXTERIOR DESIGN SELECTIONS

FB01
BRICK VENEER
SIZE: MODULAR
COLOR: LIGHT BROWN

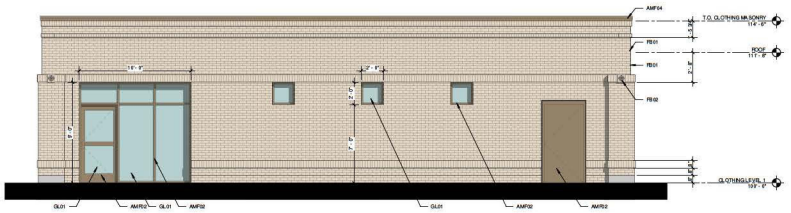
AMF01
POWDER-COATED ALUMINUM FINISH
COLOR: LIGHT BRONZE
LOCATIONS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:
-GLAZED ALUMINUM WALL SYSTEMS - EXTERIOR
-INTERIOR SIDE AS PER INTERIOR ELEVATIONS
-CAST ALUMINUM SPANDREL PANELS
-SCUPPER

XPT01
EXTERIOR PAINT
COLOR: LIGHT BRONZE
SHEEN: SEMI-GLOSS
LOCATIONS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:
-EXTERIOR HM DOORS AND FRAMES
-GATES AT GROUNDS BUILDING

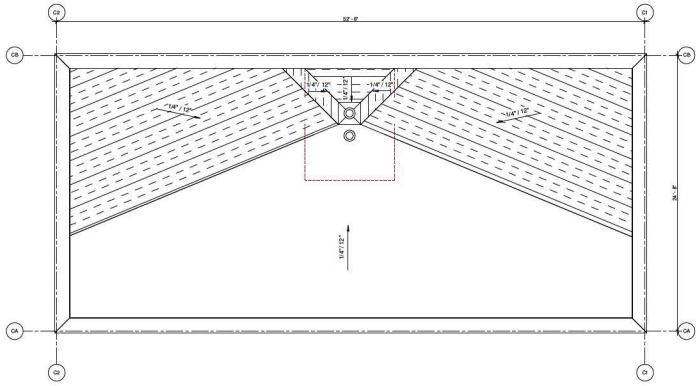
GL02
GLAZING
1" TOOTED PANE, INSULATED UNIT
TYPE A (REFER TO SPECIFICATIONS)
ALL GLASS SHALL BE LOW-IRON



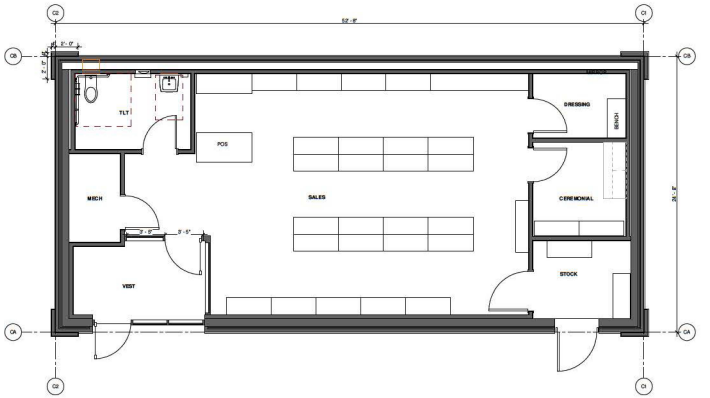
04 CLOTHING CENTER - NORTH
1/4" = 1'-0"



03 CLOTHING CENTER - WEST
1/4" = 1'-0"



02 CLOTHING CENTER ROOF PLAN
1/4" = 1'-0"



01 CLOTHING CENTER FLOOR PLAN
1/4" = 1'-0"

PLAN NORTH
TRUE NORTH

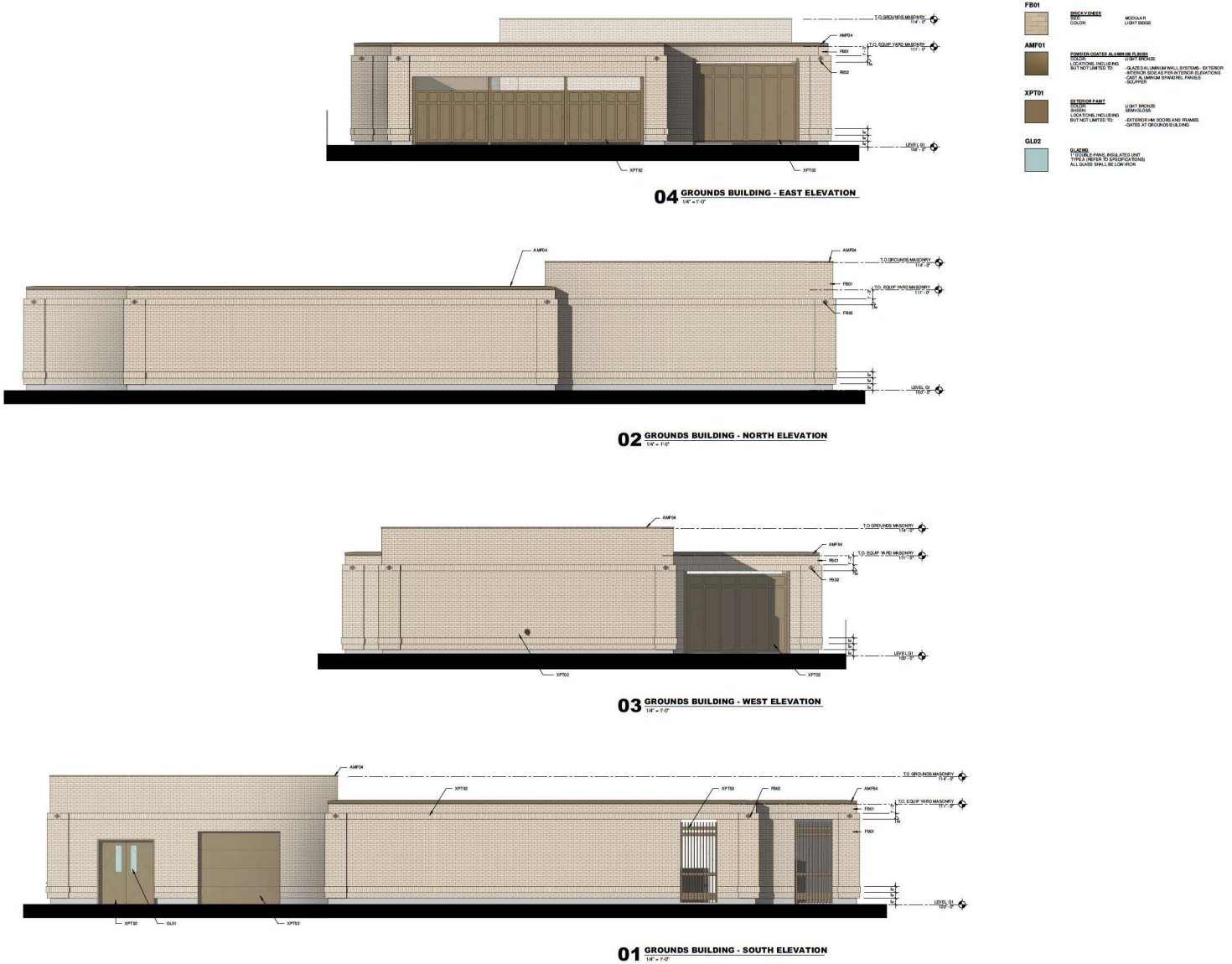
SOURCE: HKS, 2025

FIGURE **2.0-10**

Clothing Center Building

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SOURCE: HKS, 2025

FIGURE **2.0-11**

Grounds Building

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Table 2.0-2
Phase 1 Building Information

Type	Area
Temple Building	29,630 sf
Grounds Building	857 sf
Clothing Building	1,113 sf
Refuse Enclosure	485 sf
Total Phase 1	**32,085 sf**

sf = square feet
Source: HKS Architects, Inc., October 17, 2024.

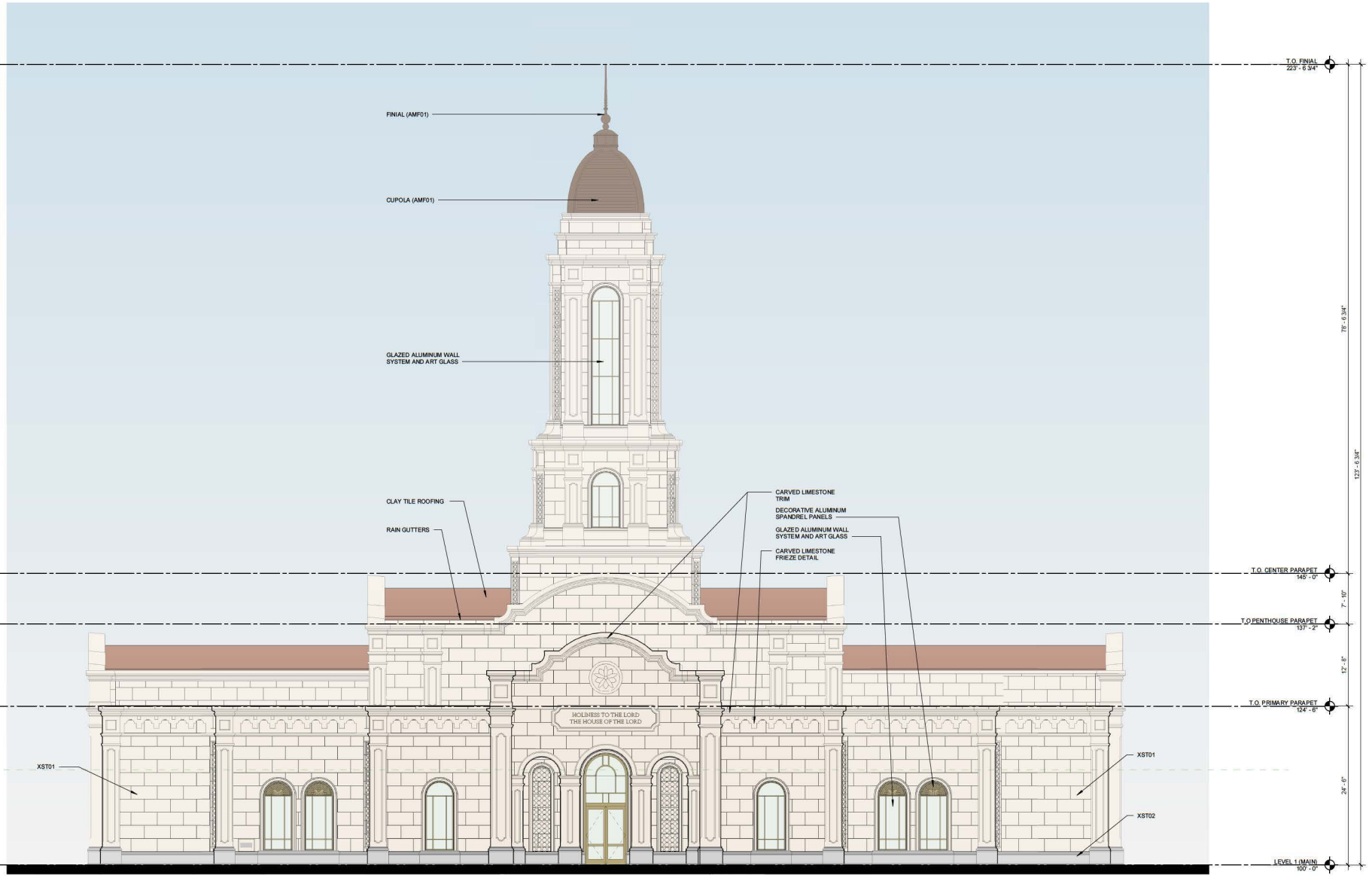
2.3.1.1 Temple Architecture and Design Features

The temple would be designed in an architectural style consistent with other temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints worldwide. The structure would feature a symmetrical façade with articulated walls, accent parapets, and a central steeple that serves as the building's focal point. Exterior finishes would consist of high-quality, non-combustible materials in light, neutral tones, including limestone, granite, clay tile roofing, powder-coated aluminum, art glass, and concrete paving. Ornamental detailing would be incorporated into the façade and entry features to reinforce the ceremonial character of the building. **Figure 2.0-12, Temple Elevation – South,** and **Figure 2.0-13, Temple Elevation – East,** illustrate the representative elevation views of the proposed temple.

Exterior lighting would highlight the façade and steeple during evening hours of operation. The roof would consist of multiple roof types (i.e., low flat, high flat, metal gable), parapets, roof access doors, a cupola/finial feature, and locations for rooftop mechanicals that would be screened. **Figure 2.0-14, Conceptual Rendering of the Temple**, illustrates the architectural design of the temple.

2.3.1.2 Temple Interior Program and Spaces

In addition to exterior architectural features, the temple would include a range of ceremonial, administrative, and support spaces distributed across three levels: a lower level, a main floor, and a mechanical penthouse. The main floor would serve as the primary functional floor, accommodating ordinance rooms such as the baptistry, instruction rooms, sealing rooms, and a bride's room. Dressing rooms for men, women, boys, and girls, with associated showers and restrooms, would support these functions. Waiting areas, a lobby, vestibule, and entry foyer would facilitate circulation and orientation for members.



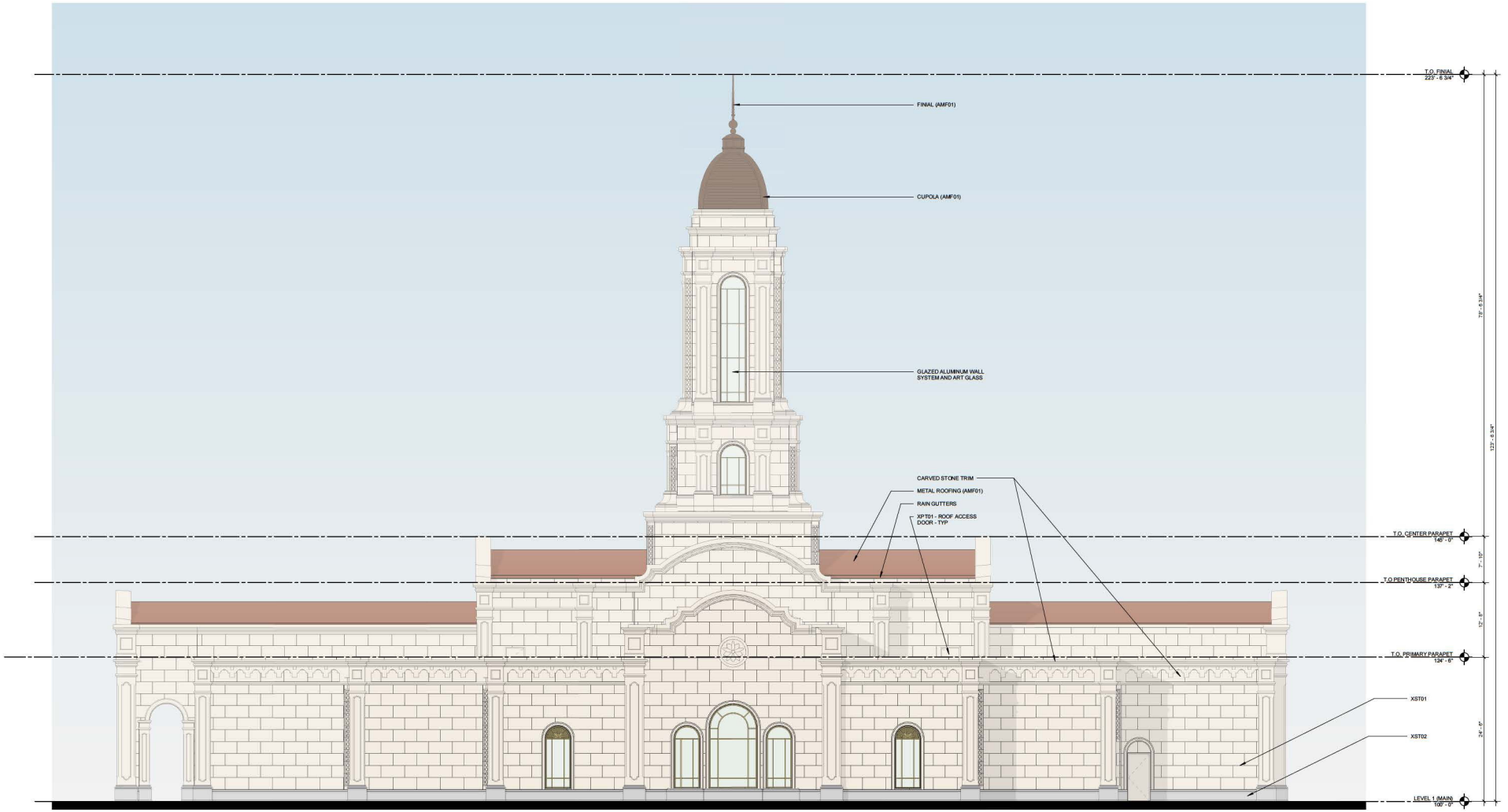
SOURCE: HKS, 2025

FIGURE **2.0-12**

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Temple Elevation-South

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SOURCE: HKS, 2025

FIGURE **2.0-13**

Temple Elevation-East

IMPACT SCIENCES

859.004•11/25



SOURCE: HKS, 2025

FIGURE **2.0-14**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Conceptual Rendering of the Temple

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Administrative functions would be accommodated in dedicated offices for the temple president, matron, and recorder, along with a first aid room, custodial spaces, and a training room. A laundry room of approximately 500 square feet would be located on the main floor to support ceremonial clothing operations. Additional support spaces would include shoe and coat storage, confirmation and viewing rooms, and multiple corridors and passageways connecting the building's programmatic zones.

The lower level would contain mechanical, electrical, and data/communications rooms, as well as a font pit associated with the baptistry. The mechanical penthouse would house additional mechanical rooms, a boiler room, an AV room, and an upper lobby, all of which would support the temple's operational infrastructure. Collectively, these spaces would accommodate the temple's religious functions while ensuring efficient building operations, code compliance, and patron comfort.

2.3.1.3 Landscaping and Open Space (Phase 1)

Phase 1 would establish the majority of the landscaped and open space framework for the Project Site. Approximately 4.67 acres (203,661 square feet) of the Project Site would be dedicated to landscaped areas, including ornamental gardens, pedestrian plazas, and landscaped frontage improvements along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue. The design emphasizes ceremonial frontage and concentric garden areas surrounding the temple, clothing center, and grounds building. Entry plazas with trellises (as illustrated in **Figure 2.0-17, Proposed Trellis Design**) and seating areas would provide shaded gathering points, and turf lawns would be minimized consistent with City water conservation standards, with exact placement subject to refinement during final design. Landscaping for Phase 1 is illustrated in **Figure 2.0-15a, Proposed Landscape Plan**, and **Figure 2.0-15b, Proposed Landscape Plan**.

Ornamental planting beds, shade trees (detailed in **Figure 2.0-16a, Proposed Landscape Plan – Trees**, and **Figure 2.0-16b, Proposed Landscape Plan – Trees**), and drought-tolerant shrubs and groundcovers would be used to soften building edges, screen parking areas, and provide year-round visual interest. Pedestrian pathways and plazas would be integrated with the temple and ancillary buildings to ensure connectivity between structures and landscaped areas.

Lighting fixtures will be incorporated into landscaped zones to highlight pathways and seating areas, designed to provide safe and accessible open space throughout the night while complying with the City's lighting ordinance. Collectively, Phase 1 landscaping and open space improvements would establish the ceremonial character of the temple grounds while ensuring sustainability and efficient irrigation.



PLANTING SCHEDULE

SHRUBS, GROUNDCOVERS & GRAVEL

SYM	ABBV	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME
AD	ACA RED	ACACIA REDOLENS 'DESERT CARPET'	ACACIA DESERT CARPET
	ACH MIL	ACHILLEA MILLEFOLIUM 'MOONSHINE'	MOONSHINE YARROW
	BAC CEN	BACCHARIS 'CENTENNIAL'	CENTENNIAL BACCHARIS
	BAC PIL	BACCHARIS PILULARIS 'TWIN PEAKS NO.2'	TWIN PEAKS NO. 2 DWARF COYOTE BRUSH
	BOU GRA	BOUTELOUA GRACILIS 'BLONDE AMBITION'	BLONDE AMBITION BLUE GRAMA GRASS
	CAL DRU	CALYLOPHUS DRUMMONDIANA	TEXAS PRIMROSE
	CAR CAL	CARPENTERIA CALIFORNICA 'ELIZABETH'	ELIZABETH BUSH ANEMONE
	CIS SAL	CISTUS SALVIFOLIUS 'PROSTRATUS'	SAGELEAF ROCKROSE
	DAS WHE	DASYLIRION WHEELERI	DESERT SPOON
	ENC ACT	ENCELIA ACTONI	ACTON ENCELIA
	HES PAR	HESPERALOE PARVIFLORA 'YELLOW'	YELLOW TEXAS YUCCA
	LEU CAN	LEUCOPHYLLUM CANDIDUM 'MICROBURST' PP33437	MICROBURST TEXAS SAGE
	LUP ALB	LUPINUS ALBIFRONS	SILVER BUSH LUPINE
	MUH RIG	MUHLENBERGIA RIGENS	DEER GRASS
	MYO PAR	MYOPORUM PARVIFOLIUM	CREEPING MYOPORUM
	NEP FAA	NEPETA X FAASSENII 'WALKER'S LOW'	WALKER'S LOW CATMINT
	OPU BAS	OPUNTIA BASILARIS	BEAVERTAIL CACTUS
	PEN MAR	PENSTEMON HETEROPHYLLUS 'MARGARITA BOP'	MARGARITA BOP FOOTHILL PENSTEMON
	PER ATR	PEROVSKIA ATRIPLICIFOLIA	RUSSIAN SAGE
	RHA CAL	RHAMNUS CALIFORNICA 'EVE CASE'	EVE CASE COFFEEBERRY
	ROM COU	ROMNEYA COULTERI	MATILIJA POPPY
SC	SIM CHI	SIMMONDSIA CHINENSIS	JOJOBA
SV	SIM VIS	SIMMONDSIA CHINENSIS 'VISTA'	COMPACT JOJOBA
	SPO ARO	SPOROBOLUS AIROIDES	ALKALI SACATON
XX	---	SEASONAL COLORS	

VINES

	ROS BAN	ROSA BANKSIAE 'ALBA PLENA'	WHITE LADY BANKS CLIMBING ROSE
	ROS CEC	ROSA 'CLIMBING CECILE BRUNNER'	CECILE BRUNNER CLIMBING ROSE

TURF

SYM	ABBV	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME
TB	TAH BER	TAHOMA 31 BERMUDA (TURF GRASS)	TAHOMA 31 BERMUDA TURF

SEE SHEET L0.02 FOR FULL SCHEDULE

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **2.0-15a**

Proposed Landscape Plan

IMPACT SCIENCES

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PLANTING SCHEDULE

SHRUBS, GROUNDCOVERS & GRAVEL

SYM	ABBV	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME
AD	ACA RED	ACACIA REDOLENS 'DESERT CARPET'	ACACIA DESERT CARPET
	ACH MIL	ACHILLEA MILLEFOLIUM 'MOONSHINE'	MOONSHINE YARROW
	BAC CEN	BACCHARIS 'CENTENNIAL'	CENTENNIAL BACCHARIS
	BAC PIL	BACCHARIS PILULARIS 'TWIN PEAKS NO. 2'	TWIN PEAKS NO. 2 DWARF COYOTE BRUSH
	BOU GRA	BOUTELOUA GRACILIS 'BLONDE AMBITION'	BLONDE AMBITION BLUE GRAMA GRASS
	CAL DRU	CALYLOPHUS DRUMMONDIANA	TEXAS PRIMROSE
	CAR CAL	CARPENTERIA CALIFORNICA 'ELIZABETH'	ELIZABETH BUSH ANEMONE
	CIS SAL	CISTUS SALVIFOLIUS 'PROSTRATUS'	SAGELEAF ROCKROSE
DAS	DAS WHE	DASYLIRION WHEELERI	DESERT SPOON
	ENC ACT	ENCELIA ACTONI	ACTON ENCELIA
	HES PAR	HESPERALOE PARVIFLORA 'YELLOW'	YELLOW TEXAS YUCCA
	LEU CAN	LEUCOPHYLLUM CANDIDUM 'MICROBURST' PP33437	MICROBURST TEXAS SAGE
	LUP ALB	LUPINUS ALBIFRONS	SILVER BUSH LUPINE
	MUH RIG	MUHLENBERGIA RIGENS	DEER GRASS
MYO	MYO PAR	MYOPORUM PARVIFOLIUM	CREEPING MYOPORUM
	NEP FAA	NEPETA X FAASSENII 'WALKER'S LOW'	WALKER'S LOW CATMINT
	OPU BAS	OPUNTIA BASILARIS	BEAVERTAIL CACTUS
	PEN MAR	PENSTEMON HETEROPHYLLUS 'MARGARITA BOP'	MARGARITA BOP FOOTHILL PENSTEMON
PA	PER ATR	PEROVSKIA ATRIPLICIFOLIA	RUSSIAN SAGE
	RHA CAL	RHAMNUS CALIFORNICA 'EVE CASE'	EVE CASE COFFEEBERRY
	ROM COU	ROMNEYA COULTERI	MATILIJA POPPY
SC	SIM CHI	SIMMONDSIA CHINENSIS	JOJOBA
SV	SIM VIS	SIMMONDSIA CHINENSIS 'VISTA'	COMPACT JOJOBA
	SPO AIR	SPOROBOLUS AIROIDES	ALKALI SACATON
XX	--	SEASONAL COLORS	

VINES

	ROS BAN	ROSA BANKSIAE 'ALBA PLENA'	WHITE LADY BANKS CLIMBING ROSE
	ROS CEC	ROSA 'CLIMBING CECILE BRUNNER'	CECILE BRUNNER CLIMBING ROSE

TURF

SYM	ABBV	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME
TB	TAH BER	TAHOMA 31 BERMUDA (TURF GRASS)	TAHOMA 31 BERMUDA TURF

SEE SHEET L0.02 FOR FULL SCHEDULE

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **2.0-15b**

Proposed Landscape Plan

IMPACT SCIENCES

859.004•02/26



TREE PLANTING SCHEDULE

SYM	ABBV	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	SIZE/QTY
	ACA BAI	ACACIA BAILEYANA	BAILEY'S ACACIA	48" BOX: 26 MULTI-TRUNK
	ARB UNE	ARBUTUS UNEDO	STRAWBERRY TREE	48" BOX: 10 MULTI-TRUNK
	CAL DEC	CALOCEDRUS DECURRENS	INCENSE CEDAR	48" BOX: 12 STANDARD
	CER OCC	CERCIS OCCIDENTALIS	WESTERN REDBUD	48" BOX: 8 MULTI-TRUNK
	CHI LIN	CHILOPSIS LINEARIS 'BURGUNDY'	DESERT WILLOW	48" BOX: 4 MULTI-TRUNK
	CHI TAS	XCHITALPA TASHKENTENSIS 'PINK DAWN'	PINK DAWN CHITALPA	48" BOX: 8 MULTI-TRUNK
	FRA VEL	FRAXINUS VELUTINA 'RIO GRANDE'	ARIZONA ASH	48" BOX: 41 STANDARD
	OLE EUR	OLEA EUROPAEA 'SWAN HILL'	FRUITLESS OLIVE	60" BOX: 4 MULTI-TRUNK
	PAR DES	PARKINSONIA X 'DESERT MUSEUM'	DESERT MUSEUM PALO VERDE	48" BOX: 4 MULTI-TRUNK
	PIS RED	PISTACIA 'RED PUSH'	RED PUSH PISTACHE	48" BOX: 9 STANDARD
	PRO GLA	PROSOPIS GLANDULOSA 'MAVERICK'	THORNLESS HONEY MESQUITE	48" BOX: 34 STANDARD
	QUE LOB	QUERCUS LOBATA	VALLEY OAK	48" BOX: 43 STANDARD
	QUE VIR	QUERCUS VIRGINIANA	SOUTHERN LIVE OAK	48" BOX: 64 STANDARD
	SEA LAN	SEARSIA (RHUS) LANCEA	AFRICAN SUMAC	48" BOX: 82 MULTI-TRUNK
	ULM PAR	ULMUS PARVIFOLIA 'DRAKE'	DRAKE CHINESE ELM	48" BOX: 33 STANDARD
	VIT AGN	VITEX AGNUS-CASTUS	CHASTE TREE	48" BOX: 8 MULTI-TRUNK

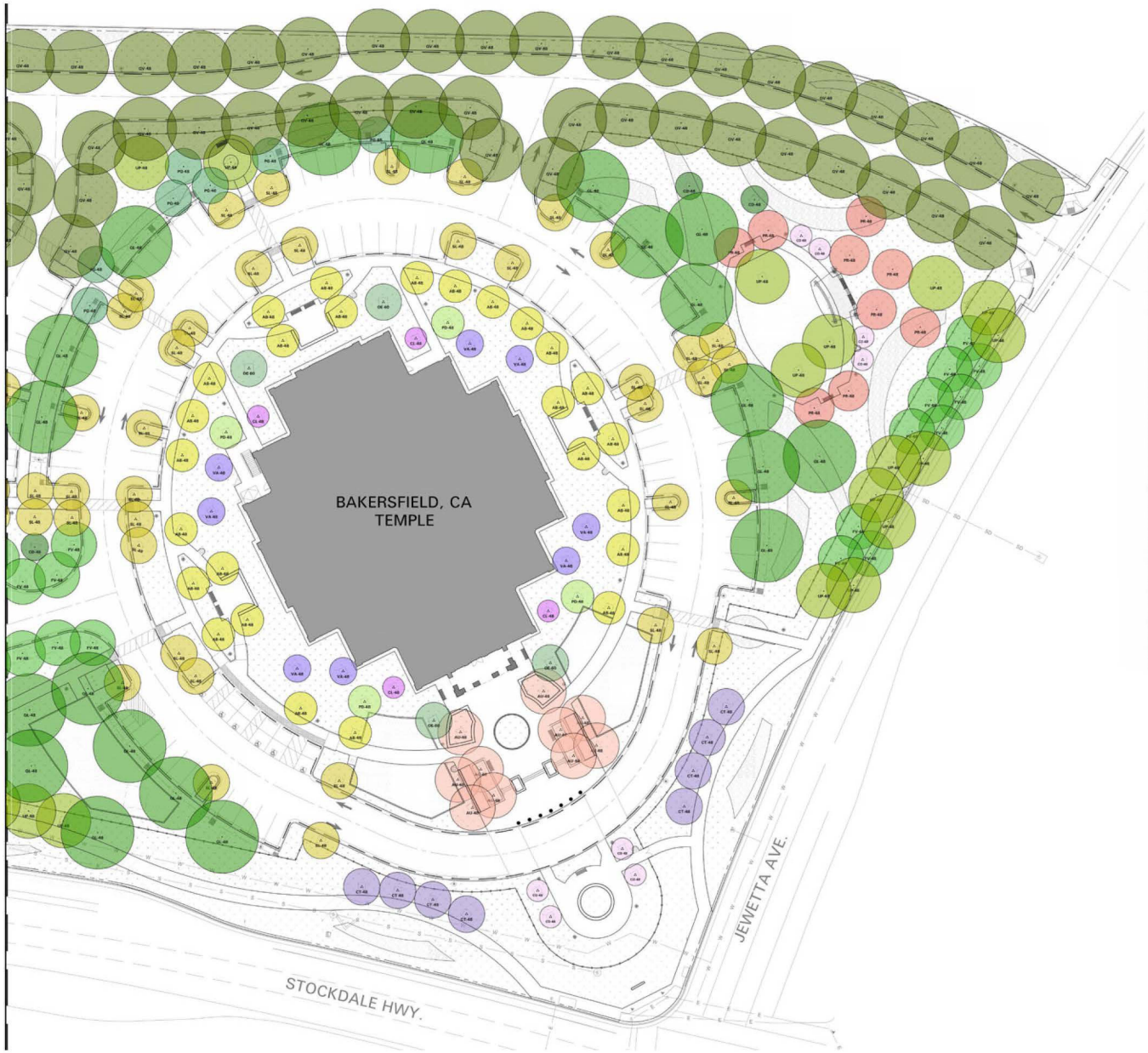
SEE SHEET L0.02 FOR FULL SCHEDULE

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **2.0-16a**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Proposed Landscape Plan - Trees



TREE PLANTING SCHEDULE

SYM	ABBV	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	SIZE/QTY
AB-48	ACA BAI	ACACIA BAILEYANA	BAILEY'S ACACIA	48" BOX: 26 MULTI-TRUNK
AU-48	ARB UNE	ARBUTUS UNEDO	STRAWBERRY TREE	48" BOX: 10 MULTI-TRUNK
CD-48	CAL DEC	CALOCEDRUS DECURRENS	INCENSE CEDAR	48" BOX: 12 STANDARD
CC-48	CER OCC	CERCIS OCCIDENTALIS	WESTERN REDBUD	48" BOX: 8 MULTI-TRUNK
CL-48	CHI LIN	CHILOPSIS LINEARIS 'BURGUNDY'	DESERT WILLOW	48" BOX: 4 MULTI-TRUNK
CT-48	CHI TAS	X CHITALPA TASHKENTENSIS 'PINK DAWN'	PINK DAWN CHITALPA	48" BOX: 8 MULTI-TRUNK
FV-48	FRA VEL	FRAXINUS VELUTINA 'RIO GRANDE'	ARIZONA ASH	48" BOX: 41 STANDARD
OE-60	OLE EUR	OLEA EUROPAEA 'SWAN HILL'	FRUITLESS OLIVE	60" BOX: 4 MULTI-TRUNK
PD-48	PAR DES	PARKINSONIA X 'DESERT MUSEUM'	DESERT MUSEUM PALO VERDE	48" BOX: 4 MULTI-TRUNK
PR-48	PIS RED	PISTACIA 'RED PUSH'	RED PUSH PISTACHE	48" BOX: 9 STANDARD
PG-48	PRO GLA	PROSOPIS GLANDULOSA 'MAVERICK'	THORNLESS HONEY MESQUITE	48" BOX: 34 STANDARD
QL-48	QUE LOB	QUERCUS LOBATA	VALLEY OAK	48" BOX: 43 STANDARD
QV-48	QUE VIR	QUERCUS VIRGINIANA	SOUTHERN LIVE OAK	48" BOX: 64 STANDARD
SL-48	SEA LAN	SEARSIA (RHUS) LANCEA	AFRICAN SUMAC	48" BOX: 82 MULTI-TRUNK
UP-48	ULM PAR	ULMUS PARVIFOLIA 'DRAKE'	DRAKE CHINESE ELM	48" BOX: 33 STANDARD
VA-48	VIT AGN	VITEX AGNUS-CASTUS	CHASTE TREE	48" BOX: 8 MULTI-TRUNK

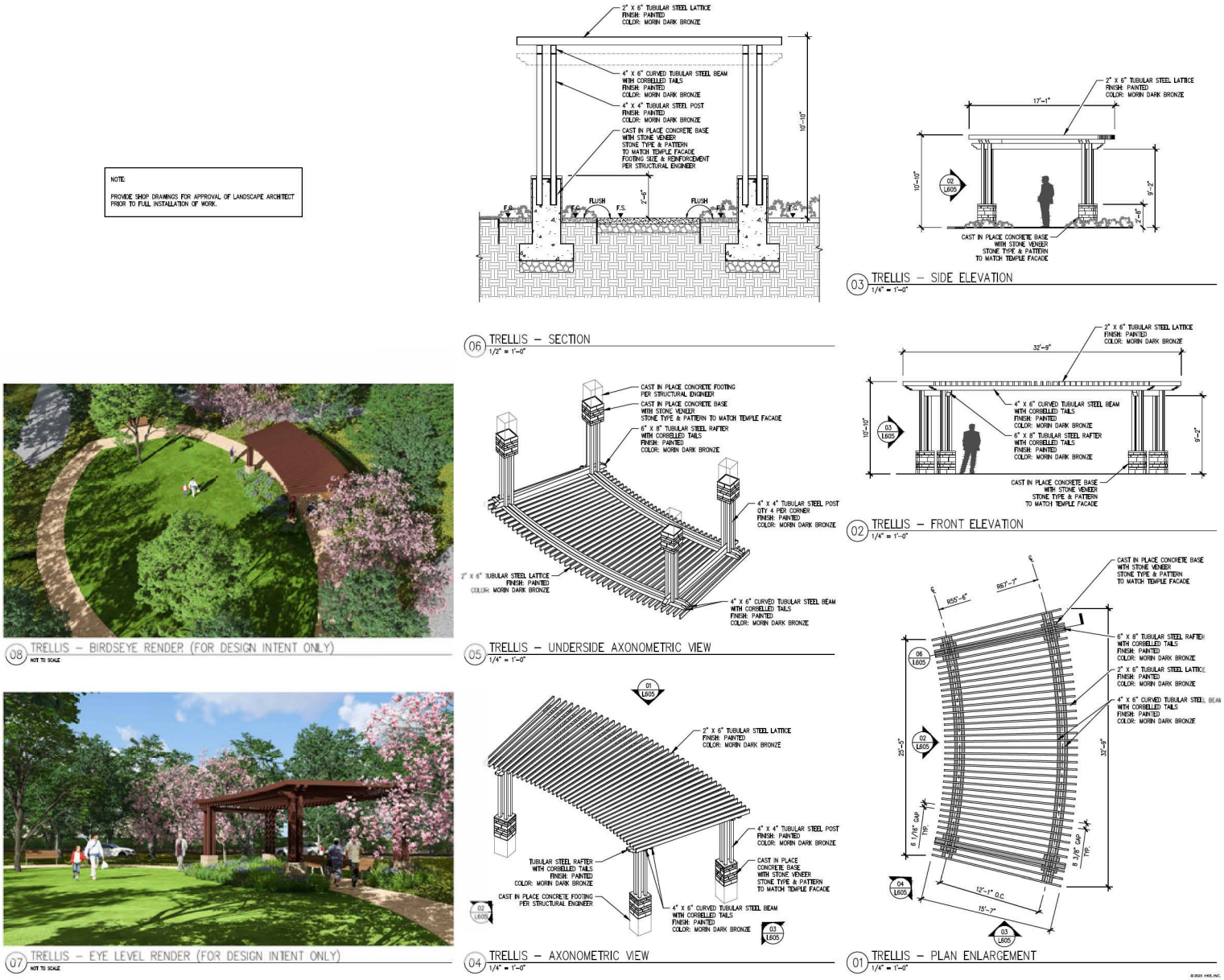
SEE SHEET L0.02 FOR FULL SCHEDULE

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **2.0-16b**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Proposed Landscape Plan - Trees



SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **2.0-17**

Proposed Trellis Design

IMPACT SCIENCES

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2.3.1.4 Stormwater Management (Phase 1)

Phase 1 stormwater infrastructure would rely on an existing off-site retention basin located on a property immediately northwest of the adjacent specialty pediatric medical clinic building, northwest of the Project Site, with a storage capacity of 12.53 acre-feet. The retention basin is owned and managed by the City's Consolidated Maintenance District as a shared regional stormwater facility serving multiple users within the surrounding area. Stormwater conveyance would occur through connections to existing manholes, directing flows into the off-site retention basin. Grassy swales along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue would function as both drainage features and landscaped open space, providing infiltration, water quality benefits, and visual amenity.

The Phase 1 refuse enclosure would also include a sanitary floor drain connected to the sanitary sewer system, preventing pollutants from entering stormwater flows.

2.3.2 Phase 2: Meetinghouse and Additional Facilities

Phase 2 of the proposed Project would develop the western portion of the Project Site with the construction of a meetinghouse, refuse enclosure and outdoor pavilion structure. The meetinghouse would be oriented toward the temple with its primary entrance facing east. The meetinghouse would comprise approximately 16,370 square feet. The building would have a proposed height of approximately 27 feet and would be topped by a prefabricated steeple reaching 66 feet 4 inches. The pavilion is a covered outdoor space with a roof and no walls that can be used as a break-out meeting area for activities and meetings associated with the meetinghouse. The pavilion is anticipated to be 30 feet by 60 feet (1,800 square feet) with a height of 13.5 feet. The refuse enclosure is 485 square feet.

Associated improvements in Phase 2 would include additional parking areas providing 93 stalls, bringing the total number of parking spaces on the site to 292 stalls at full buildout. Parking would include standard, ADA accessible, EV charging, and EV-ready stalls consistent with City standards.

Additional site improvements in Phase 2 would include expanded landscaping consistent with the established Phase 1 character, as described in **Section 2.3.2.2**. **Table 2.0-3, Phase 2 Building Information**, provides a summary of the proposed structures and sizes.

Table 2.0-3
Phase 2 Building Information

Type	Area
Outdoor Pavilion	1,800 sf
Meetinghouse	16,370 sf
Refuse Enclosure	485 sf
Total Phase 2	**18,655 sf**

sf = square feet
Source: HKS Architects, Inc., October 17, 2024.

2.3.2.1 Meetinghouse Architecture and Design Features

The meetinghouse would be designed in a simple, functional architectural style consistent with standard meetinghouse facilities constructed by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints worldwide. The building would emphasize efficiency and community use, with a rectangular floor plan, a primary worship space, classrooms, and multipurpose areas.

Exterior finishes would consist of durable, non-combustible materials in neutral tones, with modest architectural detailing to ensure compatibility with surrounding development. The proposed meetinghouse steeple would reach a height of 66 feet and 4 inches and would serve as a visual identifier of the building's religious function while remaining proportionate to the overall scale of the structure.

Exterior lighting would be limited to building entrances, parking areas, and pedestrian pathways, designed to comply with the City's lighting ordinance and to minimize spillover onto adjacent properties. These design features would establish the meetinghouse as a recognizable place of worship that complements the temple and serves the needs of the local Church congregation.

2.3.2.2 Landscaping and Open Space (Phase 2)

Phase 2 would expand the landscaped and open space program by approximately 1.22 acres (53,013 square feet), primarily associated with the construction of the meetinghouse and additional parking areas. The open space design would extend the established character of Phase 1, ensuring continuity across the site.

Landscaping in Phase 2 (as illustrated in **Figure 2.0-15a, Proposed Landscape Plan**, and **Figure 2.0-15b, Proposed Landscape Plan**) would introduce additional shade trees (detailed in **Figure 2.0-16a, Proposed Landscape Plan Trees**, and **Figure 2.0-16b, Proposed Landscape Plan Trees**) and ornamental planting beds along the expanded parking areas, providing screening and shade. The frontage of the meetinghouse

would incorporate turf lawns and ornamental plantings consistent with the temple grounds, creating a unified aesthetic. Pedestrian pathways would be extended to connect the meetinghouse with the temple and clothing center, with decorative paving materials used to maintain cohesion.

Open space features would include trellised seating areas (consistent with the design in **Figure 2.0-17**) near the meetinghouse, expanded pedestrian circulation routes, and gathering spaces, including the outdoor pavilion described in Section 2.3.2. Planting materials would continue to emphasize drought tolerance and low water demand, consistent with City of Bakersfield water conservation guidelines. Lighting fixtures would be extended to cover new pedestrian routes and gathering areas, reinforcing the ceremonial and functional character of the site.

2.3.2.3 Stormwater Management (Phase 2)

Phase 2 stormwater infrastructure would expand the system to accommodate additional impervious surfaces from the meetinghouse and parking areas. Runoff from Phase 2 would be conveyed to the same existing off-site shared retention basin utilized in Phase 1, which is owned and managed by the City's Consolidated Maintenance District.

The Phase 2 refuse enclosure would include a sanitary floor drain connected to the sanitary sewer system, preventing pollutants from entering stormwater flows.

2.3.3 Operations Summary

The proposed Project would establish a two-phase religious campus comprising a temple and a meetinghouse that perform complementary functions and are scheduled to avoid regular overlap of peak events.

2.3.3.1 Temple Operations

The temple would be used for religious instruction, marriage ceremonies, ordinances, baptisms, prayer, and reflection. Operations would occur Tuesday through Saturday between 5:00 AM and 10:00 PM, with the facility closed on Sundays and reserved for maintenance on Mondays. Ordinances are conducted by invitation only and are not open to the general public. Temple ordinances are not performed on Sundays, allowing members and staff to attend worship services at nearby meetinghouses.

Peak occupancy at the temple is not anticipated to occur regularly, but it could accommodate up to approximately 280 members, with a concurrent staff presence of up to 40 individuals. Since ordinances and ceremonies are typically attended by families or related groups, many patrons travel together. As detailed

in **Section 3.8, Transportation**, this shared travel behavior is inherently captured in the empirical trip generation rates derived from comparable, operational temples.

2.3.3.2 Meetinghouse Operations

The meetinghouse would be used primarily for Sunday worship services, with an anticipated peak occupancy of approximately 300 members. In addition to Sunday services, the meetinghouse would host membership activities during weekday evenings. The facility would operate daily between 6:00 AM and 10:00 PM. Because the temple is closed on Sundays, peak occupancy of the temple and meetinghouse would not overlap.

2.3.3.3 Religious Campus Operations

The temple and meetinghouse together would function as a coordinated religious campus. The temple would typically experience peak attendance of approximately 250–280 members with up to 40 staff present, while the meetinghouse would reach peak attendance of approximately 300 members on Sundays. Operational scheduling ensures that peak events at the two facilities occur on separate days, thereby minimizing cumulative traffic and parking demand.

2.4 PROJECT CONSTRUCTION SEQUENCING AND STAGING

Construction of the proposed Project would occur in two distinct phases. Phase 1, which includes the temple and associated site improvements, is anticipated to begin in Summer 2026 and would last for approximately 30 months. The commencement date for Phase 2, which would include the meetinghouse and additional facilities, has not yet been determined and would occur at a later time based on the needs of the Church and the community. However, construction of Phase 2 is anticipated to last for approximately 18 months.

While staging, equipment storage, and worker parking, would be strictly confined within the boundaries of the Project Site, construction activities would also include necessary off-site frontage improvements (such as the installation of curbs, gutters, and sidewalks) within the public rights-of-way along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue. Anticipated construction equipment would include standard machinery such as excavators, graders, dozers, tractors/loaders/backhoes, forklifts, and paving equipment, consistent with the modeling defaults utilized in the Project's Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impact Study (**Appendix 3.2**). To reduce emissions and localized health risks, all construction equipment exceeding 25 horsepower shall have an engine rating of Tier 4 Final (see **Section 3.2, Air Quality**). Construction would include grading and installation of utilities in accordance with City permits and standards. The Project Site is relatively level, with existing grades of approximately 366 feet and proposed finished floor elevations of

approximately 371 feet. Grading activities would require the export of approximately 3,500 cubic yards (CY) of material and the import of approximately 12,324 CY of material. A temporary soil stockpile of up to 3,000 CY would be staged in the northwest corner of the Project Site for a maximum duration of 18 months. All construction truck hauling would utilize City-designated truck routes and major arterial roadways, such as Stockdale Highway, to access regional freeways with the use of local residential streets prohibited. Dust control and best management practices would be implemented to minimize air quality impacts. Stormwater compliance would be achieved through preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and filing of a Notice of Intent under the NPDES Construction General Permit.

Construction activities would comply with the City's noise regulations, as set forth in BMC Section 9.22.050, which allows construction noise between the hours of 6:00 AM and 9:00 PM on weekdays and between 8:00 AM and 9:00 PM on weekends. Traffic management measures would be implemented to ensure safe access to and from the site during construction, and fire safety measures, such as the installation of temporary hydrants and compliance with California Building Code requirements, would be incorporated. Construction worker levels would fluctuate depending on the specific construction phase. The Project is anticipated to generate a maximum of approximately 22 one-way worker trips per day during the peak building construction phase, equating to approximately 11 workers on-site daily.

2.5 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The underlying purpose of the proposed Project is to establish a local Bakersfield-area temple and meetinghouse. The primary objectives of the Project include:

1) Design, build, and maintain a temple and meetinghouse whose physical and functional features symbolize the core beliefs of the Church and its members, and that provide places of worship consistent with these beliefs

2) Locate the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions to optimize their accessibility to the Church's members, taking into account their location relative to:

    - The existing Church membership within and near the Bakersfield community
    - The projected growth in Church membership
    - The nearest existing temples where local Church members now need to travel to worship

3) Place the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions in a location where they are compatible with surrounding uses

4) Site the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions in a stable community that will have long-term uses

5) Situate the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions to provide optimal accessibility to major highways, roadways, and arterial streets

6) Ensure that the proposed site for the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions will conform to the extent reasonably possible with existing land use and zoning regulations and will minimize the number and type of discretionary local approvals needed to facilitate a timely completion of construction and opening of the Church's places of worship

2.6 REQUESTED APPROVALS

Discretionary and ministerial entitlements, reviews, and approvals required from the City of Bakersfield and other responsible agencies for implementation of the Project would include, but would not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- City of Bakersfield
    - Site Plan Review No. 24-0027 for approval and associated building permits.[1]
    - Zone Modification No. 24-0032 to allow steeple heights as proposed (temple: 123 feet 6 inches, meetinghouse: 66 feet 4 inches) where 60 feet is permitted in a C-O (Commercial and Professional Office) zone district.[2]
    - Vesting Tentative Parcel Map No. 12637 consisting of 3 parcels on 13.07 gross acres (11.76 net acres).

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1 The Project is being processed pursuant to the provisions of the Bakersfield Municipal Code, Title 17 (Zoning Ordinance), that was in effect on February 9, 2024, when the application for the Site Plan Review and Zone Modification were deemed complete. At that time, religious institutions were a permitted use by right within the C-O (Commercial Office) zone.

2 The Project applicant has submitted a zone modification request for the proposed steeple height. The environmental impacts associated with this request are evaluated in the EIR. Any mitigation measures or conditions imposed on the zone modification will be documented and considered as part of the Project decision-making process.

  - Other discretionary and ministerial permits and approvals that may be deemed necessary, including, but not limited to, grading permits, excavation permits and building permits, public rights-of-way permits, etc.

- San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
  - Authority to Construct / Permit to Operate for the diesel-powered emergency generator
  - Authority to Construct / Permit to Operate for HVAC systems (if applicable)
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
  - Construction General Permit (NPDES)
  - Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) compliance with Notice of Intent filing

2.7 INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

This EIR will serve as the CEQA compliance document for the City of Bakersfield as the lead agency. It will provide environmental analysis to support the City's discretionary approvals, including Site Plan Review, Zone Modification, and Vesting Tentative Parcel Map.

The EIR may also be used by other agencies, including the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (for Authority to Construct/Permit to Operate) and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (for Construction General Permit compliance). Other agencies with permitting authority, such as the City's Public Works Department for off-site rights-of-way improvements (including the curbs, gutters, and sidewalks along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue) and utility service connections to existing municipal infrastructure in adjacent roadways, may also rely on this EIR in their decision-making. In addition, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife may use this EIR to evaluate potential impacts to biological resources under its jurisdiction, should any applicable permits or agreements be required.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

This section of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) evaluates the potential of the Bakersfield Temple Project (Project or proposed Project) to result in significant impacts on the environment. This section provides a full scope of environmental analysis in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (State CEQA Guidelines).

3.0.1 SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

In accordance with Section 15126 of the *State CEQA Guideline*s, **Section 3.0, Environmental Impact Analysis,** of this Draft EIR provides an analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental effects of the proposed Project. For purposes of the analyses in this section, the environmental baseline is the existing physical conditions on the Project Site and in the immediate vicinity as of the date the Notice of Preparation (NOP) was filed with the Kern County Clerk on September 17, 2025 (*State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15125(a)). The NOP is available in **Appendix 1.0-1** of this Draft EIR. This EIR is a project-level environmental review of the proposed Project as described in **Section 2.0**. Unless otherwise noted in a topic-specific section, all technical studies, modeling inputs, and significance determinations in this Draft EIR compare Project conditions to that baseline and use the most current data available as of that time. The following environmental resources are assessed in this section in accordance with Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*:

- 3.1, Aesthetics
- 3.2, Air Quality
- 3.3, Biological Resources
- 3.4, Cultural, Tribal Cultural, and Paleontological Resources
- 3.5, Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- 3.6, Land Use and Planning
- 3.7, Noise and Vibration
- 3.8, Transportation

Approach to Environmental Analysis

Section 3.1 through **Section 3.8** of this EIR contain discussions of the environmental setting, regulatory framework, and potential impacts related to construction and operation of the proposed Project. The environmental evaluation includes a development-specific analysis (i.e., proposed Project) and a cumulative analysis. If potential significant impacts are identified, feasible mitigation measures are recommended. Each section applies, recognized, topic-specific significance thresholds and analytic tools (e.g., San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District air quality thresholds and the latest California

Emissions Estimator Model; state-compliant Vehicle Miles Traveled methods and model years; industry-standard noise modeling; etc.). The analysis also includes a level of impact after the implementation of mitigation measures. Mitigation measures (if applicable) will include performance standards, implementation timing, responsible parties, and monitoring through the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program to ensure enforceability.

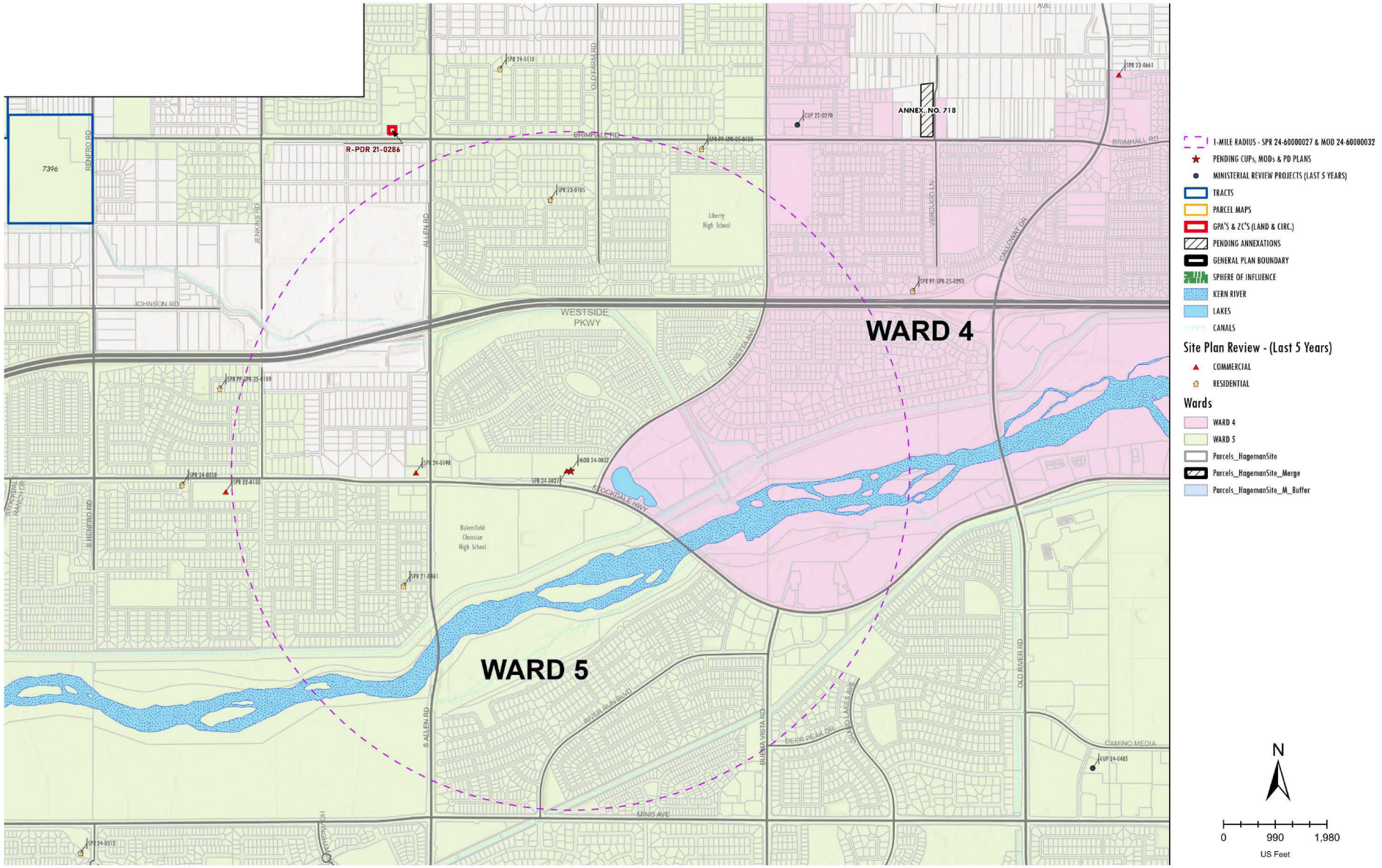
The Project analysis evaluates the construction and operation of an approximately 13.07-gross-acre (11.76 net acres) religious campus at the Project Site in two phases. Phase 1 would include the construction and operation of an approximately 29,630-square-foot temple and associated site improvements, including ancillary support buildings, plazas, landscaped gardens, and 199 parking stalls. Phase 2 would include the construction of an approximately 16,370-square-foot meetinghouse, an outdoor pavilion, a refuse enclosure, and expanded parking and landscaping. A detailed description of the Project is included in **Section 2.0, Project Description**. Technical studies that support the analysis in this EIR are included as appendices and identified in the relevant topic's section.

The cumulative analysis was prepared in accordance with Section 15130 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, which requires an EIR to discuss cumulative impacts of the proposed Project when the incremental effects of the proposed Project are cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impacts are defined as impacts created by the combination of the proposed Project with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. Cumulatively considerable means that the incremental effects of the proposed 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. This Draft EIR focuses on significant cumulative effects, and where cumulative conditions are less than significant, the Project's incremental contribution is described qualitatively for context rather than as a determination of cumulatively considerable contribution. According to Section 15130(b) of the *State CEQA Guidelines,* elements considered necessary to provide an adequate discussion of cumulative impacts of a project include either:

(1) a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts; or

(2) a summary of projection contained in an adopted General Plan or related planning document, which is designed to evaluate regional or area-wide conditions.

Both approaches are utilized in this Draft EIR. Each technical section in **Section 3.0** includes a clearly identified geographic scope for cumulative effects and either the localized list of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects as shown on **Figure 3.0-1, Related Projects Map,** and listed in **Table 3.0-1, Related Projects Table**, or the application of regional forecasts projections contained in the Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG) *2022 Regional Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy* (2022 RTP/SCS) to assess potential environmental effects.



SOURCE: City of Bakersfield, 2025

FIGURE **3.0-1**

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Related Projects Map

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Table 3.0-1
Related Projects Table

Related Project No.	Case Number	Case Type	Project Type	Approx. distance from Project Site (miles)
1	SPR 21-0461	Site Plan Review	Residential	0.45
2	SPR 20-0198	Site Plan Review	Commercial	0.55
3	SPR 23-0105	Site Plan Review	Residential	0.56
4	SPR 22-0138	Site Plan Review	Commercial	0.60
5	PP-SPR-25-0120	Plot Plan Site Plan Review	Residential	1.0

Source: Based on projects map created by City of Bakersfield Planning Division with data as of November 25, 2025.

Kern COG's 2022 RTP/SCS is used in part because the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan (adopted December 11, 2002) is substantially older and therefore less current for growth forecasting, making the Kern COG projections a more accurate regional data source for cumulative analyses. The related projects list was prepared by the City's Planning Division to include entitled and pending approvals within a 1-mile radius and is current as of November 25, 2025. Kern COG's forecasts provide the anticipated planned population, housing, and employment growth in the region for 2020-2046. **Table 3.0-2, Cumulative Growth Projections for the City of Bakersfield,** includes the forecast for the City.

Table 3.0-2
Cumulative Growth Projections for the City of Bakersfield

Year	Population (Persons)	Households	Employment (Jobs)
2020	598,428	187,362	211,235
2046	772,800	229,200	239,500

Source: Kern COG Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy. Available online at: https://www.kerncog.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022_RTP.pdf, accessed November 19, 2025.

Between 2020 and 2046, the City is projected to grow by approximately 174,000 residents (29 percent), approximately 42,000 households (22 percent), and approximately 28,000 jobs (13 percent). These increases, based on Kern COG's 2022 RTP/SCS, reflect regional planning assumptions for housing, transportation, and employment. They provide the cumulative growth context for evaluating the Project's impacts, ensuring consistency with countywide forecasts used in transportation modeling, air quality planning, and greenhouse gas reduction strategies.

The cumulative analysis included an evaluation of the combined effect of the proposed Project and future growth, in accordance with the projections provided in **Table 3.0-2**. In addition, if the combined cumulative effect is significant, then a discussion of the proposed Project's contribution to the significant cumulative effect is provided. If the proposed Project's contribution is determined to be less than cumulatively considerable, then the proposed Project would have a less than significant cumulative impact. Although not required, the cumulative analysis also evaluated the proposed Project's contribution to a less than significant cumulative effect. This determination consistently found that the proposed Project's contribution to a less than significant cumulative effect would be less than cumulatively considerable.

The analysis in this section also includes the recommendation of mitigation measures to be implemented by the proposed Project if potential environmental effects were identified as significant under the proposed Project-specific analysis or if the proposed Project's contribution to significant cumulative effects was determined to be cumulatively considerable under the cumulative analysis.

A discussion of the level of impact after the implementation of mitigation measures is provided in the Significance Determination. If a proposed project-specific impact or a proposed project's contribution to a cumulative impact did not require mitigation measures, then a statement of the level of impact (i.e., No Impact or Less Than Significant impact) is provided.

Organization of Environmental Issue Area

Implementation of the proposed Project would result in construction and operational activities at the Project Site. The potential environmental issues associated with each environmental analysis addressed in **Section 3.0** contain the following components.

Environmental Setting

This section identifies and describes the existing physical environmental conditions of the Project Site and vicinity associated with each of the impact sections. According to Section 15125(a) of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, an EIR must include a description of the existing physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the proposed Project to provide the "baseline condition" against which proposed Project-related impacts are compared. Normally, the baseline condition is the physical condition that exists when the NOP is published. The NOP for the proposed Project was published on September 17, 2025, which is considered the baseline for the analysis contained in this Draft EIR.

Regulatory Framework

The regulatory framework provides an understanding of the regulatory environment that exists prior to the implementation of the proposed Project. The regulatory framework that was used in this EIR included federal, state, regional, and local regulations and policies applicable to the Project.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section describes environmental changes to the existing physical conditions that may occur if the proposed Project is implemented and evaluates these changes with respect to the significance criteria. This section also includes a proposed Project impact analysis and a cumulative impact analysis. Mitigation measures are identified, if determined feasible, for significant proposed Project impacts and cumulative impacts where the proposed Project's contribution was determined to be cumulatively considerable. The mitigation measures are those measures that could avoid, minimize, or reduce an environmental impact. This section also includes a significance determination after mitigation that describes the level of impact significance remaining after mitigation measures are implemented.

Significance Criteria

Significance criteria have been developed for each environmental resource in accordance with Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. Each section identifies the thresholds and standards applied, including numeric thresholds and the rationale for their use. The criteria are defined at the beginning of each impact analysis section. Impacts are categorized as follows:

- **No Impact**: No substantial evidence exists to support a fair argument that the Project would have an impact on the environment.
- **Less Than Significant Impact**: Environmental impacts have been identified but are less than the thresholds of significance and do not include or require mitigation measures.
- **Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated**: Environmental impacts have been identified but are less than significant with the incorporation of mitigation measures, thereby reducing the impact from Potentially Significant Impact to a Less Than Significant Impact.
- **Significant Impact**: Potentially significant direct project-level impacts.

References

Sources relied upon for each environmental topic analyzed in this document are provided at the end of each section. Technical studies prepared for the Project are included in the appendices and cited in the relevant sections.

3.1 AESTHETICS

This section evaluates the potential impacts of the proposed Project on the visual character of the Project Site and surrounding areas. The analysis addresses effects on scenic resources, visual character, scenic quality regulations, and the introduction of new sources of light and glare. Additionally, this section includes an informational discussion of shade and shadow effects, which are not addressed by CEQA significance thresholds but are analyzed for the benefit of decision-makers and the public. The analysis is based in part on the *Visual Impact Assessment, Bakersfield Temple Project, City of Bakersfield, California* (VIA), prepared by Michael Baker International, dated February 2026. The VIA is included in **Appendix 3.1**.

3.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3.1.1.1 Definition of Terms

To provide context for the analysis presented below, key terms related to aesthetics and visual resources are defined.

Aesthetic Value: The aesthetic value of an area is a measure of its visual character and quality, combined with viewer response to the area. The scenic quality component refers to the overall visual impression retained by a viewer after traveling through or observing an area. Viewer response is a combination of viewer exposure and viewer sensitivity.

Viewer Exposure: Viewer exposure reflects the number of viewers, frequency of views, viewing distance, and the viewing duration.

Viewer Sensitivity: Viewer sensitivity relates to the extent of the public's concern for particular viewsheds and the types of viewers. Residential viewers and recreational users typically have higher sensitivity than motorists with brief, passing views.

Degree of Visibility: The extent to which development can be seen depends to a large extent on location, height/bulk, construction materials, reflectivity, and color of development. Generally, the taller a development, the greater the potential for visual impact.

Viewshed: A viewshed is a geographic area composed of land, water, biotic, and/or cultural elements that may be seen from one or more viewpoints and has inherent scenic qualities and/or aesthetic value as determined by those who view it. The extent of a viewshed can be limited by intervening elements, including trees and other vegetation, built structures, or topography such as hills and mountains.

Visual Quality: Visual quality refers to the character of the landscape, which generally gives visual value to a setting. It is useful to think of scenic resources in terms of typical views seen throughout an area, because scenic resources are rarely encountered in isolation. A typical view may include several types of scenic resources, including both natural and man-made elements.

Public vs. Private Views: Private views are views seen from privately owned land and are typically viewed by individual viewers, including views from private residences. Public views are experienced by the collective public and include views of significant landscape features as seen from public viewing spaces, not privately-owned properties.

CEQA case law has established that protection of public views is emphasized. In *Association for Protection of Environmental Values in Ukiah v. City of Ukiah* (1991) 2 Cal. App. 4th 720, 734, the court stated: "We must differentiate between adverse impacts upon particular persons and adverse impacts upon the environment of persons in general." Therefore, for this analysis, only public views are considered when determining the significance of visual impacts of the Project.

Scenic Resources: Scenic resources are significant visual resources identified by local planning documents that can be maintained and enhanced to promote a positive image in the community, such as natural open spaces, topographic formations, and landscapes that contribute to a high level of visual quality. Natural landforms and landscapes are often established as scenic resources, such as lakes, rivers, and streams, mountain meadows, and oak woodlands. However, scenic resources can also include man-made open spaces and the built environment, such as parks, trails, nature preserves, sculpture gardens, and similar features.

Lighting Effects: Lighting effects are associated with the use of artificial light during evening and nighttime hours. There are two primary sources of light: light emanating from building interiors passing through windows, and light from exterior sources (i.e., street lighting, building illumination, security lighting, parking lot lighting, and landscape lighting). Light spillover is typically defined as the presence of unwanted light on properties adjacent to the property being illuminated.

Glare: Perceived glare is the unwanted and potentially objectionable sensation as observed by a person looking directly into a light source (e.g., the sun, the sun's reflection, automobile headlights, or other light fixtures). Glare is primarily a daytime occurrence caused by the reflection of sunlight or artificial light by highly polished surfaces such as window glass or reflective materials and, to a lesser degree, from broad expanses of light-colored surfaces. Daytime glare generation is common in urban areas and is typically associated with buildings with exterior facades largely or entirely comprised of highly reflective glass.

3.1.1.2 Regional and Local Visual Context

The Project Site is located within the City of Bakersfield (City), an incorporated municipality in Kern County. The City lies within the central portion of the southern San Joaquin Valley in California's Central Valley, with the Sierra Nevada to the east, the Tehachapi Mountains to the south, and the Coast Range to the west. The regional visual character is defined by a mix of agricultural land and expanding urban development set against the backdrop of the valley floor, with distant views of the Sierra Nevada foothills visible under clear conditions.

The local setting in the Project vicinity is characterized as a suburban/urban transition zone in the western Bakersfield area. The Project Site is a vacant, graded 13.07-acre lot located at the northwest corner of Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue. The topography is relatively flat with an elevation of approximately 366 feet above mean sea level.

The immediate visual environment is defined by a single-family residential community (low-density profile, predominantly single-story to the north; Stockdale Highway (major arterial roadway), Bakersfield Christian High School (a private high school), a church, and commercial storage facility to the south; pediatric specialty care facility to the west; and Aera Park (14-acre public park) across Jewetta Avenue to the east.

Views of the Project Site are available to three primary receptor groups: motorists traveling along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue; residents of adjacent neighborhoods immediately north of the Project Site; and pedestrians using sidewalks in the area of the Project Site. Of these groups, motorists and pedestrians occupy public rights-of-way and constitute the principal public viewing locations for purposes of this CEQA analysis. Residential views from private property are noted as context but are not evaluated as public views consistent with the definitions established in **Section 3.1.1.1** and applicable CEQA case law.

3.1.1.3 Scenic Resources and Sensitive Visual Receivers

The nearest scenic resource to the Project Site is the Kern River, located approximately 0.2 miles to the south. The Kern River is recognized in the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan (General Plan) as the single most valuable visual resource in the southwestern San Joaquin Valley. The river provides habitat for wildlife, riparian vegetation that creates visual interest and relief from the grasslands and urban development of the Valley floor, and vertical modification of the landscape through erosional processes. Associated with the Kern River corridor are the Kern River Parkway Bike Trail and several public parks and recreational areas, including Aera Park located east of the Project Site across Jewetta Avenue as well as Hart Memorial Park, located approximately 10 miles to the east, and Kern County River Park. However,

intervening roadways, buildings, and trees prevent any public views of the Kern River and these distance regional parks from the Project Site.

The General Plan designates specific scenic viewshed areas, scenic recreational areas, and scenic vantage points within the City:

- Scenic Viewsheds: Areas east of Lake Ming and along State Route 178, neither of which encompasses the Project Site or its surroundings
- Scenic Recreational Areas: The area near and surrounding Lake Ming, located approximately 15 miles northeast of the Project Site, and areas within Kern County River Park along the Kern River corridor
- Scenic Vantage Points: Along Comanche Drive, Alfred Harrell Highway, and State Route 178—none of which provide views toward the Project Site

The Project Site itself is not designated or recognized as a scenic vista, scenic viewshed, scenic recreational area, or scenic vantage point under local, state, or federal designations.

Sensitive visual receivers in the Project vicinity include both public viewers occupying public rights-of-way and private receivers on adjacent properties, which include:[1]

- Residential Uses: Single-family residential subdivision located directly north of the Project Site, across the northern property line. This residential area is the closest sensitive viewer group and would have the most direct views of the proposed structures from residential buildings and yards. Residential uses are the primary sensitive receptors for light trespass evaluation under BMC Section 17.71.030.D.
- Recreational Users: Patrons of Aera Park (14 acres) located east of the Project Site across Jewetta Avenue, and users of the Kern River Parkway Bike Trail and other parks south of the Project Site. These users occupy public recreational spaces and have a vested interest in maintaining the scenic quality of their recreational experience.
- Motorists: Drivers on arterial roadways (Stockdale Highway, classified as Arterial; Jewetta Avenue, classified as Collector) and nearby regional routes (State Route 58 located 0.4 miles north; State Route 99 located 5.4 miles east) would have passing views of the Project.

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1 While CEQA scenic quality analysis considers only public views consistent with **Section 3.1.1.1**, private receivers, such as residential uses, are identified here because they are the primary sensitive receptors for light trespass and glare impacts evaluated under Impact AES-2.

- Commercial and Institutional Patrons: Staff and visitors to the specialty pediatric care facility west of the Project, Bakersfield Christian High School, and associated religious uses south of the Project. These viewers occupy private properties and are identified as the context for daytime glare analysis.

3.1.1.4 Existing Visual Character

The Project Site currently exhibits characteristics typical of disturbed, vacant land in an urbanized setting. The site is graded, relatively flat, and covered with sparse vegetation consisting primarily of annual grassland species. No architectural features, mature trees, or landscape improvements currently exist on the site. As a result, the site contributes minimally to the visual quality of the surrounding area.

The surrounding context presents a mixed, suburban visual character. Adjacent land uses and their visual characteristics include:

- **West**: A specialty pediatric care facility characterized by modern, two-story massing and flat rooflines. The visual character of the building is defined by the central, two-story curved glass atrium. The building's wings feature a contrasting band of brown masonry and white exterior panels.

- **South**: Bakersfield Christian High School, Bridge Bible Church, and a commercial storage facility. The high school campus is characterized by a multi-building layout with deep setbacks, expansive manicured lawns, mature trees, and prominent pedestrian hardscaping. The campus architecture incorporates light-colored stucco facades, arched entryways, and varying rooflines. The campus also includes athletic fields and an outdoor sports stadium with tall stadium light poles for nighttime lighting. Adjacent to the campus, Bridge Bible Church is characterized by contemporary architecture consisting of a wide, low-profile horizontal massing defined by flat rooflines, earth-tone stucco facades, and a prominent arched colonnade.

- **East:** Aera Park, a 14-acre public park with recreational amenities including baseball diamonds with stadium lighting, lawn areas, mature trees, and landscaping that presents a vegetated, open aesthetic.

- **North**: Single-family residential subdivision featuring detached homes on individual lots with landscape improvements typical of suburban residential development

Streetscape features in the Project vicinity include standard municipal street lighting along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, traffic control signals, and utility infrastructure (poles, lines, etc.). Mature trees line portions of the adjacent roadways, and scattered landscape improvements on adjacent properties provide some degree of visual interest and shade. The overall character of the Project vicinity is suburban,

dominated by vehicular-oriented development with limited pedestrian-scale architecture or public gathering spaces.

Heights of existing structures in the immediate vicinity range from 1 to 3 stories (approximately 15-45 feet), with the exception of tall stadium lighting poles at Aera Park and Bakersfield Christian High School, which extend to 45-60 feet.

Views from the Project Site include partial views of the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the east and Tehachapi Mountains to the south, residential subdivisions to the north, park areas and landscaping to the east, and roadway infrastructure and commercial development to the west and south.

The 11 public vantage points used for the visual impact analysis in this section are shown in Figure **3.1-1, Renderings Location Map**.

3.1.1.5 Existing Lighting

The Project Site is vacant, with existing lighting limited to two street light poles along the southern perimeter. However, the surrounding area consists of residential, commercial, medical, religious, and park/recreational uses that generate ambient nighttime lighting.

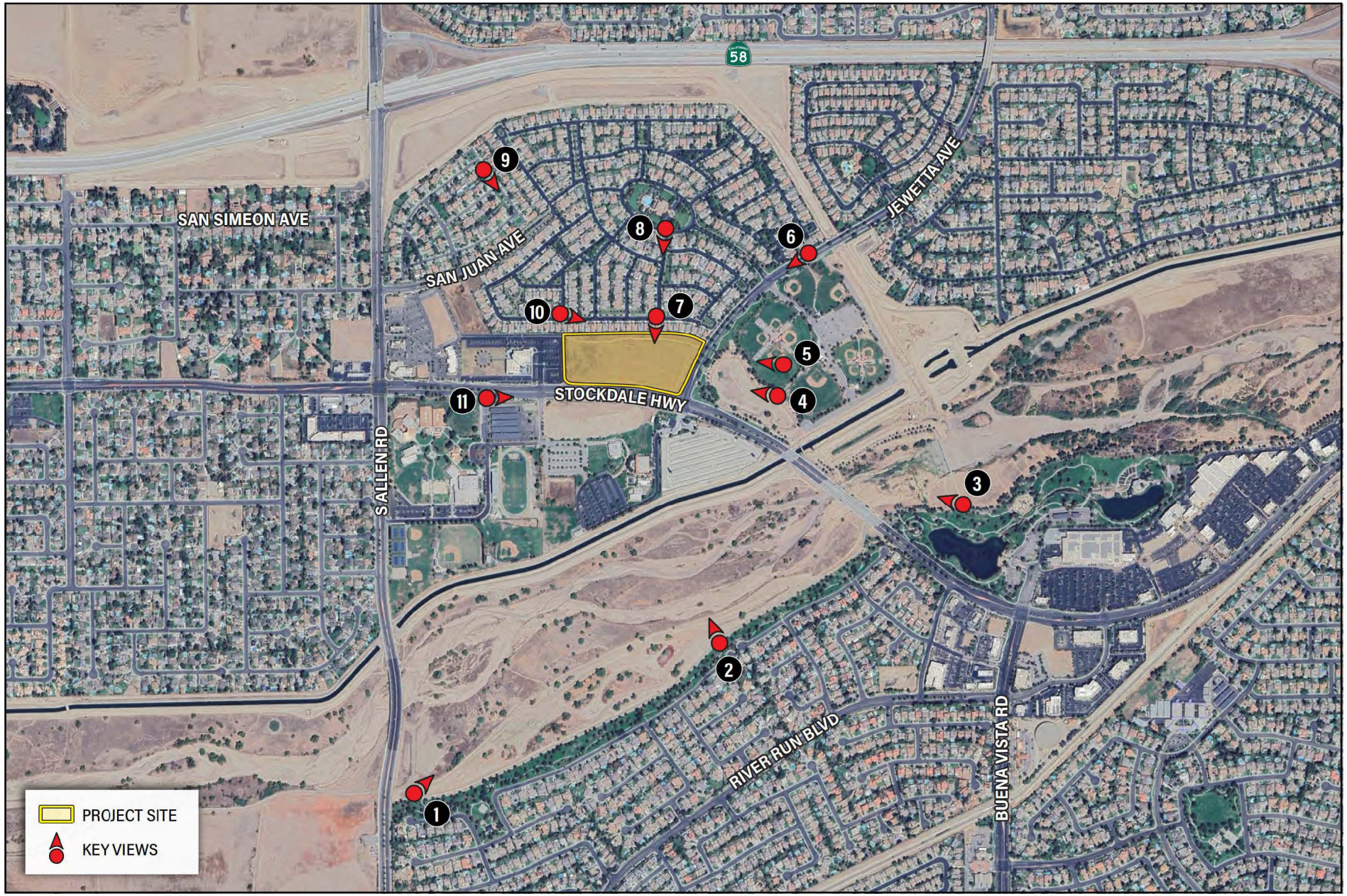
Sources of existing light include:

- Residential exterior lighting from homes north of the site
- Street lighting along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue
- Traffic signal lighting at roadway intersections
- Vehicle headlights along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue
- Commercial security and building lighting from the medical facility to the west and institutional uses to the south
- Stadium lighting from sports fields at Bakersfield Christian High School and Aera Park[2]

Existing nighttime conditions reflect the ambient lighting typical of suburban development in western Bakersfield. Existing daytime and nighttime conditions documented from each of the 11 vantage points are presented in **Figure 3.1-2** through **Figure 3.1-12, Existing Daytime and Nighttime Views**.

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2 Per Bakersfield Municipal Code (BMC) Section 17.71.040.B, stadium lighting is subject to the design and illumination standards of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) and must be turned off within one hour of an event ending. As events must end by 10:00 PM, stadium lighting could be on as late as 11:00 PM.



SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2025

FIGURE **3.1-1**

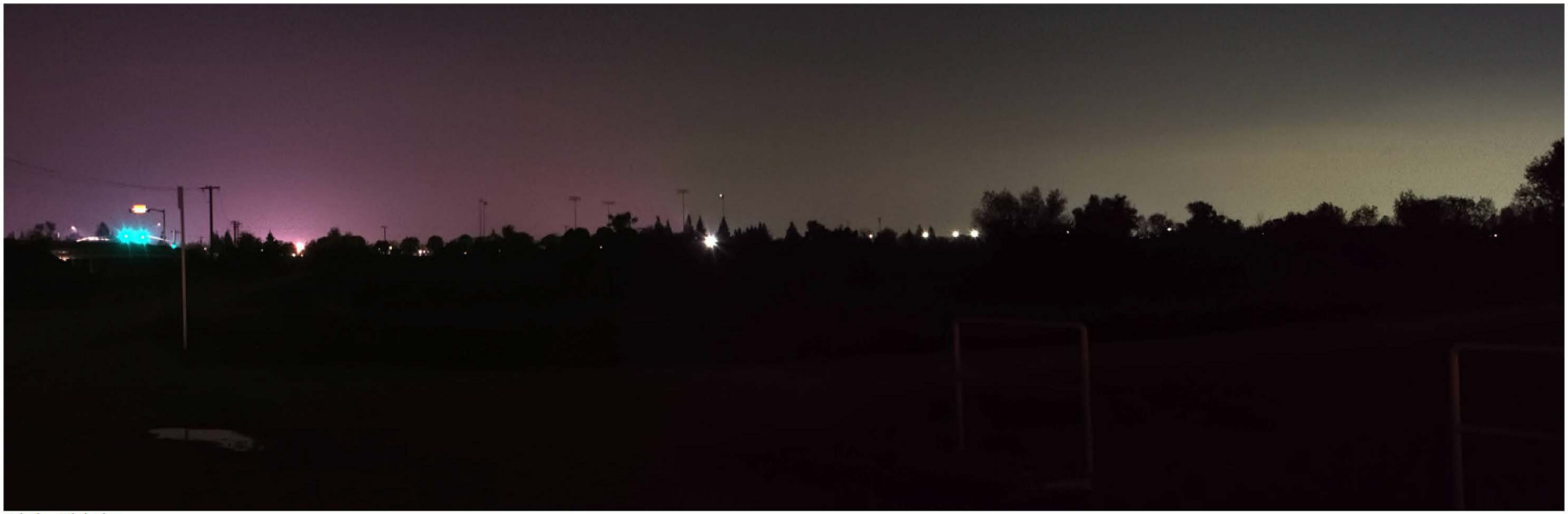
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Renderings Location Map

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Existing Daytime



Existing Nighttime

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-2**

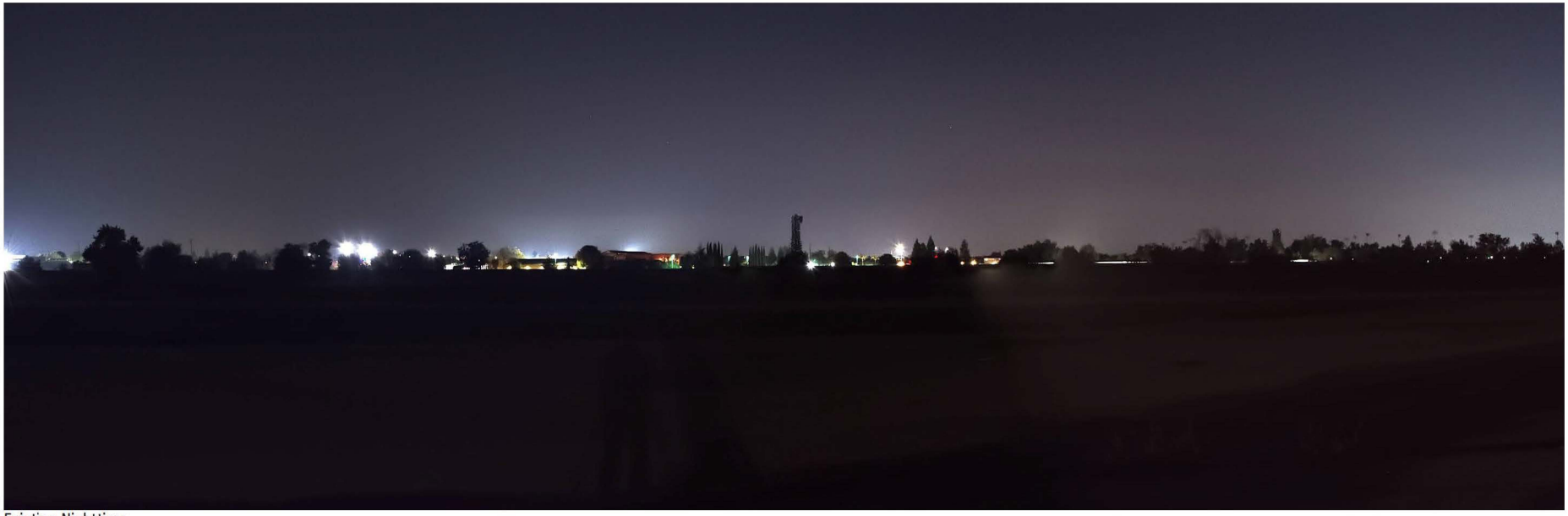
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Map View 1: Existing Daytime and Nighttime Views

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Existing Daytime



Existing Nighttime

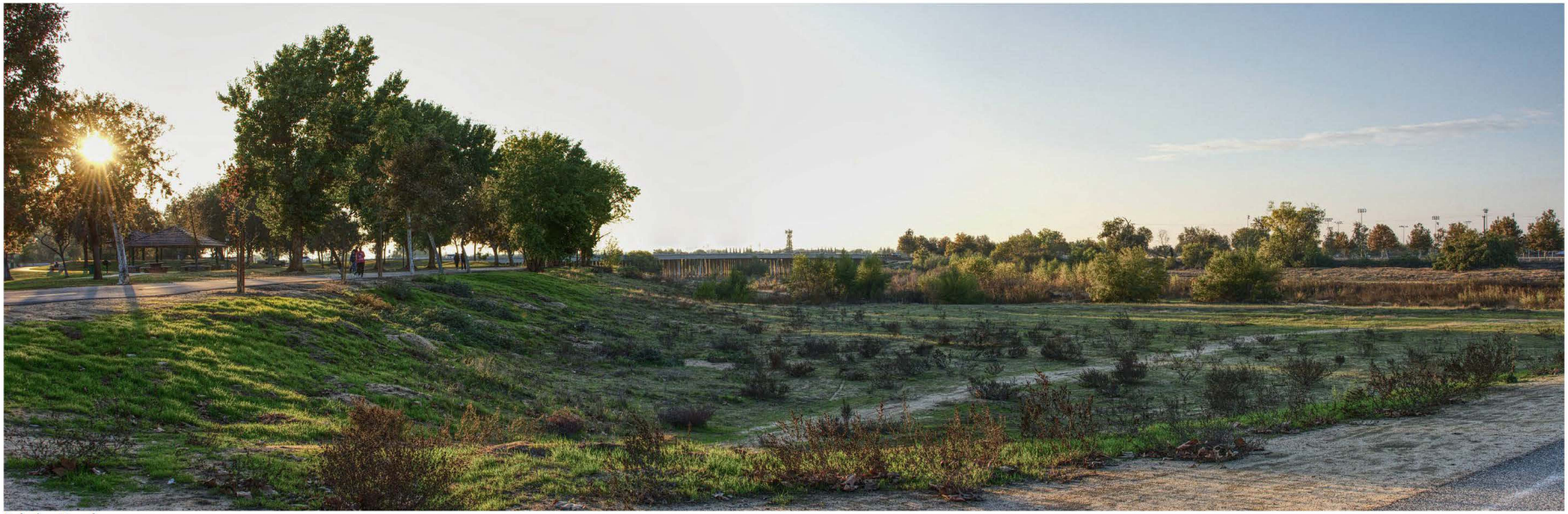
SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-3**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 2: Existing Daytime and Nighttime Views

859.004•02/26



Existing Daytime



Existing Nighttime

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-4**

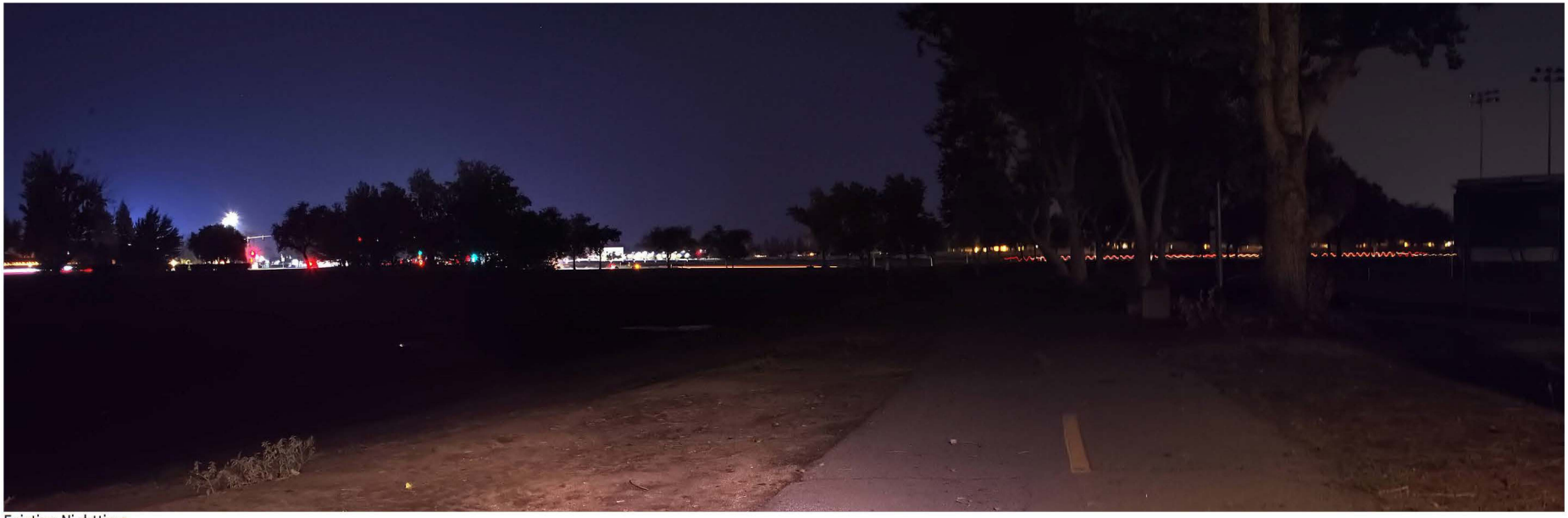
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Map View 3: Existing Daytime and Nighttime Views

859.004•02/26



Existing Daytime



Existing Nighttime

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-5**

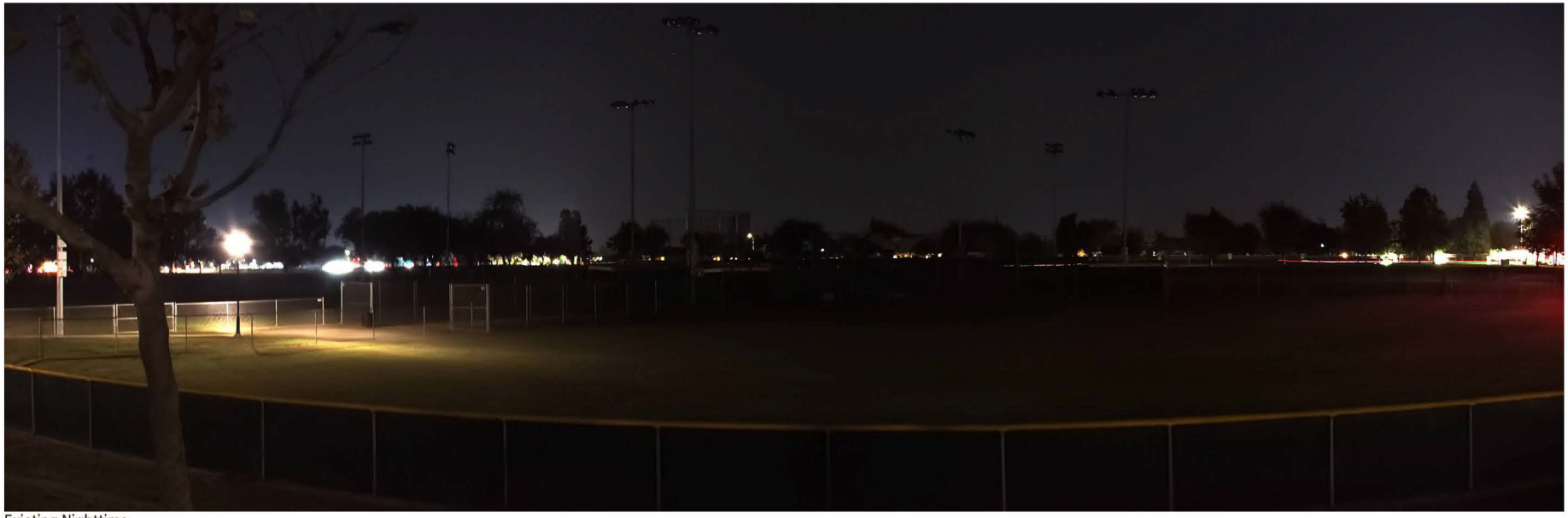
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Map View 4: Existing Daytime and Nighttime Views

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Existing Daytime



Existing Nighttime

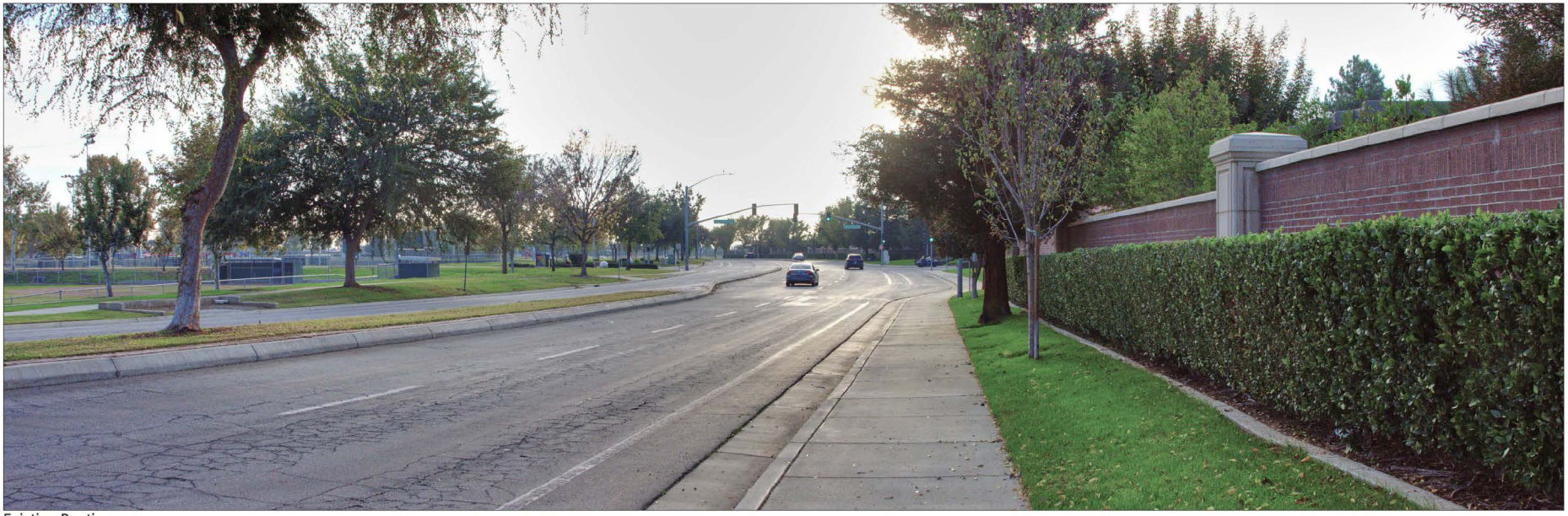
SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-6**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 5: Existing Daytime and Nighttime Views

859.004•02/26



Existing Daytime



Existing Nighttime

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-7**

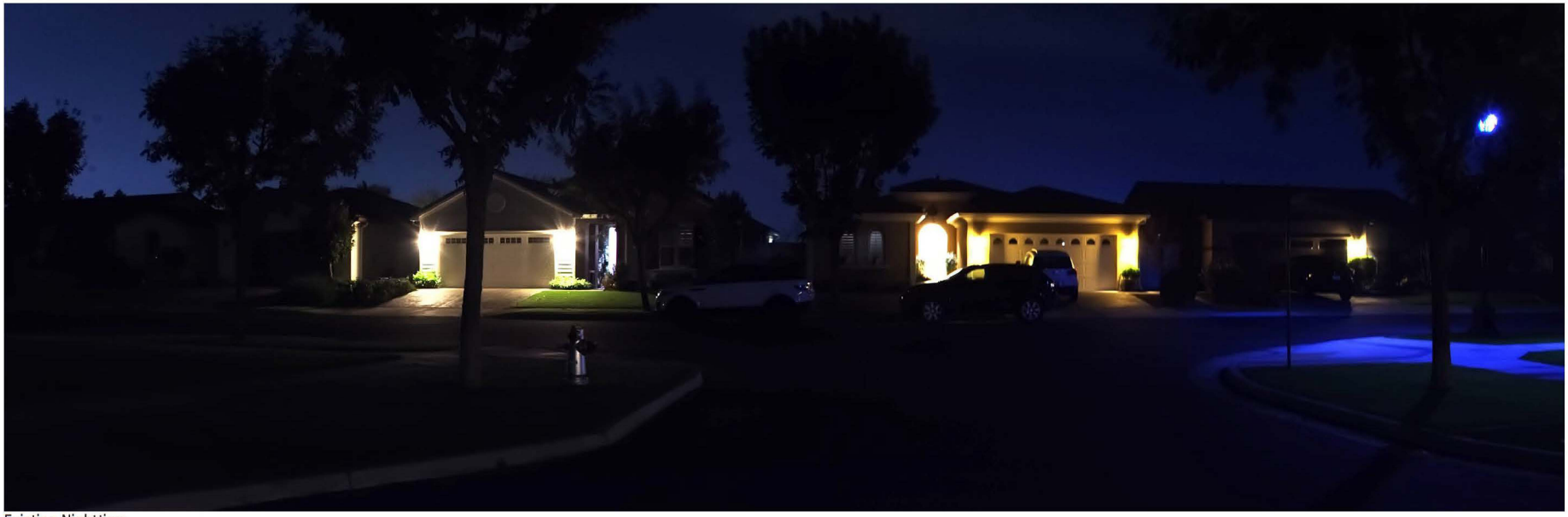
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Map View 6: Existing Daytime and Nighttime Views

859.004•02/26



Existing Daytime



Existing Nighttime

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-8**

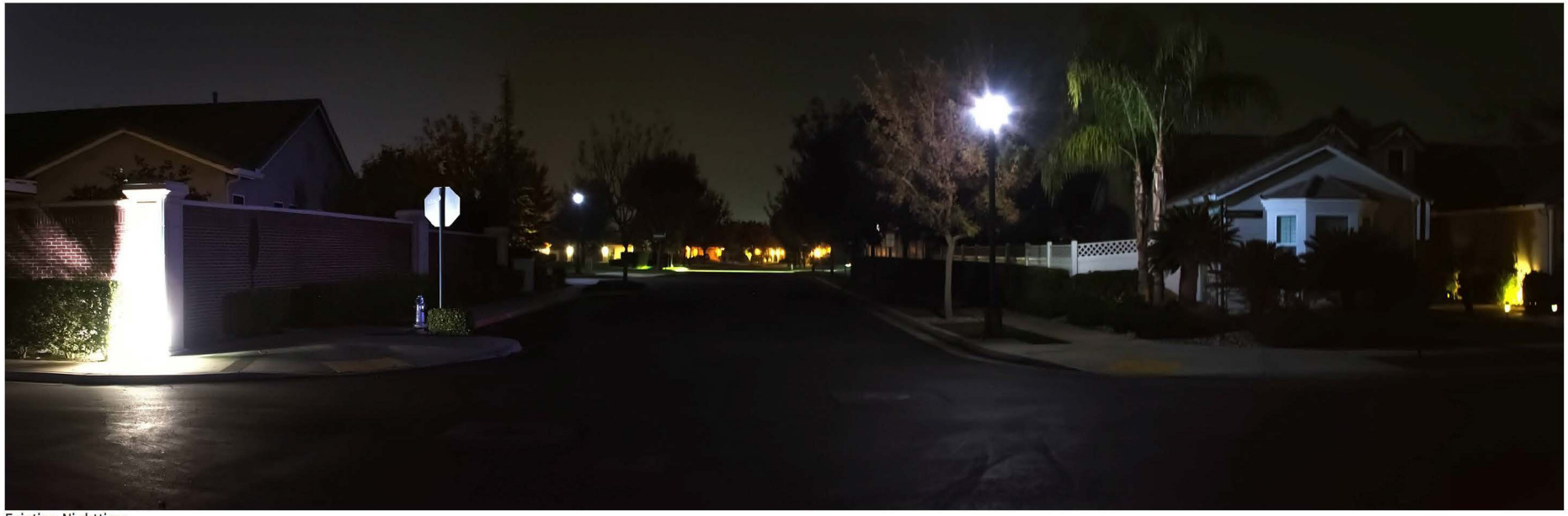
IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 7: Existing Daytime and Nighttime Views

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Existing Daytime



Existing Nighttime

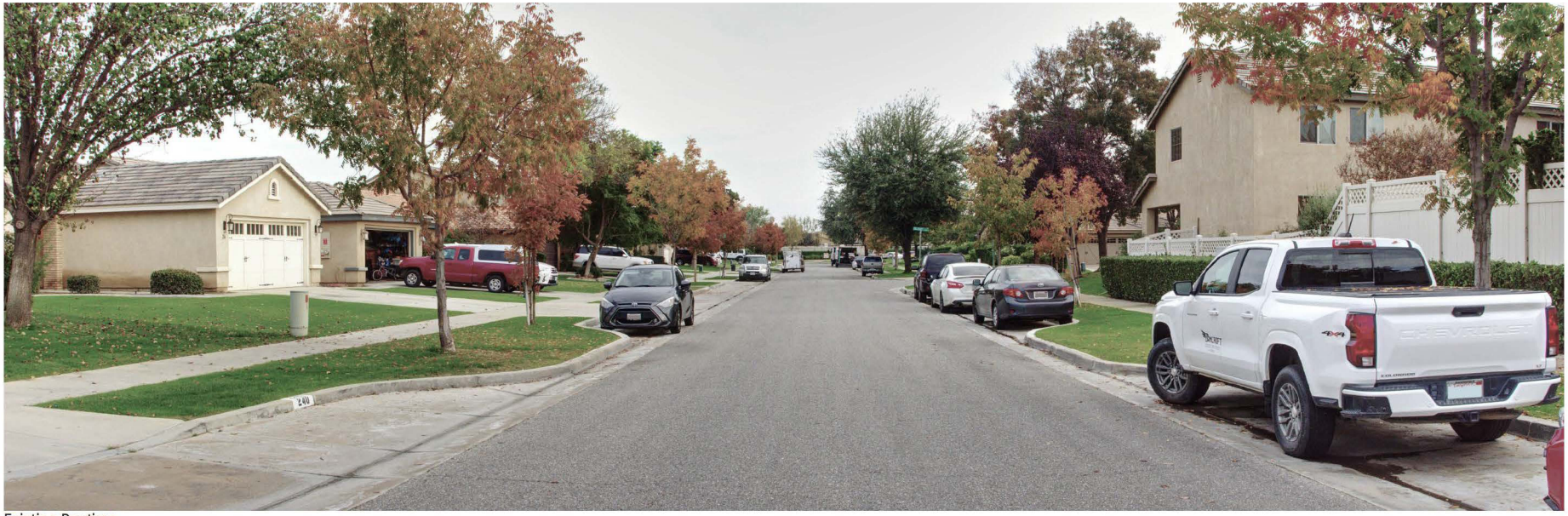
SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-9**

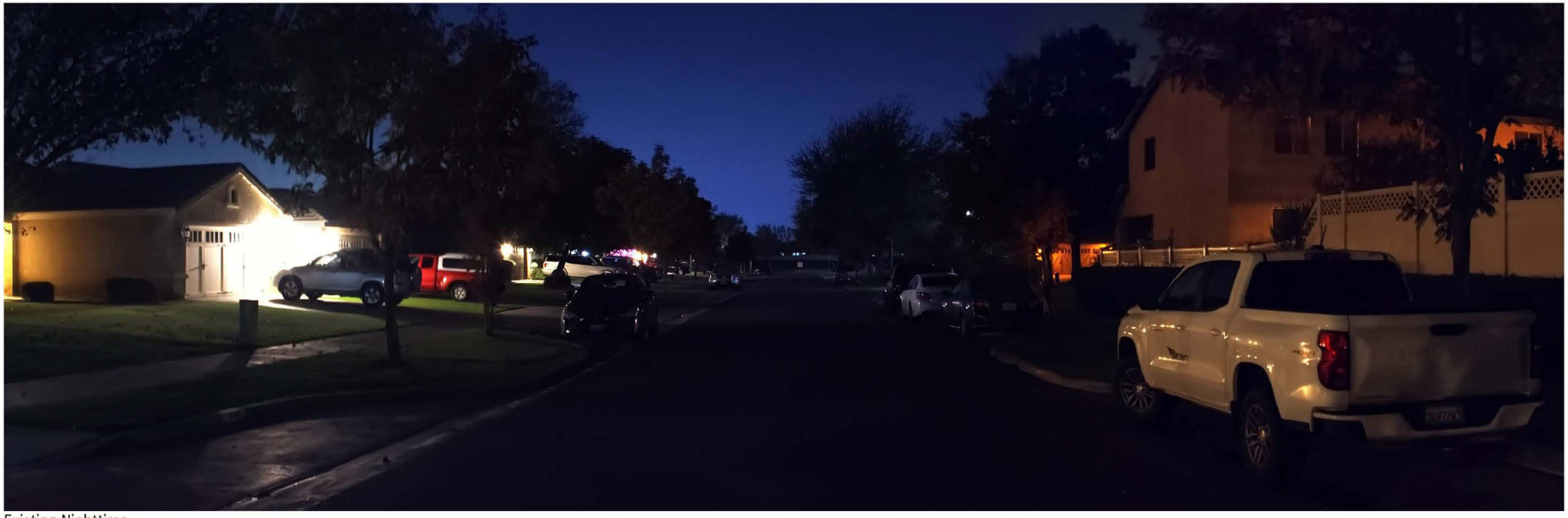
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Map View 8: Existing Daytime and Nighttime Views

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Existing Daytime



Existing Nighttime

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-10**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 9: Existing Daytime and Nighttime Views

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Existing Daytime



Existing Nighttime

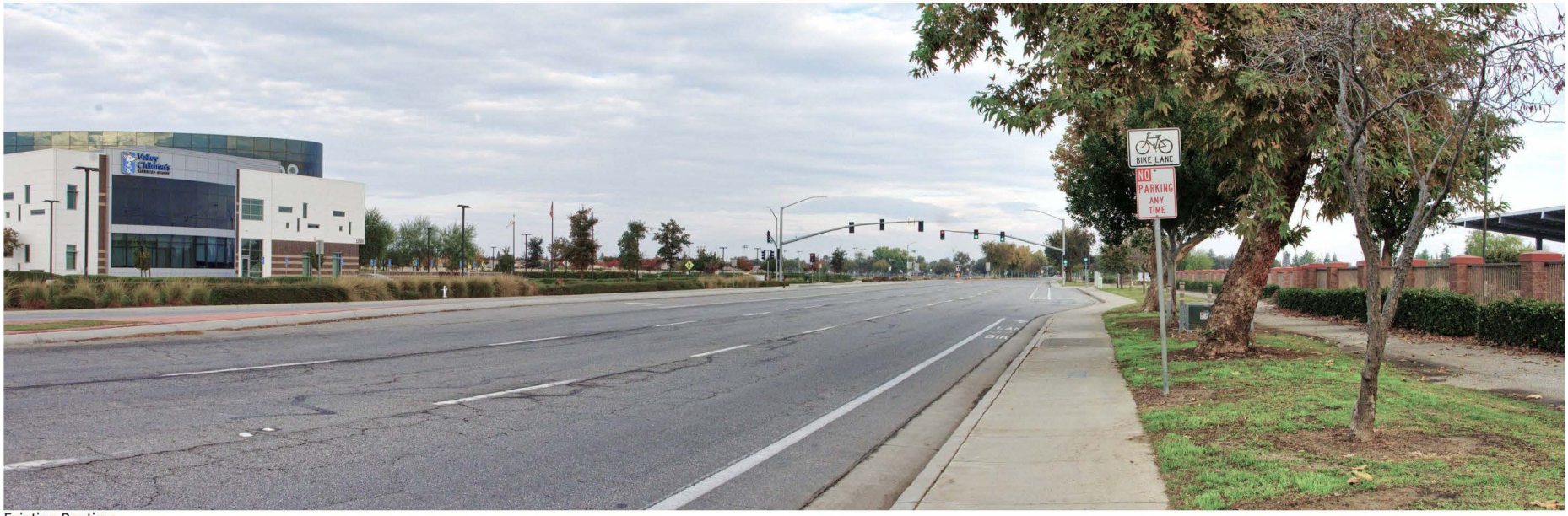
SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-11**

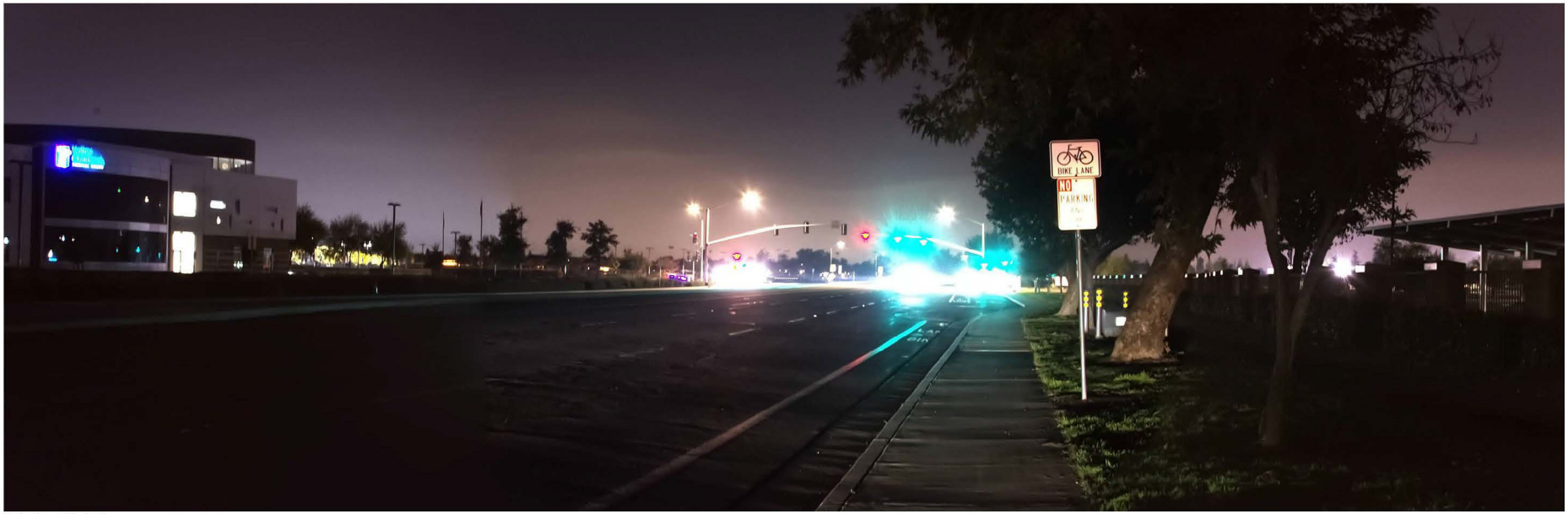
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Map View 10: Existing Daytime and Nighttime Views

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Existing Daytime



Existing Nighttime

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-12**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 11: Existing Daytime and Nighttime Views

859.004•02/26

3.1.1.6 Existing Glare

Existing daytime glare sources in the Project area include:

- Vehicle windshields and reflective surfaces along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue
- Large glass windows on the commercial medical facility west of the Project Site
- Reflective building materials on surrounding commercial and institutional structures
- Reflective materials on parking lots at neighboring developments

Daytime glare is typical of suburban commercial areas and does not create substantial adverse impacts on viewers.

3.1.1.7 Scenic Highways

The California State Scenic Highway System is a list of scenic highways (mainly state highways or scenic parkways) that have been designated or proposed by the State of California. The scenic highway designation serves to protect California's scenic beauty as well as its scenic resources.

There are no state-designated scenic highways or proposed state scenic highways or parkways within or near the Project Site. The closest state-designated scenic highway to the Project Site is State Route 33 (SR-33), located approximately 45 miles southwest of the Project Site in Ventura County. The closest highway that is eligible to be a state scenic highway is SR-14, located approximately 60 miles east of the Project Site in Kern County.

The Project Site is not located adjacent to or near any officially designated or potentially eligible scenic highways.

3.1.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

3.1.2.1 Federal Regulations

No federal regulations governing scenic resources, scenic highways, or visual quality are applicable to the Project. The Project Site is not located within or adjacent to federally designated Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Scenic Byways, Bureau of Land Management Scenic Areas, or U.S. Forest Service scenic corridors. The Project does not involve federal-aid transportation facilities subject to Department of Transportation Act Section 4(f) review.

3.1.2.2 State Regulations

California Government Code Section 65000 (Planning and Zoning Law)

The California Planning and Zoning Law (California Government Code Section 65000 et seq.) requires each county and city to adopt a comprehensive general plan to guide future growth and development. The general plan is the jurisdiction's long-term blueprint for development and must address mandatory elements, including land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety.

California Government Code Section 65300 requires that the general plan be comprehensive and internally consistent. Section 65860 requires that zoning ordinances be consistent with the general plan. This consistency requirement ensures that individual development projects, when consistent with applicable zoning, further the goals and policies of the general plan.

Aesthetic considerations are addressed in general plans through policies governing visual quality, scenic resources, design standards, landscaping, and lighting. These policies are implemented through zoning ordinances that establish specific development standards.

California Building Standards Code and California Building Code

The California Building Standards Code (Title 24, California Code of Regulations) contains building standards adopted by state agencies and applies to all occupancies in California. Title 24 is administered by the California Building Standards Commission and includes the California Building Code (Part 2), California Electrical Code (Part 3), California Mechanical Code (Part 4), California Plumbing Code (Part 5), California Energy Code (Part 6), and other parts.

The California Building Code (CBC), based on the International Building Code, establishes minimum standards for structural integrity, fire and life safety, and accessibility. Local jurisdictions may adopt more restrictive standards, but may not adopt less restrictive standards except as specifically authorized.

California Building Code Section 504.3 (Height Exceptions)

CBC Section 504.3 provides exceptions to building height limitations for certain rooftop structures. Specifically, spires, towers, steeples, and similar rooftop structures not used for habitation or storage are unlimited in height when constructed entirely of noncombustible materials. This provision recognizes that such architectural features do not create the occupancy, egress, or fire safety concerns associated with habitable building height.

California Code of Regulations Title 24 Part 6

The California Energy Code (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 24 Section 6) was created as part of the California Building Standards Code by the California Building Standards Commission in 1978 to establish statewide building energy efficiency standards to reduce California's energy consumption. California's Building Energy Efficiency Standards are updated on an approximately three-year cycle. Since the Project applications were submitted in January 2024 and deemed complete in February 2024, the Project is governed by the 2022 California Energy Code Standards, which were in effect at the time of application. These standards include mandatory requirements for efficiency and design of lighting control devices and mandatory requirements for indoor and outdoor lighting systems in residential and non-residential buildings, and hotel or motel buildings.

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Scenic Highway Program

The California Scenic Highway Program was created by the state legislature in 1963 to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from changes that would reduce the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The State Scenic Highway System includes highways that are either eligible for designation or have been officially designated as scenic highways.

A highway may be designated scenic depending upon how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler's enjoyment of the view. To receive official designation, local jurisdictions must adopt scenic corridor protection programs that address land use regulation, site planning, outdoor advertising control, earthmoving and landscaping controls, and structure design standards.

Portions of SR-14, SR-58, and SR-41 are eligible state scenic highways in Kern County but have not officially been designated as of February 2026.[3] As noted in **Section 3.1.1.7**, the Project Site is not located adjacent to or near any officially designated or eligible scenic highways.

3 Caltrans. *California State Scenic Highway System Map*. Available online at: https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aacaa, accessed on February 11, 2026.

3.1.2.3 Local Regulations

Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan

The General Plan, adopted in 2002, provides long-range guidance for decisions affecting the future character of the Metropolitan Bakersfield planning area. The General Plan represents the official statement of the community's physical development as well as its economic, social, and environmental goals.

The General Plan contains policies relevant to aesthetics and scenic quality across multiple elements, including the Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, Public Services and Facilities, and Parks Elements. Relevant policies address:

- Street trees, shrubs, and lighting to provide visual continuity and shade
- Installation of street trees to enhance pedestrian activity and convey a high-quality visual image
- Landscaping along channels, canals, roadways, and public improvements
- Parking lot shading (40 percent at tree maturity) to alleviate heat island effects
- Development sensitivity to the Kern River
- Lighting consistency with adopted standards
- Buffering of noise and light from residential uses
- Design features (screen walls, landscaping, setbacks, lighting standards) to ensure compatibility between commercial and residential uses

Project consistency with applicable General Plan policies is evaluated in **Section 3.1.3.3**, **Impact AES-1**, and presented in **Table 3.1-1**.

City of Bakersfield Municipal Code

BMC Title 17, known as the Zoning Ordinance, establishes comprehensive zoning regulations to implement the General Plan and guide orderly growth and development. The Zoning Ordinance outlines development standards pertaining to scenic quality, outdoor lighting, landscaping, and parking for each zoning district.

BMC Chapter 17.20 (Commercial and Professional Office Zone). Chapter 17.20 governs development in the C-O zone, in which the Project Site is located. All permitted uses within the C-O zone are subject to Site Plan Review. Development standards address landscaping, off-street parking, signs, walls and fencing, rooftop screening, architectural features, building height, setbacks, minimum lot area, and distance between buildings on the same lot.

Relevant C-O zone standards include:

- Maximum building height of 60 feet
- Front yard setback of at least 10 feet
- Side yard setback of at least 10 feet on street side of corner lot
- Rear yard setback of at least 20 feet when abutting residential zones

BMC Chapter 17.58 (Parking and Loading Standards). Chapter 17.58 establishes parking requirements and design standards for all development. Section 17.58.060 addresses parking lot lighting, requiring that lighting be designed to prevent glare and light spillover onto adjacent properties through the use of shields, baffles, and appropriate fixture selection.

BMC Chapter 17.60 (Signs). Chapter 17.60 regulates signs and sign illumination. Section 17.60.060 places restrictions on floodlighting, neon tubing, exposed bulbs, flashing signs, and changeable copy signs. The section requires that illuminated signs be designed with shielded light sources directed away from streets, adjacent properties, and residential areas to prevent hazards and nuisances.

BMC Chapter 17.61 (Landscaping). Chapter 17.61 establishes landscaping requirements for development projects, including requirements for drought-tolerant plants, parking lot shading, perimeter landscaping, and street frontage landscaping. The standards are designed to enhance visual quality, provide shade, and ensure compatibility with surrounding uses.

BMC Chapter 17.71 (Outdoor Lighting). Chapter 17.71 establishes outdoor lighting standards for all development to promote safety, energy efficiency, and protection of the community's night sky environment. The ordinance sets standards for placement, design, shielding, and intensity of outdoor lights to minimize glare, light trespass, and excessive illumination.

BMC Section 17.71.030 addresses light trespass, prohibiting illumination levels that extend beyond property boundaries and requiring that all outdoor lighting be designed and installed to prevent light from spilling onto adjacent properties or into the night sky. Light trespass to residentially zoned or designated properties is limited to a maximum intensity of 0.5 foot-candles at the property line, measured three feet above finished grade. This quantitative threshold provides an objective standard for evaluating light spillover impacts. Fixtures must be fully shielded or directed downward to confine light within the intended area.

BMC Section 17.71.040.B regulates stadium and athletic field lighting, requiring compliance with Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) design and illumination standards. Stadium lighting must be turned off within one hour of an event ending; as events must end by 10:00 PM, stadium lighting may operate until 11:00 PM.

BMC Section 9.22.050 (Construction Hours). Section 9.22.050 regulates construction activities to minimize impacts on residential areas. Construction, including operation of tools or equipment used in construction, drilling, repair, alteration, or demolition work, is permitted between:

- Monday through Friday: 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM
- Saturday, Sunday, and holidays: 8:00 AM to 9:00 PM

These restrictions ensure that construction activities occur during daytime hours when aesthetic impacts (primarily related to nighttime lighting) are avoided.

3.1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

3.1.3.1 Thresholds of Significance

The following thresholds for determining the significance of impacts related to aesthetics are contained in Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*:

> *Would the project…*
>
> - *Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?*
> - *Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?*
> - *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 point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?*
> - *Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?*

The Initial Study (**Appendix 1.0-2** to this Draft EIR) determined the Project would not result in a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista or scenic resources. The Project Site is located in a flat, urbanized area that is not designated as scenic in the General Plan, contains no protected view corridors, and is not visible from any state scenic highway; although the steeple would exceed surrounding building heights, it would not obstruct or alter any recognized scenic vistas. Therefore, impacts to scenic vistas and scenic resources along a state scenic highway are not further addressed in this EIR.

3.1.3.2 Methodology

This impact discussion evaluates visual impacts from inside and outside the Project Site, where the visual resources identified in **Section 3.1.1**, Environmental Setting, may be affected by the Project. Visual impacts include both the physical changes introduced by a project and viewer responses to those changes.

Urbanized Area Threshold Determination

The Project Site is located within an urbanized area of the City of Bakersfield, characterized as a suburban/urban transition zone surrounded by commercial, institutional, recreational, and residential uses. The Project vicinity features existing urban infrastructure, including arterial roadways, municipal utilities, street lighting, and established development patterns.

Under *State CEQA Guidelines* Appendix G, the applicable aesthetic threshold for projects in urbanized areas differs from non-urbanized areas. For non-urbanized areas, the threshold addresses whether a project would substantially degrade existing visual character or quality. However, for urbanized areas such as the Project Site, the threshold focuses specifically on whether the project would conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. This distinction reflects that urbanized areas rely on adopted development standards and design review to manage aesthetic impacts. Accordingly, the analysis evaluates the Project's consistency with the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan, BMC development standards for the C-O zone, and other applicable regulations governing scenic quality, landscaping, and lighting.

Light and Glare Evaluation

Light and glare impacts are evaluated using quantitative and qualitative methods to determine whether the Project would introduce substantial new sources of light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views.

Nighttime Lighting Assessment

Nighttime impacts are evaluated through: (1) photometric analysis modeling all proposed lighting sources and calculating illumination levels in foot-candles at property boundaries; (2) nighttime visual simulations depicting proposed lighting within the context of existing ambient conditions from public vantage points; and (3) comparative analysis of Project lighting characteristics against existing sources including street lights, vehicle headlights, commercial security lighting, and stadium lighting at nearby athletic facilities.

BMC Section 17.71.030.D limits light trespass to 0.5 foot-candles at the property line (measured three feet above finished grade) when adjacent to residentially zoned or designated properties. Compliance is

evaluated using applicant-provided photometric analysis. Additional lighting standards from BMC Sections 17.60.060 (sign illumination), 17.58.060 (parking lot lighting), and 17.71 (outdoor lighting) are also applied.

Daytime Glare Assessment

Daytime glare impacts are evaluated qualitatively based on reflective properties of proposed building materials, including material finish, color and reflectivity, glass type and coatings, roofing materials, and comparison to existing buildings in the area. Glare is primarily caused by the reflection of sunlight from highly polished surfaces or broad expanses of reflective materials.

Light-Sensitive Receptors

Light-sensitive receptors include single-family residential uses immediately north of the Project Site, recreational users of Aera Park to the east, and motorists on adjacent roadways.

Baseline Documentation and Analysis Framework

Existing conditions were documented through site photography from 11 public vantage points during daytime and nighttime hours in November 2025. Visual simulations depict both opening-day conditions and 15-year tree growth scenarios, as perimeter trees would be installed at approximately 13 feet in height, growing to approximately 25 feet within 15 years, providing increased screening effectiveness over time.

3.1.3.3 Impacts Analysis

Impact AES-1 **In an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.**

As established in **Section 3.1.3.2**, the Project Site is located within an urbanized area of the City, and therefore, the applicable threshold focuses on regulatory compliance rather than visual character. The Project would develop a religious campus in two phases, including a temple with a 123-foot-6-inch steeple, a meetinghouse with a 66-foot-4-inch steeple, parking for 292 vehicles, and extensive landscaping. Applicable regulations governing scenic quality include the General Plan and BMC Title 17.

Consistency with the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan

The General Plan contains policies governing scenic quality across multiple elements, including Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, Public Services and Facilities, and Parks. **Table 3.1-1, Project Consistency with the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan**, demonstrates the Project's consistency with applicable General Plan policies.

Table 3.1-1
Project Consistency with the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan

Goal or Policy	Project Consistency Analysis
Land Use Element	
Policy 69: Allow variation in the use of street trees, shrubs, lighting, and other details to give streets better visual continuity and increased shade canopy.	**Consistent.** Extensive sitewide landscaping, encompassing approximately 5.89 acres at full buildout, would be installed within the parking areas, along street frontages, along pedestrian walkways, surrounding pedestrian plazas, and in the form of gardens (**Figure 2.0-15** and **Figure 2.0-16, Proposed Landscape Plans** in **Section 2.0, Project Description**). A plant bed base would surround the temple; grass would cover the space on either side of the main entry to the temple, the space near the parking area fronting Stockdale Highway, and the space surrounding the proposed trellis; and the remainder of the site would have a low-water use base; refer to **Figure 2.0-5, Site Plan** (**Section 2.0, Project Description**). Trees, including valley oak, drake Chinese elm, Arizona ash, and southern live oak, would be planted throughout the site, including along the site perimeter, within parking areas, and along street frontages. All landscaping for the proposed Project would conform to the City development standards as set forth in BMC Chapter 17.61.
Policy 70: Provide for the installation of street trees that enhance pedestrian activity and convey a distinctive and high-quality visual image.	
Policy 71: Encourage landscaping the banks of flood control channels, canals, roadways, and other public improvements with trees to provide a strong visual element in the planning area.	
Policy 99: Develop a plan to ensure that all parking lots are 40 percent shaded at maturity to help alleviate 'heat island effect.'	
Circulation Element	
Policy 18: Provide and maintain landscaping on both sides and in the median of arterial streets within incorporated areas. In unincorporated areas, landscaping within road right-of-way may be allowed and shall be limited to low shrubs; blank irrigation conduit only will be provided within the median of arterial streets.	**Consistent.** The proposed Project would not result in any changes to roadway medians. Refer to the responses to Land Use Element Policies 69 through 71 and 99 pertaining to street frontage improvements.
Open Space Element	
Policy 5: Development location and siting should be sensitive to its relationship to the Kern River.	**Consistent.** While the Kern River is located approximately 0.2-mile to the south, the Kern River is not visible from the project site. As such, project implementation would not block views of or alter any recognized scenic resource. As depicted in **Figure 3.1-2** through **Figure 3.1-4**, as well as **Figure 3.1-13** through **Figure 3.1-15**, below, the addition of the temple within the context of the Kern River would be sensitive to this nearby visual resource. While the proposed steeple would be nominally visible to users of the Kern River open space and recreational areas, the visibility of the steeple would not disrupt the use of the open space areas or decrease recreational opportunities.
Public Services and Facilities Element	
Policy 1: Achieve consistency between current city standards and county policies for lighting in new development.	**Consistent.** The proposed Project would adhere to the BMC lighting standards contained in Sections 17.60.060, 17.58.060, and 17.71.030.D. Specifically, the proposed Project would not result in light spillover onto adjacent properties that exceeds the maximum intensity level of 0.5 foot-candles; refer to Impact AES-2 below for further analysis.

Goal or Policy	Project Consistency Analysis
Parks Element	
Policy 49: Design vegetation, earth form, and activity areas to buffer noise, light, etc., from adjacent residents.	**Consistent.** In addition to the landscape plan described in the responses to Land Use Element Policies 69 through 71 and 99, the proposed Project would buffer adjacent residential uses to the north through a combination of perimeter tree planting along the northern property boundary, with trees installed at approximately 13 feet in height and growing to approximately 25 feet with a 30-foot canopy spread within 15 years, providing progressive visual screening and light filtering; a 20-foot rear yard setback along the northern property boundary consistent with BMC Chapter 17.20 requirements for commercial zones abutting residential uses; and shielded, downward-directed exterior lighting designed to limit light trespass at the residential property line to 0.5 foot-candles in compliance with BMC Section 17.71.030.D. These features, in combination, buffer adjacent residents from light, glare, and visual intrusion consistent with Policy 49.

*Source: Visual Impact Assessment, Bakersfield Temple Project, City of Bakersfield, California, February 2026 (**Appendix 3.1**).*

Consistency with BMC Chapter 17.20 (C-O Zone Standards)

The Project Site is zoned Commercial and Professional Office (C-O). **Table 3.1-2, Project Consistency with BMC Chapter 17.20 (C-O Zone)**, demonstrates consistency with applicable C-O zone development standards. As shown in the daytime photo simulations in **Figure 3.1-13** through **Figure 3.1-23, Daytime Renderings**, for the 11 map views, the proposed temple steeple would introduce a new vertical element that exceeds the height of surrounding structures; however, the Project Site is not located within a designated scenic corridor or protected view area, and the steeple would not obstruct any recognized scenic vistas or disrupt established public view corridors. The steeple's height is addressed through the CBC Section 504.3 height exception for non-combustible, unoccupied rooftop structures and a pending Zone Modification, as detailed in **Table 3.1-2**.

Table 3.1-2
Project Consistency with BMC Chapter 17.20 (C-O Zone)

C-O Zoning Standard	Project Consistency Analysis
Uses Permitted: Places of assembly	**Consistent.** The project proposes a religious campus inclusive of a temple, meetinghouse, and ancillary buildings.
Building Height[1]: Maximum 60 feet (Four Stories)	**Consistent.** The proposed temple would have a maximum roof height of 45 feet; the proposed meetinghouse would have a maximum roof height of approximately 27 feet.[1] Both are within the 60-foot maximum building height standard for the C-O zone. While the temple proposes a steeple with a maximum height of 123 feet 6 inches, and the meetinghouse proposes a steeple with a maximum

C-O Zoning Standard	Project Consistency Analysis
	height of 66 feet 4 inches, the steeples would be constructed entirely of non-combustible materials consistent with CBC section 504.3.[2] Further, the Church has applied for a Zone Modification which, when approved by the City, would permit this steeple height.
Front Yard: Minimum of 10 feet from the front property line	**Consistent.** As shown in **Figure 2.0-5, Site Plan** (**Section 2.0, Project Description**), the proposed temple building is set back approximately 143 feet from the front property line along Stockdale Highway, substantially exceeding the minimum 10-foot front yard setback requirement for the C-O zone.
Side Yard: On a corner lot, the side yard on the street side of the lot shall be not less than 10 feet; in all other cases, a side yard for a professional or administrative office building shall not be required.	**Consistent.** As shown in **Figure 2.0-5, Site Plan** (**Section 2.0, Project Description**), the proposed Project is set back at least 10 feet from Jewetta Avenue.
Rear Yard: Where the lot abuts any R, MH zone, or PUD project of a residential nature, there shall be a rear yard of not less than 20 feet.	**Consistent.** As shown in **Figure 2.0-5, Site Plan** (**Section 2.0, Project Description**), the proposed Project is setback at least 20 feet from the residential uses along the northern boundary.

[1] *Building height is the vertical distance above grade, as defined in Section 17.04.310, to the highest point of the coping of a flat roof, to the deckline of a mansard roof, or to the average height of the highest gable of a pitched or hipped roof, whichever is applicable. The height of a stepped or terraced building is the maximum height of any segment of the building.*

[2] *Per CBC Section 504.3, Height, the maximum height in feet of a building shall not exceed the limits specified in Table 504.3, the exception being that steeples and other rooftop structures shall be constructed of materials consistent with the required type of construction of the building, except where other construction is permitted by Section 1511.2.4. Such structures shall not be used for habitation or storage. The structure shall be unlimited in height where of non-combustible materials and shall not extend more than 20 feet (6096 MM) above the allowable building height where of combustible materials.*

*Source: Visual Impact Assessment, Bakersfield Temple Project, City of Bakersfield, California, February 2026 (**Appendix 3.1**).*

Compliance with Outdoor Lighting Standards (BMC Chapter 17.71)

The Project would install exterior lighting, including facade illumination of the temple and its steeple, parking lot lighting, pedestrian pathway lighting, and perimeter security lighting. All lighting would be designed to comply with BMC Chapter 17.71 (Outdoor Lighting):

- All lighting would be well-shielded and directed downward to prevent light trespass beyond property boundaries.
- Facade lighting would utilize low-output fixtures with no direct or reflected light contributing to off-site light spillover.
- All exterior lighting sources would be dimmable, with reduced intensity within one hour after the close of daily operating hours (typically 10:00 PM) until one hour before morning operating hours (typically 5:00 AM).

- Photometric analysis demonstrates that illumination levels at the northern property line adjacent to residential uses would not exceed 0.5 foot-candles at three feet above grade, complying with BMC Section 17.71.030.D.

- Perimeter landscaping (with screening effectiveness increasing as trees mature) would provide additional screening, further reducing lighting visibility from adjacent residential properties.

Compliance with outdoor lighting standards is further evaluated in Impact AES-2, below.

Compliance with Parking and Landscaping Standards

The Project would provide 292 parking spaces at full buildout (199 spaces in Phase 1 and 93 additional spaces in Phase 2), in compliance with BMC Chapter 17.58 parking requirements. The Project's landscape plan complies with BMC Chapter 17.61, including drought-tolerant plant selection, parking lot tree coverage for shade (40 percent at maturity per General Plan Policy 99), and street frontage landscaping.

Overall, the Project demonstrates consistency with applicable General Plan policies governing scenic quality, as detailed in **Table 3.1-1**, and complies with all applicable C-O zone development standards, as demonstrated in **Table 3.1-2**. The proposed temple and meetinghouse roof heights comply with the 60-foot BMC Chapter 17.20 maximum, and the steeple heights qualify under the CBC Section 504.3 height exception for non-combustible, unoccupied rooftop structures; the pending Zone Modification would provide an additional approval mechanism for the proposed steeple heights. Proposed setbacks substantially exceed the minimum front yard (approximately 143 feet provided versus 10 feet required), side yard (Jewetta Avenue frontage), and rear yard (northern residential boundary) requirements. Exterior lighting complies with BMC Chapter 17.71, and the landscape plan complies with BMC Chapter 17.61. Accordingly, the Project would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality in the urbanized Project area.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant.



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-13**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 1: Daytime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-14**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 2: Daytime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-15**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 3: Daytime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-16**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 4: Daytime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

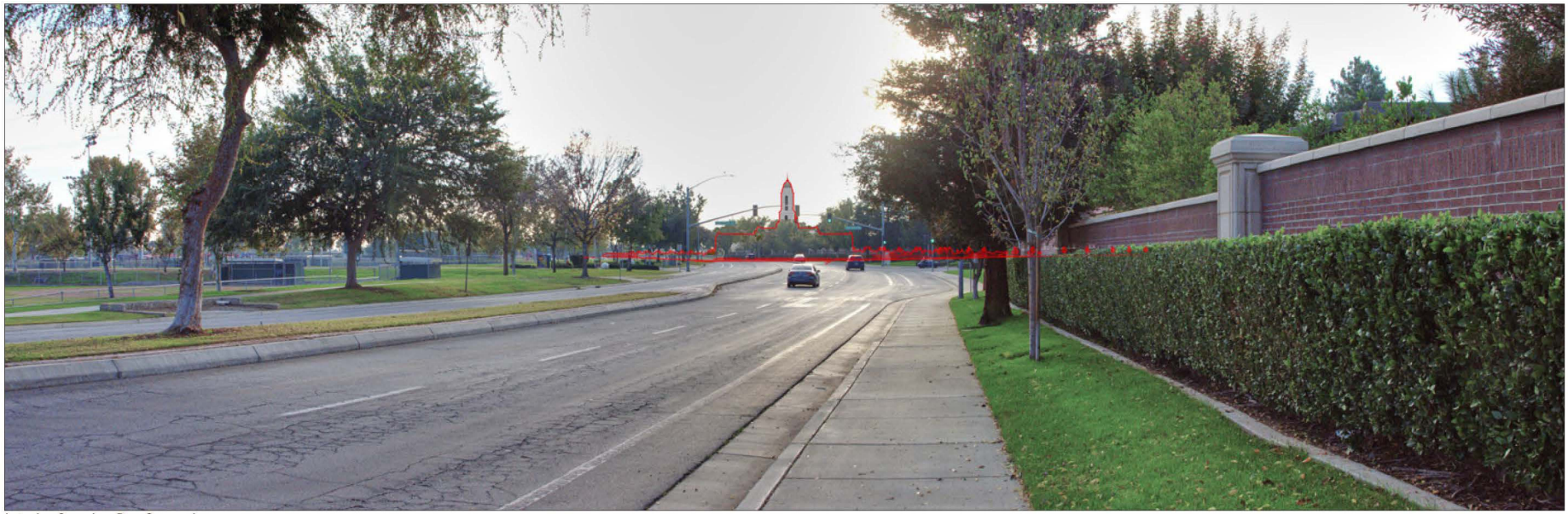
SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-17**

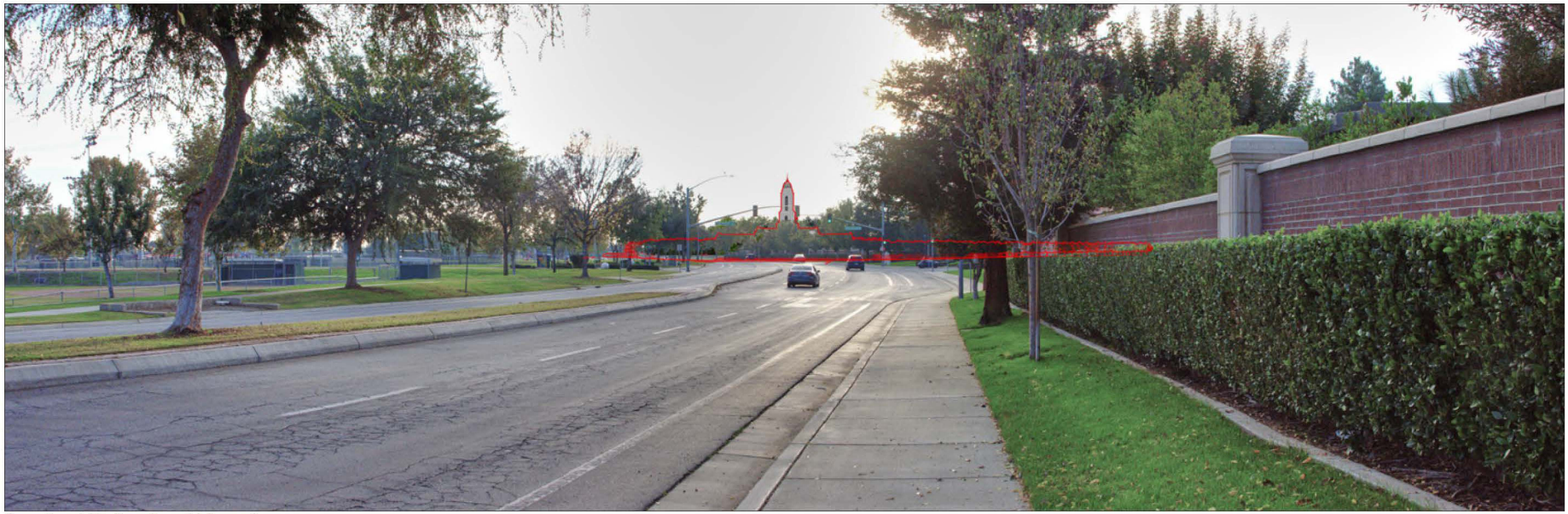
IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 5: Daytime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-18**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 6: Daytime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-19**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 7: Daytime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-20**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 8: Daytime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-21**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 9: Daytime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

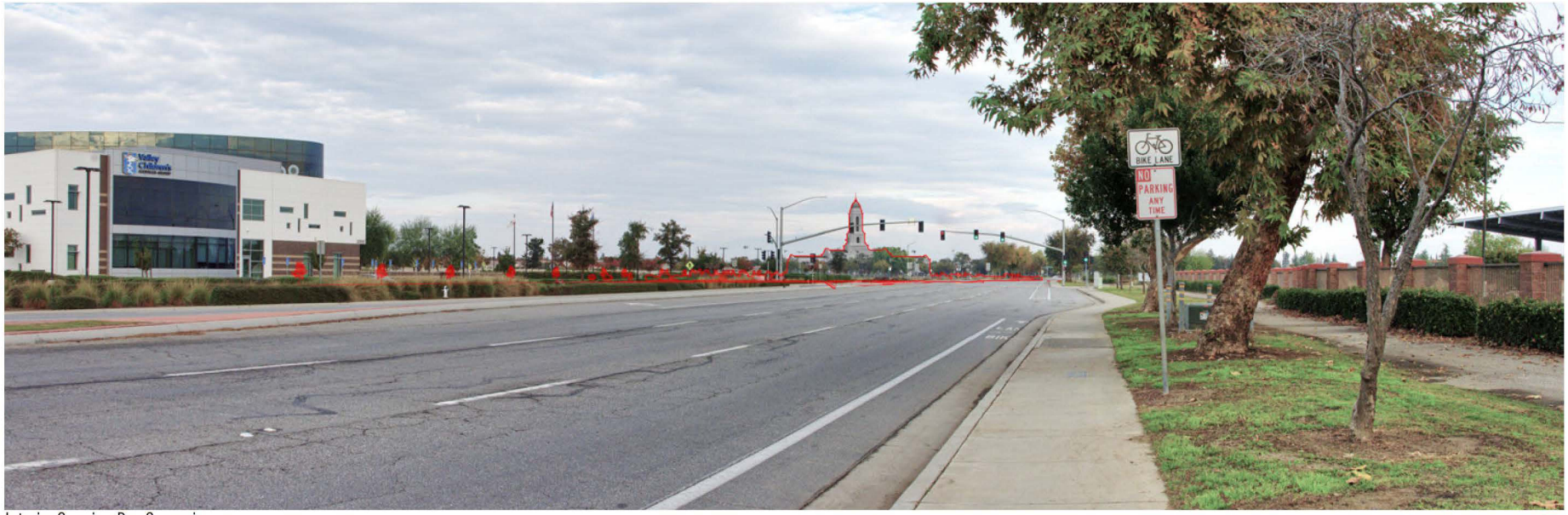
SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-22**

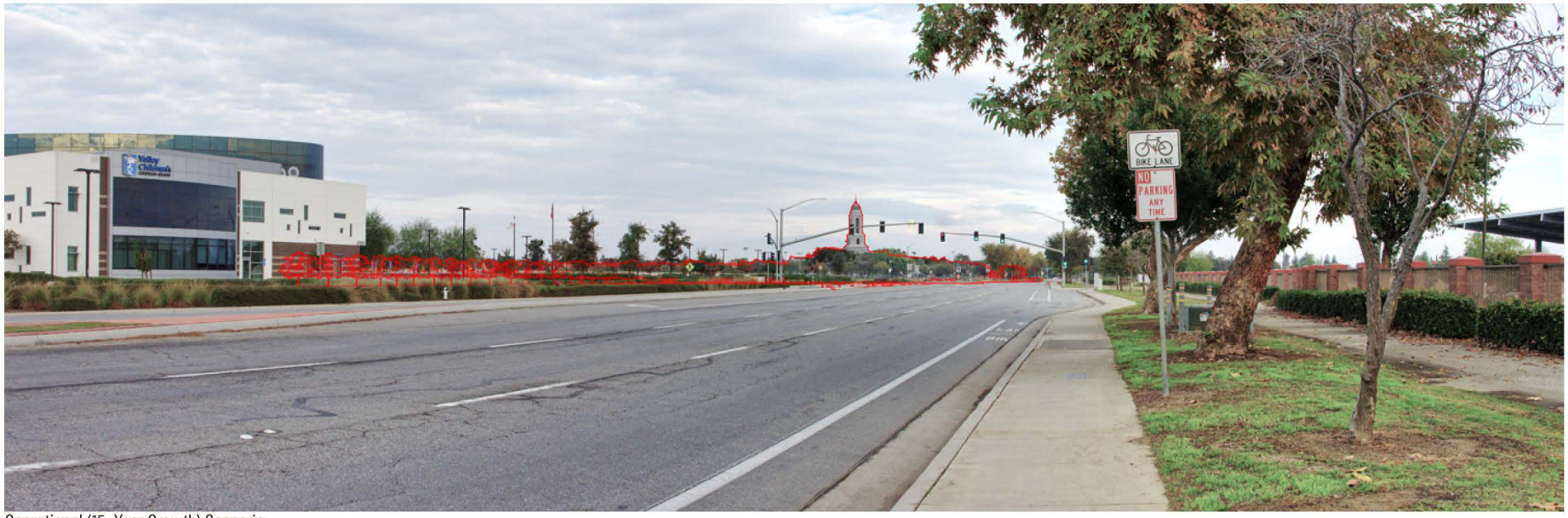
IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 10: Daytime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-23**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 11: Daytime Renderings

859.004•02/26

Impact AES-2 **Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.**

The Project would involve construction activities that could produce temporary glare, and upon completion, would introduce new sources of nighttime illumination and building materials with reflective properties. As described in **Section 3.1.3.2**, light-sensitive receptors include single-family residential uses immediately north of the Project Site, recreational users of Aera Park to the east, and motorists on adjacent roadways. This analysis addresses construction-phase impacts, followed by operational nighttime lighting impacts and daytime glare impacts.

Construction-Related Light and Glare

Construction activities would be limited to daytime hours per BMC Section 9.22.050: 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM Monday through Friday, and 8:00 AM to 9:00 PM on weekends and holidays. Construction activities would not require nighttime illumination.

Daytime construction equipment may produce temporary glare from metal surfaces; however, these effects would be short-term, intermittent, localized to the Project Site, and typical of construction activities in urbanized areas. As construction would not occur outside permitted hours and would not require nighttime lighting, construction-related light and glare impacts would be less than significant.

Nighttime Lighting Impacts

The Project would introduce the following nighttime lighting sources:

Building Illumination: The temple facade and steeple would be illuminated from dusk to dawn. At 11:00 PM (one hour after typical temple activities conclude), all exterior lighting would be dimmed. Facade lighting would utilize well-shielded, low-output fixtures focused upward on building surfaces with no direct or reflected light contributing to off-site spillover. All exterior lighting sources would be dimmable, with reduced illumination between 11:00 PM and 5:00 AM for security purposes only.

Site Lighting: Pole-mounted lighting throughout parking areas (292 spaces total at full buildout), pedestrian pathway and plaza lighting, building entrance lighting, and perimeter security lighting along the northern boundary adjacent to residential uses. All site lighting has been designed consistently with other parking lots and developments in the Bakersfield area and would comply with BMC Chapter 17.71 outdoor lighting standards.

Nighttime photosimulations are illustrated in **Figure 3.1-24** through **Figure 3.1-34, Nighttime Renderings**, for the 11 map views, which show the Project's lighting within the context of existing ambient conditions described in **Section 3.1.1.5**. As documented in the Environmental Setting, multiple sources of lighting

currently exist in the vicinity, including residential exterior lighting, street lights, traffic signals, vehicle headlights, commercial security lighting, and stadium lighting at Aera Park and Bakersfield Christian High School.

BMC Section 17.71.030.D restricts light trespass to a maximum intensity of 0.5 foot-candles at the property line (measured three feet above grade) when adjacent to residentially zoned or designated properties. Photometric analysis prepared for the Project demonstrates that illumination levels at the northern property line would not exceed 0.5 foot-candles, complying with the BMC threshold. Illustrations of the photometric analysis are shown in **Figure 3.1-35** and **Figure 3.1-36, Site Photometry Levels**.

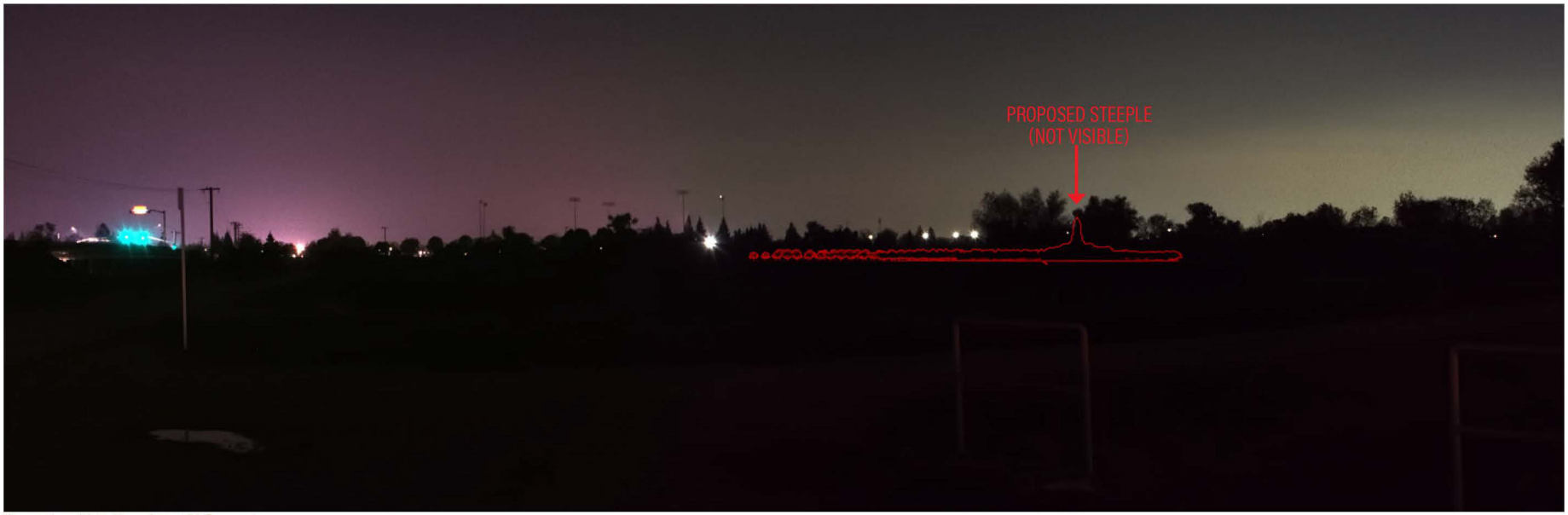
The photometric analysis conservatively does not account for the screening effect of perimeter landscaping. Trees planted along the northern boundary would be installed in 48-inch boxes at approximately 13 feet in height with a 9-foot canopy, growing to approximately 25 feet in height with a 30-foot canopy within 15 years. This vegetative screening would further reduce light spillover to adjacent residential properties, with effectiveness increasing as trees mature.

The Project's anticipated operating hours, which typically extend to 10:00 PM, end earlier than nearby stadium lighting, which may operate until 11:00 PM per BMC Section 17.71.040.B. The Project's well-controlled, carefully aimed, and dimmable lighting would not create a substantial new source of light beyond what already exists in this suburban area. The Project incorporates multiple design features to minimize impacts on nighttime views:

- All parking lot, pedestrian walkway, and drive aisle fixtures would be well-shielded to direct light downward and prevent upward light spillage.
- All temple façade and steeple illumination fixtures will be well-shielded and carefully aimed to prevent light spillage beyond the limits of the façade elements being illuminated.
- Temple architectural lighting would use low-output fixtures focused on building surfaces, with no direct or reflected light contributing to off-site spillover. The meetinghouse façade and steeple would not be illuminated; exterior lighting at the meetinghouse would be limited to required safety and egress lighting at building entrances and exits.
- All exterior lighting would be dimmable and reduced within one hour after the close of operations (typically 10:00 PM), with only minimal security lighting remaining illuminated overnight until one hour before morning operations start (typically 5:00 AM).
- Parking lot lighting would comply with BMC Section 17.58.060 standards.
- Ground-level lighting would be setback from residential property lines and supplemented by landscape screening.



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-24**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 1: Nighttime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15-Year Growth) Scenario

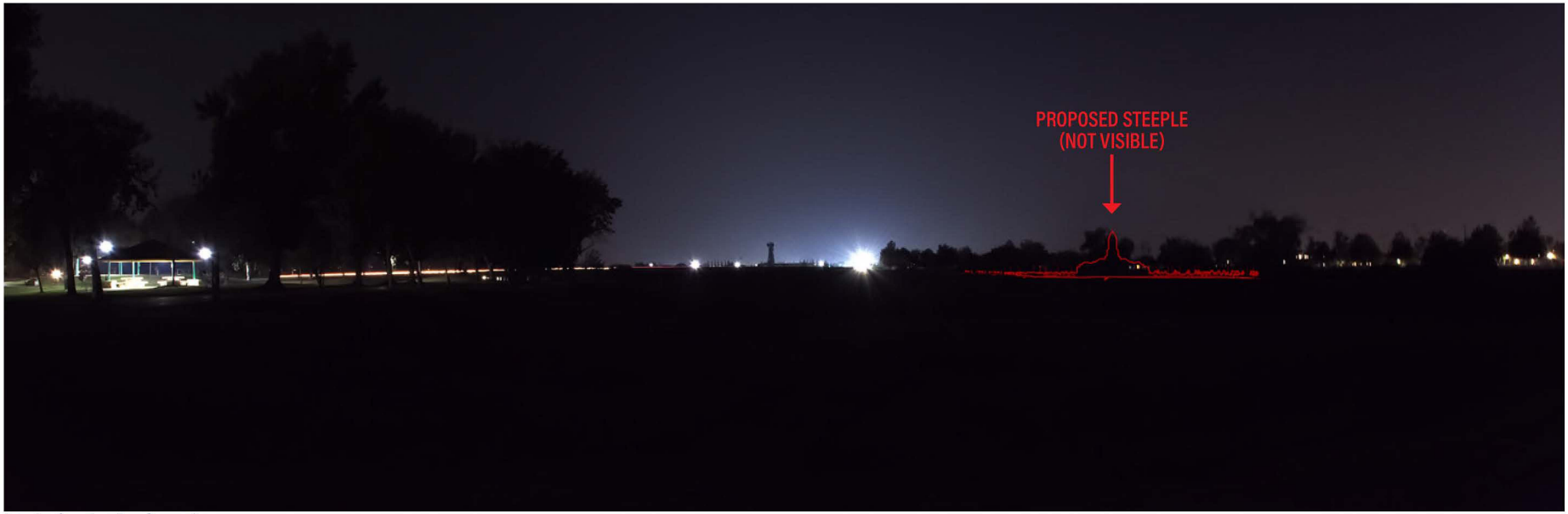
SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-25**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 2: Nighttime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-26**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 3: Nighttime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

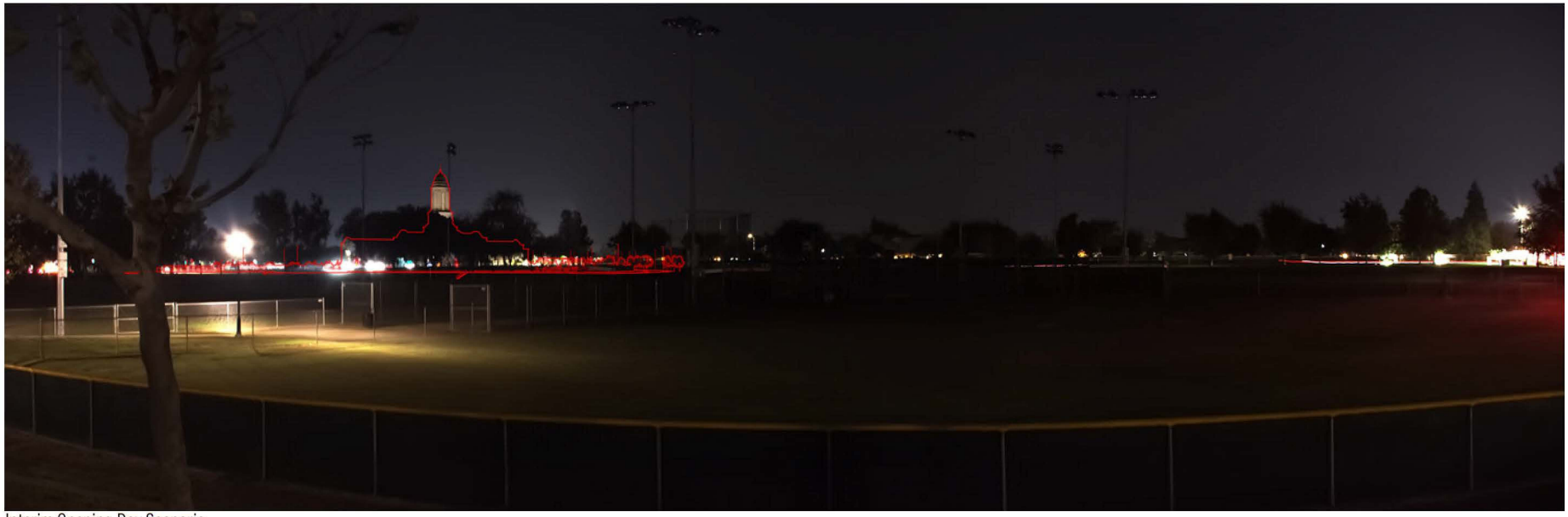
SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-27**

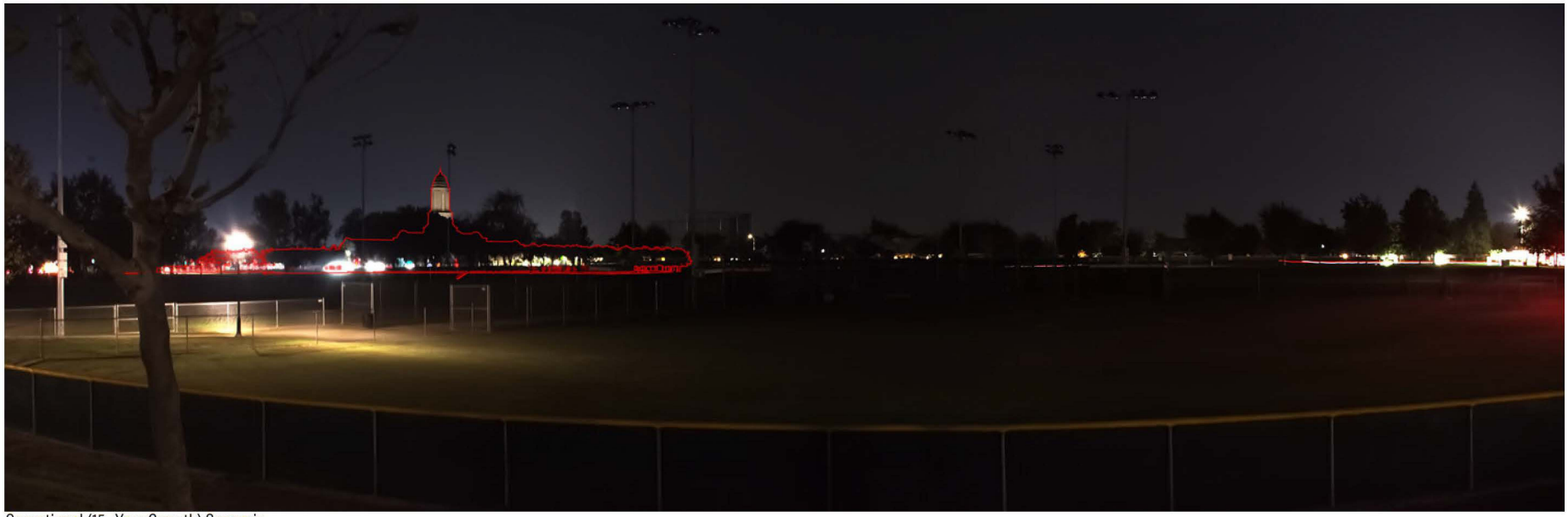
IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 4: Nighttime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-28**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 5: Nighttime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-29**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 6: Nighttime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

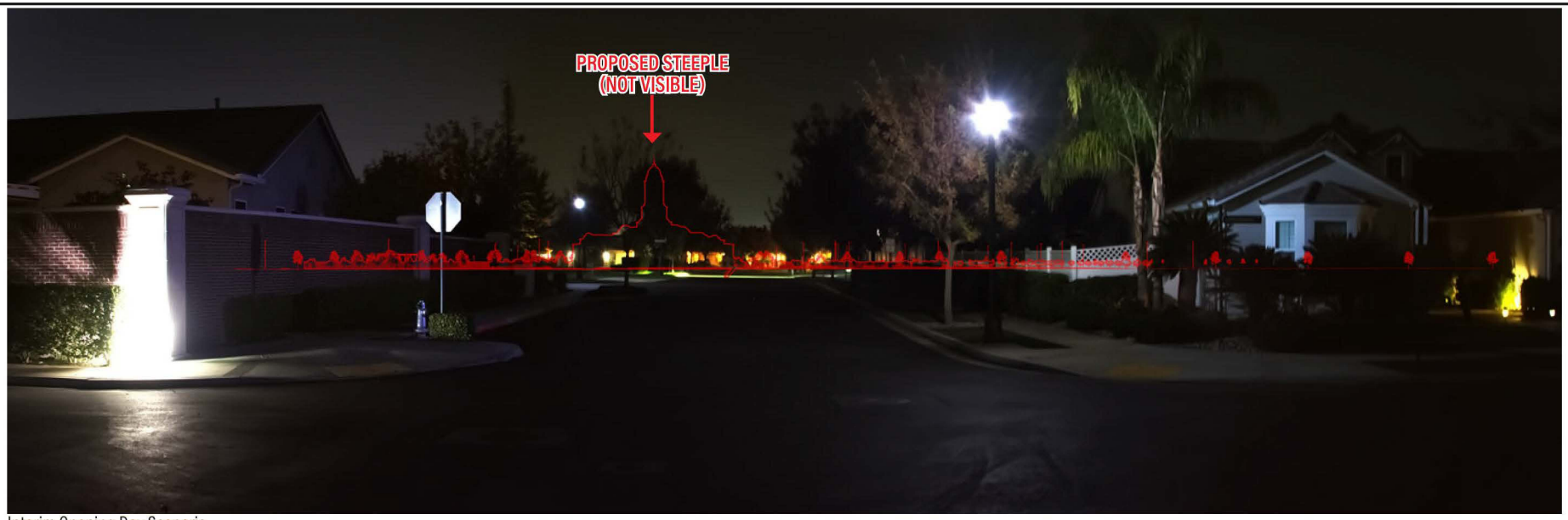
SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-30**

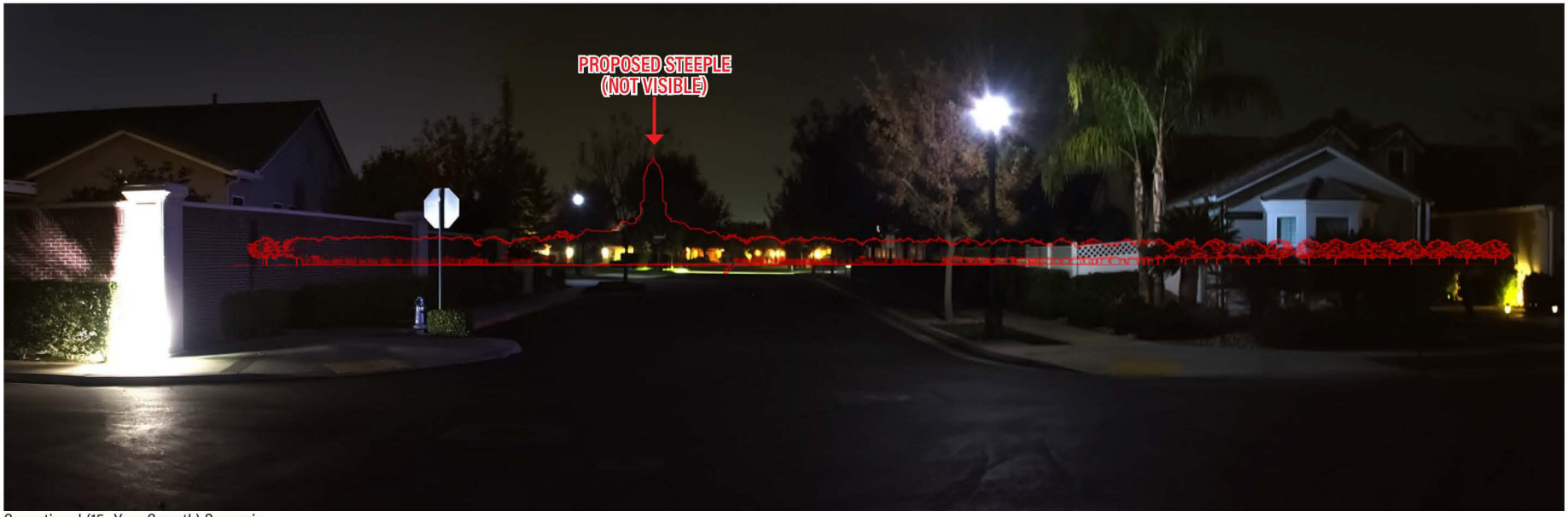
IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 7: Nighttime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-31**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 8: Nighttime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-32**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 9: Nighttime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-33**

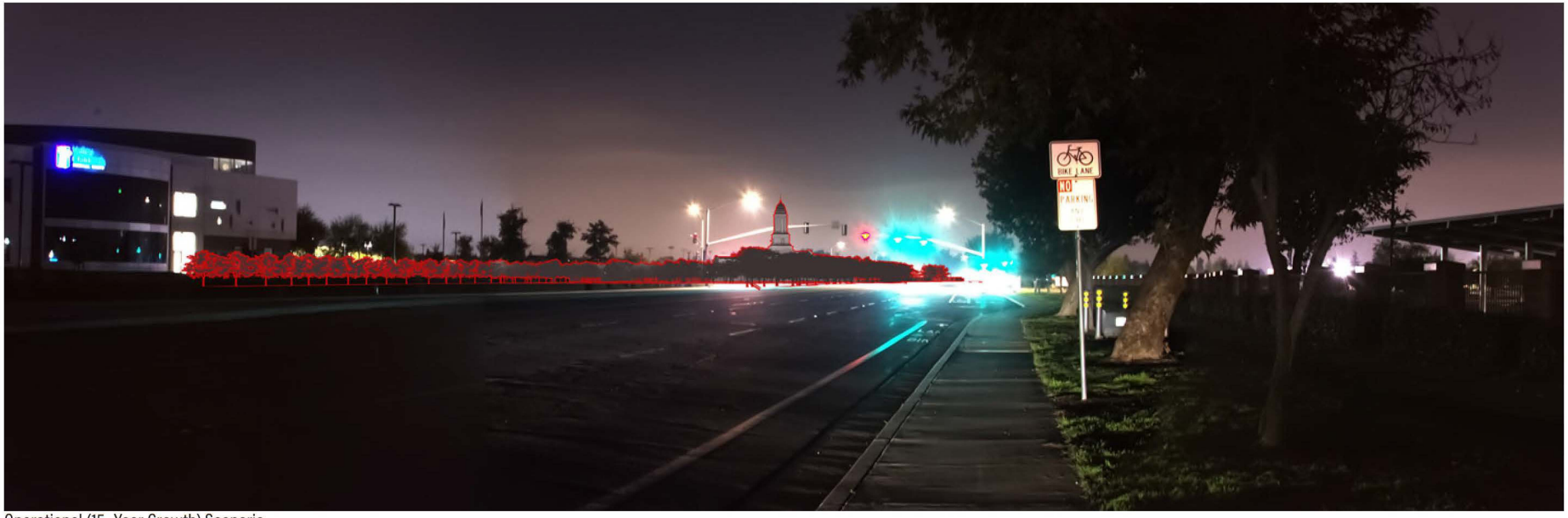
IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 10: Nighttime Renderings

859.004•02/26



Interim Opening Day Scenario



Operational (15- Year Growth) Scenario

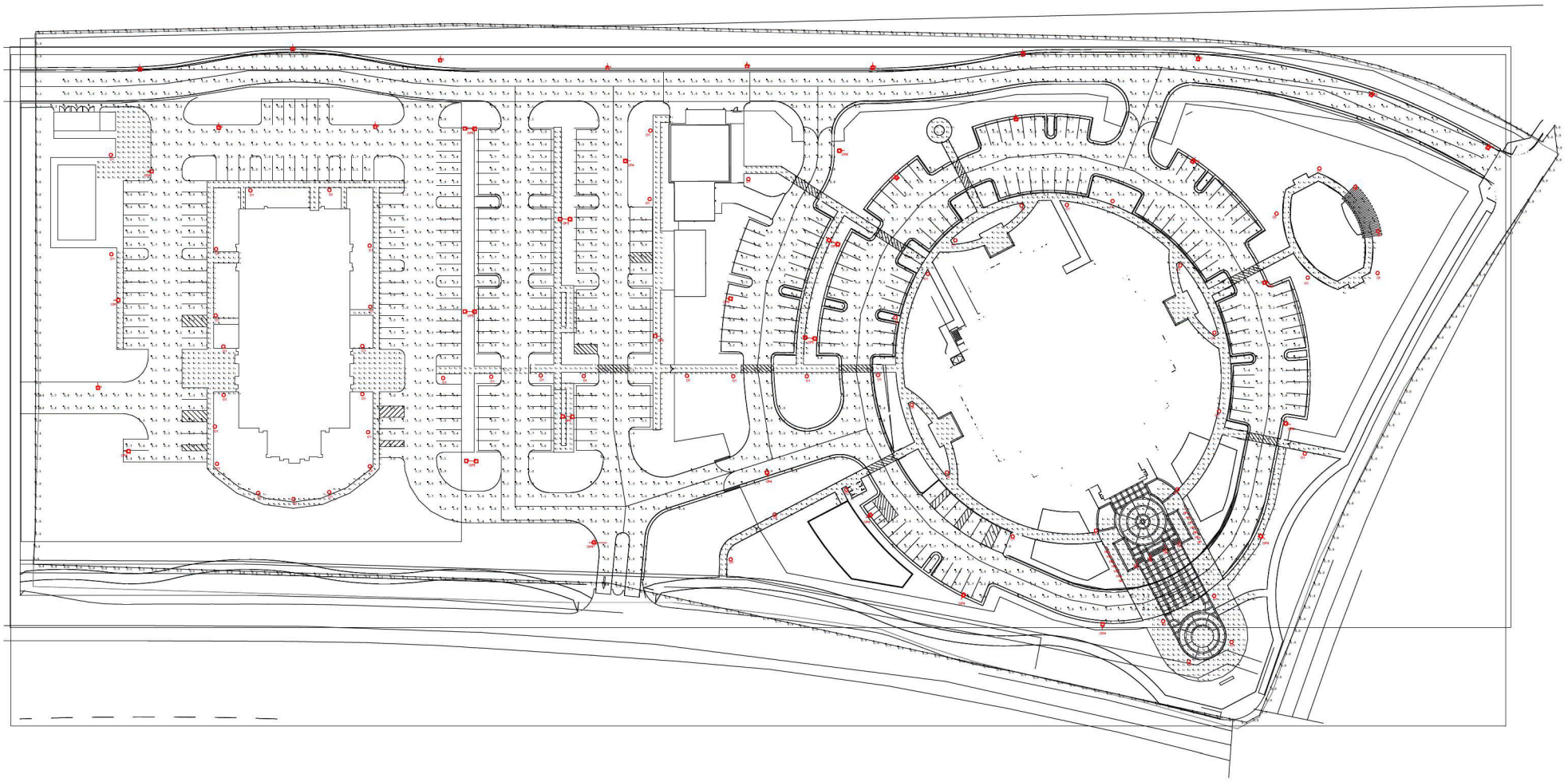
SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-34**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Map View 11: Nighttime Renderings

859.004•02/26



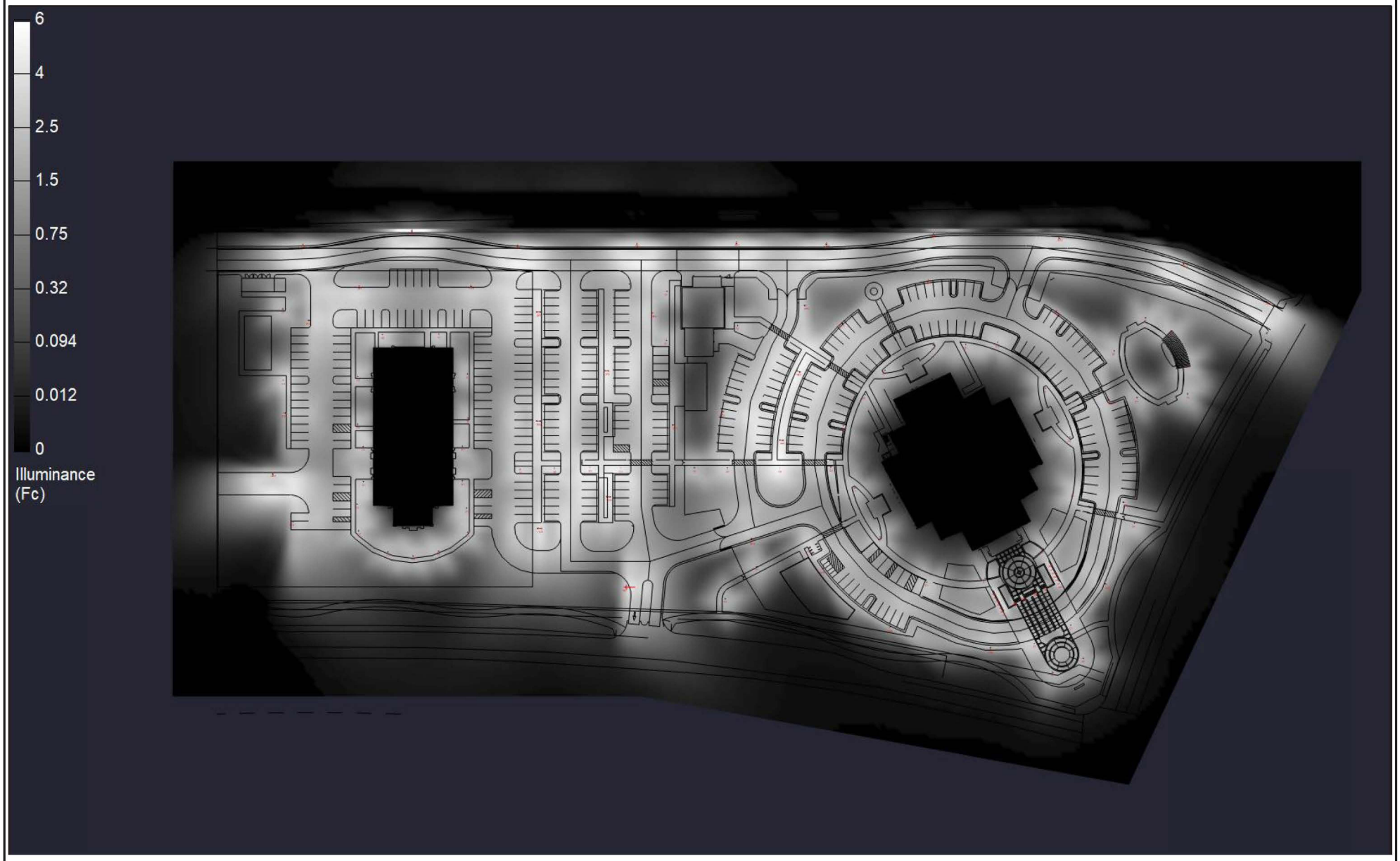
SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-35**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Site Photometry Levels

859.004•02/26



SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-36**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Site Photometry Levels

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Nighttime Lighting Impact on Sensitive Receptors

Residential Viewers: The single-family residential uses north of the Project Site would experience the greatest potential exposure to Project lighting. However, compliance with the 0.5 foot-candle threshold at the property line, combined with perimeter tree screening and dimmable lighting that is reduced within one hour after the close of operations to one hour before morning operation (which typically end around 10:00 PM and start around 5:00 AM), would ensure that Project lighting does not adversely affect residential nighttime views. While the illuminated temple steeple would be visible, the lighting has been specifically designed with well-shielded, low-output fixtures that illuminate building surfaces without creating glare or light trespass.

Recreational Users: Recreational users of Aera Park would have views of the illuminated temple steeple from across Jewetta Avenue. These vertical element of light would be visible in the nighttime skyline but would not adversely affect park users' nighttime views, as the steeple lighting would be well-controlled and consistent with existing lighting in the urban environment.

Motorists: Motorists on Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue would have passing views of the Project lighting. The lighting would not create hazards or distractions, as parking lot and pedestrian lighting would be downward-directed and shielded to prevent glare, while temple facade lighting would be well-shielded and carefully aimed to prevent light spillage beyond the illuminated surfaces.

In summary, the Project would not create a new source of substantial nighttime light that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. Photometric analysis confirms compliance with BMC Section 17.71.030.D's 0.5 foot-candle threshold at the northern residential property line. Temple facade and steeple illumination would utilize well-shielded, low-output fixtures, and all exterior lighting would be dimmable with reduced intensity between one hour after the close of operations (which typically end around 10:00 PM) and one hour before operations in the morning (typically starting at 6:00 AM). Perimeter tree planting along the northern boundary would provide increasing vegetative screening as trees mature, further reducing lighting visibility from adjacent residential properties. Nighttime lighting impacts would therefore be less than significant.

Daytime Glare Impacts

The temple would be constructed of cream-colored limestone with a smooth matte finish. The honed finish diffuses reflected light rather than creating specular reflection, reducing glare under bright sunlight conditions. The selected color and finish are intentionally designed to be easier on the eyes in bright sunlight than temples that use white granites or polished marble.

The roofing would consist of a flat PVC roof with blended red clay tile roofing at central sections, which would not produce glare. Windows and doors would be glazed with decorative art glass incorporating low-iron glass with bronze/champagne metal finishing. These glass elements would be similar in daytime glare characteristics to existing buildings in the surrounding area described in **Section 3.1.1.4**.

The Project's material palette, consisting primarily of cream-colored matte-finish limestone, low-iron glass with minimal reflectivity, and clay tile roofing, would not produce substantial daytime glare. The honed limestone finish, the temple's symmetrical design with articulated walls and accent parapets, and varied surface angles would diffuse rather than reflect light. The materials would be similar to or less reflective than existing buildings in the urbanized suburban context.

The temple's symmetrical design with articulated walls and accent parapets would create varied surface angles that further diffuse reflected light. The Project's materials would not introduce glare substantially different from or greater than existing conditions in the area.

Daytime Glare Impact on Sensitive Receptors

Residential Viewers: Single-family residential uses north of the Project Site are the most sensitive receptors for potential daytime glare impacts. However, residents would view the temple primarily from the north, where the building's northern facade would incorporate matte-finish materials that diffuse rather than reflect light. Furthermore, the northern elevations of the buildings will be shaded for significant periods of the day, inherently limiting the potential for direct solar reflection toward the adjacent residences. The distance between the temple and the residential property line (at least 20 feet of setback), combined with intervening landscape screening, would further minimize any potential glare impacts.

Motorists: Motorists on Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue would have passing views of the temple and meetinghouse facades. The cream-colored matte-finish limestone and low-iron glass would not create hazardous glare conditions for drivers, as these materials are designed to diffuse rather than reflect light in a focused manner.

In summary, the Project would not create a new source of substantial daytime glare that would adversely affect views in the area. Building materials would consist of matte-finish limestone, low-iron glass, and clay tile roofing that diffuses rather than reflects light. Daytime glare would, therefore, be less than significant.

Overall, the Project would not create new sources of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. Construction-phase glare would be temporary, intermittent, and limited to daytime hours. Operational nighttime lighting would comply with all applicable BMC standards, be

reduced between one hour after the close of operations (which is typically 10:00 PM) and one hour before commencement of operations in the morning (which is typically 6:00 AM), and be progressively screened by maturing perimeter landscaping. Building materials would consist of matte-finish and low-reflectivity surfaces that diffuse rather than focus light. Therefore, impacts related to light and glare would be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant.

3.1.3.4 Shade and Shadow Effects

CEQA Appendix G does not include shade and shadow impacts as significance thresholds for aesthetics, and the General Plan and BMC do not establish quantitative standards for shadow impacts. Therefore, the following analysis of shadows cast by Project structures is provided below for informational purposes.

Project Shadow Characteristics

The Project would introduce a steeple at 123 feet 6 inches in height that would cast shadows on adjacent properties at various times of day and year. Due to its shorter height (66 feet 4 inches) and greater distance from the property boundaries, shadows cast by the meetinghouse steeple would remain primarily on the Project Site and would not substantially affect adjacent properties. The extent and duration of shadows vary by season due to the sun's changing angle. Shadow analysis was conducted for four representative days: winter solstice (December 21), spring equinox (March 21), summer solstice (June 21), and fall equinox (September 21). **Figure 3.1-37** through **Figure 3.1-40** illustrate shadow patterns at hourly intervals throughout each representative day.

Key Findings

To present a conservative analysis, **Figure 3.1-37** depicts the "worst-case" scenario for shadow length and direction, occurring on the winter solstice (December 21) when the sun is at its lowest angle in the sky.

Since the sun is low, the temple and its steeple cast their longest possible shadows of the entire year on this date.

Winter shadows are longest, extending to the north during the late afternoon, while summer shadows remain comparatively short due to the higher sun angle. Since the site maintains a minimum 20-foot setback along the northern boundary, shadows cast onto adjacent residential properties are limited.

The analysis confirms that any shadow overlap on adjacent sensitive uses is transient. As shown in **Figure 3.1-37**, the temple steeple's shadow may briefly cross the northern property line only during the deepest part of the winter afternoon, but this interaction is narrow and fast-moving. During the morning hours, shadows fall primarily westward, shifting eastward in the afternoon as the sun moves across the sky. Any shadowing that occurs over nearby roadways or parking areas is temporary and consistent with typical urban development patterns.

Shade-Sensitive Uses

Shade-sensitive uses typically include: solar energy systems (photovoltaic panels, solar thermal systems); community or residential gardens; residences designed for passive solar heating; recreational facilities where sunlight access is critical (e.g., outdoor pools).

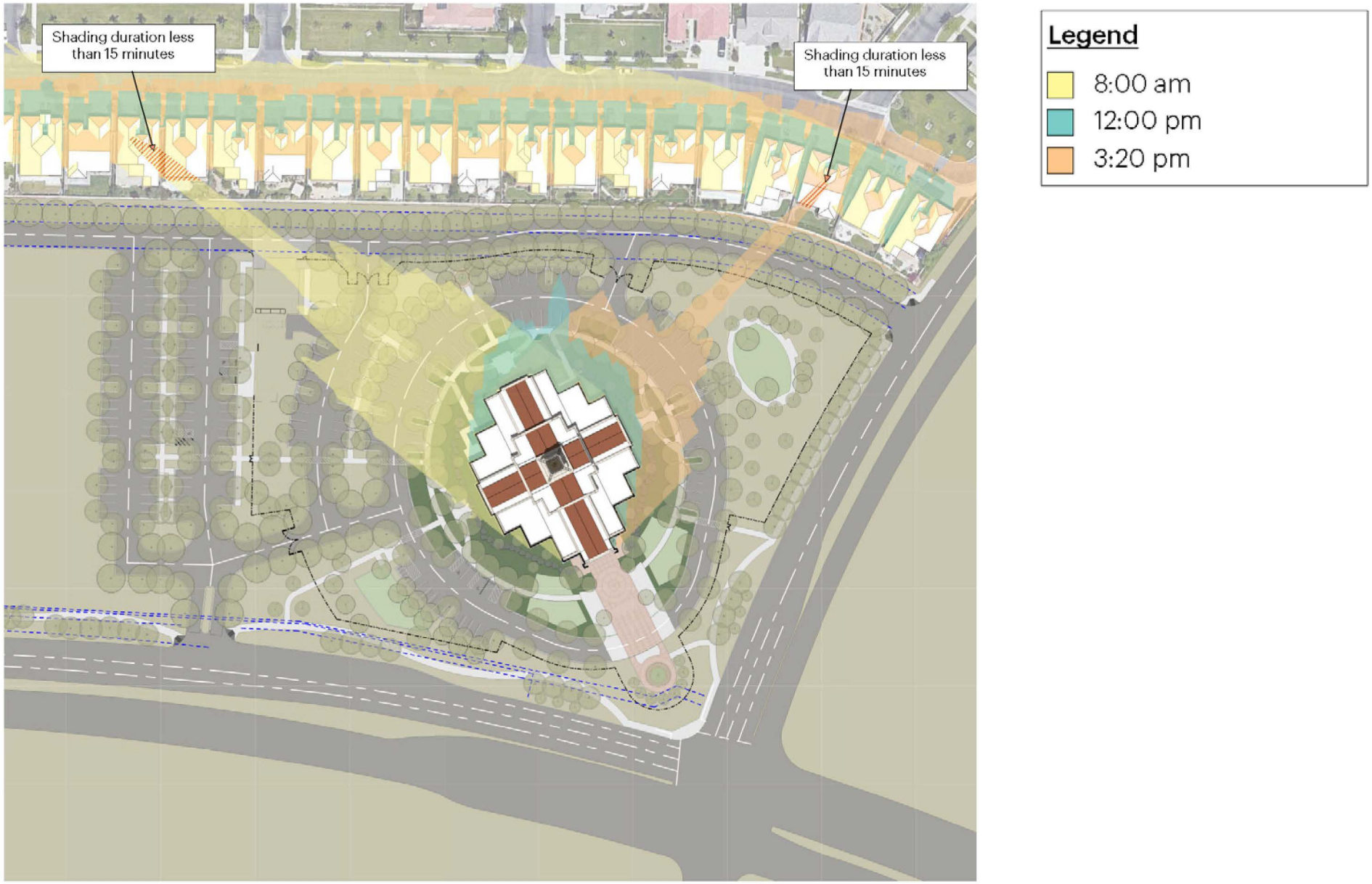
No shade-sensitive uses have been identified on properties immediately adjacent to the Project Site. The single-family residential uses to the north are conventional construction not reliant on passive solar design, and no solar energy systems or community gardens are present on adjacent parcels based on site reconnaissance conducted in November 2025.

Regulatory Context

Unlike some jurisdictions, such as the City and County of San Francisco, which has a formal shadow ordinance, and the City of Los Angeles, which requires shadow analyses in certain plans and discretionary reviews, the City of Bakersfield has not adopted quantitative thresholds or standards for shadow impacts. The General Plan and BMC address building setbacks, heights, and spacing, which inherently limit the extent of shadow effects on adjacent properties, but do not establish shadow-specific criteria.

The Project complies with all applicable BMC setback requirements:

- Front yard (Stockdale Highway): Minimum 10 feet required
- Street side yard (Jewetta Avenue): Minimum 10 feet required
- Rear yard (adjacent to residential): Minimum 20 feet required



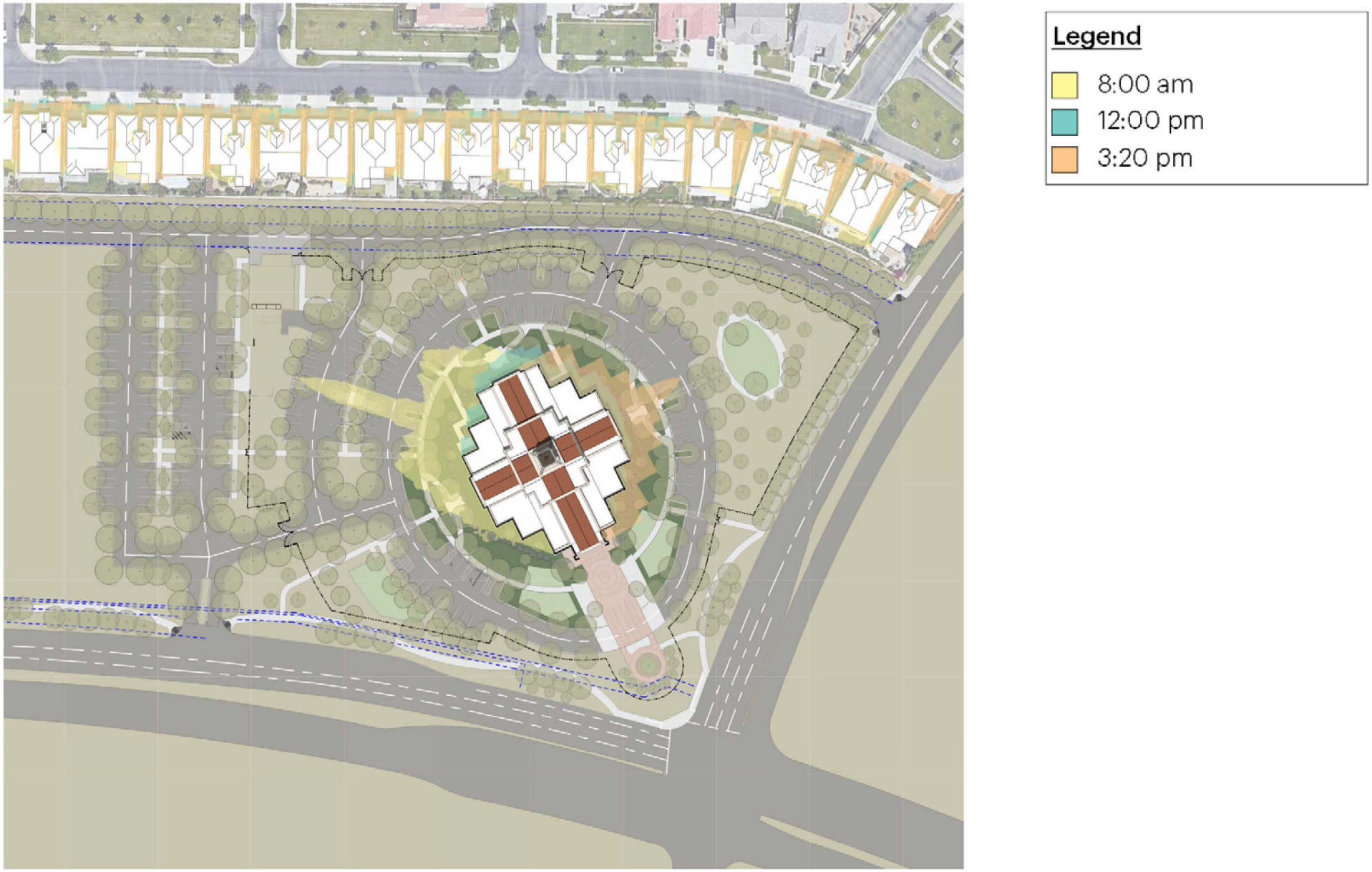
SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-37**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Winter Solstice Shadows - December 21

859.004•02/26



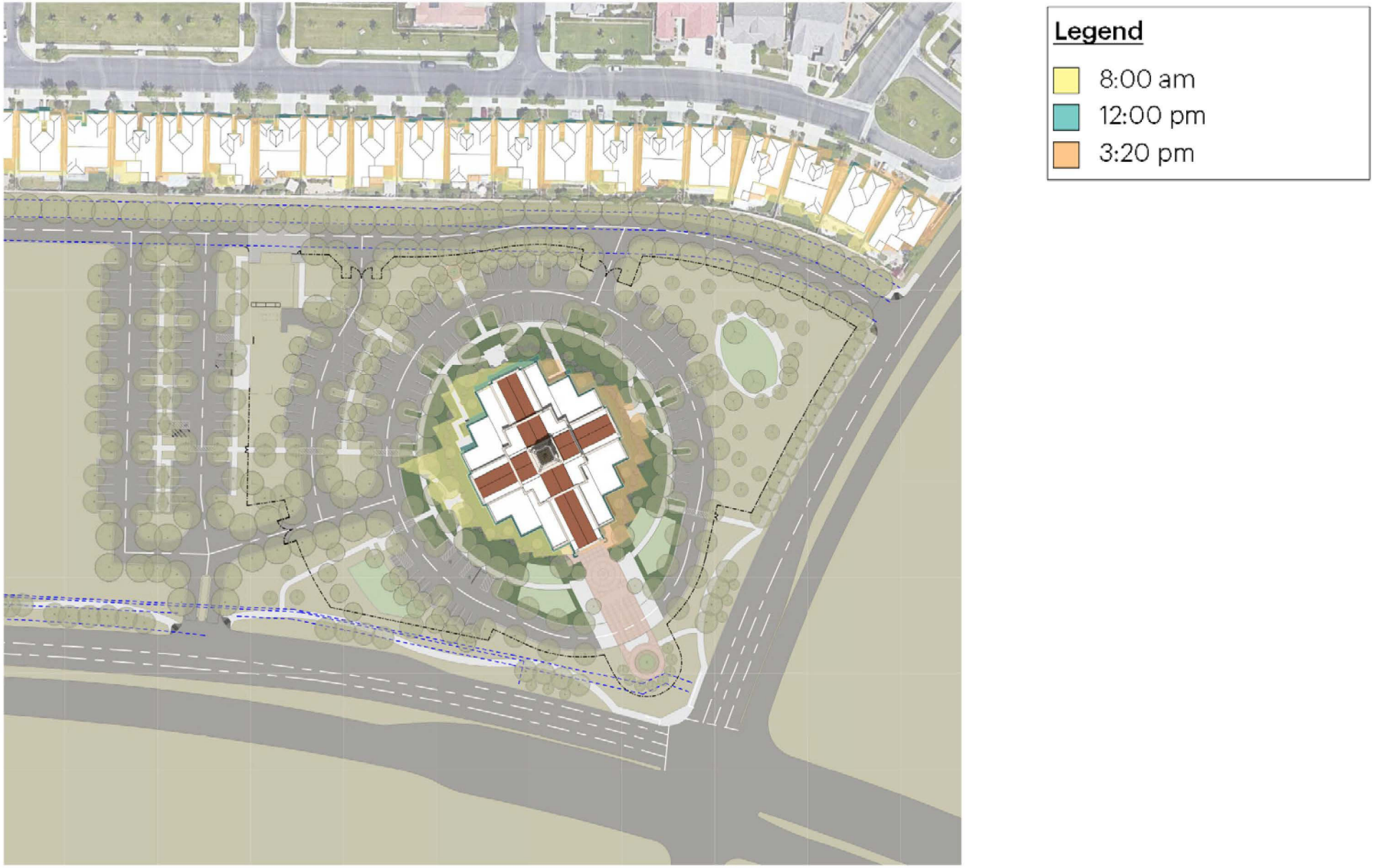
SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-38**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Spring Equinox Shadows - March 21

859.004•02/26



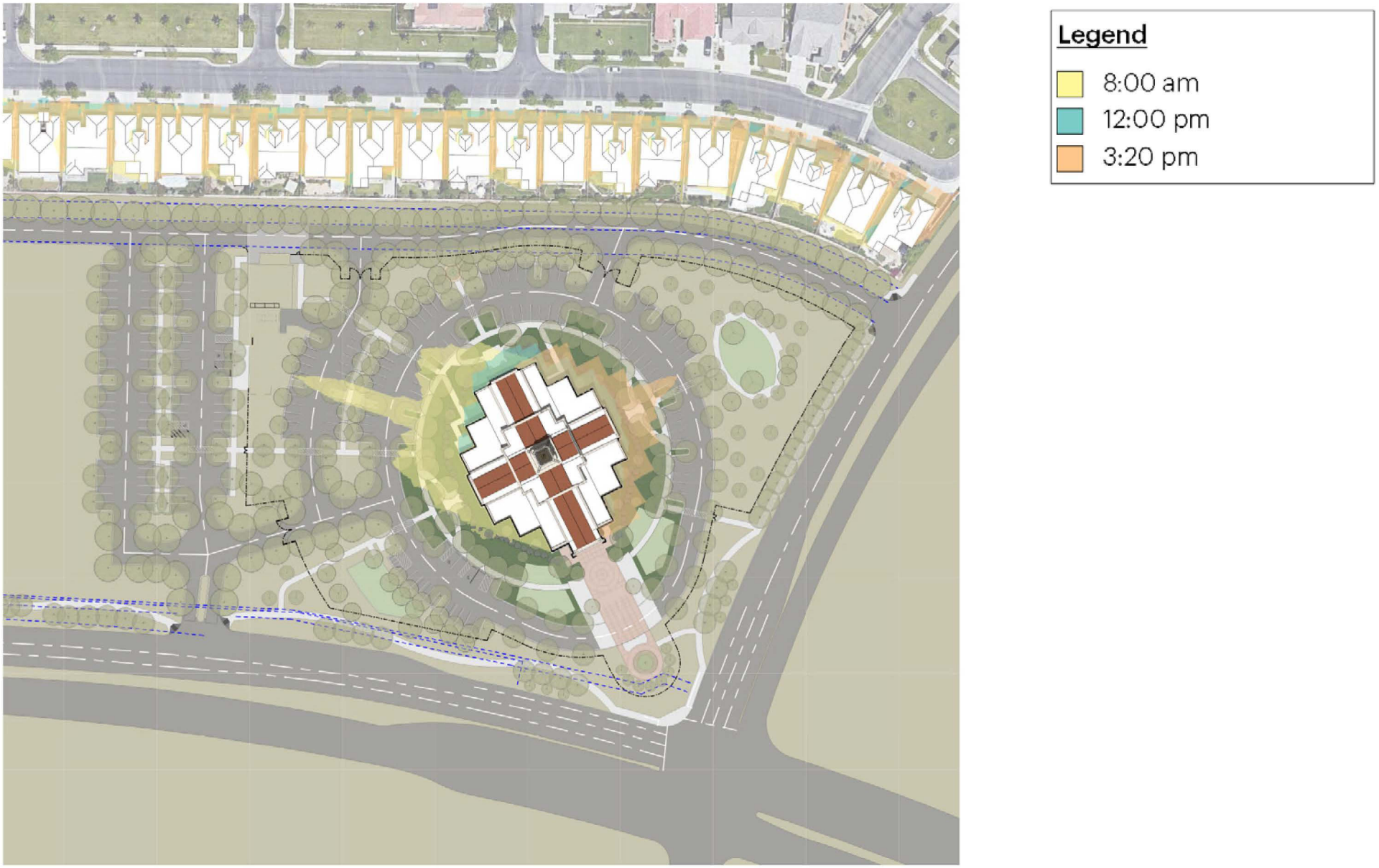
SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-39**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Summer Solstice Shadows - June 21

859.004•02/26



SOURCE: Michael Baker International, 2026

FIGURE **3.1-40**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Fall Equinox Shadows - September 21

859.004•02/26

These setbacks limit the extent to which Project shadows would extend onto adjacent residential properties, particularly along the northern boundary where residential uses are located.

Shade Shadow Conclusion

While shade and shadow effects are only evaluated for informational purposes, the shadow analysis demonstrates that the temple would cast shadows consistent with urban development patterns. The absence of shade-sensitive uses on adjacent properties, combined with compliance with BMC setback requirements, indicates that shadow effects would not adversely affect adjacent land uses. This informational analysis is provided to assist decision-makers and the public in understanding the Project's shadow characteristics throughout the year.

3.1.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The geographic scope for cumulative aesthetic impacts is the viewshed from which the Project would be visible, encompassing an area within approximately 1 to 1.5 miles of the Project Site based on the VIA's analysis from 11 public vantage points. Past projects are incorporated into the existing conditions baseline described in **Section 3.1.1**.

As shown in **Table 3.0-1**, five related projects have been identified within a 1-mile radius of the Project Site, including residential and commercial development at various stages of planning and approval. All five of these related projects fall within the primary cumulative viewshed. Regional growth projections in the 2022 KCOG RTP/SCS (Table 3.0-2) anticipate that the City of Bakersfield would grow by approximately 29 percent in population, 22 percent in households, and 13 percent in employment between 2020 and 2046. While regional growth will result in aesthetic changes throughout the planning area, the General Plan and BMC development standards apply uniformly to all development, ensuring that individual projects maintain acceptable visual quality.

The combination of the Project, related projects, and regional growth would result in continued urbanization of western Bakersfield, including the introduction of new buildings and structures, the removal of vacant parcels and replacement with developed uses, the installation of parking areas and landscaping, and the introduction of nighttime lighting sources. However, the Project Site is located within an already urbanized area where aesthetic impacts are managed through comprehensive regulatory frameworks.

In urbanized areas, cumulative aesthetic impacts are addressed through uniform application of development standards that apply to all projects. The General Plan policies governing landscaping, street trees, parking lot shading, lighting standards, and buffering, combined with BMC standards for the C-O

zone, parking, landscaping, and outdoor lighting (including the quantitative 0.5 foot-candle light spillover limit), ensure that individual projects do not contribute considerably to cumulative aesthetic impacts. All development within the C-O zone, including the Project and related commercial projects, is subject to Site Plan Review that evaluates compliance with these aesthetic standards. Similarly, residential development in the R-1 zone is subject to setback, height, landscaping, and design requirements, while institutional and recreational uses are subject to standards that maintain compatibility with surrounding land uses. This comprehensive regulatory framework applies uniformly to the five related projects identified in **Table 3.0-1**, ensuring that cumulative development maintains acceptable visual quality through consistent application of development standards.

As demonstrated in **Section 3.1.3.3**, the Project complies with all applicable General Plan policies and BMC development standards governing scenic quality (**Impact AES-1**) and would not create substantial new sources of light or glare (**Impact AES-2**). The Project would provide extensive landscaping (approximately 5.89 acres at full buildout), maintain appropriate setbacks from adjacent residential uses (at least 20 feet), and comply with all lighting standards (maximum 0.5 foot-candles at residential property line). Nighttime lighting would be well-shielded, carefully aimed or downward-directed, dimmable, and would be reduced in intensity within one hour after the close of operations (which typically end around 10:00 PM). Reduction in lighting intensity would continue until operations (which typically start around 5:00 AM for the temple and 6:00 AM for the meetinghouse). Perimeter landscaping would provide additional screening that increases in effectiveness as trees mature. Building materials would consist of cream-colored matte-finish limestone, low-iron glass, and clay tile roofing that would not produce substantial daytime glare.

Because the Project complies with all applicable regulations designed to manage cumulative aesthetic impacts, and because these same regulations would apply to all related projects and future development in the area, the Project's incremental contribution to cumulative aesthetic impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. Aesthetic impacts are inherently localized, i.e., experienced from specific viewing locations rather than regionally, and the regulatory framework ensures that cumulative development maintains acceptable visual quality through consistent application of development standards, quantitative lighting thresholds, landscaping requirements, and design review.

The cumulative aesthetic impact would be less than significant, and the Project's contribution to this less than significant cumulative impact would not be cumulatively considerable.

3.2 AIR QUALITY

This section describes the ambient air quality of the Bakersfield area and compares existing pollutant concentrations to applicable federal, state, and local standards. This section also identifies relevant air quality plans and policies and evaluates potential impacts associated with the Project. The analysis relies on data from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD or Valley Air District), the California Air Resources Board (CARB), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). This section was prepared using the *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impact Study, City of Bakersfield, CA,* prepared by MD Acoustics, dated December 23, 2025 (see **Appendix 3.2**), to analyze air quality impacts in accordance with CEQA. Impacts from greenhouse gas emissions are discussed in **Section 3.5, Greenhouse Gas Emissions.**

3.2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3.2.1.1 Regional Climate

The Project Site is located in the City of Bakersfield within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB). The SJVAB consists of eight counties, stretching from Kern County in the south to San Joaquin County in the north. The SJVAB is bounded by the Sierra Nevada to the east, the Coast Ranges to the west, and the Tehachapi Mountains to the south. The San Joaquin Valley experiences hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters.

The SJVAB has an inland Mediterranean climate with warm, dry summers, relatively cool nights, and cooler winters with limited rainfall. Winters are mild with light rains and frequent heavy fog from December to January. Within the SJVAB, the surrounding mountains restrict air movement and impede the dispersion of pollutants out of the basin. The SJVAB also experiences temperature inversions frequently throughout the year, which restrict vertical dispersion of air pollutants; an inversion occurs when a mass of warm, dry air sits over cooler air near the ground, essentially trapping the air mass below. In addition, the Valley's long, hot summers and stagnant, foggy winters provide ideal conditions for the formation of photochemical oxidants and reduce dispersion.

Wind speed and direction determine the dispersion of air pollutants. Marine air comes into the basin from the Sacramento River–San Joaquin River Delta, although most air movement is restricted by the surrounding mountains. Winds from the Bay Area flow northeasterly into the Sacramento Valley and southward into San Joaquin County. This results in weak winds from the north and northeast, with an average speed of seven miles per hour. During the summer, winds from the north flow south and southeasterly through the Valley, through the Tehachapi Pass, and into the Southeast Desert Air Basin. As

a result, emissions from the San Francisco Bay Area and the broader Sacramento air basins are transported into San Joaquin County and the SJVAB. Emissions within the San Joaquin Valley are then transported to the Southeast Desert and Great Basin Valley Air Basins.

In late fall and winter, cold air from the mountains flows into the Valley, producing winds from the south that move north and northwesterly. Some emissions from the San Joaquin Valley are transported to the broader Sacramento air basin during these periods. However, winds are relatively light, limiting the dispersion of carbon monoxide (CO) and other pollutants.

During late fall and winter, when interchange of air between the Valley and the coast is minimal, humidity is high following winter rains, and ground-level temperature inversions persist for several weeks. Under these conditions, air movement is virtually absent, and radiation fog, known as tule fog, forms. This is typically when peak concentrations of CO, oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), and particulate matter (PM) occur.

3.2.1.2 Regional Air Quality

The western half of Kern County (County), which contains the City of Bakersfield, lies within the SJVAB, is recognized as one of the most polluted air basins in the country and under the jurisdiction of the SJVAPCD). The eastern half of the County falls within the Mojave Desert Air Basin and is under the jurisdiction of the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District. The surrounding topography includes foothills and mountains to the east, west, and south, as previously noted. These mountain ranges direct air circulation and dispersion patterns. Temperature inversions can trap air within the Valley, thereby preventing the vertical dispersal of air pollutants. In addition to topographic conditions, the local climate can also contribute to air quality problems.

Ozone, classified as a "regional" pollutant, often afflicts areas downwind of the original source of precursor emissions. Ozone precursor emissions, such as NOx and ROG, are compounds that react in the presence of solar radiation with other chemical compounds to form ozone. Ozone is readily transported by prevailing winds. Peak ozone levels tend to be higher in the southern portion of the Valley, as the prevailing summer winds sweep precursors downwind of northern source areas before concentrations peak. As described below, the U.S. EPA and the state designate air basins as in attainment or nonattainment for several pollutants, including ozone. The separate designations reflect the fact that ozone precursor transport depends on daily meteorological conditions.

Other primary pollutants, carbon monoxide (CO), for example, may form high concentrations when wind speed is low. During the winter, Bakersfield experiences cold temperatures and calm conditions that increase the likelihood of a climate conducive to high CO concentrations. High CO concentrations are also

linked to heavy traffic conditions with significant delays. Unlike the rest of Kern County, Bakersfield experiences traffic conditions that can result in high CO concentrations.

Surface radiant cooling can also cause temperature inversions, where the normal decrease in air temperature with altitude is reversed, leaving warmer air above cooler air near the ground. Inversion layers can occur anywhere from close to ground level up to thousands of feet into the atmosphere. One way for this to occur is on clear winter nights, when the ground loses heat at a rapid rate, cooling the ground off and radiating the heat into the air. As the ground cools, the air in contact with it cools as well. Inversion layers are significant to meteorology because they block atmospheric flow, which causes the air over an area experiencing an inversion to become stable. In areas with unhealthy air or high rates of air pollution, an inversion can trap pollutants at ground level, causing higher concentrations than under normal conditions when pollutants would tend to disperse due to air flow patterns. As a result, conditions in Kern County are conducive to the containment of air pollutants.

3.2.1.3 Ambient Air Quality Standards

Both the federal government and the State of California have established ambient air quality standards for several different pollutants. The U.S. EPA sets National Ambient Air Quality Standards for the following seven pollutants: carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), ozone (O_3), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), respirable particulate matter (PM10), fine particulate matter (PM2.5), and lead. These seven pollutants are commonly referred to as "criteria pollutants." California Ambient Air Quality Standards have also been adopted for these pollutants, as well as for sulfates, visibility-reducing particles, hydrogen sulfide, and vinyl chloride. California standards are generally stricter than national standards. Each of the criteria pollutants that are of concern in the SJVAB is briefly described below.

While reactive organic gases (ROGs) are not considered to be criteria air pollutants, they are widely emitted from land development projects and undergo photochemical reactions in the atmosphere to form O_3; therefore, ROGs are also relevant to the proposed project and are of concern in the area.[1]

Ozone (O_3). O_3 is a gas that is formed when ROGs and oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), both byproducts of internal combustion engine exhaust and other sources, undergo slow photochemical reactions in the presence of sunlight. Ozone concentrations are generally highest during the summer months when direct sunlight, light wind, and warm temperatures combine. ROGs are also referred to as reactive organic compounds (ROCs) or volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

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1 U.S. EPA, Technical Overview of Volatile Organic Compounds. Available online at: https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/technical-overview-volatile-organic-compounds, accessed October 28, 2025.

Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2). NO_2 is a reddish-brown, highly reactive gas that is formed in the ambient air through the oxidation of nitric oxide (NO). NO_2 is also a byproduct of fuel combustion. NO is produced by combustion and is the principal form of NO_X, but NO reacts quickly to form NO_2, creating the mixture of NO and NO_2 referred to as NO_X. NO_2 acts as an acute irritant and, in equal concentrations, is more injurious than NO. At atmospheric concentrations, however, NO_X is only potentially irritating. NO_2 absorbs blue light, the result of which is a brownish-red cast to the atmosphere and reduced visibility.

Carbon Monoxide (CO). CO is a colorless, odorless gas produced by the incomplete combustion of fuels. CO concentrations tend to be the highest during winter mornings, with little to no wind, when surface-based inversions trap the pollutant at ground levels. CO is emitted directly from internal combustion engines. Motor vehicles operating at slow speeds are the primary source of CO in the basin. The highest ambient CO concentrations are generally found near congested transportation corridors and intersections.

Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2). SO_2 is a colorless, extremely irritating gas or liquid. It enters the atmosphere as a pollutant, mainly as a result of burning high-sulfur-content fuel oils and coal, and from chemical processes occurring at chemical plants and refineries. When SO_2 oxidizes in the atmosphere, it forms sulfates (SO_4).

Respirable Particulate Matter (PM10). PM10 consists of suspended particles or droplets 10 micrometers or smaller in diameter. Some sources of PM10, like pollen and windstorms, are naturally occurring. However, in populated areas, most PM10 is caused by road dust, diesel soot, combustion products, abrasion of tires and brakes, and construction activities.

Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5). PM2.5 is suspended particulate matter that is 2.5 micrometers or smaller in diameter. The sources of PM2.5 include fuel combustion from automobiles, power plants, wood burning, industrial processes, and diesel-powered vehicles such as buses and trucks. These fine particles are also formed in the atmosphere when gases such as sulfur dioxide, NO_X, and ROGs are transformed in the air by chemical reactions.

PM2.5 and PM10 pose a greater health risk than larger-size particles. When inhaled, these tiny particles can penetrate the human respiratory system's natural defenses and damage the respiratory tract. PM2.5 and PM10 can increase the number and severity of asthma attacks, cause or aggravate bronchitis and other lung diseases, and reduce the body's ability to fight infections. In some cases, the particles can cause infectious diseases. For example, inhalation of spores can cause San Joaquin Valley Fever (Coccidioidomycosis), an infectious disease caused by the fungus *Coccidioides* immitis. Infection is caused by inhalation of Coccidioides immitis spores that have become airborne when dry, dusty soil or dirt is disturbed by wind, construction, farming, or other activities. The Valley Fever fungus tends to be found at the base of hillsides in undisturbed soil and is found in the southwestern United States.

Very small particles of substances, such as lead, sulfates, and nitrates, can cause lung damage directly. These substances can be absorbed into the bloodstream and cause damage elsewhere in the body. These substances can transport absorbed gases, such as chlorides or ammonium, into the lungs and cause injury. Whereas PM10 tends to collect in the upper portion of the respiratory system, PM2.5 is so tiny that it can penetrate deeper into the lungs and damage lung tissues. Suspended particulates also damage and discolor surfaces on which they settle, as well as produce haze and reduce regional visibility.

A summary of state and federal ambient air quality standards and the effects of the exceedance of these standards on health are shown in **Table 3.2-1, Ambient Air Quality Standards**. For some pollutants, separate standards have been set for different periods. Most standards have been set to protect public health. For some pollutants, standards have been based on other values, such as protection of crops, protection of materials, or avoidance of nuisance conditions.

Table 3.2-1
Ambient Air Quality Standards

Air Pollutant	Averaging Time	California Standards	National Standards[1]		Health and Other Effects
			Primary[2,3]	Secondary[2,4]	
Ozone (O_3)	8-hour	0.070 ppm (137 µg/m³)	0.070 ppm (137 µg/m³)	Same as primary	(a) Pulmonary function decrements and localized lung edema in humans and animals; (b) Risk to public health implied by alterations in pulmonary morphology and host defense in animals; (c) Increased mortality risk; (d) Risk to public health implied by altered connective tissue metabolism and altered pulmonary morphology in animals after long-term exposures and pulmonary function decrements in chronically exposed humans; (e) Vegetation damage; and (f) Property damage
	1-hour	0.09 ppm (180 µg/m³)	--[5]	--	
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	8-hour	9 ppm (10 mg/m³)	9 ppm (10 mg/m³)	--	(a) Aggravation of angina pectoris and other aspects of coronary heart disease; (b) Decreased exercise tolerance in persons with peripheral vascular disease and lung disease; (c) Impairment of central nervous system functions; and (d) Possible increased risk to fetuses
	1-hour	20 ppm (23 mg/m³)	35 ppm (40 mg/m³)	--	
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)	Annual	0.030 ppm (57 µg/m³)	0.053 ppm (100 µg/m³)	Same as primary	(a) Potential to aggravate chronic respiratory disease and respiratory symptoms in sensitive groups; (b) Risk to public health implied by pulmonary and extra-pulmonary biochemical and cellular changes and pulmonary structural changes; and (c) Contribution to atmospheric discoloration
	1-hour	0.18 ppm (339 µg/m³)	0.100 ppm[6] (188 µg/m³)	--	

Air Pollutant	Averaging Time	California Standards	National Standards[1]		Health and Other Effects
			Primary[2,3]	Secondary[2,4]	
Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2)	Annual	--	0.030 ppm (80 µg/m³)[7]	-	Bronchoconstriction accompanied by symptoms, which may include wheezing, shortness of breath and chest tightness, during exercise or physical activity in persons with asthma
	24- hour	0.04 ppm (105 µg/m³)	0.14 ppm (365 µg/m³) [7]	-	
	3-hour	-	-	0.5 ppm (1,300 µg/m³)	
	1-hour	0.25 ppm (655 µg/m³)	0.075 ppm[7] (196 µg/m³)	--	
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM10)	Annual	20 µg/m³	--	--	a) Exacerbation of symptoms in sensitive patients with respiratory or cardiovascular disease; (b) Declines in pulmonary function growth in children; and (c) Increased risk of premature death from heart or lung diseases in the elderly
	24-hour	50 µg/m³	150 µg/m³	Same as primary	
Fine Particulate Matter ($PM_{2.5}$)	24-hour	No separate state standard	35 µg/m³	--	(a) Exacerbation of symptoms in sensitive patients with respiratory or cardiovascular disease; (b) Declines in pulmonary function growth in children; and (c) Increased risk of premature death from heart or lung diseases in the elderly
	Annual	12 µg/m³	12 µg/m³	15 µg/m³	
Lead	Calendar Quarter	--	1.5 µg/m³	Same as primary	(a) Increased body burden; and (b) Impairment of blood formation and nerve conduction
	30-day Average	1.5 µg/m3	--	--	
Hydrogen Sulfide (H_2S)	1-hour	0.03 ppm	None	None	(a) Odor of H_2S is extremely strong and foul, potentially inducing tearing of the eyes and symptoms related to overstimulation of the sense of smell, including nausea, or vomiting.
Vinyl Chloride	24-hour	0.01 ppm	None	None	(a) Short-term exposure to high levels (10 ppm or above) of vinyl chloride in air causes central nervous system effects, such as dizziness, drowsiness, and headaches. The primary non-cancer health effect of long-term exposure to vinyl chloride through inhalation or oral exposure is liver damage. Inhalation exposure to vinyl chloride has been shown to increase the risk of angiosarcoma, a rare form of liver cancer in humans.

Air Pollutant	Averaging Time	California Standards	National Standards[1]		Health and Other Effects
			Primary[2,3]	Secondary[2,4]	

Source: CARB, Ambient Air Quality Standards, (https://www.arb.ca.gov/research/aaqs/caaqs/caaqs.htm),
ppm = parts per million by volume; µg/m³ = microgram per cubic meter; mg/m³ = milligrams per cubic meter.

1 *Standards, other than for ozone and those based on annual averages, are not to be exceeded more than once a year. The ozone standard is attained when the expected number of days per calendar year with maximum hourly average concentrations above the standard is equal to or less than one.*

2 *Concentrations are expressed first in units in which they were promulgated. Equivalent units given in parenthesis.*

3 *Primary Standards: The levels of air quality necessary, with an adequate margin of safety to protect the public health. Each state must attain the primary standards no later than three years after that state's implementation plan is approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA).*

4 *Secondary Standards: The levels of air quality necessary to protect the public welfare from any known or anticipated adverse effects of a pollutant.*

5 *The national 1-hour ozone standard was revoked by US EPA on June 15, 2005. A new 8-hour standard was established in May 2008.*

6 *The form of the 1-hour NO_2 standard is the 3-year average of the 98th percentile of the daily maximum 1-hour average concentration.*

7 *On June 2, 2010, the US EPA established a new 1-hour SO_2 standard, effective August 23, 2010, which is based on the 3-year average of the annual 99th percentile of the 1-hour daily maximum. The US EPA also revoked both the existing 24-hour and annual average SO_2 standards.*

The U.S. EPA and CARB designate air basins or portions of air basins and counties as being in "attainment" or "nonattainment" for each of the criteria pollutants. Nonattainment areas are ranked (marginal, moderate, serious, severe, or extreme) according to the degree of nonattainment. Areas that do not meet the standards shown in **Table 3.2-1** are classified as nonattainment areas. The National Ambient Air Quality Standards (other than O_3, PM10, PM2.5, and those based on annual averages or arithmetic mean) are not to be exceeded more than once per year. The National Ambient Air Quality Standards for O_3, PM10, and PM2.5 are based on statistical calculations over one- to three-year periods, depending on the pollutant. The California Ambient Air Quality Standards are generally defined as values not to be exceeded for their specified averaging times, and attainment designations for state standards are typically determined based on data collected over a three-year period.

The determination of whether an area meets the state and federal standards is based on air quality monitoring data. Some areas are unclassified, which means there is insufficient monitoring data for determining attainment or nonattainment. Unclassified areas are typically treated as being in attainment. Because the attainment/nonattainment designation is pollutant-specific, an area may be classified as nonattainment for one pollutant and attainment for another. Similarly, because the state and federal standards differ, an area could be classified as attainment for the federal standards of a pollutant and as nonattainment for the state standards of the same pollutant.

The SJVAB is classified by the U.S. EPA as an O_3 nonattainment area and ranging from attainment/unclassified, nonattainment, and attainment for the other criteria pollutants. The main source of CO and NOx emissions is motor vehicles. The major contributors to ROG emissions are mobile sources and agriculture. ROG emissions from motor vehicles have been decreasing since 1985 due to stricter

standards, even though the vehicle miles have been increasing. Stationary source regulations implemented by the SJVAPCD have also substantially reduced ROG emissions. ROG from natural sources (mainly from trees and plants) is the largest source of this pollutant in Kern County. Atmospheric modeling accomplished for recent ozone planning efforts has found that controlling NOx is more effective at reducing ozone concentrations than controlling ROG. However, controls meeting Reasonably Available Control Technology (RACT) and Best Available Control Technology (BACT) are still required for SJVAPCD plans.[2]

The SJVAB has been ranked amongst the worst in the United States for O_3 levels, although long-term monitoring data show that overall O_3 concentrations have declined over time. Direct PM10 emissions have decreased between the years 1975 and 1995 and have remained relatively constant since 2000. The main sources of PM10 in the SJVAB are from vehicles traveling on unpaved roads and agricultural activities. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) must implement Best Available Control Measures (BACM) for sources of fine particulate matter (PM10) to comply with federal attainment planning requirements.[3]

The attainment status of the SJVAB, excluding the portion under the jurisdiction of the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District, with respect to attainment with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) is summarized in **Table 3.2-2, National and California Ambient Air Quality Standard Designations for the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin**.

Table 3.2-2
National and California Ambient Air Quality Standard Designations for San Joaquin Valley Air Basin

Pollutant	National Ambient Air Quality Standard Designations	California Ambient Air Quality Standard Designations
Ozone (O_3) – 1 hour	Standard Revoked (2005)	Nonattainment/Severe

2 Reasonable Available Control Technologies are devices, systems, process modifications, or other apparatus or techniques that are reasonably available, taking into account: the necessity of imposing such controls in order to attain and maintain a national ambient air quality standard; the social environmental, and economic impact of such controls; and alternative means of providing for attainment and maintenance of such a standard. Best Available Control Technologies are the most stringent emission limitation or control technique of the following: 1. Achieved in practice for such category and class of source 2. Contained in any State Implementation Plan approved by the EPA for such category and class of source. A specific limitation or control technique shall not apply if the owner of proposed emissions unit demonstrates to the satisfaction of the air pollution control officer (APCO) that such a limitation or control technique is not presently achievable 3. Contained in an applicable federal New Source Performance Standard or 4. Any other emission limitation or control technique, including process and equipment changes of basic or control equipment, found by the APCO to be cost effective and technologically feasible for such class or category of sources or for a specific source. Source: Tulare County General Plan, *Air Quality Element*, August 2012.

3 Best Available Control Measures is a set of programs that identify and implement potentially best available control measures affecting local air quality issues. Source: Tulare County General Plan, *Air Quality Element*, August 2012.

Pollutant	National Ambient Air Quality Standard Designations	California Ambient Air Quality Standard Designations
Ozone (O_3) – 8 hour	Nonattainment/Extreme	Nonattainment
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	Unclassifiable/Attainment	Attainment
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)	Unclassifiable/Attainment	Attainment
Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2)	Unclassifiable/Attainment	Attainment
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM10)	Attainment	Nonattainment
Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5)	Nonattainment	Nonattainment
Lead (Pb)	Unclassifiable/Attainment	Attainment

Source: San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, accessible online at : https://ww2.valleyair.org/air-quality-information/ambient-air-quality-standards-valley-attainmnet-status/.

3.2.1.4 Toxic Air Contaminants

In addition to criteria pollutants, CARB periodically assesses the health impacts and ambient levels of toxic air contaminants (TACs), also referred to as hazardous air pollutants (HAPs), in California. The U.S. EPA also assesses health impacts for hazardous air pollutants. A TAC is defined by California Health and Safety Code Section 397655:

> *"Toxic air contaminant" means an air pollutant which may cause or contribute to an increase in mortality or in serious illness, or which may pose a present or potential hazard to human health. A substance that is listed as a hazardous air pollutant pursuant to subsection (b) of Section 112 of the federal act (42 USC. Sec. 7412(b)) is a toxic air contaminant.*

TACs may increase cancer risk or cause other serious health effects, but the actual hazard depends on factors such as emission quantity, toxicity, release conditions, weather, and terrain. TACs are emitted by a variety of industrial processes such as petroleum refining, electric utility and chrome plating operations, commercial operations such as gasoline stations and dry cleaners, and motor vehicle exhaust, and may exist as PM10 and PM2.5 or as vapors (gases). TACs include metals, other particles, gases absorbed by particles, and certain vapors from fuels and other sources.

The emission of toxic substances into the air can be damaging to human health and to the environment. Human exposure to these pollutants at sufficient concentrations and durations can result in cancer, poisoning, and the rapid onset of sickness, such as nausea or difficulty in breathing. Other less measurable effects include immunological, neurological, reproductive, developmental, and respiratory problems. Pollutants deposited onto soil or into lakes and streams affect ecological systems and eventually human health through the consumption of contaminated food. The carcinogenic potential of TACs is a particular public health concern because many scientists currently believe that there is no "safe" level of exposure to carcinogens. Any exposure to a carcinogen poses some risk of contracting cancer.

The public's exposure to TACs is a significant public health issue in California. The Air Toxics "Hotspots" Information and Assessment Act is a state law requiring facilities to report emissions of TACs to air districts. The program is designated to quantify the amounts of potentially hazardous air pollutants released, the location of the release, the concentrations to which the public is exposed, and the resulting health risks.

The State Air Toxics Program (AB 2588) identified over 200 TACs, including the 188 TACs identified in the federal Clean Air Act. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) has assessed this expansive list of toxics and identified 21 TACs as Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSATs). MSATs are compounds emitted from highway vehicles and nonroad equipment. Some toxic compounds are present in fuel and are emitted to the air when the fuel evaporates or passes through the engine unburned. Other toxics are emitted from the incomplete combustion of fuels or as secondary combustion products. Metal air toxics also result from engine wear or from impurities in oil or gasoline. U.S. EPA also extracted a subset of these 21 MSAT compounds that it now labels as the six priority MSATs: benzene, formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, diesel particulate matter (DPM)/diesel exhaust organic gases, acrolein, and 1,3-butadiene. While these six MSATs are considered the priority transportation toxics, the U.S. EPA stresses that the lists are subject to change and may be adjusted in future rules.[4] U.S. EPA has issued a number of regulations that will dramatically decrease MSATs through cleaner fuels and cleaner engines. According to an FHWA analysis, with an increase in vehicle miles traveled of 102 percent, reductions of 60 percent to 91 percent in MSATs are projected from 2010 to 2050.[5]

As noted in the definition above, all U.S. EPA hazardous air pollutants are considered to be TACs. CARB has assessed inhalation cancer risk for the state and has provided risk maps based on the Assessment System for Population Exposure Nationwide (ASPEN) dispersion model.[6] The ASPEN model is used in the U.S. EPA's National Air Toxics Assessment study.[7] The risk maps depict inhalation cancer risk due to modeled outdoor toxic pollutant levels, and do not account for cancer risk due to other types of exposure (e.g., direct or ingestion). Based on CARB's assessment, the largest contributor to inhalation cancer risk is diesel emissions (Diesel Particulate Matter [DPM]).

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4 FHWA, *Memorandum. Information: Interim Guidance Update on Air Toxic Analysis in NEPA Documents*, December 6, 2012.

5 FHWA, Interim Guidance Update on Mobile Source Air Toxic Analysis in NEPA - Figure 1. Available online at: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/Environment/air_quality/air_toxics/policy_and_guidance/nmsatetrends.cfm, accessed November 26, 2025.

6 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). n.d.a. "The ASPEN Model," https://archive.epa.gov/airtoxics/nata/web/html/aspen.html.

7 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). n.d.b. "National Air Toxics Assessments," https://www.epa.gov/national-air-toxics-assessment.

California law defines TACs as air pollutants having carcinogenic or other health effects. A total of 245 substances have been designated TACs under California law; they include the federal Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAPs) adopted as TACs in accordance with Assembly Bill 2728. The Air Toxics Hot Spots Information and Assessment Act of 1987, Assembly Bill 2588 (AB 2588), seeks to identify and evaluate risk from air toxics sources; AB 2588 does not regulate air toxics emissions directly. Under AB 2588, sources emitting more than 10 tons per year of any criteria air pollutant must estimate and report their toxic air emissions to the local air districts. Local air districts then prioritize facilities on the basis of emissions, and high-priority facilities are required to submit a health risk assessment and communicate the results to the affected public. Depending on risk levels, emitting facilities are required to implement varying levels of risk reduction measures.

The California-specific transportation air quality analysis model, EMFAC, is designed to model MSATs at the project level. Health effects from MSATs/TACs, i.e., cancer risks and chronic non-cancer risks from on-road traffic, have been associated primarily with DPM, benzene, and 1,3-butadiene. EMFAC can be used to estimate DPM, benzene, and 1,3-butadiene emissions. In addition to DPM, benzene, 1,3-butadiene, acetaldehyde, carbon tetrachloride, hexavalent chromium, paradichlorobenzene, formaldehyde, methylene chloride, and perchloroethylene pose the greatest existing ambient TAC risk, for which data are available, in California. DPM poses the greatest health risk among these ten TACs mentioned. Based on receptor modeling techniques, it is estimated that DPM accounts for up to 50 percent of the total regional risk in Southern California.[8]

Diesel Particulate Matter (DPM)

According to the 2013 California Almanac of Emissions and Air Quality, the majority of the estimated health risks from TACs can be attributed to relatively few compounds, the most important being particulate matter from the exhaust of diesel-fueled engines. DPM differs from other TACs in that it is not a single substance, but rather a complex mixture of hundreds of substances.[9]

On a statewide basis, based on the average potential cancer risk associated with particulate matter from diesel-fueled engines, DPM averages approximately 500 potential cancer cases per million exposed persons. In addition to these general risks, DPM can also present elevated localized or near-source

8 Ibid.

9 California Air Resources Board. *The California Almanac of Emissions and Air Quality 2013 Edition*. 2013.

exposures. Depending on the activity and nearness to receptors, these potential risks can range from a low number to 1,500 cancer cases per million exposed persons.[10]

Diesel exhaust is composed of two phases, gas and particle, and both phases contribute to the health risk. The gas phase is composed of many of the urban hazardous air pollutants, such as acetaldehyde, acrolein, benzene, 1,3-butadiene, formaldehyde and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. The particle phase is also composed of many different types of particles by size or composition. Fine and ultra fine diesel particulates are of the greatest health concern, and may be composed of elemental carbon with adsorbed compounds such as organic compounds, sulfate, nitrate, metals and other trace elements. Diesel exhaust is emitted from a broad range of diesel engines; the on road diesel engines of trucks, buses and cars and the off road diesel engines that include locomotives, marine vessels and heavy duty equipment. Although DPM is emitted by diesel-fueled internal combustion engines, the composition of the emissions varies depending on engine type, operating conditions, fuel composition, lubricating oil, and whether an emission control system is present.

The most common exposure to DPM is breathing the air that contains DPM. The fine and ultra-fine particles are respirable (similar to PM2.5), which means that they can avoid many of the human respiratory system defense mechanisms and enter deeply into the lung. Exposure to DPM comes from both on-road and off-road engine exhaust that is either directly emitted from the engines or lingering in the atmosphere.

Diesel exhaust causes health effects from both short-term or acute exposures, and long-term chronic exposures. The type and severity of health effects depends upon several factors including the amount of chemical exposure and the duration of exposure. Individuals also react differently to different levels of exposure. There is limited information on exposure to just DPM but there is enough evidence to indicate that inhalation exposure to diesel exhaust causes acute and chronic health effects.

Acute exposure to diesel exhaust may cause irritation to the eyes, nose, throat and lungs, some neurological effects such as lightheadedness. Acute exposure may also elicit a cough or nausea as well as exacerbate asthma. Chronic exposure to DPM in experimental animal inhalation studies has shown a range of dose-dependent lung inflammation and cellular changes in the lung and immunological effects. Based upon human and laboratory studies, there is considerable evidence that diesel exhaust is a likely carcinogen.

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10 California Air Resources Board and Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. "Consolidated Table of OEHHA/ARB Approved Risk Assessment Health Values." https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/classic/toxics/healthval/contable09252025.pdf, accessed November 26, 2025.

Human epidemiological studies demonstrate an association between diesel exhaust exposure and increased lung cancer rates in occupational settings.[11]

U.S. EPA's National Scale Assessment uses several types of health hazard information to provide a quantitative "threshold of concern" or a health benchmark concentration at which it is expected that no adverse health effects occur at exposures to that level. Health effects information on carcinogenic, short- and long-term non-carcinogenic endpoints are used to establish selective protective health levels to compare to the modeled exposures levels. Unfortunately, the exposure response data in human studies are considered too uncertain to develop a carcinogenic unit risk for U.S. EPA's use. There is a Reference Concentration (RFC) that is used as a health benchmark protective of chronic non-carcinogenic health effects but it is for diesel exhaust and not specifically set for DPM. The RFC for diesel exhaust, which includes DPM, is 5 $\mu g/m^3$.[12] This benchmark is lower than the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for fine particulate matter (PM2.5), which are 12 $\mu g/m^3$ annual (primary) and 35 $\mu g/m^3$ 24-hour.

Unlike other TACs, no ambient monitoring data are available for DPM because no routine measurement method currently exists. However, California Air Resources Board has made preliminary concentration estimates based on a PM exposure method. This method uses the ARB emissions inventory's PM10 database, ambient PM10 monitoring data, and the results from several studies to estimate concentrations of DPM.

Health Studies

As discussed above, vehicle emissions contain a number of substances that can be harmful, including TACs such as benzene and diesel PM. A growing body of scientific evidence shows that living or going to school near roadways with heavy traffic volumes is associated with a number of adverse health effects. These include increased respiratory symptoms, increased risk of heart and lung disease, and elevated mortality rates. Although many early studies were conducted in Europe, subsequent research in the United States and California has confirmed similar results.

Children's Health Study. In 2005, the *Children's Health Study*, a ten-year study conducted by the University of Southern California School of Medicine, found strong evidence that exposure to pollutants related to vehicle emissions such as NO_2 and elemental carbon (or soot) is linked to a slowing of lung function growth. The researchers concluded that the resulting deficits in lung function are likely permanent and may increase the risk for respiratory and other diseases later in life. The study also found that the children in

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11 U.S. OSHA, Diesel Exhaust/ Diesel Particulate Matter. Available at https://www.osha.gov/dts/hazardalerts/diesel_exhaust_hazard_alert.html, accessed November 26, 2025.

12 Ibid.

the study who lived nearest to roadways with heavy traffic, such as freeways, showed increased risk for having asthma.[13]

The East Bay Children's Respiratory Health Study. The East Bay Children's Respiratory Health Study, conducted in 2001, included more than 1,100 students between the 3rd and 5th grades.[14] The study included ten neighborhoods with school sites located upwind and downwind from major roads. The San Francisco Bay area has strong prevailing winds, and this study found that downwind direction and proximity to major roads was an important determinant of increased exposure to traffic pollutants. This study found higher concentrations of black carbon, oxides of nitrogen, and nitrogen oxide at schools located downwind from freeways as compared with those schools upwind or farther from major traffic sources.

For children residing at their current address for at least one year, investigators found a modest but significant increase of five to eight percent in bronchitis and asthma symptoms in children in neighborhoods with higher concentrations of traffic pollutants.

California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) School Study. The OEHHA studied public schools in California, various socioeconomic factors, and their proximity to major roads. The study found that about two percent of all the public schools in California, approximately 150,000 students, are located within 150 meters (500 feet) of busy roadways. The study also provided recommendations on ways to mitigate exposure of students to traffic-related pollutants in the event that a school is located near major roads.

Air Quality and Land Use Handbook. The studies described in the above paragraphs, along with other similar studies, were considered by the ARB in the preparation of the publication, Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective.[15] In the discussion of traffic emissions and health effects, the key health findings included the following:

- Reduced lung function in children was associated with traffic density, especially trucks, within 1,000 feet, and the association was strongest within 300 feet;
- Increased asthma hospitalizations were associated with living within 650 feet of heavy traffic and heavy truck volume;
- Asthma symptoms increased with proximity to roadways, and the risk was greatest within 300 feet;

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13 Ibid.

14 CARB, *The East Bay Children's Health Study; Traffic-Related Air Pollution Near Busy Roads*, June 7, 2004.

15 ARB, *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective*, April 2005.

- Asthma and bronchitis symptoms in children were associated with proximity to high levels of traffic in a San Francisco Bay Area community with good overall regional air quality; and
- A San Diego study found increased medical visits in children living within 550 feet of heavy traffic.

The ARB concludes their analysis with the following recommendation: Avoid siting new sensitive land uses within 500 feet of a freeway, urban roads with 100,000 vehicles/day, or rural roads with 50,000 vehicles/day.

Childhood Asthma. A study published in 2006 examined the relationship of residence near a freeway and susceptibility to childhood asthma.[16] This study found residence within 75 meters (245 feet) of a major road was associated with an increased risk of lifetime asthma, prevalent asthma, and wheeze. The higher risk of asthma near a major road decreased to background rates at 150 to 200 meters (490 to 655 feet) from the road. In children with a parental history of asthma and in children moving to the residence after two years of age, there was no increased risk associated with exposure. A similar pattern of effects was observed with traffic-modeled exposure. These results indicate that residence near a major road is associated with asthma.

Traffic and Lung Development. In February 2007, a study examined the pulmonary function of more than 3,500 children over a period of eight years.[17] The studies were conducted in 12 California communities. Health effects related to distance from freeways were divided into three groups: less than 500 meters (1,640 feet) from the freeway, 500 to 1,500 meters (1,640 to 4,920 feet) from the freeway, and greater than 1,500 meters (4,920 feet) from the freeway.

The study shows that the residential proximity to freeway traffic is associated with substantial deficits in lung-function development in children. The effects were greater for those children who lived within 500 meters (1,640 feet) of a freeway than for those who lived at least 1,500 meters (4,920 feet) from a freeway. Since lung development is nearly complete by age 18 years, an individual with a deficit at this time will probably continue to have less than healthy lung function for the remainder of his or her life. The study did not find any evidence that traffic effects varied depending on background air quality, which suggests that even in an area with low regional pollution, children living near a major roadway are at increased risk

16 McConnell, R., K. Berhane, L. Yao, M. Jerrett, F. Lurmann, F. Gilliland, N. Kunzli, J. Gauderman, E. Avol, D. Thomas, and J. Peters, *Traffic, Susceptibility, and Childhood Asthma*, 2006.

17 Gauderman, W. J., H. Vora, R. McConnell, K. Berhane, F. Gilliland, D. Thomas, F. Lurmann, E. Avol, N. Kunzli, M. Jerrett, and J. Peters, *Effect of Exposure to Traffic on Lung Development from 10 to 18 Years of Age: A Cohort Study*, The Lancet, Volume 369. February 17, 2007.

of health effects. The results also suggest that children who live close to a freeway in a high-pollution area experience a combination of adverse developmental effects because of both local and regional pollution.

Particulates at a Sacramento School Site. A multi-year study in the Sacramento area, described in a 2006 report, analyzed atmospheric particulate matter at a school site downwind of a busy secondary road.[18] The study was not a health effects study. The study is of interest for the following reasons: (1) The study indicates that exhaust from automobiles may be a greater source of toxic pollutants than diesel exhaust, and (2) a barrier of dense vegetation can be one element in a pollutant mitigation strategy.

Relevance to CEQA Analysis. These studies consistently demonstrate that proximity to major roadways increases risks of asthma, bronchitis, and impaired lung development in children. For CEQA adequacy, these findings support reliance on CARB's land use guidance, which recommends avoiding siting sensitive receptors (schools, parks, residences) within 500 feet of freeways or other high-volume roads.

3.2.1.5 Ambient Air Monitoring

CARB has established and maintains a network of sampling stations in conjunction with local air pollution control districts (APCDs) and air quality management districts (AQMDs), private contractors, and the National Park Service. The monitoring station network provides air quality monitoring data, including real-time meteorological data and ambient pollutant levels, as well as historical data. To identify ambient concentrations of the criteria pollutants, the SJVAPCD operates air quality monitoring stations throughout the SJVAB. Kern County consists of 15 monitoring stations; the nearest air monitoring station to the Project Site with available data is the Bakersfield – California Avenue monitoring station located approximately 9 miles east of the Project Site at 5558 California Avenue in Bakersfield. A summary of the monitored values for O_3, NO_2, PM10, and PM2.5 for the three most recent years for which data are available is presented in **Table 3.2-3, Ambient Pollutant Concentrations.**

Table 3.2-3
Ambient Air Pollutant Concentrations

Pollutant	Standards[1]	Year		
		2022	2023	2024
Ozone (O_3)				
Maximum 1-hour concentration monitored (ppm)		0.093	0.088	0.099
Maximum 8-hour concentration monitored (ppm)		0.076	0.079	0.089
Number of days exceeding state 1-hour standard	0.09 ppm	0	0	2

18 Cahill, T. A., *Vehicular Exposures and Potential Mitigations Downwind of Watt Avenue, Sacramento, CA. Report to The Health Effects Task Force, Breathe California of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails*, 2006.

Pollutant	Standards[1]	Year		
		2022	2023	2024
Number of days exceeding federal/state 8-hour standard	0.070 ppm	4 / 7	7 / 7	36 / 38
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)				
Maximum 1-hour concentration monitored (ppm)		0.054	0.058	0.057
Annual average concentration monitored (ppm)		0.011	0.009	*
Number of days exceeding state 1-hour standard	0.18 ppm	0	0	0
Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5)				
Maximum 24-hour concentration monitored (µg/m³)		58.1	63.7	71.9
Annual average concentration monitored (µg/m³)		*	12.0	*
Number of samples exceeding federal standard	35 µg/m³	35	10	15
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM10)				
Maximum 24-hour concentration monitored (µg/m³)		134.7	181.3	129.7
Annual average concentration monitored (µg/m³)		46.8	39.8	41.1
Number of samples exceeding federal standard	50 µg/m³	0	1	0
Number of samples exceeding state standard	20 µg/m³	139	109	110

Source: California Air Resource Board. Top 4 Summary. Available online at: https://www.arb.ca.gov/adam/topfour/topfour1.php,accessed October 2025.

[1] Parts by volume per million of air (ppm), micrograms per cubic meter of air (µg/m³), or annual arithmetic mean (aam).

[2] The 8-hour federal O_3 standard was revised from 0.075 ppm to 0.070 ppm in 2015. The statistics shown are based on the 2015 standard of 0.070 ppm.

3.2.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Air quality in the SJVAB is addressed through the efforts of various federal, state, regional, and local government agencies. The agencies primarily responsible for improving the air quality within the SJVAB include the U.S. EPA, CARB, the SJVAPCD, the Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG), and the City of Bakersfield. These agencies work jointly, as well as individually, to improve air quality through legislation, regulations, planning, policy-making, education, and a variety of programs. The agencies primarily responsible for improving the air quality within SJVAB are discussed below, along with their individual responsibilities.

3.2.2.1 Federal

Federal Clean Air Act

Congress passed the first major Clean Air Act (CAA) in 1970 (42 U.S. Code [USC] Sections 7401 et seq.). This Act gives the EPA broad responsibility for regulating motor vehicle and other emissions from many sources of air pollution, from mobile to stationary sources. Pursuant to the CAA, the EPA is authorized to regulate air emissions from mobile sources like heavy-duty trucks, agricultural and construction equipment, locomotives, lawn and garden equipment, and marine engines; and stationary sources such as

power plants, industrial plants, and other facilities. The CAA sets National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for the six most common air pollutants to protect public health and public welfare. These pollutants include particulate matter, ozone, carbon monoxide, sulfur oxides, nitrogen oxides, and lead. For each pollutant, the U.S. EPA designates an area as attainment for meeting the standard or nonattainment for not meeting the standard. A maintenance designation entails an area that was previously designated as nonattainment but is currently designated as attainment. The CAA directs states to develop state implementation plans (SIPs), applicable to appropriate industrial sources in the state, in order to achieve these standards.

The U.S. EPA is responsible for enforcing the federal Clean Air Act and the NAAQS. The U.S. EPA regulates emission sources that are under the exclusive authority of the federal government, such as aircraft, ships, and certain locomotives. The U.S. EPA also maintains jurisdiction over emissions sources outside state waters (outer continental shelf), and establishes various emissions standards for vehicles sold in states other than California. These standards identify levels of air quality for seven criteria pollutants: O_3, CO, NO_2, SO_2, PM10, PM2.5, and lead. The thresholds are considered to be the maximum concentration of ambient (background) air pollutants determined safe to protect the public health and welfare with an adequate margin of safety.

As part of its enforcement responsibilities, the U.S. EPA requires each state with areas that do not meet the federal standards to prepare and submit a State Implementation Plan (SIP) that demonstrates the means to attain the federal standards. The SIP must integrate federal, state, and local plan components and regulations to identify specific measures to reduce pollution, using a combination of performance standards and market-based programs within the time frame identified in the SIP. Note that an SIP is not a single document, but rather a collection of documents including technical reports, district rules, state regulations, programs, and air quality management plans (AQMPs). AQMPs are developed by the local air districts to ensure local compliance with the aims of the SIP, and become part of the SIP once submitted and approved. Consequently, compliance with the applicable SIP ensures compliance with the AQMP as well.

The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments were enacted to better protect the public's health and create more efficient methods to lower pollutant emissions. The major areas of improvement addressed in the amendments include NAAQS, air basin designations, automobile/heavy-duty engine emissions, and hazardous air pollutants. The U.S. EPA designated air basins as being in attainment or nonattainment for each of the seven criteria pollutants. Nonattainment air basins for ozone are further ranked (marginal, moderate, serious, severe, or extreme) according to the degree of nonattainment. CARB is required to describe in its SIP how the state will achieve federal standards by specified dates for each air basin that has

failed to attain a NAAQS for any criteria pollutant. The extent of a given SIP depends on the severity of the air quality condition within the state or a specific air basin.

In response to rapid population growth and the associated rise in motor vehicle operations, the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments addressed tailpipe emissions from automobiles, heavy-duty engines, and diesel fuel engines. The amendments established more stringent standards for hydrocarbons, NO_x, and CO emissions in order to reduce the ozone and carbon monoxide levels in heavily populated areas. Under the 1990 Clean Air Act, new fuels were required to be less volatile, contain less sulfur (regarding diesel fuel), and have higher levels of oxygenates (oxygen-containing substances to improve fuel combustion). The U.S. EPA also has regulatory and enforcement jurisdiction over emission sources beyond state waters (outer continental shelf), and those that are under the exclusive authority of the federal government, such as aircraft, locomotives, and interstate trucking.

Due to the lack of a substantial reduction in hazardous emissions under the 1977 Clean Air Act, the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments listed 189 hazardous air pollutants (HAPs), which are carcinogenic, mutagenic, and/or reproductive toxicants, to be reduced. The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments impact major stationary sources and area emissions sources, requiring the use of Maximum Achievable Control Technology (MACT) to reduce HAP emissions and their associated health impacts.

Transportation Conformity

Transportation conformity is required under Clean Air Act section 176(c) to ensure that federally supported highway and transit project activities are consistent with ("conform to") the purpose and requirements of the SIP. Conformity currently applies to areas that are designated non-attainment, and those re-designated to attainment after 1990 ("maintenance areas" with plans developed under CAA section 175A) for the following transportation-related criteria pollutants: ozone, particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), CO, and NO2. Conformity to the purpose of the SIP means that transportation activities will not cause new air quality violations, worsen existing violations, or delay timely attainment of the relevant NAAQS. The transportation conformity regulation is found in 40 CFR part 93.

Conformity also requires reporting on the timely implementation of Transportation Control Measures (TCMs) , thus reinforcing the link between AQMP/SIPs and the transportation planning process. TCMs are expected to be given funding priority and to be implemented on schedule, and, in the case of any delays, any obstacles to implementation have been or are being overcome.

3.2.2.2 State

California Clean Air Act of 1988

The California CAA of 1988 (CCAA) allows states to adopt ambient air quality standards and other regulations if they are at least as stringent as federal standards. CARB, a part of the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA), is responsible for the coordination and administration of both federal and state air pollution control programs within California, including setting the CAAQS. The CCAA, amended in 1992, requires all air quality management districts (AQMDs) in the state to achieve and maintain the CAAQS. The CAAQS are generally stricter than national standards for the same pollutants and have also established state standards for sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, vinyl chloride, and visibility-reducing particles, for which there are no national standards. CARB also conducts research, compiles emission inventories, develops suggested control measures, and provides oversight of local programs. CARB also has primary responsibility for the development of California's State Implementation Plan (SIP), for which it works closely with the federal government and the local air districts.

California Air Toxics "Hot Spots" Information and Assessment Act (AB 2588)

The California Air Toxics Program is supplemented by the Air Toxics "Hot Spots" program, which became law (AB 2588, Statutes of 1987) in 1987. In 1992, the AB 2588 program was amended by Senate Bill 1731 to require facilities that pose a significant health risk to the community to perform a risk reduction audit and reduce their emissions through implementation of a risk management plan. Under this program, which is required under the Air Toxics "Hot Spots" Information and Assessment Act (Section 44363 of the California Health and Safety Code), facilities are required to report their air toxics emissions, assess health risks, and notify nearby residents and workers of significant risks when present.

Typically, land development projects generate diesel emissions from construction vehicles during the construction phase, as well as some diesel emissions from small trucks during the operational phase. Diesel exhaust is mainly composed of particulate matter and gases, which contain potential cancer-causing substances. Emissions from diesel engines currently include over 40 substances that are listed by the U.S. EPA as hazardous air pollutants and by CARB as TACs. On August 27, 1998, CARB identified particulate matter in diesel exhaust as a TAC, based on data linking diesel particulate emissions to increased risks of lung cancer and respiratory disease.[19]

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19 Diesel exhaust is included within pollutants subject to the hotspot program. Please refer to OEHHA's Air Toxics Hot Spot Program Risk Assessment Guidelines. Available online at: https://oehha.ca.gov/air/crnr/notice-adoption-air-toxics-hot-spots-program-guidance-manual-preparation-health-risk-0, accessed November 25, 2025.

In March 2015, the OEHHA adopted "The Air Toxics Hot Spots Program Guidance Manual for Preparation of Health Risk Assessments" in accordance with the Health and Safety Code, Section 44300. The Final Guidance Manual incorporates the scientific basis from three earlier developed Technical Support Documents to assess risk from exposure to facility emissions. The 2015 OEHHA Final Guidance has key changes including greater age sensitivity for children, decreased exposure durations, and higher breathing rate profiles. Because cancer risk could be up to three times greater using this new guidance, it may result in greater mitigation requirements, more agency backlog, and increased difficulty in getting air permits.

The CARB provides a computer program, the Hot Spots Analysis and Reporting Program (HARP), to assist in a coherent and consistent preparation of a Health Risk Assessment (HRA). HARP2, an update to HARP, was released in March 2015. HARP2 has a more refined risk characterization for HRAs and CEQA documents, incorporating the 2015 OEHHA Final Guidance.

3.2.2.3 Regional[20]

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

The SJVAPCD is the regional agency responsible for the regulation and enforcement of federal, state, and local air pollution control regulations in the SJVAB. The SJVAPCD jurisdiction includes all of Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Madera, Fresno, Kings, and Tulare Counties, and the San Joaquin Valley portion of Kern County.

Air Quality Plans

The SJVAPCD has prepared several air quality attainment plans to achieve the O_3 and PM standards, the most recent of which include the 2020 Reasonably Available Control Technology Demonstration for the 2015 8-Hour Ozone Standard; 2016 Plan for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard; 2014 Reasonably Available Control Technology Demonstration for the 8-Hour Ozone State Implementation Plan; 2013 Plan for the Revoked 1-Hour Ozone Standard; 2007 PM10 Maintenance Plan and Request for Redesignation; 2012 PM2.5 Plan; 2015 Plan for the 1997 PM2.5 Standard; 2016 Moderate Area Plan for the 2012 PM2.5 Standard; and the 2018 Plan for the 1997, 2006, and 2012 PM2.5 Standards. The following sections summarize key elements of these and other recent air quality attainment plans.

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20 Regional regulatory framework provided by MD Acoustics, LLC, Bakersfield Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impact Study, December 23, 2025. See **Appendix 3.2.**

Extreme 1-Hour Ozone Attainment Demonstration Plan

The Extreme 1-Hour Ozone Attainment Demonstration Plan, adopted by the SJVAPCD Governing Board on October 8, 2004, sets forth measures and emission-reduction strategies designed to attain the federal 1-hour O_3 standard by November 15, 2010, as well as an emissions inventory, outreach, and rate of progress demonstration. This plan was approved by the EPA on March 8, 2010; however, the EPA's approval was subsequently withdrawn effective November 26, 2012, in response to a decision issued by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (Sierra Club v. EPA, 671 F.3d 955) remanding the EPA's approval of these SIP revisions. Concurrent with the EPA's final rule, CARB withdrew the 2004 plan. The SJVAPCD developed a new plan for the 1-hour O_3 standard, the 2013 Plan for the Revoked 1-Hour Ozone Standard, which it adopted in September 2013.

2007 8-Hour Ozone Plan

The 2007 8-Hour Ozone Plan, adopted by the Governing Board on April 30, 2007, sets forth measures and a "dual path" strategy to attain the federal 1997 8-hour O_3 standard by 2023 for the SJVAB by reducing emissions of O_3 and PM precursors. The plan also includes provisions for improved pollution control technologies for mobile and stationary sources, as well as an increase in state and federal funding for incentive-based measures to reduce emissions. All local measures would have been adopted by the SJVAPCD before 2012. This plan was approved by the EPA on April 30, 2012. On November 26, 2012, however, the EPA withdrew its determination that the plan satisfied the federal Clean Air Act requirements regarding emissions growth caused by growth in vehicle miles traveled. All other determinations in the EPA's March 1, 2012, rule approving the plan remain unchanged and in effect. The SJVAPCD is currently in the process of developing an O_3 plan to address EPA's 2008 8-hour O_3 standard, with attainment required by 2032.

2009 Reasonably Available Control Technology State Implementation Plan

On April 16, 2009, the Governing Board adopted the Reasonably Available Control Technology Demonstration for Ozone State Implementation Plans (2009 RACT SIP). In part, the 2009 RACT SIP satisfied the commitment by the SJVAPCD for a new RACT analysis for the 1-hour O_3 plan (see discussion of the EPA withdrawal of approval in the Extreme 1-Hour Ozone Attainment Demonstration Plan summary above) and was intended to prevent all sanctions that could be imposed by the EPA for failure to submit a required SIP revision for the 1-hour O_3 standard. With respect to the 8-hour standard, the plan also assesses the SJVAPCD's rules based on the adjusted major source definition of 10 tons per year (due to the SJVAB's designation as an extreme O_3 nonattainment area), evaluates SJVAPCD rules against new Control

Techniques Guidelines promulgated since August 2006, and reviews additional rules and rule amendments that had been adopted by the Governing Board since August 17, 2006, for RACT consistency.

2013 Plan for the Revoked 1-Hour Ozone Standard

The SJVAPCD developed a plan for the U.S. EPA's revoked 1-hour O_3 standard after the EPA withdrew its approval of the 2004 Extreme 1-Hour Ozone Attainment Demonstration Plan as a result of litigation. As a result of the litigation, the U.S. EPA reinstated previously revoked requirements for 1-hour O_3 attainment plans. The 2013 plan addresses those requirements, including a demonstration of implementation of reasonably available control measures and a demonstration of a rate of progress averaging 3 percent annual reductions of ROG or NOx emissions every 3 years. The 2013 Plan for the Revoked 1-Hour Ozone Standard was approved by the Governing Board on September 19, 2013.

2014 RACT SIP

On June 19, 2014, the Governing Board adopted the 2014 Reasonably Available Control Technology Demonstration for the 8-Hour Ozone State Implementation Plan (2014 RACT SIP). The 2014 RACT SIP includes a demonstration that the SJVAPCD rules implement RACT. The plan reviews each of the NOx reduction rules and concludes that they satisfy requirements for stringency, applicability, and enforceability, and meet or exceed RACT. The plan's analysis of further ROG reductions through modeling and technical analyses demonstrates that added ROG reductions will not advance SJVAB's O_3 attainment. Each ROG (i.e., VOC) rule evaluated in the 2009 RACT SIP, however, has been subsequently approved by the U.S. EPA as meeting RACT within the last 2 years. The O_3 attainment strategy, therefore, focuses on further NOx reductions.

SJVAPCD 2016 Plan for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard

The SJVAPCD adopted the 2016 Plan for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard in June 2016. This plan demonstrates the practicable and expeditious attainment of the 75 parts per billion 8-hour O_3 standard.

SJVAPCD 2016 Moderate Area Plan for the 2012 PM2.5 Standard

The SJVAPCD adopted the 2016 Moderate Area Plan for the 2012 PM2.5 Standard on September 15, 2016. This plan addresses the EPA federal annual PM2.5 standard of 12 micrograms per cubic meter (μg/m3), established in 2012. This plan includes an attainment impracticability demonstration and request for reclassification of the SJVAB from Moderate nonattainment to Serious nonattainment.

SJVAPCD 2018 Plan for the 1997, 2006, and 2012 PM2.5 Standards

The SJVAPCD adopted the 2018 Plan for the 1997, 2006, and 2012 PM2.5 Standards on November 15, 2018. This plan addresses the U.S. EPA federal 1997 annual PM2.5 standard of 15 μg/m^3 and 24-hour PM2.5 standard of 65 μg/m^3, the 2006 24-hour PM2.5 standard of 35 μg/m^3, and the 2012 annual PM2.5 standard of 12 μg/m^3. This plan demonstrates attainment of the federal PM2.5 standards as expeditiously as practicable.

2020 RACT Demonstration

The SJVAPCD adopted the 2020 RACT Demonstration for the 2015 8-Hour Ozone Standard on June 18, 2020. The San Joaquin Valley is classified as an Extreme nonattainment area for the 2015 O_3 standard. The 2020 RACT Demonstration includes a comprehensive evaluation of all NOx and ROG SJVAPCD rules to ensure that each rule meets or exceeds RACT. The 2020 RACT Demonstration fulfills Clean Air Act requirements and demonstrates that all federal RACT requirements continue to be satisfied in the San Joaquin Valley.

Particulate Matter Attainment Plans

2007 PM10 Maintenance Plan and Request for Redesignation

On September 20, 2007, the Governing Board approved the 2007 PM10 Maintenance Plan and Request for Redesignation. After achieving compliance with the annual and 24-hour NAAQS for PM10 during the period from 2003 to 2006, the SJVAPCD prepared the 2007 PM10 Maintenance Plan and Request for Redesignation. The plan includes future emission estimates through 2020 and, based on modeling, projects that SJVAB will continue to attain the PM10 NAAQS through 2020. The plan does not call for the adoption of new control measures. Measures called for in the 2007 8-Hour Ozone Plan and 2008 PM2.5 Plan (discussed below) will also produce PM10 benefits; however, the plan does include a contingency plan if future PM10 levels were to exceed the NAAQS. It also includes a request that the U.S. EPA redesignate the SJVAB to attainment status for the PM10 NAAQS. On October 25, 2007, CARB approved the SJVAPCD's plan with modifications to the transportation conformity budgets. On September 25, 2008, the U.S. EPA redesignated the SJVAB to attainment for the PM10 NAAQS and approved the PM10 maintenance plan.

2008 PM2.5 Plan

The SJVAPCD Governing Board adopted the 2008 PM2.5 Plan on April 30, 2008. This plan is designed to assist the SJVAB in attaining all PM2.5 standards, including the 1997 federal standards, the 2006 federal standards, and the state standard, as soon as possible. On July 13, 2011, the EPA issued a proposed rule

partially approving and disapproving the 2008 PM2.5 Plan. Subsequently, on November 9, 2011, the EPA issued a final rule approving most of the plan with an effective date of January 9, 2012. However, the EPA disapproved of the plan's contingency measures because they would not provide sufficient emissions reductions.

2012 PM2.5 Plan

Approved by the Governing Board on December 20, 2012, the 2012 PM2.5 Plan addresses attainment of EPA's 24-hour PM2.5 standard of 35 μg/m^3 established in 2006. In addition to reducing direct emissions of PM2.5, this plan focuses on reducing emissions of NOx, which is a predominant pollutant in the formation of PM2.5 in the SJVAB. The plan relies on a multilevel approach to reducing emissions through SJVAPCD efforts (industry, the general public, employers, and small businesses) and state/federal efforts (passenger vehicles, heavy-duty trucks, and off-road sources), as well as SJVAPCD and state/federal incentive programs to accelerate replacement of on- and off-road vehicles and equipment.

2015 Plan for the 1997 PM2.5 Standard

The Governing Board adopted the 2015 Plan for the 1997 PM2.5 Standard on April 16, 2015. This plan addresses the U.S. EPA's annual PM2.5 standard of 15 μg/m3 and 24-hour PM2.5 standard of 65 μg/m3 established in 1997. Although nearly achieving the 1997 standards, the SJVAB experienced higher PM2.5 levels in winter 2013–2014 due to the extreme drought, stagnation, strong inversions, and historically dry conditions; thus, the SJVAPCD was unable to meet the attainment date of December 31, 2015. Accordingly, this plan also contains a request for a one-time extension of the attainment deadline for the 24-hour standard to 2018 and the annual standard to 2020. The plan builds on past development and implementation of effective control strategies. Consistent with U.S. EPA regulations for PM2.5 plans to achieve the 1997 standards, the plan contains Most Stringent Measures, Best Available Control Measures, and additional enforceable commitments for further reductions in emissions, and ensures expeditious attainment of the 1997 standard.

2016 Moderate Area Plan for the 2012 PM2.5 Standard

On September 15, 2016, the Governing Board adopted the 2016 Moderate Area Plan for the 2012 PM2.5 Standard. This plan addresses the federal mandates for areas classified as "moderate nonattainment" for the 2012 PM2.5 NAAQS of 12 μg/m3. Consistent with EPA's PM2.5 Implementation Rule, the plan satisfies the mandate to submit a moderate nonattainment plan to EPA by October 2016, demonstrates impracticability of attaining the 2012 PM2.5 standard by the moderate nonattainment deadline of 2021, includes a request to reclassify San Joaquin Valley to a "serious nonattainment" area for the 2012 PM2.5

standard, satisfies all federal Clean Air Act requirements for moderate nonattainment areas, and demonstrates that emissions are continuing to be reduced in San Joaquin Valley.

2017 Particulate Matter Plans

The SJVAPCD is in the process of developing an attainment strategy to address the 1997, 2006, and 2012 PM2.5 standards and a plan to demonstrate maintenance of the 1987 PM10 standard, as required under the federal Clean Air Act.

Senate Bill 656 Particulate Matter Control Measure Implementation Schedule

Senate Bill (SB) 656 was enacted in 2003 and codified as California Health and Safety Code Section 39614. SB 656 seeks to reduce exposure to PM10 and PM2.5 and to make further progress toward attainment of the NAAQS and CAAQS for PM10 and PM2.5. SB 656 required CARB, in consultation with local air districts, to develop and adopt lists of "the most readily available, feasible, and cost-effective" PM control measures. Subsequently, the air districts were required to adopt implementation schedules for the relevant control measures in their districts. In June 2005, the SJVAPCD adopted its SB 656 Particulate Matter Control Measure Implementation Schedule. The SJVAPCD analysis of the CARB list concluded that all but one of the measures that apply to SJVAPCD sources had been implemented or were in one of the SJVAPCD's attainment plans for adoption within the next 2 years. The remaining measure pertains to a future amendment of a rule for gasoline transfer into stationary storage containers, delivery vessels, and bulk plants.

SJVAPCD Rules and Regulations

The SJVAPCD's primary means of implementing air quality plans is by adopting and enforcing rules and regulations. Stationary sources within the jurisdiction are regulated by the SJVAPCD's permit authority over such sources and through its review and planning activities. Unlike stationary source projects, which encompass very specific types of equipment, process parameters, throughputs, and controls, air emissions sources from land use development projects are mainly mobile sources (traffic) and area sources (small dispersed stationary and other non-mobile sources), including exempt (i.e., no permit required) sources such as consumer products, landscaping equipment, furnaces, and water heaters. Mixed-use land development projects may include nonexempt sources, including devices such as small to large boilers, stationary internal combustion engines, gas stations, and asphalt batch plants. Notwithstanding nonexempt stationary sources, which would be permitted on a case-by-case basis, SJVAPCD Regulations VIII and IX generally apply to land use development projects and are described below.

Regulation IV – Prohibitions

- Rule 4102: Nuisance – Prohibits discharge of air contaminants or other materials from any source which causes injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public or which endanger the comfort, repose, health, or safety of any such person or the public or which cause or have a natural tendency to cause injury or damage to business or property.

- Rule 4601: Architectural Coatings – The purpose of the rule is to limit VOC emissions from architectural coatings. This rule specifies architectural coatings storage, cleanup, and labeling requirements.

- Rule 4641: Cutback, Slow Cure, and Emulsified Asphalt, Paving and Maintenance Operations – The purpose of this rule is to limit VOC emissions by restricting the application and manufacturing of certain types of asphalt for paving and maintenance operations.

Regulation VIII – Fugitive PM10 Prohibition

- Rule 8021: Construction, Demolition, Excavation, Extraction, and Other Earthmoving Activities. The purpose of this rule is to limit fugitive dust emissions from construction, demolition, excavation, extraction, and other earthmoving activities. The rule outlines Dust Control Plan requirements for certain applicable construction activities.

- Rule 8031: Bulk Materials. The purpose of the rule is to limit fugitive dust emissions from the outdoor handling, storage, and transport of bulk materials.

- Rule 8041: Carryout and Trackout. The purpose of this rule is to prevent or limit fugitive dust emissions from carryout and trackout.

- Rule 8051: Open Areas. The purpose of this rule is to limit fugitive dust emissions from open areas.

- Rule 8061: Paved and Unpaved Roads. The purpose of this rule is to limit fugitive dust emissions from paved and unpaved roads by implementing control measures and design criteria.

- Rule 8071: Unpaved Vehicle/Equipment Traffic Areas. The purpose of this rule is to limit fugitive dust emissions from unpaved vehicle and equipment traffic areas.

Regulation IX – Mobile and Indirect Sources

- Rule 9110: General Conformity. The rule specifies the criteria and procedures for determining the conformity of federal actions with the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District's air quality implementation plan.

- Rule 9120: Transportation Conformity. The rule sets forth the principles for determining conformity of transportation plans, programs, and projects which are developed, funded, or approved by the United States Department of Transportation (DOT), and by metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) or other recipients of funds under Title 23 U.S.C. or the Federal Transit Act. The rule sets forth policy, criteria, and procedures for demonstrating and assuring conformity of such activities to an applicable implementation plan developed pursuant to the Clean Air Act.

- Rule 9410: Employer-Based Trip Reduction. The purpose of this rule is to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) from private vehicles used by employees to commute to and from their worksites to reduce emissions of oxides of nitrogen, volatile organic compounds, and particulate matter.

- Rule 9510: Indirect Source Review (ISR). The purpose of this rule is to fulfill the District's emission reduction commitments in the PM10 and Ozone Attainment Plans, achieve emission reductions from the construction and use of development projects through design features and on-site measures, and provide a mechanism for reducing emissions from the construction of and use of development projects through off-site measures.

- Rule 9610: State Implementation Plan Credit for Emission Reductions Generated through Incentive Programs. The purpose of this rule is to provide an administrative mechanism for the District to achieve credit towards SIP requirements for emission reductions achieved in the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin through incentive programs administered by the District, United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, or CARB.

Rule 9510: Indirect Source Review

The ISR rule, which was adopted December 15, 2005, and went into effect March 1, 2006, requires developers of new residential, commercial, and some industrial projects to reduce NOx and PM10 emissions generated by their projects. In general, development contributes to air pollution in the SJVAB by increasing the number of vehicles and vehicle miles traveled. ISR applies to development projects that require discretionary approval from the lead agency. The ISR rule also applies to transportation and transit projects with construction exhaust emissions that equal or exceed 2 tons per year of NOx or PM10. The ISR rule requires submittal of an air impact assessment application no later than the date on which the application is made for a final discretionary approval from the public agency. The air impact assessment contains the information necessary to calculate construction and operational emissions of a development project. Section 6.0 of the ISR rule outlines general mitigation requirements for developments that include a reduction in construction emissions of 20 percent of the total construction NOx emissions and 45 percent of the total construction PM10 exhaust emissions. The rule also requires the Project to reduce operational

NOx emissions by 33.3% and operational PM10 emissions by 50% compared to the unmitigated baseline. Section 7.0 of the ISR rule includes fee schedules for construction or operational excess emissions of NOx or PM10—those emissions above the goals identified in Section 6.0 of the rule. Monies collected from this fee are used by the SJVAPCD to fund emissions reduction projects in the SJVAB on behalf of that project. Currently, the SJVAPCD is proposing revisions to Rule 9510 that may affect the applicability mechanism of the ISR rule to ensure that the rule applies consistently throughout the San Joaquin Valley, as well as clarification and enhancement of several other aspects of the rule.

Rule 9610: State Implementation Plan Credit for Emission Reductions Generated through Incentive Programs

Rule 9610 provides an administrative mechanism for the SJVAPCD to receive credit toward SIP requirements for emissions reductions achieved in the SJVAB through incentive programs administered by the SJVAPCD, United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, or CARB. On April 9, 2015, the EPA finalized a limited approval and limited disapproval (for a minor administrative error) of Rule 9610 as a revision to the California SIP. Additional documentation regarding the effectiveness of SJVAPCD's incentive programs can be found in the 2015 Annual Demonstration Report, SIP Credit for Emission Reductions Generated Through Incentive Programs.

CEQA Relevance

The SJVAPCD's attainment and maintenance plans for ozone, PM2.5, and PM10, together with implementation of SB 656 control measures and compliance with District rules and regulations, including Regulation VIII (fugitive dust), Regulation IX (mobile/indirect sources), and Rule 9510 (Indirect Source Review), establish the regulatory baseline for air quality management in the SJVAB. Because the Valley remains in nonattainment for ozone and PM2.5, a project must demonstrate consistency with applicable SIPs and attainment plans, rely on these plans to determine significance thresholds, and incorporate mitigation measures consistent with Best Available Control Measures (BACM), Most Stringent Measures (MSM), and enforceable requirements under ISR and fugitive dust rules.

3.2.2.4 Local

The City of Bakersfield adopted the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan on December 11, 2002, and it became effective on February 26, 2003. The General Plan contains multiple goals and policies within the Conservation Element pertaining to air quality; relevant goals and policies to the Project are listed below:

Goals

1. Promote air quality that is compatible with health, well-being, and enjoyment of life by controlling point sources and minimizing vehicular trips to reduce air pollutants.

2. Continue working toward attainment of Federal, State, and Local standards as enforced by the SJVAPCD.

3. Reduce the amount of vehicular emissions in the planning area.

Policies

1. Comply with and promote San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) control measures regarding Reactive Organic Gases (ROG). Such measures are focused on: (a) steam-driven well vents, (b) Pseudo-cyclic wells, (c) natural gas processing plant fugitives, (d) heavy oil test stations, (e) light oil production fugitives, (f) refinery pumps and compressors, and (g) vehicle inspection and maintenance (1-1).

2. Encourage land uses and land use practices which do not contribute significantly to air quality degradation (l-1).

3. Require dust abatement measures during significant grading and construction operations (1-1).

4. Consider air pollution impacts when evaluating discretionary permits for land use proposals. Considerations should include (1-1):

    a. Alternative access routes to reduce traffic congestion.

    b. Development phasing to match road capacities

    c. Buffers including increased vegetation to increase emission dispersion and reduce impacts of gaseous or particulate matter on sensitive uses.

5. Consider the location of sensitive receptors such as schools, hospitals, and housing developments when locating industrial uses to minimize the impact of industrial sources of air pollution (1-1).

3.2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

3.2.3.1 Thresholds of Significance

The following thresholds for determining the significance of impacts related to air quality are contained in Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*:

> *Would the project…*
>
> - *Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?*
> - *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?*
> - *Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?*
> - *Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?*

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.7 provides that, when available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air district may be relied upon to make determinations of significance. Accordingly, the potential air quality impacts of the Project are evaluated using thresholds developed by SJVAPCD.[21]

According to the SJVAPCD, a project is non-conforming if it conflicts with or delays implementation of any applicable attainment or maintenance plan. A project is conforming if it complies with all applicable SJVAPCD rules and regulations, complies with all proposed control measures that are not yet adopted from the applicable plan(s), and is consistent with the growth forecasts in the applicable plan(s) (or is directly included in the applicable plan).

Violation of Air Quality Standards or Substantial Contribution to Air Quality Violations. The SJVAPCD recommends that projects with construction-related or operational emissions that exceed any of the following emissions thresholds listed in **Table 3.2-4** should be considered significant:

Table 3.2-4
SJVAPCD Air Quality Significance Thresholds

Pollutant	Annual Thresholds (tons/year)
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)	10
Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)	10

21 SJVAPCD, *Guidance for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts*, March 19, 2015. Available online at: https://ww2.valleyair.org/media/g4nl3p0g/gamaqi.pdf, accessed December 8, 2025.

Pollutant	Annual Thresholds (tons/year)
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM10)	15
Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5)	15
Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2)	27
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	100

Source: SJVAPCD, Air Quality Thresholds of Significance – Criteria Pollutants, March 19, 2025.

For the purposes of this analysis, a regional air quality impact would be considered significant if emissions exceed the SJVAPCD significance thresholds identified above.

3.2.3.2 Methodology

Construction Emissions

Project emissions were estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod; Version 2022.1.1.29) software, which is a statewide land use emissions computer model designed to provide a uniform platform for government agencies, land use planners, and environmental professionals to quantify potential criteria pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions from a variety of land use projects. CalEEMod was developed in collaboration with the air districts of California. Regional data (e.g., emission factors, trip lengths, meteorology, source inventory, etc.) have been provided by the various California air districts to account for local requirements and conditions. The model is considered to be an accurate and comprehensive tool for quantifying air quality and greenhouse gas impacts from land use projects throughout California.

The CalEEMod program uses the EMFAC2021 computer program to calculate the emission rates specific to the Bakersfield region of the SJVAPCD for construction-related employee vehicle trips and the OFFROAD2017 computer program to calculate emission rates for heavy truck operations. EMFAC2021 and OFFROAD2017 are computer programs generated by CARB that calculate composite emission rates for vehicles. Emission rates are reported by the program in grams per trip, grams per mile, or grams per running hour. Using CalEEMod, the peak annual air pollutant emissions were calculated and presented below. These emissions represent the highest level of emissions for each of the construction phases in terms of air pollutant emissions.

The analysis assesses the emissions associated with the construction of the proposed Project as indicated in **Table 3.2-5**. Per the site plan, the overall area to be disturbed during construction of the proposed Project was estimated to be approximately 13.07 acres. Construction of the Project would occur in two distinct phases. Phase 1, which includes the temple and associated site improvements (including ancillary

buildings, plazas, gardens, and related accessory structures), is anticipated to begin in Summer 2026 and would last for approximately 30 months. The commencement date for Phase 2, which would include the meetinghouse and additional ancillary facilities (including an outdoor pavilion and a refuse enclosure), has not yet been determined and would occur at a later time based on the needs of the Church and the community; however, Phase 2 construction is anticipated to last approximately 18 months. While the actual construction schedule would occur over these extended durations, the air quality modeling assumes a highly conservative 18-month continuous schedule to evaluate the maximum potential peak daily and peak annual construction emissions. The phases of the construction activities that have been analyzed below are: 1) demolition, 2) site preparation, 3) grading, 4) building, 5) paving, and 6) architectural coating. Additionally, while the Project proposes approximately 3,500 cubic yards (CY) of soil export and 12,324 CY of soil import, the modeling conservatively assumed 20,000 cubic yards of soil export in the grading phase. Accordingly, the CalEEMod analysis presented in the Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impact Study (**Appendix 3.2**) provides a highly conservative, worst-case estimate of the Project's emissions, as it is based on a more compressed construction schedule and higher earthwork volumes than are currently anticipated. For details on construction modeling and construction equipment for each phase, please see **Appendix 3.2.**

Operational Emissions

Operational or long-term emissions arise from mobile and area sources. Mobile sources (vehicle trips) are the largest contributor, while area sources include consumer products, natural gas combustion, landscape equipment, and architectural coatings. The operational emissions were estimated using CalEEMod.

Mobile Sources

Mobile sources include emissions from vehicle trips generated by the Project. The Project's air quality impact study calculates emissions based on distinct operational "events," defined as scheduled activities (such as temple ordinances or community gatherings) that generate vehicle traffic. The model assumes an average of approximately 48 trips per event, with a conservative assumption of up to four events per day, resulting in a total of 192 trips per day. CalEEMod applies emission factors for each trip using the EMFAC2021 model, with trip lengths reflecting local vehicle travel characteristics within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin, consistent with SJVAPCD guidance for regional operational emissions analysis. Temple trips originating from assigned stakes located outside the SJVAB generate the majority of their vehicle miles traveled outside of the air basin and are therefore not attributable to the regional SJVAB emissions calculation. The trip generation assumptions are consistent with the Project-specific travel data presented in the Traffic Impact Analysis (**Appendix 3.8**). Detailed CalEEMod output and assumptions are provided in **Appendix 3.2** to this Draft EIR.

Area Sources

Emissions from landscape equipment (e.g., mowers, trimmers, blowers) were estimated using CalEEMod defaults. Architectural coatings would comply with SJVAPCD Rule 4601, limiting the VOC content to an average of 50 grams per liter or less.

Energy Usage

CalEEMod defaults for energy consumption were applied. These defaults assume a mixed-fuel energy profile for Place of Worship land uses, incorporating both natural gas consumption for space heating and water heating and electricity consumption for lighting, cooling, and plug loads, based on building type, square footage, and regional utility data from the California Energy Commission. This assumption is consistent with the Project's design, as the temple and meetinghouse would utilize both natural gas and electricity at the time of initial construction; however, the building design includes infrastructure to accommodate a future optional transition to fully electric operations.

3.2.4 IMPACT ANALYSIS

AQ Impact 1 **Would implementation of the proposed Project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?**

Area air quality planning, including the AQMPs for the SJVAPCD, assumes that there will be emissions from new growth, but that such emissions may not impede the attainment and may actually contribute to the attainment of applicable air quality standards within the SJVAB. Construction-related emissions from projects would be temporary in nature, lasting only for the duration of the construction period, and would not have a long-term impact on the region's ability to meet state and federal air quality standards. According to the SJVAPCD, a project is non-conforming if it conflicts with or delays implementation of any applicable attainment or maintenance plan. A project is conforming if it complies with all applicable SJVAPCD rules and regulations, complies with all proposed control measures that are not yet adopted from the applicable plan(s), and it is consistent with the growth forecasts in the applicable plan(s) (or is directly included in the applicable plan). The SJVAPCD currently recommends that projects with construction-related and/or operational emissions that exceed any of the emissions thresholds listed in **Table 3.2-4**, above, should be considered significant. Conformity with growth forecasts can be established by demonstrating that the project is consistent with the land use plan that was used to generate the growth forecast. An example of a non-conforming project would be one that increases the gross number of dwelling units, increases the number of trips, and/or increases the overall vehicle miles traveled in an affected area, all in excess of the applicable land use plan.

The Project Site is designated Office Commercial (O-C) in the City's General Plan and zoned Commercial and Professional Office (C-O), which allows for the Project's religious assembly uses. As shown in **AQ Impact 2**, below, the Project's emissions do not exceed any SJVAPCD thresholds during either short-term construction or long-term operation of the Project. Therefore, as the Project is consistent with the zoning and land use designation for the site, and the construction and operation of the Project would not exceed thresholds established by the SJVAPCD, the Project would not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of the SJVAPCD air quality plans.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than Significant Impact.

AQ Impact 2 **Would implementation of the proposed Project 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?**

Regional Construction Emissions

Predicted maximum annual construction-generated emissions for the Project are summarized in **Table 3.2-5,** Regional Significance - Construction Emissions (tons/year). These calculations assume implementation of dust control measures, as required by SJVAPCD Regulation VIII (Fugitive PM10 Prohibition). As shown in **Table 3.2-5**, emissions generated during the construction of the Project would not exceed any of the emission thresholds established by the SJVAPCD. It should be noted that while the Project would implement **Mitigation Measure MM AQ-1** (requiring Tier 4 Final engines) to address toxic air contaminants (see **AQ Impact 3**), unmitigated construction emissions for criteria pollutants would also remain below SJVAPCD thresholds. Therefore, Project construction would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants to which the region is in nonattainment.

Table 3.2-5
Regional Significance - Construction Emissions (tons/year)

Maximum Annual Emissions						
Construction Year	**VOC**	**NOx**	**CO**	**SO_2**	**PM10**	**PM2.5**
2026	0.06	0.51	2.30	< 0.01	0.16	0.07
2027	0.22	0.19	0.94	< 0.01	0.02	0.01
Threshold	**10**	**10**	**100**	**27**	**15**	**15**
Exceed?	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*

*Source: MD Acoustics, December 2025. See **Appendix 3.2** .*
*Note: Project emissions account for reductions under SJVAPCD Regulation VIII. Emissions assume implementation of **Mitigation Measure MM AQ-1**, which requires all construction equipment to have an engine rating of Tier 4 Final per the health risk assessment (see below).*

Regional Operational Emissions

The operational emissions were estimated using CalEEMod and compared against SJVAPCD thresholds. Long-term operational emissions attributable to the Project are summarized in **Table 3.2-6,** Regional Significance - Operational Emissions (tons/year). As shown, the operational emissions generated by the Project would not exceed the regional thresholds of significance established by the SJVAPCD.

Table 3.2-6
Regional Significance - Operational Emissions (tons/year)

Maximum Annual Emissions						
Category	**VOC**	**NOx**	**CO**	**SO_2**	**PM10**	**PM2.5**
Area Sources	0.25	< 0.01	0.20	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01
Energy Usage	0.01	0.10	0.08	< 0.01	0.01	0.01
Mobile Sources	0.50	0.86	4.71	0.02	1.33	0.35
Total	*0.76*	*0.96*	*4.99*	*0.02*	*1.33*	*0.35*
Threshold	**10**	**10**	**100**	**27**	**15**	**15**
Exceed?	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*

*Source: MD Acoustics, December 2025. See **Appendix 3.2**.*

As shown in **Table 3.2-5** and **Table 3.2-6**, the Project's construction and operational emissions would not exceed the SJVAPCD's thresholds for any criteria air pollutants. Thus, the Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of pollutants for which the region is in nonattainment. Therefore, impacts are less than significant.

Air Quality Health Impacts

On December 24, 2018, the California Supreme Court published its opinion on the *Sierra Club et al. v. County of Fresno et. Al.* (Case No. S219783), which determined that an environmental review must adequately analyze a project's potential impacts and inform the public how its bare numbers translate to a potential adverse health impact or explain how existing scientific constraints cannot translate the emissions numbers to the potential health impacts.

Criteria air pollutants are defined as those pollutants for which the federal and state governments have established air quality standards for outdoor or ambient concentrations to protect public health. The national and state ambient air quality standards have been set at levels to protect human health with a determined margin of safety. The SJVAB is in state nonattainment for PM2.5, PM10, and O_3 and federal nonattainment for PM2.5 and O_3. Therefore, increases in particulate matter or ozone precursors (ROG/VOC and NO_X) are pollutants of greatest concern. As noted in **Table 3.2-5** and **Table 3.2-6** above, the Project would emit criteria air pollutants during construction and operation. However, the Project would not exceed SJVAPCD thresholds for ozone precursors (ROG and NO_X), PM2.5, PM10, or any other criteria air pollutants, and would not result in a cumulatively significant impact for which the region is in non-attainment.

Although the Project would emit criteria pollutants during construction and operation, emissions would not exceed SJVAPCD thresholds. It is not scientifically feasible to directly link the Project's relatively small contribution (e.g., 0.96 tons/year of NO_X) to specific health outcomes such as asthma incidence. Regional dispersion models evaluate basin-wide pollutant trends and cannot isolate health effects from a single project, and no other dispersion or emission models exist that can isolate health effects from a single project. For this reason, among others, SJVAPCD mass emissions thresholds serve as the appropriate benchmark for CEQA significance. Because Project emissions fall below these thresholds (see **Table 3.2-5** and **Table 3.2-6**), the Project would not result in a significant adverse impact on human health, and impacts are considered less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than Significant Impact.

AQ Impact 3 **Would implementation of the proposed project expose sensitive receptors to substantial air pollutant concentrations?**

As defined in the SJVAPCD's *Guidance for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts*, sensitive receptors are people who have an increased sensitivity to air pollution or environmental contaminants. Sensitive receptor locations include schools, parks and playgrounds, day care centers, nursing homes, hospitals, and residential dwelling unit(s).[22] The location of sensitive receptors is necessary to assess toxic impacts on public health. The closest existing sensitive receptors to the Project Site are residential land uses adjacent to the north, a public park (Aera Park) approximately 100 feet to the east, a church approximately 210 feet to the south, a pediatric care center approximately 290 feet to the west, and a high school approximately 1,050 feet to the southwest.

Construction of the Project would include site clearance and grading, placement of utilities, building construction, paving, application of architectural coatings, and interior finishing. Construction equipment and associated heavy-duty truck trips generate exhaust, which contains diesel particulate matter (DPM), known as a toxic air contaminant (TAC).

The SJVAPCD has defined several health risk significance thresholds for use by Lead Agencies in health risk assessments. The following SJVAPCD thresholds are used for this analysis:[23]

- Maximum Incremental Cancer Risk: >=100 in 1 million, with public notice required >=10 in 1 million and quadrennial updated summary required >=1 in 1 million
- Hazard Index (project increment) >=1.0.

Construction Analysis (Diesel Particulate Matter)

The following is a summary of the construction Health Risk Assessment (HRA) prepared by MD Acoustics (see **Appendix 3.2** to this Draft EIR).

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22 SJVAPCD, *Guidance for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts*, March 19, 2015. Available online at: https://ww2.valleyair.org/media/g4nl3p0g/gamaqi.pdf, accessed December 9, 2025.

23 SJVAPCD, APR – 1906. *Framework for Performing Health Risk Assessments.* February 12, 2020. https://ww2.valleyair.org/media/0shm0mlk/apr-1906.pdf, accessed November 25, 2025.

Construction-related activities would result in temporary, short-term project-generated emissions of DPM from the exhaust of off-road, heavy-duty diesel equipment for site grading; soil hauling truck traffic; vertical building construction; paving; application of architectural coatings; and other miscellaneous activities. For construction activity, DPM is the primary air toxic of concern. Particulate exhaust emissions from diesel-fueled engines (i.e., DPM) were identified as a toxic air contaminant (TAC) by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) in 1998.

The construction HRA evaluated DPM emissions (represented as exhaust PM10 from CalEEMod) generated during construction of the proposed project and the related health risk impacts for sensitive receptors located within 1,000 feet of the project boundary. Exhaust PM10 emissions from the construction of the project were calculated in CalEEMod (see **Appendix 3.2** to this Draft EIR).

Each emission source to be evaluated requires geometrical and emission release specifications for use in the air dispersion model. The emission source configurations applied in this assessment of construction DPM emissions are shown in **Table 3.2-7.**

Table 3.2-7
Summary of Emission Source Configurations

Emission Source Type	Relevant Assumptions
On-site Construction Emissions	• Configuration: area sources • Release height: 3.3 feet (1 meter) • Emission factors: on-site PM10 exhaust emissions per CalEEMod 2022.1.1.29 (Appendix 3.2)
Off-site Construction Truck Traffic	• Configuration: line volume sources • Release height: 12 feet (3.7 meters) • Emission factors: Mobile PM10 Exhaust emissions per CalEEMod 2022.1.1.29 (Appendix 3.2) for diesel truck trips for vendor and hauling trips, proportional for 0.65-mile path surrounding site based on minimum default trip length of 10.2 miles

*Source: MD Acoustics, December 2025. See **Appendix 3.2** to this report.*

Results of the construction HRA are summarized in **Table 3.2-8**. As shown, unmitigated construction emissions would exceed the 10 in one million threshold for carcinogenic risk at various receptors (maximum risk of 48.97 in a million at receptor 4). With respect to noncarcinogenic health risks, the maximum hazard index for chronic HI would be less than 0.1. Therefore, impacts associated with carcinogenic risk would be potentially significant, and impacts with respect to noncarcinogenic health risks would be less than significant.

Table 3.2-8
Summary of the Health Impacts from Construction of the Proposed Project (Unmitigated)

Construction		
Receptor	**Average Annual Concentration (ug/m3)**	**Maximum Cancer Risk – 1 Year (Risk per Million)**
1	2.28E-02	4.05
2	1.94E-01	34.44
3	2.66E-01	47.29
4	2.75E-01	48.98
5	2.49E-01	44.22
6	2.49E-01	44.25
7	2.14E-01	38.06
8	1.50E-01	26.68
9	6.24E-02	11.10
10	1.58E-01	28.02
Highest Value at Any Receptor Analyzed	**2.75E-01**	**48.98**
Applicable Threshold of Significance	**-**	**10**
Threshold Exceeded at Any Receptor?	**-**	**Yes**

Source: SJVAPCD, Air Quality Thresholds of Significance – Criteria Pollutants, March 19, 2025.

Construction Analysis (Valley Fever)

Coccidioidomycosis, more commonly known as "Valley Fever," is an infection caused by inhalation of the spores of the *Coccidioides immitis* fungus, which grows in the soils of the southwestern United States. When fungal spores are present, any activity that disturbs the soil, such as digging, grading, or other earth-moving operations, can cause the spores to become airborne and thereby increase the risk of exposure. The ecologic factors that appear to be most conducive to survival and replication of the spores are high summer temperatures, mild winters, sparse rainfall, and alkaline sandy soils. Statewide incidences in 2018 were 18.8

per 100,000 people, occurring largely in Central California.[24] The Project would be required to comply with SJVAPCD Regulation VIII (including Rule 8021), requiring fugitive dust mitigation measures such as periodic watering of active excavation areas and unpaved surfaces, limiting vehicle speeds on unpaved areas, covering soil transport trucks, implementing track-out prevention at site access points, and suspending dust-generating activities during high wind events. These comprehensive dust suppression techniques would control the release of the Coccidioides immitis fungus during construction activities. Therefore, impacts with respect to valley fever exposure upon sensitive receptors during construction would be less than significant.

Operational Analysis

The greatest potential for toxic air contaminant emissions during operations would be related to diesel particulate emissions associated with heavy trucks. The OEHHA has issued the *Air Toxic Hot Spots Program Risk Assessment Guidelines and Guidance Manual for the Preparation of Health Risk Assessments* (February 2015), which provides algorithms, exposure variates, cancer and noncancer health values, and the air modeling protocols needed to perform HRAs under the Air Toxics Hot Spots Information and Assessment Act of 1987. Hazard identification includes identifying all substances that are evaluated for cancer risk and/or non-cancer acute, 8-hour, and chronic health impacts. In addition, the guidelines identify any multi-pathway substances that present a cancer risk or chronic non-cancer hazard via non-inhalation routes of exposure.

Given the relatively limited number of heavy-duty truck trips during operation of the Project (up to four delivery trucks per week, or fewer than one heavy-duty diesel truck trip per day on average), the Project would not result in a long-term substantial source of TAC emissions and corresponding individual cancer risk. Consistent with SJVAPCD methodology, the Project's minimal heavy-duty diesel truck activity does not rise to a level that would warrant a detailed operational health risk assessment; operational-based PM emissions (including diesel exhaust) do not exceed any applicable local or regional SJVAPCD thresholds. It should be noted that while the Project's passenger vehicle trip generation is higher than heavy-truck traffic, passenger vehicles are primarily gasoline or electric and are not significant sources of DPM, the primary TAC of concern. Therefore, impacts with respect to long-term operational TAC would be less than significant.

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24 California Department of Public Health, *Yearly Summary of Coccidioidomycosis in California, 2012–2020 (Sacramento: California Department of Public Health, 2021),* https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/ValleyFeverDataPublications.aspx.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures

MM AQ-1: Prior to the issuance of any grading or building permits, the Project Applicant shall verify that all diesel-powered off-road construction equipment exceeding 25 horsepower used during Project construction is equipped with engines meeting U.S. EPA Tier 4 Final standards, unless the construction contractor can demonstrate to the City of Bakersfield Building Division that such equipment is not commercially available locally. The construction contractor shall prepare and maintain a complete inventory of all equipment to be used on-site, including the engine tier ratings, and shall submit this inventory to the City of Bakersfield Building Division for review and approval before construction begins. During construction, the contractor shall ensure that all applicable equipment is clearly labeled or otherwise documented to demonstrate compliance with Tier 4 Final standards.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

As stated above, unmitigated construction emissions would exceed the 10 in one million threshold for carcinogenic risk (maximum risk of 48.97 in one million at receptor 4). As shown in **Table 3.2-9,** with implementation of **Mitigation Measure AQ-1**, the carcinogenic risk at all receptors where the threshold for carcinogenic risk would be exceeded would be reduced to 8.48 or less. Tier 4 Final engines utilize advanced emission control technologies, including diesel particulate filters and diesel oxidation catalysts, which reduce DPM emissions by upwards of 85 to 90 percent compared to older, lower-tier engines. Because DPM is the primary driver of construction-related cancer risk, the mandated reduction in exhaust particulate matter proportionally lowers the health risk to nearby sensitive receptors. As such, the maximum cancer risks at the maximally exposed sensitive receptor over the construction period would be less than 10 in one million, and the maximum hazard index for chronic HI would be less than 0.1. Therefore, the estimated health risks and hazard indices are below the SJVAPCD's thresholds of significance, and construction of the Project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations in the form of airborne TACs. Impacts on human health would thus be less than significant.

Table 3.2-9
Summary of the Health Impacts from Construction of the Proposed Project (Mitigated)

Construction		
Receptor	**Average Annual Concentration (ug/m3)**	**Maximum Cancer Risk – 1 Year (Risk per Million)**
1	3.92E-03	0.71
2	3.34E-02	6.03
3	4.60E-02	8.19
4	4.76E-02	8.48
5	4.30E-02	7.66
6	4.30E-02	7.66
7	3.70E-02	6.60
8	2.59E-02	4.63
9	1.07E-02	1.98
10	2.72E-02	4.86
Highest Value at Any Receptor Analyzed	**4.76E-02**	**8.48**
Applicable Threshold of Significance	**-**	**10**
Threshold Exceeded at Any Receptor?	**-**	**No**

Source: SJVAPCD, Air Quality Thresholds of Significance – Criteria Pollutants, March 19, 2025.

AQ Impact 4 **Would the proposed project include sources that could create other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?**

According to CARB's *CEQA Air Quality Handbook,* land uses often associated with odors include agriculture (farming and livestock), wastewater treatment plants, food processing plants, chemical plants, composting facilities, refineries, landfills, dairies, and fiberglass molding. The Project would not include land uses identified by CARB as major odor sources.

Construction activities could generate detectable odors from heavy-duty equipment exhaust, asphalt paving, and architectural coatings. However, construction-related odors would be short-term in nature and end once construction is complete. In addition, the Project would be required to comply with the California Code of Regulations, Title 13, sections 2449(d)(3) and 2485, which limit the idling time of construction equipment either by shutting it off when not in use or by reducing idling to five minutes or less. Compliance with SJVAPCD Rule 4102 (Nuisance), which prohibits the discharge of air contaminants that cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to the public, would further ensure that construction odors are

minimized. Any odor impacts on existing adjacent land uses would be short-term and not substantial. Due to the short-term nature of construction-related odors, limited amounts of odor sources involved, and compliance with the above-referenced regulations, impacts related to odors during construction would be less than significant.

Potential sources that may emit odors during operation include vehicular exhaust and trash storage areas. As the Project would operate as a religious assembly use, it would not involve industrial processes or intensive agricultural activities that generate substantial odors. Trash storage areas would be enclosed and covered in accordance with City standards to minimize potential odors. Therefore, impacts related to odors during operation would be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than Significant Impact.

3.2.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative projects include local development as well as general growth within the Project area. However, as with most development, the greatest source of emissions is from mobile sources, which travel in and out of the local area. Therefore, from an air quality standpoint, the cumulative analysis extends beyond local projects and, when wind patterns are considered, encompasses a broader regional area. Consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15130, the cumulative air quality analysis considers the Project's incremental contribution in connection with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects (see **Table 3.0-1**) and regional growth projections from the 2022 Kern COG RTP/SCS (**Table 3.0-2**).

The area that encompasses the Project is designated nonattainment for O_3 and particulate matter under state and federal ambient air quality standards. The greatest cumulative impact on regional air quality would be the incremental addition of pollutants, mainly from increased traffic associated with residential, commercial, and industrial development, and from the use of heavy equipment and trucks associated with the construction of these projects. Air quality would be temporarily degraded during construction activities that occur separately or simultaneously. However, in accordance with the SJVAPCD methodology, projects

that do not exceed the SJVAPCD criteria or can be mitigated to less than the criteria levels are not significant and do not add to the overall cumulative impact.

Project operations would generate emissions of NO_x, VOC, CO, SO_2, PM10, and PM2.5, which would not exceed the SJVAPCD regional thresholds and would not be expected to result in ground-level concentrations that exceed the NAAQS or CAAQS. Therefore, operation of the Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants or ozone precursors in the nonattainment area. As a result, the Project would result in a less than significant cumulative impact from operational emissions. Accordingly, the Project's incremental contribution to cumulative regional air quality impacts is less than cumulatively considerable.

3.2.6 REFERENCES

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3.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

This section discusses the biological resources occurring at the Project Site, evaluates the significance of potential impacts to these resources based on thresholds defined in CEQA and the *State CEQA Guidelines*, and provides a determination of significance. The primary source of information for this section is the *Biological Resources Assessment, Bakersfield Temple, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Bakersfield, CA,* prepared for the Project by Terracon, dated September 22, 2025 (see **Appendix 3.3, Biological Resources Assessment**).

3.3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3.3.1.1 Regional Setting

The Project Site is located within the City of Bakersfield in Kern County. Kern County encompasses an area of varied topography and diverse ecosystems. Portions of the Coastal Range foothills, Sierra Nevada, San Joaquin Valley, and Mojave Desert are located in Kern County, contributing to its biological diversity. The Project Site is located in the southern San Joaquin Valley, a region characterized by flat terrain, extensive agriculture and urban development, as well as fragmented natural habitats.

3.3.1.2 General Site Characteristics

Soils

The Project Site soils are primarily mapped as Wasco sandy loam, a soil series that is formed in alluvium derived from granite. This soil type occurs regionally at elevations between 250 feet and 3,700 feet; the Project Site is approximately 365 feet above mean sea level. This soil series is well drained with infrequent flooding. The depth to the water table is greater than 80 inches, and the typical soil profile is sandy loam from 0 to 15 inches and sandy loam from 15 to 60 inches.

Vegetation

The vacant, graded Project Site consists primarily of ruderal native and non-native annual vegetation. Dominant species observed during the field visit include wall barley, red brome, fiddleneck, and sand pygmyweed. Other common weedy species were present, such as Russian thistle, black mustard, common stork's-bill, Mediterranean grass, silverleaf nightshade, saltgrass, common tarweed, and common mallow. A complete list of species documented during the field visit is provided on pages 17 and 18 of the Biological Resources Assessment (**Appendix 3.3**).

Approximately 9.95 acres of the Project Site contain a fiddleneck plant community and approximately 2.15 acres contain a sand pygmyweed-dominated area; together, these two vegetation units account for the approximately 12.1-acre Biological Resources Assessment study area (see Appendix 3.3). The fiddleneck plant community is characterized as an annual grassland. Emergent shrubs occur at low cover, including species such as California sagebrush and brittlebush. The sand pygmyweed-dominated area is characterized by darker soils with reduced vegetation cover that appeared to allow periodic ponding; however, this area does not constitute a vernal pool and no jurisdictional wetland features were identified within the Project Site. Although sand pygmyweed is occasionally associated with vernal pool conditions, its presence here is attributed to the seasonally moist, low-cover soil conditions rather than a true vernal pool hydrology.

3.3.1.3 General Wildlife

The fiddleneck vegetation community has the potential to support a variety of wildlife. As part of the Biological Resources Assessment prepared for the Project (see **Appendix 3.3**), a field reconnaissance survey was conducted on the Project Site (see **Section 3.3.3.2, Methodology**, below, for more information). Wildlife species observed included house finch, domestic cat, California ground squirrel, common ladybug, ants, red-tailed hawk, spotted towhee, common raven, western side-blotched lizard, California scrub jay, and mourning dove. Small mammal burrows were observed throughout the Project Site. Several burrows appeared active, and California ground squirrels were observed entering and exiting the Project Site.

3.3.1.4 Sensitive Biological Resources

Assessments for the potential occurrence of special-status species are based upon known ranges, habitat preferences for the species, and species occurrence records from the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB). The potential for each special-status species to occur on the Project Site was evaluated according to the following criteria:

- **Not Expected.** Habitat on and adjacent to the site is clearly unsuitable for the species' requirements (e.g., foraging, breeding, cover, substrate, elevation, hydrology, plant community, site history, disturbance regime). The species is not expected to be found on the site.

- **Low Potential**. Few habitat components meeting the species' requirements are present, and/or the majority of the habitat on and adjacent to the site is unsuitable or of poor quality. The species is not likely to be found on the site.

- **Moderate Potential**. Some habitat components meeting the species' requirements are present, and/or portions of the habitat on or adjacent to the site are unsuitable. The species has a moderate potential of being found on the site.

- **High Potential**. Most or all habitat components meeting the species' requirements are present, and/or the majority of the habitat on or adjacent to the site is highly suitable. The species has a high potential of being found on the site.

- **Present**. The species was observed on the site or has been recorded (e.g., CNDDB, other reports) within the last five years.

All special-status plant and wildlife species observed, historically occurring, or potentially occurring within the Project Site or its vicinity according to the CNDDB are presented in **Table 3.3-1, Summary of the Potentially Occurring Special-Status Plant and Wildlife Species**. The potential for these species to occur within the Project Site is described below.

Given the current level of disturbance and the urban landscape of the Project Site, it is highly unlikely that the special-status plant and wildlife species identified in **Table 3.3-1** would occur on-site. However, existing trees on properties adjacent to the Project Site may provide suitable nesting habitat for special-status bird species. Based on database and literature review, up to 31 special-status bird species have the potential to occur within the Gosford (California) Quadrangle.

Table 3.3-1
Summary of the Potentially Occurring Special-Status Plant and Wildlife Species

Scientific Name	Common Name	Habitat	Federal Status /a/	State Status /b/	Other	Likelihood of Occurrence Within the Project Site
			Plants			
Atriplex tularensis	Bakersfield Smallscale	Found in chenopod scrub and meadow and seep habitats, specifically with alkaline soils present.	FE	SE		**Not Expected:** No such suitable habitat present within Project Site
Caulanthus californicus	California Jewelflower	Found in chenopod scrub, pinyon and juniper woodlands, and valley and foothill grasslands.	FE	SE		**Low:** Fiddleneck—phacelia fields grassland community present in Project Site may provide limited suitable habitat.
Eremalche parryi ssp. kernensis	Kern Mallow	Found in chenopod scrub, pinyon and juniper woodlands, and valley and foothill grasslands.	FE			**Low:** Fiddleneck—phacelia fields grassland community present in Project Site may provide limited suitable habitat.
Monolopia congdonii	San Joaquin Woollythreads	Found in chenopod scrub and valley and foothill grasslands.	FE	SE		**Low:** Fiddleneck-phacelia fields grassland community present in Project Site may provide limited suitable habitat.
Opuntia basilaris var. treleasei	Bakersfield Cactus	Found in chenopod scrub and valley and foothill grasslands.	FE	SE		**Not Expected:** Suitable grassland habitat present, however, no Bakersfield cactus observed within Project Site.
			Wildlife			
Invertebrates						
Danaus plexippus	Monarch Butterfly	Found in grasslands and associated with Asclepias species. Low incidence in California during winter. Critically important wintering areas present in Coastal California.	PT	--		**Low:** May occur during migration. Flowering plant species present may provide foraging habitat.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Habitat	Federal Status /a/	State Status /b/	Other	Likelihood of Occurrence Within the Project Site
Bombus crotchii	Crotch's Bumble Bee	Found between San Diego and Redding, California in open grasslands, shrublands, chaparral, including desert margins including Joshua tree woodland and creosote scrub, and semi-urban settings.	-	CAND		**Low:** Fiddleneck—phacelia fields vegetation community present in Project Site may provide limited suitable habitat.
Desmocerus californicus dimorphus	Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle	Found in riparian scrub, specifically associated with Sambucus species.	FT	--		**Not Expected:** Sambucus species not present in Project Site.
Branchinecta lunchi	Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp	Found in vernal pools	FT	--		**Not Expected:** No such suitable habitat present in Project Site.
Mammals						
Ammospermop hilus nelsoni	Nelson's Antelope Squirrel	Found in chenopod scrub and valley and foothill grasslands.	--	ST		**Low:** Fiddleneck—phacelia fields grassland community and burrows present in Project Site may provide limited suitable habitat.
Dipodomys ingens	Giant Kangaroo Rat	Found in chenopod scrub and valley and foothill grasslands.	FE	SE		**Low**: Fiddleneck—phacelia fields grassland community and burrows present within Project Site may provide limited suitable habitat.
Dipodomys nitratoides nitratoides	Tipton Kangaroo Rat	Found in chenopod scrub.	FE	SE		**Not Expected**: No such suitable habitat present within Project Site.
Sorex ornatus relictus	Buena Vista Lake Ornate Shrew	Found in marshes, swamps, and riparian scrub.	FE			**Not Expected:** No such suitable habitat present. Soils within Project Site lacks moisture, leaf litter, and debris.
Vulpes macrotis mutica	San Joaquin Kit Fox	Found in chenopod scrub and valley and foothill grasslands.	FE	ST		**Low:** Fiddleneck—phacelia fields grassland community and burrows present throughout Project Site may provide limited suitable habitat.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Habitat	Federal Status /a/	State Status /b/	Other	Likelihood of Occurrence Within the Project Site
Dipodomys nitratoides brevinasus	Short-nosed Kangaroo Rat	Found in chenopod scrub and valley and foothill grasslands.			SSC	**Low**: Fiddleneck—phacelia fields grassland community and burrows present throughout Project Site may provide limited suitable habitat.
Eumops perotis californicus	Western Mastiff Bat	Found in chaparral, cismontane woodlands, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grasslands.			SSC	**Not Expected:** Fiddleneck—phacelia fields grassland community may provide suitable foraging habitat, however, no suitable roosting habitat present within vicinity of Project Site.
Onychomys torridus tularensis	Tulare Grasshopper Mouse	Found in chenopod scrub.			SSC	**Not Expected:** No such suitable habitat present in Project Site.
Taxidea taxus	American Badger	Found in broadleaved uplan forests chenopod scrub, chaparral, desert dunes and washes, Joshua tree woodland, Mojavean desert scrub, Sonoran desert scrub and thron woodland, and valley and foothill grasslands.			SSC	**Low:** Fiddleneck—phacelia fields grassland community and burrows present in Project Site may provide limited suitable habitat.
Reptiles						
Gambelia sila	Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard	Found in chenopod scrub.	FE	SE	FP	**Not Expected:** No such suitable habitat present within Project Site.
Actinemys marmorata	Northwestern Pond Turtle	Found in aquatic habitats including ponds, streams, creeks, and rivers. Nesting occurs in upland habitats within vicinity of these aquatic habitats.	PT	--	SSC	**Not Expected**: No such suitable habitat present within Project Site.
Anniella spp.	California Legless Lizard	Occurs from Contra Costa County south to San Diego, found in a variety of open habitats primarily in moist, loose soils.	--	--	SSC	**Not Expected:** No such suitable habitat present within Project Site.
Arizona elegans occidentalis	California Glossy Snake	Found in a range of scrub and grassland habitats, primarily with loose and/or sandy soils.			SSC	**Not Expected**: No such suitable habitat present within Project Site.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Habitat	Federal Status /a/	State Status /b/	Other	Likelihood of Occurrence Within the Project Site
Masticophis flagellum ruddocki	San Joaquin Coachwhip	Found in chenopod scrub and valley and foothill grasslands.			SSC	**Low:** Fiddleneck—phacelia fields grassland community and burrows present in Project Site may provide limited suitable habitat.
Phrynosoma blainvillii	Coast Horned Lizard	Found in chaparral, cismontane woodlands, coastal and coastal bluff scrub, desert washes, pinyon and juniper woodlands, riparian woodlands and scrub, and valley and foothill grasslands.			SSC	**Low:** Fiddleneck—phacelia fields grassland community and burrows present in Project Site may provide limited suitable habitat. Ant species present in Project Site may provide suitable source of forage.
Amphibians						
Spea hammondii	Western Spadefoot Toad	Found in cismontane woodlands, coastal scrub, valley and foothill grasslands, vernal pools, and wetlands	PT		SSC	**Not Expected:** No such suitable habitat present in Project Site.
Birds						
Gymnogyps californianus	California Condor	Found in vast habitats of undeveloped land, using large trees for roosting, and nesting on rocky cliffs or tree cavities.	FE			**Not Expected:** No such suitable habitat present within Project Site.
Empidonax traillii extimus	Southwestern Willow Flycatcher	Found in dense riparian habitats specifically vegetated with dense willows or other shrubby vegetation near water sources or saturated soils.	FE			**Not Expected:** No such suitable habitat present within Project Site.
Agelaius tricolor	Tricolored Blackbird	Found in freshwater marshes and swamps and wetlands.		ST	SSC	**Not Expected:** No such suitable habitat present in Project Site.
Buteo swainsoni	Swainson's Hawk	Found in Great Basin grasslands, riparian forests and woodlands, and valley and foothill grasslands.		ST		**Low:** Fiddleneck—phacelia fields grassland community may provide limited suitable foraging habitat.
Athene cunicularia	Burrowing Owl	Found in wide-open, sparsely vegetated areas like praries, deserts, grasslands, and agricultural fields.	SC	CAND	SSC	**Moderate:** Sparsely vegetated grassland and burrows present in Project Site may provide suitable habitat.
Charadrius nivosus nivosus	Western Snowy Plover	Found in Great Basin standing waters, sand shores, and wetlands.	FT		SSC	**Not Expected:** No such suitable habitat present in Project Site

Scientific Name	Common Name	Habitat	Federal Status /a/	State Status /b/	Other	Likelihood of Occurrence Within the Project Site
Coccyzus americanus occidentalis	Western Yellowbilled Cuckoo	Found in riparian forests.	FT	SE		**Not Expected:** No such suitable habitat present in Project Site.
Dendrocygna bicolor	Fulvous Whistlingduck	Found in freshwater marshes and swamps.			SSC	**Not Expected:** No such suitable habitat present in Project Site.
Elanus leucurus	White-tailed Kite	Found in cismontane woodlands, marshes, swamps, riparian woodlands, valley and foothill grasslands, and wetlands.			FP	**Low:** Fiddleneck—phacelia fields grassland community may provide limited suitable foraging habitat.
Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus	Yellow-headed Blackbird	Found in marshes, swamps, and wetlands with dense riparian vegetation.			SSC	**Not Expected:** No such suitable habitat present in Project Site.

Source: Terracon, Biological Resources Assessment, September 22, 2025 .
/a/ United States legal status under the Federal Endangered Species Act.
/b/ State of California legal status.
/c/ California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) designation and applies to wildlife only.
FE = Federally listed as Endangered
. FT= Federally listed as Threatened
FPD= Federally Proposed for Delisting
FC= Federal Candidate
PE= Proposed Endangered
PT= Proposed Threatened
S= Federally Sensitive
SC= National Marine Fisheries Service or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designated Species of Concern. Species of Concern status does not carry any procedural or substantive protections under the ESA.
SE= State-listed as Endangered
ST= State-listed as Threatened
SPD= State-Proposed for Delisting
S= State Sensitive
SR= State Rare
CAND = State Candidate
PE= Proposed Endangered
WL= Watch List
SSC = Species of Special Concern
CH = Critical Habitat
FP= California Department of Fish and Game designated "Fully Protected"– Permit required for "take"
CWL = California Department of Fish and Game designated "California Watch List"
SLC = California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Ranking Species of Local Concern.

Sensitive Plant Communities, Critical Habitats, and Habitat Connectivity

As shown in **Table 3.3-1**, five special-status plant species were evaluated for their potential to occur within the Project Site. These species include the Bakersfield smallscale, California jewelflower, Kern mallow, San Joaquin woollythreads, and Bakersfield cactus. While the Bakersfield smallscale and Bakersfield cactus were determined to be not expected within the Project Site, and the California jewelflower, Kern mallow, and San Joaquin woollythreads were determined to have a low potential to occur within the Project Site.

No sensitive natural communities, designated critical habitats, or mapped habitat linkages occur within the Project Site. The Project Site is surrounded by existing urban development, and habitat connectivity is limited to ruderal vegetation and disturbed grassland patches. As a result, the Project Site does not provide functional connectivity to larger habitat areas or regional wildlife corridors.

Special-Status Wildlife Species

As shown in **Table 3.3-1**, 31 special-status wildlife species were evaluated for their potential to occur within the Project Site. These species are considered special status due to state and/or federal listings under their respective Endangered Species Acts, or because they are considered a California Species of Special Concern (SSC) or Fully Protected (FP). Of these 31 species, suitable habitat for 12 species were observed on-site.

Species with a low potential to occur within the Project Site include monarch butterfly, Crotch's bumble bee, Nelson's antelope squirrel, giant kangaroo rat, San Joaquin kit fox, short-nosed kangaroo rat, American badger, coast horned lizard, San Joaquin coachwhip, Swainson's hawk, and white-tailed kite.

The burrowing owl was determined to have a moderate potential to occur on-site based on the presence of suitable grassland and burrow habitat.

Migratory Birds

Migratory birds are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), which prohibits the take of birds, nests, or eggs except as permitted by the United States Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS). The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) provides additional protections for bald and golden eagles, including their nests, which are safeguarded at all times; any disturbance or removal requires federal authorization. At the state level, the California Fish and Game Code (CFGC; Sections 3503, 3503.5, 3511, and 3513) prohibits the take, possession, or destruction of birds, nests, and eggs, with special provisions for Fully Protected species and birds of prey. Fully Protected birds (Section 3511) may not be taken or possessed at any time, with very limited exceptions, such as a specific permit from CDFW.

Although common birds are not considered special-status species, their nests and eggs remain protected under MBTA and CFGC. Although no trees are present on the vacant, graded Project Site, existing vegetation, grassland, and burrows on-site may provide suitable nesting habitat for species such as the burrowing owl (see **Table 3.3-1**). Additionally, the golden eagle, which is protected under BGEPA, could potentially occur seasonally in the vicinity.

Jurisdictional Waters and Wetlands

In accordance with Section 1602 of the CFGC, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has jurisdiction over lakes and streambeds, including adjacent riparian resources. CDFW regulates wetland areas only when they are part of a river, stream, or lake, and typically considers riparian trees greater than two inches in diameter at breast height (DBH) to be jurisdictional features. Under Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA), the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulates activities that discharge dredge or fill material into wetlands or other "Waters of the United States" (WOTUS) through issuance of a Section 404 permit. The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB) has jurisdiction over "Waters of the State" (WOTS) pursuant to the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act and issues Water Quality Certifications under Section 401 of the CWA.

The field survey confirmed that the Project Site does not contain any aquatic features, riparian vegetation, or a relatively permanent surface water connection to navigable waters. Thus, the Project Site does not support WoUs, WoS, or wetland features subject to regulation by USACE, CDFW, or CVRWQCB.

Wildlife Movement Corridors

Wildlife corridors are generally defined as connections between habitat patches that allow for physical and genetic exchange between otherwise isolated animal populations. Such linkages may serve a local purpose, such as foraging and denning areas, or they may be regional in nature, allowing movement across the landscape. Some habitat linkages may serve as migration corridors, wherein wildlife species periodically move away from an area and then subsequently return. Barriers or impediments to movement commonly include urban development, roads, fencing, unsuitable habitat, or open areas with little vegetative cover.

Although the Project Site is vacant, graded, and vegetated, it is surrounded by an urbanized environment. The nearest natural area is the Kern River, located approximately 0.27 miles southeast of the Project Site. However, intervening urban development between the river and the Project Site limits habitat connectivity and prevents the Project Site from functioning as a wildlife movement corridor or regional linkage.

3.3.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

3.3.2.1 Federal

Federal Endangered Species Act

Under the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA), the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce have joint authority to list a species as Threatened or Endangered (16 United States Code [USC] Section 1533[c]). Pursuant to the requirements of the FESA, an agency reviewing a proposed project within its jurisdiction must determine whether any federally listed or proposed species may be present in the project region, and whether the proposed project would result in a "take" of such species. The "take" provision of the FESA applies to actions that would result in injury, death, or harassment of a single member of a species protected under the Act. In addition, the agency is required to determine whether the project is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any species proposed to be listed under the FESA or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat for such species (16 USC Section 1536[3][4]). If it is determined that a project may result in the "take" of a federally listed species, "take" authorization from USFWS or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is required. If there is a federal nexus, e.g., a federal lease, permit or funding, etc., "take" authorization can be obtained under Section 7 of FESA through agency consultation and the issuance of a biological opinion by USFWS. If there is no federal nexus, "take" authorization is authorized under FESA Section 10 which requires a habitat conservation plan and issuance of an incidental take permit.

Clean Water Act

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972, often referred to as the Clean Water Act, is the nation's primary law for regulating discharges of pollutants into waters of the United States. The objective of the CWA is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. The regulations adopted pursuant to this act deal extensively with the permitting of actions in waters of the United States, including wetlands. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has primary authority to set water quality standards, but the USACE has primary responsibility for permitting the discharge of dredge or fill materials into streams, rivers, wetlands, and other waters of the United States under Section 404. CWA Section 401 requires state certification to ensure federal permits comply with state water quality standards.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

MBTA (16 USC, Sections 703 et seq.) prohibits the killing, possessing, or trading in migratory birds, except in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior. The Act protects whole birds,

parts of birds, and bird nests and eggs. With a few exceptions, most birds are covered under the MBTA. Disturbances that cause mortality or injury, such as nest abandonment or the destruction of active nests or eggs, are considered a "take" and are in violation of the MBTA. The destruction of habitat, by itself, is generally not considered a direct violation unless it results in such a take. The regulatory interpretation of the MBTA regarding incidental take has fluctuated across recent federal administrations. Most recently, in April 2025, the Department of the Interior issued Solicitor's Opinion M-37085, which reinstated previous guidance concluding that the MBTA's prohibitions apply only to affirmative, purposeful actions intended to take migratory birds. Consequently, unintentional or "incidental" take is currently not prohibited under federal enforcement of the MBTA. The most recent USFWS list of protected migratory birds was published in 2020.

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

BGEPA (16 USC Sections 668–668d) provides heightened federal protections for bald and golden eagles. The Act prohibits the take, possession, sale, or transport of eagles, their parts, nests, or eggs without a permit from USFWS. Unlike the MBTA, BGEPA defines "take" broadly to include "disturb," meaning actions that may injure eagles, reduce their productivity, or cause nest abandonment. Eagle nests are protected year-round, whether active or inactive, and any removal or alteration requires federal authorization.

3.3.2.2 State

California Endangered Species Act

Under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), the CDFW maintains lists of "Threatened" and "Endangered" species (CFGC Section 2070). CDFW also maintains a list of "candidate species," which are species formally under review for addition to either the list of endangered species or the list of threatened species. Candidate species receive the same protections as listed species under CESA (CFGC Section 2068). Additionally, under Assembly Bill 1319, signed into law on October 11, 2025, CDFW may designate California-native species as "provisional candidate" species if a federal action reduces FESA protections for those species and CDFW determines the reduction would substantially impact the species in California. Provisional candidate species receive the same protections as CESA candidate species. AB 1319 applies to species that were federally listed or FESA candidates as of January 1, 2025, and are not already protected under CESA; its provisions sunset on December 31, 2031. In addition, the CDFW maintains lists of "species of special concern," which serve as watch lists. Pursuant to the requirements of the CESA, an agency reviewing a proposed project within its jurisdiction must determine whether any state-listed species could be present and whether the project would significantly impact such species.

California Native Plant Protection Act

The California Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA) directed CDFW to "preserve, protect, and enhance Endangered plants in this state." The California Fish and Wildlife Commission may designate native plants as Endangered or Rare and require permits for collecting, transporting, or selling such plants. CESA expanded NPPA protections and established three listing categories for plants in California: Rare, Threatened, and Endangered.

California Fish and Game Code

CFGC provides a variety of protections for species in California, including those that are not listed under FESA or CESA.

- Section 3503 prohibits take, possession, or needles destruction of the nests and eggs of and native bird species (except non-native species such as English sparrows and European starlings).
- Section 3503.5 prohibits take, possession, or killing of raptors and owls, their nests, and their eggs.
- Section 3513 prohibits the take or possession of all migratory birds designated in the MBTA, except as otherwise provided by federal law.
- Section 3800 prohibits the taking of nongame birds occurring naturally in California.
- Sections 3511 (birds), 4700 (mammals), 5050 (reptiles and amphibians), and 5515 (fish) designate certain species as Fully Protected in California. Fully Protected species may not be taken or possessed at any time, and CDFW cannot authorize their take even with a CESA Incidental Take Permit.

California Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley)

CVRWQCB regulates waters through two laws. First, it regulates discharges into WOTUS that require a federal permit (e.g., USACE Section 404) by issuing a CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification, the procedures for which are detailed in the California Code of Regulations Title 23, Sections 3830-3869. Second, the CVRWQCB and the State Water Resources Control Board regulate WOTS, which includes WOTUS as well as isolated or non-jurisdictional state waters via the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (California Water Code Sections 13000 et seq). Projects impacting WOTS that do not fall under CWA Section 401 typically require the issuance of Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) or a waiver from the CVRWQCB.

3.3.2.3 Local

Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan

The City's General Plan includes a Conservation Element that addresses biological resources. Relevant policies include:

- Direct development away from "sensitive biological resource" areas, unless effective mitigation measures can be implemented.
- Preserve areas of riparian vegetation and wildlife habitat within floodways along rivers and streams, in accordance with the Kern River Plan Element and channel maintenance programs designed to maintain flood flow discharge capacity.
- Discourage, where appropriate, the use of off-road vehicles to protect designated sensitive biological and natural resources.
- Determine the feasibility of enhancing sensitive biological habitat and establishing additional wildlife habitat in the study area with State and/or Federal assistance.
- Determine the locations and extent of suitable habitat areas required for the effective conservation management of designated "sensitive" plant and animal species.
- Investigate the feasibility of including natural areas selected for the habitat conservation plan as a component of the regional park system.
- Where possible, and with the cooperation of wildlife agencies, utilize Metropolitan Bakersfield Habitat Conservation Plan (MBHCP) resources to expand/create habitat preserves with the Northeast Bakersfield Open Space Area (NBOSA).

Metropolitan Bakersfield Habitat Conservation Plan

The Metropolitan Bakersfield Habitat Conservation Plan (MBHCP) was a joint program of the City of Bakersfield and Kern County designed to assist development applicants in complying with FESA and CESA. The MBHCP provided incidental take coverage for certain listed species within the approximately 409-square-mile General Plan area, which encompasses the Project Site. The MBHCP provided this coverage through payment of mitigation fees that funded acquisition and management of habitat lands. However, the MBHCP expired on January 1, 2023, and no longer provides incidental take coverage or mitigation authority. As a result, because the Project was proposed after the MBHCP's expiration, the

Project must evaluate biological impacts individually and, if necessary, obtain project-specific permits under FESA and CESA. Habitat mitigation fees under the MBHCP are no longer applicable.

3.3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

3.3.3.1 Thresholds of Significance

The following thresholds for determining the significance of impacts related to biological resources are contained in Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*:

> *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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?*
> - *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 US Fish and Wildlife Service?*
> - *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?*
> - *Interfere substantially with the movement of any native or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors or impedes the use of native wildlife nursery sites?*
> - *Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?*
> - *Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?*

In addition, *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15065(a), Mandatory Findings of Significance, states that a project may have a significant effect if it substantially degrades 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, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal species. These mandatory findings of significance are considered in assessing project-related impacts on biological resources.

For this analysis, impacts are considered significant if they would substantially diminish or result in the loss of an important biological resource, or conflict with the application of conservation plans or

regulations. Some impacts may be locally adverse but not significant if they do not substantially diminish or permanently affect resources at the local or regional level. *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15380 also requires consideration of non-listed species that meet rare or endangered criteria. Therefore, special-status species are evaluated using current scientific knowledge of their population size and distribution.

The Initial Study (**Appendix 1.0-2** to this Draft EIR) determined that the following thresholds would be less than significant:

- 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?

- Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

The Project Site lacks hydrologic features, riparian habitat, or mapped streams, and nearby waters (Cross Valley Canal and Kern River) located approximately 0.2 miles south are separated by intervening development. Since the MBHCP has expired, the Project Site is not within any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan or Natural Community Conservation Plan area. Therefore, these thresholds are not further addressed.

3.3.3.2 Methodology

This section outlines the methodology for evaluating impacts to biological resources, including sensitive natural communities and special status species.

For this analysis, "sensitive natural communities" are considered to be habitats or natural communities that are unique, of relatively limited distribution in the region, and/or of particularly high value for wildlife. Sensitive habitats include specific natural communities defined by CDFW, as well as wetlands and riparian communities, which are considered special status natural communities due to their limited distribution in California. Sensitive natural communities are usually identified in regional or local plans, policies, or regulations, and may or may not contain special status species.

For purposes of this analysis, "special status species" include:

- Species listed as Threatened or Endangered under FESA or CESA;

- Species that are candidates for listing under federal or state law;

- Species proposed for listing by USFWS or designated as Species of Special Concern by CDFW;
- Species protected under the MBTA;
- Plant species identified as rare, threatened, or endangered by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS); and
- Any other species that may be considered endangered or rare pursuant to *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15380(b).

The impact analysis evaluates both direct and indirect effects of the Project on special status species and sensitive natural communities under the CEQA threshold questions. Impacts may include direct take of a species or the removal or disturbance of habitats, as well as indirect effects such as habitat fragmentation, pollination interruption, plant and wildlife dispersal interruption, increased risk of fire, and increased invasion of non-native wildlife and plant species that out-compete the native species.

Literature Review

Analysis of the biological resources associated with the Project Site began with a thorough review of relevant literature to establish existing conditions (see **Appendix 3.3**). The records review included:

- Hydrology and habitat data: historical aerial photographs, historic topographic maps, USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps, soil data from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), United States Geological Survey (USGS) National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) maps, publicly available light detection and ranging (LiDAR) data.
- Species occurrence data: CDFW CNDDB records, CNPS Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California, and USFWS Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) service, also referred to as the Environmental Conservation Online System (ECOS)/IPaC tool.
- Additional environmental data: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) datasets relevant to hydrology and climate.

Field Reconnaissance Survey

In addition to a literature review, a pedestrian field reconnaissance survey of the Project Site was conducted on April 10, 2025 (see **Appendix 3.3**). The survey consisted of observations of habitat suitability and visual evidence of federally or state-listed, and other special status, species. This reconnaissance was intended to

identify whether habitat preferred by special status species is present within the Project Site and to inform baseline conditions. Because this survey determined that suitable habitat for certain special-status species (including burrowing owl, nesting birds, and other special-status wildlife) is present on-site, species-specific protocol-level pre-construction surveys are required prior to ground disturbance, as detailed in **Mitigation Measures MM BIO-3** through **MM BIO-5**.

3.3.3.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact BIO-1 **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.**

The proposed Project would develop an approximately 13.07-acre (11.76 net acre) Project Site into a religious campus on a currently vacant, graded site. The Project Site is primarily composed of fiddleneck plant community, which could provide limited suitable habitat for several special-status species. No special-status species were observed during the field reconnaissance survey (see **Appendix 3.3**), and no USFWS-designated critical habitat occurs within the Project Site or adjacent areas.

As shown in **Table 3.3-1**, above, portions of the Project Site may provide limited suitable habitat for special-status wildlife including monarch butterfly, Crotch's bumble bee, Nelson's antelope squirrel, giant kangaroo rat, San Joaquin kit fox, short-nosed kangaroo rat, American badger, coast horned lizard, San Joaquin coachwhip, Swainson's hawk, white-tailed kite, and burrowing owl. The Project Site also contains grassland vegetation suitable for three special-status plants: California jewelflower, Kern mallow, and San Joaquin wollythreads. Species such as monarch butterfly, Crotch's bumble bee, Swainson's hawk, and white-tailed kite are expected to occur only temporarily for foraging; impacts to these species would be less than significant with mitigation. To ensure construction workers are aware of these species and their protections, Mitigation Measure **MM BIO-1** requires implementation of a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP), including training, educational materials, and signed acknowledgements. In addition, **MM BIO-2** requires a qualified biological monitor to be present during vegetation clearance and ground disturbance, with authority to halt work if sensitive species are at risk. These measures provide proactive avoidance and compliance monitoring for special-status wildlife and plants.

Although the Project Site provides only marginal habitat, the San Joaquin kit fox is especially known to occur in urban areas and may use disturbed grasslands and burrows for denning or dispersal. Construction activities could result in direct mortality or disturbance if kit foxes are present. Mitigation Measure **MM BIO-3** requires take-avoidance surveys within 14 days of construction to confirm the presence or absence

of kit fox and other special-status species. If kit fox dens are detected, buffers consistent with USFWS guidance must be established (i.e., a minimum radius of 50 feet for potential or atypical dens and 100 feet for known dens as measured from the den entrance), and agency consultation is required before construction proceeds. **MM BIO-2** would ensure that a biological monitor is present to enforce these buffers and halt work if necessary, while **MM BIO-1** provides worker training to recognize kit fox and avoid inadvertent disturbance. These measures would avoid or minimize potential impacts to kit fox to less than significant levels.

The burrowing owl has a moderate potential to occur on the Project Site due to the presence of suitable grassland and burrow habitat. Construction activities such as grading, excavation, and vegetation removal could result in direct disturbance of occupied burrows or destruction of nesting sites, leading to potentially significant impacts. The burrowing owl is designated as a California Species of Special Concern and a Candidate Species for listing under CESA. The burrowing owl is also protected under the MBTA and CFGC. Mitigation Measure **MM BIO-5** requires pre-construction surveys in accordance with the CDFW 2012 *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation*, including multiple survey visits during breeding and non-breeding seasons, transect-based methods, and time-of-day protocols to maximize detection. If burrowing owls are detected, avoidance buffers must be established, and agency consultation is required to develop relocation or compensatory mitigation plans before construction proceeds. **MM BIO-4** supplements this measure by requiring pre-construction nesting bird surveys and avoidance buffers around active nests, including burrowing owl nests, during the breeding season. **MM BIO-2** ensures monitoring and enforcement of these measures, while **MM BIO-1** provides worker training to recognize burrowing owls and avoid disturbance. Implementation of **MM BIO-1** through **MM BIO-5** would reduce potential impacts to burrowing owl to less than significant levels.

The majority of the Project Site contains relatively undisturbed grassland with low vegetation cover and burrows, which provide suitable nesting and foraging for migratory birds protected under the MBTA and BGEPA. Construction activities such as excavation, grading, and paving could disturb or remove suitable habitat, resulting in potentially significant impacts without mitigation. As discussed above, **MM BIO-4** specifically addresses nesting birds by requiring surveys and buffers during the breeding season, while **MM BIO-3** provides take-avoidance surveys for raptors such as Swainson's hawk and white-tailed kite. **MM BIO-2** ensures monitoring and enforcement of these measures, and **MM BIO-1** provides worker training to avoid inadvertent impacts. Implementation of **MM BIO-1** through **MM BIO-5** would ensure compliance with MBTA and BGEPA and reduce impacts to migratory birds to less than significant levels.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Potentially Significant Impact.

Mitigation Measures

MM BIO-1: **Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP).** Prior to Project-related construction activities, the Project Applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to initiate and conduct a WEAP designed to educate on-site workers about critical environmental concerns associated with the Project. This training shall be mandatory for on-site personnel and shall be administered on the first day of work, before any Project activities commence. The WEAP shall emphasize recognition and protection of special-status species potentially present within the Project Site and immediately adjacent suitable habitat, including burrowing owl, Nelson's antelope squirrel, San Joaquin kit fox, other special-status wildlife, and nesting birds.

The program shall include the following elements:

- A presentation developed by or in consultation with a qualified biologist addressing sensitive biological resources that may be present within the Project Site, the rationale for their protection, and the consequences of non-compliance.
- Brochures or booklets with written descriptions, photographs of protected species, and site rules for the protection of biological resources.
- Contact information for the Project's biological monitor with instructions for workers to report questions or concerns.
- An acknowledgement form signed by each worker confirming receipt of training and commitment to comply with biological resources protection requirements.

The Project Applicant shall ensure all on-site personnel receive WEAP training throughout the Project construction. A training log shall be maintained on-site and signed by personnel immediately after WEAP training to document compliance.

MM BIO-2: **Biological Monitor.** Prior to Project-related construction activities, the Project Applicant shall designate a qualified biologist as the biological monitor in the event of an observation of a special-status species within the Project Site during the pre-construction and take-avoidance surveys. This monitor shall be required to be on-site at all times during activities involving vegetation clearance or ground disturbance. Their primary responsibility shall be to ensure that any potential impacts to biological resources are either avoided or minimized to the greatest extent possible. Once the Project approaches a phase where it is

determined by the biological monitor that potential impacts to biological resources are no longer present, as determined by their expertise, they may request a reduction or discontinuation of biological monitoring in that specific area. The biological monitor shall also be vested with the authority to halt specific Project activities if they suspect violations of avoidance or minimization measures, or if there are concerns about compliance with local, state, or federal laws.

MM BIO-3 **Take-Avoidance Surveys for Special-Status Species.** Prior to Project-related construction activities, and within fourteen (14) days before the start of work, the Project Applicant shall retain qualified biologist(s) to conduct take-avoidance surveys of the Project Site and immediately adjacent suitable habitat. The surveys shall confirm the presence or absence of special-status species, including but not necessarily limited to:

- monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*)
- Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*)
- Nelson's antelope squirrel (*Ammospermophilus nelsoni*)
- giant kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys ingens*)
- San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*)
- short-nosed kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys nitratoides brevinasus*)
- American badger (*Taxidea taxus*)
- San Joaquin coachwhip (*Masticophis flagellum ruddocki*)
- coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*)
- Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)
- white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*)
- California jewelflower (*Caulanthus californicus*)
- Kern mallow (*Eremalche parryi ssp. kernensis*)
- San Joaquin woollythreads (*Monolopia congdonii*)

If San Joaquin kit foxes or active dens are detected, the Project Applicant shall establish exclusion zones and buffers consistent with USFWS guidance: a minimum of 50 feet for potential or atypical dens, and a minimum of 100 feet for known dens, demarcated with USFWS-approved exclusion fencing, and, for natal or pupping dens, the Project Applicant shall immediately notify USFWS; no ground-disturbing activities shall occur in the vicinity of a natal or pupping den without prior USFWS authorization.

If any of the above special-status species, or other special-status species or their active dens, burrows, or nests, are detected during the surveys, the qualified biologist shall establish

appropriate, species-specific environmentally sensitive area buffers around the den, burrow or nest.

If avoidance of any detected special-status species or its habitat is not feasible, the Project Applicant shall immediately notify the City of Bakersfield to determine appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures. For non-listed California Species of Special Concern, construction may resume once the City approves a species-specific minimization plan; formal consultation and take permits from USFWS or CDFW are not legally required. If the species is formally listed or protected by the FESA or CESA (i.e., Threatened, Endangered, Candidate, or Fully Protected), consultation with the USFWS and/or CDFW as applicable shall be initiated to determine appropriate measures. All ground-disturbing activities within established buffer areas shall be suspended and shall not resume until the Project Applicant has obtained all required incidental take authorization under the federal Endangered Species Act and/or California Endangered Species Act as applicable to the species detected (recognizing that FESA take prohibitions generally do not apply to listed plants on private land lacking a federal nexus). Mitigation may include off-site habitat conservation, participation in a conservation bank, or other measures approved by the agencies. Construction within the established buffer areas shall not proceed until all necessary agency approvals are obtained.

The biologist(s) conducting the surveys shall record a comprehensive list of plant and wildlife species observed on-site. Survey reports shall be submitted within 14-30 days of survey completion, with immediate reporting of any state or federally listed species to the City of Bakersfield and the appropriate resource agencies, specifically the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and/or the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

MM BIO-4 **Pre-Construction Nesting Bird Surveys and Avoidance.** Prior to the commencement of any ground-disturbing activity or vegetation clearing, the Project Applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to implement the following measures:

- Timing and Survey Requirements: To the maximum extent practicable, all initial ground-disturbing activities and vegetation removal shall occur outside of the local avian nesting season, generally defined as February 1 through August 31, or as otherwise determined by a qualified biologist based on local conditions. If construction or vegetation removal must occur during the nesting season, a qualified biologist shall conduct a focused survey for active nests within the Project Site and adjacent off-site habitat (including neighboring trees) within a surrounding buffer of at least 250 feet (or greater, as determined by the biologist based on site conditions and disturbance

levels). This survey shall be conducted no more than five (5) days prior to the start of ground disturbance or vegetation removal in that area.

- Avoidance and Buffers: If an active nest is identified, a temporary, environmentally sensitive area buffer shall be established around the nest location. No grading, vegetation removal, heavy equipment use, or construction activity shall occur within the buffer until the qualified biologist determines the nest is no longer active (i.e., the young have fledged and left the nest). Minimum avoidance buffer distances shall be: 50 feet for non-raptor (passerine) nests, 300 feet for non-listed raptor nests, and up to one-half mile for state or federally listed raptor species (e.g., Swainson's hawk), as approved by CDFW and/or USFWS. The qualified biologist shall serve as a construction monitor during periods when construction occurs near active nest areas and shall have the authority to halt or modify work as necessary to prevent impacts to nesting birds.

- Reporting: A survey report documenting the methods, results, established buffers, and compliance monitoring shall be submitted to the City of Bakersfield within thirty (30) days of survey completion, or prior to construction if any active nest is discovered. Immediate reporting of any state or federally listed species shall be made to the City of Bakersfield, CDFW, and/or USFWS, who will provide guidance regarding avoidance, minimization, or permitting requirements under the federal and state Endangered Species Acts.

MM BIO-5 **Pre-Construction Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*) Surveys.** Prior to Project-related construction activities, the Project Applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to conduct pre-construction surveys for burrowing owl in accordance with the *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFW 2012). Surveys shall be conducted to determine the presence or absence of burrowing owl within the Project Site and immediately adjacent suitable habitat.

- **Number of Visits and Timing:** If within the breeding season (February 1–August 31), conduct four survey visits: (1) at least one visit between February 15 and April 15, and (2) a minimum of three visits, at least three weeks apart, between April 15 and July 15, with at least one visit after June 15. If surveys are conducted outside the breeding season, conduct at least four visits spread evenly throughout the non-breeding season.

- **Survey Method:** Surveys shall cover the entire Project Site using straight-line transects spaced 7–20 meters apart, adjusted for vegetation height and density. At the start of each transect and at least every 100 meters, surveyors shall scan the visible Project area with binoculars. All potential burrows shall be recorded if evidence of burrowing owl use is present (e.g., owls, pellets, prey remains, whitewash, or decoration). Observers shall also listen for burrowing owl calls during surveys.

- **Time of Day:** Surveys shall be conducted between morning civil twilight and 10:00 AM, and two hours before sunset until evening civil twilight, to maximize detection probability.

- **Avoidance:** If any signs of burrowing owl presence are detected, vegetation clearing and ground-disturbing activities shall be prohibited in the affected area. The City of Bakersfield, CDFW, and USFWS shall be contacted immediately to formulate avoidance or minimization strategies. If burrowing owls are detected, the Project Applicant shall implement avoidance buffers consistent with CDFW's 2012 Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation. If avoidance is not feasible, the Project Applicant shall consult with CDFW to develop a relocation and/or compensatory mitigation plan, which may include passive relocation, establishment of artificial burrows, or off-site conservation easements. No ground-disturbing activities shall occur until CDFW has approved the plan. Documentation of compliance shall be submitted to the City of Bakersfield prior to construction.

- **Reporting:** A survey report documenting methods, results, maps of burrow locations, and avoidance measures shall be submitted to CDFW within fourteen (14) days of survey completion or construction monitoring. The biologist(s) shall also record a comprehensive list of species observed and report observations of special-status species to the City of Bakersfield, CDFW, and/or USFWS for guidance regarding avoidance, minimization, or permitting requirements.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated.

Impact BIO-2 **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 US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Vegetation within the vacant, graded Project Site is primarily characterized by fiddleneck plant community. According to **Appendix 3.3**, which included a field reconnaissance survey and vegetation mapping, this community is not listed by CDFW as a sensitive natural community and is considered regionally common. Sensitive natural communities are defined by CDFW as those that are rare or declining, and none occur within the Project Site. Native habitats, including riparian habitats and other communities designated by the CDFW as sensitive, do not occur within or adjacent to the Project Site, and construction activities would not indirectly affect such communities. Thus, the Project would have no impact on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by CDFW or USFWS.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

No Impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

No Impact.

Impact BIO-3 **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.**

The Project Site surrounded by roads, urban development, and a public park. Due to surrounding development, the Project Site does not serve as part of a wildlife corridor. Review of CDFW Essential Connectivity Areas mapping confirms that the Project Site is not located within a designated California Essential Habitat Connectivity (CEHC) area; the nearest CEHC area to the Project Site is located approximately 4.5 miles southwest along a segment of the Kern River.[1]

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1 California Department of Fish and Wildlife, CDFW Open Data Portal, "Essential Connectivity Areas - California Essential Habitat Connectivity." Available online at: https://data-cdfw.opendata.arcgis.com/maps/CDFW::essential-connectivity-areas-california-essential-habitat-connectivity-cehc-ds620/explore, accessed October 16, 2025.

The MBTA and CFGC Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 protect nesting birds, including raptors and burrowing owl. Although no active nests were observed during the field reconnaissance survey, the existing grassland and burrows provide suitable habitat for common birds, raptors, and burrowing owl. If Project construction activities occur during the nesting season (generally February 1 through August 31), active nests could be disturbed, resulting in potentially significant impacts.

As discussed in **Impact BIO-1**, construction activities could disturb nesting birds. However, implementation of **Mitigation Measures MM BIO-3** through **MM BIO-5** would require pre-construction surveys, establishment of avoidance buffers, and agency consultation if nests are detected. BGEPA also provides heightened protections for golden eagles, including their nests. Although no eagle nests were observed during the field reconnaissance survey, golden eagles are known to seasonally occur in the Project Site region. Thus, construction activities occurring during the nesting season could potentially disturb foraging or nesting eagles if present in the vicinity. Implementation of **Mitigation Measures MM BIO-3** through **MM BIO-5** ensures compliance with MBTA, CFGC, and BGEPA, thereby reducing potential impacts to less than significant levels.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Potentially Significant Impact.

Mitigation Measures

See **Mitigation Measures MM BIO-3** through **MM BIO-5**.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated.

Impact BIO-4 **Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.**

The Project has been designed with consideration for the policies and ordinances of the City relating to biological resources. Consistent with the applicable policies of the Conservation Element of the City's General Plan, the Project incorporates measures to ensure protection of sensitive species. Additionally, the MBHCP expired in 2023 and is no longer in effect; therefore, the Project would not conflict with its provisions.

BMC Section 17.61.050 ("Tree Preservation and Protection") establishes requirements for replacement planting when trees are voluntarily removed from existing projects with approved landscape plans. The

Project Site is currently vacant, supports ruderal vegetation and grassland, and does not contain protected trees. Therefore, Section 17.61.050 is not applicable to the Project.

Based on these considerations, the Project would not conflict with any local ordinances or policies protecting biological resources. Impacts are less than significant without mitigation.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than Significant Impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than Significant Impact.

3.3.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The cumulative analysis for biological resources was prepared in accordance with Section 15130 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, which requires evaluation of whether the incremental effects of the Project are cumulatively considerable when viewed in connection with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. The geographic scope for cumulative impacts includes the Project Site and surrounding urbanized area, as reflected in the related projects list (**Table 3.0-1**) and regional growth projections from Kern COG's 2022 RTP/SCS.

The City of Bakersfield and Kern County have already experienced extensive conversion of native grasslands and scrub habitats to agriculture and urban uses, resulting in regional fragmentation of habitat for species such as the San Joaquin kit fox and burrowing owl. Between 2020 and 2046, the City is projected to grow by approximately 174,000 residents (29 percent), 42,000 households (22 percent), and 28,000 jobs (13 percent) (see **Table 3.0-2**). This growth will continue to exert pressure on remaining grassland habitats and special-status species.

As shown in **Figure 3.0-1** and listed in **Table 3.0-1**, the five related projects within a 1-mile radius of the Project Site are residential or commercial developments in already urbanized areas. Some related projects may occur on sites that contain sensitive natural communities or mapped wildlife corridors; however, none are located adjacent to the Project Site or in areas that would combine directly with the Project to result in cumulatively considerable impacts to biological resources.

The Project Site itself is vacant, graded, and isolated within an urbanized setting, and supports only disturbed grassland with ruderal vegetation. Construction activities could adversely affect marginal habitat for special-status wildlife species, including nesting and foraging birds and burrowing owl. Implementation of **Mitigation Measures MM BIO-1** through **MM BIO-5** ensures that potential impacts to kit fox, burrowing owl, nesting birds, and other special-status species are avoided or minimized. These measures, combined with existing state and federal protections under CEQA, FESA, CESA, MBTA, and CFGC, prevent the Project from contributing to cumulative declines in regional populations.

Although the City's urban expansion contributes to regional habitat loss, the Project's incremental impact is minor relative to the regional baseline. The Project affects approximately 13.07 gross acres (11.76 net acres) of vacant, graded land supporting disturbed grassland with limited habitat value. By requiring surveys, buffers, agency consultations, and avoidance of active nests and burrows, the Project ensures that it does not incrementally contribute to cumulative declines in nesting bird populations, special-status species, or regional habitat connectivity.

The Project is consistent with the Project Site's existing land use designation and zoning, which anticipated this type of orderly urban development. As discussed in **Impacts BIO-2** and **BIO-3**, the Project Site does not contain vegetation characterized as a sensitive natural community, nor does it support wetland features, resulting in no impact to these resources. Existing policies and regulations, in combination with **Mitigation Measures MM BIO-1** through **MM BIO-5**, reduce impacts to biological resources that may be present (such as special-status species) to less than significant levels.

Therefore, the Project would not substantially contribute to cumulative impacts on sensitive habitats or biological resources within the City, and cumulative impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

3.3.5 REFERENCES

California Department of Fish and Wildlife. CDFW Open Data Portal. "Essential Connectivity Areas - California Essential Habitat Connectivity." Available online at: https://data-cdfw.opendata.arcgis.com/maps/CDFW::essential-connectivity-areas-california-essential-habitat-connectivity-cehc-ds620/explore, accessed October 16, 2025.

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Terracon. *Biological Resources Assessment Report Bakersfield Temple, 12310 Stockdale Highway Bakersfield, Kern County, California Terracon Project No. LA257112*, September 2025.

U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of the Solicitor. *Solicitor's Opinion M-37085: The Migratory Bird Treaty Act Does Not Prohibit Incidental Take*. April 2025.

3.4 CULTURAL, TRIBAL CULTURAL, & PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

This section describes existing cultural resource conditions within the Project Site and evaluates potential impacts to historical resources, archeological resources, tribal cultural resources (TCRs), and paleontological resources associated with Project implementation. The primary source of information for this section is the *Cultural Resource Assessment Bakersfield Temple Environmental Services Project Bakersfield, Kern County, California* prepared by BCR Consulting, dated October 22, 2025. This report is included in **Appendix 3.4-1, Cultural Resources Assessment**. Documentation of the Assembly Bill (AB) 52 tribal notification process is provided in **Appendix 3.4-2**.

3.4.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3.4.1.1 Prehistory/Ethnography

The Project Site is situated at the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley, where the Kern River, wetlands, and seasonal lakes (Buena Vista/Tulare basins) created a rich, productive landscape that supported human occupation for hundreds of years. Ethnographically, the Project is located within the traditional boundaries of the Southern Valley Yokuts. This prehistoric population of the area depended heavily on the Tulare, Buena Vista, and Kern Lakes and their connecting sloughs and rivers for sustenance and transportation. Local Yokuts villages and camps were concentrated along sloughs, marshes, and the Kern River; material remains recovered in and near modern Bakersfield include ground-stone tools, shell and bone, projectile points, and village debris showing fishing, waterfowl hunting, tule-basketry, and extensive acorn processing.[1] Yokut political units were associated with the channels and sloughs of the Kern River delta. The local Southern Valley Yokuts, referred to as the Chuxoxi, represented one of the southernmost Chuxoxi trade routes.[2] Rights to the delta allowed them to reap the benefits of the related perennial water sources, enabling the local population to pursue a relatively sedentary lifestyle in an otherwise arid climate. Prehistorically, such sedentism often coincides with a village-style residential model in which residential bases remain the same or seasonal, while specialized procurement parties are deployed to more remote areas to collect specialized resources.

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1 Wallace, W.J. 1978. "Southern Valley Yokuts." In Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 8: California, edited by R.F. Heizer, pp. 448–461. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

2 Kroeber, A.L. 1925. Handbook of the Indians of California. Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 78. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

3.4.1.2 History

Early Exploration

The first non-Indians to enter the San Joaquin Valley were Spaniards led by Captain Don Pedro Fages. In 1772, while stationed at Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, Fages led an expedition northward across the Tehachapi Mountains into the southern San Joaquin Valley, becoming one of the first Europeans to enter the region.[3] Father Francisco Garcés also travelled through the San Joaquin Valley searching for an overland route from Yuma to Monterey. Father Garcés documented his journey and encountered numerous Yokuts, Tübatulabal, and Kitanemuk villages along the Kern River, Buena Vista Lake, and Tulare Lake basins. Garcés recorded detailed ethnographic observations of Native lifeways, languages, and intertribal relations—accounts that remain among the earliest written records of the Valley's Indigenous inhabitants. According to his records, Garcés noted positive interactions with locals.

Mexican Period

The Mexican period in the region (1821-1848) saw little notable cultural exchange between Mexicans and Southern Valley Yokuts, although an 1833 malaria epidemic devastated the local native population.[4] The ensuing American era, punctuated by California's annexation into the United States in 1848, resulted in overwhelming Anglo settlement and seizure of Indian lands, and disrupted any remaining prehistoric Yokut influence in the San Joaquin Valley. Mining and ranching represented the early historical focus of the San Joaquin Valley, although the region's abundant natural water supply, mild climate, and huge tracts of arable land soon led to the successful development of agriculture. The resulting diversion of local water and skyrocketing real estate values transformed the physical and economic character of the valley and allowed it to remain as a productive agricultural region.

American Period

The first major wave of Euro-Americans into the San Joaquin Valley was brought on by the acquisition of California at the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848 and the discovery of gold in 1848. The southern Valley Yokuts were removed by the U.S. Government in 1851 and relocated to the Tejon Reservation at the base of the Tehachapis and to the Fresno Reservation outside of Madera, California.[5] In 1866, the first

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3 Herbert E. Bolton, "Anza's California Expeditions, Volume IV: Garcés and the Exploration of the San Joaquin Valley." *University of California Press* (1930), 1771-1776.

4 Sherburne F. Cook, "The Aboriginal Population of the San Joaquin Valley, California," *Anthropological Records* 16:31-80. University of California, Berkeley, (1995).

5 William J. Wallace, "Southern Valley Yokuts. In California," *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 8, W. C. Smithsonian Institution, (1978), 448-461.

homestead claim was filed in Bakersfield for a parcel named "Baker's Field" after Colonel Thomas Baker and his family.[6] The City was formally laid out, and between 1869 and 1873, a telegraph office, two stores, a newspaper, two boarding houses, a doctor's office, a school, and a saloon were established. The City was disincorporated in 1876 and reincorporated in 1898. The San Francisco and San Joaquin Valley Railroad also began providing service to and from the City in 1898. Agriculture and oil played vital roles in early Bakersfield and remain central to the city's economy. Crops harvested in the area include carrots, alfalfa, cotton, grapes, almonds, pistachios, citrus fruits, wheat, garlic, and potatoes. Oil was discovered in 1877. In 1899, the Kern River Oil Field was tapped, and the discovery of oil brought an influx of people and technology.

3.4.1.3 Records Search and Field Survey

Prior to the field surveys, a records search and visual impact analysis were conducted at the Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center (SSJVIC) at California State University, Bakersfield. In addition, a review was conducted of the Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD), summarizing California State Historic Preservation Officer determinations of significance, and listings of the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) and the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR).

Data from the SSJVIC revealed that 73 cultural resource studies have taken place, resulting in the recording of 22 cultural resources that were identified within a two-mile radius of the Project Site. Of the 73 previous studies, four have assessed the Project Site. While no extant cultural resources (including prehistoric or historic archaeological sites or historic buildings) were identified during these previous assessments, SSJVIC maps depicted the historic period canal called the Pioneer Canal (designated P-15-17761) within the Project Site, along its southern boundary.

The Pioneer Canal was constructed between 1867 and 1873 by early settlers to divert water from the Kern River for agricultural use. The canal initially measured roughly 100 yards long and 30 feet wide, carrying water westward to irrigate the Kern County Land Company's tract. However, aerial photography indicates that the segment of the canal within the Project Site was demolished between 1994 and 2004

Pedestrian field surveys of the Project Site were conducted by BCR Consulting on April 10, 2025, by walking parallel transects spaced approximately 15 meters apart across 100 percent of the Project Site. Soil exposures, including natural and artificial clearings, were carefully inspected for evidence of cultural resources. Survey stakes and flagging observed on the surface indicated that the former canal alignment is now occupied by a modern gas pipeline. Thus, the Pioneer Canal (P-15-17761) is considered destroyed.

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6 Jones & Stokes Associates, *Cultural Resources Report For The Woodmont-Sr-99/Hosking Commercial Center Project, Bakersfield, Kern County, California* (2007).

Because the Pioneer Canal no longer exists and lacks integrity, it is not considered a historical resource under CEQA.

3.4.1.4 Native American Sacred Sites

Currently, there are no federally established reservations in the City of Bakersfield, Kern County. However, the Tejon Indian Tribe is a federally recognized tribe (84 Fed. Reg. § 1200), and includes members of the Kitanemuk, Yokuts, and Chumash people.[7]

As part of the process of identifying cultural resources issues within or near the Project Site, and to assist the City with Native American government-to-government consultation in accordance with Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1 (Assembly Bill 52; AB 52), the City initiated the AB 52 tribal notification process.[8]

In compliance with AB 52 and as part of the Project's Cultural Resources Assessment (**Appendix 3.4-1**), the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was contacted to request a review of the Sacred Lands File (SLF) and a list of Native American individuals and tribal organizations for consultation. The NAHC provided the results of the SLF search on April 4, 2025, stating the search was completed with negative results. In addition to the NAHC contact list, the City utilized its own AB 52 tribal mailing list, which included additional tribal entities and individuals traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area. All parties on both lists were sent notification letters (**Appendix 3.4-2)**.

On September 12, 2025, the City sent notification letters to the following tribal entities and individuals identified through the NAHC Contact List and/or the City's AB 52 tribal mailing list:

- Santa Rosa Rancheria
- Kitanemuk & Yowlumne Tejon Indians
- Kawaiisu Tribe
- Tule River Indian Tribe
- Tejon Indian Tribe
- Robert L. Gomez, Jr.
- Kern Valley Indian Council
- Chalon Indian Council of Bakersfield

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7 Federal Register, "Indian Entities Recognized by and Eligible To Receive Services From the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs." Available at: https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2019-00897. 2019. Accessed October 15, 2025.

8 Senate Bill 18 (Government Code Section 65352.3) does not apply to this Project because the Project does not involve the adoption of or amendment to a General Plan or Specific Plan, nor does it involve the designation of open space.

- Table Mountain Rancheria

The letter included a brief description of the Project, its location, and requested entitlements, including the zone modification. One response was received from Table Mountain Rancheria on October 17, 2025, stating that the Project Site is beyond their area of interest. Additionally, two AB 52 notification letters were returned to the City by the U.S. Postal Service as undeliverable. Both returned letters were addressed to the Kawaiisu Tribe contact. No other responses or requests for consultation were received within the statutory 30-day response period. The City also received a standard procedural letter from the NAHC dated September 22, 2025, outlining general legal requirements for tribal notifications; however, the NAHC did not provide Project-specific comments.

3.4.1.5 Paleontological Resources Assessment

Paleontological resources include fossil remains, fossil localities, and formations that have produced fossil material. Paleontological resources are limited, nonrenewable, sensitive scientific resources, including fossils preserved either as impressions of soft (fleshy) or hard (skeletal) parts, mineralized remains of skeletons, tracks, or burrows, or other trace fossils, coprolites (fossilized excrement), seeds or pollen, and other microfossils from terrestrial, aquatic, or aerial organisms. Paleontological resources are not evenly distributed; the potential for fossil occurrence depends on the rock type exposed at the surface in a given area. Sedimentary rocks contain the bulk of fossils, although metamorphic rocks occasionally also contain fossils.

According to **Appendix 3.4-1**, the geologic units underlying this Project Site are mapped as fan and basin deposits from the Holocene epoch. While Holocene alluvial units are considered to have preservation value, they are relatively recent in age and unlikely to contain fossil material. Thus, the Project Site has low potential for paleontological sensitivity.

3.4.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Cultural resources are regulated at the federal, state, and local levels as discussed below.

3.4.2.1 Federal

The National Register of Historic Places (National Register), administered by the National Park Service, recognizes properties significant at the national, state, or local level. Listing provides recognition and may qualify properties for preservation incentives. However, listing does not restrict private property owners from actions they may otherwise take with respect to their property.

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their undertakings on historic properties through the Section 106 review process. Because the Project does not involve federal funding, permits, or land, Section 106 does not apply.

No properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register are located within or adjacent to the Project Site. Therefore, federal regulations governing historic properties are not applicable to the Project.

3.4.2.2 State

California Environmental Quality Act

Under CEQA, public agencies must consider the effects of their actions on both "historical resources" and "unique archaeological resources."

Historical Resources: Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21083.1 and *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.5, a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is considered to have a significant effect on the environment. Historical resources include properties listed in, or formally determined eligible for listing in, the CRHR, as well as local landmarks and resources identified in historical surveys. A substantial adverse change means physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that its significance is materially impaired.

Unique Archaeological Resources: PRC Section 21083.2 defines unique archaeological resources as those that contain important scientific information, have special qualities (e.g., oldest or best example of their type), or are directly associated with significant historic or prehistoric events or persons. CEQA distinguishes between archaeological sites that qualify as historical resources and those that qualify as unique archaeological resources. If a project may affect such resources, mitigation must be considered. Preservation in place is the preferred method of mitigation; if not feasible, data recovery may be required.

Mitigation: *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.4(b) provides that impacts to historical resources may be considered mitigated to less than significant if treatment is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. For archaeological sites, preservation in place is preferred; when data recovery is necessary, a plan must be prepared and deposited with the appropriate California Historical Resources Information Center.

Inadvertent Discoveries: *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.5(f) requires that provisions be made for the treatment of historical or unique archaeological resources accidentally discovered during construction, including immediate evaluation by a qualified archaeologist and contingency funding for avoidance or mitigation.

Human Remains: California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that excavation stop if human remains are uncovered, and the County Coroner must be notified. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the NAHC must be contacted, and consultation with the Most Likely Descendant must occur pursuant to PRC Section 5097.98.

California Register of Historical Resources

The CRHR is an authoritative guide for identifying historical resources in California and protecting them from substantial adverse change. Eligibility criteria parallel those of the National Register and include:

- Criterion 1 – Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California of the United States;
- Criterion 2 – Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history;
- Criterion 3 – Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values; and
- Criterion 4 – Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

Resources listed in or formally determined eligible for the National Register, CRHR Historical Landmarks, and certain California Points of Historical Interest are automatically included in the CRHR. Local landmarks and resources identified in surveys may also be considered eligible.

Assembly Bill 52

AB 52 requires CEQA lead agencies to consult with California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of a proposed project if consultation is requested.

Defined in PRC Section 21074, TCRs include:

1. Sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to tribes that are listed or eligible for listing in the CRHR or a local register; or
2. A resource determined by the lead agency, with substantial evidence, to be significant under PRC Section 5024.1(c), considering tribal significance.

Mitigation measures for TCRs must be developed in consultation with affected tribes. PRC Section 21084.3 establishes preservation in place as the preferred mitigation. If preservation is not feasible, other culturally appropriate measures may be considered.

California Health and Safety Code

California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that excavation stop if human remains are uncovered. The County Coroner must be notified to determine the nature of the remains. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the Coroner must notify the NAHC within 24 hours. The NAHC then identifies the Most Likely Descendant, who must be consulted regarding treatment and disposition of the remains, consistent with PRC Section 5097.98.

3.4.2.3 Local

Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan

The Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan does not currently include a formal historical element, but it contains policies that address cultural resource preservation. Relevant policies include:

- As part of the environmental review procedure, an evaluation of the significance of paleontological, archaeological, and historical resources and the impact of proposed development on those resources shall be conducted and appropriate mitigation and monitoring included for development projects.
- Development on land containing known archaeological resources (i.e., high sensitivity areas) shall utilize methodology set forth, as described necessary by a qualified archaeologist, to locate proposed structures, paving, landscaping, and fill dirt in such a way as to preserve these resources undamaged for future generations when it is the recommendation of a qualified archaeologist that said resources be preserved in situ.
- The preservation of significant historical resources shall be encouraged by developing and implementing incentives such as building and planning application permit fee waivers, Mills Act contracts, grants and loans, implementing the State Historic Building Code, and other incentives as identified in the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Bakersfield Municipal Code

Chapter 15.72 (Historic Preservation) of the City's Municipal Code establishes the City's Historic Preservation Program, which creates a Historic Preservation Commission, responsible for reviewing and recommending the designation of historic landmarks, districts, and cultural resources—such as buildings,

structures, archaeological or paleontological sites, and areas of historical interest. It outlines criteria for designation based on architectural, cultural, historical, or scientific significance, including properties associated with important events, persons, or distinctive construction styles. Once designated, alterations, demolitions, or relocations of these resources require review and approval by the Historic Preservation Commission to ensure the integrity and character of the resource are preserved. The ordinance also provides procedures for nomination, public hearings, and issuance of permits, ensuring public participation and consistency with city planning objectives.

3.4.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

3.4.3.1 Thresholds of Significance

The following thresholds for determining the significance of impacts related to cultural resources, TCRs, and paleontological resources are contained in Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*.

Cultural Resources

Would the project…

- *Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?*
- *Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?*
- *Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?*

Tribal Cultural Resources

Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

- *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*
- *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 5023.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5023.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.*

Paleontological Resources

Would the project…

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

3.4.3.2 Methodology

The cultural resources analysis is based on the findings of the Cultural Resources Assessment (**Appendix 3.4-1)**. The evaluation considers known resources identified through records searches and surveys, as well as the potential for encountering undiscovered subsurface resources during construction.

Cultural Resources

The analysis of historical resources examines whether the Project would demolish, destroy, relocate, or alter a historic resource in a way that materially impairs its significance.

The analysis of archaeological resources and human remains assesses the likelihood that ground-disturbing activities (such as grading or excavation) could uncover or damage unique archaeological resources. This assessment relies on surface surveys and an evaluation of the Project Site's sensitivity for buried deposits.

Tribal Cultural Resources

The analysis of TCRs evaluates whether the Project Site contains resources of cultural value to a California Native American tribe. This determination is based on a review of national and local historic registers and information provided by tribes during the AB 52 notification and consultation process.

Paleontological Resources

The analysis of paleontological resources evaluates the geologic suitability of the Project Site to contain fossils. Because fossils are subsurface, this analysis relies on a qualitative review of the underlying soil and rock units (geology) to determine the probability of encountering significant paleontological resources during excavation.

3.3.3.4 Impact Analysis

Cultural Resources

Impact CR-1 **Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.5.**

The proposed Project involves the development of a new religious campus on the existing 13.07-acre (11.76 net acres) Project Site. The Project Site is currently vacant with no historical (or other) buildings, structures, or objects present on-site. A records search identified four prior cultural resource studies that assessed the Project Site. Within these studies, no historical resources were identified. Further, historical maps and aerial photography analyzed in **Appendix 3.4-1** indicate that the Project Site remained vacant and undeveloped

until after 1980. Based on this evidence, the Project Site has no known historic resources as defined by Section 15064.5 of the *CEQA Guidelines*. Therefore, implementation of the Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, and no impact would occur.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

No Impact.

Mitigation Measure

No mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

No Impact.

Impact CR-2 **Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.5.**

As stated above, a records search and visual impact analysis identified four prior cultural resource studies that assessed the Project Site. Within these studies, no cultural resources (including prehistoric or historic archaeological sites) have been identified within the Project Site. A visual impact analysis of SSJVIC maps found that a historic period canal called the Pioneer Canal (designated P-15-17761) was present within Project Site (see **Appendix 3.4-1**). However, the canal was demolished between 1994 and 2004, and a site visit found no remaining traces. Because the Pioneer Canal is no longer extant and was never documented as an archaeological resource within the Project Site, the Project Site does not contain any known archeological resources.

The Project proposes the development of a new religious campus in two phases. Construction activities would require surface and subsurface excavation and grading. While the potential for resources is considered low based on the records search and survey, the Project Site is underlain by Holocene alluvium, which has the potential to bury and mask older archaeological deposits that would not be visible during a surface survey. Thus, although unlikely, undiscovered archaeological resources could potentially be encountered through ground-disturbing activities during construction.

In the event that archaeological resources are encountered during Project construction, **Mitigation Measure MM CR-1** would ensure proper evaluation and treatment by a qualified archaeologist. With implementation of **MM CR-1**, impacts to archaeological resources would be reduced to a less than significant level pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Potentially Significant Impact.

Mitigation Measure

MM CR-1: The Project Applicant shall retain a qualified archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards to conduct a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training for all construction personnel prior to the start of ground disturbance. The training shall review the types of cultural resources that may be encountered and the proper protocols for halting work. The archaeologist shall remain on-call during the construction phase of the Project.

If archaeological resources are encountered during ground-disturbing activities, work within 100 feet of the find shall be halted, and the archaeologist shall evaluate the find. If necessary, the evaluation shall include preparation of archaeological testing for California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) eligibility. Results of the archaeological testing shall be reviewed and approved by both the qualified archaeologist and the City of Bakersfield Planning Division. If the discovery proves to be significant under CEQA and cannot be avoided by the Project, additional work shall be warranted, such as data recovery excavation. Such measures shall be identified in a treatment plan prepared by the archaeologist and approved by the City of Bakersfield to mitigate any such significant impacts to archaeological resources.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated.

Impact CR-3 **Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.**

The Project Site is not located in an area with known prehistoric or historic period archaeological resources, and it is therefore unlikely that human remains are present within the areas that would be affected by excavation. However, if human remains are encountered, treatment must comply with applicable state law. California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that excavation in the vicinity of the discovery stop immediately and that the County Coroner be notified. If the County Coroner determines the remains to be of Native American origin, the County Coroner must notify the NAHC. The NAHC will then identify

the Most Likely Descendant, who shall be consulted regarding appropriate treatment and disposition of the remains, consistent with Public Resources Code Section 5097.98.

Excavation may not resume in the area of the discovery until the remains have been investigated and appropriate recommendations for treatment and disposition have been implemented. Compliance with these statutory requirements ensures that any inadvertent discovery of human remains would be handled appropriately and impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than Significant Impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than Significant Impact.

Tribal Cultural Resources

Impact CR-4 **Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 that is:**

a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or

b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1.

The SLF search conducted by NAHC on April 4, 2025, for this Project returned negative results. Moreover, as required by AB 52, the City provided formal notification to tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area on September 12, 2025. Tribes notified are listed above under **Section 3.4.1.4**. The City did not receive any requests for consultation during the 30-day response period. Table Mountain Rancheria responded regarding the Project but declined consultation as the Project Site is outside of their area of interest.

Based on the negative SLF results and the conclusion of the AB 52 notification process with no requests for consultation, no TCRs as defined by PRC Section 21074 were identified within the Project Site. Specifically, no resources within the Project Site are listed or eligible for listing in the CRHR or a local register. Furthermore, no resources were identified by a California Native American tribe as significant under PRC Section 5024.1(c), nor has the City, acting as Lead Agency, determined any resource to be significant pursuant to its discretion. Therefore, the Project would not impact any known TCRs. However, ground-disturbing activities during construction have the potential to uncover previously unidentified subsurface resources that may qualify as TCRs. If such resources are encountered and damaged without proper treatment, a significant impact could occur. Implementation of **Mitigation Measure MM TCR-1** would reduce this potential impact to a less than significant level by ensuring any inadvertent discoveries are treated with culturally appropriate dignity and managed in consultation with culturally affiliated tribes.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Potentially Significant Impact.

Mitigation Measure

MM TCR-1: In the event that potential tribal cultural resources (TCRs) are discovered during Project construction, all work shall cease within 50 feet of the find. The Project Applicant shall immediately notify the City of Bakersfield Planning Division. The City shall contact Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area to facilitate a prompt evaluation of the find.

If the resource is determined to be a TCR as defined by Public Resources Code Section 21074, the City shall consult with the affiliated tribe(s) to determine appropriate treatment measures. Consistent with Public Resources Code Section 21084.3, preservation in place shall be the preferred mitigation. If preservation in place is not feasible, appropriate treatment may include, but is not limited to, culturally appropriate recovery, documentation, or reburial, as determined through consultation. Work in the area of the find may only resume following completion of consultation and implementation of agreed-upon treatment measures.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated.

Paleontological Resources

Impact CR-5 **Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?**

Paleontological resources include fossil remains or traces of past life forms, including both vertebrate and invertebrate species, as well as plants. Paleontological resources are generally found within sedimentary rock formations. A unique geologic feature is a physical landform or rock structure that is unusual, rare, or has special scientific value.

The Project Site is located in a highly urbanized area, which has been previously disturbed by past development activities. The geologic units underlying this Project Site are mapped as fan and basin deposits from the Holocene epoch. While Holocene alluvial units are considered to have preservation value, they are unlikely to contain fossil material due to their relatively recent age. However, excavation to greater depths could reach Pleistocene alluvial sediments, which have higher paleontological sensitivity. Construction activities associated with the Project could disturb unknown paleontological resources buried in site soils. Therefore, the Project could result in potentially significant impacts to paleontological resources. Implementation of **Mitigation Measure MM PR-1** would reduce these impacts to a less than significant level.

Significance Before Mitigation

Potentially significant impact.

Mitigation Measure

MM PR-1 Prior to the start of grading, a qualified paleontologist shall conduct a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training for construction crews regarding the identification of fossil remains. In the event that ground-disturbing activities unearth paleontological resources, the Project Applicant shall immediately notify the City of Bakersfield Planning Division, and all work shall cease in the area of the find until a qualified paleontologist assesses the discovery. Construction activity may continue unimpeded on other portions of the Project Site. The paleontologist shall perform and adhere to all applicable performance standards and practices from the 2021 Society for Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP) standard procedures. The paleontologist shall prepare a monitoring plan, subject to City review and approval, that identifies the location, time frame, and extent of monitoring required during earthmoving activities, particularly in areas where excavation may reach Pleistocene deposits. Any paleontological resources

discovered shall be recovered, curated, and documented in accordance with federal, state, and local guidelines, including SVP standards and applicable CEQA requirements. The City, as Lead Agency, shall approve the treatment plan prior to resuming work in the area of the find.

Significance After Mitigation

Less than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated.

3.4.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The cumulative analysis was prepared in accordance with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15130, which requires an EIR to discuss cumulative impacts when the incremental effects of a project are cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impacts are defined as impacts created by the combination of the Project with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

The geographic scope for cumulative cultural resources impacts is the City and surrounding Kern County. The cumulative analysis considers localized projects identified in **Table 3.0-1, Related Projects Table**, within one mile of the Project Site, and regional growth projections from Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG) 2022 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), which forecast approximately 174,000 new residents, 42,000 households, and 28,000 jobs in Bakersfield between 2020 and 2046. This growth context reflects ongoing development in the City and broader metropolitan area, which, in combination with the related projects listed in Table 3.0-1, could contribute to cumulative effects on cultural resources.

Historical Resources

The Project Site contains no historical resources, and the Pioneer Canal segment within the Project Site has been demolished, and lacks integrity. As shown in **Table 3.0-1**, five related projects are located within a one-mile radius of the Project Site. These projects are primarily residential and commercial developments. While cumulative development in the City could result in demolition or alteration of historical resources elsewhere, the Project would not contribute to such impacts because no historical resources are present on-site. Therefore, the Project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts on historical resources would be less than significant and not cumulatively considerable.

Archaeological Resources

The records search and field survey found no known archaeological resources within the Project Site. However, the Project Site is underlain by Holocene alluvium, which has the potential to contain buried

deposits. Nearby residential and commercial projects listed in **Table 3.0-1** could also disturb undiscovered archaeological resources. The Project includes mitigation (**MM CR-1**) requiring work stoppage and evaluation by a qualified archaeologist if resources are discovered. With this mitigation measure, the Project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts on archaeological resources would be reduced to less than significant. Therefore, the Project would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts to archaeological resources.

Tribal Cultural Resources

The SLF search returned negative results, and the AB 52 consultation did not identify any TCRs within the Project Site. Cumulative development in the City, including the related projects identified in **Table 3.0-1**, could affect TCRs in the region. The Project includes mitigation (**MM TCR-1**) requiring consultation with affiliated tribes if TCRs are discovered. With implementation of **MM TCR-1**, the Project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts on TCRs would be less than significant. Therefore, the Project would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts to TCRs.

Human Remains

Although unlikely, human remains could be encountered during ground disturbance. Cumulative development in the City could similarly result in inadvertent discoveries. The Project is subject to Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and PRC Section 5097.98, requiring notification of the County Coroner and consultation with the NAHC and Most Likely Descendant. Compliance with these laws ensures proper treatment. Therefore, the Project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts on human remains would be less than significant and not cumulatively considerable.

Paleontological Resources

The Project Site is underlain by Holocene deposits with low paleontological sensitivity. Other projects identified in **Table 3.0-1** may be located on geologic formations with higher sensitivity, and cumulative development could affect paleontological resources where sensitive formations are present. The Project includes mitigation measure **MM PR-1**, which requires WEAP training, immediate notification, and work stoppage if fossils are found, evaluation by a qualified paleontologist, and implementation of an SVP-compliant monitoring and treatment plan with City approval before resuming work. With implementation of **MM PR-1**, the Project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts on paleontological resources would be reduced to less than significant and not cumulatively considerable.

Based on the cumulative analysis, the Project would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts to historical resources, archaeological resources, TCRs, human remains, or paleontological resources. All

cumulative impacts would be less than significant with implementation of Project-specific **Mitigation Measures MM CR-1**, **MM TCR-1**, and **MM PR-1**, as identified above.

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3.5 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

This section evaluates the environmental impacts of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with the proposed Project. The section also identifies applicable federal, state, regional, and local regulatory frameworks and evaluates the Project's consistency with those programs. This analysis considers both temporary construction emissions and the long-term operational emissions, consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.4. This section was prepared using the *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impact Study, City of Bakersfield, CA*, prepared by MD Acoustics, dated December 23, 2025 (see **Appendix 3.2**) to quantify emissions and evaluate the Project's potential GHG impacts in accordance with CEQA.

3.5.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3.5.1.1 Global Climate Change Background

Global climate change refers to any significant change in climate measurements, such as temperature, precipitation, or wind, that lasts for an extended period (i.e., decades or longer).[1] Climate change may result from:

- Natural factors, such as changes in the sun's intensity or slow changes in Earth's orbit around the sun;
- Natural processes within the climate system (e.g., changes in ocean circulation, reduction in sunlight from the addition of GHG and other gases to the atmosphere from volcanic eruptions); and
- Human activities that change the atmosphere's composition (e.g., through burning fossil fuels) and the land surface (e.g., deforestation, reforestation, urbanization, desertification).

The third factor (human activities) is the focus of climate change legislation and regulatory efforts. The natural process through which heat is retained in the troposphere[2] is called the "greenhouse effect." This occurs through a three-fold process as follows: (1) short-wave radiation in the form of visible light emitted by the sun is absorbed by Earth as heat; (2) long-wave radiation is re-emitted by Earth; and (3) GHGs in the atmosphere absorb or trap the long-wave radiation and re-emit it back towards Earth and into space.

Earth's natural warming process, the greenhouse effect, is often compared to a greenhouse structure, where glass panes allow sunlight in but reduce heat loss. Certain atmospheric gases, known as GHGs, act as an

1 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Glossary of Climate Change Terms." Available online at: https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/climatechange/glossary-climate-change-terms_.html. Accessed September 4, 2025.

2 The troposphere, the lowest layer of the atmosphere, extends from Earth's surface to approximately 10 to 12 kilometers (6 to 7.5 miles) in height.

insulating blanket for solar energy, maintaining the global average temperature within a suitable range for life. These GHGs keep the average surface temperature of Earth close to 60 degrees Fahrenheit (°F). Without the natural greenhouse effect, Earth's surface would be approximately 61°F cooler, rendering the planet largely uninhabitable.[3]

3.5.1.2 GHG Pollutants and Effects

The California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 defined GHGs to include carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFC), perfluorocarbons (PFC), sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6), and nitrogen trifluoride. Black carbon also contributes to global warming, but it is a solid particle or aerosol, not a gas.

Table 3.5-1, Description of GHGs, provides a description of each GHG. These pollutants are emitted from sources such as forest fires, decomposition of organic material, industrial processes, landfills, and consumption of fossil fuels for power generation, transportation, heating, and cooking.

Table 3.5-1
Description of GHGs

Pollutant	General Description
Carbon Dioxide (CO_2)	CO_2 is an odorless, colorless GHG, which has both natural and man-made sources. Natural sources include the following: decomposition of dead organic matter; respiration of bacteria, plants, animals, and fungi; evaporation from oceans; and volcanic outgassing; manmade sources of CO_2 are burning coal, oil, natural gas, and wood.
Methane (CH_4)	CH_4 is a flammable gas and is the main component of natural gas. When one molecule of CH_4 is burned in the presence of oxygen, one molecule of CO_2 and two molecules of water are released. There are no ill health effects from CH_4. A natural source of CH_4 is 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 landfills, fermentation of manure, and cattle.
Nitrous Oxide (N_2O)	N_2O is a colorless GHG. High concentrations can cause dizziness, euphoria, and sometimes slight hallucinations. N_2O is produced by microbial processes in soil and water, including those reactions which occur in fertilizer containing nitrogen. In addition to agricultural sources, some industrial processes (fossil fuel-fired power plants, nylon production, nitric acid production, and vehicle emissions) also contribute to its atmospheric load. It is used in rocket engines, racecars, and as an aerosol spray propellant.
Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)	HFCs are synthetic man-made chemicals that are used as a substitute for chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) for automobile air conditioners and refrigerants. CFCs are gases formed synthetically by replacing all hydrogen atoms in methane or ethane with chlorine and/or fluorine atoms. CFCs are nontoxic, nonflammable, insoluble, and chemically unreactive in the troposphere (the level of air at Earth's surface). CFCs were first synthesized in 1928 for use as refrigerants, aerosol propellants, and cleaning solvents. Because they destroy stratospheric ozone, the production of CFCs was stopped as required by the Montreal Protocol in 1987.

3 California Environmental Protection Agency, *Climate Action Team Report to Governor Schwarzenegger and the Legislature*, 2006.

Pollutant	General Description
Perfluorocarbons (PFCs)	PFCs have stable molecular structures and do not break down through the chemical processes in the lower atmosphere. High-energy ultraviolet rays about 60 kilometers above Earth's surface are able to destroy the compounds. PFCs have very long lifetimes, between 10,000 and 50,000 years. Two common PFCs are tetrafluoromethane and hexafluoroethane. The two main sources of PFCs are primary aluminum production and semiconductor manufacture.
Sulfur Hexafluoride (SF_6)	SF_6 is an inorganic, odorless, colorless, non-toxic, and nonflammable gas. SF_6 is used for insulation in electric power transmission and distribution equipment, in the magnesium industry, in semiconductor manufacturing, and as a tracer gas for leak detection.
Black Carbon /a/	Black Carbon. Black carbon is the most strongly light-absorbing component of particulate matter emitted from burning fuels such as coal, diesel, and biomass.

Source: Association of Environment Professionals, Alternative Approaches to Analyze Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Global Climate Change in CEQA Documents, 2007.
/a/ Black carbon contributes to global warming, but it is a solid particle or aerosol, not a gas.

3.5.1.3 Global Warming Potential

While water vapor and carbon dioxide (CO_2) are the most abundant GHGs, other trace GHGs have a greater ability to absorb and re-radiate long-wave radiation. To gauge the potency of GHGs, scientists have established a Global Warming Potential (GWP) for each GHG based on its ability to absorb and re-emit long-wave radiation over a specific period. The GWP of a gas is determined using CO_2 as the reference gas with a GWP of 1 over 100 years. For example, a gas with a GWP of 10 is 10 times more potent than CO_2 over 100 years.

The use of GWP allows GHG emissions to be reported using CO_2 as a baseline. The sum of each GHG multiplied by its associated GWP is referred to as carbon dioxide equivalents (CO_2e). This essentially means that 1 metric ton of a GHG with a GWP of 10 has the same climate change impacts as 10 metric tons of CO_2.

Table 3.5-2, Atmospheric Lifetimes and Global Warming Potential for GHGs, summarizes atmospheric lifetimes and GWP values for selected gases, with CO_2 as a reference gas.

Table 3.5-2
Atmospheric Lifetimes and Global Warming Potential for GHGs

Greenhouse Gas	Lifetime (Years)	Global Warming Potential Factor (20-Year)	Global Warming Potential Factor (100-Year)
Carbon Dioxide	100	1	1
Nitrous Oxide	121	264	298
Nitrogen Trifluoride	500	12,800	16,100
Sulfur Hexafluoride	3,200	17,500	23,500
Perfluorocarbons	3,000-50,000	5,000-8,000	7,000-11,000
Black Carbon	days to weeks	270-6,200	100-1,700

Greenhouse Gas	Lifetime (Years)	Global Warming Potential Factor (20-Year)	Global Warming Potential Factor (100-Year)
Methane	12	84	25
Hydrofluorocarbons	Uncertain	100-11,000	100-12,000

Source: CARB, Climate Change Scoping Plan First Update, 2013.
Note: "Global Warming Potential" is a relative measure of how much heat a GHG traps in the atmosphere, as compared to CO_2.

3.5.1.4 Effects of Global Climate Change

Climate change has the potential to affect environmental resources globally and locally, including air temperatures, precipitation, hydrology, and ecosystems. Scientific modeling predicts that continued GHG emissions at or above current rates would induce more extreme climate changes during the 21st century than were observed during the 20th century. Scientists studying the particularly rapid rise in global temperatures during the late 20th century conclude that natural variability alone does not account for the observed increase. Human activity associated with the industrial revolution has likely resulted in increased emissions of CO_2 and other GHGs, primarily from the burning of fossil fuels (i.e., during motorized transport, electricity generation, consumption of natural gas, industrial activity, manufacturing, etc.) and deforestation, as well as agricultural activity and the decomposition of solid waste.[4]

Over the past 100 years, Earth's average global temperature has increased by approximately 1°F, with some regions experiencing increases of up to 4°F. These observed warming trends provide context for evaluating human contributions to climate change.

California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment identifies potential impacts, including reduced snowpack, sea-level rise, extreme heat days, increased wildfire frequency, and more drought years. These statewide projections provide context for evaluating local project impacts under CEQA.

3.5.1.5 Statewide GHG Emissions

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) compiles GHG inventories for the State of California. According to CARB's 2025 emission inventory,[5] 2023 emissions from GHG-emitting activities statewide were 360.4 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent ($MMTCO_2e$), 11.2 $MMTCO_2e$ (3.0 percent) lower than 2022 levels. Since the peak level in 2004, California's GHG emissions have generally followed a decreasing trend. In 2014, statewide GHG emissions dropped below the 2020 GHG Limit and have

4 Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, *Climate Change 101*, 2011.

5 California Air Resources Board, *California Greenhouse Gas Emissions for 2000 to 2023, Trends of Emissions and Other Indicators*, (2025). Available online at: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2025-11/nc-2000_2023_ghg_inventory_trends.pdf. Accessed December 17, 2025.

remained below the limit since that time. The transportation sector remains the largest source of statewide emissions (46.4 percent), followed by the industrial and electricity sectors.

Table 3.5-3, GHG Emissions in California, provides a summary of GHG emissions reported in California in 2000 and 2023, separated by categories defined by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Table 3.5-3
GHG Emissions in California

Source Category	2000 ($MMTCO_2e$)	Percent of Total	2023 ($MMTCO_2e$)	Percent of Total
Energy	**405.8**	**87.7%**	**287.9**	**79.8%**
Energy Industries	158.3	--	280.0	--
Manufacturing Industries & Construction	17.3	--	13.0	--
Transport	178.1	--	134.2	--
Other Sectors (Residential/Commercial/Institutional)	44.8	--	41.2	--
Fugitive Emissions from Solid Fuels	0.0	--	0.0	--
Fugitive Emissions from Oil & Natural Gas	6.1	--	7.2	--
Fugitive Emissions from Geothermal Energy Production	1.1	--	0.8	--
Pollution Control Devices	0.0	--	0.0	--
Industrial Processes & Product Use	**19.6**	**4.2%**	**32.9**	**9.1%**
Mineral Industry	5.6	--	4.5	--
Chemical Industry	0.1	--	0.0	--
Metal Industry	0.1		0.0	
Non-Energy Products from Fuels & Solvent Use	2.5	--	1.5	--
Electronics Industry	0.5	--	0.3	--
Substitutes for Ozone Depleting Substances	5.6	--	21.1	--
Other Product Manufacture and Use	1.5	--	0.9	--
Other	3.7	--	4.7	--
Agriculture, Forestry, & Other Land Use	**28.4**	**6.1%**	**29.1**	**8.0%**
Livestock	19.1	--	20.9	--
Aggregate Sources & Non-CO_2 Sources on Land	9.3	--	8.2	--
Waste	**8.9**	**1.9%**	**10.5**	**2.9%**
Solid Waste Disposal	6.6	--	8.2	--
Biological Treatment of Solid Waste	0.1	--	0.3	--
Wastewater Treatment & Discharge	2.1	--	1.9	--
Emissions Summary				
Gross California Emissions	**462.9**	100%	**360.4**	100%

Sources: [1] CARB, California Greenhouse Gas Inventory for 2000-2023 - by IPCC Category. Last updated November 4, 2025. Available online at https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/ghg-inventory-data. 2023 is the most recent year of available data, and the comparison to the year 2000 is intended to illustrate the changes in GHG emissions over a 23-year period.

3.5.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

3.5.2.1 Federal Regulations

Federal Clean Air Act. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) is responsible for implementing federal policy to address GHGs. Under the federal Clean Air Act (CAA), the U.S. EPA regulates GHG emissions from mobile and stationary sources.

Vehicle Efficiency and Fuel Economy Standards. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and U.S. EPA administer the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards and GHG emissions standards for passenger cars and light trucks. These standards regulate the fuel efficiency and CO_2 emissions of the vehicle fleet, directly influencing the mobile source emissions associated with land use projects.

In March 2022, the U.S. EPA restored California's CAA waiver, allowing the state to enforce its own more stringent GHG standards and Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) mandates. However, as of 2025, the U.S. EPA has moved to revoke this waiver. The status of California's waiver authority is subject to ongoing federal administrative and legal proceedings. Regardless of the federal waiver status, California's vehicle emission standards and ZEV mandates remain operative under state law and continue to apply to vehicles sold in California.

3.5.2.2 State Regulations

California Air Resources Board. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) is responsible for the coordination and administration of both federal and state air pollution control programs within California. CARB has primary responsibility for the development of California's State Implementation Plan (SIP), for which it works closely with the Federal Government and the local air districts. The SIP is required for the state to take over implementation of the federal CAA. CARB also has primary responsibility for adopting regulations to meet the state's goal of reducing GHG emissions.

Statewide GHG Reduction Targets. California has established a series of statutory targets for GHG emissions reductions:

- AB 32 requires statewide GHG emissions to be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020. This target was achieved in 2016.
- SB 32 requires statewide GHG emissions to be reduced to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.

- AB 1279 establishes the policy of the state to achieve carbon neutrality as soon as possible, but no later than 2045, and to ensure that by 2045, statewide anthropogenic GHG emissions are reduced at least 85 percent below 1990 levels.

Climate Change Scoping Plan. CARB adopted the 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality (Scoping Plan) in December 2022. It identifies a technologically feasible, cost-effective, and equity-focused path to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045 and to reduce manmade GHG emissions to at least 85 percent below 1990 levels. Consistency with the Scoping Plan is a key metric for determining CEQA significance.

Cap-and-Trade Program. The program works by establishing a hard cap on about 85 percent of total statewide GHG emissions. While the Project itself is not a capped entity, the electricity and fuel it consumes are covered by this program.

Building and Energy Regulations.

- **California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen)**: Part 11 of Title 24 sets mandatory measures for sustainable site development, energy efficiency, and water conservation for new construction.
- **Title 24 Energy Efficiency Standards**: Part 6 of Title 24 requires energy-efficient building design. The 2022 standards encourage electrification and high-efficiency HVAC systems.
- **Renewable Portfolio Standards (SB 100)**: Requires retail sellers of electricity to provide 60% renewable energy by 2030 and 100 percent zero-carbon electricity by 2045.

Waste Diversion Regulations.

- AB 341 mandates a commercial recycling goal of 75 percent by 2020.
- SB 1383 requires a 75 percent reduction in organic waste disposal by 2025.

Transportation Regulations.

- SB 375 requires Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), including the Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG), to develop Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCSs) to reduce passenger vehicle GHG emissions.
- Advanced Clean Cars Program combines the control of smog-causing pollutants and GHG emissions into a single coordinated package of standards, including Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) mandates.

3.5.2.3 Regional

Kern COG 2022 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). The 2022 RTP/SCS is a blueprint that establishes a set of regional transportation goals, policies, and actions intended to guide development of the planned multimodal transportation systems in Kern County through the year 2046. The RTP/SCS aims to reduce per capita passenger vehicle GHG emissions consistent with SB 375 targets.

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD). The SJVAPCD has adopted *Guidance for Valley Land-Use Agencies in Addressing GHG Emission Impacts for New Projects under CEQA* (2009). The guidance recommends that projects comply with an approved GHG emission reduction plan or GHG mitigation program.

3.5.2.4 Local Regulations

Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan. The City's Conservation Element of the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan (General Plan) has identified the following goals, objectives, and policies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the development of the City under the General Plan. Applicable GHG emission reducing goals and policies from the General Plan's Conservation Element are listed below:

Goals

- Reduce the amount of vehicular emissions in the planning area.

Policies

- Implement the Transportation System Management Program (July 1984) for Metropolitan Bakersfield to improve traffic flow, reduce vehicle trips, and increase street capacity.
- Encourage the use of mass transit, carpooling, and other transportation options to reduce vehicle miles traveled.
- Promote the use of bicycles by providing attractive bicycle paths and requiring provision of storage facilities in commercial and industrial projects.
- Cooperate with Golden Empire Transit and Kern Regional Transit to provide a comprehensive mass transit system for Bakersfield; require large-scale new development to provide related improvements, such as bus stop shelters and turnouts.

- Encourage walking for short-distance trips through the creation of pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and street crossings.

- Encourage the use of alternative fuel and low or zero-emission vehicles (I-5, I-6).

City of Bakersfield Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP). Adopted in March of 2024, the City's PCAP meets the requirements for a Qualified Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy and is designed to streamline environmental review of future development projects in the City, consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15183.5. The PCAP outlines the City's near-term climate action strategy and includes measures in areas including building energy, infrastructure, land use and mobility, natural and urban landscapes, and materials and waste.

3.5.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

3.5.3.1 Thresholds of Significance

The following thresholds for determining the significance of impacts related to GHG are contained in Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*:

> *Would the project…*
>
> - *Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?*
> - *Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?*

In accordance with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.4, the significance of GHG emissions is evaluated based on:

- Consistency with applicable plans and regulations (i.e., City of Bakersfield PCAP).
- Whether the Project would conflict with adopted strategies to reduce GHG emissions.

The City's PCAP meets the requirements for a Qualified Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy under *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15183.5 and is designed to streamline environmental review of future development projects. The PCAP's CEQA document[6] provides project applicants the opportunity to use streamlining tools when demonstrating consistency with the CAP. Demonstrating consistency with the CAP establishes that a project would not result in additional significant GHG impacts under CEQA.

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6 City of Bakersfield, *Climate Action Plan Initial Study/Negative Declaration*, July 2023. Available online at: https://ceqanet.lci.ca.gov/2023070104/. Accessed December 17, 2025.

Accordingly, this analysis evaluates the Project's GHG emissions by assessing consistency with the City's PCAP and provides additional discussion of consistency with the CARB Scoping Plan.

3.5.3.2 Methodology

This methodology describes the technical approach used to quantify Project emissions and evaluate consistency with applicable plans and regulations in order to apply the thresholds of significance above. Emissions were quantified using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), as documented in **Appendix 3.2**. CalEEMod incorporates emission factors from CARB, U.S. EPA AP-42, and local air district guidance. Construction emissions reflect project duration, equipment use, worker trips, and material deliveries, and were amortized over a 30-year period consistent with SJVAPCD practice. Operational emissions were modeled for full project buildout, including vehicle trips, energy consumption, water demand, and solid waste generation, with energy demand based on Title 24 standards and water demand on City of Bakersfield utility assumptions.

The quantified emissions are provided for informational purposes. The Project's consistency with statewide reduction strategies (CARB Scoping Plan) and local policies (City's PCAP) was also evaluated. Significance was determined based on whether the Project conflicts with the City's adopted reduction plan. Impacts are considered less than significant if the Project demonstrates consistency with applicable GHG-reducing strategies.

3.5.3.3 Impact Analysis

GHG Impact 1 **Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment.**

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4(a) requires a lead agency to make a good-faith effort, based on scientific and factual data, to describe and estimate the amount of GHG emissions resulting from a project. *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.4(c) provides that a lead agency may use a model or methodology to estimate GHG emissions and has discretion to select the most appropriate tool to enable decision makers to consider the project's incremental contribution to climate change.

Based upon this guidance, GHG emissions were quantified for the Project using CalEEMod Version 2022.1.1.29, which is the model recommended by the SJVAPCD (see **Appendix 3.2** to this Draft EIR). Operational emissions include both direct and indirect sources including mobile sources, water use, solid waste, area sources, natural gas, and electricity use. CalEEMod is a statewide land use emissions computer model designed to provide a uniform platform for government agencies, land use planners, and environmental professionals to quantify potential criteria pollutant and GHG emissions associated with

both construction and operations from a variety of land use projects. The model is considered by the SJVAPCD to be an accurate and comprehensive tool for quantifying air quality and GHG impacts from land use projects throughout California.

This analysis is performed to quantify the Project's emissions for informational purposes. The SJVAPCD has not adopted a numeric significance threshold for land use development projects, nor have the City or CARB adopted separate numeric thresholds. Thus, the Project's significance is determined based on its consistency with the City's PCAP. Consistency with the CARB Scoping Plan is also provided as additional information (see GHG Impact 2, below, for the Project's consistency analysis). The Project's GHG emissions are quantified in this analysis to comply with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.4(a).

As shown in **Table 3.5-4, Project Annual Construction GHG Emissions**, the total GHG construction emissions for 2026 through 2027 would be 618 $MTCO_2e$. (As detailed in **Section 3.2, Air Quality**, the technical modeling evaluated an 18-month continuous construction schedule, which captures the Project's total construction activities and conservatively assumes a higher volume of soil hauling than is currently proposed.) Because construction emissions would occur over a relatively short duration, they represent a small portion of the Project's lifetime GHG emissions. Consistent with SJVAPCD recommendations, the total construction GHG emissions were divided by 30 to determine an annual construction emission rate to be amortized over the Project's first 30 years of operations. Amortized over a 30-year period, the Project is anticipated to emit approximately 20.6 MTCO2e per year.

Table 3.5-4
Project Annual Construction GHG Emissions

Construction Year	Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (per year)
2026	464
2027	154
Total Construction GHG Emissions	**618**

Source: MD Acoustics, December 2025. See ***Appendix 3.2.***

Project operations would generate GHG emissions from the usage of on-road motor vehicles, electricity, natural gas, water, and generation of solid waste and wastewater. Emissions of operational GHGs are shown in **Table 3.5-5, Project Annual Operational GHG Emissions**. As shown, the operational GHG emissions generated by the Project would be approximately 1,613 $MTCO_2e$ per year.

Table 3.5-5
Project Annual Operational GHG Emissions

Category	Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (per year)
Amortized Construction GHGs	20.60
Area Sources	0.73
Energy Usage	12.90
Mobile Sources	1,487.00
Solid Waste	89.20
Water	2.79
Refrigerants	0.03
Total Annual GHG Emissions	**1,613.25**

Source: MD Acoustics, December 2025. See ***Appendix 3.2.***

As discussed above, the SJVAPCD has not adopted a numeric significance threshold for land use development projects to determine CEQA significance. The mass emissions presented above are provided for informational purposes to comply with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.4(a). Instead, the determination of significance is based on consistency with GHG reduction plans, which, for this Project, is the City's PCAP. As detailed in the consistency analysis for GHG Impact 2, below, the Project incorporates valid GHG reduction measures and complies with the City's PCAP as well as the CARB Scoping Plan. Therefore, the Project would not generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than Significant Impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than Significant Impact.

GHG Impact 2 **Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gas emissions.**

Consistency with the City of Bakersfield Priority Climate Action Plan

The City's PCAP was adopted by the City in 2024. The PCAP meets the requirements for a Qualified Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy under *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15183.5 and streamlines CEQA review for projects demonstrating consistency.[7]

Project consistency with all applicable targets within the PCAP is assessed in **Table 3.5-6,** below. As shown in **Table 3.5-6**, the Project is consistent with the applicable strategies and targets within the PCAP.

Table 3.5-6
Project Consistency with the City's PCAP

Strategies	Description	Consistency Analysis
Building Energy	Address residential and nonresidential building energy efficiency and energy use.	**Consistent.** The California Green Building Standards Code (proposed Part 11, Title 24) was adopted as part of the California Building Standards Code in the CCR. Part 11 establishes voluntary standards that are mandatory in the 2022 edition of the Code on planning and design for sustainable site development, energy efficiency (in excess of the California Energy Code requirements), water conservation, material conservation, and internal air contaminants. The project would be subject to and comply with these mandatory standards.
Infrastructure	Increase production and use of clean electricity.	**Consistent.** The project would be consistent with all California Green Building Standards and would use clean electricity sources provided by Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), which is subject to state RPS requirements to increase renewable energy procurement.
	Increase EV charging infrastructure.	**Consistent.** The project would be consistent with all California Green Building Standards regarding EV charging infrastructure and would comply with City requirements to include EV charging infrastructure. Specifically, the Project includes 9 installed EV charging stations and 26 EV-ready stalls, complying with City requirements.

7 City of Bakersfield, *Priority Climate Action Plan*, March 2024. Available online at: https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-03/city-of-bakersfield-pcap.pdf. Accessed December 17, 2025.

Strategies	Description	Consistency Analysis
	Increase use of electricity and alternative fuels in construction equipment.	**Consistent.** The Project would be consistent with all California Green Building Standards regarding construction equipment and would utilize Tier 4 Final construction equipment as required by **Mitigation Measure MM AQ-1**, ensuring high efficiency and reduced emissions.
Land Use and Mobility	Improve pedestrian and biking infrastructure, prioritizing investments in disadvantaged communities.	**Consistent.** The project includes the installation of new sidewalks along the site frontage on Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, where none currently exist, improving local pedestrian connectivity and facilitating non-automotive travel, thereby contributing to the reduction of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT).
	Increase residential density near transit, prioritizing affordable housing development.	**Consistent.** The project is a place of worship on land zoned commercial and would not impede efforts to increase housing density near transit. Furthermore, by locating a religious facility within an established urban area rather than on the urban edges, the Project serves the local membership base and reduces the need for long-distance regional travel to other temples, directly supporting the PCAP's goal of reducing VMT.
Natural and Urban Landscapes	Increase urban tree canopy and green spaces to reduce the heat island effect and improve air quality.	**Consistent.** The project would comply with all City regulations regarding tree planting and green spaces, and include a robust landscaping plan with approximately 5.89 acres of landscaped area (approximately half the Project Site), increasing the urban tree canopy and green space.
Material and Waste	Increase organic waste diversion citywide.	**Consistent.** The proposed project would be required to have recycling programs that reduce waste to landfills by a minimum of 75 percent (per AB 341 and SB 1383).

Source: City of Bakersfield Priority Climate Action Plan (2024). Available at https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-03/city-of-bakersfield-pcap.pdf

Consistency with AB 32, SB 32, AB 1279 (Per CARB Scoping Plans)

As detailed in **Section 3.5.2, Regulatory Framework**, above, the CARB Scoping Plan (most recently updated in 2022) outlines the state's strategy to achieve its GHG reduction targets, including returning to 1990 levels by 2020 (AB 32), reducing emissions 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 (SB 32), and achieving carbon neutrality by 2045 (AB 1279).

While the City's PCAP is the plan for determining project significance, an evaluation of the Project's consistency with the CARB Scoping Plan is provided to demonstrate alignment with statewide climate goals. As shown in **Table 3.5-7**, the Project is consistent with the applicable strategies and recommended actions identified in the 2008, 2017, and 2022 Scoping Plans. By complying with Title 24 energy efficiency standards, utilizing water conservation measures, and supporting the transition to zero-emission vehicles (via EV infrastructure), the Project would not conflict with the state's ability to achieve its long-term GHG reduction targets.

Table 3.5-7
Project Consistency with CARB Scoping Plan Policies and Measures

2008 Scoping Plan Measures to Reduce GHG Emissions	Project Compliance with Measure
California Light-Duty Vehicle Greenhouse Gas Standards – Implement adopted standards and planned second phase of the program. Align zero-emission vehicle, alternative and renewable fuel, and vehicle technology programs with long-term climate change goals.	**Consistent.** While this measure applies to vehicle manufacturers, the Project supports its implementation by providing 9 EV charging stations and 26 EV-ready stalls, thereby facilitating the use of cleaner vehicles that meet these stringent state standards.
Energy Efficiency – Maximize energy efficiency building and appliance standards; pursue additional efficiency, including new technologies, policy, and implementation mechanisms. Pursue comparable investment in energy efficiency from all retail providers of electricity in California.	**Consistent.** The Project complies with the 2022 Title 24 Building Energy Efficiency Standards, which incorporate and exceed the efficiency goals originally set forth in the 2008 Scoping Plan. Key features include high-efficiency lighting, HVAC systems, and water heating technologies.
Low Carbon Fuel Standard – Develop and adopt the Low Carbon Fuel Standard.	**Consistent.** This is a state-level regulation of fuel providers. However, the Project supports the transition to low-carbon transportation by locating a community-serving use near residential neighborhoods (reducing VMT) and providing EV infrastructure to displace gasoline consumption.
Vehicle Efficiency Measures – Implement light-duty vehicle efficiency measures.	**Consistent.** The Project supports vehicle efficiency by providing adequate on-site circulation to minimize vehicle idling. Furthermore, the Project's location encourages shorter vehicle trips for local residents.
Medium/Heavy-Duty Vehicles – Adopt medium and heavy-duty vehicle efficiency measures.	**Consistent.** The Project would utilize commercial delivery services subject to CARB's heavy-duty vehicle regulations. Additionally, the site design includes loading areas that accommodate delivery trucks efficiently, reducing the need for idling or complex maneuvering.
Green Building Strategy – Expand the use of green building practices to reduce the carbon footprint of California's new and existing inventory of buildings.	**Consistent.** The Project complies with the California Green Building Standards Code (CalGreen), utilizing sustainable design practices such as water-efficient irrigation, drought-tolerant landscaping, and construction waste diversion of at least 75 percent.
High Global Warming Potential Gases – Adopt measures to reduce high global warming potential gases.	**Consistent.** The Project would install modern HVAC and refrigeration systems that utilize low-GWP refrigerants in compliance with current CARB regulations, thereby directly reducing the potential for high-GWP emissions.
Recycling and Waste – Reduce methane emissions at landfills. Increase waste diversion, composting, and commercial recycling. Move toward zero-waste.	**Consistent.** The Project would implement a comprehensive waste management plan in compliance with AB 341 and SB 1383, including designated enclosures for recycling and organic waste bins to ensure material is diverted from landfills.

2008 Scoping Plan Measures to Reduce GHG Emissions	Project Compliance with Measure
Water – Continue efficiency programs and use cleaner energy sources to move and treat water.	**Consistent.** The Project reduces water-related energy use by complying with the City's water conservation ordinances and installing low-flow plumbing fixtures and smart irrigation controllers, which minimizes the energy required for water transport and treatment.
2017 Scoping Plan Recommendation Actions to Reduce GHG Emissions	**Project Compliance with Recommended Action**
Implement Mobile Source Strategy: Further increase GHG stringency on all light-duty vehicles beyond existing Advanced Clean Car regulations.	**Consistent.** While vehicle standards are established at the state level, the Project supports the reduction of mobile source emissions by installing new sidewalks along the site frontage to encourage pedestrian travel and locating a community-serving use near existing residential neighborhoods, thereby reducing vehicle trip lengths.
Implement Mobile Source Strategy: At least 1.5 million zero-emission and plug-in hybrid light-duty electric vehicles by 2025 and at least 4.2 million zero-emission and plug-in hybrid light-duty electric vehicles by 2030.	**Consistent.** The Project directly supports the State's ZEV adoption goals by providing infrastructure that enables electric vehicle use. Specifically, the site plan includes nine active EV charging stations and 26 EV-ready stalls, exceeding minimum code requirements.
Implement Mobile Source Strategy: Innovative Clean Transit: Transition to a suite of to-be-determined innovative clean transit options. Assumed 20 percent of new urban buses purchased beginning in 2018 will be zero-emission buses, with the penetration of zero-emission technology ramped up to 100 percent of new sales in 2030. Also, new natural gas buses, starting in 2018, and diesel buses, starting in 2020, meet the optional heavy-duty low-NOX standard.	**Consistent.** The Project does not operate a transit fleet; however, it is located on Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, which are served by GetBus Route 82. The Project's development of frontage improvements (sidewalks) enhances access to these existing transit stops, supporting the utilization of clean transit systems.
Implement Mobile Source Strategy: Last Mile Delivery: New regulation that would result in the use of low NOX or cleaner engines and the deployment of increasing numbers of zero-emission trucks, primarily for class 3-7 last mile delivery trucks in California. This measure assumes ZEVs comprise 2.5 percent of new Class 3–7 truck sales in local fleets starting in 2020, increasing to 10 percent in 2025, and remaining flat through 2030.	**Consistent.** The Project would utilize commercial delivery services for its operations (e.g., clothing center supplies, grounds maintenance) that are subject to CARB's increasingly stringent low-NOx and zero-emission truck regulations. The site includes adequate internal circulation to accommodate these modern delivery vehicles without idling or congestion.
Implement SB 350 by 2030: Establish annual targets for statewide energy efficiency savings and demand reduction that will achieve a cumulative doubling of statewide energy efficiency savings in electricity and natural gas end uses by 2030.	**Consistent.** The Project supports this goal by complying with the 2022 Title 24 Building Energy Efficiency Standards, which are significantly more stringent than the 2017 standards in effect when this Scoping Plan was adopted. Features such as LED lighting, high-efficiency HVAC systems, and water-efficient landscaping contribute to doubling statewide efficiency savings.
By 2019, develop regulations and programs to support organic waste landfill reduction goals in the SLCP and SB 1383.	**Consistent.** The Project would comply with SB 1383 (Short-Lived Climate Pollutants) requirements for organic waste diversion. The site plan includes designated refuse enclosures designed to accommodate separate organic waste bins, ensuring the Project participates in the City's organic waste recycling program to divert material from landfills.
2022 Scoping Plan Recommended Actions to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions	**Project Compliance with Recommended Action**
Deploy ZEVs and reduce driving demand	**Consistent.** The Project supports the deployment of Zero-Emission Vehicles (ZEVs) by installing nine operational EV charging stations and 26 EV-ready stalls. Additionally, the Project reduces driving demand and VMT by constructing new sidewalks along the site frontage, which enhances local pedestrian connectivity and encourages non-automotive travel. Locating a temple within the City further reduces VMT by shortening travel distances for existing area

2008 Scoping Plan Measures to Reduce GHG Emissions	Project Compliance with Measure
	members who would otherwise need to drive to temples situated farther away.
Coordinate the supply of liquid fossil fuels with declining California fuel demand	**Consistent.** While this is a state-level supply management action, the Project supports this goal by reducing demand for liquid fossil fuels through high-efficiency building design and the provision of infrastructure that supports the transition to electric vehicles.
Generate clean electricity	**Consistent.** The Project would comply with the solar photovoltaic requirements of the 2022 Title 24 standards. Additionally, the Project would connect to the PG&E grid, which is increasing its procurement of renewable energy in compliance with SB 100.
Decarbonize industrial energy supply	**Consistent.** The Project is a religious assembly use and does not involve industrial processes or industrial energy demands. It would utilize standard commercial energy supplies that are subject to statewide decarbonization mandates.
Decarbonize buildings	**Consistent.** The Project complies with the 2022 Title 24 Building Energy Efficiency Standards, utilizing high-efficiency LED lighting, modern HVAC systems, and water conservation measures to minimize building energy intensity and associated carbon emissions.
Reduce non-combustion emissions	**Consistent.** The Project would utilize HVAC and refrigeration systems that comply with current CARB regulations regarding low-GWP refrigerants, thereby minimizing non-combustion GHG emissions.

Source: CARB Scoping Plan (2008, 2017, 2022)

As demonstrated in **Table 3.5-6** and **Table 3.5-7**, the Project is consistent with the applicable strategies, measures, and targets of both the City's PCAP and the CARB Scoping Plan. The Project incorporates specific design features, including EV charging infrastructure, water conservation measures, energy-efficient building systems, and waste diversion programs that advance the City's local reduction strategy and support the state's long-term climate goals. Therefore, as the Project would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions, impacts with respect to regulatory consistency would be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than Significant Impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than Significant Impact.

3.5.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The cumulative analysis was prepared in accordance with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15130, which requires an EIR to discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the incremental effects of the project are cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impacts are defined as impacts created by the combination of the project with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. 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 with impacts related to the proposed project.

In accordance with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15130(b), this analysis utilizes a summary of projections contained in an adopted planning document designed to evaluate regional or area-wide conditions. Specifically, this analysis relies on the Kern COG 2022 RTP/SCS, which provides regional growth forecasts for population, housing, and employment for the period 2020–2046.

Although the Project is expected to emit GHGs, the emission of GHGs by a single project into the atmosphere is not itself necessarily an adverse environmental effect. Rather, it is the increased accumulation of GHG from more than one project and many sources in the atmosphere that may result in global climate change. Therefore, in the case of global climate change, the proximity of the project to other GHG emission-generating activities is not directly relevant to the determination of a cumulative impact because climate change is a global condition. According to CAPCOA, "GHG impacts are exclusively cumulative impacts; there are no non-cumulative GHG emission impacts from a climate change perspective."[8] The resultant consequences of climate change can cause adverse environmental effects. A project's GHG emissions typically would be very small in comparison to state or global GHG emissions and, consequently, they would, in isolation, have no significant direct impact on climate change.

The state has mandated a goal of reducing statewide emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 and 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, even though statewide population and commerce are predicted to continue to expand. In order to achieve these goals, CARB has established and is implementing regulations to reduce statewide GHG emissions.

8 California Air Pollution Control Officers Association, *CEQA & Climate change: Evaluating and Addressing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Projects Subject to the California Environmental Quality Act*, (2008).

As discussed in **GHG Impact 2**, the Project is consistent with the strategies and targets of the City's PCAP. The City's PCAP meets the criteria for a Qualified Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy under *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15183.5. Therefore, consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064(h)(3),[9] the City, as lead agency, has determined that the Project's contribution to cumulative GHG emissions and global climate change would be less than significant because the Project complies with the requirements of an approved plan for the reduction of GHG emissions.

Furthermore, the Project supports regional growth projections utilized in the 2022 RTP/SCS. As shown in **Table 3.0-2**, the City is projected to grow by approximately 174,000 residents and 28,000 jobs between 2020 and 2046. The Project, which provides religious and community-serving facilities to support this planned population growth, is consistent with the City's land use designation for the Project Site that serves as the basis for these regional forecasts. By locating community-serving uses near existing residential neighborhoods and providing pedestrian and EV infrastructure, the Project supports the RTP/SCS goals of reducing per capita VMT and GHG emissions (see **Section 3.8, Transportation**, of this Draft EIR).

Therefore, as the Project is consistent with the City's PCAP and with regional growth forecasts designed to meet state climate goals, the Project's incremental contribution to GHG emissions and their effects on climate change would not be cumulatively considerable.

3.5.5 REFERENCES

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California Air Resources Board. "SB 375 Regional Targets." Available online at: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/sustainable-communities-program/sb-375-regional-targets. Accessed November 19, 2025.

9 The *State CEQA Guidelines* were amended in response to SB 97. In particular, the *State CEQA Guidelines* were amended to specify that compliance with a GHG emissions reduction program renders a cumulative impact insignificant. Per State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(h)(3), a project's incremental contribution to a cumulative impact can be found not cumulatively considerable if the project will comply with an approved plan or mitigation program that provides specific requirements that will avoid or substantially lessen the cumulative problem within the geographic area of the project. To qualify, such a plan or program must be specified in law or adopted by the public agency with jurisdiction over the affected resources through a public review process to implement, interpret, or make specific the law enforced or administered by the public agency. Examples of such programs include a "water quality control plan, air quality attainment or maintenance plan, integrated waste management plan, habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, [and] plans or regulations for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions."

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3.6 LAND USE AND PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

This section describes the existing land uses in the City of Bakersfield (City), identifies the regulatory framework with respect to regulations that address land use, and evaluates the significance of the potential changes in existing land uses that could result from the implementation of the proposed Project. Consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15125(d), this section evaluates the Project's consistency with applicable planning documents and zoning regulations.

3.6.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3.6.1.1 City of Bakersfield

The City is an incorporated municipality located within the central portion of Kern County. Land uses within the City include residential, commercial, office, industrial, open space and recreational, and public facilities and institutional. Residential development, single-family and multi-family, predominates the City.

3.6.1.2 Project Site Land Use

The approximately 13.07-acre (11.76 net acres) Project Site, located at 12310 Stockdale Highway on the northwest corner of Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, comprises two parcels (APNs 500-780-12 and 500-780-13), which would be subdivided into three parcels under the Applicant's Vesting Tentative Parcel Map No. 12637. The Project Site is vacant and contains no existing structures. Sidewalks are present along the southern and eastern boundaries, and the Project Site is situated along an arterial roadway within an established suburban context. The Project Site has a General Plan Land Use designation of Office Commercial (O-C) and is zoned for Commercial and Professional Office (C-O), as illustrated on **Figure 3.6-1, Existing General Plan Land Use Designations,** and **Figure 3.6-2, Existing Zoning**.

3.6.1.3 Surrounding Land Uses

The Project Site is situated within an urbanized portion of western Bakersfield and is surrounded by a mix of residential, commercial, institutional, and recreational uses. To the west, the site is bordered by a commercial medical facility, while to the south, across Stockdale Highway, is a private high school, other religious facilities, and a commercial storage facility. To the east, across Jewetta Avenue, lies a 14-acre public park that provides open space and recreational amenities for the community. Immediately north of the Project Site is a single-family residential subdivision. The zoning designations in the surrounding area

reflect this land use pattern, with Commercial and Professional Office (C-O) and combined Commercial and Planned Commercial Development (C-2/PCD) districts to the west; Single-Dwelling Residential (R-1) and Planned Commercial Development (PCD) to the south and southeast; Open Space (OS) to the east; and Planned Unit Development (PUD) to the north.

3.6.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

3.6.2.1 State

General Plans and Land Use Regulations

California Government Code Section 65300 requires each city and county to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan to guide the physical development of the jurisdiction and any land within its sphere of influence. State law mandates that a general plan address seven required elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. The general plan must be internally consistent and provide policies to address environmental issues relevant to the community, such as hazards or flooding. The Project's consistency with the City's General Plan is evaluated in **Section 3.6.5**, below.

Subdivision Map Act

The Subdivision Map Act (Government Code Section 66410 et seq.) governs the division of land and requires local governments to adopt subdivision ordinances. These ordinances establish conditions for approval of subdivision maps and provide local agencies with direct authority over the types of subdivision projects permitted and the physical improvements required. Approval of the Project's Vesting Tentative Parcel Map (No. 12637) is subject to the provisions of the Subdivision Map Act.

Senate Bill 375

The Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (Sustainable Communities Act, SB 375, Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008) establishes the framework for Regional Transportation Plans and Sustainable Communities Strategies (RTP/SCS) and provides CEQA streamlining tools for qualifying residential or mixed-use projects. The Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG) adopted its most recent RTP/SCS in 2022. As the Project is a proposed religious facility, SB 375 streamlining provisions do not apply to the Project. However, the Project's consistency with Kern COG's 2022 RTP/SCS is evaluated in **Section 3.6.5**, below.

Senate Bill 743

Senate Bill 743 (2013) amended CEQA to modernize transportation analysis by replacing automobile Level of Service (LOS) with Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as the primary metric for evaluating transportation impacts. Under SB 743, projects are assessed based on their potential to increase or reduce VMT, aligning transportation analysis with statewide greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals and sustainable land use planning. SB 743 applies to all project types, including religious facilities. The Project's consistency with SB 743 and VMT impacts are evaluated in **Section 3.8, Transportation**, of this Draft EIR.

3.6.2.2 Regional and Local

Regional Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy

Kern COG is an association of local governments and agencies that serves as a Metropolitan Planning Organization, a Regional Transportation Planning Agency, and a Council of Governments. The Kern COG region encompasses all of Kern County, which includes 11 cities. Kern COG is responsible for developing long-range regional transportation plans, including the regional SCS and associated growth forecasts, RTP, and regional housing needs allocations.

The Kern COG 2022 RTP/SCS establishes regional transportation and land use strategies to reduce GHG emissions and guide growth through 2046. The Project's consistency with Kern COG's 2022 RTP/SCS is evaluated in **Section 3.6.5**, below, to determine whether the Project would conflict with regional plans adopted to avoid or mitigate environmental effects.

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Air Quality Attainment Plans

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) has adopted several Air Quality Attainment Plans (AQAPs) that identify measures needed for the San Joaquin Valley to attain the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) to protect public health, safety, and welfare. The Project is located within the jurisdiction of SJVAPCD. The Project's consistency with the applicable SJVAPCD AQAP is evaluated in **Section 3.2, Air Quality**, of this Draft EIR.

Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan

The Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan (General Plan), adopted in 2002, provides long-range guidance for growth and development in the City and is a fundamental policy document that defines how the City should use and manage its resources into the future. It includes nine elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, Safety, Public Services and Facilities, and Parks.

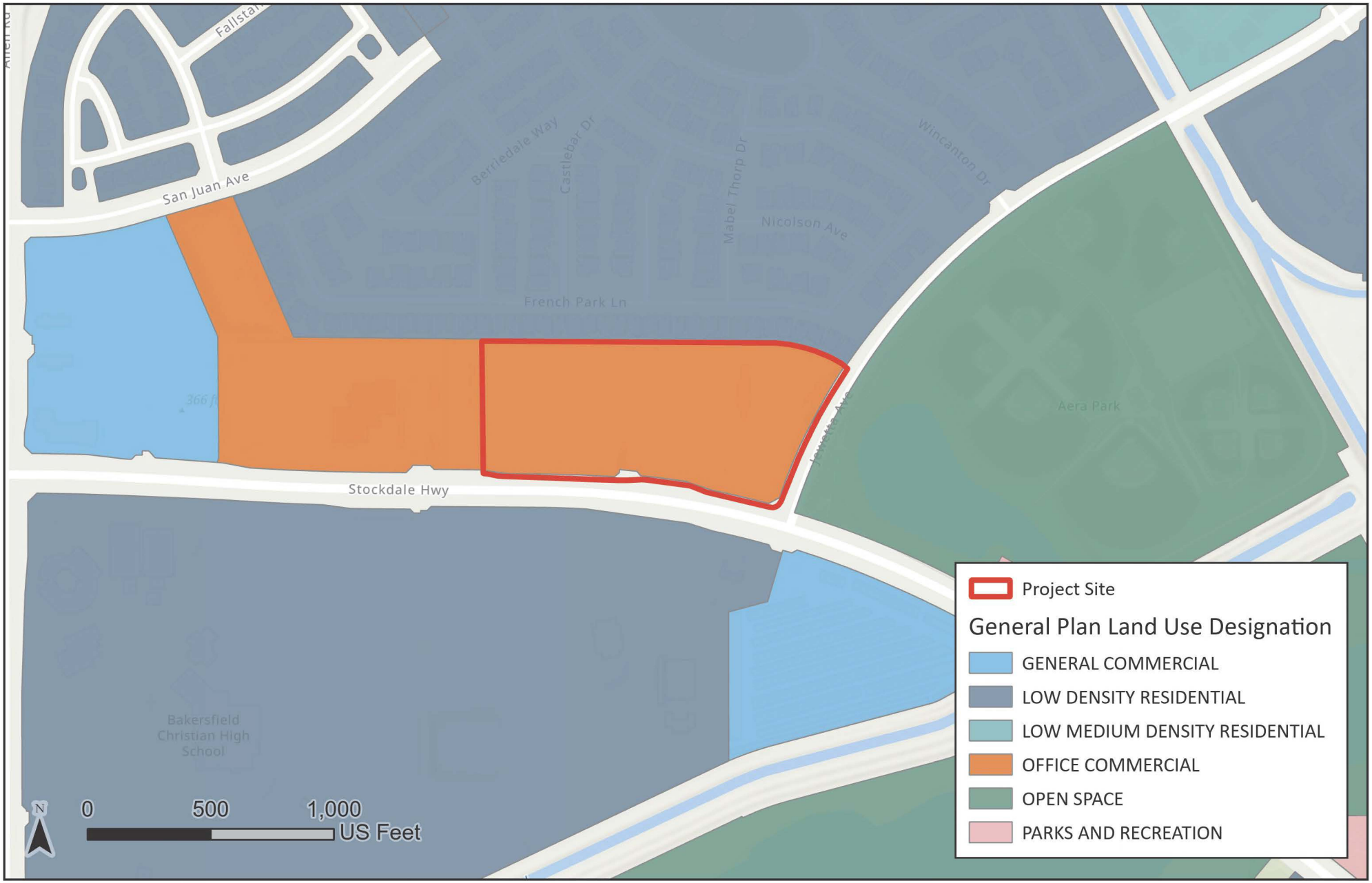
The Project's consistency with the Land Use Element and Circulation Element is relevant to this Project as they establish land use designations, building intensity standards, and transportation policies applicable to the Project Site. The Project's consistency with the City's General Plan is evaluated in **Section 3.6.5**, below.

- **Land Use Element**: The Land Use Element and the Land Use Policy Map establish the broad, general policies regarding the distribution and mix of land uses consistent with community goals. The Land Use Element designates the general distribution and intensity of land uses for housing, business, industry, open space, education, public buildings and grounds, and other public and private uses. The Land Use Element also establishes standards of population density and building intensity for the various land uses. The Land Use Policy Map graphically illustrates the planned pattern of land use in Bakersfield.

City of Bakersfield Zoning Code

BMC Title 17, known as the Zoning Code, implements the land use policies of the General Plan. The Zoning Code is detailed with respect to specific development standards and land use requirements. The City's Zoning Code includes specific standards regarding permitted uses, building heights, parking, setbacks, and other requirements. At the time the Project's application was submitted, religious uses were permitted by-right in the C-O zone, and the City deemed the application complete and vested before the Zoning Code was subsequently revised to require a Conditional Use Permit for a religious use in the C-O zone. The Project, therefore, is being processed as by-right.

The Project includes a Zone Modification request (Zone Modification No. 24-0032) which the City told the Church to seek for the City to authorize steeple heights that exceed the numeric building height standard in the C-O zone, as discussed in Section 3.6.5, Impact LAN-1, below. The analysis in this Draft EIR is limited to evaluating the potential physical environmental impacts that could result from the Project (such as aesthetics or shading) in accordance with CEQA.



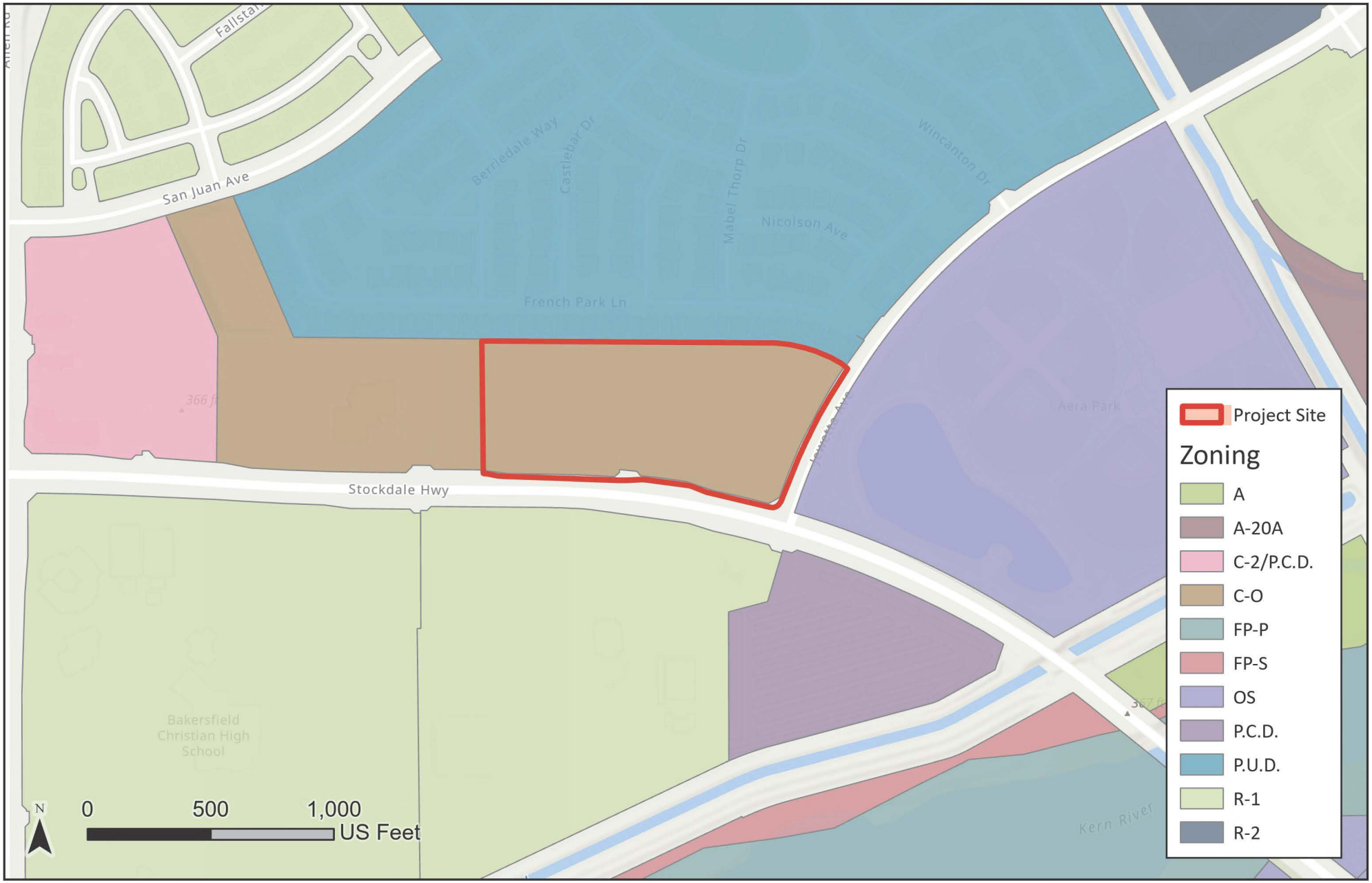
SOURCE: City of Bakersfield, 2025; Esri, 2025

FIGURE **3.6-1**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Existing General Plan Land Use Designations

859.004•11/25



SOURCE: City of Bakersfield, 2025; Esri, 2025

FIGURE **3.6-2**

Existing Zoning

IMPACT SCIENCES

859.004•11/25

3.6.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

3.6.3.1 Thresholds of Significance

The following thresholds for determining the significance of impacts related to land use and planning are contained in Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*:

> *Would the project…*
> - *Physically divide an established community?*
> - *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?*

The Initial Study (**Appendix 1.0-2** to this Draft EIR) determined that the Project would not physically divide an established community. The Project Site is within an urbanized area, and development would occur entirely within parcels designated for urban use. No new barriers or circulation changes would occur. Therefore, this issue is not further addressed.

3.6.3.2 Methodology

The discussion in this impact section assesses whether the Project would cause significant impacts related to land use under *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15125(d), which requires that an EIR include a discussion of any inconsistencies with applicable plans. CEQA significance regarding land use is based on whether a plan inconsistency results in a significant physical environmental effect. The consistency analysis, therefore, focuses on whether the Project would conflict with policies adopted to avoid or mitigate environmental impacts in a manner that would result in a significant physical environmental effect.

Analysis of conflicts and consistency with applicable plans is included in this impact section. Under State Planning and Zoning law (Government Code Sections 65000, et seq.), strict conformity with every policy is not required, and a project is considered consistent if it furthers the overall goals and does not obstruct key policies. Under CEQA, as noted, the threshold of significance is whether any inconsistency would result in a significant physical environmental effect.

For the purpose of identifying significant impacts related to land use, they can be either direct or indirect. Direct impacts include physical division of communities or conflicts with adopted land use plans. Indirect impacts, such as transportation or air quality effects, are addressed in those respective sections of this Draft EIR. This section focuses on direct land use consistency impacts.

3.6.3.3 Impact Analysis

Impact LAN-1 **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.**

Kern COG's 2022 RTP/SCS is a long-range regional transportation and land use network plan that sets regional transportation goals, policies, and actions intended to guide development of the planned multimodal transportation systems in Kern County. Similarly, the City's General Plan serves as a blueprint for the City's planning efforts and vision for the future.

Table 3.6-1, Project Consistency with Kern COG 2022 RTP/SCS Goals, demonstrates the Project's consistency with the goals outlined in the 2022 RTP/SCS, whereas **Table 3.6-2, Project Consistency with the General Plan,** discusses the proposed Project's consistency with relevant policies from the City's General Plan Land Use element.

Table 3.6-1
Project Consistency with Kern COG 2022 RTP/SCS Goals

Goals	Consistency Analysis
Goal 1: Mobility – Improve the mobility of people and freight	**Consistent.** The Project reduces average travel distances (as measured in VMT) for church members by providing a local temple (in the first phase) and meetinghouse (in a later second phase), thereby decreasing regional trip lengths compared to existing travel patterns. Pedestrian frontage improvements along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue would provide a missing connection where sidewalks are currently absent, thereby enhancing local mobility and connectivity. As analyzed in **Section 3.8, Transportation**, the Project does not conflict with adopted mobility policies.
Goal 2: Accessibility – Improve accessibility to, and the economic wellbeing of, major employment and other regional activity centers	**Consistent.** The Project improves accessibility for church members by locating facilities near major highways and arterials, reducing travel distances to church services and ordinances. This would provide additional opportunities for church members to support the local economy. Publicly accessible plazas and pedestrian pathways would provide connectivity to nearby activity centers along Stockdale Highway, supporting local accessibility without creating adverse physical impacts.
Goal 3: Reliability – Improve the reliability and safety of the transportation system.	**Consistent.** The Project incorporates frontage, circulation, and parking improvements consistent with City standards, including ADA and EV facilities. As analyzed in **Section 3.8, Transportation**, the Project would not degrade roadway reliability or safety, and no physical conflicts with adopted transportation safety policies would occur.

Goals	Consistency Analysis
Goal 4: Efficiency – Maximize the efficiency of the existing and future transportation system.	**Consistent.** The Project reduces trip lengths for assigned wards and stakes, resulting in an overall reduction in regional VMT compared to existing conditions. No roadway capacity enhancement is required as a result of the Project, and the Project supports efficient use of the existing transportation system by reducing regional VMT. The Project is consistent with RTP/SCS efficiency goals and does not result in adverse physical impacts.
Goal 5: Livability – Promote livable communities.	**Consistent.** The Project provides landscaped street frontages, publicly accessible plazas, and pedestrian improvements that enhance community livability. By providing a temple in Bakersfield, regional trips would be reduced for church community members, improving overall livability.
Goal 6: Sustainability – Minimize effects on the environment.	**Consistent.** The Project incorporates drought-tolerant landscaping, efficient irrigation, and stormwater features such as swales and basins that reduce water demand and improve runoff quality. Buildings would comply with California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) and the California Building Code, ensuring energy efficiency and reduced GHG emissions. The Project also provides EV charging and EV-ready parking stalls, supporting sustainable transportation. As analyzed in **Section 3.8, Transportation**, the Project would reduce VMT compared to existing travel patterns of church members, which supports Kern COG's RTP/SCS sustainability goals.
Goal 7: Equity – Ensure an equitable distribution of the benefits among various demographic and user groups.	**Consistent.** The Project provides a religious campus that is accessible to church members across the Bakersfield metropolitan area and the broader region, reducing travel distances compared to the distance of existing temples. In addition, daytime public amenities such as landscaped plazas, pedestrian pathways, and seating areas are available to visitors regardless of affiliation, supporting equitable access to open space. The Project complies with ADA requirements, provides accessible parking and EV charging stalls, and incorporates design features that ensure safe and inclusive use of the site and facilities. Collectively, these measures demonstrate consistency with Kern COG's RTP/SCS equity goals by distributing benefits across diverse demographic and user groups.

Source: Kern Council of Governments, 2022 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, adopted July 21, 2022. Available online at: https://www.kerncog.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022_RTP.pdf, accessed November 7, 2025.

As shown in **Table 3.6-1**, above, the Project is consistent with Kern COG 2022's RTP/SCS goals. The Project reduces VMT, enhances pedestrian connectivity, complies with CALGreen and City development standards, and provides publicly accessible amenities. No conflicts with adopted regional transportation or sustainability policies would result, as the Project supports the RTP/SCS objectives. In addition to regional transportation and sustainability goals, the Project's consistency with the General Plan and the City's zoning regulations is evaluated below.

The Project is subject to the General Plan and the Zoning Code (BMC Title 17). As discussed above and shown in **Figure 3.6-1** and **Figure 3.6-2**, the Project Site has a General Plan designation of Office Commercial

(O-C) and is zoned Commercial and Professional Office (C-O). Religious facilities are a permitted use within the C-O zone, and at the time the Project application was submitted, religious facilities were permitted by-right in that zone, and as such, the Project is considered by-right.[1] The City interprets its General Plan in a manner consistent with its zoning structure, meaning that institutional and service uses are generally considered compatible within commercial designations.

The proposed steeples for the temple and meetinghouse exceed the 60-foot building height limit for structures in the C-O zone. The City provides a discretionary Zone Modification process to authorize such exceptions. This process has been consistently applied to similar institutional projects, allowing design flexibility while maintaining compatibility with surrounding uses. General Plan maps reflect the quality and character of land use designations in general terms and do not preclude minor deviations from the overall pattern. Similarly, the zoning map indicates predominant uses but allows for discretionary approvals to accommodate site-specific conditions.

The Project's site plan has been designed to conform with the applicable development standards of the C-O zone, including setbacks, landscaping, parking, and circulation. The City has indicated to the Church that the Project requires a discretionary Zone Modification (MOD 24-0032) to authorize decorative, non-occupiable and non-combustible steeples that exceed the numeric building height standard in the C-O zone. This Draft EIR analyzes the potential physical impacts of the site design and steeple height, including a visual simulation report (see **Section 3.1, Aesthetics**), and concludes that the steeple height would not cause a substantial environmental effect to adjacent properties such as the single-family residences to the north. Because Zone Modification is a discretionary approval under the BMC, the City may impose conditions of approval to ensure the Project conforms to approved plans, maintains compatibility with surrounding uses, and avoids significant environmental impacts so long as those conditions are consistent with applicable federal and state law. With such conditions and compliance with such applicable laws and standards, the Zone Modification would not result in a significant environmental impact. Additionally, approval of the Zone Modification would render the Project consistent with the General Plan and Zoning Code. Thus, since the Project is consistent with the General Plan and zoning designations and does not cause a significant physical environmental effect under CEQA, the Project would not cause a significant environmental impact due to conflict with the General Plan or zoning.

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1 The City adopted Ordinance No. 5158 on April 26, 2024 (codified May 26, 2024), amending the Zoning Code (BMC Title 17) to require a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for religious facilities in the C-O (Commercial and Professional Office) zone. At the time the Project application was submitted and deemed complete, however, such facilities were permitted by-right.

The following **Table 3.6-2** summarizes the Project's consistency with applicable General Plan goals and policies.

Table 3.6-2
Project Consistency with the General Plan

General Plan Goal/Policy	Discussion
Land Use Element	
Goals	
Goal No. 1: Accommodate new development which captures the economic demands generated by the marketplace and establishes Bakersfield's role as the capital of the southern San Joaquin Valley.	Consistent. The Project supports these goals by accommodating new institutional development that meets the demand of church members. By locating a temple in Bakersfield, the Project reinforces the City's role as a regional center for religious and community activities in the southern San Joaquin Valley. The Project also contributes to a balanced mix of land uses by providing facilities that serve the population's cultural and spiritual needs, complementing residential, commercial, and employment uses. The Project, thereby, supports both economic demand and the mix of uses envisioned by the General Plan.
Goal 2: Accommodate new development which provides a full mix of uses to support its population.	
Goal 3: Accommodate new development which is compatible with and complements existing land uses.	**Consistent.** The Project is consistent with its land use designation, and similar institutional uses are present south of Stockdale Highway, including a private Christian high school and a church. Although the temple and meetinghouse steeples exceed the numeric building height standard of the C-O zone, the City's discretionary Zone Modification process allows limited exceptions where design features and conditions ensure compatibility. The Project incorporates perimeter landscaping, setbacks, and site design elements that buffer adjacent residential uses to the north and establish a visually compatible relationship among buildings and surrounding properties. As analyzed in **Section 3.1, Aesthetics**, visual simulations illustrate that the steeple height would not cause a substantial adverse effect on views or community character. With approval of the Zone Modification and compliance with applicable standards, the Project complements existing land uses and achieves a compatible functional and visual relationship, consistent with the General Plan goals.
Goal 7: Establish a built environment which achieves a compatible functional and visual relationship among individual buildings and sites.	
Goal 4: Accommodate new development which channels land uses in a phased, orderly manner and is coordinated with the provision of infrastructure and public improvements.	**Consistent.** The Project would be constructed in two phases: Phase 1 includes the temple and associated site improvements, while Phase 2 provides the meetinghouse and additional facilities. The Project Site is surrounded by existing urban development and served by established infrastructure, ensuring that it does not represent leapfrog growth but rather coordinated infill consistent with City planning objectives. Development is coordinated with existing infrastructure and includes frontage improvements along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, pedestrian pathways, plazas, benches, and landscaped gardens that would be publicly accessible during daytime hours. These improvements ensure that the Project is phased in an orderly manner and coordinated with the provision of public amenities, thereby supporting planned growth and avoiding significant environmental impacts.

General Plan Goal/Policy	Discussion
Policies	
Commercial Development	
Policy 15. Allow for the development of a variety of commercial centers/corridors which are differentiated by their function, intended users and level of intensity, including conveniences centers serving local residential neighborhoods, sub-regional centers which serve groupings of neighborhoods, and major regional centers which serve the planning area and surrounding areas.	**Consistent.** While the Project is not a commercial use in the traditional sense, it functions as a regional institutional facility that complements the mix of uses envisioned by the General Plan. By providing a new temple and meetinghouse for church members, the Project accommodates demand for community-serving development and reinforces Bakersfield's role as a regional center in the southern San Joaquin Valley. The Project optimizes accessibility for members by locating near major highways, arterials, and local roadways, thereby serving residents within Bakersfield and surrounding areas while also accommodating visitors from the broader Central Valley. In this way, the Project contributes to the diversity of land uses that support the population and regional activity, consistent with these General Plan policies.
Policy 16. Allow for the development of a variety of commercial uses, including those which serve residents (groceries, clothing, etc), highway users, and tourists-visitors.	
Policy 25. Provide for infill of commercial land uses to be compatible with the scale and character of existing commercial districts and corridors.	**Consistent.** The Project represents infill development consistent with its land use designation, and similar institutional uses are present south of Stockdale Highway, including a private Christian high school and a church. Although the temple and meetinghouse steeples exceed the numeric building height standard of the C-O zone, the City's discretionary Zone Modification process allows limited exceptions where design features and conditions ensure compatibility. The Project incorporates fencing, perimeter landscaping, setbacks, and lighting controls to buffer adjacent single-family residences to the north and reduce potential differences in scale, noise, traffic, and parking. As analyzed in **Section 3.1, Aesthetics**, visual simulations illustrate that the steeple height would not cause a substantial adverse effect on views or community character. With approval of the Zone Modification and compliance with applicable standards, the Project is compatible with surrounding land uses and achieves the design relationships envisioned by these General Plan policies.
Policy 26. Encourage adjacent commercial uses to be of compatible height, setback, color, and materials.	
Policy 28. Require that commercial development provide design features such as screen walls, landscaping and height, setback and lighting restrictions between the boundaries of adjacent residential land use designations so as to reduce impacts of residences due to noise, traffic, parking, and differences in scale.	
Policy 30. Street frontages along all new commercial development shall be landscaped.	**Consistent.** The Project provides landscaped street frontages along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, incorporating trees, shrubs, and groundcover that enhance the visual character of the corridor and buffer adjacent uses. These improvements are consistent with City standards and contribute to a compatible and attractive streetscape consistent with this General Plan policy.
Public Facilities	
Policy 52. Locate new development where infrastructure is available or can be expanded to serve the proposed development.	**Consistent.** Although the Project Site is currently vacant, it is located within an urbanized area where infrastructure and public services are available and can be expanded to serve new development. The Project would be coordinated with existing utility and service systems, ensuring that land use and infrastructure development occur in a complementary manner. In accordance with City requirements, the developer is responsible for all on-site improvements and for a proportional share of off-site service extension and infrastructure costs. Availability of services has been evaluated during discretionary consideration of the Project, and no limitations have been identified that would affect approval or require a reduction in size, density, or intensity. Accordingly, the Project is consistent with these General Plan policies.
Policy 53. Ensure that land use and infrastructure development are coordinated.	
Policy 54. The developer shall be responsible for all on-site costs incurred as a result of the proposed project, in addition to a proportional share of off-site costs incurred in service extension or improvements. The availability of public or private services or resources shall be evaluated during discretionary project consideration. Availability may affect project approval or result in a reduction in size, density, or intensity otherwise indicated in the general plan's map provisions.	

General Plan Goal/Policy	Discussion
Signage	
Policy 61. Coordinate a consistent design vocabulary between city and county for all public signage, including fixture type, lettering, colors, symbols, and logos. **Policy 62.** Provide signage which is adequately spaced and clearly visible during the day and night to control vehicular traffic, bicycles, and pedestrians. **Policy 63.** Encourage the use of creative and distinctive signage which establishes a distinctive image for the planning area and identifies principal entries to the metropolitan area, unique districts, neighborhoods and locations.	**Consistent.** The Project would include a monument sign at the southeastern corner of the Project Site to clearly identify the temple. The sign would be designed in accordance with BMC Chapter 17.60, ensuring consistency with City standards for lettering, colors, and fixture type. Placement and design would provide adequate visibility during both day and night to guide vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrian circulation safely. In addition, the monument sign would contribute to a distinctive image for the Project, reinforcing its role as a community-serving institutional use within Bakersfield. Accordingly, the Project's signage is consistent with these General Plan policies.
Image	
Policy 67. Develop a distinctive identity for the Bakersfield region which differentiates it as a unique place in the Southern San Joaquin Valley.	**Consistent.** The Project would contribute to Bakersfield's distinctive identity by introducing a new temple for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, one of only a few temples located in the Central Valley. The temple's architectural design, landscaped grounds, and community-serving function reinforce Bakersfield's role as a unique regional center for cultural and spiritual activities. The Project would provide a landmark facility that is both visually distinctive and accessible to residents and visitors.
Policy 69. Allow variation in the use of street trees, shrubs, lighting, and other details to give streets better visual continuity and increased shade canopy. **Policy 70.** Provide for the installation of street trees which enhance pedestrian activity and convey a distinctive and high-quality visual image. **Policy 71.** Encourage landscaping the banks of flood control channels, canals, roadways and other public improvements with trees to provide a strong visual element in the planning area. **Policy 72.** Promote the establishment of attractive entrances into communities, major districts, and transportation terminals, centers, and corridors within the planning area.	**Consistent.** The Project would incorporate extensive landscaping throughout the site, including shade trees, shrubs, planting areas, drought-tolerant species, and efficient irrigation systems. Street frontages along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue would be enhanced with trees and lighting that improve pedestrian activity, provide visual continuity, and contribute to a high-quality streetscape. Stormwater basins and landscaped areas are designed to integrate with public improvements, reinforcing the visual character of adjacent corridors. In addition, the Project's entry plazas and landscaped frontage establish an attractive entrance into the community, consistent with City requirements for landscaping design, irrigation efficiency, and water-use standards outlined in BMC Chapter 17.61. As such, the Project is consistent with these General Plan policies.
General	
Policy 75. Provide adequate land area for the expansion of existing uses and development of new uses consistent with the policies of the general plan. **Policy 76.** Provide for a mix of land uses which meets the diverse needs of residents; offers a variety of employment opportunities; capitalizes, enhances, and expands upon existing physical and economic assets; and allows for the capture of regional growth.	**Consistent.** The Project provides adequate land area for the development of new institutional uses consistent with the General Plan, accommodating the expansion of facilities for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. By introducing a temple and meetinghouse in the City, the Project contributes to the mix of land uses that meet the diverse needs of residents, complementing residential, commercial, and employment areas with community-serving religious facilities. The Project capitalizes on the City's existing infrastructure and regional accessibility, enhancing the City's role as a hub for cultural and spiritual activities in the southern San Joaquin Valley. In this way, the Project supports regional growth while remaining consistent with these General Plan policies.

General Plan Goal/Policy	Discussion
Policy 78. Accommodate new projects which are infill or expansion of existing urban development.	**Consistent.** The Project represents infill development within an established urbanized area. Although the Project Site is currently vacant, it is surrounded by existing residential, institutional, and roadway development. The Project would utilize available infrastructure and public services, ensuring that new growth is directed into areas already served by urban facilities rather than extending development into undeveloped lands. By directing new growth into areas already served by urban facilities, the Project represents infill consistent with this General Plan policy.
Policy 79. Provide for an orderly outward expansion of new "urban" development (any commercial, industrial, and residential development having a density greater than one unit per acre) so that it maintains continuity of existing development, allows for the incremental expansion of infrastructure and public services, minimizes impacts on natural environmental resources, and provides a high-quality environment for living and businesses.	**Consistent.** The Project would contribute to the continuity of existing urban development by utilizing a vacant site that is surrounded by residential, institutional, and roadway uses, thereby reinforcing the urbanized character of the area. Development would be coordinated with existing infrastructure and public services, allowing for incremental expansion without extending growth into undeveloped lands. The Project is designed to meet CALGreen and California Building Code standards, ensuring sustainable construction and energy-efficient operations. Site improvements include shade trees, shrubs, drought-tolerant landscaping, efficient irrigation systems, lighting, and stormwater basins, which minimize impacts on natural resources while enhancing the quality of the built environment. In this way, the Project supports orderly expansion of the City and is consistent with this General Plan policy.
Policy 82. Preserve existing significant sound residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, and industrial areas.	**Consistent.** The Project is consistent with its land use designation and represents infill development within an urbanized area. Similar institutional uses are present south of Stockdale Highway, including a private Christian high school and a church, reinforcing compatibility with the broader district. Although the temple and meetinghouse steeples exceed the numeric building height standard of the C-O zone, the City's discretionary Zone Modification process allows limited exceptions where design features and conditions ensure compatibility. The Project incorporates fencing, perimeter landscaping, setbacks, and lighting controls to buffer adjacent single-family residences to the north. As analyzed in **Section 3.1, Aesthetics**, visual simulations illustrate that the steeple height would not cause a substantial adverse effect on views or community character. With approval of the Zone Modification and compliance with applicable standards, the Project preserves the integrity of surrounding residential neighborhoods and commercial districts, consistent with this General Plan policy.
Policy 86. Encourage infill of vacant parcels.	**Consistent.** The Project represents infill development on a vacant parcel that is surrounded by existing residential, institutional, and roadway uses. The Project Site is located within an urbanized area with available infrastructure and public services, allowing the Project to be integrated into the City's built environment without extending growth into undeveloped lands. By utilizing an underused parcel and reinforcing the continuity of surrounding development, the Project supports orderly growth and is consistent with this General Plan policy.

General Plan Goal/Policy	Discussion
Policy 89. Encourage new uses and buildings in pedestrian sensitive areas to incorporate design characteristics which include: a) Walls which are aesthetically treated by the use of color, materials, offset planes, columns, and/or other architectural details, to provide visual interest to pedestrians; b) Landscaping, including trees, flowering shrubs, and ground cover; c) Pedestrian amenities, such as benches, trash receptacles and signage oriented to the pedestrian; d) Design amenities related to the street level such as awnings, arcades, and paseos; e) Visual access to the interior of buildings; f) Uses other than parking and traffic circulation between the sidewalk and building.	**Consistent.** The Project transforms a vacant, undeveloped parcel into a pedestrian-friendly environment by incorporating multiple design features that enhance visual interest and accessibility. Project Site improvements include landscaped areas with shade trees, flowering shrubs, and drought-tolerant groundcover supported by efficient irrigation systems. Public amenities such as paved walking paths along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, plazas, benches, and gardens would be accessible during daytime hours, providing opportunities for pedestrian activity and community interaction. Architectural treatments, setbacks, and lighting further contribute to a visually appealing and safe environment. These features ensure that the Project is consistent with this policy by creating an attractive, pedestrian-sensitive setting consistent with City standards.
Policy 100. Encourage the use of reflective roofing material and other measures that reduce the "heat island effect."	**Consistent.** The Project incorporates design measures that minimize the heat island effect, including the use of light-colored, reflective materials such as limestone and granite on building exteriors. In addition, the Project provides extensive landscaping with shade trees, shrubs, drought-tolerant plants, and efficient irrigation systems. These features reduce localized heat gain, improve energy efficiency, and enhance the comfort of the surrounding environment. Thus, the Project's design and landscaping measures are consistent with this General Plan policy.

Source: City of Bakersfield, Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan, adopted December 11, 2002. Available online at: https://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/6c7a0380-7841-40d6-b3ef-23ceb4fa0fd7, accessed November 7, 2025.

As discussed above, religious uses are permitted in the C-O zone, and the Project represents infill development supported by landscaping, pedestrian amenities, and infrastructure improvements. Although the temple and meetinghouse steeples would exceed the numeric building height limit of the C-O zone, the City's discretionary Zone Modification process, together with perimeter landscaping, setbacks, and site design features, ensures compatibility with surrounding residential and commercial uses. The steeples are non-occupiable, non-combustible architectural elements that, based on the visual simulations and technical analyses in this Draft EIR, would not result in substantial physical environmental effects related to aesthetics, noise, lighting, traffic, or views (see also **Section 3.1, Aesthetics**; **Section 3.7, Noise**; and **Section 3.8, Transportation**). Approval of the Zone Modification would assure height limit consistency as a land-use decision and does not, itself, create a CEQA impact. Compliance with City development standards, the Subdivision Map Act, and CEQA transportation requirements under SB 743 further ensures that the Project would not cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental effects. Accordingly, the Project supports the City's planning objectives and would not result in a significant land use-related impact regarding consistency with such an applicable land use plan, policy or regulation under CEQA.

Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant.

3.6.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The cumulative analysis for land use and planning was prepared in accordance with Section 15130 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, which requires evaluation of whether the incremental effects of the proposed Project are cumulatively considerable when viewed in connection with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. The geographic scope for cumulative land use impacts includes the Project Site and surrounding urbanized area, as reflected in the related projects list (**Table 3.0-1**) and regional growth projections from Kern COG's 2022 RTP/SCS.

Within a one-mile radius of the Project Site, the City has identified five related projects, including residential and commercial projects (see **Table 3.0-1** in **Section 3.0, Environmental Impact Analysis**). These related projects reflect the ongoing infill and corridor development pattern in the City. Each project is subject to General Plan and zoning consistency requirements, including discretionary review where necessary.

The Project would exceed the numeric building height limit of the C-O zone; however, compatibility is ensured through the City's Zone Modification process, perimeter landscaping, setbacks, and site design features. As analyzed in **Section 3.1, Aesthetics**, the steeples are slender, non-occupiable architectural elements that do not result in substantial view obstruction or adverse changes to community character. When considered together with related projects and regional growth forecasts, the Project does not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact on land use and planning since Project impacts relating to consistency with land use plans or policies are site-specific and localized. No conflicts with adopted land use plans or policies intended to avoid or mitigate environmental effects have been identified. Therefore, cumulative land use and planning impacts would be less than significant.

3.6.5 REFERENCES

California Air Resources Board. "Sustainable Communities." Available online at: https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/sb375/sb375.htm, accessed November 3, 2025.

California Department of Finance. *E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State, 2020-2025*. Available online at: https://dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/Estimates/e-5-population-and-housing-estimates-for-cities-counties-and-the-state-2020-2025/, accessed November 3, 2025.

City of Bakersfield. *Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan*. Adopted December 11, 2002. Available online at: https://content.civicplus.com/ap.i/assets/6c7a0380-7841-40d6-b3ef-23ceb4fa0fd7, accessed November 5, 2025.

Kern Council of Governments *2022 Kern County Regional Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy*. Adopted July 21, 2022. Available online at: https://www.kerncog.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022_RTP.pdf, accessed November 5, 2025.

3.7 NOISE & VIBRATION

This section evaluates noise and groundborne vibration impacts resulting from construction and operation of the Project. Topics addressed include short-term construction and long-term operational noise and vibration. The primary source of information for this section is the *Noise and Vibration Impact Study, City of Bakersfield, CA,* prepared by MD Acoustics, dated February 11, 2026. This report is included in **Appendix 3.7** to this Draft EIR.

3.7.1 FUNDAMENTALS OF NOISE AND VIBRATION

Noise is usually defined as unwanted sound. Noise becomes unwanted when it interferes with normal activities, causes actual physical harm, or has adverse effects on health. The definition of "noise" as unwanted sound implies that it has an adverse effect on people and their environment.

Noise is measured on a logarithmic scale of sound pressure level known as a decibel (dB). The human ear does not respond uniformly to sounds at all frequencies; it is less sensitive to low and high frequencies than to medium frequencies, which correspond with human speech. In response, the A-weighted noise level (or scale) has been developed. It corresponds better with people's subjective judgment of sound levels. This A-weighted sound level is called the "noise level" and is referenced in units of dBA. Because noise is measured on a logarithmic scale, a doubling of sound energy results in a 3 dBA increase in noise levels. However, changes in a noise level of less than 3 dBA are not typically noticed by the human ear.[1] A change from 3 to 5 dBA may be noticed by some individuals who are extremely sensitive to changes in noise, and a 5.0 dBA increase is readily noticeable. The human ear perceives a 10 dBA increase in sound level as a doubling of sound.

On the A-weighted scale, the range of human hearing extends from approximately 3 to 140 dBA. **Table 3.7-1, A-Weighted Decibel Scale**, provides examples of A-weighted noise levels from common sources. Noise sources occur in two forms: (1) point sources, such as stationary equipment or individual motor vehicles; and (2) line sources, such as a roadway with a large number of point sources (motor vehicles). Sound generated by a point source typically diminishes (attenuates) at a rate of 6 dBA for each doubling of distance from the source to the receptor at acoustically "hard" sites and 7.5 dBA at acoustically "soft"

1 California Department of Transportation, *Technical Noise Supplement to the Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol*, 2013. Available online at: https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/environmental-analysis/documents/env/tens-sep2013-a11y.pdf, accessed January 16, 2026.

sites.[2,3] For example, if a noise source produces a noise level of 89 dBA at a reference distance of 50 feet, the noise level would be 83 dBA at a distance of 100 feet from the noise source, 77 dBA at a distance of 200 feet, and so on. Noise generated by a mobile source will decrease by approximately 3 dBA over hard surfaces and 4.5 dBA over soft surfaces for each doubling of distance.[4]

Table 3.7-1
A-Weighted Decibel Scale

Typical A-Weighted Sound Levels	Sound Level (dBA, Leq)
Threshold of Pain	140
Jet Takeoff at 100 Meters	125
Jackhammer at 15 Meters	95
Heavy Diesel Truck at 15 Meters	85
Conversation at 1 Meter	60
Soft Whisper at 2 Meters	35

Source: United States Occupational Safety & Health Administration, Noise and Hearing Conservation Technical Manual, 1999.

Sound levels also can be attenuated by man-made or natural barriers (e.g., sound walls, berms, and ridges), as well as elevational differences. Noise is most audible when traveling by direct line-of-sight, an uninterrupted visual path between the noise source and noise receptor. Barriers, such as walls or buildings that break the line-of-sight between the source and the receiver, can greatly reduce noise levels from the source since sound can only reach the receiver by diffraction. However, if a barrier is not high or long enough to break the line-of-sight from the source to the receiver, its effectiveness is greatly reduced.

Sound barriers typically reduce noise levels by 5 to 10 dBA, depending on factors such as their height and distance relative to the noise source and the noise receptor.[5] Sound levels may also be attenuated 3 dBA by

2 Federal Highway Administration, *Highway Traffic Noise: Analysis and Abatement Guidance*, 2011. Available online: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/regulations_and_guidance/analysis_and_abatement_guidance/revguidance.pdf, accessed January 16, 2026.

3 Examples of "hard" or reflective sites include asphalt, concrete, and hard and sparsely vegetated soils. Examples of acoustically "soft" or absorptive sites include soft, sand, plowed farmland, grass, crops, heavy ground cover, etc.

4 Federal Highway Administration, *Highway Traffic Noise: Analysis and Abatement Guidance*, 2011. Available online: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/regulations_and_guidance/analysis_and_abatement_guidance/revguidance.pdf, accessed January 16, 2026.

5 Federal Highway Administration, *Highway Traffic Noise: Analysis and Abatement Guidance*, 2011. Available online: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/regulations_and_guidance/analysis_and_abatement_guidance/revguidance.pdf, accessed January 16, 2026.

a first row of houses and 1.5 dBA for each additional row of houses.[6] The minimum noise attenuation provided by typical structures in California is provided in **Table 3.7-2, Building Noise Reduction Factors**.

Table 3.7-2
Building Noise Reduction Factors

Building Type	Noise Reduction - dBA	
	Window Condition	Noise Reduction Due to Exterior of the Structure
All	Open	10
Light Frame	Ordinary Sash (Closed)	20
	Storm Windows	25
Masonry	Single Glazed	25
	Double Glazed	35

Source: Federal Highway Administration, Highway Traffic Noise Analysis and Abatement Guidance. December 2011.

3.7.1.1 Sound Rating Scales

Various rating scales approximate the human subjective assessment to the "loudness" or "noisiness" of a sound. Noise metrics have been developed to account for additional parameters, such as duration and the cumulative effect of multiple events. Noise metrics are categorized as single-event metrics and cumulative metrics, as summarized below.

In order to simplify the measurement and computation of sound loudness levels, frequency-weighted networks have obtained wide acceptance. The A-weighted scale, discussed above, has become the most prominent of these scales and is widely used in community noise analysis. Its advantages are that it has shown good correlation with community response and is easily measured. The metrics used in this analysis are all based on the dBA scale.

Equivalent Noise Level

Equivalent Noise Level (Leq) is the sound level corresponding to a steady-state A-weighted sound level containing the same total energy as several single-event noise exposure level events during a given sample period. Leq is the "acoustic energy" average noise level during the period of the sample. It is based on the observation that the potential for noise annoyance is dependent on the total acoustical energy content of

6 California Department of Transportation, *Technical Noise Supplement to the Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol*, 2013. Available online at: https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/environmental-analysis/documents/env/tens-sep2013-a11y.pdf, accessed January 16, 2026.

the noise. The equivalent noise level is expressed in units of dBA. Leq can be measured for any period, but is typically measured for 15 minutes, 1 hour, or 24 hours. Leq for a 1-hour period is used by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for assessing highway noise impacts. Leq for 1 hour is referred to as the Hourly Noise Level (HNL) in the California Airport Noise Regulations and is used to develop Community Noise Equivalent Level values for aircraft operations. Construction noise levels and ambient noise measurements in this section use the Leq scale.

Community Noise Equivalent

Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) is a 24-hour, time-weighted energy average noise level based on the A-weighted decibel. It is a measure of the overall noise experienced during an entire day. The term "time-weighted" refers to the penalties attached to noise events occurring during certain sensitive periods. In the CNEL scale, 5 dB is added to measured noise levels occurring between the hours of 7:00 PM and 10:00 PM. For measured noise levels occurring between the hours of 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM, 10 dB is added. These decibel adjustments are an attempt to account for the higher sensitivity to noise in the evening and nighttime hours and the expected lower ambient noise levels during these periods.

Day-Night Average Noise Level

The day-night average sound level (Ldn) is another average noise level over a 24-hour period. Noise levels occurring between the hours of 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM are increased by 10 decibels (dB). This noise is weighted to take into account the decrease in community background noise of 10 dBA during this period. Noise levels measured using the Ldn scale are typically similar to CNEL measurements.

3.7.1.2 Adverse Effects of Noise Exposure

Noise is known to have several adverse effects on humans, which has led to laws and standards being set to protect public health and safety, and to ensure compatibility between land uses and activities. Adverse effects of noise on people include hearing loss, communication interference, sleep interference, physiological responses, and annoyance. Each of these potential noise impacts on people is briefly discussed in the following narrative.

Hearing Loss

Hearing loss is generally not a community noise concern, even near a major airport or a major freeway. The potential for noise-induced hearing loss is more commonly associated with occupational noise exposures in heavy industry, very noisy work environments with long-term exposure, or certain very loud recreational activities (e.g., target shooting and motorcycle or car racing). The Occupational Safety and

Health Administration (OSHA) identifies a noise exposure limit of 90 dBA for 8 hours per day to protect from hearing loss (higher limits are allowed for shorter duration exposures). Noise levels in neighborhoods, even in very noisy neighborhoods, are not sufficiently loud enough to cause hearing loss.

Communication Interference

Communication interference is one of the primary concerns in environmental noise. Communication interference includes speech disturbance and intrusion with activities such as watching television. Noise can also interfere with communications, such as within school classrooms. Normal conversational speech is in the range of 60 to 65 dBA, and any noise in this range or louder may interfere with speech.

Sleep Interference

Noise can make it difficult to fall asleep, create momentary disturbances of natural sleep patterns by causing shifts from deep to lighter stages, and cause awakening. Noise may even cause awakening that a person may or may not be able to recall.

Physiological Responses

Physiological responses are those measurable effects of noise on people that are realized as changes in pulse rate, blood pressure, and other physical changes. Studies to determine whether exposure to high noise levels can adversely affect human health have concluded that, while a relationship between noise and health effects seems plausible, there is no empirical evidence of the relationship.

Annoyance

Annoyance is an individual characteristic and can vary widely from person to person. Noise that one person considers tolerable can be unbearable to another of equal hearing capability. The level of annoyance depends both on the characteristics of the noise (including loudness, frequency, time, and duration) and how much activity interference (such as speech interference and sleep interference) results from the noise. However, the level of annoyance is also a function of the attitude of the receiver. Personal sensitivity to noise varies widely. Attitudes may also be affected by the relationship between the person affected and the source of noise, and whether attempts have been made to abate the noise.

3.7.1.3 Characteristics of Vibration

Vibration consists of waves transmitted through solid material. Groundborne vibration propagates from a source through the ground to adjacent buildings by surface waves. Vibration may comprise a single pulse, a series of pulses, or a continuous oscillatory motion. The frequency of a vibrating object describes how

rapidly it is oscillating and is measured in hertz (Hz). Most environmental vibrations consist of a composite, or "spectrum" of many frequencies, and are generally classified as broadband or random vibrations. The normal frequency range of most groundborne vibration that can be felt generally starts from a low frequency of less than one Hz to a high of about 200 Hz. Vibration is often measured in terms of the peak particle velocity (PPV) in inches per second (in/sec) when considering impacts on buildings or other structures, as PPV represents the maximum instantaneous peak of vibration that can stress buildings. Because it is a representation of acute vibration, PPV is often used to measure the temporary impacts of short-term construction activities that could instantaneously damage built structures. Vibration is often also measured by the Root Mean Squared (RMS) because it best correlates with human perception and response. Specifically, RMS represents "smoothed" vibration levels over an extended period of time and is often used to gauge the long-term chronic impact of a project's operation on the adjacent environment. RMS amplitude is the average of a signal's squared amplitude. It is most commonly measured in decibel notation (VdB).

Vibration energy attenuates as it travels through the ground, causing the vibration amplitude to decrease with distance away from the source. High-frequency vibrations reduce much more rapidly than low frequencies, so that in the far-field from a source, the low frequencies tend to dominate. Soil properties also affect the propagation of vibration. When groundborne vibration interacts with a building, there is usually a ground-to-foundation coupling loss (i.e., the foundation of the structure does not move in sync with the ground vibration), but the vibration can also be amplified by the structural resonances of the walls and floors. Vibration in buildings is typically perceived as rattling of windows or items on shelves, or the motion of building surfaces. At high levels, vibration can result in damage to structures.

Manmade groundborne vibration is generally limited to areas within a few hundred feet of certain types of construction activities, especially pile driving. Road vehicles rarely create enough groundborne vibration to be perceptible to humans unless the road surface is poorly maintained and there are potholes or bumps. If traffic induces perceptible vibration in buildings, such as window rattling or shaking of small loose items (typically caused by heavy trucks in passing), then it is most likely an effect of low-frequency airborne noise or ground characteristics. Human annoyance by vibration is related to the number and duration of events. The more events or the greater the duration, the more annoying it will be to humans.

3.7.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3.7.2.1 Existing Ambient Noise Levels

Noise measurements are taken to determine the existing noise levels. A noise receiver or receptor is any location in the noise analysis in which noise might produce an impact. The following criteria are used to select measurement locations and receptors:

- Locations expected to receive the highest noise impacts, such as the first row of houses
- Locations that are acoustically representative and equivalent to the area of concern
- Human land usage
- Sites clear of major obstruction and contamination

All measurement equipment meets American National Standards Institute (ANSI) specifications for sound level meters. MD noise measurement procedures are presented below:

- The sound level meter was calibrated (Piccolo-II) before and after the measurement.
- Following the calibration of the equipment, a windscreen was placed over the microphone.
- Frequency weighting was set on "A" and slow response.
- Results of the noise measurements were recorded on field data sheets.
- Temperature and sky conditions were observed and documented.

The noise monitoring location was selected to obtain a baseline of the existing noise environment. One (1) long-term noise measurement was conducted at the Project Site. **Appendix 3.7** includes photos, the field sheet, and measured noise data. One (1) 24-hour noise measurement was conducted at the Project Site to document the existing noise environment. The measurements include the 1-hour Leq, Lmin, Lmax, and other statistical data (e.g., L2 and L8). The results of the noise measurement are presented in **Table 3.7-3**. Noise measurement field sheets are provided in **Appendix 3.7.**

The data presented in **Table 3.7-3** and the field notes provided in **Appendix 3.7**, indicate that ambient noise levels in the project vicinity range between 43 and 55 dBA Leq. The total noise level was 56.3 dBA CNEL. The quietest daytime level of 46.6 dBA Leq is highlighted in yellow and occurred twice at 10 AM and at 4 PM. The quietest nighttime level of 43 dBA Leq is highlighted in green and occurred at 2 AM. The field data indicate that traffic along Stockdale Highway and noise from the pediatric specialty care center to the west are the dominant noise sources.

Table 3.7-3
Long-Term Noise Measurement Data for (LT1) (dBA)1

Date	Start Time	Stop Time	1-Hour dB(A)							
			L_{EQ}	L_{MAX}	L_{MIN}	L_2	L_8	L_{25}	L_{50}	L_{90}
4/11/2025	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	49.3	68.4	37.7	55.7	52.3	49.2	47.1	45.1
4/11/2025	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	46.6	63.1	37.8	51.5	49.7	46.9	45.6	43.5
4/11/2025	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	49.7	70.8	39.4	54.7	51.7	49.1	47.5	45
4/11/2025	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	48.5	66	41.6	52.3	50.5	48.1	47.1	45
4/11/2025	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	47.5	65.2	39.2	52.6	50.9	48.3	46.2	43.5
4/11/2025	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	49	71.9	37.4	54.4	48.2	46.8	45	42.7
4/11/2025	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	46.7	64.4	38	52.6	49.1	47	45.7	43.7
4/11/2025	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	46.6	60.1	37.3	50.3	49.2	47.6	45.8	42.8
4/11/2025	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	48.8	67.8	38.5	52.3	50.9	48.9	47.8	46.2
4/11/2025	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	49.6	68.8	39.9	56.1	51.5	50	48.2	46.6
4/11/2025	7:00 PM	8:00 PM	55	81.7	40.9	58.1	54.7	51.9	50.2	48.2
4/11/2025	8:00 PM	9:00 PM	52.9	75	43.9	58.7	55.9	52.1	50.6	49
4/11/2025	9:00 PM	10:00 PM	53	62.5	43	55.3	54.8	53.9	52.8	50.4
4/11/2025	10:00 PM	11:00 PM	51.1	69.2	43.1	54	53.5	51.8	50.1	48.6
4/11/2025	11:00 PM	12:00 AM	52.6	76.6	41.8	57.6	54.1	51.4	49.3	46.9
4/12/2025	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	48.6	59.8	36	52.4	51.4	50	48.4	43.2
4/12/2025	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	45.2	58.3	33.9	50.9	47.7	45.7	44.3	40.7
4/12/2025	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	43	55.9	32.7	47.9	46.2	43.9	42	38.9
4/12/2025	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	45.9	60.2	33.5	51.1	48.8	46.7	45.1	39.8
4/12/2025	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	49.2	64.6	36	53.9	51.7	50.2	49	44.5
4/12/2025	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	50	62.5	40.2	53.3	52.4	50.9	49.7	46.6
4/12/2025	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	52.7	62	44.9	57.1	54.5	53.1	52	50.3
4/12/2025	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	50.6	63.5	40.8	54.3	52.9	51.4	50.4	46.8
4/12/2025	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	48	63.5	39.5	52.6	50	48.5	47.2	45.1
CNEL			56.3							

Notes:
1. Long-term noise monitoring location (NM1) is illustrated in Exhibit E. The quietest hourly daytime noise interval is highlighted in yellow. The quietest nighttime noise interval is highlighted in green.

3.7.2.3 Existing Groundborne Vibration

The primary sources of groundborne vibration at the Project Site are heavy-duty vehicles (e.g., refuse trucks, delivery trucks, and school buses) traveling on local roadways. Trucks and buses typically generate

groundborne vibration velocity levels of around 63 VdB, and these levels could reach 72 VdB where trucks and buses pass over bumps in the road.[7]

3.7.2.4 Noise Sensitive Receptors

Noise-sensitive land uses are generally considered to include those uses where noise exposure could result in health-related risks to individuals, as well as places where quiet is an essential element of their intended purpose. Noise-sensitive land uses include residential (single and multi-family dwellings, mobile home parks, dormitories, and similar uses); transient lodging (including hotels, motels, and similar uses); hospitals, nursing homes, convalescent hospitals, and other facilities for long-term medical care; public or private educational facilities, libraries, churches, and places of public assembly. Noise-sensitive receptors near the Project Site include residential uses, a church, and a pediatric specialty care center.

3.7.2.5 Existing Sound Barriers

An existing 6.5-foot-tall concrete masonry unit (CMU) sound wall is located along the northern property line between the Project Site and adjacent residential properties. The wall runs continuously along the perimeter and is in good structural condition.

3.7.3 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

3.7.3.1 Federal Regulations

Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. §1919 et seq.), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has adopted regulations designed to protect workers against the effects of occupational noise exposure. These regulations list permissible noise level exposure as a function of the amount of time during which the worker is exposed. The regulations further specify a hearing conservation program that involves monitoring noise to which workers are exposed, ensuring that workers are made aware of overexposure to noise, and periodically testing the workers' hearing to detect any degradation.[8]

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7 California Department of Transportation, *Technical Noise Supplement to the Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol*, 2013. Available online at: https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/environmental-analysis/documents/env/tens-sep2013-a11y.pdf, accessed January 16, 2026.

8 United States Department of Labor, *OSH Act of 1970*. Available online at: https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/oshact/completeoshact, accessed January 16, 2026.

Noise Control Act of 1972

Under the authority of the Noise Control Act of 1972, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) established noise emission criteria and testing methods published in Parts 201 through 205 of Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) that apply to some transportation equipment (e.g., interstate rail carriers, medium trucks, and heavy trucks) and construction equipment. In 1974, U.S. EPA issued guidance levels for the protection of public health and welfare in residential areas of an outdoor L_{dn} of 55 dBA and an indoor L_{dn} of 45 dBA. These guidance levels are not standards or regulations and were developed without consideration of technical or economic feasibility. There are no federal noise standards that directly regulate environmental noise related to the construction or operation of the Project. Moreover, the federal noise standards are not reflective of urban environments that range by land use, density, proximity to commercial or industrial centers, etc. As such, for purposes of determining acceptable sound levels to determine and evaluate intrusive noise sources and increases, this document utilizes the City of Bakersfield Noise Regulations, discussed below.

Federal Transit Administration Vibration Standards

There are no federal vibration standards or regulations adopted by any agency that are applicable to evaluating vibration impacts from land use plans such as the Project. However, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has adopted vibration criteria for use in evaluating vibration impacts from construction activities. The vibration damage criteria adopted by the FTA are shown in **Table 3.7-4, Construction Vibration Damage Criteria.**

Table 3.7-4
Construction Vibration Damage Criteria

Building Category	PPV (in/sec)
I. Reinforced-concrete, steel, or timber (no plaster)	0.5
II. Engineered concrete and masonry (no plaster)	0.3
III. Non-engineered timber and masonry buildings	0.2
IV. Buildings extremely susceptible to vibration damage	0.12

Source: FTA, Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual, 2018.

The FTA has also adopted standards associated with human annoyance for determining the groundborne vibration and noise impacts from ground-borne noise on the following three off-site land-use categories: Vibration Category 1 – High Sensitivity, Vibration Category 2 – Residential, and Vibration Category 3 –

Institutional.[9] The FTA defines Category 1 as buildings where vibration would interfere with operations within the building, including vibration-sensitive research and manufacturing facilities, hospitals with vibration-sensitive equipment, and university research operations. Vibration-sensitive equipment includes, but is not limited to, electron microscopes, high-resolution lithographic equipment, and normal optical microscopes. Category 2 refers to all residential land uses and any buildings where people sleep, such as hotels and hospitals. Category 3 refers to institutional land uses such as schools, churches, other institutions, and quiet offices that do not have vibration-sensitive equipment but that still potentially involve activities that could be disturbed by vibration. The vibration thresholds associated with human annoyance for these three land-use categories are shown in **Table 3.7-5, Groundborne Vibration and Groundborne Noise Impact Criteria for General Assessment**. No thresholds have been adopted or recommended for commercial or office uses.

Table 3.7-5
Groundborne Vibration and Groundborne Noise Impact Criteria for General Assessment

Land Use Category	Frequent Events[a]	Occasional Events[b]	Infrequent Events[c]
Category 1: Buildings where vibration would interfere with interior operations.	65 VdB[d]	65 VdB[d]	65 VdB[d]
Category 2: Residences and buildings where people normally sleep.	72 VdB	75 VdB	80 VdB
Category 3: Institutional land uses with primarily daytime use.	75 VdB	78 VdB	83 VdB

a "Frequent Events" is defined as more than 70 vibration events of the same source per day.
b "Occasional Events" is defined as between 30 and 70 vibration events of the same source per day.
c "Infrequent Events" is defined as fewer than 30 vibration events of the same kind per day.
d This criterion is based on levels that are acceptable for most moderately sensitive equipment such as optical microscopes.
Source: FTA, Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual, 2018.

3.7.3.2 State Regulations

Title 24, California Code of Regulations

The California Noise Insulation Standards of 1988 (California Code of Regulations Title 24, Section 3501 et seq.) require that interior noise levels from the exterior sources not exceed 45 dBA Ldn/community noise equivalent level (CNEL)[10] in any habitable room of a multi-residential use facility (e.g., hotels, motels, dormitories, long-term care facilities, and apartment houses and other dwellings, except detached single-

9 Federal Transit Administration, *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment*, 2018. Available online at: https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/research-innovation/118131/transit-noise-and-vibration-impact-assessment-manual-fta-report-no-0123_0.pdf, accessed August 8, 2024.

10 Measurements are based on Ldn or CNEL.

family dwellings) with doors and windows closed. Where exterior noise levels exceed 60 dBA CNEL/Ldn, an acoustical analysis is required to show that the building construction achieves an interior noise level of 45 dBA CNEL/Ldn or less.

Caltrans Vibration/Groundborne Noise Standards

The State of California has not adopted statewide standards or regulations for evaluating vibration or groundborne noise impacts from land use development projects such as the Project. Although the state has not adopted any vibration standard, Caltrans, in its Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual (Caltrans 2020) recommends the following vibration thresholds that are more practical than those provided by the FTA.

The State noise and vibration guidelines are to be used as guidance with respect to planning for noise, not standards and/or regulations to which the City must adhere.

Table 3.7-6
Guideline Vibration Damage Potential Threshold Criteria

Structure and Condition	Maximum PPV (inch/sec)	
	Transient Sources[1]	Continuous/Frequent Intermittent Sources[2]
Extremely fragile historic buildings, ruins, ancient monuments	0.12	0.08
Fragile buildings	0.20	0.10
Historic and some old buildings	0.50	0.25
Older residential structures	0.50	0.30
New residential structures	1.00	0.50
Modern industrial/commercial buildings	2.00	0.50

Source: Table 19, Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual (Caltrans 2020).
[1] Transient sources create a single, isolated vibration event, such as blasting or drop balls.
[2] Continuous/frequent intermittent sources include impact pile drivers, pogo-stick compactors, crack-and-seat equipment, vibratory pile drivers, and vibratory compaction equipment.

3.7.3.3 Local Regulations

City of Bakersfield General Plan

The City's General Plan Noise Element outlines the exterior noise standards for community noise environments.

Table 3.7-7
Land Use Compatibility Standards

Land Use Category	Community Noise Exposure (dB, L_{dn} or CNEL)					
	55	60	65	70	75	80
Residential - Low Density Single-Family, Duplex, Mobile Homes						
Residential - Multi-Family						
Transient Lodging - Motels Hotels						
Schools, Libraries, Churches, Hospitals, Nursing Homes						
Auditoriums, Concert Halls, Amphitheaters						
Sports Arena, Outdoor Spectator Sports						
Playgrounds, Neighborhood Parks						
Golf Courses, Riding Stables, Water Recreation, Cemeteries						
Office Buildings, Business Commercial and Professional						

Land Use Category	Community Noise Exposure (dB, L_{dn} or CNEL)					
	55	60	65	70	75	80
Industrial, Manufacturing, Utilities, Agriculture						

Clearly Acceptable - Specified land use is satisfactory, based upon the assumption that any buildings involved are of normal conventional construction without any special noise insulation requirements.

Normally Acceptable - New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise insulation features included in the design. Conventional construction, but with closed windows and fresh air supply system or air conditioning will normally suffice.

Normally Unacceptable - New construction or development should generally be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.

Clearly Unacceptable - New construction or development should generally not be undertaken.

Source: California General Plan Guidelines. City of Bakersfield General Plan Noise Element.

Policies and Implementation Measures

Policies and implementation measures from the Noise Element that would mitigate potential impacts on noise include the following.

- Identify noise-impact areas exposed to existing or projected noise levels exceeding 65 dB CNEL (exterior) or the performance standards described in **Table 3.7-7**. The noise exposure contour maps on file at the City of Bakersfield and County of Kern indicate areas where existing and projected noise exposures exceed 65 dB CNEL (exterior) for the major noise sources identified (I-1).

- Prohibit new noise-sensitive land uses in noise-impacted areas unless effective mitigation measures are incorporated into project design to reduce noise to acceptable levels. (I-2, I-3, I-6, I-7).

- Review discretionary industrial, commercial, or other noise-generating land use projects for compatibility with nearby noise-sensitive land uses. Additionally, the development of new noise-generating land uses that are not preempted from local noise regulation will be reviewed if resulting noise levels will exceed the performance standards contained within **Table 3.7-7** in areas containing residential or other noise-sensitive land uses (I-3, I-6, I-7).

- Require noise level criteria applied to land uses other than residential or other noise-sensitive uses to be consistent with the recommendations of the California Office of Noise Control (see Figure VII-1 (I-4)).

- Encourage vegetation and landscaping along roadways and adjacent to other noise sources in order to increase absorption of noise (I-7).

- Encourage interjurisdictional coordination and cooperation with regard to noise impact issues (I-8).
- Establish threshold standards for the determination of the existence of project and cumulative noise impacts for mobile noise-generating land uses that are significant, and will therefore require mitigation to achieve acceptable noise standards that do not exceed the standards contained in this element (I-9, I-10).
- Require development of proposed residential or other noise-sensitive land uses in noise-impacted areas to comply with the noise standards of 65 dB CNEL or less in outdoor activity areas and 45 dB CNEL or less within interior living spaces and the performance standards within **Table 3.7-7**.
- Require proposed commercial and industrial uses or operations to be designed or arranged so that they will not subject residential or other noise-sensitive land uses to exterior noise levels in excess of 65 dB CNEL and interior noise levels in excess of 45 dB CNEL, and so that impacts on noise-sensitive uses shall not exceed the performance standards in **Table 3.7-7**. At the time of any discretionary approval, such as a request for a zone change or subdivision, the developer may be required to submit an acoustical report indicating the means by which the developer proposes to comply with the noise standards. The acoustical report shall:
    - Be the responsibility of the applicant.
    - Be prepared by a qualified acoustical consultant experienced in the fields of environmental noise assessment and architectural acoustics.
    - Include representative noise level measurements with sufficient sampling periods and locations to adequately describe local conditions.
    - Include estimated noise levels in terms of CNEL and the standards of **Table 3.7-7** (if applicable} for existing and projected future (10-20 years hence) conditions, with a comparison made to the adopted policies of the Noise Element.
    - Include recommendations for appropriate mitigation to achieve compliance with the adopted policies and standards of the Noise Element.
    - Include estimates of noise exposure after the prescribed mitigation measures have been implemented. If compliance with the adopted standards and policies of the Noise Element will not be achieved, a rationale for acceptance of the project must be provided.

Standards for project noise impacts for mobile sources. A significant increase of existing ambient noise levels affecting existing noise-sensitive land uses (receptors), and requiring the adoption of practical and feasible mitigation measures, is deemed to occur where a project will cause:

- An increase of the existing ambient noise level by 5 dB or more, where the existing ambient level is less than 60 dB CNEL
- An increase of the existing ambient noise level by 3 dB or more, where the existing ambient level is 60 to 65 dB CNEL;
- An increase of the existing ambient noise level by 1.5 dB or more, where the existing ambient level is greater than 65 dB CNEL.

Standards for cumulative noise impacts for mobile sources. A project's contribution to noise increase would normally be considered cumulatively considerable and considered significant when ambient noise levels affect noise-sensitive land uses (receptors) and when the following occurs.

- A project increases the ambient (cumulative without project) noise level by 1 dB or more; and
- The cumulative with project noise levels causes the following:
    - An increase of the existing ambient noise level by 5 dB or more, where the existing ambient level is less than 60 dB CNEL;
    - An increase of the existing ambient noise level by 3 dB or more, where the existing ambient level is 60 to 65 DB CNEL;
    - An increase in the existing ambient noise level by 1.5 dB or more, where the existing ambient level is greater than 65 dB CNEL.

City of Bakersfield Code of Ordinances

Chapter 9.22 – Noise

Table 3.7-8
Exterior Noise Level Standards

Category	Cumulative Number of Minutes in any one-hour time period	Daytime 7 AM – 10 PM	Night-time 10 PM- 7AM
1	30	55	50
2	15	60	55
3	5	65	60
4	1	70	65
5	0	75	70

Note: Each of the noise level standards specified in this table shall be reduced by five (5) dB(A) for pure tone noises, noises consisting primarily of speech or music, or for recurring impulsive noises. These noise level standards should be applied at a residential or other noise-sensitive land use and not on the property of a noise-generating land use.

9.22.030. – Noise Generally.

A. It is unlawful for any person to willfully make or continue, or allow to be made or continued, any loud, unnecessary noise which disturbs the peace or quiet of any neighborhood or which causes discomfort or annoyance to persons residing within one thousand feet of the noise source.

B. The standards which may be considered in determining whether a violation of the provisions of this section exists may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. The level of the noise;
2. The level and intensity of any background noise;
3. The proximity of the noise to residential sleeping facilities;
4. The nature and zoning of the area within which the noise occurs;
5. The density of habitation of the area within which the noise occurs;
6. The time of the day or night the noise occurs;
7. The duration of the noise;

8. Whether the noise is recurrent, intermittent or constant.

C. Refrigerator trucks shall be permitted to operate in any commercial or manufacturing zone at all hours; provided, however, that such use does not emit noise or vibration detrimentally impacting neighboring residential properties and the occupants thereof between ten p.m. and seven a.m.

9.22.040. – Exemptions.

The following activities shall be exempted from the provisions of this chapter:

A. The emission of sound for the purpose of alerting persons to the existence of an emergency or the emission of sound in the performance of emergency works for as long a period of time as is necessary to constitute adequate alerting of persons to the existence of the emergency or the emergency work;

B. Warning devices for the protection of the public safety, as for example, police, fire, ambulance, commercial, residential and vehicle alarm devices, and train horns;

C. All mechanical devices, apparatus or equipment which are utilized for the protection or salvage of agricultural crops during periods of potential or actual frost damage or other adverse weather conditions.

9.22.050. – Noise during construction.

A. Except as provided herein or in subsection B, C or D of this section, it is unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to erect, demolish, alter or repair any building, or to grade or excavate land, streets or highways, other than between the hours of six a.m. and nine p.m. on weekdays, and between eight a.m. and nine p.m. on weekends; provided, however, that city crews and those of the city's contractors performing street work between nine p.m. and six a.m. are exempt here from if the city engineer has directed that work be performed between such hours to alleviate potential traffic congestion.

B. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, if the city manager determines that the public health and safety will not be impaired by the erection, demolition, alteration or repair of any building or the excavating and grading of land, streets or highways between the hours of nine p.m. and six a.m., and if he or she further determines that loss or inconvenience would result to any party in interest by virtue of the requirements provided in subsection A of this section, he or she may grant a permit for such work to be done between the hours of nine p.m. and six a.m., upon application being made at the time the permit for the work is awarded or during the progress of the work. Such permit may be granted for a period not to exceed three days, and may be extended by the city manager for a period not to exceed three days.

C. The provisions of this section shall not apply to any work of construction performed one thousand feet or more from the nearest residential dwelling.

D. The provisions of this section shall not apply to performance of emergency work as defined in this chapter.

3.7.4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

3.7.4.1 Thresholds of Significance

The following thresholds for determining the significance of impacts related to noise and vibration are contained in Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*:

> *Would the project…*
>
> - *Generate 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.*
> - *Generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.*
> - *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 Plan area to excessive noise levels.*

The Initial Study (**Appendix 1.0-2** to this Draft EIR) determined that the Project Site is not located near any public or private airports and would not expose people to excessive aircraft-related noise, resulting in no impact. Therefore, this issue is not further addressed in this EIR.

The remaining noise and vibration considerations require a more detailed evaluation, as the *State CEQA Guidelines* do not define what constitutes a "substantial increase" in noise, nor do they provide specific thresholds for assessing noise or vibration impacts. As a result, this EIR relies on applicable local regulations and established technical guidance to develop significance thresholds appropriate for the Project and its setting. The following outlines the analytical criteria used to evaluate construction and operational noise, as well as groundborne vibration, consistent with the City's General Plan Noise Element and Bakersfield Municipal Code (BMC).

The City has not adopted or established quantitative standards specific to construction noise. However, the BMC Section 9.22.030 provides noise limits and includes time intervals that have been used herein to illustrate the potential scope of construction noise levels under the Project. Although the noise standards identified in BMC Section 9.22.030 are not specifically intended to regulate construction noise, this analysis

has conservatively applied these standards to determine if construction noise generated by the Project would be potentially significant.

The Project would have a significant impact on noise levels from operations if the permanent ambient noise level measured at the property line of affected uses increases by 3 dBA CNEL to or within the "normally incompatible" or "clearly incompatible" categories, as shown in **Table 3.7-7**, **Land Use Compatibility Standards**.

Caltrans provides groundborne vibration impact criteria with respect to building damage during construction activities (see **Table 3.7-6, Guideline Vibration Damage Potential Threshold Criteria**). PPV, expressed in inches per second, is used to measure building vibration damage. Construction vibration damage criteria are assessed based on structural condition (e.g., fragile, historic, and modern). The guidelines consider 0.08 inch/sec PPV to be the criterion for extremely fragile historic buildings, 0.10 inch/sec PPV for fragile buildings, 0.25 inch/sec PPV for historic and some old buildings, 0.30 inch/sec PPV for older residential structures, 0.50 inch/sec PPV for new residential buildings and modern industrial or commercial buildings.

3.7.4.2 Methodology

Stationary Noise Modeling

SoundPLAN (SP) acoustical modeling software was utilized to model future worst-case stationary noise impacts to the adjacent land uses. SP is capable of evaluating multiple stationary noise source impacts at various receiver locations. SP's software utilizes algorithms (based on the inverse square law and reference equipment noise level data) to calculate noise level projections. The software allows the user to input specific noise sources, spectral content, sound barriers, building placement, topography, and sensitive receptor locations. See **Appendix 3.7** for inputs and outputs.

The future worst-case daytime noise level projections were modeled using referenced sound level data for the various stationary on-site sources (HVAC, parking). The SP model assumes that every noise source is operating simultaneously (worst-case scenario) when the noise will, in reality, be intermittent and lower in noise level. Measured and referenced sound level data were utilized to model the various stationary on-site noise sources associated with project operation, as shown in **Table 3.7-9** (see **Appendix 3.7**).

Parking was modeled using the SoundPLAN parking tool. Daytime vehicle movements per hour for each parking lot area were calculated from the peak hour project trip generation (provided by Fehr & Peers) for the proposed project (i.e., 0.4 to 0.5 movements per parking spot per hour). A total of 17 HVAC units are assumed for the temple phase of the Project, and another 9 units for the meetinghouse phase of the Project,

each with a capacity of 5 tons. Each HVAC unit will have a sound power level of 67.7 dBA. The units were modeled as point sources located on the ground in an enclosure and on the rooftops, with each point source representing a group of 2 to 3 HVAC units. As a worst-case scenario, the model assumes that all HVAC units are operating simultaneously and continuously. **Appendix 3.7** provides the SoundPLAN inputs and outputs.

The future worst-case nighttime noise level projections were also modeled. The model assumes that HVAC units are operating throughout the night, but that there is no parking lot traffic during nighttime hours.

Table 3.7-9
SoundPLAN Modeling Assumptions

Noise Source	Source Type	Reference Level	Descriptor
5-Ton HVAC Unit	Point Source	67.7	dBA, Lw
Parking	Area (Parking Tool)	0.4 to 0.5	Movements per hr

*Source: See **Appendix 3.7***

Traffic Noise Prediction Modeling

The FHWA Traffic Noise Prediction Methodology (FHWA-RD-77-108) was utilized to model future traffic noise levels on the Project Site and existing and existing plus project traffic noise volumes along roadways affected by project-generated vehicle traffic. The FHWA model arrives at the predicted noise level through a series of adjustments to the Reference Energy Mean Emission Level (REMEL). Existing traffic noise levels were taken from the March 2025 Bakersfield Special Use Site Traffic Impact Analysis prepared by Fehr & Peers. Project-generated traffic was taken from the Bakersfield LDS Church Project Traffic Impact Analysis prepared by Fehr & Peers (**Appendix 3.8**).

Project-generated vehicle traffic will result in an incremental increase in ambient noise levels. To determine the Project's noise impact on the surrounding land uses, this analysis generated noise contours for existing Average Daily Traffic Volumes (ADT) and existing plus project conditions. **Table 3.7-10** indicates the roadway parameters and vehicle distribution utilized for the modeling. Noise contours are used to provide a characterization of sound levels experienced at a set distance from the centerline of a subject roadway. They are intended to represent a worst-case scenario and do not take into account structures, sound walls, topography, and/or other sound attenuating features that may further reduce the actual noise level. Noise contours are developed for comparative purposes and are used to demonstrate potential

increases/decreases along subject roadways as a result of a project. The referenced traffic data and traffic noise calculation worksheets outputs are located in **Appendix 3.7**.

- Roadway classification (e.g., freeway, major arterial, arterial, secondary, collector, etc.),
- Roadway Active Width (e.g., distance between the center of the outermost travel lanes on each side of the roadway)
- ADT, speeds, percentages of autos, medium, and heavy trucks
- Roadway grade and angle of view
- Site Conditions (e.g., soft vs. hard)
- Percentage of total ADT that flows each hour throughout a 24-hour period

Table 3.7-10
Roadway Parameters and Vehicle Distribution

Roadway/Type	Segment	Existing ADT[1]	Existing + Project ADT[1]	Speed (MPH)	Site Conditions
Allen Rd.	N. of Stockdale Hwy.	26,500	26,639	50	Soft
Stockdale Hwy.	E. of Allen Rd.	13,800	13,939	50	Hard
Jewetta Ave.	N. of Stockdale Hwy.	7,900	8,039	45	Hard
Motor-Vehicle Type[2]		**Daytime % (7AM to 7 PM)**	**Evening % (7 PM to 10 PM)**	**Night % (10 PM to 7 AM)**	**Total % of Traffic Flow**
Automobiles		77.5	12.9	9.6	97.4
Medium Trucks		84.8	4.9	10.3	1.8
Heavy Trucks		86.5	2.7	10.8	0.7

Notes:
[1] Fehr & Peers traffic impact analysis report, March 2025 & August 2025. Available online at: https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/census

FHWA Roadway Construction Noise Model

The construction noise analysis uses the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Roadway Construction Noise Model (RCNM), together with several key construction parameters. Key inputs include distance to the sensitive receiver, equipment usage, percentage usage factor, and baseline parameters for the project site. The Project was analyzed based on the different construction phases. The construction noise calculation output worksheet is in **Appendix 3.7**.

Construction noise was modeled for the construction noise focused on the buildings and construction noise along the northern property line. Equipment types and the construction schedule were derived from a nearly identical LDS temple and meetinghouse project of comparable size and construction type under construction in Modesto, California, at the time the Project's Noise and Vibration Impact Study was prepared (early 2026), as described in Sections 5.5, 8.0, and 8.1.2 of the Noise and Vibration Impact Study (**Appendix 3.7**). The model assumes that two pieces of equipment operate within a 150-foot stretch along the northern property line, 10 feet from the residential wall (for an average of 44 feet from the residential receptors to the north), during an 8-hour period, as a worst-case scenario. This assumption is based on the given schedule of completing each phase of work on the northern property line within 10 working days or less.

3.7.4.3 Impact Analysis

Impact NOI-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.**

This analysis includes the average Leq(8h) for all the construction phases and equipment across the site, and this analysis also includes a maximum Leq(8h) for construction that would occur along the northern property line. The first analysis measures distance from the proposed temple building, which represents the majority of where construction activity will occur. This first analysis assumes that all equipment for the phase is operating each day, averaged at the temple building location. The second analysis calculates the two loudest pieces of equipment used at the property line, based on equipment and schedule data from a nearly identical LDS temple and meetinghouse project of comparable size and construction type under construction in Modesto, California, at the time the Project's Noise and Vibration Impact Study was prepared in early 2026 (**Appendix 3.7**). As a worst case, this analysis assumes that the two loudest pieces of equipment will be operating about 10 feet from the property line within a 150-foot segment during an 8-hour day, for an average of 44 feet from any one receptor located 10 feet from the northern property line.

Average Construction Noise Impact

Construction activities throughout the site are anticipated to include five phases: site preparation, grading, building construction, paving, and architectural coating. As established in **Section 3.2, Air Quality**, and **Section 3.5, Greenhouse Gas Emissions**, the technical modeling conservatively assumes a continuous, compressed construction schedule. For noise impacts, this compressed technical schedule represents a worst-case scenario because it assumes more heavy equipment operating simultaneously than would occur during the actual, longer 48-month buildout. Noise levels associated with each phase are shown in **Table 3.7-11**. The construction noise calculation output worksheet is located in **Appendix 3.7**.

As shown in **Table 3.7-11**, average project construction noise levels will range between 55 and 69 dBA Leq(8h) at the nearest sensitive receptor, which are the residential uses north of the Project. Noise levels at other sensitive receptors are lower due to increased distance.

Table 3.7-11
Average Construction Noise Level by Phase (dBA, Leq)

Location	Phase	Construction Noise Level (dBA, Leq)
North Residential	Prep	68.7
	Grade	69.4
	Build	67.1
	Paving	67.9
	Arch Coat	55.0
South Church	Prep	58.1
	Grade	58.8
	Build	56.5
	Paving	57.3
	Arch Coat	44.4
West Care Center	Prep	55.3
	Grade	55.9
	Build	53.7
	Paving	54.4
	Arch Coat	41.6

Property Line Construction Noise Impact

Construction noise from activity occurring along the northern property line has also been analyzed. Activities along the northern property line include grading, fine grading, paving, and landscaping. Although the equipment will be nearer to sensitive receptors, construction along the northern property line has the benefit of being near the property line's concrete masonry block wall, making the insertion loss from the wall more effective, which will have an estimated reduction of 6 dB. The wall was visually confirmed during a site visit to be solid and continuous, with no significant gaps or breaks, and is approximately 6.5 feet tall (See Section 8.1.2 of **Appendix 3.7**). Given the schedule and equipment from the aforementioned Modesto temple project, the estimated Leq(8h) level will be 72 to 79 dBA Leq(8h).

As demonstrated above and detailed in **Appendix 3.7**, construction activities will fall below the 80 dBA Leq(8h) FTA guideline for daytime residential receptors per the FTA Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual. Furthermore, the Project will be required to adhere to Section 9.22.050 of the City of Bakersfield Noise Ordinance, which allows construction between 6:00 AM and 9:00 PM on weekdays, and

between 8:00 AM and 9:00 PM on weekends. Therefore, construction noise impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation measures are required.

Although not required, the Project Applicant will implement the following best practice policies as feasible to further reduce construction-related noise and vibration levels:

- The contractor shall locate equipment staging areas as far as possible and away from the sensitive receptors.
- Idling equipment shall be turned off when not in use.
- Equipment shall be maintained so that vehicles and their loads are secured from rattling and banging.
- The contractor shall use electric equipment in place of diesel equipment.
- The contractor shall ensure all construction equipment is equipped with appropriate noise attenuating devices.

Operational Noise Impacts

Transportation Noise

The potential off-site noise impacts caused by the increase in vehicular traffic as a result of the Project were calculated from the centerline of affected road segments to the nearest sensitive receptors. The impact of the existing residential wall was considered in the CNEL evaluation, but was not factored into the contour analysis. The noise levels both with and without project-generated vehicle traffic were compared, and the increase was calculated. The distance to the 70, 65, 60, and 55 dBA CNEL noise contours is provided in **Appendix 3.7**. Noise contours were calculated for the following scenarios and conditions:

- Existing Condition: This scenario refers to the existing year traffic noise condition and is demonstrated in **Table 3.7-12.**
- Existing + Project Condition: This scenario refers to the existing year plus project traffic noise condition and is demonstrated in **Table 3.7-13.**

As shown in **Table 3.7-12**, the addition of project-generated vehicle traffic to Allen Road, Stockdale Highway, and Jewetta Avenue would result in negligible increases in ambient noise levels and would not be significant. The increase to the existing ambient level is less than 5 dB and thus requires no mitigation in accordance with Implementation Measure 10 of the Noise Element.

Transportation noise impacts would be considered significant if the existing plus project levels are expected to increase by more than 3 dB. Compared to existing traffic noise levels, existing plus project traffic noise levels are expected to increase by up to 0.1 dB CNEL at existing land uses. Therefore, impacts associated with operational transportation noise would be less than significant.

Table 3.7-12
Existing Scenario - Noise Levels Along Roadways (dBA CNEL)

Roadway	Segment	CNEL (dBA)	Distance to Contour (Ft)			
			70 dBA CNEL	65 dBA CNEL	60 dBA CNEL	55 dBA CNEL
Existing Without Project Exterior Noise Levels						
Allen Rd.	N. of Stockdale Hwy.	44.9	68	146	315	680
Stockdale Hwy.	E. of Allen Rd.	52.0	55	174	549	1735
Jewetta Ave.	N. of Stockdale Hwy.	57.0	25	79	249	788
Existing With Project Exterior Noise Levels						
Allen Rd.	N. of Stockdale Hwy.	44.9	68	147	317	682
Stockdale Hwy.	E. of Allen Rd.	52.1	55	175	554	1753
Jewetta Ave.	N. of Stockdale Hwy.	57.1	25	80	254	802

Table 3.7-13
Change in Existing Noise Levels as a Result of the Project

Roadway[1]	Segment	CNEL at 80 Feet dBA[2]			
		Existing Without Project	Existing With Project	Change in Noise Level	Potential Significant Impact
Allen Rd.	N. of Stockdale Hwy.	44.9	44.9	0	No
Stockdale Hwy.	E. of Allen Rd.	52.0	52.1	0.1	No
Jewetta Ave.	N. of Stockdale Hwy.	57.0	57.1	0.1	No

Notes:
[1] Exterior noise levels calculated at 5 feet above ground level.
[2] Noise levels calculated from centerline of subject roadway.

Stationary Noise

Sensitive receptors that may be affected by project operational noise include existing residences to the north, a specialty care center to the west, and a church to the south. The worst-case stationary noise was modeled using SoundPLAN acoustical modeling software. Worst-case assumes that all equipment is

always operational, when in reality, the noise will be intermittent and cycle on/off depending on customer usage. The model includes the existing 6.5-foot-tall CMU wall to the north of the Project Site.

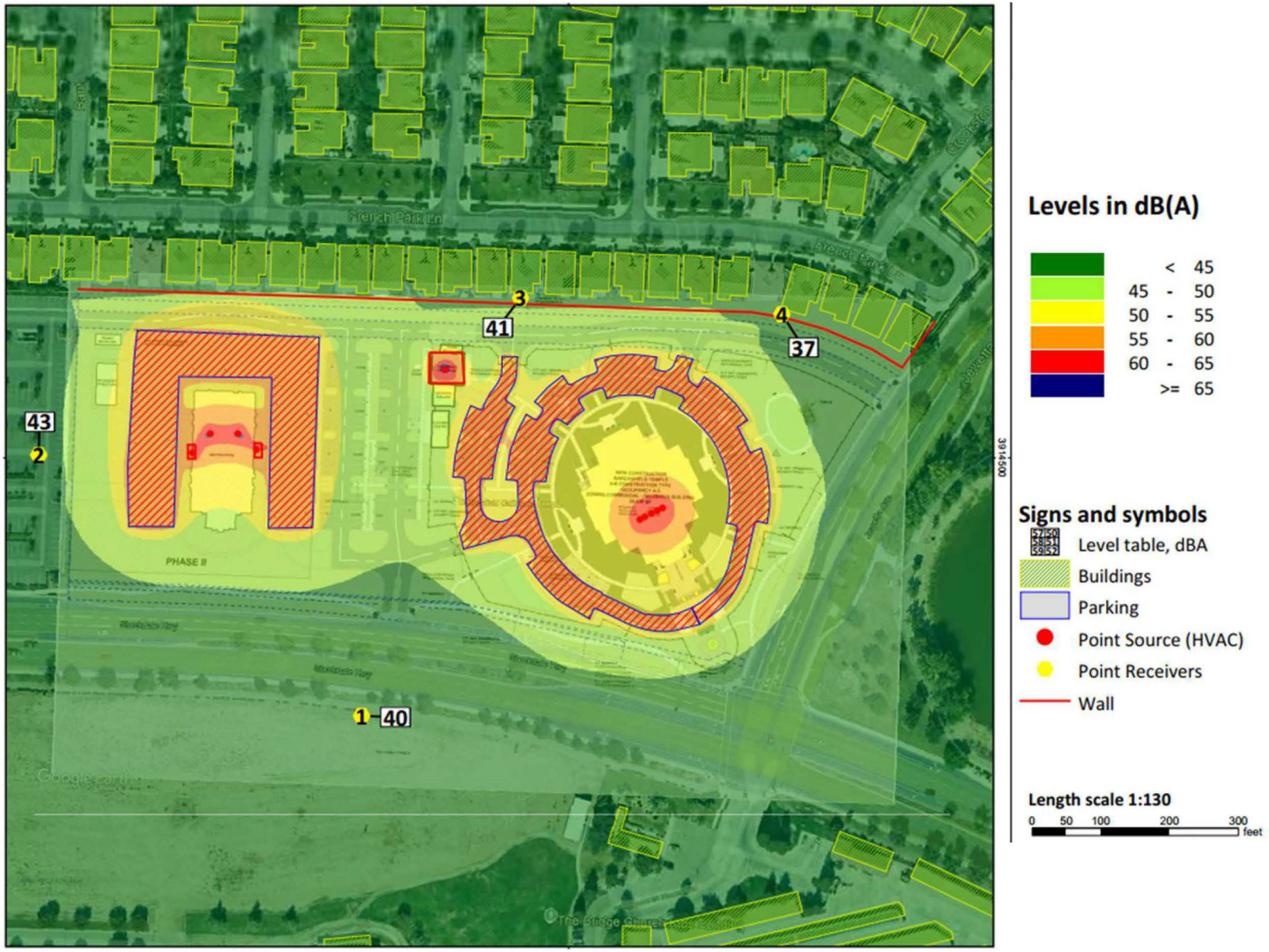
A total of four (4) receptors were modeled to evaluate the proposed project's operational impact. **Figure 3.7-1, Daytime Operational Noise Level Contours**, and **Figure 3.7-2, Nighttime Operational Noise Level Contours,** show the projected levels at these receptors. A receptor is denoted by a yellow dot. Receptor 1 represents the nearby church use. Receptor 2 represents the care center use. Receptors 3 and 4 represent residential uses.

Project Only Levels

Figure 3.7-1 presents the daytime "Project-Only" noise levels and contours at the nearest sensitive receptors, and **Figure 3.7-2** presents the nighttime "Project-Only" noise levels. Daytime operation assumes that HVAC equipment is operating simultaneously and continuously, and that the peak hour Project-generated trips occur in each parking area. Nighttime operation assumes that HVAC equipment is operating simultaneously and continuously, and that the parking areas are not in operation. This represents a conservative, worst-case noise scenario. As a project design feature, all rooftop HVAC equipment would be shielded by a parapet wall, which would provide additional attenuation beyond that reflected in the modeling results above.

The model indicates that the project-only noise levels during daytime operation are 40 dBA at the existing church use, 43 dBA at the specialty care center use, and range from 37 dBA Leq to 41 dBA Leq at the existing residential uses. The project-only noise level thus meets the City's daytime noise level limit of 55 dBA Leq for noise-sensitive uses (i.e., residential receptors).

The project-only hourly noise levels during nighttime operation are 37 dBA at the existing church use, 39 dBA at the specialty care center use, and range from 34 to 38 dBA Leq at residential receptors. The project-only noise level thus meets the City's nighttime noise level limit of 50 dBA Leq for noise-sensitive uses.



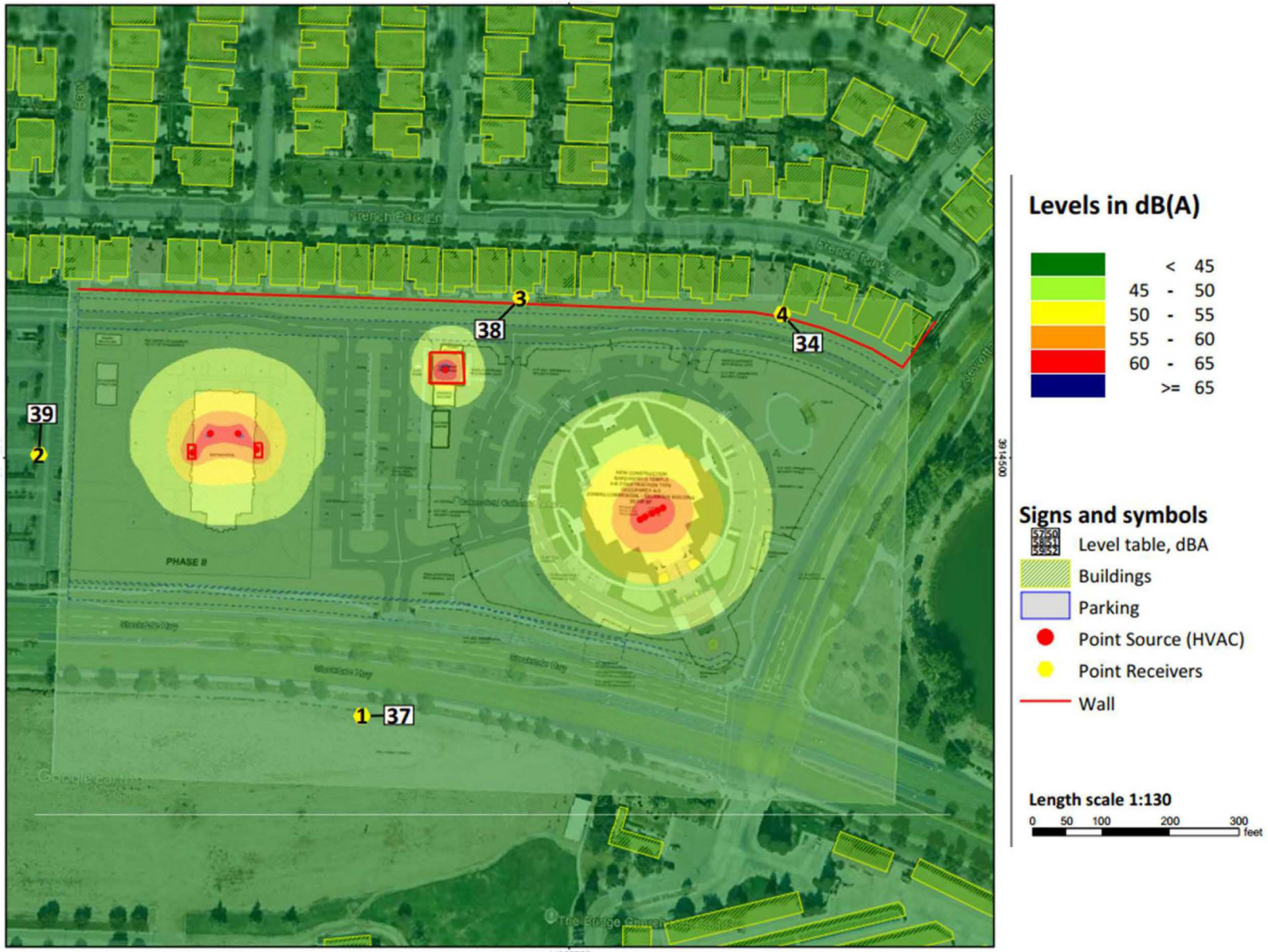
SOURCE: MD Acoustics, 2025

FIGURE **3.7-1**

Daytime Operational Noise Level Contours

IMPACT SCIENCES

859.004•01/26



SOURCE: MD Acoustics, 2025

FIGURE **3.7-2**

Nighttime Operational Noise Level Contours

IMPACT SCIENCES

859.004•01/26

Project Plus Ambient Operational Noise Levels

Table 3.7-14, Worst-Case Predicted Daytime Operational Leq Noise Levels (dBA), presents the ambient noise level, the Project's noise level, and the combined project plus ambient noise level condition for daytime hours. As a worst-case scenario, this analysis compared the Project operational noise level to the quietest existing daytime hourly noise level (47 dBA Leq at 10 AM and 4 PM) to show the maximum potential noise impact due to the Project.

Table 3.7-14
Worst-Case Predicted Daytime Operational Leq Noise Levels (dBA)

Receptor[1]	Existing Ambient Noise Level (dBA, Leq)[2]	Project Noise Level (dBA, Leq)[3]	Maximum Permitted Daytime Noise Level (dBA, Leq)[4]	Total Combined Noise Level (dBA, Leq)	Change in Noise Level as Result of Project
1	47	40	**55**	48	1
2	47	43	**55**	49	2
3	47	41	**55**	48	1
4	47	37	**55**	47	0

Notes:
1. Receptor 1 represents a nearby church use. Receptor 2 represents a specialty care center use. Receptors 3-4 represent residential uses.
*2. See Appendix A to the noise study in **Appendix 3.7** to this Draft EIR for the ambient noise measurement.*
3. See Exhibit F for the daytime operational noise level projections at said receptors.
4. See Table VII-2 of the Noise Element in the City's General Plan.

The Project is not anticipated to operate during nighttime hours; however, the HVAC equipment servicing the Project will be in operation. Therefore, an analysis of the Project's operational nighttime noise levels was evaluated and provided in **Table 3.7-15** below. As shown in **Table 3.7-15**, nighttime noise levels will comply with the City's noise ordinance.

Table 3.7-15
Worst-Case Predicted Nighttime Operational Leq Noise Levels (dBA)

Receptor[1]	Existing Ambient Noise Level (dBA, Leq)[2]	Project Noise Level (dBA, Leq)[3]	Maximum Permitted Nighttime Noise Level (dBA, Leq)[4]	Total Combined Noise Level (dBA, Leq)	Change in Noise Level as Result of Project
1	43	37	**50**	44	1
2	43	39	**50**	45	2
3	43	38	**50**	44	1
4	43	34	**50**	44	1

Notes:
1. *Receptor 1 represents a nearby church use. Receptor 2 represents a specialty care center use. Receptors 3-4 represent residential uses.*
2. *See Appendix A to the noise study in **Appendix 3.7** to this Draft EIR for the ambient noise measurement.*
3. *See Exhibit G for the nighttime operational noise level projections at said receptors.*
4. *See Table VII-2 of the Noise Element in the City's General Plan.*

As shown in **Table 3.7-14** and **Table 3.7-15**, project-only noise levels will meet the daytime and nighttime exterior noise limits for sensitive uses as defined in **Table 3.7-7**. Project plus ambient noise will increase the existing ambient levels at the nearby church use by 1 dB, at the care center use by 2 dB and at residential receptors by up to 1 dB during the day, and the night. It takes a change of 3 dB for the human ear to perceive a difference. Therefore, the change in noise level would be "Not Perceptible" at all receptors and impacts associated with operational noise would be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less Than Significant Impact.

Mitigation Measure

No mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less Than Significant Impact.

Impact NOI-2 **Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.**

Construction activities can produce vibration that may be felt by adjacent land uses. The construction of the Project would not require the use of equipment such

as pile drivers, which are known to generate substantial construction vibration levels. The primary vibration source during construction may be from a vibratory roller. A vibratory roller has a vibration impact of 0.210 inches per second peak particle velocity (PPV) at 25 feet, which is perceptible and can be a risk to nearby fragile structures.

Table 3.7-16 gives approximate vibration levels for particular construction activities. This data provides a reasonable estimate for a wide range of soil conditions.

Table 3.7-16
Vibration Source Levels for Construction Equipment

Equipment	Peak Particle Velocity (inches/second) at 25 feet	Approximate Vibration Level LV (dVB) at 25 feet
Pile driver (impact)	1.518 (upper range)	112
	0.644 (typical)	104
Pile driver (sonic)	0.734 upper range	105
	0.170 typical	93
Clam shovel drop (slurry wall)	0.202	94
Hydromill	0.008 in soil	66
(slurry wall)	0.017 in rock	75
Vibratory Roller	0.21	94
Hoe Ram	0.089	87
Large bulldozer	0.089	87
Caisson drill	0.089	87
Loaded trucks	0.076	86
Jackhammer	0.035	79
Small bulldozer	0.003	58

Source: Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment, Federal Transit Administration, May 2018.

The nearest existing buildings are 20 feet north of the edge of the Project Site.[11] At this distance, a vibratory roller would yield a worst-case 0.268 PPV (in/sec), which is below the Caltrans 0.50 PPV (in/sec) threshold for new residential structures shown in **Table 3.7-6** and will not result in architectural damage. Therefore, impacts associated with construction-related vibration would be less than significant.

11 It should be noted that the noise analysis models construction equipment noise at 10 feet from the property line whereas this vibration analysis measures the distance to the actual building (20 feet) instead of the property line itself.

As the Project would operate as a religious institution, there would be no substantive sources of long-term vibration, and impacts related to operational vibration would be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less Than Significant Impact.

Mitigation Measure

No mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less Than Significant Impact.

3.7.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The cumulative analysis was prepared in accordance with Section 15130 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, which requires an EIR to discuss cumulative impacts of the proposed Project when the incremental effects of the proposed Project are cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impacts are defined as impacts created by the combination of the proposed Project with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. Cumulatively considerable means that the incremental effects of the proposed 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. This Draft EIR focuses on significant cumulative effects, and where cumulative conditions are less than significant, the Project's incremental contribution is described qualitatively for context rather than as a determination of cumulatively considerable contribution.

According to Section 15130(b) of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, elements considered necessary to provide an adequate discussion of cumulative impacts of a project include either: (1) a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts; or (2) a summary of projection contained in an adopted General Plan or related planning document, which is designed to evaluate regional or area-wide conditions. Both approaches are utilized in this Draft EIR.

The localized list of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, as shown on **Figure 3.0-1, Related Projects Map**, and listed in **Table 3.0-1, Related Projects Table**, was prepared by the City's Planning Division to include entitled and pending approvals within a one-mile radius. Regional forecast projections are based on Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG) 2022 Regional Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) to assess potential environmental effects. Kern COG's forecasts provide

the anticipated planned population, housing, and employment growth in the region for 2020-2046. **Table 3.0-2, Cumulative Growth Projections for the City of Bakersfield,** shows that between 2020 and 2046, the City is projected to grow by approximately 174,000 residents (29 percent), approximately 42,000 households (22 percent), and approximately 28,000 jobs (13 percent). These increases, based on the Kern COG's RTP/SCS, reflect regional planning assumptions for housing, transportation, and employment. They provide the cumulative growth context for evaluating the Project's impacts, ensuring consistency with countywide forecasts.

The cumulative analysis included an evaluation of the combined effect of the proposed Project and future growth, in accordance with the projections provided in **Table 3.0-2**. In addition, if the combined cumulative effect is significant, then a discussion of the proposed Project's contribution to the significant cumulative effect is provided. If the proposed Project's contribution is determined to be less than cumulatively considerable, then the proposed Project would have a less than significant cumulative impact.

3.7.5.1 Cumulative Construction Noise and Vibration

The geographic scope for cumulative construction noise and vibration impacts is localized, generally limited to areas within 500 to 1,000 feet of the Project Site where construction noise contours from simultaneous projects could overlap. Construction noise dissipates at a rate of approximately 6 dBA per doubling of distance from a point source. Vibration energy attenuates even more rapidly, generally limited to areas within a few hundred feet of construction activities.

As identified in **Table 3.0-1, Related Projects Table**, the nearest related projects are approximately 0.45 miles (2,376 feet) and 0.55 miles (2,904 feet) away. At a distance of 0.45 miles, noise generated by construction equipment at the nearest related project site would attenuate to levels that are indistinguishable from the ambient noise environment at the proposed Project's sensitive receptors. Furthermore, the Project's construction noise impacts would be less than significant. Because the nearest related project is located well beyond the distance where sound levels or groundborne vibration would merge with Project construction activities to create a combined impact, the Project would not contribute to a cumulative construction noise or vibration impact. Therefore, the Project's contribution would be less than cumulatively considerable.

3.7.5.2 Cumulative Operational Noise

Stationary noise sources, such as HVAC units and parking lot activities, are localized and typically do not combine with sources at distant locations to create a cumulative impact. The Project's stationary noise levels comply with City standards at all property lines and sensitive receptors. For a cumulative impact to occur, another stationary noise source would need to be located immediately adjacent to the Project's receptors

(the church to the south, the pediatric specialty care center to the west, or the residences to the north). As noted in the related projects list, there are no active or pending projects immediately adjacent to the Project Site that would place new stationary equipment near these shared property lines. Consequently, there is no potential for a combined increase in stationary noise levels. The Project's contribution is less than cumulatively considerable.

Cumulative traffic noise impacts are assessed based on the increase in traffic volumes resulting from regional growth (as projected by Kern COG's RTP/SCS), combined with the Project's traffic. A significant cumulative impact would occur if the cumulative traffic noise levels increase significantly over existing conditions, and the Project's contribution to that increase is "cumulatively considerable" (defined by the City as a project-related increase of 1 dB or more).

The Project's contribution to traffic noise is negligible. As shown in the existing plus Project analysis, the Project results in a maximum noise increase of 0.1 dBA CNEL along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue. This is substantially below the 3 dBA threshold of perception and the 1 dBA threshold for a cumulatively considerable contribution.

In the cumulative 2046 horizon, ambient traffic noise levels on local roadways will likely be higher due to the regional growth projected in **Table 3.0-2** (e.g., the addition of 174,000 residents and 28,000 jobs). Because decibels are logarithmic, adding a fixed small noise source (the Project) to a louder environment results in an even smaller incremental increase than adding it to a quieter environment. Since the Project adds only 0.1 dBA to the existing (quieter) environment, its contribution to the cumulative (louder) environment would be 0.1 dBA or less. This contribution does not meet the City's threshold of 1 dB required to be considered cumulatively considerable. Therefore, the Project would not result in a significant cumulative traffic noise impact, and its contribution is less than cumulatively considerable.

3.8 TRANSPORTATION

INTRODUCTION

This section evaluates the potential impacts of the Project on the surrounding transportation system. The analysis evaluates the Project's consistency with applicable transportation plans and policies, assesses Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) pursuant to *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.3(b), and potential hazards related to Project Site access and geometric design. The analysis in this section is based primarily on the *Bakersfield LDS Church Project Traffic Impact Analysis* (TIA) prepared by Fehr & Peers, dated November 2025, available in **Appendix 3.8** to this Draft EIR.

3.8.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3.8.1.1 Project Location and Setting

The Project Site is located at the northwest corner of Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue in the City, encompassing approximately 13.07 acres (11.76 net acres) of vacant, graded land. Surrounding land uses include residential subdivisions to the north, commercial and institutional uses to the south, a public park to the east, and office/commercial uses to the west. Regional access is available from State Route 58 (0.4 miles north), State Route 99 (5.4 miles east), and Interstate 5 (7.7 miles southwest).

3.8.1.2 Existing Transportation Facilities

Roadway Network

Primary access to the Project Site is provided by Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue. Both roadways are improved with multiple lanes and signalized intersections at major crossings. Stockdale Highway is classified as an Arterial roadway providing east–west connectivity, while Jewetta Avenue is classified as a Collector roadway providing north–south connectivity. The City's Circulation Element defines an Arterial as a street "used primarily by through traffic, with a minimal function to provide access to abutting property," and a Collector as a street that "functions to connect local streets with arterials and to provide access to abutting property."

Transit Facilities

The area is served by Golden Empire Transit ("GetBus"). Route 82 operates along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, providing connections between California State University, Bakersfield, and the downtown Transit Center. Service is provided on weekdays at 60-minute headways with no weekend service.

Bicycle Facilities

Existing Class II bike lanes (striped lanes for exclusive bicycle use) are located along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, providing bicycle connectivity in the vicinity of the Project Site.

Pedestrian Facilities

Sidewalks are present along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue; however, sidewalks are absent along the Project Site frontage.

3.8.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

3.8.2.1 Federal Regulations

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) provides comprehensive rights and protections to individuals with disabilities. Title II of the ADA covers public services and transportation, requiring that the design and construction of new facilities by public entities (such as sidewalks and crosswalks within the City right-of-way) be readily accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. Title III requires that private commercial facilities and places of public accommodation (such as the proposed Project) meet accessibility standards for parking, accessible routes, and building access. The Project includes ADA-compliant parking stalls and pedestrian pathways to ensure compliance with these federal standards.

3.8.2.2 State Regulations

Senate Bill 743

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Section 21099(b)(1) required that the state Office of Planning and Research (now called the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation) develop revisions to the *State CEQA Guidelines* establishing criteria for determining the significance of transportation impacts of projects that "promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses." CEQA Section 21099(b)(2) states that upon certification of the revised guidelines for determining transportation impacts pursuant to section 21099(b)(1), 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.

In January 2016, the Office of Planning and Research published for public review and comment a Revised Proposal on Updates to the *State CEQA Guidelines* on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA,

recommending that transportation impacts for projects be measured using a VMT metric.[1] In January 2019, changes to the CEQA statutes and guidelines took effect, including a new section 15064.3 that states that VMT is the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts, and includes updated criteria for analyzing transportation impacts.[2]

***State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.3.** As discussed above, changes to CEQA include the adoption of *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.3, *Determining the Significance of Transportation Impacts*. Section 15064.3 establishes VMT as the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. Generally, land use projects within 0.5 miles of either an existing major transit stop[3] or a stop along an existing high-quality transit corridor[4] should be presumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact. Projects that decrease VMT in the project area compared to existing conditions should be presumed to have a less than significant transportation impact. A lead agency has discretion to choose the most appropriate methodology to evaluate VMT, including whether to express the change in absolute terms, per capita, per household, or in any other measure. A lead agency may also use models to estimate VMT and may revise those estimates to reflect professional judgment based on substantial evidence.

3.8.2.3 Regional and Local

Regional Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy

Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG) is an association of local governments and agencies that serves as a Metropolitan Planning Organization, a Regional Transportation Planning Agency, and a Council of Governments. The Kern COG region encompasses all of Kern County, which includes 11 cities. Kern COG is responsible for developing long-range regional transportation plans, including the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) and associated growth forecasts, the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and the regional housing needs allocations. The RTP and SCS are updated every four years.

The 2022 RTP/SCS is a long-range planning document that provides a vision for the region's future transportation needs and land use patterns. It is designed to meet the greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction

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1 California Office of Planning and Research, *Revised Proposal on Updates to the CEQA Guidelines on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA, Implementing Senate Bill 743 (Steinberg, 2013)*, January 20, 2016.

2 The Governor's Office of Planning and Research is now known as the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation.

3 "Major transit stop" is defined in Public Resources Code Section 21064.3 as a site containing an existing rail transit station, a ferry terminal served by either a bus or rail transit service, or the intersection of two or more major bus routes with a frequency of service interval of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods.

4 "High-quality transit corridors" are defined in Public Resources Code Section 21155 as a corridor with fixed route bus service with service intervals no longer than 15 minutes during peak commute hours.

targets set by the California Air Resources Board by integrating transportation and land use planning. The SCS focuses on reducing VMT by encouraging compact development and improving access to alternative modes of transportation. While the consistency of the Project with the applicable land use goals of the RTP/SCS is analyzed in **Section 3.6, Land Use and Planning**, the transportation modeling and VMT reduction goals of the RTP/SCS provide the regional regulatory context for the transportation impact analysis in this section.

Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan

The Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan (General Plan), adopted in 2002, provides long-range guidance for growth and development in the City and is a fundamental policy document that defines how the City should use and manage its resources into the future. It includes nine elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, Safety, Public Services and Facilities, and Parks.

The General Plan Circulation Element serves as the infrastructure plan addressing the circulation of people, goods, and utility systems within the City. It is correlated with the Land Use Element to ensure that the circulation system can accommodate planned development. The Project's consistency with the Circulation Element is evaluated in **Section 3.8.3**, below.

City of Bakersfield Municipal Code

The Bakersfield Municipal Code (BMC) contains specific requirements for street design, improvement standards, and right-of-way dedications. The Project is subject to compliance with these Code requirements which will be made standard conditions of approval regarding frontage improvements.

City of Bakersfield Bicycle Transportation Plan

The City of Bakersfield *Bicycle Transportation Plan* (2013) serves as the City's master plan for bicycle infrastructure. It classifies the existing and proposed bikeway network into Class I (paths), Class II (lanes), and Class III (routes) facilities. The plan establishes design standards and identifies specific roadway corridors where bicycle facilities are required to ensure a continuous and safe network for cyclists throughout the metropolitan area.

City of Bakersfield Active Transportation Plan

The City of Bakersfield *Active Transportation Plan* (2025) outlines policies and strategies to improve safety and connectivity for non-motorized travel modes, including walking and biking. The plan focuses on closing infrastructure gaps, enhancing pedestrian safety near schools and transit stops, and prioritizing

improvements in high-need areas. It serves as a guiding document for the City's capital improvement projects and grant funding applications.

3.8.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

3.8.3.1 Thresholds of Significance

The following thresholds for determining the significance of impacts related to transportation are contained in Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*:

Would the project…

- *Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?*
- *Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?*
- *Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)*
- *Result in inadequate emergency access?*

The text of *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.3, Subdivision (b) is as follows:

- *Land Use Projects. Vehicle miles traveled exceeding an applicable threshold of significance may indicate a significant impact. Generally, projects within one-half mile of either an existing major transit stop or a stop along an existing high-quality transit corridor should be presumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact. Projects that decrease vehicle miles traveled in the project area compared to existing conditions should be presumed to have a less than significant transportation impact.*
- *Transportation Projects. Transportation projects that reduce, or have no impact on, vehicle miles traveled should be presumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact. For roadway capacity projects, agencies have discretion to determine the appropriate measure of transportation impact consistent with CEQA and other applicable requirements. To the extent that such impacts have already been adequately addressed at a programmatic level, such as in a regional transportation plan EIR, a lead agency may tier from that analysis as provided in Section 15152.*
- *Qualitative Analysis. If existing models or methods are not available to estimate the vehicle miles traveled for the particular project being considered, a lead agency may analyze the project's vehicle miles traveled qualitatively. Such a qualitative analysis would evaluate factors such as the availability of transit, proximity to other destinations, etc. For many projects, a qualitative analysis of construction traffic may be appropriate.*
- *Methodology. A lead agency has discretion to choose the most appropriate methodology to evaluate a project's vehicle miles traveled, including whether to express the change in absolute terms, per capita, per household or in any other measure. A lead agency may use models to estimate a project's vehicle miles traveled, and may revise those estimates to reflect professional judgment based on substantial evidence. Any assumptions used to estimate vehicle miles traveled and any revisions to model outputs should be documented and explained in the*

> *environmental document prepared for the project. The standard of adequacy in Section 15151 shall apply to the analysis described in this section.*

The Initial Study (**Appendix 1.0-2** to this Draft EIR) determined that the Project would not result in inadequate emergency access. The Project provides unobstructed emergency access via Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, meets all City and Fire Code requirements with adequate driveways and fire lanes, and would result in less than significant impacts to emergency access. Therefore, this issue is not further addressed.

3.8.3.2 Methodology

The transportation analysis utilizes two key metrics to evaluate potential impacts: vehicle trips and VMT. Vehicle trips (i.e., trip generation) represent the total number of vehicles entering and exiting the Project Site. This volume-based metric is used to evaluate operational impacts on local intersections, driveway access, and safety, as addressed under Impact TR-1 and Impact TR-3, below. VMT, by contrast, measures the total distance vehicles travel to reach the site. It serves as an indicator of regional travel efficiency and associated GHG emissions, and is used in evaluating Impact TR-2, below.

Since the Project functions as a specialized regional use (a religious temple), the methodology distinguishes between site-level vehicle trips and regional travel efficiency. This approach is necessary to account for both the local operational volume at the Project driveways (i.e., vehicle trips) and the potential change in regional travel distances (i.e., VMT).

Trip Generation

Typical land uses such as residential and commercial developments often use standard trip generation rates (e.g., Institute of Transportation Engineers [ITE] manuals) to estimate traffic volumes. However, in cases similar to the proposed Project, where standard trip rates may not accurately reflect the proposed use, an alternative method for estimating trips may be appropriate. As such, the unique operational characteristics of the proposed temple and meetinghouse may not be accurately captured by standard land use codes for religious institutions due to how the temple schedules temple ordinances/meeting sessions and specific membership assignments. Unlike a typical religious congregation that meets in a large group all at the same time, temple activities are scheduled and limited to the capacities of the various spaces within the building for religious ceremonies such as baptisms, weddings, or religious instruction.

Therefore, trip generation estimates were derived from traffic counts collected at four comparable Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints sites that contain a temple and meetinghouse:

- Gilbert Temple – 3301 S. Greenfield Road, Gilbert, Arizona 85297
  - 85,326-square-foot temple on a 15.38-acre site
- Draper Temple – 14065 Canyon Vista Lane, Draper, Utah 84020
  - 58,300-square-foot temple on a 12-acre site
- Newport Beach Temple – 2300 Bonita Canyon Drive, Newport Beach, California 92660
  - 17,800-square-foot temple on an 8.8-acre site
- Redlands Temple – 1761 Fifth Avenue, Redlands, California 92374
  - 17,300-square-foot temple on a 4.6-acre site
- The meetinghouses for these sites range between 15,000 and 18,000 square feet.

Although total building square footage varies among these four facilities, each contains a similar quantity of interior primary-use spaces, including ordinance rooms, sealing rooms, and a baptistry, which are the functional areas that directly drive trip generation. Differences in total building size reflect varying amounts of ancillary and support spaces rather than differences in primary activity capacity. Additionally, the programming and operational schedule at each of these facilities, including session-based ordinance scheduling and membership-assigned attendance, is similar to the operational model planned for the proposed Bakersfield temple, supporting the use of these traffic counts as representative data for this analysis.

These counts were grouped by the hour to see how many trips typically occur during different times of the day. The results from each site were then averaged to develop a typical trip rate for facilities with similar characteristics. For the proposed Project, the number of trips was estimated based on the number of seats in the building, since seating capacity directly relates to how many people could attend and travel to the site. Using the observed distribution of traffic at these comparable facilities, the analysis then identified and evaluated three key peak periods: the weekday AM peak hour, the weekday PM peak hour, and the Saturday peak hour.

VMT Analysis

One way to understand traffic conditions is to study traffic volumes with an analysis of the operating conditions, indicated through volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratios and Level of Service (LOS). LOS was used previously as the primary method for determining CEQA transportation-related impacts, but upon implementation of VMT thresholds, vehicle delay or traffic congestion is no longer a significant impact in of itself and is now considered only as it relates to secondary impacts, such as emergency access or air quality. Changes in state legislation and the related guidance from the Office of Planning and Research have required that traffic be analyzed in terms of VMT in order to support statewide GHG goals and encourage multi-modality in California cities. Traditional mitigation measures to address increases in

vehicle delay often involved increasing vehicle capacity (i.e., the width of a roadway or intersection), which has the potential to induce more trips/VMT and does not support state goals.

Neither the City nor Kern COG has adopted quantitative VMT thresholds of significance, screening criteria, or standardized methodologies for evaluating VMT impacts under CEQA. Based on coordination with City staff and Kern COG, the Project's TIA (**Appendix 3.8**) applied a Project-specific "net change" VMT methodology that compares existing travel patterns to anticipated Project travel patterns by evaluating the travel distances for church members of the nine specific "stakes" (i.e., geographic units) assigned to the proposed temple relative to the distances those members currently travel to existing temples in the cities of Los Angeles, Redlands, and Fresno. This approach is appropriate for the proposed religious institutional use, which serves a defined and known population.

Signal Warrant Analysis

To evaluate potential hazards and the need for intersection control, a signal warrant analysis was conducted in accordance with the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD), Chapter 4C. The analysis focused on Warrant 3 (Peak Hour), which is intended for use at locations where minor-street traffic suffers undue delays when entering or crossing a major street. This warrant evaluates total stopped time delay, minor-street approach volumes, and total intersection volumes to determine if a traffic signal is justified. Warrant 3 was selected because it is typically the first volume-related warrant satisfied by development projects. The signal warrant analysis was conducted solely to evaluate potential access-related hazards and does not imply that a traffic signal is required or that unsafe conditions exist where a warrant is not met.

3.8.3.3 Impact Analysis

Impact TR-1 **Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.**

The Project is subject to the goals and policies set forth in the General Plan's Circulation Element and applicable ordinances in the BMC, as both govern the City's transportation infrastructure and development standards. A significant impact would occur if the Project were to hinder the implementation of these plans, conflict with specific design and operational standards, or generate trips that the system is not designed to accommodate. It should be noted that while local roadway performance standards such as LOS are referenced for purposes of General Plan consistency and engineering context, LOS is not used to determine the significance of transportation impacts under CEQA, consistent with Senate Bill 743 and *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.3.

Roadway Network

Based on the methodology described above, the Project is expected to generate the following trip volumes:[5]

- 71 trips in the weekday AM peak hour
- 139 trips in the weekday PM peak hour
- 191 trips in the Saturday peak hour

These estimated trips reflect the unique operational characteristics of the proposed uses. Unlike a standard place of worship with a single large congregation arriving simultaneously, the proposed temple (Phase 1) would operate on a schedule of distinct sessions spread throughout the day, Tuesdays through Saturdays with the temple closed on Sundays and reserved for maintenance on Mondays. This operational model distributes vehicle arrivals and departures evenly, preventing significant surges in peak hour traffic. The proposed meetinghouse (Phase 2) would operate primarily on Sundays for worship services and would host membership activities during weekday evenings. Furthermore, attendance at the temple and meetinghouse is determined by the specific "stakes" (regional geographic units) and "wards" (local units) assigned to the Project, resulting in a predictable and capped volume of visitors.

As noted above, the Circulation Element classifies Stockdale Highway as an Arterial (i.e., high-capacity roadway designed for regional traffic) and Jewetta Avenue as a Collector (i.e., roadway designed to connect local neighborhoods to arterials). The Project would use Stockdale Highway for primary access and Jewetta Avenue for secondary access as well as internal circulation and connectivity with the adjacent land use to the west of the Project Site. The addition of approximately 139 peak hour trips along Stockdale Highway (a 6-lane Arterial designed to carry up to 60,000 daily vehicles) and Jewetta Avenue (a 4-lane Collector designed to carry up to 30,000 daily vehicles) does not conflict with the roadway's functional classification or capacity goals. As discussed in Impact TR-3, below, the signal warrant analyses conducted in accordance with the CA MUTCD demonstrate that neither Project driveway would experience undue delay or hazardous conditions under existing plus Project conditions.

Transit Facilities

GetBus Route 82 serves the corridor. Route 82 operates with 60-minute headways on weekdays and does not provide weekend service. The Project would not modify existing bus stops, interfere with transit operations, or preclude future transit improvements. By maintaining the existing stops and constructing

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5 The weekday AM and PM peak hours represent the single highest-volume 60-minute periods during the morning and evening commute windows, respectively. The Saturday peak hour represents the highest-volume hour observed on Saturdays at comparable temple facilities. These periods are consistent with standard traffic study practice for the project use type. Refer to **Appendix 3.8** for detailed methodology.

new sidewalks along the site frontage, the Project would support existing transit infrastructure and improve pedestrian connectivity for riders accessing the site. These improvements ensure consistency with the City's adopted policies to enhance and encourage the use of public transportation.

Bicycle Facilities

The Project design preserves the existing Class II bike lanes on Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue. Construction and operation would not interfere with these facilities, maintaining the integrity and function of the bikeway system.

Pedestrian Facilities

The Project would construct new sidewalks along the frontage of both Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, where none currently exist. These improvements are a Project design feature required by City standards and would be implemented prior to Project occupancy, improving the pedestrian network and tying into existing marked crosswalks at the intersection, implementing the Circulation Element's goal to provide for safe pedestrian movement.

Table 3.8-1, Project Consistency with the Circulation Element, analyzes the Project's consistency with specific, applicable policies contained in the City's General Plan Circulation Element.

Table 3.8-1
Project Consistency with the Circulation Element

Circulation Element Topic	Applicable Goals and Policies	Consistency Analysis
Streets	**Goal 1:** Provide a safe and efficient street system that links all parts of the area for movement of people and goods.	**Consistent.** The Project proposes two driveway access points (one on Jewetta Avenue, one on Stockdale Highway) designed with "right-in-right-out" configurations. This configuration restricts turning movements to maintain the efficiency of the arterial/collector flow and minimize conflict points, thereby supporting a safe and efficient system.
	Goal 2: Provide for safe and efficient motorized, non-motorized, and pedestrian traffic movement.	**Consistent.** The Project would construct new sidewalks along the entire site frontage on Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, closing the existing gap and connecting to marked crosswalks. Additionally, the Project would maintain the existing Class II bike lanes on both frontages without obstruction.
	Goal 4: Provide a street system that creates a positive image of Bakersfield and contributes to residents' quality of life.	**Consistent.** The Project would provide comprehensive landscaping improvements along the street frontages. Lawns and ornamental plantings would be located in the "high-visibility frontage zones" along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, enhancing the visual quality of the corridor.

Circulation Element Topic	Applicable Goals and Policies	Consistency Analysis
	Goal 6: Provide a local street network that contributes to the quality and safety of residential neighborhoods and commercial districts.	**Consistent.** The Project would direct all site access to Stockdale Highway (an Arterial) and Jewetta Avenue (a Collector), utilizing the roadways designed for higher volumes. By placing access approximately 500+ feet away from the intersection and using right-in-right-out restrictions, the design would prevent queuing and cut-through traffic that could impact the adjacent residential neighborhood to the north.
	Goal 7: Develop and maintain a circulation system that supports the land use plan shown in the general plan.	**Consistent.** The Project would construct the necessary frontage improvements (e.g., sidewalks and curb and gutters, as needed) required to support the proposed religious campus land use, ensuring the circulation system complements the site's development.
	Policy 1: Classify streets in the following manner: [...] Arterials are used primarily by through traffic, with a minimal function to provide access to abutting property. Collectors function to connect local streets with arterials and to provide access to abutting property.	**Consistent.** The Project acknowledges the classification of Stockdale Highway as an Arterial and Jewetta Avenue as a Collector. The site design respects this hierarchy by orienting the site to utilizing the arterial for regional visibility while strictly controlling access to maintain through-traffic function, and utilizing the collector for secondary distribution. Frontage improvements are designed in accordance with these functional classifications.
	Policy 6: Design and locate site access driveways to minimize traffic disruption where possible considering items such as topography, past parcelization and other factors.	**Consistent.** The Project locates driveways approximately 500 to 550 feet away from the Stockdale Highway/Jewetta Avenue intersection, providing ample corner clearance. Furthermore, the driveways are restricted to "right-in-right-out" configurations. This design minimizes traffic disruption by eliminating left-turn conflicts and preventing queuing from interfering with intersection operations.
	Policy 7: Minimize direct and uncontrolled property access from arterials.	**Consistent.** The Project limits access on Stockdale Highway (an Arterial) to a single driveway point. By configuring this driveway as right-in-right-out only, the access is strictly controlled to prevent unsafe cross-traffic movements, directly satisfying the requirement to minimize uncontrolled access on arterial roadways.
	Policy 8: Limit full access median breaks on arterials to a maximum of three per mile and include left-turn lanes at each.	**Consistent.** The Project respects the existing raised median on Stockdale Highway and does not propose a new median break. Access to the site from the arterial is limited to right-turn movements only, preserving the integrity of the median and arterial flow.
	Policy 12: Maintain the integrity of the circulation system.	**Consistent.** The Project maintains the integrity of the circulation system by dedicating necessary right-of-way along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue and constructing frontage improvements (e.g., sidewalks and curb and gutters, as needed) to City standards.
	Policy 16: Require that truck access to commercial and industrial properties be designed to minimize impacts on adjacent residential parcels.	**Consistent.** While the Project is a religious institutional use rather than commercial/industrial, it is located adjacent to residential uses to the north. Consistent with this policy, service and trash collection access is provided via the main driveways on Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, away from the northern residential property line, thereby minimizing noise and vibration impacts on neighbors.
	Policy 17: Require buildings expected to be serviced by delivery trucks to provide off-street facilities for access and parking.	**Consistent.** The Project Site is approximately 13.07 gross acres (11.76 net acres) and includes ample internal vehicular circulation aisles. Deliveries for the temple and meetinghouse (e.g., supplies, maintenance) would occur entirely on-site within the designated parking and service

Circulation Element Topic	Applicable Goals and Policies	Consistency Analysis
		areas, preventing any obstruction of the public right-of-way.
	Policy 18: Provide and maintain landscaping on both sides and in the median of arterial streets within incorporated areas. In unincorporated areas, landscaping within road right-of-way may be allowed and shall be limited to low shrubs; blank irrigation conduit only will be provided within the median of arterial streets.	**Consistent.** The Project fronts Stockdale Highway, an arterial street. The Project would include landscaped gardens with lawns and ornamental planting beds, along the high-visibility frontage zones. The Project would maintain the landscaping, enhancing the arterial streetscape.
	Policy 19: Provide and maintain landscaping on both sides of collector streets. In unincorporated areas, landscaping within road right-of-way may be allowed and shall be limited to low shrubs.	**Consistent.** The Project fronts Jewetta Avenue, a collector street. Similar to the arterial frontage, the Project incorporates significant landscaping along the Jewetta Avenue setback.
	Policy 20: Prohibit parking on new arterials in incorporated areas. In unincorporated areas, prohibit parking when traffic studies warrant elimination. Allow parking on collectors and on residential streets.	**Consistent.** The Project provides 292 off-street parking stalls, which conforms with the BMC. Consequently, the Project does not rely on or propose any on-street parking along Stockdale Highway (Arterial), consistent with the prohibition.
	Policy 22: Design transportation improvements to minimize noise impacts on adjacent uses.	**Consistent.** The Project's access points are designed as "right-in-right-out" on the major roadways. This configuration would reduce vehicle deceleration/acceleration noise compared to a full-access intersection. Furthermore, by directing traffic to the Arterial and Collector, the design minimizes traffic noise intrusion into the local residential streets to the north.
	Policy 32: Reserve or acquire right-of-way for all future transportation facilities in conformance with the Circulation Plan Map.	**Consistent.** The Project is consistent with the Circulation Plan Map requirements for Stockdale Highway (Arterial) and Jewetta Avenue (Collector). As noted in the Project Description, the Project Site encompasses approximately 13.07 gross acres (11.76 net acres). This net developable acreage accounts for necessary public right-of-way dedications along these frontages to accommodate the planned roadway widths.
	Policy 34: Minimize the impacts of land use development on the circulation system. Review all development plans, rezoning applications, and proposed general plan amendments with respect to their impact on the transportation system, and require revisions as necessary.	**Consistent.** A TIA (**Appendix 3.8**) was prepared for the Project to evaluate potential impacts on the circulation system. The analysis determined that the Project's trip generation is low and would not result in significant impacts.
	Policy 35: Require new development and expansion of existing development in incorporated areas to fully provide for on-site transportation facilities, including streets, curbs, traffic control devices, etc. Within unincorporated areas, street improvements will be determined by County Ordinance.	**Consistent.** The Project would construct frontage improvements along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue. This would include the installation of new curb, where needed, on Jewetta Avenue and sidewalks where none currently exist, consistent with City standards for "on-site" transportation facilities.
	Policy 36: Prevent streets and intersections from degrading below Level of Service "C" where possible due to physical constraints (as defined in a Level of Service Standard) or when the existing Level of Service is below "C" prevent where possible further degradation due to new development or expansion of existing development with a three part mitigation program: adjacent right-of-way dedication, access improvements and/or an areawide impact fee. The area-wide	**Consistent.** Although LOS is not a CEQA significance criterion under Senate Bill 743, the Project's consistency with Policy 36 requires demonstrating the existing LOS conditions will not be degraded below LOS "C" due to Project-generated trips. Based on existing peak hour traffic volumes documented in the Traffic Impact Analysis (**Appendix 3.8**), Stockdale Highway carries approximately 1,391 vehicles during the PM peak hour across six travel lanes, representing a volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratio of approximately 0.23, which is consistent with LOS A. Jewetta

Circulation Element Topic	Applicable Goals and Policies	Consistency Analysis
	impact fee would be used where the physical changes for mitigation are not possible due to existing development and/or the mitigation measure is part of a larger project, such as freeways, which will be built at a later date.	Avenue carries approximately 801 vehicles during the PM peak hour across four travel lanes, representing a V/C ratio of approximately 0.27, which is also consistent with LOS A. Both roadways are currently operating well above the LOS "C" threshold (V/C less than or equal to 0.80). The addition of 71 AM peak hour trips and 139 PM peak hour trips represents a nominal increase of less than 10 percent of current volumes on either roadway and would not alter the existing LOS designation on either roadway. The 'right-in-right-out' driveway configuration further ensures that through traffic on both roadways is not disrupted by turning movements. Therefore, the Project is consistent with Policy 36.
	Policy 37: Require new development and expansion of existing development to pay for necessary access improvements, such as street extensions, widenings, turn lanes, signals, etc., as identified in the transportation impact report, as may be required for a project.	**Consistent.** The TIA evaluated the need for turn lanes and signals (see Impact TR-3, below) and determined that no off-site widenings or traffic signals are required. The Project would construct the necessary site access driveways and frontage improvements at its own cost, consistent with this policy.
	Policy 39: Require new development and expansion of existing development to pay or participate in its pro rata share of the costs of expansions in area-wide transportation facilities and services which it necessitates.	**Consistent.** The Project would construct all necessary frontage improvements along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, including right-of-way dedications, curbs, and sidewalks at its own cost, directly offsetting the infrastructure demand it generates. Should the City determine the Project is subject to the Transportation Impact Fee, the Project would comply; however, the Project's direct construction of these improvements satisfies the intent of this policy by ensuring the development bears the costs of the transportation facilities it necessitates.
Transit	**Goal 1:** Provide planning area residents with a choice of travel modes.	**Consistent.** The Project would enhance travel mode choices by constructing new sidewalks along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, closing a gap in the pedestrian network. These improvements support General Plan mobility objectives but are not relied upon to reduce VMT or mitigate transportation impacts under CEQA.
	Goal 2: Provide a street system and land development policies that support public transportation.	**Consistent.** The Project supports public transportation by developing a regional use along an existing transit corridor (GetBus Route 82). The Project would not impede bus operations or require the relocation of existing stops, ensuring continued support for the transit network.
	Goal 4: Reduce traffic congestion and parking requirements and improve air quality through improved transportation services.	**Consistent.** As detailed in the VMT analysis (see Impact TR-2, below), the Project would reduce regional VMT by approximately 718,209 miles annually by providing a local destination for current regional travelers. This reduction in vehicle miles directly supports the goal of reducing congestion and improving air quality.
	Policy 1: Consider transit service issues in the design of the arterial and collector street system.	**Consistent.** The Project would preserve existing GetBus Route 82 bus stops located along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue. The new sidewalk improvements would provide connectivity to these stops, facilitating safe pedestrian access for transit riders.
	Policy 2: Consider for bus turnouts along arterials and collectors where appropriate.	**Consistent.** The TIA evaluated the site frontage and determined that the existing transit configuration is adequate. The Project would maintain the existing curb alignment, which supports current transit operations, consistent with City engineering standards.

Circulation Element Topic	Applicable Goals and Policies	Consistency Analysis
	Policy 3: Consider transit service issues in the site plan review process.	**Consistent.** The Project is subject to Site Plan Review, which includes consideration of transit issues and Golden Empire Transit operations. The Project would not impact transit facilities or GetBus operations.
	Policy 4: Coordinate with GET and Kem Transit to locate bus stops as close as possible to the facilities they serve.	**Consistent.** The Project preserves the existing bus stops on Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue. By constructing internal pedestrian pathways that link the buildings directly to the public sidewalk and these stops, the Project ensures convenient access for transit users.
	Policy 9: Support efforts to promote ridesharing.	**Consistent.** The nature of the proposed use (religious worship) encourages ridesharing, as families and members often travel together to religious services. The Project supports this effort by providing an ample on-site parking area that facilitates carpooling efficiency.
Bikeways	**Goal 1:** Provide a circulation system which recognizes and responds to the needs of bicycle travel.	**Consistent.** The Project recognizes the needs of bicycle travel by preserving the existing Class II bike lanes along the Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue frontages. The site design ensures that site access points do not interrupt the continuity of these facilities.
	Goal 2: Provide a circulation system that minimizes cyclist/motorist conflicts.	**Consistent.** The Project would minimize cyclist/motorist conflicts by restricting driveway access to "right-in-right-out" movements. This configuration reduces the conflicts from turning movements across the bike lane compared to a full-access driveway, thereby enhancing safety for cyclists traveling along the arterial and collector.
	Goal 3: Provide a continuous easily-accessible bikeway system within the metro area.	**Consistent.** The Project maintains the existing continuous bike lanes on Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue. By not modifying the roadway width or curb alignment in a manner that would remove these lanes, the Project ensures the regional bikeway system remains continuous and accessible.
	Policy 1: Require bicycle facilities to be designed in accordance with the State Bikeway Design Criteria.	**Consistent.** The Project's frontage improvements, which include the preservation of the existing Class II bike lanes and the construction of new curbs, where needed, and sidewalks are designed in accordance with City standards, which incorporate State Bikeway Design Criteria.
	Policy 5: Consider bicycle safety when implementing improvements for automobile traffic operations.	**Consistent.** The Project prioritizes bicycle safety by limiting site access to "right-in-right-out" driveways. This configuration reduces the number of potential conflict points between vehicles entering/exiting the site and cyclists traveling in the adjacent bike lanes compared to full-access driveways.
	Policy 7: Consider bicycle safety when implementing improvements for automobile traffic operations.	**Consistent.** As a religious campus serving the community, the Project functions as an activity center. The Project would provide adequate on-site amenities, including bicycle parking facilities, consistent with City zoning requirements to encourage non-motorized travel to the site. The Project also prioritizes bicycle safety by limiting site access to "right-in-right-out" driveways.
	Policy 9: Require new subdivisions to provide bike lanes on collector and arterial streets in accordance with the Bikeway Master Plan.	**Consistent.** The Project fronts Stockdale Highway (Arterial) and Jewetta Avenue (Collector), both of which are designated routes in the Bikeway Master Plan. The Project does not conflict with this requirement by preserving the existing Class II bike lanes along the entire site frontage.

Circulation Element Topic	Applicable Goals and Policies	Consistency Analysis
	Policy 11: Construct bike lanes in conjunction with au street improvement projects that coincide with the Bikeway Master Plan.	**Consistent.** The Project involves street improvement work (frontage improvements). Consistent with this policy, the site design ensures that the existing bike lanes are protected and maintained during and after the construction of the adjacent sidewalks and driveways.
Parking	**Goal 1:** Provide an efficient parking system to respond to the needs of motorists.	**Consistent.** The Project would provide an efficient on-site parking system comprising 292 total stalls arranged in clear aisles. Motorists can easily locate and access parking for specific events without queuing on the public street.
	Goal 2: Satisfy parking requirements in all new developments (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.) through off-street facilities.	**Consistent.** The Project conforms to BMC parking requirements entirely through off-street facilities. With 292 spaces provided, the site accommodates the peak demand for both the temple and meetinghouse uses, ensuring no reliance on street parking.
	Goal 3: Preserve and enhance residential neighborhoods through parking policy.	**Consistent.** The Project would provide sufficient parking supply to handle peak attendance. By containing all visitor parking within the site boundaries, the Project prevents parking spillover into the nearby residential streets, thereby preserving the neighborhood's quality and accessibility.
	Policy 3: Ensure that adequate on-site parking supply and parking lot circulation is provided on all site plans in accordance with the adopted parking standards.	**Consistent.** The Project would provide a total of 292 off-street parking stalls (199 in Phase 1; 93 in Phase 2). This supply conforms to BMC requirements and accounts for the specific peak demand of the temple and meetinghouse uses. The site plan features defined drive aisles that allow for efficient internal circulation and emergency vehicle access, consistent with City standards.
	Policy 4: Discourage the intrusion of non-neighborhood parking in residential areas.	**Consistent.** The Project prevents intrusion into the adjacent residential neighborhood to the north by providing an on-site parking supply that fully accommodates peak attendance. Furthermore, site access is oriented exclusively toward the Arterial and Collector roadways. By containing all visitor parking and circulation within the site, the Project ensures that church-related traffic does not utilize local residential streets for parking.
	Policy 9: Locate short-term served parking to be convenient to the businesses served.	**Consistent.** The Project site plan locates accessible (ADA) parking stalls and visitor drop-off zones immediately adjacent to the main entrances of both the Temple and the Meetinghouse. This ensures that short-term loading and unloading, as well as access for those with mobility limitations, would be convenient and safe.
	Policy 10: Locate long-term parking on peripheral lands, accessible to arterial streets.	**Consistent.** The Project's parking lots would be on-site and accessible from Stockdale Highway (Arterial) and Jewetta Avenue (Collector). The layout allows for longer-duration parking to occur within the secure site boundaries without utilizing valuable street frontage or impacting the public right-of-way.

Source: City of Bakersfield, Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan, adopted December 11, 2002. Available online at: https://www.bakersfieldcity.us/271/Adopted-Planning-Documents, accessed December 10, 2025.

The following **Table 3.8-2, Project Consistency with Bakersfield Municipal Code**, provides an analysis of the Project's consistency with the applicable transportation-related chapters of the BMC, and Project compliance with City standards for traffic control, funding, parking, and street improvements.

Furthermore, in addition to the regulatory ordinances of the BMC, the Project was evaluated for consistency with other applicable alternative transportation for the City's transportation network. Specifically, the City's *Bicycle Transportation Plan*, the *Active Transportation Plan*, and the *Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Plan*.

City of Bakersfield Bicycle Transportation Plan and Active Transportation Plan. The Project was evaluated for consistency with the City's adopted active transportation network documents, including the *Bicycle Transportation Plan* and the *Active Transportation Plan*. The *Bicycle Transportation Plan* is the comprehensive guide for the development of the City's bikeway network. It designates specific classifications for roadways to ensure a continuous network. As identified in the plan, Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue are designated for Class II bicycle lanes (striped lanes for one-way travel).

Table 3.8-2
Project Consistency with Bakersfield Municipal Code

Applicable BMC Section	Consistency Analysis
Title 10, Vehicles and Traffic Chapter 10.12, Traffic Control Devices	**Consistent.** As detailed in the TIA, a peak hour signal warrant analysis (CA MUTCD Warrant 3) determined that Project traffic volumes (71 AM trips / 139 PM trips) do not meet the thresholds to justify a traffic signal (see Impact TR-3, below). Consequently, the Project proposes "right-in-right-out" access controls enforced by standard regulatory signage (stop signs and turn restriction signs), which is consistent with the engineering requirements of this chapter.
Title 15, Buildings and Construction Chapter 15.84, Transportation Impact Fee	**Consistent.** Should the City determine the Project is subject to the RTIF, the Project would comply. However, the Project's direct construction of all necessary frontage improvements along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, including right-of-way dedications, curbs, and sidewalks at its own cost satisfies the intent of this chapter by ensuring the development bears the cost of the transportation facilities it necessitates.
Title 17, Zoning Chapter 17.58, Parking and Loading Standards	**Consistent.** This chapter establishes minimum off-street parking ratios. The Project provides a total of 292 parking stalls (199 in Phase 1 and 93 in Phase 2), calculated to accommodate the demand of the proposed religious uses and conforms to parking requirements. The provision of standard, ADA accessible, and EV parking stalls complies with the design standards and ratios of the Zoning Ordinance.
Title 16, Subdivisions Chapter 16.28, Improvements	**Consistent.** Chapter 16.28 requires the installation of street improvements as a condition of parcel map approval. The Project would construct full frontage improvements along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, including new curbs, where needed, and sidewalks where none currently exist. These improvements close existing gaps in the pedestrian infrastructure and adhere to City engineering standards.
Title 12, Streets, Sidewalks and Public Places Chapters 12.16, Sidewalks, Curbs, and Driveways	**Consistent.** This chapter regulates the permitting and construction of driveways within the public right-of-way. The Project's access points are designed to minimize conflicts ("right-in-right-out" configuration) and would be constructed under a permit in accordance with City standard details for driveway approaches.

Source: City of Bakersfield, Bakersfield Municipal Code. Available online at: https://bakersfield.municipal.codes/, accessed December 18, 2025.

The Project is consistent with the Class II bicycle lanes designation because the site design preserves the existing Class II lanes along the entire site frontage. The Project's restriction of driveways to "right-in-right-out" configurations minimizes conflict points between vehicles and cyclists, supporting the plan's safety and connectivity goals. Furthermore, the Project supports the broader pedestrian safety goals of the *Active Transportation Plan* by constructing new sidewalks and ADA-compliant curb ramps, where needed, thereby improving connectivity to the existing transit stops and the surrounding neighborhood.

City of Bakersfield Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Plan. This plan focuses on reducing collisions and improving safety for non-motorized users. The Project supports the goals of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Plan by closing existing infrastructure gaps with pedestrian facilities. By constructing new sidewalks, ADA-compliant curb ramps, where needed, and maintaining adequate lighting along the Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue frontages, the Project provides the physical infrastructure necessary to separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic, thereby enhancing safety in accordance with the plan's objectives.

As discussed above, the Project's trips can be accommodated by the existing arterial and collector roadway system. Furthermore, the Project design incorporates required frontage improvements, preserves existing transit and bicycle facilities, and provides adequate off-street parking and access controls. As demonstrated in the consistency analysis above, the Project is consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan's Circulation Element, the requirements of the BMC, and the design standards of the City's active transportation plans. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, and impacts would be less than significant.

Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant.

Impact TR-2 **Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b).**

As noted above, while the City has not yet established quantitative VMT thresholds of significance, the analysis utilizes a project-specific VMT reduction methodology consistent with the *State CEQA Guidelines*.

The Project comprises two phases. Phase 1 includes the temple, and Phase 2 includes the meetinghouse, both of which serve specific assigned geographic memberships. This operational characteristic allows for a precise analysis of travel behavior changes.

Phase 1 (Temple): Currently, Church members in the Bakersfield region must travel to temples in the cities of Los Angeles, Redlands, or Fresno. The proposed Project would divert these long-distance regional trips to a local destination. The Project would serve nine specific "stakes" (geographic regional units). The analysis in the TIA evaluated the travel distances for members in each stake relative to the proposed Bakersfield location versus their current assigned temple.

As summarized in **Table 3.8-3, Annual VMT Reduction Summary**, members in eight of the nine stakes would experience shorter travel distances. The redistribution of these regional trips is calculated to result in a net reduction of approximately 718,209 annual VMT.

Table 3.8-3
Annual VMT Reduction Summary

Stake	Zip Code	Distance to Nearest Existing Temple (miles)	Distance to Bakersfield Temple (miles)	Reduction in Miles	Number of Visits per Year from Members	Annual VMT Reduced (miles)
Bakersfield East	93306	124	23.2	100.8	2,656	148,736
Bakersfield South	93304	105	7.1	97.9	2,636	143,369
Bakersfield	93308	124	24.1	99.9	2,579	143,135
Bakersfield West	93312	112	1.7	110.3	2,019	123,720
Lancaster East	93535	77.1	107	-29.9	957	(15,897)
Porterville	93257	78.8	53.5	25.3	2,676	37,613
Ridgecrest	93555	146	117	29	1,601	25,794
San Luis Obispo	93401	154	136	18	2,918	29,180
Santa Maria	93454	150	107	43	3,456	82,560
					Total	**718,209**

1. *The number of visits per year from members was provided by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This represents the number of visits to existing temples made each year by members in each stake. Temple visits are tracked by member, and this data is the actual number of visits made in this stake to an existing temple that are expected to transfer to the new temple.*
2. *The annual VMT reduced assumes that some visitors will travel together, with an average vehicle occupancy assumed of 1.8 people per vehicle.*
3. *Annual VMT reduced was calculated using the distance reduced, the number of member visits per year, and the average vehicle occupancy.*

Source: Fehr & Peers, Bakersfield LDS Church Project Traffic Impact Analysis, November 2025. ***Appendix 3.8****.*

The reduction in VMT shown above occurs across the broader region served by the assigned stakes and existing temples, encompassing portions of the City of Bakersfield and Kern County, as well as areas within the counties of Fresno, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara. For context, an annual reduction of 718,209 VMT represents approximately 0.01 percent of the total annual VMT generated in Kern County, based on data from Kern COG's 2022 RTP/SCS.

Phase 2 (Meetinghouse): The meetinghouse would serve three local wards. Wards encompass smaller geographic areas than stakes and, similar to stakes, provide a reasonable degree of certainty regarding the origins and destinations of trips to and from the meetinghouse site. However, unlike the stake-level analysis, the precise number of trips associated with the meetinghouse is not yet known. To inform the assessment, the TIA conducted a comparative analysis of ward members' home locations relative to the Project Site and their current meetinghouse. **Table 3.8-4, Trip Length Comparison Between Existing and Proposed Meetinghouses**, presents the travel distances from each ward to both the existing meetinghouse and the proposed meetinghouse.

Table 3.8-4
Trip Length Comparison Between Existing and Proposed Meetinghouses

Ward (Zip Code)	Distance to Nearest Existing Meetinghouse (miles)	Distance to Project Meetinghouse (miles)	Reduction in Miles
93312	5.5	4.8	0.7
93314	6.0	3.7	2.3
93311	2.5	3.5	-1.0
		Total	2.0

Source: Fehr & Peers, Bakersfield LDS Church Project Traffic Impact Analysis, November 2025. ***Appendix 3.8****.*

As shown, for two of the three wards, the proposed Project location is closer than the existing meetinghouses members currently attend. The only exception is the ward in zip code 93311, which is one mile closer to an existing meetinghouse than the Project. However, the overall effect of the local redistribution would result in a further net reduction in travel miles.

This quantitative reduction in VMT aligns with the qualitative goals of Kern COG's 2022 RTP/SCS. As detailed in **Table 3.6-1, Project Consistency with Kern COG 2022 RTP/SCS**, the Project supports efficient use of the existing transportation system by shortening trip lengths for assigned wards and stakes, thereby maximizing regional network efficiency and minimizing environmental effects associated with long-distance travel. In other words, the Project essentially replaces regional trips with local trips.

Therefore, as the Project would result in a net reduction in total VMT compared to existing conditions and is consistent with the regional VMT-reduction strategies of the RTP/SCS, it is consistent with the intent of SB 743 and *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.3(b). VMT impacts would thus be less than significant.

Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant.

Impact TR-3 **Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment).**

The Project proposes two driveway access points. Access from Jewetta Avenue is proposed on the west side of Jewetta Avenue, approximately 500 feet north of Stockdale Highway. Access from Stockdale Highway is proposed on the north side of Stockdale Highway, approximately 550 feet west of Jewetta Avenue from an existing curb cut.

A Peak Hour Signal Warrant analysis (CA MUTCD Warrant 3) was conducted for both driveways under "Existing Plus Project" and "Future Plus Project" conditions.

- Jewetta Avenue Driveway: Peak hour volume (10 AM trips / 23 PM trips) is well below the limiting value threshold of 100 vehicles per hour required to trigger a warrant.
- Stockdale Highway Driveway: Peak volumes (6 AM trips / 13 PM trips) also do not meet the warrant criteria.

Thus, no traffic signals are recommended or required.

Regarding geometric design and safety, the TIA specifies that the site plan proposes "right-in-right-out" configurations for the driveway accesses. This configuration restricts left-turn movements across the arterial (Stockdale Highway) and collector (Jewetta Avenue), thereby minimizing conflict points and reducing the potential for broadside collisions. The spacing of the driveways (approximately 500+ feet from

the intersection) exceeds standard corner clearance requirements, preventing queuing conflicts with the signalized intersection at Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue.

Therefore, impacts regarding increasing hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses would be less than significant.

Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant.

3.8.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The cumulative analysis was prepared in accordance with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15130. Cumulative impacts are defined as impacts created by the combination of the Project with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. Cumulatively considerable means that the incremental effects of the proposed 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.

This Draft EIR utilizes both the list approach and the projection approach to evaluate cumulative impacts. A localized list of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects is provided in **Table 3.0-1, Related Projects Table**. This list includes five projects within a one-mile radius of the Project Site, consisting primarily of commercial and residential developments, as identified by the City in its related projects list provided for the EIR. A one-mile radius is appropriate for this transportation analysis for two reasons. First, the driveway-level access and signal warrant analysis (Impact TR-3) evaluates conditions at the two Project driveways only; projects located beyond one mile would not generate meaningful turning movement volumes at those specific locations and their inclusion would not alter the analysis or its conclusions. Second, cumulative regional VMT growth is separately and comprehensively addressed through the Kern COG's 2022 RTP/SCS regional forecast, which captures projected growth across all of Kern County through 2046 and is not limited by a geographic radius. Together, these two approaches provide a complete cumulative transportation analysis consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15130. Regional forecast projections from Kern COG's 2022 RTP/SCS are used to assess regional growth. As shown

in **Table 3.0-2, Cumulative Growth Projections for the City of Bakersfield**, the City is projected to grow by approximately 174,000 residents and 28,000 jobs between 2020 and 2046.

The City and the surrounding region are experiencing growth as indicated by the related projects listed in **Table 3.0-1** and the long-term regional forecasts in **Table 3.0-2**. This anticipated growth places increased demand on the multi-modal transportation network, potentially resulting in cumulative pressures on roadway capacity, active transportation facilities, and transit services. However, a significant cumulative impact would typically arise only if the combined effect of these projects resulted in gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle network, physically precluded the implementation of planned improvements, or generated VMT in excess of regional efficiency goals.

Regarding the performance of the circulation system, the Project actively supports the infrastructure needs of the growing corridor rather than conflicting with them. The Project's incremental contribution involves constructing frontage improvements, including new sidewalks along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue where none currently exist. This improvement closes a gap in the pedestrian network, facilitating connectivity to adjacent uses. Furthermore, the Project maintains existing Class II bike lanes and transit stops, ensuring that the cumulative development of the area does not degrade multi-modal access. Because the Project brings the site into compliance with City standards and enhances connectivity in a developing corridor, its contribution supports the cumulative circulation system. Therefore, the Project's contribution to potential cumulative conflicts with transportation plans or policies is less than cumulatively considerable.

Regional VMT impacts are cumulative as they are measured against regional efficiency and climate goals. Kern COG's 2022 RTP/SCS forecasts a population increase of approximately 29 percent by 2046. Without efficient land use planning, this general growth could result in significant cumulative VMT increases. However, the Project functions as a regional VMT reduction land use. As established in the Project-specific analysis, the Project would serve members who currently travel to Los Angeles, Redlands, or Fresno. By redirecting these existing long-distance trips to a local destination, the Project reduces regional travel by approximately 718,209 annual VMT. This reduction aligns with the efficiency and sustainability goals of the RTP/SCS, which seek to maximize the efficiency of the existing transportation system. Even if the region experiences a significant cumulative increase in VMT due to general population growth, the Project's specific incremental effect is a net reduction in VMT. Consequently, the Project would not contribute to a significant cumulative VMT impact.

With respect to transportation safety and hazards, cumulative impacts could arise if traffic generated by the Project, combined with traffic from the five related projects and general regional growth, created unsafe conditions at site access points or adjacent intersections. The TIA evaluated "Future Plus Project"

conditions, which specifically incorporate ambient traffic growth and specific development in the vicinity to account for this cumulative setting. Under these cumulative conditions, the peak hour volumes at both the Jewetta Avenue and Stockdale Highway access points remain well below the thresholds required to justify a traffic signal. The Project uses "right-in-right-out" driveway configurations that minimize conflict points with the increasing cumulative traffic volumes on the arterial roadway network. Because the driveway designs accommodate the cumulative traffic volumes without creating queuing hazards or meeting signal warrants, the Project does not contribute to a significant cumulative safety hazard.

Based on the analysis of circulation system consistency, regional VMT efficiency, and geometric safety under future conditions, the Project's incremental contribution to cumulative transportation impacts is less than cumulatively considerable.

3.8.5 REFERENCES

City of Bakersfield. *Active Transportation Plan*. City of Bakersfield Public Works Department, 2025. Available online at: https://www.bakersfieldcity.us/357/Traffic-Engineering. Accessed December 18, 2025.

City of Bakersfield. *Bakersfield Municipal Code*, 2025. Accessed December 2025. Available online at: https://bakersfield.municipal.codes/. Accessed December 18, 2025.

City of Bakersfield, Development Services Department. *Bicycle Transportation Plan*, Adopted November 20, 2013. Available online at: https://www.kerncog.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/2013_BakersfieldBikePlan.pdf. Accessed December 18, 2025.

City of Bakersfield. *Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan*. Adopted December 11, 2002. Available online at: https://www.bakersfieldcity.us/271/Adopted-Planning-Documents. Accessed December 10, 2025.

Fehr & Peers. *Bakersfield LDS Church Project Traffic Impact Analysis.* Prepared for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. November 2025. See **Appendix 3.8**.

Kern Council of Governments. *2022 Kern County Regional Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy*. Adopted July 21, 2022. Available online at: https://www.kerncog.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022_RTP.pdf. Accessed November 5, 2025.

4.0 EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

INTRODUCTION

As required by Section 15128 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, an EIR shall contain a brief discussion stating the reasons why various possible significant effects of a project were determined not significant and are, therefore, not discussed in detail in the EIR. In accordance with the *State CEQA Guidelines*, this section discusses the environmental issue areas where impacts were found not to be significant. These determinations are based on the Appendix G thresholds of the *State CEQA Guidelines* and the site-specific characteristics of the proposed Project, as documented in the Initial Study prepared for the Project (**Appendix 1.0-2)** and that was circulated for public review from September 17, 2025, to October 20, 2025, with the Notice of Preparation.

4.1 AESTHETICS

The Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project does not conflict with any applicable vista protection standards, scenic resource protection requirements, or design criteria of federal, state, or local agencies. The Project Site is located within an area having slopes of 0 to 2 percent in any direction, and the surrounding terrain is generally flat and urbanized. The Project Site and its immediate vicinity are not regarded or designated within the City's General Plan as visually important or "scenic." While the proposed development would introduce new buildings, landscaping, and site improvements consistent with the existing urban character of the area, views from public vantage points are limited by commercial, institutional, and residential development, with no designated scenic vistas or protected view corridors in the Project vicinity. While the temple steeple (at 123 feet 6 inches) and the meetinghouse steeple (at 66 feet 4 inches) would be taller than surrounding structures, it would not block or alter any recognized scenic vista, as none are visible on or near the site. Therefore, because the Project Site is not located within or adjacent to a designated scenic vista and does not obstruct views of officially recognized scenic resources, the Project impacts would be less than significant.

The Project would not substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.

No Impact. The Project Site is not located adjacent to or near any officially designated or potentially eligible scenic highways to be listed on the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) State Scenic

Highway System.[1] The nearest section of highway eligible for state scenic highway designation is State Route 14, located in Kern County more than 60 miles to the east. The nearest designated segment is State Route 33 in Ventura County through the Los Padres National Forest, which is well outside the viewshed of the Project Site. As a result, the Project would not introduce new visual elements that could damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway. No impact would occur.

4.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

The Project would not 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.

No Impact. According to the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), the Project Site is designated as "Urban and Built-Up Land" and as such does not contain any land classified as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance.[2] Therefore, implementation of the Project would have no impact on existing agricultural resources and would not result in the conversion of agricultural farmland.

The Project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.

No Impact. The Project Site is not zoned for agricultural use nor are there agricultural activities occurring on-site. Moreover, neither the Project Site nor adjacent parcels are enrolled in a Williamson Act contract.[3] As such, the Project would not conflict with existing agricultural zoning or a Williamson Act contract, and no impact would occur. Therefore, Project implementation would have no impact on existing agricultural resources or Williamson Act contract land.

The Project would not 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)).

No Impact. The City does not contain any forest land (as defined by PRC § 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by PRC § 4526), or timberland zoned for Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code §

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1 California Department of Transportation, "California State Scenic Highways." Available online at: https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways, accessed August 27, 2025.

2 California Department of Conservation, "California Important Farmland Finder," Available online at: https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/ciff/, accessed October 16, 2025.

3 California Department of Conservation, Williamson Act Program. Available online at: https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/lca, accessed on October 16, 2025.

51104(g)).[4] Neither the Project Site nor the surrounding parcels contain forest land as defined by the Public Resources Code. Therefore, the Project would have no impact on the rezoning of forest land or timberland.

The Project would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact. The Project involves the development of a vacant, graded parcel within an existing urban setting, surrounded by urban uses with a land use appropriate to the underlying zoning and General Plan designation. As established above, no forest land as defined by Public Resources Code Section 12220(g) exists on the Project Site or within the surrounding urbanized area. Because no forest land is present, the Project cannot result in its loss or conversion to non-forest use. Thus, the Project would have no impact on forest land or forestry resources.

The Project would not 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.

No Impact. The Project would have no impact to the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use; conflict with existing agricultural zoning or Williamson Act contracts; result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; or other conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use.

4.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The Project would not 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.

Less Than Significant Impact. A review of the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI),[5] CDFW Lands Viewer,[6] and site reconnaissance indicates that the Project Site consists of vacant, graded land with sparse vegetation and no evidence of wetlands, marshes, vernal pools, riparian habitat, or other waters subject to state or federal jurisdiction. The Project Site is relatively flat, with slopes of 0 to 2 percent, and has been previously disturbed by grading and surrounding urban development. There are no hydrologic features

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4 California Department of Fish and Wildlife, "California Forests and Timberlands." Available online at: https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=109919, accessed October 16, 2025.

5 United States Fish & Wildlife Service, "National Wetlands Inventory." Available online at: https://www.fws.gov/program/national-wetlands-inventory, accessed September 16, 2025.

6 California Department of Fish & Wildlife, CDFW Lands Viewer. Available online at: https://apps.wildlife.ca.gov/lands/, accessed September 16, 2025.

on the Project Site that would support wetland conditions, and no blue-line streams or wetland features are mapped within the Project boundaries.

The nearest surface waters are the Cross Valley Canal and the Kern River, which are riverine habitats located approximately 0.2 miles south of the site, separated from the project area by existing development and roadways. Project construction and operation would not involve direct removal, filling, or hydrological alteration of any state or federally protected wetlands. Since no state or federally protected wetlands occur on or adjacent to the Project Site, and the Project would not directly or indirectly affect such resources, there would be no substantial adverse effect on wetlands. Therefore, the impacts would be less than significant impact.

The Project would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other applicable habitat conservation plan.

No Impact. The Project Site is not located within the boundaries of any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other habitat conservation plan area. As such, the Project would not conflict with the provisions of any such plan. Therefore, no impact would occur.

4.4 ENERGY

The Project would not result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation.

Less Than Significant Impact. Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) provides electricity services to most of Kern County, including the City. Statewide electric consumption in 2024 was estimated by the California Energy Commission (CEC) to be 282,783 gigawatt hours (GWh), with Kern County responsible for consuming approximately 15,273 GWh.[7] The statewide natural gas consumption in 2024 was estimated by the CEC to be 11,104 millions of therms (MMThm), with Kern County responsible for consuming approximately 1,368 MMThm.[8]

Neither federal nor state law nor the *State CEQA Guidelines* establishes thresholds that define when energy consumption is considered wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary. In general, compliance with CCR Title

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7 California Energy Commission, "Electricity Consumption.". Available online at: https://www.energy.ca.gov/data-reports/energy-almanac/california-electricity-data/california-energy-consumption-dashboards-0, accessed November 19, 2025.

8 California Energy Commission, "Natural Gas Consumption.". Available online at: https://www.energy.ca.gov/data-reports/energy-almanac/california-electricity-data/california-energy-consumption-dashboards-1, accessed November 19, 2025.

24 Energy Efficiency Standards would result in energy-efficient buildings. The proposed Project is anticipated to comply with these standards.

Construction

Construction activities associated with the Project would consume electricity on a limited basis to power lighting, electrical equipment, and supply and convey water for dust control. Electricity would be supplied to the Project Site from existing electrical lines. The electricity demand at any given time would vary throughout the construction period based on the construction activities being performed and would cease upon completion of construction. Electricity use from construction would be short-term, limited to working hours, used for necessary construction-related activities, and represent a small fraction of the Project's annual operational electricity.

Typically, construction activities do not involve the consumption of natural gas. As such, natural gas would not be supplied to support Project construction activities, and there would be no expected demand generated by construction of the Project. If natural gas is used during construction, it would be in limited amounts and on a temporary basis, and would specifically be used to replace or offset diesel-fueled equipment and, as such, would not result in substantial on-going demand.

Construction activities associated with the Project would use gasoline and/or diesel-powered equipment and/or vehicles for hauling activities. However, the Project Applicant would use fuel-efficient equipment consistent with State and federal regulations. Furthermore, the Project would comply with all California Code of Regulations, including Title 13, sections 2449(d)(3) and 2485, which minimizes the idling time of construction equipment either by shutting it off when not in use or by reducing the time of idling to no more than five minutes.

Construction equipment would comply with applicable standards, and construction activities and associated fuel consumption and energy use would be temporary and typical of construction sites. It is also reasonable to assume contractors would avoid wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary fuel consumption during construction to reduce construction costs. Therefore, construction activities associated with the Project would not involve the inefficient, wasteful, and unnecessary use of energy during construction, and the construction-phase impact related to energy consumption would be less than significant.

Operational

The Project involves the construction of a religious campus. This development would result in energy consumption for electricity and the conveyance of water, wastewater, and solid waste disposal. The Project would be built to be powered by a combination of electricity and natural gas at the time of initial

construction, utilizing natural gas for space heating and water heating and electricity for lighting, cooling, and plug loads; the building design also includes infrastructure to accommodate a future optional transition to fully electric operations. The Project would be required to comply with the State's Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 24, Part 6), which requires newly constructed buildings to meet energy performance standards set by the Energy Commission to reduce the wasteful, uneconomic, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy, and to enhance the outdoor and indoor environmental quality. In addition, the Project would be required to comply with the mandatory requirements set forth in the California Green Building Standards Code (CBSC) related to energy efficiency, water efficiency and conservation, and material conservation and resource efficiency for new buildings.

Energy would also be consumed as a result of vehicle trips. Thus, operation associated with implementation of the Project would result in an increase in the consumption of petroleum-based fuels related to vehicular travel to and from the Project Site. The majority of vehicles would consist of light-duty automobiles and light-duty trucks, which are subject to state fuel efficiency standards, such as the Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) and Low-Emission Vehicle Program Standards. The Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS), in part, aims to reduce fuel consumption, and providers of transportation fuels must demonstrate that the mix of fuels they supply for use in California meets the LCFS carbon intensity standards for each annual compliance period.

In conclusion, increased energy demand associated with construction activities associated with the Project would be temporary and typical of construction projects and would not result in wasteful use of energy resources. Although operational energy use could increase overall, newly constructed uses would be energy efficient and be in conformance with the latest version of California's Building Energy Efficiency Standards and Green Building Standards Code. Similarly, vehicular travel associated with the proposed project's operations would rely upon fuel subject to state fuel efficiency standards. Thus, impacts from the Project's construction and operation related to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources would be less than significant.

The Project would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project would be designed in a manner that is consistent with relevant energy conservation plans designed to encourage development that results in the efficient use of energy resources. The City has adopted a Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) that identifies strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and advance energy efficiency and renewable energy generation.[9] Relevant

9 City of Bakersfield, *Priority Climate Action Plan,* 2024. Available online at: https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-03/city-of-bakersfield-pcap.pdf, accessed October 16, 2025.

Building + Energy measures in the PCAP include promoting high-performance building envelopes that exceed state energy code requirements; encouraging electrification of new buildings; increasing on-site solar generation; incentivizing advanced energy management systems; and pairing energy upgrades with water-efficiency improvements.

The Project would involve the phased development of a religious campus. The proposed structures would be constructed of high-quality, non-combustible materials and designed to comply with, and potentially exceed, the current California Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24, Part 6) and California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen). The Project incorporates energy-efficient design features such as high-performance building envelopes, LED lighting with time-based dimming, drought-tolerant landscaping with efficient irrigation, and modern HVAC systems. These measures are consistent with the PCAP's emphasis on reducing building energy demand and promoting efficient operation.

As discussed above, the Project would comply with the most current CALGreen Building Code which ensures the use of energy-efficient features for the Project. The Project would be consistent with applicable state energy regulations and would advance multiple PCAP Building + Energy strategies. Thus, the Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency, and its impacts related to state or local energy plan would be less than significant.

4.5 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The Project would not 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.**

Less Than Significant Impact. The California Geological Survey (CGS) designates Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones to regulate development across active faults (surface displacement within the past 11,000 years). According to the most recent CGS maps (Special Publication 42), no Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone traverses the Project Site.[10] The nearest mapped active fault, the Kern Front Fault, is approximately 11.8 miles northeast. As such, the site is not subject to surface fault rupture hazards. While the region is seismically active and could experience strong ground shaking, the Project would be designed and constructed in compliance with the California Building Standards Code, which includes seismic safety

10 California Geological Survey, "CGS Seismic Hazards Program: Alquist-Priolo Fault Hazard Zones." Available online at: https://maps-cnra-cadoc.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/cadoc::cgs-seismic-hazards-program-alquist-priolo-fault-hazard-zones/explore?location=36.281441%2C-119.787888%2C5.42, accessed October 16, 2025

provisions. Therefore, the Project would not directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects from rupture of a known earthquake fault, and impacts would be less than significant.

ii. Strong seismic ground shaking.

Less Than Significant Impact. The City, like most of California, is located in a seismically active region where moderate to strong earthquakes can occur on numerous regional faults. The intensity of ground shaking at the Project Site during a seismic event would depend on factors such as earthquake magnitude, distance from the epicenter, subsurface conditions, and topography. According to the CGS's Seismic Hazard Zone maps, the Project Site is not within a designated seismic hazard zone for amplified shaking, and the nearest active fault is located more than 10 miles away.[11] While strong ground shaking could occur during a major regional earthquake, the Project would be designed and constructed in compliance with the California Building Standards Code, which includes seismic safety provisions intended to protect public safety and reduce the risk of structural damage. Therefore, the Project would not expose people or structures to substantial adverse effects from strong seismic ground shaking, and impacts would be less than significant

iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction.

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project would not directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects related to seismic ground failure, including liquefaction. The Project Site is not within a CGS Seismic Hazard Zone for liquefaction.[12] Additionally, the City's General Plan identifies areas in the southeast of the City with a potential risk of liquefaction, away from the Project Site. Final design will implement all recommendations of the geotechnical report and comply with the California Building Code and ASCE 7, including seismic site classification, ground-motion parameters, and any ground improvement if warranted. The Project does not include dewatering or other activities expected to raise shallow groundwater levels. Accordingly, the Project would not expose people or structures to significant risk of loss, injury, or death from seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction. Thus, no impact would occur.

iv. Landslides.

No Impact. Landslides involve the downslope movement of soil and/or rock under the influence of gravity, often triggered by factors such as steep slopes, weak materials, elevated groundwater, or seismic shaking.

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11 California Geological Survey, "California Seismic Hazards Zones." Available online at: https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/shma, accessed October 16, 2025.

12 California Geologic Survey, "EQ Zapp: California Earthquake Hazards Zone Application," Available online at: https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/geohazards/eq-zapp, accessed October 16, 2025.

According to the CGS, the Project Site is not located within a mapped landslide hazard zone.[13] The Project Site and surrounding area are relatively flat and urbanized, with no significant natural or engineered slopes that could pose a landslide risk. The Project would not involve grading or construction on steep slopes, and no conditions exist on or adjacent to the Project Site that could result in slope instability. Therefore, the Project would not directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving landslides, and no impact would occur.

The Project would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil.

Less Than Significant Impact. Construction activities for both phases, including grading, utility installation, and paving, could temporarily expose soils to wind or water erosion during site preparation. The Project is required to comply with the State Water Resources Control Board's Construction General Permit as part of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), which requires preparation and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) with erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMPs), e.g., silt fencing, fiber rolls, stabilized construction entrances. The Project is also subject to the City's grading ordinance and BMC provisions for erosion control. Given the Project Site's relatively flat topography and urban surroundings, the potential for significant erosion is low. These regulatory compliance measures would minimize erosion during construction, and disturbed areas would be stabilized post-construction through paving, landscaping with drought-tolerant species, and other permanent improvements. As such, the Project would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil, and impacts would be less than significant.

The Project would not 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.

Less than Significant Impact. The Project Site is graded, relatively flat, and located in an urbanized area of the City. As discussed above, according to the CGS, the Project Site is not within a mapped liquefaction hazard zone, landslide zone, or other unstable geologic unit. No oil or gas extraction occurs on or adjacent to the Project Site.

Lateral spreading is typically associated with liquefaction during seismic events; because the site is not in a liquefaction zone and is underlain by compacted soils, the potential for lateral spreading is negligible. Subsidence in the Bakersfield area is generally associated with long-term deep groundwater or petroleum withdrawal; no such activities are present at or near the Project Site. A substantial amount of subsidence

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13 California Geologic Survey, "EQ Zapp: California Earthquake Hazards Zone Application," Available online at: https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/geohazards/eq-zapp, accessed October 16, 2025.

has occurred in agricultural zones east and southeast of the City and along major conveyance systems like the Friant-Kern Canal and California Aqueduct, away from the Project Site. Within the developed city, subsidence rates are much lower, although subsidence can still occur. The Project Site's urban setting, existing infrastructure, and absence of groundwater pumping on-site make the risk of subsidence low. The Project would not exacerbate subsidence in the region. The Project would be designed and constructed in compliance with the California Building Code, which includes seismic design standards to address potential ground shaking and settlement.

Given the absence of unstable geologic units or soils on the Project Site, the lack of nearby slopes or liquefaction-prone areas, and required adherence to applicable state and local building regulations, the Project would not be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the Project, in a manner that could result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

The Project would not be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994) (California Building Code), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property.

Less Than Significant Impact. Per the Uniform Building Code (UBC), a site-specific geotechnical investigation for the Project would include laboratory testing of near-surface soils in accordance with UBC Test Standard 18-1 (1994). Expansion Index values and expansion potential are based on UBC Table 18-1-B. The Project is likewise subject to the City's permitting and plan-check requirements for Site Plan Review, grading permit, and building permit including geotechnical investigation/soils report as needed to address expansive soils, grading, drainage, or other site-specific conditions.

The Project Site is situated on the Kern River alluvial fan within an urbanized area of the City where soils are predominantly Wasco sandy loam, which does not have a high Expansion Index value.[14] Additionally, no evidence of landslides, lateral spreading, or substantial regional subsidence is present at or adjacent to the Project Site. Therefore, impacts regarding expansive soil would be less than significant.

The Project would not 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. The Project Site is located in an urbanized area of the City with existing municipal sewer infrastructure in adjacent roadways. Wastewater generated by the Project would be conveyed via new on-site laterals to the City's sanitary sewer system, operated in coordination with the Bakersfield Water

14 United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service, "Web Soil Survey." Available online at: https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/, accessed October 16, 2025.

Department and Kern County Public Works. The Project would not use septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems; therefore, soil characteristics related to septic system suitability are not applicable. Because the Project would connect to existing sewer facilities with adequate capacity, no new or expanded off-site wastewater treatment facilities are required. No impact would occur.

4.6 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The Project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.

Less Than Significant Impact. Construction of the Project would involve the short-term use of common hazardous materials such as fuels, lubricants, paints, solvents, and adhesives. These materials would be stored, handled, transported, and disposed of in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations, including those enforced by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Environmental Protection Agency, and Bakersfield Fire Department. Compliance with these requirements would minimize the potential for accidental release. During operation, hazardous materials would be limited to small quantities of cleaning products, landscape maintenance chemicals, and similar consumer-grade products. No acutely hazardous materials, as defined by CalEPA, would be used or stored on site in reportable quantities. If an accidental release occurs during construction or operation, the contractor/operator would implement spill containment and cleanup measures and notify the appropriate agencies in accordance with regulatory requirements. Thus, given the limited types and quantities of hazardous materials involved, and mandatory compliance with applicable regulations, the Project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

The Project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.

Less Than Significant Impact. Construction of the Project would involve the short-term use of hazardous substances typical of construction sites, such as petroleum-based fuels, lubricants, and hydraulic fluids for equipment. These materials would be stored, handled, and used in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations, including those enforced by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Environmental Protection Agency, Kern County Environmental Health Services, and the City of Bakersfield. Contractors would implement standard spill prevention and response measures, including secondary containment for fuel storage, immediate cleanup of any releases, and required agency notifications. During operation, hazardous materials use would be limited to small quantities of

consumer-grade cleaning products, landscaping chemicals, and fuel for maintenance equipment. These materials would be used and stored in compliance with manufacturer instructions and applicable regulations, minimizing the potential for accidental release.

The Project Site is not listed as a hazardous materials site on databases maintained by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control's EnviroStor database,[15] the State Water Resources Control Board's GeoTracker database,[16] and the current "Cortese" list.[17] A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment prepared by Terracon Consultants, Inc., in June 2025 identified no recognized environmental conditions, controlled recognized environmental conditions, or historical recognized environmental conditions on the site.[18] Thus, given the limited types and quantities of hazardous materials involved, the absence of known contamination, and mandatory compliance with applicable regulations, the Project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

The Project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.

Less Than Significant Impact. Bakersfield Christian High School, located at 12775 Stockdale Highway, is located within one-quarter mile of the Project Site. Construction and operation of the Project would involve the use of small quantities of hazardous materials typical of building activities and ongoing maintenance (e.g., fuels, lubricants, cleaning products). These materials would be stored, handled, and disposed of in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations, including those enforced by the CalEPA, Department of Toxic Substances Control, Kern County Environmental Health Services, and Bakersfield Fire Department. Given the minimal quantities involved, adherence to regulatory requirements, and standard best management practices for spill prevention and cleanup, the Project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances,

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15 California Department of Toxic Substances Control, EnviroStor. Available online at: https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/map/?myaddress=stockdale+and+jewetta, accessed October 16, 2025.

16 State Water Resources Control Board, GeoTracker. Available online at https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/map/?CMD=runreport&myaddress=stockdale+and+jewetta+ave, accessed October 16, 2025.

17 California Department of Toxic Substances Control, Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List (Cortese). Available online at: https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/search?CMD=search&city=Bakersfield&zip=&county=&case_number=&business_name=&FEDERAL_SUPERFUND=True&STATE_RESPONSE=True&VOLUNTARY_CLEANUP=True&SCHOOL_CLEANUP=True&CORRECTIVE_ACTION=True&tiered_permit=True&evaluation=True&cvci=True&operating=True&post_closure=True&non_operating=True&inspections=True&inspectionsother=True, accessed October 16, 2025

18 Terracon, *Bakersfield Temple Phase I Environmental Site Assessment*, June 2025. See **Appendix A** to the Initial Study in **Appendix 1.0-2** to this Draft EIR.

or waste in a manner that would pose a significant risk to nearby schools. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

The Project would not 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.

No Impact. Government Code Section 65962.5, commonly referred to as the "Cortese List," requires the CalEPA to compile and annually update a list of hazardous waste sites and properties. Data sources include the Department of Toxic Substances Control's EnviroStor database, the State Water Resources Control Board's GeoTracker database, and other agency records. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment for the Project was prepared by Terracon Consultants, Inc., in June 2025 (available in Appendix A to the Initial Study in **Appendix 1.0-2** to this Draft EIR). As discussed above, the Project Site is not included on any list of these hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. The site is currently vacant, graded, and has no history of uses that would have generated or stored hazardous materials in reportable quantities. Because the Project Site is not listed on the Cortese List or any related database, development of the proposed Project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment under this threshold. Therefore, no impact would occur.

The Project is not located within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, nor would the Project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area.

No Impact. The Project Site is not located within the boundaries of any Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. The nearest public use airport is Bakersfield Municipal Airport, located approximately eight miles southeast of the Project Site, well outside the 2-mile screening distance. The Project Site is also outside the 65 dB CNEL noise contour for this airport and is not within any designated airport safety zones. No private airstrips are located within two miles of the Project Site. Therefore, implementation of the Project would not result in a safety hazard or expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels. Therefore, no impact would occur.

The Project would not impair the implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

Less Than Significant Impact. The approach to evacuations in the City and Kern County is a dynamic zone-based system, which is a more modern and effective method as it allows for a targeted response to

the specific location of an emergency instead of pre-determined evacuation routes.[19] The Project would not interfere with the real-time monitoring and evacuation coordination system used by the City and Kern County. Moreover, as part of the City's standard development review process, the Bakersfield Police Department and Bakersfield Fire Department review project plans prior to construction to ensure that safety considerations and emergency access are incorporated into the design and maintained. The Project does not anticipate closure of any public or private streets and would use existing on-site driveways for emergency vehicle access. Construction activities would be confined to the Project Site and would include provisions for detour signage, trained flaggers, and staging areas for emergency vehicles, as required by the City's police and fire agencies, should they be needed. Therefore, the Project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

The Project would not expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.

No Impact. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the Project Site is located in a Local Responsibility Area and is not within a designated Fire Hazard Severity Zone.[20] The Project Site is in an urbanized area, surrounded by residential, commercial, religious institutional, and manicured park, and does not contain wildland vegetation or steep terrain that would contribute to wildfire risk. The Bakersfield Fire Department provides fire protection services to the area. Implementation of the Project would not expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. Therefore, no impact would occur.

4.7 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

The Project would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality.

Less Than Significant Impact. Construction of the Project would involve grading, utility installation, and paving that could temporarily increase erosion and sedimentation in stormwater runoff. The Project would be subject to the State Water Resources Control Board's Construction General Permit (Order 2009-0009-DWQ, as amended), which requires preparation and implementation of a SWPPP with erosion and sediment control BMPs such as silt fencing, fiber rolls, stabilized construction entrances, and

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19 Kern County Fire Department, KCFD News, "A New Evacuation Management Tool Activated in Kern County," August 18, 2023, Available online: https://kerncountyfire.org/15143/a-new-evacuation-management-tool-activated-in-kern-county/, accessed October 16, 2025.

20 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, "Fire Hazard Severity Zones," 2025. Available online at: https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/5065c998b4b0462f9ec3c6c226c610a9, accessed October 16, 2025.

inlet protection. The Project must also comply with the City's NPDES MS4 Permit (No. CA00883399), and Kern County Public Works post-construction BMP requirements. During operation, potential stormwater pollutants would be limited to those associated with parking areas, landscaped areas, and building maintenance (e.g., oils, grease, fertilizers, pesticides). These would be addressed through site design features, source control measures, and treatment controls consistent with the City's MS4 Permit and Kern County standards. The Project Site is graded and relatively flat, reducing erosion potential, and no septic systems or direct discharges to groundwater are proposed. Thus, with compliance with applicable state and local regulatory requirements and implementation of appropriate construction and post-construction BMPs, the Project would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, nor substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

The Project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin.

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed Project would be served by the City's municipal water system, which obtains water from a combination of surface water and groundwater sources overseen by the Kern River Groundwater Sustainability Agency. The Project is expected to use approximately 16.6 to 17.1 acre-feet of water each year based on the landscape design and building program. Most of this demand would come from irrigating the Project Site's 256,674 square feet of landscaped areas, which are designed with drought-tolerant plants and efficient irrigation systems. Indoor water use for the temple and meetinghouse would be minimal by comparison, thanks to efficient fixtures and the intermittent nature of worship and assembly activities. Relative to the California Water Service – Bakersfield District's 2020 actual demand of about 66,000 acre-feet, the Project would account for roughly 0.026 percent of total demand. Compared to the District's projected 2045 demand of approximately 78,000 to 80,000 acre-feet, the Project's share would remain around 0.022 percent. Thus, the Project's contribution to Citywide water demand would be negligible in scale within existing entitlements and allocations. No on-site wells are proposed by the Project.

Project Site development would increase impervious surfaces; however, post-construction stormwater BMPs, including landscaped areas, would promote on-site percolation where feasible. The Project Site is not located within a designated groundwater recharge area, and underlying Wasco sandy loam soil type has moderate infiltration capacity. Thus, given the small incremental demand relative to available supplies, absence of direct groundwater extraction, and incorporation of infiltration BMPs, the Project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere with recharge in a manner that would impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

The Project would not 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.

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project Site is graded, relatively flat, and located in an urbanized area. There are no natural streams or rivers on or adjacent to the Project Site; therefore, the Project would not alter the course of a stream or river. Construction activities such as grading, trenching, and excavation would temporarily disturb soils, making them susceptible to erosion from wind or stormwater runoff. However, as the Project would disturb more than one acre, it must obtain coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board's Construction General Permit (NPDES), which requires preparation and implementation of a SWPPP. The SWPPP would include erosion and sediment control BMPs such as silt fencing, fiber rolls, stabilized construction entrances, and inlet protection. The Project would also comply with the City's grading and stormwater requirements and Kern County Public Works post-construction BMP standards to manage runoff from new impervious surfaces. Given the Project Site's flat topography, absence of natural drainages, and required implementation of construction and post-construction BMPs, the Project would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite.

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project Site is graded, relatively flat, and located in an urbanized area of the City. There are no natural streams or rivers on or adjacent to the Project Site; therefore, the Project would not alter the course of a stream or river. Development would introduce new impervious surfaces; however, site drainage would be designed to direct runoff to the City's storm drain system in compliance with the City's stormwater management requirements and Kern County Public Works post-construction BMP standards. Because the Project would disturb more than one acre, it must obtain coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board's Construction General Permit (NPDES), which requires preparation and implementation of a SWPPP. The SWPPP would include BMPs to control the rate and volume of runoff during construction. Post-construction, the Project would incorporate detention, infiltration, or other approved measures to ensure that peak runoff rates do not exceed pre-Project conditions. Moreover, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Map Service Center, the Project Site is outside the 100-year flood hazard area.[21] Given the Project Site's topography, absence of natural drainages,

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21 Federal Emergency Management Agency, *National Flood Hazard Layer FIRMette*. Available online at: https://msc.fema.gov/arcgis/rest/directories/arcgisjobs/nfhl_print/mscprintb_gpserver/jb5d17ecd547a4091a6be5925cf25de0b/scratch/FIRMETTE_60f95966-f94d-4d02-bc6c-3ed8d0008f04.pdf, accessed October 16, 2025.

and required implementation of construction and post-construction BMPs, the Project would not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on- or off-site. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project Site is graded, relatively flat, and located in an urbanized area of the City. There are no natural streams or rivers on or adjacent to the Project Site; therefore, the Project would not alter the course of a stream or river. Development would introduce new impervious surfaces; however, site drainage would be designed to direct runoff to the City's storm drain system in compliance with the City's stormwater management requirements and Kern County Public Works post-construction BMP standards. Because the Project will disturb more than one acre, it must obtain coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board's Construction General Permit (NPDES), which requires preparation and implementation of a SWPPP. The SWPPP would include erosion and sediment control BMPs during construction, and post-construction measures such as detention basins, infiltration areas, or flow-through treatment to ensure that post-Project peak runoff rates do not exceed pre-Project conditions and that the capacity of the existing/planned storm drain system is not exceeded. Potential pollutants in stormwater runoff from the completed project (e.g., oil and grease from parking areas, nutrients from landscaping, trash and debris) would be minimized through source control and treatment control BMPs consistent with City and state requirements. Thus, given the Project Site's topography, absence of natural drainages, and required implementation of construction and post-construction BMPs, the Project would not create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

iv. Impede or redirect flood flows

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project Site is graded, relatively flat, and located in an urbanized area of the City. There are no natural streams, rivers, or other flood conveyance features on or adjacent to the Project Site; therefore, the Project would not alter the course of a stream or river. As discussed above, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Map Service Center, the Project Site is outside the 100-year flood hazard area and is identified as having minimal flood risk.

Site grading and building placement would be designed to maintain existing overland flow paths and direct stormwater to the City's storm drain system in compliance with the City's stormwater management requirements and Kern County Public Works post-construction BMP standards. Because the Project would disturb more than one acre, it must also obtain coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board's

Construction General Permit (NPDES), which requires preparation and implementation of a SWPPP to manage runoff during construction. Thus, given the Project Site's topography, absence of flood conveyance features, and required implementation of construction and post-construction BMPs, the Project would not impede or redirect flood flows. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

The Project is not in flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones that risks release of pollutants due to project inundation.

No Impact. The Project Site is graded, relatively flat, and located in an urbanized area of the City. As discussed above, the Project Site is outside the Federal Emergency Management Agency's 100-year flood hazard area and is designated Zone X (minimal flood risk). The Project Site is approximately 70 miles inland from the nearest point of the Pacific Ocean and is not subject to tsunami hazards. The California Department of Water Resources' dam inundation mapping indicates the Project Site is not within a designated dam failure inundation zone.[22] There are no large water bodies in the vicinity that could generate a seiche affecting the Project Site.

The Project would not store or use hazardous materials in reportable quantities; hazardous materials use would be limited to small amounts of cleaning products, landscaping chemicals, and maintenance fuels, all handled in compliance with applicable regulations. Therefore, even in the unlikely event of inundation, there would be no substantial risk of pollutant release. Thus, based on the Project Site's location, topography, and absence of significant inundation hazards, the Project would not result in the release of pollutants in a flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zone. Therefore, no impact would occur.

The Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.

No Impact. The Project Site is within the jurisdiction of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board and subject to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Tulare Lake Basin (Basin Plan). The Basin Plan identifies beneficial uses for surface and groundwater in Kern County, establishes water quality objectives, and outlines implementation programs to achieve those objectives. The Project would comply with applicable Basin Plan requirements through implementation of construction and post-construction BMPs consistent with the City's stormwater management standards and the State Water Resources Control Board's Construction General Permit (NPDES), including preparation of a SWPPP.

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22 California Department of Water Resources, "California Dam Breach Inundation Maps." Available online at: https://fmds.water.ca.gov/maps/damim/. Accessed October 16, 2025.

The Project Site overlies the Kern County Subbasin of the San Joaquin Valley Groundwater Basin, overseen by the Kern River Groundwater Sustainability Agency pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The Project would be served by the City's municipal water system and would not involve direct groundwater extraction. Project water demand is within the City's existing entitlements and consistent with the sustainable management criteria for Kern County Subbasin groundwater.

Because the Project would adhere to the Basin Plan's water quality requirements and would not conflict with the Groundwater Sustainability Plan, it would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. Therefore, no impact would occur.

4.8 LAND USE AND PLANNING

The Project would not physically divide an established community.

No Impact. The Project Site is located within an existing urbanized area of the City and is surrounded by developed land uses, including residential, commercial, and religious institutional uses. The proposed development would occur entirely within the boundaries of the Project Site, which are existing parcels intended for urbanized development, and would not introduce new roadways, barriers, or other physical features that would bisect or isolate any portion of the surrounding community. The Project would maintain existing public street connections and would not alter established circulation patterns in a way that would physically divide an established community. Therefore, no impact would occur.

4.9 MINERAL RESOURCES

The Project would not 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.

No Impact. According to the California Department of Conservation Division of Mine Reclamation, and the California Geological Survey's Mineral Land Classification maps, the Project Site has no active mines and is designated as MRZ-1.[23, 24] The MRZ-1 classification is an area where adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present, or that the likelihood for their presence is minimal.[25] The

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23 California Department of Conservation, "Mines Online." Available online at: https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/mol/index.html. Accessed on October 16, 2025.

24 California Department of Conservation, "Mineral Land Classification." Available online at: https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/mineralresources/. Accessed October 16, 2025.

25 California Department of Conservation, "CGS Information Warehouse: Mineral Land Classification Maps (SMARA Study Areas)" Available at: https://maps-cnra-cadoc.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/cadoc::cgs-information-warehouse-mineral-land-classification-maps-smara-study-areas/explore?location=35.490744%2C-119.243210%2C9.44, accessed October 16, 2025.

General Plan does not designate the Project Site or surrounding area for Mineral Petroleum (R-MP), which is assigned to parcels that contain producing, or potentially productive, petroleum fields and mineral deposits. Implementation of the Project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region or residents of the state, nor would it encroach on, or otherwise indirectly affect, existing mineral resource areas. Thus, no impact would occur.

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

No Impact. The City's General Plan and California Department of Conservation mapping indicate the Project Site is not delineated as a locally important mineral resource recovery site, nor are such sites located adjacent to the Project Site. The Project would not preclude access to, or otherwise indirectly affect, any important local mineral resource recovery area, such as an area designated by the General Plan as Mineral Petroleum (R-MP). As such, no impact would occur.

4.10 NOISE

The Project is not 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.

No Impact. The Project Site is not located within an airport land use plan area, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, or within the vicinity of a private airstrip. As such, there would be no exposure of people in the Project area to excessive aircraft-related noise levels. Therefore, no impact would occur.

4.11 POPULATION AND HOUSING

The Project would not 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).

Less Than Significant Impact. A project could induce population growth in an area either directly, through the development of new housing or businesses, or indirectly, through the extension of roads or other infrastructure. The Project does not include the addition or removal of housing and would, therefore, have no direct impact on population or housing forecasts identified in City and regional growth projections. The Project is consistent with the Project Site's existing land use designation and zoning (from a land use perspective), which anticipated the type of development proposed (i.e., an area-serving, non-residential land use).

Although the Project would generate additional employment opportunities, it is anticipated that the workforce would primarily consist of existing residents in the Bakersfield area. Any potential employees who may permanently relocate to the region as a direct result of the Project are expected to be minimal. Estimating such relocation would be highly speculative due to multiple factors (e.g., family income, housing cost, and availability). Furthermore, the Project does not require extension of new infrastructure or utilities beyond the immediate service connections to the Project Site, thereby avoiding growth inducement through expanded service corridors.

As of 2025, the City has an estimated population of 419,238 persons.[26] Given the scale of the Project and the above considerations, any potential increase in population would be nominal and within planned growth assumptions. Therefore, the Project would not induce substantial unplanned population growth, either directly or indirectly, and associated impacts would be less than significant.

The Project would not displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing units, necessitating the construction of replacement housing.

No Impact. The Project Site is currently vacant and contains no existing housing units or residents. The Project would not involve demolition, removal, or alteration of any residential structures, nor would it require acquisition of off-site properties that could contain housing. The Project Site's existing land use designation and zoning do not identify it for residential use, and the Project does not propose any changes that would indirectly displace housing elsewhere. Therefore, the Project would not displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing units, and no construction of replacement housing would be necessitated. No impact would occur.

4.12 PUBLIC SERVICES

The Project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

a) Fire protection.

Less Than Significant Impact. Fire protection services for the Project Site are provided by the Bakersfield Fire Department, with the nearest fire station, Fire Station No. 15, located at 1301 Buena Vista Road,

26 California Department of Finance, "E-1 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State – January 1, 2024 and 2025, May 2025." Available online at: https://dof.ca.gov/forecasting/demographics/estimates-e1/, accessed October 16, 2025.

approximately 1.1 miles southeast of the Project Site. The Project would not induce population growth that could increase service demand beyond existing capacity. The Project would primarily serve existing members in the Bakersfield region and would not require the construction of new or physically altered fire protection facilities to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives. Any additional personnel needed for special events would be dispatched from existing stations. As no new or expanded fire facilities are required, the Project would not result in associated environmental impacts. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

b) Police protection.

Less Than Significant Impact. Police protection services for the Project Site are provided by the Bakersfield Police Department, with the nearest station, Westside Police Substation, located at 1301 Buena Vista Road, approximately 1.1 miles southeast of the Project Site. The proposed Project would primarily serve existing members in the Bakersfield region and would not induce population growth that could increase demand for police services beyond existing capacity. The Project's operational characteristics are not expected to generate unusual or sustained service calls. Any additional personnel needed for special events would be dispatched from existing stations. The Project would not require the construction of new or physically altered police facilities to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

c) Schools.

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project Site is located within the Rosedale Union School District, which includes elementary and middle schools, and the Kern High School District. Public schools that serve the Project Site include American Elementary School, located at 800 Verdugo Lane; Rosedale Middle School, located at 12463 Rosedale Highway; and Liberty High School, located at 925 Jewetta Avenue. The Project would primarily serve existing members in the Bakersfield region and would not induce population growth that could increase student enrollment beyond existing capacity. The Project's operational characteristics are not expected to generate sustained or unusual school service demands.

Moreover, pursuant to the Leroy F. Greene School Facilities Act of 1998 (Senate Bill 50), codified in part at Government Code Section 65995 *et seq.*, the payment of state-mandated school impact fees to Rosedale Union School District and Kern High School District would be deemed by statute to be full and complete mitigation of any school facility impacts associated with the Project. Unless waived by the affected school districts for this Project, the Project would be required to pay applicable school impact fees at the time of building permit issuance, consistent with SB 50 requirements. Since the Project would not require the construction of new or physically altered school facilities beyond those addressed through SB 50 fees, and

such payment constitutes complete mitigation under CEQA, impacts on schools would be less than significant.

d) Parks.

Less Than Significant Impact. The Bakersfield Parks and Recreation Department operates more than 65 parks and community facilities for public recreation and community services. The nearest park to the Project Site is Aera Park, located across Jewetta Avenue, less than 0.1 mile to the east. The Project would primarily serve existing members in the Bakersfield region and does not include residential uses; therefore, it would not induce population growth that could increase demand for neighborhood or regional parks. In addition, the Project design includes landscape plazas and gardens available to the public, providing incidental recreational opportunities on-site. No new or expanded public park facilities would be required, and no physical deterioration of existing facilities would occur or be accelerated. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

e) Other public facilities.

Less Than Significant Impact. The Southwest Branch Library, a branch of the Kern County Library, is located at 8301 Ming Avenue, approximately 3.1 miles east of the Project Site, and serves residents of the City. The Project would primarily serve existing members in the Bakersfield region and does not include residential uses; therefore, it would not induce population growth that could increase demand for libraries or other public facilities such as community centers, civic buildings, or cultural venues. No new or expanded public facilities would be required, and no physical deterioration of existing facilities would occur or be accelerated. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

4.13 RECREATION

The Project would not 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.

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project proposes the development of a religious campus intended to serve the existing Bakersfield region. The Project does not include residential uses and would not generate population growth that could increase demand for neighborhood or regional parks. In addition, the Project itself would include publicly accessible landscaped areas, plazas, and gardens for patrons to enjoy during daytime hours. These on-site amenities would provide opportunities for informal outdoor use associated with the Project activities, further reducing the likelihood that patrons would rely on nearby public parks for passive recreation.

Any incidental use of neighborhood or regional parks by attendees is expected to be minimal and well within the capacity of existing facilities. As such, the Project would not require new or expanded park facilities, and it would not cause or accelerate physical deterioration of existing recreational facilities. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

The Project would not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project is located on a vacant parcel and does not propose any off-site recreational facilities. No residential uses are included; therefore, the Project would not generate new demand for neighborhood or regional parks that could require the construction or expansion of such facilities. The Project's design includes landscape plazas and gardens that will be available to the public. These features would be constructed and maintained entirely within the Project Site and would not create demand for additional off-site recreational resources. As such, no physical environmental effects associated with the construction of new or expanded public recreational facilities would occur, and impacts would be less than significant.

4.14 TRANSPORTATION

The Project would not result in inadequate emergency access.

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project Site is located within an urbanized area served by an established public street network, including direct frontage on Stockdale Highway (classified as an Arterial) and Jewetta Avenue (classified as a Collector) that provide unobstructed access for emergency vehicles. The Project's site plan has been reviewed by City staff, including the City Fire Department, and confirmed to meet all applicable emergency access requirements of the BMC, California Fire Code, and City development standards. The design provides multiple driveways, adequate turning radii, and clear fire lane widths to accommodate emergency apparatus, and no roadway closures or access restrictions are proposed during construction or operation. As such, the Project would not result in inadequate emergency access, and impacts would be less than significant.

4.15 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

The Project would not 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.

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed Project would incrementally increase demand for water, wastewater, stormwater, electric, natural gas, or telecommunications. The Project would connect to existing infrastructure and utilities, all of which have sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed development without requiring the relocation or construction of new or expanded off-site facilities that could cause significant environmental effects.

Potable water service to the project site would be provided by the City of Bakersfield's Domestic Water System, which is managed by the City's Water Resources Department and operated under contract by California Water Service (Cal Water). The system serves approximately 48,140 municipal connections and, in 2020, delivered 45,649 acre-feet of water to customers. According to the City's 2020 Urban Water Management Plan, the Domestic Water System has adequate supplies to meet existing and projected demands under normal, single-dry-year, and multiple-dry-year conditions through 2045. The Project's estimated annual demand of approximately 16.6 to 17.1 acre-feet represents roughly 0.026 percent of current citywide demand and about 0.022 percent of projected 2045 demand. This incremental increase can be accommodated within existing system capacity. No new or expanded off-site water treatment or major distribution facilities would be required to serve the project; only standard service connections and on-site infrastructure would be installed. Therefore, the Project would not result in the need for new or expanded water supply entitlements or facilities, and impacts related to water supply would be less than significant.

Wastewater generated by the Project would be collected and conveyed via the City of Bakersfield's municipal sewer system, operated by the City's Wastewater Division. The City's wastewater system serves the urbanized area through two treatment plants: Wastewater Treatment Plant No. 2 and the North of the River Sanitary District Plant, which together provide a total treatment capacity of approximately 48 million gallons per day (MGD). In 2020, average daily flows were well below permitted capacity, leaving adequate reserve capacity to accommodate additional development. Moreover, the Project's wastewater generation, based on its limited occupancy and assembly-type use, would represent a negligible increase in system flows relative to existing capacity. The City has confirmed that the existing collection and treatment infrastructure in the service area is adequate to serve the Project without the need for new or expanded off-site wastewater treatment or major conveyance facilities. Only standard on-site laterals and connections to existing mains would be required. It should be noted that the Project would comply with all applicable federal, state, and local wastewater regulations, including the City's sewer connection requirements and the treatment plants' NPDES permits.

Stormwater in the Bakersfield metropolitan area is managed through a joint MS4 operated by the City of Bakersfield and Kern County under an NPDES permit issued by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (NPDES No. CA00883399). The system includes a network of underground storm drains, inlets, and approximately 200 retention basins that capture and manage urban runoff before discharge to

the Kern River, canals, or infiltration facilities. The Project would incorporate site-specific drainage improvements consistent with the City's Storm Water Management Plan and Municipal Code Chapter 8.34, including low-impact development (LID) features and BMPs to control the volume and quality of runoff. Post-development peak flows would be managed on-site to avoid exceeding pre-Project conditions, and runoff would be directed to the existing municipal storm drain system via standard service connections. The City has confirmed that the existing storm drainage infrastructure in the service area has adequate capacity to accommodate the Project's incremental runoff. No new or expanded off-site drainage facilities would be required beyond the Project's on-site improvements. The Project would comply with all applicable NPDES permit requirements, including construction-phase erosion and sediment control measures and post-construction stormwater quality standards. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) would provide electrical service to the Project Site, which is located within an urbanized area already served by existing distribution infrastructure along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue. Based on California Energy Commission demand factors for religious assembly uses, the Project's estimated peak load of approximately 150–200 kW can be accommodated by the existing local distribution circuit and substation without requiring new or expanded off-site electric power facilities, and any necessary service connections or minor equipment upgrades would occur on-site or within existing utility corridors, avoiding the need for construction or relocation of facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) provides natural gas service to the Bakersfield area through existing distribution mains in the public rights-of-way along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue adjacent to the Project Site. The City allows natural gas in new construction, subject to compliance with the California Building Standards Code (Title 24) and applicable efficiency requirements. Based on California Energy Commission energy intensity factors for religious assembly uses, the combined 50,122 square feet of new structures across both phases (comprising the temple, meetinghouse, grounds building, clothing center, equipment yard, and refuse enclosures, per **Table 2.0-2** and **Table 2.0-3**) is estimated to have a peak annual natural gas demand of approximately 7,500-10,000 therms, which can be accommodated by existing infrastructure without the need for new or expanded off-site facilities. Any necessary service connections or meters would be installed onsite or within previously disturbed utility corridors, avoiding the construction or relocation of facilities that could cause significant environmental effects; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Telecommunications services in the Project area are provided by multiple carriers with existing underground and overhead infrastructure within the public rights-of-way along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue. Service to the Project, if selected by the operator, would be extended via standard

connections from these existing facilities, with any necessary installation limited to on-site conduit, wiring, and equipment pads. No new or expanded off-site telecommunications facilities such as cell towers, switching stations, or major fiber trunk lines would be required, and all work would occur within previously disturbed areas. As a result, the Project would not necessitate the relocation or construction of telecommunications facilities that could cause significant environmental effects, and impacts would be less than significant.

Overall, because the Project's potable water, wastewater, stormwater, electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications demands can all be met by existing municipal and utility infrastructure with only standard on-site connections or minor improvements in previously disturbed area, and without the need for new or expanded off-site facilities that could cause significant environmental effects, impacts related to utilities and service systems would be less than significant.

The Project would have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years.

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed Project would be served by the City of Bakersfield's Domestic Water System, managed by the City's Water Resources Department and operated under contract by California Water Service (Cal Water). In 2020, the system included 48,140 municipal connections and supplied 45,649 acre-feet of water from a combination of surface water and groundwater sources. The Project Site is within the City's service area and planned growth boundary.

The Project is expected to generate an annual water demand of approximately 16.6 to 17.1 acre-feet per year, with the majority of use attributable to landscape irrigation across 256,674 square feet of drought-tolerant planting areas. Indoor water use for the temple and meetinghouse is expected to be minimal due to efficient fixtures and intermittent occupancy typical of worship and assembly uses. According to the 2020 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) prepared for the California Water Service – Bakersfield District, total Citywide water demand was approximately 66,000 acre-feet in 2020 and is projected to increase to approximately 78,000 to 80,000 acre-feet per year by 2045 under normal and dry hydrologic conditions. The Project's estimated demand represents approximately 0.026 percent of current Citywide demand and 0.022 percent of projected 2045 demand within existing entitlements and allocations. Therefore, given the Project's modest water use relative to citywide totals, its compliance with water efficiency standards, and the availability of long-term water supplies identified in the UWMP, the Project would not result in a significant impact on water supply resources.

Because the Project is within the service area of a water provider with documented, reliable supplies under all hydrologic conditions evaluated in the UWMP, and because its demand is within forecasted growth assumptions, the Project would have a less than significant impact.

The Project would not 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.

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project would be served by the City of Bakersfield Wastewater Division via Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) No. 3, located at 6901 McCutchen Road, which has a permitted capacity of 32 MGD and currently treats an average of 17.3 MGD, with approximately 14.7 MGD of available capacity.[27] Based on typical wastewater generation factors for assembly-type uses (approximately 15 gallons per occupant per day) and the Project's peak non-overlapping occupancies of up to 280 persons for the temple and 300 persons for the meetinghouse, the Project's maximum daily wastewater generation is estimated to be approximately 8,700 gallons per day, or 0.0087 MGD. This represents approximately 0.027 percent of WWTP No. 3's permitted capacity and approximately 0.05 percent of its current available capacity. The City has confirmed that existing collection and treatment infrastructure can accommodate this incremental demand without the need for new or expanded off-site wastewater treatment or major conveyance facilities. Therefore, the wastewater treatment provider would determine that it has adequate capacity to serve the Project in addition to existing commitments, and impacts would be less than significant.

The Project would not 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.

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project would be served by the Metropolitan Sanitary Landfill, operated by the Kern County Public Works Department. This Class III municipal solid waste facility has a permitted maximum throughput of 4,500 tons per day and an estimated remaining capacity of approximately 22 million tons, equating to approximately 22 years of operation at current disposal rates. Based on CalRecycle's construction and demolition (C&D) debris generation factor of approximately 4.38 pounds per square foot of building area, construction of the 50,122 square feet of new structures comprising the temple, meetinghouse, grounds building, clothing center, equipment yard, and refuse enclosures across both phases would generate an estimated 219,534 pounds (approximately 110 tons) of C&D debris over the construction period. In compliance with AB 939 and City requirements, a substantial portion of this debris, such as concrete, metals, asphalt, and cardboard, would be diverted from landfill disposal through

27 City of Bakersfield, Water Resources, Wastewater Division, "Wastewater Treatment Plant No. 3." Available online at: https://www.bakersfieldcity.us/679/Wastewater-Treatment-Plants, accessed October 16, 2025

recycling, further reducing the net disposal volume. Regarding the Project's operation, using CalRecycle's solid waste generation factor for institutional/religious assembly uses of approximately 0.006 pounds per square foot per day, the Project's 50,122 square feet of building area would generate approximately 301 pounds/day (0.15 tons/day), or approximately 55 tons per year of solid waste. Consistent with state mandates (AB 939, AB 341, AB 1826, and SB 1383) and City programs, at least 50 percent of this material would be diverted through recycling and organics collection, resulting in an estimated disposal volume of 27.5 tons per year (0.075 tons/day). This generation represents approximately 0.0017 percent of the landfill's permitted daily throughput and an even smaller fraction of its remaining capacity.

Given the minimal contribution of both operational and construction solid waste relative to available landfill capacity, the fact that the waste stream is accounted for in the County Integrated Waste Management Plan, and the Project's compliance with all applicable waste reduction and diversion requirements, the Project would not generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, exceed the capacity of local infrastructure, or impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

The Project would comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

Less Than Significant Impact. Solid waste collection and disposal for the Project would be provided by the Bakersfield Department of Public Works (BDPW), which offers garbage, recycling, and organics collection services to residents and businesses. Solid waste from the Project would be transported to the Metropolitan Landfill, which operates under permits issued by CalRecycle. The Project would be required to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local solid waste management and reduction statutes and regulations, including the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (AB 939), Mandatory Commercial Recycling (AB 341), Mandatory Commercial Organics Recycling (AB 1826), and Short-Lived Climate Pollutants: Organic Waste Reductions (SB 1383), as well as the City of Bakersfield's solid waste and recycling ordinances. Compliance would be achieved through participation in the City's collection and recycling programs, proper segregation of recyclables and organics, and adherence to landfill disposal requirements.

Because the Project would be served by an established municipal solid waste collection system and would comply with all applicable statutes and regulations, it would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of solid waste management and reduction laws. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

4.16 WILDFIRE

The Project is not located in or near state responsibility area or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zone and would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

No Impact. According to the 2025 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's (CAL FIRE) Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps, the Project Site is not located within or adjacent to a State Responsibility Area or within a designated Fire Hazard Severity Zone.[28] Moreover, the approach to evacuations in the City and Kern County is a dynamic zone-based system, which is a more modern and effective method, as it allows for a targeted response to the specific location of an emergency instead of pre-determined evacuation routes.[29] The Project would not interfere with the real-time monitoring and evacuation coordination system used by the City and Kern County. Therefore, even though the Project Site is not within a very high fire hazard severity zone, the Project also would not impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Thus, no impact would occur.

The Project is not located in or near state responsibility area or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zone and would not exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors.

No Impact. According to the 2025 CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps, the Project Site is not located within or adjacent to a State Responsibility Area or within a designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. The Project Site is relatively flat, located in an urbanized area, and lacks extensive flammable vegetation. Prevailing wind conditions and site characteristics do not create elevated wildfire risk. The Project does not include features that would increase the likelihood of wildfire ignition or contribute to the uncontrolled spread of wildfire, such as large-scale storage of flammable materials or introduction of high-fuel landscaping. Therefore, the Project would not exacerbate wildfire risks or expose occupants to pollutant concentrations from wildfire, and no impact would occur.

The Project is not located in or near state responsibility area or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zone and would not require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such

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28 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, "Find Your Fire Hazard Severity Zone." Available online at: https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/5065c998b4b0462f9ec3c6c226c610a9, accessed October 16, 2025.

29 Kern County Fire Department, KCFD News, "A New Evacuation Management Tool Activated in Kern County," August 18, 2023. Available online at: https://kerncountyfire.org/15143/a-new-evacuation-management-tool-activated-in-kern-county/, accessed October 16, 2025.

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.

No Impact. According to the 2025 CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps, the Project Site is not located within or adjacent to a State Responsibility Area or within a designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. The Project Site is in an urbanized area and is already served by existing public roads, utilities, and other infrastructure. The Project would connect to these existing systems and would not require the installation or maintenance of new roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines, or other utilities that could exacerbate wildfire risk or cause temporary or ongoing environmental impacts. No off-site infrastructure extensions into undeveloped areas are proposed or needed. As such, no impacts would occur.

The Project is not located in or near state responsibility area or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zone and would not 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.

No Impact. According to the 2025 CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps, the Project Site is not located within or adjacent to a State Responsibility Area or within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. The Project Site is in an urbanized area and relatively flat, with no steep slopes or unstable geologic features. The Project would not involve grading or vegetation removal beyond the site boundary that could alter drainage patterns or increase erosion potential. Given these conditions, there is no potential for post-fire slope instability, downslope or downstream flooding, or landslides. Therefore, no impact would occur.

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5.0 ALTERNATIVES

INTRODUCTION

This section of the EIR provides a comparative analysis of the environmental merits of alternatives to the proposed Project, pursuant to Section 15126.6 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(a) requires that an EIR "describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic project objectives but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project," and specifies that the EIR evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives. An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project; rather, it must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will foster informed decision making and public participation. The discussion of alternatives shall focus on those alternatives capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the Project, even if those alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the Project objectives or would be more costly (*State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(b)).

5.1 CONSIDERATIONS

The range of alternatives required in an EIR is governed by a "rule of reason" that requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice (*State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(f)). The alternatives shall be limited to ones that would avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the significant effects of the Project. Of those alternatives, the EIR needs to examine in detail only the alternatives that the lead agency determines could feasibly attain most of the Project's basic objectives. The range of feasible alternatives shall be selected and discussed in a manner that fosters meaningful public participation and informed decision making (*State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(f)).

When addressing the feasibility of alternatives, *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(f)(1) identifies the following factors that may be taken into account: site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, General Plan consistency, other plans or regulatory limitations, jurisdictional boundaries, and whether the proponent can reasonably acquire, control, or otherwise have access to the alternative site. The *State CEQA Guidelines* further clarify that an alternative whose effects cannot be reasonably ascertained and whose implementation is remote and speculative need not be considered (*State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(f)(3)). The *State CEQA Guidelines* also provide that the alternatives discussion need not be presented in the same level of detail as the assessment of the proposed Project (*State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(d)).

Accordingly, the following factors were considered in determining the range of alternatives to be analyzed in this EIR and the appropriate level of analytical detail: (1) the nature of the significant impacts of the Project; (2) the ability of each alternative to avoid or substantially lessen those impacts; (3) the ability of each alternative to meet most of the basic Project objectives; and (4) the overall feasibility of each alternative. Although the proposed Project's impacts would be mitigated to less than significant levels, the alternatives were selected to further reduce the Project's potentially significant impacts prior to mitigation, specifically regarding temporary construction noise and ground-disturbing biological and cultural impacts.

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(c) also requires that the EIR identify any alternatives that were considered by the lead agency but were rejected as infeasible, and briefly explain the reasons underlying that determination. Among the factors that may be used to eliminate alternatives from detailed consideration are: (i) failure to meet most of the basic Project objectives; (ii) infeasibility; or (iii) inability to avoid or substantially lessen the Project's significant environmental effects.

In addition to the four alternatives selected for detailed analysis, a Reduced Steeple Height Alternative was considered but rejected. Under this alternative, the temple steeple height would be reduced below the proposed 123 feet 6 inches to a height that would conform to the C-O zone's 60-foot maximum height standard without requiring a Zone Modification. This alternative was rejected for two independent reasons.

First, the Reduced Steeple Height Alternative would fail to meet Project Objective 1, which calls for a temple whose physical and functional features symbolize the core beliefs of the Church and its members and provide a place of worship consistent with those beliefs. The temple steeple comprises an unoccupied tower, cupola/dome, and finial is a defining architectural feature of Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints temples worldwide, expressing the spiritual significance of the temple as distinct from other houses of worship. The steeple height and proportions are integral to the Church's established temple design program and are not separable from the structure's religious and symbolic function. A steeple reduced to 60 feet or less would be architecturally inconsistent with the Church's standard temple design and would not fulfill the objective of providing a place of worship whose physical features reflect the Church's core beliefs. Because this alternative would fail to meet a fundamental Project objective, it does not qualify for detailed analysis under *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(f).

Secondly, a Reduced Steeple Height Alternative would not avoid or substantially lessen any significant environmental effect of the Project. As established in the environmental impact analyses presented in **Section 3.0** of this EIR, the temple steeple is an unoccupied, non-habitable structure that does not generate construction equipment emissions, ground disturbance, noise, vibration, vehicle trips, or any other impact-producing activity beyond that associated with the temple building itself. Furthermore, as analyzed in

Section 3.1, Aesthetics, the proposed 123-foot 6-inch steeple height does not result in any significant aesthetic or visual impacts, as the Project Site is located in an urbanized area and the steeple qualifies for height exceptions under California Building Code Section 504.3. Additionally, a reduced steeple height is not required to avoid significant shade or shadow impacts, as shadows cast by the proposed steeple onto adjacent sensitive uses would be transient and limited. Thus, a reduced steeple height would not avoid or substantially lessen any significant environmental effect, and as such, the Reduced Steeple Height Alternative does not satisfy the threshold for inclusion as a detailed alternative under *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(f).

For these reasons, the Reduced Steeple Height Alternative was rejected from detailed analysis. The four alternatives analyzed herein and discussed below represent a reasonable range of alternatives consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(f), sufficient to allow a reasoned choice among options that could feasibly avoid or substantially lessen the significant effects of the Project while still attaining most of the basic Project objectives.

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e) requires the analysis of a No Project Alternative. Section 15126.6(e)(2) further requires that where the No Project Alternative is identified as the environmentally superior alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative from among the remaining alternatives. The identification of the environmentally superior alternative is provided in Section 5.6 of this chapter.

Consistent with these requirements, four alternatives were selected for detailed analysis, as described below.

5.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The alternatives selected for analysis in this EIR were developed to avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the environmental impacts associated with the proposed Project, while still feasibly attaining most of the basic Project objectives. Consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(a), the alternatives analysis evaluates the extent to which each alternative would meet the following Project objectives established by the Project Applicant:

1) Design, build, and maintain a temple and meetinghouse whose physical and functional features symbolize the core beliefs of the Church and its members, and that provide places of worship consistent with these beliefs.

2) Locate the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions to optimize their accessibility to the Church's members, taking into account their location to:

   - The existing Church membership within and near the Bakersfield community.
   - The projected growth in Church membership.
   - The nearest existing temples where local Church members now need to travel to and worship.

3) Place the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions where they are compatible with surrounding uses.

4) Site the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions in a stable community that will have long-term uses.

5) Situate the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions to provide optimal accessibility to major highways, roadways, and arterial streets.

6) Ensure that the selected site for the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions will conform to the extent reasonably possible with existing land use and zoning regulations and will minimize the number and type of discretionary local approvals needed to facilitate a timely completion of construction and opening of the Church's places of worship.

5.3 SELECTION OF ALTERNATIVES FOR ANALYSIS

Consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(f), the alternatives selected for detailed analysis focus on alternatives to the Project or its location that could feasibly avoid or substantially lessen the significant effects of the Project while still attaining most of the basic Project objectives. The range of alternatives is sufficient to allow decision makers a reasoned choice among the options analyzed, and the discussion is intended to provide decision makers with a clear understanding of the merits and disadvantages of each alternative relative to the proposed Project.

The City of Bakersfield, as lead agency, considered and selected the following four alternatives for detailed analysis.

Alternative 1 – No Project/No Development

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e) requires that an EIR evaluate a No Project Alternative. As described in *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(e)(1), the purpose of describing and analyzing the No Project Alternative is to allow decision makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed Project with the impacts of not approving it. Under Section 15126.6(e)(2), where the project is the revision of an existing land use or regulatory plan, the No Project Alternative is the continuation of the existing plan. Where, as here, the project is a new development on a currently vacant site, the No Project Alternative is what would reasonably be expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the Project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services.

For purposes of this EIR, the No Project Alternative assumes that the proposed temple, meetinghouse, and associated site improvements would not be constructed. The Project Site, an approximately 13.07-acre (11.76 net acres) vacant, graded, unpaved parcel at the northwest corner of Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, would remain in its current condition. No physical changes to the site would occur, no ground disturbance would take place, and the site would continue to be designated Office Commercial (O-C) in the General Plan and zoned Commercial and Professional Office (C-O) under the Bakersfield Municipal Code.

Alternative 2 – Site A Project Alternative

The Site A Project Alternative would relocate the proposed Project to an existing 6.2-acre property owned by the Applicant at 5600 Panorama Drive, Bakersfield (APN 438-010-02), located approximately 12 miles northeast of the Project Site. As shown in **Figure 5.0-1, Alternative 2 – Site A Project Alternative**, Site A is situated at the northwest corner of the intersection of Panorama Drive and Fairfax Road, both of which are classified as Arterial roadways in the City's General Plan Circulation Element. Site A is located approximately 6.5 miles from the City center and less than one mile south of State Route 178 via Fairfax Road. The site is surrounded by residential uses to the north, east, and west, and a high school to the southwest. Site A is designated Low Density Residential (LR) in the City's General Plan and zoned Single-Unit Dwelling (R-1) under the Bakersfield Municipal Code.

Site A is currently developed with an existing 25,000-square-foot Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints meetinghouse serving three local congregations. Implementation of Alternative 2 would require demolition of this existing meetinghouse to accommodate the proposed temple and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions. Due to Site A's considerably smaller lot size (6.2 acres compared to the Project Site's 13.07 acres) and its irregular configuration, the site cannot accommodate both the temple and the meetinghouse at the building dimensions, site plan layout, and

setback requirements of the proposed Project. Accordingly, Alternative 2 would include only the temple and its ancillary improvements; the meetinghouse would be excluded from the project program.

The elimination of the meetinghouse under Alternative 2 would remove the primary facility for Sunday congregational worship and weekday Church activities from this location. The temple, by contrast, is reserved exclusively for dedicated members for religious instruction, worship, prayer, reflection, and participation in sacred ceremonies and ordinances, and is not a substitute for a meetinghouse. Additionally, demolition of the existing meetinghouse would displace the three local congregations currently worshipping at Site A, necessitating the construction of a replacement meetinghouse at another location to serve those congregations. A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) would be required to authorize the temple use at Site A, given the site's R-1 zoning, and a General Plan Amendment may also be required, given the site's LR General Plan designation.

Alternative 3 – Site B Project Alternative

The Site B Project Alternative would develop the full proposed Project program, temple, meetinghouse, and all associated family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution uses and improvements, on an approximately 14-acre vacant parcel (APN 514-020-01) located at the southeastern corner of the intersection of McKee Road and Stine Road, Bakersfield, approximately 7.23 miles southeast of the Project Site, as shown in **Figure 5.0-2, Alternative 3 – Site B Project Alternative**. McKee Road is classified as a Collector roadway, and Stine Road is classified as an Arterial roadway in the City's General Plan Circulation Element. Site B is not proximate to a major state highway or freeway. Site B is located approximately 10 miles south of the City center in the southeastern periphery of the City, within an area of lower development and population density than the areas surrounding the Project Site and Site A. The site is bordered by residential neighborhoods to the north, east, and west; an elementary school to the south; and a high school to the northwest. Large areas of agricultural and vacant land lie further south of the site. Site B is designated General Commercial (GC) in the City's General Plan and zoned Mixed-Use Transit (MX-2), which allows Regional Commercial (C-2) uses. A CUP would be required to authorize the proposed religious assembly uses at Site B under the MX-2 zoning designation. The size, configuration, topography, and site conditions of Site B are suitable to accommodate the full proposed Project program, including the temple and meetinghouse at the building dimensions, site plan design, and setback requirements established for the proposed Project.

Alternative 4 – Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office)

The Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office) would develop the Project Site, the same 13.07-acre parcel at the northwest corner of Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, with a four-story, 50-foot-tall, 200,000-

square-foot medical office building with professional medical, medical specialty, and/or medical administrative uses, and could accommodate Church family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution uses, as illustrated in **Figure 5.0-3, Alternative 4 – Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office)**. Given the site's existing C-O zoning, its location on a major commercial corridor along Stockdale Highway, and the adjacent medical uses, a by-right medical office building represents a reasonably foreseeable future development scenario if the proposed Project is not approved. Associated improvements would include an 818-space surface parking lot (including 34 accessible parking spaces), landscaping, 300 trees, and parking area lighting. The proposed medical office building and all associated improvements would conform to the City's development standards for the C-O zone, and professional, medical and family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution office uses are permitted by-right in the C-O zone under the Bakersfield Municipal Code. Unlike the proposed Project, Alternative 4 would not require a Zone Modification, as the proposed building height of 50 feet would comply with the C-O zone's 60-foot maximum height standard.

5.4 ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

Each alternative selected for analysis is evaluated in sufficient detail to allow decision makers to determine whether its overall environmental impacts would be less than, similar to, or greater than the impacts of the proposed Project, as required by *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(d). The alternatives analysis need not be presented at the same level of detail as the impact analyses for the proposed Project; rather, it must be sufficient to permit a reasoned comparative evaluation.

The environmental impact analyses for the proposed Project, set forth in **Section 3.0** of this Draft EIR, include mitigation measures (MMs) that reduce the environmental impacts associated with Project implementation to less than significant levels where feasible. The alternatives analysis assumes that equally effective mitigation measures would apply to the alternatives to the extent that comparable impacts are identified, with the exception of Alternative 1 (No Project/No Development), which involves no construction or development and therefore would not generate the impacts to which those mitigation measures respond.

This section includes: (1) an analysis of whether each alternative would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed Project; (2) an evaluation of the extent to which each alternative would meet the basic Project objectives; and (3) a comparative summary of impacts across all environmental issue areas, culminating in the identification of the environmentally superior alternative consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(e)(2).



SOURCE: Google Earth, 2026

FIGURE **5.0-1**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Alternative 2-Site A Project Alternative

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SOURCE: Google Earth, 2026

FIGURE **5.0-2**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Alternative 3-Site B Project Alternative

859.004•01/26



SOURCE: Google Earth, 2026

FIGURE **5.0-3**

IMPACT SCIENCES

Alternative 4 - Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office)

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5.5 COMPARATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS

5.5.1 Alternative 1 – No Project/No Development

The environmental effects of the No Project Alternative are also summarized in **Table 5.0-5, Comparison of Alternatives to the Project,** below.

Aesthetics

Under the No Project Alternative, the proposed temple, meetinghouse, and associated site improvements would not be constructed. The Project Site would remain in its current condition as a vacant, graded, flat lot that contributes minimally to the visual quality of the surrounding area, as established in **Section 3.1.1.4**.

Regarding scenic quality/regulatory compliance (AES-1), no development would occur; accordingly, no new structures, site improvements, or landscaping would be introduced. There would be no potential for conflict with applicable zoning or General Plan policies governing scenic quality. As such, no impact to scenic quality would occur under the No Project Alternative.

Regarding light and glare (AES-2), no new sources of nighttime lighting or daytime glare would be introduced. The site would retain its existing two perimeter light poles, and no change to ambient lighting conditions in the surrounding area would occur. No impact related to light or glare would result.

Therefore, the No Project Alternative would result in no aesthetic impacts, which is less than the Project's less than significant impacts.

Air Quality

Under the No Project Alternative, the proposed temple, meetinghouse, and associated improvements would not be constructed. No construction activities would occur, and no operational land uses that generate air emissions would be established on the Project Site. Accordingly, no construction equipment exhaust, fugitive dust, or vehicle trip emissions would be generated.

With respect to consistency with applicable air quality plans (**AQ Impact 1**), the No Project Alternative would not generate any emissions that could conflict with or hinder implementation of the SJVAPCD's adopted air quality attainment plans. No impact would occur.

With respect to criteria pollutant emissions and SJVAPCD regional and localized significance thresholds (**AQ Impact 2**), no construction or operational emissions would be generated. No exceedance of SJVAPCD

thresholds would occur, and the No Project Alternative would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants in the SJVAB.

With respect to sensitive receptor exposure to toxic air contaminants (**AQ Impact 3**), no diesel-powered construction equipment or emergency generator would be operated. No health risk to nearby sensitive receptors would result, and implementation of **Mitigation Measure MM AQ-1** would not be required.

With respect to objectionable odors (AQ Impact 4), no land uses associated with odor generation would be established. No impact would occur.

Therefore, the No Project Alternative would result in no air quality impacts, which is less than the Project's less than significant impacts across all impact topics.

Biological Resources

Under the No Project Alternative, the proposed temple, meetinghouse, and associated improvements would not be constructed. No ground-disturbing activities, vegetation removal, or construction operations would occur on the Project Site. The Project Site would remain in its current condition as a vacant, graded lot supporting ruderal annual grassland vegetation, including the fiddleneck plant community that provides marginal habitat for the special-status species identified in **Section 3.3.1.4**.

With no disturbance of soil or vegetation, no impacts to special-status plant or wildlife species, including burrowing owl, San Joaquin kit fox, or nesting migratory birds, would occur under Alternative 1 (**Impact BIO-1**). The fiddleneck plant community would remain undisturbed; however, as established in the project-level analysis, this community is not classified by CDFW as a sensitive natural community, and no sensitive natural communities are present on the Project Site (**Impact BIO-2**). No construction activities would occur during the nesting season, and no wildlife movement corridors or nursery sites would be disturbed (**Impact BIO-3**). No trees would be removed, and no conflict with local ordinances or policies protecting biological resources, including BMC Section 17.61.050, would occur (Impact BIO-4). Implementation of **Mitigation Measures MM BIO-1** through **MM BIO-5** would not be required.

Therefore, biological resource impacts under the No Project Alternative would not occur, which is less than the Project's impacts, which range from no impact (BIO-2) to less than significant with mitigation (BIO-1, BIO-3).

Cultural, Tribal Cultural, & Paleontological Resources

Under the No Project Alternative, the proposed temple, meetinghouse, and associated improvements would not be constructed. No ground-disturbing activities, grading, or excavation would occur on the Project Site.

With respect to historical resources (**Impact CR-1**), the Project Site contains no historical resources, as established in **Section 3.4.3**. No construction would occur, and no potential for demolition or physical alteration of a historical resource would exist. No impact would occur.

With respect to archaeological resources (**Impact CR-2**), no ground-disturbing activities would take place. While the Project Site is underlain by Holocene alluvium with low-to-moderate subsurface archaeological sensitivity, no excavation would disturb potential buried deposits. No impact would occur, and implementation of **MM CR-1** would not be required.

With respect to human remains (**Impact CR-3**), no ground disturbance would occur. The statutory protections of California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 would not be triggered. No impact would occur.

With respect to tribal cultural resources (**Impact CR-4**), no ground disturbance would occur that could uncover previously unidentified subsurface TCRs. No impact would occur, and implementation of **MM TCR-1** would not be required.

With respect to paleontological resources (**Impact CR-5**), no excavation would occur. The Holocene alluvial deposits underlying the Project Site would remain undisturbed, and no paleontological resources would be affected. No impact would occur, and implementation of **MM PR-1** would not be required.

Therefore, cultural, tribal cultural, and paleontological resource impacts under the No Project Alternative would not occur, which is less than the Project's less than significant with mitigation impacts.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Under the No Project Alternative, the proposed temple, meetinghouse, and associated improvements would not be constructed. No construction activities would occur, and no operational land uses that generate GHG emissions would be established on the Project Site.

With respect to GHG emissions generation (**GHG Impact 1**), no construction equipment would operate on the Project Site, and no vehicle trips, energy consumption, water use, or solid waste generation associated

with project operations would occur. No GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, would be generated. No impact would occur.

With respect to consistency with applicable GHG reduction plans and policies (**GHG Impact 2**), no development would occur and no conflict with the City of Bakersfield Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP), the CARB Scoping Plan, the Kern COG 2022 RTP/SCS, or any other applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions would result. No impact would occur.

Therefore, GHG impacts under the No Project Alternative would not occur, which is less than the Project's less than significant impacts.

Land Use and Planning

Under the No Project Alternative, the proposed temple, meetinghouse, and associated improvements would not be constructed. The Project Site would remain vacant and retain its existing General Plan land use designation of Office Commercial (O-C) and its Commercial and Professional Office (C-O) zoning.

With respect to conflicts with land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental effects (**Impact LAN-1**), no development would occur, and no potential conflict with the General Plan, City Zoning Code, Kern COG 2022 RTP/SCS, or any other applicable land use plan or policy would result. The site would remain consistent with its existing designations by default. No Zone Modification, Vesting Tentative Parcel Map, or other discretionary land use approval would be required. No impact would occur.

Therefore, land use and planning impacts under the No Project Alternative would not occur, which is less than the Project's less than significant impacts. However, it should be noted that while the No Project Alternative avoids the Zone Modification required for the steeple heights, it also foregoes the General Plan policy benefits that the Project achieves, including infill development, pedestrian connectivity improvements, and provision of community-serving institutional uses consistent with the Land Use Element's goals of accommodating a full mix of uses.

Noise & Vibration

Under the No Project Alternative, the proposed temple, meetinghouse, and associated improvements would not be constructed. No ground disturbance, grading, demolition, or construction activities would occur on the Project Site. The Project Site would remain vacant, and no new stationary noise sources (HVAC equipment, parking lot activity) or project-generated vehicle trips would be introduced.

With respect to generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels (**Impact NOI-1**), no construction equipment would operate on the Project Site and no construction-phase noise would be generated. Operationally, no HVAC equipment or parking activity noise sources would be introduced. The Project Site is currently vacant and generates no noise. Under the No Project Alternative, the existing ambient noise environment in the project vicinity, which ranges from 43 to 55 dBA Leq, with a measured CNEL of 56.3 dBA at the Project Site, would not be altered. No temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels would occur. No impact would result.

With respect to generation of excessive groundborne vibration (**Impact NOI-2**), no ground-disturbing construction activities would occur and no vibratory equipment would be operated. No operational vibration sources associated with a religious institution would be introduced. No impact would result.

Therefore, noise and vibration impacts under the No Project Alternative would not occur, which is less than the Project's less than significant impacts under both **Impact NOI-1** and **Impact NOI-2**.

Transportation

Under the No Project Alternative, the proposed temple, meetinghouse, and associated improvements would not be constructed. No construction activities would occur, no new vehicle trips would be generated, and no permanent employees or residents would be added to the Project Site.

With respect to conflicts with programs, plans, ordinances, or policies addressing the circulation system (**Impact TR-1**), no development would occur, and no frontage improvements, including the new sidewalks along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, would be constructed. The Project would install new sidewalks along the entire site frontage on Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, closing an existing gap in the pedestrian network, connecting to existing marked crosswalks, and implementing the Circulation Element's goal of providing for safe pedestrian movement. Under the No Project Alternative, this infrastructure gap would remain, and the Circulation Element's pedestrian connectivity goals would go unimplemented at the Project Site. The No Project Alternative would not conflict with any existing transportation plan, ordinance, or policy, but it would also not advance the pedestrian and multimodal connectivity improvements that the Project would deliver. No impact would occur.

With respect to consistency with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.3(b) (**Impact TR-2**), no development would occur, and no vehicle trips would be generated. No VMT, and therefore no VMT increase, would result from the No Project Alternative. The existing regional travel pattern, whereby Bakersfield-area Church members must travel to temples in Los Angeles, Redlands, or Fresno, would continue unchanged. The approximately 718,209 annual VMT reduction that the proposed Project would achieve by redirecting those long-distance regional trips to a local destination would not be realized. While the No Project

Alternative would generate no new VMT, it also foregoes the substantial regional VMT reduction benefit of the proposed Project. No impact would occur.

With respect to substantial increases in hazards due to geometric design features (**Impact TR-3**), no driveways or site access points would be constructed. No signal warrant analysis would be triggered. No impact would occur.

Therefore, transportation impacts under the No Project Alternative would not occur. Impacts associated with this alternative would be less than the Project. However, under the No Project Alternative, pedestrian improvements and regional VMT reduction benefits would not occur.

Relationship to the Project Objectives

As demonstrated in **Table 5.0-1, Alternative 1 Relationship to the Project Objectives**, the No Project Alternative would fail to meet five of the six Project objectives outright, and while it would technically satisfy the regulatory minimization component of Objective 6 by requiring no discretionary approvals, Alternative 1 would not advance the fundamental purpose of any Project objective.

Table 5.0-1
Alternative 1 Relationship to the Project Objectives

Project Objective	Relationship to the Objective
Objective #1: Design, build, and maintain a temple and meetinghouse whose physical and functional features symbolize the core beliefs of the Church and its members, and that provide places of worship consistent with these beliefs.	**Not Met.** Under the No Project Alternative, no temple or meetinghouse would be designed, constructed, or maintained on the Project Site. The Project Applicant's ability to provide a permanent place of worship with the architectural and functional features that express the Church's core beliefs, including the temple spire, celestial room, and ordinance rooms, would not be realized. This objective would not be met.
Objective #2: Locate the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions to optimize their accessibility to the Church's members, taking into account their location relative to: • The existing Church membership within and near the Bakersfield community • The projected growth in Church membership • The nearest existing temples where local Church members now need to travel to worship	**Not Met.** Under the No Project Alternative, no temple or meetinghouse would be developed in Bakersfield. Church members in the nine assigned stakes would continue to travel to the nearest temples in Los Angeles, Redlands, and Fresno, distances of approximately 110 to 160 miles round-trip. The accessibility benefit of establishing a local temple, the primary driver of the Project's substantial regional VMT reduction, would not be achieved. This objective would not be met.
Objective #3: Place the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions in a location where they are compatible with surrounding uses.	**Not Met.** Under the No Project Alternative, no temple or meetinghouse would be placed on the Project Site or any other location. This objective would not be met.

Project Objective	Relationship to the Objective
Objective #4: Site the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions in a stable community that will have long-term uses.	**Not Met.** Under the No Project Alternative, no temple or meetinghouse would be sited within the Bakersfield metropolitan area. The Project Site, located within an established suburban neighborhood along the Stockdale Highway corridor, a stable, growing community with long-term institutional uses, would remain vacant and undeveloped. This objective would not be met.
Objective #5: Situate the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions to provide optimal accessibility to major highways, roadways, and arterial streets.	**Not Met.** Under the No Project Alternative, no temple or meetinghouse would be constructed at the Project Site or any other location. The Project Site's location at the northwest corner of Stockdale Highway (an Arterial) and Jewetta Avenue (a Collector), with direct regional access to State Route 58 (0.4 miles north), State Route 99 (5.4 miles east), and Interstate 5 (7.7 miles southwest), would go unutilized for this purpose. This objective would not be met.
Objective #6: Ensure that the proposed site for the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions will conform to the extent reasonably possible with existing land use and zoning regulations and will minimize the number and type of discretionary local approvals needed to facilitate a timely completion of construction and opening of the Church's places of worship.	**Partially Met.** The No Project Alternative would require no discretionary approvals, as no development would occur. In this narrow sense, the objective of minimizing regulatory burden would be technically satisfied, as no Zone Modification, Vesting Tentative Parcel Map, or any other entitlement would be required. However, this result does not advance the underlying purpose of the objective, which is to facilitate the timely completion and opening of the Church's places of worship. Because no worship facilities would be built, the broader intent of this objective would not be met.

5.5.2 Alternative 2 –Site A Project Alternative

The environmental effects of the Site A Project Alternative are also summarized in **Table 5.0-5, Comparison of Alternatives to the Project**, below.

Aesthetics

The Site A Project Alternative would relocate the proposed Project to a 6.2-acre site at 5600 Panorama Drive in a predominantly suburban, residentially-zoned area of Bakersfield. Because the site is smaller and irregularly shaped, Alternative 2 would include only the temple and ancillary facilities; the meetinghouse (16,370 square feet) and associated Phase 2 parking (93 stalls) would be eliminated.

Regarding scenic quality/regulatory compliance (AES-1), Site A and its immediate vicinity are not designated as a scenic vista, scenic viewshed, or scenic vantage point in the General Plan, nor is the site located adjacent to or near any officially designated or eligible state scenic highway. As a developed suburban site surrounded by residential uses and a high school, Site A is located within an urbanized area; the applicable threshold, therefore, focuses on consistency with applicable zoning and regulations governing scenic quality, consistent with the approach applied to the Project. While the existing 25,000-square-foot meetinghouse at Site A already features a modest steeple of approximately 50 to 60 feet,

establishing a precedent for institutional vertical elements at this location, the proposed Project temple steeple at 123 feet 6 inches would be approximately two times the height of the existing structure.

However, the temple's setbacks and landscaping would be designed to conform to applicable development standards to ensure visual compatibility. Similar to the Project Site, where a Zone Modification addresses the steeple height deviation, The City would require for Site A a CUP, a Zone Modification, and potentially a General Plan Amendment to authorize the proposed use. The same General Plan policies and BMC standards that govern the Project Site would apply to Site A, subject to those additional approvals. Aesthetic impacts under AES-1 would be less than significant and similar to the Project.

Regarding light and glare (AES-2), the elimination of the meetinghouse and its associated 93 parking stalls under Alternative 2 would result in a reduced nighttime lighting footprint compared to the Project. Fewer pole-mounted parking lot lights, no meetinghouse facade illumination, and reduced landscape lighting would be required. The surrounding R-1 zoning context means the BMC Section 17.71.030.D 0.5 foot-candle threshold at residential property lines would apply on all sides of the site, rather than only the northern boundary as at the Project Site. The Project's temple lighting design, using well-shielded, downward-directed, and dimmable fixtures as described in **Section 3.1.3.3**, would also apply to Alternative 2 under the methodology described in **Section 5.4**. Daytime glare characteristics would be the same as the Project, as the temple's matte-finish limestone and low-iron glass material palette would be unchanged. Light and glare impacts under AES-2 would be less than significant and less than the Project.

Overall, aesthetic impacts under Alternative 2 would be less than the Project due to the elimination of the meetinghouse for this Alternative. Impacts related to scenic regulatory compliance (AES-1) would be similar to the Project, while light and glare impacts (AES-2) would be less than the Project due to the reduced development footprint and elimination of the meetinghouse and associated lighting.

Air Quality

The Site A Project Alternative would relocate the proposed Project to Site A, a 6.2-acre property at 5600 Panorama Drive. Due to the considerably smaller size and irregular shape of Site A, the meetinghouse component of the proposed Project would be eliminated, and only the temple and its ancillary facilities would be constructed. Additionally, the existing 25,000-square-foot meetinghouse currently located at Site A would need to be demolished prior to construction of the temple, introducing a demolition phase not present in the proposed Project.

With respect to consistency with applicable air quality plans (AQ Impact 1), Alternative 2 would involve construction and operation of a religious assembly use. While the elimination of the proposed meetinghouse would reduce the total square footage of new construction and reduce localized operational

vehicle trips, the heavy equipment required to demolish the existing 25,000-square-foot meetinghouse and the regional displacement of existing congregational vehicle trips would largely offset these reductions. Similar to the Project, the scale and nature of construction and operational emissions would not be of a magnitude that would conflict with or hinder SJVAPCD attainment plan implementation. Impacts under AQ Impact 1 would be less than significant.

With respect to criteria pollutant emissions and SJVAPCD regional and localized significance thresholds (AQ Impact 2), construction activities under Alternative 2 would involve site grading, utility installation, and building construction for the temple and ancillary structures, similar in scope to Phase 1 of the proposed Project. However, Alternative 2 would also include demolition of the existing 25,000-square-foot meetinghouse at Site A, which would introduce additional short-term construction equipment emissions not present in the proposed Project. Consistent with the methodology described in Section 5.4, equivalent mitigation measures, including SJVAPCD Rule 9510 compliance and standard dust control requirements, would apply to Alternative 2. The additional demolition-related emissions represent a modest, short-term increment; consistent with the findings for the Project's construction phase, these emissions would not be expected to exceed SJVAPCD regional or localized significance thresholds.

Because the meetinghouse is eliminated under Alternative 2, long-term operational emissions associated with meetinghouse activities, including Sunday worship traffic generation, would be reduced locally at Site A compared to the Project. However, since the three local congregations currently utilizing Site A would be displaced, these vehicle trips would largely be redistributed to other existing or replacement meetinghouse locations within the region rather than eliminated entirely. Therefore, regional operational emissions under Alternative 2 would be similar to the Project, while construction emissions would be slightly greater due to the demolition phase.

With respect to sensitive receptor exposure to toxic air contaminants (**AQ Impact 3**), diesel-powered construction equipment and an emergency generator would be operated under Alternative 2. As with the Project, **Mitigation Measure MM AQ-1** would apply, requiring the use of Tier 4 Final engines for off-road construction equipment to reduce diesel particulate matter (DPM) emissions and minimize health risk to nearby sensitive receptors. Site A is surrounded by residential uses on three sides, making nearby sensitive receptors comparable in proximity and sensitivity to those at the Project Site. With implementation of **MM AQ-1**, impacts under **AQ Impact 3** would be less than significant.

With respect to objectionable odors (**AQ Impact 4)**, Alternative 2 would not introduce land uses associated with odor generation. No impact would occur.

Overall, air quality impacts under Alternative 2 would be less than significant and similar to the Project. While localized operational emissions would decrease due to the elimination of the meetinghouse, regional operational mobile emissions would remain comparable due to displaced meetinghouse trips, and construction emissions would be similar to the Project, as the emissions generated by the required demolition phase would offset the emissions saved by not constructing the new meetinghouse.

Biological Resources

The Site A Project Alternative would relocate the proposed Project to Site A, a 6.2-acre property at 5600 Panorama Drive in a predominantly suburban, residentially developed area of northeastern Bakersfield, approximately 12 miles northeast of the Project Site. Site A is currently developed with an existing 25,000-square-foot meetinghouse. Alternative 2 would require demolition of the existing meetinghouse and construction of the temple and ancillary facilities. Because Site A is located within a heavily urbanized context and is substantially developed, the biological resource conditions at Site A differ meaningfully from the Project Site.

With respect to special-status species (**Impact BIO-1**), Site A is a developed, impervious urban site surrounded by residential uses and a high school. Unlike the Project Site, which supports approximately 9.95 acres of fiddleneck plant community that provides marginal habitat for burrowing owl, San Joaquin kit fox, nesting migratory birds, and several special-status plant species, Site A lacks the ruderal grassland, open ground, and burrow features that characterize the Project Site. The potential for special-status plant species or grassland-dependent wildlife to occur at Site A is lower than at the Project Site. However, the existing trees and landscaping at Site A may provide nesting habitat for migratory birds and raptors protected under the MBTA, BGEPA, and CFGC. To address this potential, **MM BIO-1** through **MM BIO-5** would apply to Alternative 2, consistent with the methodology described in Section 5.4. In particular, **MM BIO-4** would require pre-construction nesting bird surveys and avoidance of active nests during the breeding season, and MM BIO-1 would ensure worker environmental awareness training. With implementation of **MM BIO-1** through **MM BIO-5**, impacts to special-status species under Alternative 2 would be less than significant.

With respect to sensitive natural communities and riparian habitat (**Impact BIO-2**), Site A does not contain riparian habitat, sensitive natural communities, wetlands, or waters of the United States or State. No sensitive natural community impacts would occur.

With respect to wildlife movement corridors and nursery sites (Impact BIO-3), Site A is fully surrounded by urban development. As with the Project Site, Site A does not function as a wildlife movement corridor or regional linkage. No impacts to wildlife corridors or nursery sites would occur.

With respect to local ordinances protecting biological resources (Impact BIO-4), Site A contains an existing developed landscape with trees that may be subject to BMC Section 17.61.050 (Tree Preservation and Protection) if trees are removed as part of demolition and site preparation. Compliance with BMC Section 17.61.050 would be required as a standard condition of project approval to address any necessary tree replacement, while MM BIO-4 would independently require pre-construction surveys and avoidance buffers to protect any nesting birds utilizing those trees prior to removal. With implementation of applicable mitigation measures and mandatory regulatory compliance, impacts would be less than significant.

Overall, biological resource impacts under Alternative 2 would be less than significant with implementation of **MM BIO-1** through **MM BIO-5**, and are similar to, or potentially less than, the Project given Site A's fully developed, urbanized character and reduced grassland habitat potential. However, the presence of mature trees at Site A introduces a nesting bird consideration not present at the currently vacant and treeless Project Site.

Cultural, Tribal Cultural, & Paleontological Resources

The Site A Project Alternative would relocate the proposed Project to a 6.2-acre developed property at 5600 Panorama Drive. Unlike the Project Site, which is vacant, unimproved, and contains no historical resources, Site A is currently developed with an existing 25,000-square-foot meetinghouse. Implementation of Alternative 2 would require demolition of this existing structure, followed by grading and construction of the temple and ancillary facilities.

With respect to historical resources (**Impact CR-1**), the existing meetinghouse at Site A was not identified as a City-designated historic landmark under BMC Chapter 15.72. While CEQA generally requires buildings 50 years of age or older to be evaluated for historical significance prior to demolition, regardless of formal designation, the existing meetinghouse is a modern facility associated with the late-twentieth-century suburban development of the area. As a modern structure lacking exceptional architectural or historical significance, it would not meet the criteria for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). Assuming the building lacks historical significance, its demolition would result in no impact. Therefore, impacts to historical resources would be less than significant and similar to the Project.

With respect to archaeological resources (**Impact CR-2**), demolition and ground-disturbing activities at Site A could expose subsurface soils not previously disturbed by the existing building's foundation or utilities. While Site A is located within a developed urban area, the Bakersfield region's Holocene alluvial soils have the potential to contain buried prehistoric deposits. Consistent with the methodology described in Section 5.4, MM CR-1 would apply to Alternative 2, requiring a qualified archaeologist to conduct Worker

Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training for construction crews, remain on-call during ground disturbance, and direct work stoppage and evaluation if archaeological resources are encountered. With implementation of **MM CR-1**, impacts to archaeological resources would be less than significant.

With respect to human remains (Impact CR-3), ground-disturbing activities at Site A could inadvertently uncover human remains. Compliance with California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 is required by law and would apply to Alternative 2 regardless of project approvals, ensuring that any inadvertent discovery is handled appropriately. Impacts would be less than significant.

With respect to tribal cultural resources (**Impact CR-4**), Native American consultation under AB 52 and SB 18 would be required for Alternative 2. The AB 52 and SB 18 consultation conducted for the Project applies only to the Project Site and cannot be transferred to Site A. New tribal notification and the 30-day response period would be required for Alternative 2. If ground-disturbing activities at Site A uncover potential TCRs, **MM TCR-1** would apply, requiring immediate work stoppage, City notification, and consultation with culturally affiliated tribes. With implementation of **MM TCR-1**, impacts to TCRs would be less than significant.

With respect to paleontological resources (**Impact CR-5**), ground-disturbing activities associated with demolition and construction at Site A could encounter paleontological resources in subsurface alluvial deposits. **MM PR-1** would apply, requiring WEAP training by a qualified paleontologist prior to grading and appropriate evaluation and treatment protocols if paleontological resources are uncovered. With implementation of **MM PR-1**, impacts to paleontological resources would be less than significant.

Overall, cultural and tribal cultural resource impacts under Alternative 2 would be less than significant with implementation of **MM CR-1**, **MM TCR-1**, and **MM PR-1**, and similar to the Project for archaeological, human remains, TCR, and paleontological topics.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Site A Project Alternative would relocate the proposed Project to Site A, a 6.2-acre property at 5600 Panorama Drive. Because Site A cannot accommodate the meetinghouse, Alternative 2 would include only the temple and its ancillary facilities. Construction activities would additionally include the demolition of the existing 25,000-square-foot meetinghouse currently operating at Site A, which would generate short-term construction-phase GHG emissions not present in the proposed Project.

With respect to GHG emissions generation (**GHG Impact 1**), construction-phase emissions under Alternative 2 would include equipment exhaust and worker and haul truck trips associated with

demolition of the existing meetinghouse, grading, and construction of the temple and ancillary facilities. The demolition phase would introduce additional short-term construction GHG emissions compared to the proposed Project; however, as with the Project's 618 $MTCO_2e$ total construction emissions (amortized to approximately 20.6 $MTCO_2e$ per year over 30 years), the incremental increase associated with demolition is expected to be modest. Operationally, Alternative 2 would generate fewer localized facility-based energy, water, and solid waste GHG emissions than the Project due to the elimination of the meetinghouse; however, because the local congregations would be displaced, the vehicle trips associated with Sunday worship activities, the primary driver of the Project's operational emissions (approximately 1,487 $MTCO_2e$ per year of the Project's 1,613 $MTCO_2e$ annual total), would be redistributed regionally rather than eliminated entirely. These emissions are provided for informational purposes consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.4(a). Significance is determined by consistency with GHG reduction plans, as described below.

With respect to consistency with applicable GHG reduction plans and policies (**GHG Impact 2**), Alternative 2 would be constructed and operated in the same manner as the proposed Project and would be required to comply with the same applicable regulations and voluntary design features that support PCAP consistency: Title 24 energy efficiency standards and CALGreen, EV charging infrastructure, pedestrian sidewalk improvements, drought-tolerant landscaping, and AB 341/SB 1383 waste diversion requirements. Site A is located near existing residential neighborhoods in northeastern Bakersfield, which supports the PCAP and Kern COG RTP/SCS goals of reducing per capita VMT by locating a community-serving use within proximity of the membership it serves. Alternative 2 would be consistent with the City's PCAP and the CARB Scoping Plan for the same reasons as the Project, as analyzed in **Table 3.5-6** and **Table 3.5-7**. As such, GHG impacts under Alternative 2 would be less than significant.

Overall, GHG impacts under Alternative 2 would be less than significant and similar to the Project with respect to plan consistency. While localized facility-based emissions (energy, water, waste) would decrease due to the elimination of the meetinghouse, regional mobile source GHG emissions under Alternative 2 would be similar to the Project due to the redistribution of meetinghouse trips.

Land Use and Planning

The Site A Project Alternative would relocate the temple and ancillary facilities to a 6.2-acre property at 5600 Panorama Drive (APN 438-010-02). Site A is designated Low Density Residential (LR) in the City's General Plan and zoned Single-Unit Dwelling (R-1). Because the proposed Project involves demolition of an existing meetinghouse and construction of a new temple at a residentially-designated and residentially-zoned site, the land use and planning implications of Alternative 2 differ from the proposed Project.

With respect to physically dividing an established community, Alternative 2 would develop a single parcel within an established suburban neighborhood and would not introduce any linear barrier or infrastructure element that would divide an existing community. No impact would result.

With respect to conflicts with land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental effects (**Impact LAN-1**), the proposed temple and its ancillary uses under Alternative 2 would be inconsistent with Site A's General Plan designation of Low Density Residential (LR) and R-1 zoning, which are intended to preserve residential neighborhoods and restrict non-residential development. Religious uses are not a permitted use by-right in the R-1 zone. Furthermore, the proposed family ancestral search and clothing distribution and sale facilities are not permitted in residential zones and could only be allowed if expressly authorized as accessory uses to the temple under a CUP. Unlike the proposed Project, which is a by-right religious use in the C-O zone requiring only a Zone Modification for steeple height, Alternative 2 would require a CUP to authorize the religious use and its accessory functions in the R-1 zone, and potentially a General Plan Amendment if the temple use is determined to be inconsistent with the LR land use designation. However, under CEQA, an inconsistency with a land use plan or zoning designation is only considered a significant impact if it results in a secondary physical environmental effect. While Alternative 2 requires different discretionary entitlements than the Project, the required CUP process would ensure operational and physical compatibility with surrounding residential uses, thereby avoiding significant physical environmental impacts. As such, impacts would be less than significant and similar to the proposed Project.

Noise & Vibration

The Site A Project Alternative would relocate the temple to a 6.2-acre site at 5600 Panorama Drive. Because Site A cannot accommodate both structures, Alternative 2 would include only the temple and ancillary facilities, without the meetinghouse. Construction activities would include demolition of the existing 25,000-square-foot meetinghouse currently located on Site A, followed by grading and construction of the temple. Site A is located adjacent to existing residential uses and in proximity to a school, which are classified as noise-sensitive receptors.

Construction Noise

With respect to construction-related noise (**Impact NOI-1**), demolition activities associated with the existing meetinghouse would introduce a construction phase and noise source not present under the proposed Project, which is developing a currently vacant lot. Demolition equipment such as excavators, loaded trucks, and jackhammers typically generates noise levels ranging from 79 to 86 dBA at 25 feet. Because the residential uses adjacent to Site A are located within a Low Density Residential neighborhood

that is likely to have lower existing ambient noise levels than the Project Site, which is buffered by the commercial corridor along Stockdale Highway, the incremental increase over the ambient noise level for construction events may be more pronounced. Regardless, all construction activities under Alternative 2 would be required to comply with BMC Section 9.22.050, which restricts construction to between 6:00 AM and 9:00 PM on weekdays and 8:00 AM and 9:00 PM on weekends. Construction activity would also be required to comply with the noise limits established in BMC Section 9.22.030. As a project-specific noise study has not been conducted for Site A, a quantitative comparison with the Project's modeled construction noise levels (ranging from 55 to 79 dBA Leq(8h) at the nearest residential receptor) is not possible at this level of analysis. However, consistent with the approach used for the Project, construction activities under Alternative 2 would be required to adhere to all applicable BMC time-of-day restrictions, and the best practice noise minimization measures identified in **Section 3.7.4.3** would apply. Construction noise impacts under Alternative 2 would be less than significant, and due to the additional demolition phase not present at the Project Site, construction noise impacts under Alternative 2 would be similar to or incrementally greater than the Project but would be expected to be less than significant.

Operational Noise

With respect to operational noise (**Impact NOI-1**), Alternative 2 would eliminate the meetinghouse from the project program. The meetinghouse is the primary driver of peak Sunday mobile source noise at the Project Site, as it generates more vehicle trips than the temple on a typical Sunday. With only the temple operational under Alternative 2, mobile source operational noise contributions from project-generated vehicle traffic on local roadways near Site A would be less than those associated with the full project program. Stationary noise sources under Alternative 2, HVAC equipment, and parking lot activity, would also be reduced proportionally due to the smaller building program. Without a site-specific noise study for Site A, precise receptor-level noise calculations equivalent to **Table 3.7-14** and **Table 3.7-15** cannot be provided here; however, given the reduced scale of development, project-only and project-plus-ambient stationary noise levels at residential and institutional receptors near Site A are expected to comply with the City's daytime limit of 55 dBA Leq and nighttime limit of 50 dBA Leq, consistent with the City's BMC and Noise Element standards. Operational noise impacts under Alternative 2 would be less than significant and less than the Project.

Construction and Operational Vibration

With respect to groundborne vibration (**Impact NOI-2**), a site-specific geotechnical investigation has not been conducted for Site A. However, for the purposes of this comparative analysis, it is assumed that construction activities at Site A would utilize similar methods as the proposed Project and would not require pile driving. Under this assumption, the most vibration-intensive construction equipment

anticipated, a vibratory roller, generates a PPV of 0.21 in/sec at 25 feet. Demolition activities would involve standard excavators and loaded trucks, which generate substantially lower vibration levels (0.076 to 0.089 in/sec PPV at 25 feet). These levels are below the Caltrans threshold of 0.50 in/sec PPV for new residential structures. Operationally, a temple generates no substantive vibration sources. Construction and operational vibration impacts under Alternative 2 would therefore be less than significant and similar to the Project. However, it should be noted that if site-specific soil conditions at Site A were ultimately found to require pile driving, construction vibration impacts would be substantially greater than the proposed Project and could potentially be significant given the immediate proximity of residential uses.

Overall, noise and vibration impacts under Alternative 2 would be less than significant. Construction noise impacts would be similar to or slightly greater than the Project due to the additional demolition phase, while operational noise impacts would be less than the Project due to the elimination of the meetinghouse and its associated trip generation.

Transportation

The Site A Project Alternative would relocate the temple and ancillary facilities to a 6.2-acre property at 5600 Panorama Drive, at the northwest corner of Panorama Drive and Fairfax Road, approximately 12 miles northeast of the Project Site. Unlike the proposed Project, Alternative 2 could not accommodate the meetinghouse due to the smaller lot size; the project program would be reduced to the temple only. Panorama Drive is classified as a Collector roadway and Fairfax Road is classified as an Arterial in the City's General Plan Circulation Element. Both roadways are designated as Class II bicycle lane (striped lane) facilities in the City's Bicycle Transportation Plan. There is an existing GetBus transit stop in the right-of-way along Panorama Road just west of Fairfax Road adjacent to Site A.

With respect to conflicts with programs, plans, ordinances, or policies addressing the circulation system (**Impact TR-1**), the temple-only buildout under Alternative 2 would generate fewer localized vehicle trips at the site driveways than the full project program, as the meetinghouse would be eliminated. However, the regional vehicle trips associated with the displaced meetinghouse congregations would simply be redistributed to other existing or replacement meetinghouses in the area, rather than eliminated entirely. The reduced development program would also reduce the frontage improvement obligation; however, Alternative 2 would still be required to construct sidewalks, curb, and gutter improvements along the site frontage on Panorama Drive and Fairfax Road as a condition of project approval, consistent with BMC Title 16, Chapter 16.28. The Project design under Alternative 2 would preserve the existing Class II bike lanes on Panorama Drive and Fairfax Road and would not physically obstruct or remove any bicycle facility. Alternative 2 would be required to provide off-street parking consistent with BMC Title 17, Chapter 17.58, pay applicable Regional Transportation Impact Fees, and comply with all other applicable circulation-

related provisions of the BMC. Alternative 2 would be consistent with applicable plans, ordinances, and policies addressing the circulation system. Impacts would be less than significant.

With respect to consistency with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.3(b) (**Impact TR-2**), the VMT impact of Alternative 2 must be evaluated relative to the stakes (i.e., groups of local congregations) assigned to the proposed Bakersfield temple. Because Alternative 2 would be located approximately 12 miles northeast of the Project Site, the distance from assigned stakes to the temple would shift. For stakes concentrated in eastern and southern Bakersfield (e.g., Bakersfield East, Bakersfield South), Site A at Panorama Drive and Fairfax Road would result in longer average trip distances than the Project Site at Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue, reducing the magnitude of the VMT reduction benefit. Conversely, for the Bakersfield West stake, Site A may provide a comparable reduction. However, because Alternative 2 would still serve members who currently travel to distant temples in Los Angeles, Redlands, and Fresno, the Bakersfield temple at Site A would still result in a substantial net reduction in regional VMT compared to existing conditions, even if the magnitude of the reduction is somewhat less than the Project. While the elimination of the meetinghouse from the project program (and the demolition of the existing meetinghouse) would displace congregational vehicle trips to other existing or replacement meetinghouses in the region, this regional displacement would not negate the substantial regional VMT reduction achieved by the temple. Consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.3(b), projects that decrease VMT compared to existing conditions are presumed to have a less than significant transportation impact. Alternative 2 would result in a less than significant VMT impact. Impacts under Alternative 2 would be less than significant and similar to the Project, though the absolute VMT reduction may be less than the Project due to the greater distance from eastern and southern Bakersfield stakes.

With respect to substantial increases in hazards due to geometric design features (**Impact TR-3**), Alternative 2 would propose driveway access points on Panorama Drive and Fairfax Road. The access design would be required to comply with the City's driveway spacing and design standards and would be reviewed by the City as part of the discretionary approval process. The temple-only buildout under Alternative 2 would generate substantially fewer peak-hour trips at site driveways than the Project (which generates 139 PM peak-hour trips across both driveways). Based on the trip generation methodology documented in the TIA (Appendix 3.8), the temple alone accounts for a fraction of total project trips due to its scheduled, session-based operation model. Peak-hour driveway volumes are not expected to meet the CA MUTCD Warrant 3 thresholds, consistent with the Project's signal warrant findings. The right-in-right-out driveway configuration would be required at access points on Fairfax Road (an arterial) consistent with Circulation Element Policy 7, while full-access driveways could be permitted on Panorama Drive (a Collector). Impacts regarding hazards due to geometric design features would be less than significant.

Overall, transportation impacts under Alternative 2 would be less than significant across all three impact topics and similar to or less than the Project. The elimination of the meetinghouse reduces local driveway trip generation when compared to the Project, and the comparable regional VMT reduction benefit of locating a new Bakersfield temple supports a less than significant VMT finding.

Relationship to the Project Objectives

The Project's objectives are included in **Table 5.0-2, Alternative 2 Relationship to the Project Objectives**. As shown, Alternative 2 would partially meet five of the six Project objectives (Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5). While it would establish a local temple on an established institutional site where operational compatibility could be achieved through a CUP, it is constrained primarily by the elimination of the meetinghouse and ancillary facilities, the site's R-1 zoning and LR General Plan designation, and Site A's reduced regional highway accessibility relative to the Project Site. Alternative 2 would fail to meet Objective 6 entirely, as the residential land use requires a greater number of more complex discretionary approvals than the proposed Project.

Table 5.0-2
Alternative 2 Relationship to the Project Objectives

Project Objective	Relationship to the Objective
Objective #1: Design, build, and maintain a temple and meetinghouse whose physical and functional features symbolize the core beliefs of the Church and its members, and that provide places of worship consistent with these beliefs.	**Partially Met.** Alternative 2 would develop a temple at Site A; however, due to the constrained 6.2-acre lot size, the meetinghouse could not be accommodated and would be excluded from the project program. The temple could still be designed with the architectural and functional features that express the Church's core beliefs, including the temple spire, celestial room, and ordinance rooms. However, the absence of the meetinghouse would eliminate the weekly Sunday congregational worship function from the site entirely, representing a significant reduction in the breadth of the Church's places of worship objectives. This objective would be partially met.
Objective #2: Locate the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions to optimize their accessibility to the Church's members, taking into account their location relative to: • The existing Church membership within and near the Bakersfield community • The projected growth in Church membership • The nearest existing temples where local Church members now need to travel to worship	**Partially Met.** While Site A would still establish a local Bakersfield-area temple, reducing long-distance travel to Los Angeles, Redlands, and Fresno for all nine assigned stakes, its location in the far northeastern portion of the City is less central to the assigned membership base than the Project Site, which is situated at the intersection of Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue with direct regional access to SR-58, SR-99, and I-5. Members in the eastern and southern Bakersfield stakes would face longer average trip distances to Site A than to the Project Site, reducing the accessibility benefit. Additionally, the existing meetinghouse would be removed, resulting in the displacement of the Church members who currently attend services at the meetinghouse. This objective would be partially met.

Project Objective	Relationship to the Objective
Objective #3: Place the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions in a location where they are compatible with surrounding uses.	**Partially Met.** Site A is designated Low Density Residential (LR) in the City's General Plan and zoned Single-Unit Dwelling (R-1). A temple is not a permitted use by-right in the R-1 zone and would require a CUP and potentially a General Plan Amendment. The CUP process would ensure operational compatibility with the surrounding residential uses, thereby satisfying the compatibility aspect of this objective for the temple. However, placing a regional-serving religious campus within a low-density residential neighborhood presents greater compatibility hurdles than the Project Site's commercial and institutional corridor. Additionally, the meetinghouse and ancillary functions would also not be developed at Site A, further precluding the full attainment of this objective. This objective would be partially met.
Objective #4: Site the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions in a stable community that will have long-term uses.	**Partially Met.** Site A currently operates as an existing Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints meetinghouse serving members within the area, demonstrating an established institutional presence and a stable surrounding community. In this respect, Site A has characteristics consistent with long-term institutional use. However, the existing meetinghouse would be demolished to accommodate the temple, eliminating the existing congregational facility. The R-1 zoning designation of Site A, which is primarily intended for single-family residential use, does not inherently support long-term regional institutional uses of the scale contemplated by the temple program. This objective would be partially met.
Objective #5: Situate the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions to provide optimal accessibility to major highways, roadways, and arterial streets.	**Partially Met.** Site A is situated at the northwest corner of the intersection of Panorama Drive and Fairfax Road, which are classified as a Collector and an Arterial, respectively, in the City's General Plan Circulation Element. Site A also provides regional access to State Route 178 via Fairfax Road. However, compared to the Project Site, which provides direct access to SR-58 (0.4 miles north), SR-99 (5.4 miles east), and I-5 (7.7 miles southwest) from Stockdale Highway, Site A's regional highway access is more limited. SR-178 provides primarily east-west connectivity in the northeastern portion of the City and does not offer the same multi-directional regional accessibility that the Project Site provides. This objective would be partially met.
Objective #6: Ensure that the proposed site for the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions will conform to the extent reasonably possible with existing land use and zoning regulations and will minimize the number and type of discretionary local approvals needed to facilitate a timely completion of construction and opening of the Church's places of worship.	**Not Met.** Site A is designated Low Density Residential (LR) and zoned Single-Unit Dwelling (R-1). A religious assembly use at this scale is not permitted by-right in the R-1 zone and would require, at minimum, a CUP and potentially a General Plan Amendment to authorize the proposed temple use. While the requirement for additional discretionary approvals does not constitute a physical environmental impact under CEQA, Alternative 2 would require a greater number of more complex discretionary approvals than the proposed Project, extending the entitlement timeline and increasing regulatory uncertainty. This objective would not be met.

5.5.3 Alternative 3 –Site B Project Alternative

The environmental effects of the Site B Project Alternative are also summarized in **Table 5.0-5, Comparison of Alternatives to the Project,** below.

Aesthetics

The Site B Project Alternative would relocate the proposed Project to an approximately 14-acre site at the southeastern corner of McKee Road and Stine Road, approximately 7.23 miles southeast of the Project Site. Site B's size, shape, and topography are suitable to accommodate the full project program, including the temple, meetinghouse, and all associated improvements at the same building height, size, and scale as the proposed Project.

Regarding scenic quality/regulatory compliance (AES-1), Site B and its immediate vicinity are not designated as a scenic vista, scenic viewshed, or scenic vantage point in the General Plan, and Site B is not located adjacent to or near any officially designated or eligible state scenic highway. Site B is located within an urbanized area of southern Bakersfield; accordingly, the applicable threshold focuses on consistency with applicable zoning and regulations governing scenic quality. Site B is zoned MX-2 (Mixed-Use Transit), which accommodates the proposed ancillary uses, though a CUP would be required to authorize the primary religious assembly use. Similar to the Project, the City would require a Zone Modification or similar height exception to allow the steeple heights of 123 feet 6 inches for the temple and 66 feet 4 inches for the meetinghouse. The temple and meetinghouse design, setbacks, and landscaping proposed as part of the Project would remain unchanged, and the same General Plan aesthetic policies would apply. Aesthetic impacts under AES-1 would be less than significant and similar to the Project.

Regarding light and glare (AES-2), since Alternative 3 would accommodate the full project program at the same size and scale as the proposed Project, nighttime lighting and daytime glare impacts under Alternative 3 would be similar to the Project. The surrounding land uses, residential neighborhoods to the north, east, and west, and schools to the south and northwest, would trigger the BMC Section 17.71.030.D 0.5 foot-candle threshold at residential property lines on multiple sides. The same lighting design standards and photometric compliance requirements described in **Section 3.1.3.3** would apply to Alternative 3 under the methodology described in Section 5.4. Daytime glare characteristics would be the same as the Project, given the identical material palette. Light and glare impacts under AES-2 would be less than significant and similar to the Project.

Overall, aesthetic impacts under Alternative 3 would be less than significant and similar to the Project.

Air Quality

The Site B Project Alternative would relocate the proposed Project to Site B, an approximately 14-acre parcel located approximately 7.23 miles southeast of the Project Site. Site B is surrounded by predominantly residential uses to the north, east, and west, a high school to the northwest, and an elementary school to the south. Because Site B is of sufficient size and suitable configuration to accommodate the full project program, Alternative 3 would include both the temple and the meetinghouse at the same building height, size, and scale as the proposed Project. The construction schedule and activities are not anticipated to differ substantially from the Project.

With respect to consistency with applicable air quality plans (**AQ Impact 1**), Alternative 3 would involve construction and operation of a religious campus functionally identical to the proposed Project. The scale of emissions would be similar in magnitude to the Project, and Alternative 3 would not conflict with or hinder SJVAPCD attainment plan implementation. Impacts under **AQ Impact 1** would be less than significant.

With respect to criteria pollutant emissions and SJVAPCD regional and localized significance thresholds (AQ Impact 2), construction activities under Alternative 3 would involve the same scope and duration as the proposed Project, including grading, utility installation, and construction of the temple and meetinghouse. As with the Project, construction emissions under Alternative 3 are not anticipated to exceed SJVAPCD regional or localized significance thresholds, consistent with the modeling findings presented in **Table 3.2-5**. Operational emissions, including vehicle trips generated by temple and meetinghouse activities, would be similar to the Project given the identical program. Impacts under **AQ Impact 2** would be less than significant.

With respect to sensitive receptor exposure to toxic air contaminants (**AQ Impact 3**), diesel-powered construction equipment and an emergency generator would be operated under Alternative 3. **Mitigation Measure MM AQ-1** would apply, requiring the use of Tier 4 Final engines for off-road construction equipment to address DPM emissions and protect nearby sensitive receptors, including the residential uses and schools surrounding Site B. As with the proposed Project, while unmitigated construction mass emissions for criteria pollutants (e.g., total PM10) would remain below SJVAPCD regional thresholds, the localized unmitigated DPM concentrations would result in a potentially significant health risk to nearby receptors. With implementation of **MM AQ-1**, which specifically targets and reduces DPM exhaust, the localized health risk impacts under **AQ Impact 3** would be reduced to a less than significant level.

With respect to objectionable odors (**AQ Impact 4**), Alternative 3 would not introduce land uses associated with odor generation. No impact would occur.

Overall, construction and operational air quality impacts under Alternative 3 would be less than significant and similar to the Project across all impact topics.

Biological Resources

The Site B Project Alternative would relocate the proposed Project to an approximately 14-acre vacant parcel at the southeastern corner of McKee Road and Stine Road, approximately 7.23 miles southeast of the Project Site. Site B is bordered by residential neighborhoods to the north, east, and west; an elementary school to the south; and a high school to the northwest. Large tracts of farmland lie further south of the site. Because Site B is a currently vacant, unpaved lot of sufficient size to accommodate the full project program, including both the temple and meetinghouse, construction activities under Alternative 3 would be comparable in scope and duration to the proposed Project.

With respect to special-status species (**Impact BIO-1**), Site B is a vacant parcel in the southeastern outskirts of Bakersfield. While a project-specific biological resources assessment has not been conducted for Site B, its characteristics, a vacant lot within an urbanizing area surrounded by residential development and farmland, suggest a biological setting that is broadly comparable to, or potentially of greater sensitivity than, the Project Site, given the proximity to agricultural lands to the south that may provide habitat for San Joaquin Valley grassland-dependent species such as burrowing owl and San Joaquin kit fox. Construction activities, including grading, excavation, and vegetation removal, could disturb habitat for special-status species that may be present. Consistent with the methodology described in **Section 5.4**, **MM BIO-1** through **MM BIO-5** would apply to Alternative 3, requiring a Worker Environmental Awareness Program, biological monitoring, pre-construction take-avoidance surveys, nesting bird surveys, and burrowing owl protocol surveys prior to any ground disturbance. With implementation of MM BIO-1 through MM BIO-5, impacts to special-status species under Alternative 3 would be less than significant.

With respect to sensitive natural communities and riparian habitat (**Impact BIO-2**), Site B is a vacant parcel surrounded by urban development and does not appear to contain mapped riparian habitat, sensitive natural communities, or wetland features based on available regional data. Similar to the Project Site, no impacts to sensitive natural communities are anticipated. Similar to the Project Site, no sensitive natural communities are present or anticipated at Site B. Impacts under Impact BIO-2 would be no impact, consistent with the Project.

With respect to wildlife movement corridors and nursery sites (**Impact BIO-3**), Site B is surrounded by residential development and roadways. The site does not appear to lie within a designated California Essential Habitat Connectivity area. As with the Project Site, Site B does not function as a regional wildlife movement corridor. **MM BIO-3** through **MM BIO-5** would ensure the avoidance of active nests and the

protection of any nesting migratory birds during construction. Impacts under Impact BIO-3 would be less than significant with mitigation.

With respect to local ordinances protecting biological resources (**Impact BIO-4**), if any trees or protected vegetation are present at Site B, applicable provisions of BMC Section 17.61.050 would apply as a standard condition of project approval. **MM BIO-4** would separately address nesting birds associated with any such vegetation. Impacts would be less than significant.

Overall, biological resource impacts under Alternative 3 would be less than significant with implementation of **MM BIO-1** through **MM BIO-5** and similar to the Project, as both involve development of a comparably-sized vacant parcel with potential for grassland-dependent special-status species.

Cultural, Tribal Cultural, & Paleontological Resources

The Site B Project Alternative would develop the full project program, temple, meetinghouse, and associated improvements, on an approximately 14-acre vacant parcel at the southeastern corner of McKee Road and Stine Road, approximately 7.23 miles southeast of the Project Site. Like the Project Site, Site B is a currently vacant, unpaved lot with no structures present.

With respect to historical resources (**Impact CR-1**), Site B is a vacant parcel containing no identified buildings, structures, or objects. Consistent with the project-level analysis, the absence of constructed improvements on Site B means there are no known historical resources that could be adversely affected by construction. No impact to historical resources would occur under Alternative 3.

With respect to archaeological resources (**Impact CR-2**), construction of Alternative 3 would require ground disturbance, grading, and excavation comparable in scope to the proposed Project. While no project-specific archaeological survey has been conducted for Site B, the site is located within the southern San Joaquin Valley, a region with established prehistoric occupation by the Southern Valley Yokuts and known sensitivity for buried archaeological deposits in alluvial settings. **MM CR-1** would apply to Alternative 3, requiring WEAP training by a qualified archaeologist prior to ground disturbance and immediate evaluation if archaeological resources are encountered. With implementation of **MM CR-1**, impacts to archaeological resources would be less than significant.

With respect to human remains (**Impact CR-3**), ground-disturbing activities at Site B could inadvertently uncover human remains. Compliance with California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 is required by law. These statutes mandate that if human remains are discovered, all ground-disturbing work must halt in the immediate vicinity of the find, and the County Coroner must be notified. If the Coroner determines the remains are Native American, the Native American

Heritage Commission (NAHC) must be contacted to identify the Most Likely Descendant, who will provide recommendations for the proper treatment and disposition of the remains. Because adherence to these mandatory procedures ensures any inadvertently discovered remains are protected from further disturbance and treated with appropriate cultural dignity, impacts would be less than significant.

With respect to tribal cultural resources (**Impact CR-4**), AB 52 and SB 18, tribal consultation would be required for Alternative 3 at a new location. The AB 52 consultation conducted for the Project applies only to the Project Site and cannot be transferred to Site B. New tribal notification, the 30-day statutory response period would be required, and any responsive tribes requesting consultation must be accommodated. If potential TCRs are discovered during ground-disturbing activities, **MM TCR-1** would apply, requiring work stoppage, City notification, and consultation with affiliated tribes to determine appropriate treatment. With implementation of **MM TCR-1**, impacts to TCRs would be less than significant.

With respect to paleontological resources (**Impact CR-5**), Site B is underlain by alluvial deposits in the southern San Joaquin Valley. As with the Project Site, excavation at depth could encounter Pleistocene alluvial sediments with elevated paleontological sensitivity. **MM PR-1** would apply, requiring WEAP training by a qualified paleontologist, work stoppage and evaluation protocols if paleontological resources are discovered, and preparation of a monitoring plan for City review and approval. With implementation of **MM PR-1**, impacts to paleontological resources would be less than significant.

Overall, cultural, tribal cultural, and paleontological resource impacts under Alternative 3 would be less than significant with implementation of **MM CR-1**, **MM TCR-1**, and **MM PR-1**, and similar to the Project across all impact topics.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Site B Project Alternative would relocate the proposed Project to an approximately 14-acre vacant parcel at the southeastern corner of McKee Road and Stine Road, approximately 7.23 miles southeast of the Project Site. Site B was selected to evaluate the environmental comparison of an off-site location capable of accommodating the full project program, regardless of current applicant ownership. Site B is of sufficient size and suitable configuration to accommodate the full project program, the temple, meetinghouse, and all associated improvements, at the same building height, size, and scale as the proposed Project. Construction activities and schedule are not anticipated to differ substantially from the Project.

With respect to GHG emissions generation (**GHG Impact 1**), construction-phase GHG emissions under Alternative 3 would be similar to the proposed Project, as the scope, duration, and equipment requirements would be comparable. Operational GHG emissions from vehicle trips, energy use, water consumption, and solid waste would also be similar to the Project, as the same program of uses would generate comparable

trip generation rates and utility demands. These emissions are provided for informational purposes consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.4(a). Significance is determined by consistency with GHG reduction plans, as described below.

With respect to consistency with applicable GHG reduction plans and policies (**GHG Impact 2**), Alternative 3 would be required to comply with Title 24, CALGreen, and all other applicable state and local building and energy efficiency regulations. The same project design features supporting PCAP consistency, EV charging infrastructure, pedestrian improvements, drought-tolerant landscaping, and waste diversion, would be implemented under Alternative 3 at Site B. Site B is located near existing residential neighborhoods in southern Bakersfield, which similarly supports the PCAP and Kern COG RTP/SCS goals of reducing per capita VMT. However, Site B is located approximately 7.23 miles southeast of the Project Site, 10 miles south of the City center, and is farther from a major highway than the Project Site. This location may result in slightly longer average vehicle trip lengths for temple and meetinghouse patrons compared to the proposed Project Site, which is directly accessible from Stockdale Highway with immediate regional highway connections. Nevertheless, by locating a community-serving religious campus within the City rather than requiring members to travel to temples in other regions, Alternative 3 would still support the RTP/SCS VMT reduction goals. Alternative 3 would be consistent with the City's PCAP and the CARB Scoping Plan for the same reasons as the proposed Project, as analyzed in **Table 3.5-6** and **Table 3.5-7.** GHG impacts under Alternative 3 would thus be less than significant.

Overall, GHG impacts under Alternative 3 would be less than significant and similar to the Project across both impact topics, as Alternative 3 would construct the identical building program, implement the same energy-efficiency design features, and achieve a comparable regional VMT reduction by establishing a local temple.

Land Use and Planning

The Site B Project Alternative would relocate the full project program, temple, meetinghouse, and associated improvements, to an approximately 14-acre parcel at the southeastern corner of McKee Road and Stine Road (APN 514-020-01). Site B is designated General Commercial (GC) in the City's General Plan and zoned Mixed-Use Transit (MX-2), which allows Regional Commercial (C-2) uses. No existing residential structures or people would be displaced, as Site B is a vacant parcel.

With respect to physically dividing an established community, Alternative 3 would develop a single vacant parcel within an established urban area and would not introduce any linear infrastructure element that would divide an existing community. No impact would result.

With respect to conflicts with land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental effects (**Impact LAN-1**), the proposed temple and meetinghouse uses under Alternative 3 would require a CUP in the MX-2 zone. However, Site B's General Commercial (GC) designation is broadly compatible with institutional and community-serving uses, and the MX-2 zone is intended to accommodate a range of mixed uses including regional commercial activities. A CUP process would allow the City to impose conditions ensuring compatibility with the surrounding residential neighborhoods and schools. The temple and meetinghouse design, setbacks, and landscaping would remain consistent with applicable General Plan compatibility policies. With approval of the required CUP and compliance with applicable City development standards, land use impacts under Alternative 3 would be less than significant. Both the Project and Alternative 3 involve discretionary entitlements (Zone Modification for the Project; CUP for Alternative 3) therefore impacts would be less than significant and similar.

Noise & Vibration

The Site B Project Alternative would develop the full project program, temple, meetinghouse, and associated improvements, on an approximately 14-acre vacant parcel at the southeastern corner of McKee Road and Stine Road. Because Alternative 3 would implement the same building program as the proposed Project on a similarly vacant, unpaved site, construction activities, equipment types, and construction schedule are anticipated to be comparable to the Project. Site B is located adjacent to existing residential uses and in proximity to local schools, which are classified as noise-sensitive receptors.

Construction Noise

With respect to construction-related noise (**Impact NOI-1**), construction activities at Site B would involve the same five phases as the proposed Project: site preparation, grading, building construction, paving, and architectural coating. The construction equipment fleet, usage factors, and duration would be comparable to the proposed Project. A site-specific construction noise model has not been prepared for Site B; however, given that Site B is a vacant parcel of similar scale surrounded by residential uses and schools, construction noise at the nearest sensitive receptors is expected to be comparable to the Project's modeled range of 55 to 79 dBA Leq(8h) at residential receptors. All construction activities would be required to comply with BMC Section 9.22.050's time-of-day restrictions (6:00 AM to 9:00 PM weekdays; 8:00 AM to 9:00 PM weekends) and BMC Section 9.22.030's noise standards. The best practice noise minimization measures identified in **Section 3.7.4.3** would also apply. Construction noise impacts under Alternative 3 would be less than significant and similar to the Project.

Operational Noise

With respect to operational noise (**Impact NOI-1**), Alternative 3 would generate mobile source and stationary noise comparable to the proposed Project, as the same land uses, temple and meetinghouse, would be developed at the same building scale. Vehicle trip generation rates, HVAC equipment requirements, and parking activity would be similar. However, the roadway network and ambient noise environment at Site B differ from those at the Project Site. Site B is located at the southeastern corner of McKee Road and Stine Road, which has lower traffic volumes than the Stockdale Highway / Jewetta Avenue corridor where the Project is located. The existing ambient noise level at Site B is likely lower than the measured Project Site ambient of 56.3 dBA CNEL. In a lower-ambient environment, the same project-generated operational noise levels could result in a greater perceived noise increase at sensitive receptors compared to the Project Site. Nonetheless, the same regulatory standards, the City's BMC daytime limit of 55 dBA Leq, nighttime limit of 50 dBA Leq, and the General Plan Noise Element compatibility thresholds, would apply to Alternative 3, and compliance would be required as a condition of project approval. Operational noise impacts under Alternative 3 would be less than significant and similar to the Project.

Construction and Operational Vibration

With respect to groundborne vibration (**Impact NOI-2**), construction activities at Site B would not require pile driving. The most vibration-intensive equipment anticipated, a vibratory roller, generates a PPV of 0.21 in/sec at 25 feet, which is below the Caltrans threshold of 0.50 in/sec PPV for new residential structures. Operationally, the temple and meetinghouse would generate no substantive vibration sources. Construction and operational vibration impacts under Alternative 3 would be less than significant and similar to the Project.

Overall, noise and vibration impacts under Alternative 3 would be less than significant across both impact topics and similar to the Project.

Transportation

The Site B Project Alternative would develop the full project program, temple, meetinghouse, and associated improvements, on an approximately 14-acre vacant parcel at the southeastern corner of McKee Road and Stine Road, approximately 7.23 miles southeast of the Project Site. The City's General Plan Circulation Element classifies Stine Road as an Arterial and McKee Road as a Collector, consistent with the same functional roadway hierarchy present at the Project Site (Stockdale Highway as Arterial, Jewetta Avenue as Collector). Neither McKee Road nor Stine Road is currently designated as Class II or other bicycle lane facilities in the City's Bicycle Transportation Plan. No GetBus transit stops are located along McKee Road or Stine Road in the vicinity of Site B.

With respect to conflicts with programs, plans, ordinances, or policies addressing the circulation system (**Impact TR-1**), Alternative 3 would develop the same building program as the proposed Project and would generate comparable trip volumes (approximately 71 AM peak-hour trips, 139 PM peak-hour trips, and 191 Saturday peak-hour trips, consistent with the TIA methodology). These trips would be accommodated on Stine Road (an Arterial designed for higher-volume regional traffic) and McKee Road (a Collector providing neighborhood-to-arterial connectivity). As a condition of project approval, Alternative 3 would be required to construct full frontage improvements, including sidewalks, curb, and gutter, along the site frontage on McKee Road and Stine Road where none currently exist, consistent with BMC Chapter 16.28. However, unlike the Project Site, neither McKee Road nor Stine Road are currently designated bicycle lane facilities, meaning Alternative 3 would not provide the bicycle network preservation and connectivity benefits of the proposed Project. Furthermore, the absence of transit service along the McKee Road and Stine Road corridor means that Alternative 3 would not support transit connectivity in the manner that the Project does along the GetBus Route 82 corridor (Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue). Alternative 3 would be required to pay applicable Regional Transportation Impact Fees and comply with all applicable BMC requirements. Alternative 3 would be consistent with the Circulation Element's roadway hierarchy and development standards. Impacts would be less than significant, though Alternative 3 would provide fewer multimodal transportation benefits than the Project due to the absence of bicycle lane and transit infrastructure in the Site B corridor.

With respect to consistency with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.3(b) (**Impact TR-2**), the VMT impact of Alternative 3 must be evaluated relative to the same nine assigned stakes. Site B is located approximately 7.23 miles southeast of the Project Site and farther from the Bakersfield West stake (zip code 93312), which accounts for the largest single VMT reduction in the Project's analysis (110.3-mile reduction per trip × 2,019 annual visits = 123,720 annual VMT). The greater distance of Site B from western Bakersfield, where the Bakersfield West stake is concentrated, would reduce the annual VMT reduction below the Project's 718,209-mile figure. Conversely, Site B's more southern and eastern location would benefit the Bakersfield East and Bakersfield South stakes marginally. However, Alternative 3, like the Project, would still establish a local Bakersfield temple serving members who currently travel to Los Angeles, Redlands, and Fresno, resulting in a substantial net reduction in regional VMT compared to existing conditions. Consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.3(b), this net VMT reduction would support a less than significant transportation impact. Impacts would be less than significant and similar to the Project, though the absolute annual VMT reduction may be modestly less than the Project due to Site B's greater distance from the Bakersfield West stake.

With respect to substantial increases in hazards due to geometric design features (**Impact TR-3**), Alternative 3 would propose driveway access on Stine Road (Arterial) and McKee Road (Collector),

consistent with the same roadway hierarchy as the Project. Access design would be required to comply with the City's driveway spacing and design standards. As Stine Road currently features an existing center left-turn lane, it is anticipated that full-access driveways (allowing left-turn ingress and egress) could be permitted by the City on both frontages, though a dedicated right-turn deceleration lane may be required on Stine Road. Because the same project program would be developed, trip generation at site driveways would be comparable to the Project. Based on the Project's TIA, driveway volumes are not expected to meet the CA MUTCD Warrant 3 peak-hour signal threshold. The adequate driveway spacing from the McKee Road/Stine Road intersection, combined with City-reviewed access restrictions and lane configurations, would minimize conflict points and prevent queuing hazards. Impacts regarding hazards due to geometric design features would be less than significant and similar to the Project.

Overall, transportation impacts under Alternative 3 would be less than significant across all three impact topics. Alternative 3 would be similar to the Project in terms of VMT reduction and geometric safety, but would provide fewer multimodal transportation benefits compared to the Project due to the absence of bicycle lane facilities and GetBus transit service on McKee Road and Stine Road.

Relationship to the Project Objectives

The Project's objectives are included in **Table 5.0-3, Alternative 3 Relationship to the Project Objectives**. As shown, while Alternative 3 would meet Objective 1, Objective 3, and Objective 4 to the same extent as the Project by developing the full temple and meetinghouse program within a community that is compatible with religious uses, it would meet Objectives 2, 5, and 6 only to a lesser extent than the Project, due to Site B's peripheral location relative to the assigned membership base, farther distance from freeway access compared to the Project Site, and the need for a CUP not required for the proposed Project.

Table 5.0-3
Alternative 3 Relationship to the Project Objectives

Project Objective	Relationship to the Objective
Objective #1: Design, build, and maintain a temple and meetinghouse whose physical and functional features symbolize the core beliefs of the Church and its members, and that provide places of worship consistent with these beliefs.	**Met, Similar to the Project.** Alternative 3 would develop the full project program, temple, and meetinghouse at Site B at the same building size and scale as the proposed Project. The temple and meetinghouse would retain the same architectural design, including the temple spire, celestial room, ordinance rooms, and meetinghouse chapel, that express the Church's core beliefs. The relocation to Site B would not alter the physical or functional character of either facility. This objective would be met to the same extent as the Project.

Project Objective	Relationship to the Objective
Objective #2: Locate the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions to optimize their accessibility to the Church's members, taking into account their location relative to: • The existing Church membership within and near the Bakersfield community • The projected growth in Church membership • The nearest existing temples where local Church members now need to travel to worship	**Partially Met, to a Lesser Extent than the Project.** Alternative 3 would establish a local Bakersfield-area temple and meetinghouse, reducing long-distance travel to Los Angeles, Redlands, and Fresno for all nine assigned stakes. However, Site B is located approximately 7.23 miles southeast of the Project Site, near the southern periphery of the City, approximately 10 miles from the City center. This location is more distant from the Bakersfield West stake, which accounts for the largest single VMT reduction in the Project's analysis, and is less centrally accessible to the broader assigned membership base than the Project Site at Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue. Members in the western and northern Bakersfield stakes would face longer average trip distances to Site B than to the Project Site. This objective would be met, but to a lesser extent than the Project.
Objective #3: Place the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions in a location where they are compatible with surrounding uses.	**Met, Similar to the Project.** Site B is located within a predominantly suburban area of the City and is surrounded by residential uses and schools, which are generally compatible with a religious institutional campus. Religious assembly uses frequently co-locate with schools and residential neighborhoods. This objective would be met similar to the Project.
Objective #4: Site the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions in a stable community that will have long-term uses.	**Met, Similar to the Project.** Site B is a vacant parcel surrounded by established residential neighborhoods in the southern portion of Bakersfield. The surrounding residential uses represent a stable, built-out community context. The City's General Commercial (GC) General Plan designation and MX-2 zoning for Site B reflect a long-term vision for mixed institutional and commercial uses at this location, supporting the sustained operation of community-serving facilities. Similar to the Project, the assigned Church membership base is a geographically defined and relatively stable population that would have long-term access to the temple and meetinghouse at this location. This objective would be met to a similar extent as the Project.
Objective #5: Situate the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions to provide optimal accessibility to major highways, roadways, and arterial streets.	**Partially Met, to a Lesser Extent than the Project.** Site B is situated at the southeastern corner of McKee Road and Stine Road, which are classified by the City's General Plan Circulation Element as a Collector and an Arterial roadway, respectively. While Stine Road provides arterial-level connectivity within the southern portion of the City, Site B is farther from a major state highway or freeway than the proposed Project Site. By contrast, the Project Site provides direct regional access to SR-58 (0.4 miles north), SR-99 (5.4 miles east), and I-5 (7.7 miles southwest) from Stockdale Highway, a six-lane Arterial, providing multi-directional regional highway access. The farther freeway access at Site B would result in longer travel times for members arriving from outside the immediate vicinity, reducing the accessibility benefit for regionally assigned members. This objective would be partially met, but to a lesser extent than the Project.

Project Objective	Relationship to the Objective
Objective #6: Ensure that the proposed site for the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions will conform to the extent reasonably possible with existing land use and zoning regulations and will minimize the number and type of discretionary local approvals needed to facilitate a timely completion of construction and opening of the Church's places of worship.	**Partially Met, to a Lesser Extent than the Project.** Site B is designated General Commercial (GC) in the City's General Plan and zoned Mixed-Use Transit (MX-2). Religious assembly is not a listed permitted or conditionally permitted use by-right in the MX-2 zone, requiring a CUP to authorize the proposed uses. By contrast, the proposed Project is a by-right religious use in the C-O zone, requiring only a Zone Modification for steeple heights exceeding 60 feet, a narrower and more ministerial form of discretionary approval than a CUP. Alternative 3 would therefore require a greater number of discretionary approvals than the proposed Project, including at minimum a CUP and a Vesting Tentative Parcel Map, extending the entitlement timeline and introducing greater regulatory uncertainty. While the requirement for a CUP does not constitute a physical environmental impact under CEQA, and while the GC designation is not fundamentally incompatible with institutional uses, the additional CUP requirement represents a meaningful departure from the objective's goal of minimizing discretionary approvals to facilitate timely project delivery. This objective would be partially met, but to a lesser extent than the Project.

5.5.4 Alternative 4 – Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office)

The environmental effects of the Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office) are also summarized in **Table 5.0-5, Comparison of Alternatives to the Project**, below.

Aesthetics

The Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office) would develop the Project Site with a four-story, 50-foot-tall, 200,000-square-foot medical office building, a surface parking lot with 818 parking spaces, landscaping, and 300 trees. This alternative would occur on the same Project Site as the proposed Project.

Regarding scenic quality/regulatory compliance (AES-1), the Project Site is located in an urbanized area; accordingly, the applicable threshold focuses on consistency with applicable zoning and regulations governing scenic quality. The medical office building, at 50 feet in height, would fall within the C-O zone's 60-foot height limit and would not require a Zone Modification, unlike the Project's steeples. The by-right medical office use would encompass the family ancestral search and ancillary clothing distribution and sale uses, and would be consistent with C-O zoning without discretionary approval. The medical office building would be required to comply with all applicable General Plan policies and BMC development standards governing scenic quality as part of ministerial permitting, including landscaping (BMC Chapter 17.61), parking standards (BMC Chapter 17.58), and sign regulations (BMC Chapter 17.60). As with the Project, aesthetic impacts under AES-1 would be less than significant and similar to the proposed Project.

Regarding light and glare (AES-2), the 818-space surface parking lot associated with Alternative 4 represents a significantly larger parking area than the Project's 292 spaces, resulting in a substantially larger number of pole-mounted parking lot lights and a greater overall nighttime lighting footprint on the Project Site. This increased lighting would be subject to BMC Section 17.71.030.D's 0.5 foot-candle limit at the northern residential property line; however, the larger parking area extending closer to the site perimeter may require greater shielding measures to achieve compliance. Facade and security lighting for a large commercial medical office building would also introduce new ambient lighting compared to the currently vacant site. Daytime glare from a commercial medical office building would depend on the final material selection; if exterior glazing similar to the adjacent specialty pediatric care facility (described in **Section 3.1.1.4**) were used, larger glass window areas could generate more specular daytime glare than the Project's matte-finish limestone and low-iron glass. Under the methodology described in Section 5.4, the same BMC lighting standards would apply, and light and glare impacts under AES-2 would be less than significant, but greater than the Project.

Overall, Alternative 4 would result in less than significant aesthetic impacts. Compared to the Project, Alternative 4 would introduce a significantly larger parking footprint with greater associated nighttime lighting and potentially greater daytime glare from commercial glazing. Aesthetic impacts under Alternative 4 would be greater than the Project with respect to light and glare (AES-2), and similar to the Project with respect to regulatory compliance (AES-1).

Air Quality

The Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office) would develop the Project Site with a four-story, 50-foot-tall, 200,000-square-foot medical office building, an 818-space surface parking lot, landscaping, and 300 trees. Alternative 4 would occur on the same 13.07-acre Project Site as the proposed Project. The gross building area of Alternative 4 (200,000 square feet) substantially exceeds the proposed Project's gross building area of approximately 50,122 square feet (for all proposed buildings); however, site disturbance during construction would encompass the same 13.07-acre parcel. Operational vehicle trips generated by a 200,000-square-foot medical office use would be substantially greater than those generated by the proposed Project's religious assembly campus, given the higher trip generation rates associated with medical office uses compared to the Project's appointment-based, carpool-oriented operations.

With respect to consistency with applicable air quality plans (**AQ Impact 1**), Alternative 4 would generate greater operational emissions than the Project due to higher employee and visitor vehicle trip generation. However, as a by-right commercial use in the C-O zone, Alternative 4 would be required to comply with all applicable SJVAPCD rules and regulations, and its emissions profile would be consistent with land uses

anticipated in the SJVAPCD's attainment planning. Impacts under **AQ Impact 1** would be less than significant.

With respect to criteria pollutant emissions and SJVAPCD regional and localized significance thresholds (**AQ Impact 2**), construction of Alternative 4 would disturb the same overall project footprint as the proposed Project, resulting in similar construction-phase fugitive dust and equipment exhaust emissions. However, the greater building area may extend the construction duration, potentially increasing cumulative equipment operating hours compared to the Project. Operationally, Alternative 4 would generate substantially greater vehicle trip emissions due to higher medical office trip generation rates. Alternative 4 would be subject to SJVAPCD Rule 9510 (Indirect Source Review), which requires a 20 percent reduction in construction NOx emissions and a 45 percent reduction in construction PM10 emissions, as well as a 33.3 percent reduction in operational NOx and 50 percent reduction in operational PM10 emissions. Adherence to Rule 9510 and all other applicable air quality regulations would ensure that construction and operational emissions remain below SJVAPCD thresholds. Impacts under **AQ Impact 2** would be less than significant.

With respect to sensitive receptor exposure to toxic air contaminants (**AQ Impact 3**), diesel-powered construction equipment and operational diesel vehicle activity associated with medical office and other permitted uses would be present under Alternative 4. As with the Project, **MM AQ-1** would apply to construction equipment, requiring Tier 4 Final engines to reduce DPM emissions and protect nearby sensitive receptors. With implementation of **MM AQ-1**, impacts under **AQ Impact 3** would be less than significant.

With respect to objectionable odors (**AQ Impact 4**), medical office uses do not typically constitute a source of objectionable odors as defined under CEQA. No impact would occur.

Overall, air quality impacts under Alternative 4 would be less than significant. Compared to the Project, Alternative 4 would result in greater operational air quality emissions due to the higher vehicle trip generation associated with a large medical office use, making operational air quality impacts under Alternative 4 greater than the Project, though remaining below applicable SJVAPCD significance thresholds.

Biological Resources

The Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office) would develop the same 13.07-acre Project Site with a four-story, 200,000-square-foot medical office building, an 818-space surface parking lot, landscaping, and 300 trees. Because Alternative 4 would occur on the same Project Site as the proposed Project, the existing

biological resource conditions described in **Section 3.3.1**, including the fiddleneck plant community, ruderal grassland, burrow features, and associated special-status species habitat, are directly applicable.

With respect to special-status species (**Impact BIO-1**), construction of Alternative 4 would require ground disturbance, grading, and vegetation removal across the same 13.07-acre site as the proposed Project. These activities would disturb the fiddleneck plant community and burrow habitat that provides marginal potential habitat for burrowing owl, San Joaquin kit fox, nesting migratory birds, and special-status plant species identified in **Table 3.3-1**. The development footprint of Alternative 4, encompassing a large surface parking lot and building pad, would result in permanent removal of the entire grassland vegetation community, leaving no residual open or ruderal habitat on the site. By comparison, the proposed Project's design retains approximately 5.89 acres of landscaped open space, providing some post-construction habitat value for foraging birds and pollinators. The total permanent impact to existing site vegetation and burrow habitat under Alternative 4 would therefore be greater than the Project. Consistent with the methodology described in **Section 5.4**, **MM BIO-1** through **MM BIO-5** would apply to Alternative 4, requiring a Worker Environmental Awareness Program, biological monitoring, pre-construction take-avoidance surveys for San Joaquin kit fox and other special-status species, nesting bird surveys and avoidance buffers, and burrowing owl protocol surveys prior to any ground disturbance. With implementation of **MM BIO-1** through **MM BIO-5**, impacts to special-status species under Alternative 4 would be less than significant.

With respect to sensitive natural communities and riparian habitat (**Impact BIO-2**), Alternative 4 would occur on the same Project Site, which contains no sensitive natural communities, riparian habitat, or wetland features, as established in the project-level analysis. No impacts to sensitive natural communities would occur. Impacts under **Impact BIO-2** would be no impact, consistent with the Project-level analysis.

With respect to wildlife movement corridors and nursery sites (**Impact BIO-3**), the Project Site does not serve as a wildlife movement corridor or regional linkage, as established in **Section 3.3.3.3** (**Impact BIO-3**). This conclusion applies equally to Alternative 4. **MM BIO-3** through **MM BIO-5** would ensure avoidance of active nests and compliance with MBTA, BGEPA, and CFGC during construction. Impacts under **Impact BIO-3** would be less than significant with mitigation.

With respect to local ordinances protecting biological resources (**Impact BIO-4**), the Project Site does not currently contain protected trees subject to BMC Section 17.61.050. However, the 300 trees proposed as part of Alternative 4's landscaping would be subject to tree preservation requirements following project completion. No conflict with applicable local ordinances would occur during construction. Impacts under **Impact BIO-4** would be less than significant.

Overall, biological resource impacts under Alternative 4 would be less than significant with implementation of **MM BIO-1** through **MM BIO-5**. Compared to the Project, Alternative 4 would result in greater permanent loss of the existing on-site grassland and burrow habitat due to its larger development footprint and reduced open space retention, making biological resource impacts under Alternative 4 incrementally greater than the Project during the construction phase and in terms of permanent habitat removal, though remaining less than significant with mitigation.

Cultural, Tribal Cultural, & Paleontological Resources

The Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office) would develop the same 13.07-acre Project Site as the proposed Project with a four-story, 200,000-square-foot medical office building, an 818-space surface parking lot, landscaping, and 300 trees. Because Alternative 4 would occur on the same Project Site, the cultural resource conditions described in **Section 3.4.1**, including the absence of historical resources, the low-to-moderate archaeological sensitivity of Holocene alluvial soils, the negative SLF results, and the completed AB 52 consultation, apply directly.

With respect to historical resources (**Impact CR-1**), the Project Site contains no historical resources, as established in **Section 3.4.3**. No above-ground historic resources would be demolished or adversely affected by Alternative 4. No impact would occur, consistent with the Project.

With respect to archaeological resources (Impact CR-2), construction of Alternative 4 would require ground disturbance and excavation across the same 13.07-acre site. The 818-space surface parking lot would require more extensive grading across a larger portion of the site compared to the proposed Project's more compact building footprint and landscaped open space. This expanded grading area could increase the probability of encountering buried archaeological deposits compared to the Project. **MM CR-1** would apply to Alternative 4, requiring WEAP training by a qualified archaeologist prior to ground disturbance and immediate evaluation and work stoppage protocols if archaeological resources are encountered. With implementation of **MM CR-1**, impacts to archaeological resources would be less than significant.

With respect to human remains (Impact CR-3), ground-disturbing activities associated with Alternative 4 could inadvertently uncover human remains. Compliance with California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 applies by law. Impacts would be less than significant, consistent with the Project.

With respect to tribal cultural resources (**Impact CR-4**), the AB 52 and SB 18 consultation process completed for the Project applies to the Project Site and is therefore directly applicable to Alternative 4, which is located on the same parcel. The SLF search returned negative results, and the AB 52 notification process concluded with no requests for consultation from culturally affiliated tribes. No TCRs were identified

within the Project Site. However, if potential TCRs are inadvertently discovered during construction of Alternative 4, **MM TCR-1** would apply, requiring immediate work stoppage, City notification, and tribal consultation to determine appropriate treatment. With implementation of **MM TCR-1**, impacts to TCRs would be less than significant, consistent with the Project.

With respect to paleontological resources (**Impact CR-5**), construction of Alternative 4 would disturb the same underlying Holocene alluvial deposits as the proposed Project. The expanded grading footprint associated with the larger parking area could increase the depth and extent of excavation compared to the Project, potentially reaching Pleistocene alluvial sediments with higher paleontological sensitivity. **MM PR-1** would apply, requiring WEAP training by a qualified paleontologist, work stoppage and evaluation if paleontological resources are discovered, and preparation of a monitoring plan subject to City review and approval. With implementation of **MM PR-1**, impacts to paleontological resources would be less than significant.

Overall, cultural, tribal cultural, and paleontological resource impacts under Alternative 4 would be less than significant with implementation of **MM CR-1**, **MM TCR-1**, and MM PR-1, and similar to the Project across all impact topics. The expanded grading footprint of Alternative 4 compared to the Project slightly increases the probability of encountering buried archaeological and paleontological resources during construction; however, this difference does not change the less than significant with mitigation significance determination.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office) would develop the same 13.07-acre Project Site with a four-story, 200,000-square-foot medical office building, an 818-space surface parking lot, landscaping, and 300 trees. Alternative 4 would occur on the same Project Site as the proposed Project and would be subject to the same state and local regulatory framework.

With respect to GHG emissions generation (**GHG Impact 1**), construction-phase GHG emissions under Alternative 4 would be derived from the same site disturbance area as the proposed Project; however, the substantially larger building footprint (200,000 square feet vs. 50,122 square feet gross) may extend the construction duration and increase cumulative equipment operating hours and associated GHG emissions compared to the Project. Operationally, Alternative 4 would generate substantially greater vehicle trip-related GHG emissions than the Project. A 200,000-square-foot medical office building generates significantly higher daily trip rates than the proposed Project's religious assembly campus, which operates on a limited schedule (Tuesday through Saturday for the temple, with peak Sunday occupancy for the meetinghouse) and is served by a membership base that is expected to carpool heavily. Mobile source

emissions represent the dominant GHG source in the Project's operational profile, accounting for approximately 1,487 $MTCO_2e$ of the Project's 1,613 $MTCO_2e$ annual total; the substantially higher trip generation of Alternative 4 would result in proportionately greater mobile source GHG emissions. These emissions are provided for informational purposes consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.4(a). Significance is determined by consistency with GHG reduction plans, as described below.

With respect to consistency with applicable GHG reduction plans and policies (**GHG Impact 2**), Alternative 4 would be required to comply with Title 24, CALGreen, and all applicable state and local energy efficiency and building standards as a condition of ministerial building permits. As a by-right commercial office development in the C-O zone, Alternative 4 would be required to incorporate EV charging infrastructure consistent with Title 24 and City requirements, install energy-efficient lighting and HVAC systems, and implement AB 341/SB 1383 waste diversion programs. The Project's PCAP-consistent design features, pedestrian sidewalk improvements along Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue and EV infrastructure, would similarly apply to Alternative 4 as standard conditions of development. However, Alternative 4 would not provide the same VMT-reduction benefits as the Project: a large medical office use attracting regional patient and employee trips would generate substantially more vehicle activity than the appointment-based, locally-serving religious campus. Despite higher overall operational GHG emissions, Alternative 4 would nonetheless comply with all applicable plans and regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions, including the City's PCAP and the CARB Scoping Plan, through mandatory regulatory compliance. GHG impacts under Alternative 4 would be less than significant.

Overall, GHG impacts under Alternative 4 would be less than significant. However, compared to the Project, Alternative 4 would result in greater construction-phase GHG emissions due to the larger building program and greater operational GHG emissions due to the substantially higher vehicle trip generation of a 200,000-square-foot medical office use, making GHG emissions under Alternative 4 greater than the Project, though remaining less than significant based on consistency with the City's PCAP.

Land Use and Planning

The Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office) would develop the same 13.07-acre Project Site with a four-story, 200,000-square-foot medical office building, an 818-space surface parking lot, landscaping, and 300 trees. This alternative would occur at the Project Site, which retains its General Plan designation of Office Commercial (O-C) and C-O zoning. No existing residential structures or people would be displaced, as the Project Site is vacant.

With respect to conflicts with land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental effects (**Impact LAN-1**), professional medical, medical specialty, and medical

administrative uses are permitted by-right in the C-O zone under BMC Title 17. Unlike the proposed Project, which requires a Zone Modification for steeple heights exceeding 60 feet, Alternative 4's four-story, 50-foot-tall medical office building would comply with the C-O zone's 60-foot maximum building height and would not require a Zone Modification. No General Plan Amendment, CUP, or Zone Modification would be required; the only required approvals would involve ministerial building, grading and other permits. Alternative 4 is consistent with the General Plan's Office Commercial designation and all applicable C-O development standards, including setbacks, landscaping, and parking. The project would be consistent with General Plan policies supporting infill development, provision of commercial uses serving the community, and compatibility with surrounding land uses. As a large commercial development, Alternative 4 would be required to provide landscaped street frontages, parking lot shading, and pedestrian improvements consistent with the General Plan policies evaluated in **Table 3.6-2**. Land use impacts under Alternative 4 would be less than significant.

Overall, land use and planning impacts under Alternative 4 would be less than significant and less than the Project because unlike the Project, Alternative 4 as designed would be by right and would require no discretionary approvals. While Alternative 4 is a fully by-right use that avoids the need for a Zone Modification and Vesting Tentative Parcel Map, the requirement for these entitlements under the proposed Project is an administrative process that does not, in itself, constitute a physical environmental impact.

Noise & Vibration

The Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office) would develop the same 13.07-acre Project Site with a four-story, 200,000-square-foot medical office building, an 818-space surface parking lot, landscaping, and 300 trees. Because Alternative 4 would occur at the same Project Site, the existing ambient noise environment described in **Section 3.7.2**, including the measured ambient range of 43 to 55 dBA Leq and a CNEL of 56.3 dBA, applies directly. The same sensitive receptors are present: residential uses to the north (protected by the existing 6.5-foot CMU wall), the pediatric specialty care center to the west, and the church to the south.

Construction Noise

With respect to construction-related noise (**Impact NOI-1**), the substantially larger building footprint of Alternative 4 (200,000 square feet gross floor area versus the Project's 50,122 square feet) and the 818-space surface parking lot would require more extensive grading across the full 13.07-acre site and a longer overall construction duration compared to the proposed Project. A longer construction period would extend the duration of temporary construction noise at the northern residential receptors. Additionally, a larger building program may require simultaneous operation of more equipment across the site at any one time. Although no pile driving is anticipated, the expanded scope and duration of construction activities would

result in greater cumulative construction noise exposure at the residential receptors to the north compared to the Project. All construction activities under Alternative 4 would nevertheless be required to comply with BMC Section 9.22.050 time-of-day restrictions and BMC Section 9.22.030 noise standards, and the best practice noise minimization measures identified in **Section 3.7.4.3** would apply. Construction noise impacts under Alternative 4 would be less than significant but greater than the Project due to the increased construction scope and duration.

Operational Noise

With respect to operational noise (**Impact NOI-1**), a 200,000-square-foot medical office building generates substantially more daily vehicle trips than the Project's religious assembly campus, which operates on a limited and appointment-based schedule with concentrated Sunday peak hours. The substantially higher trip generation associated with a large medical office use, drawing patients, staff, and delivery vehicles across a five-to-six day work week, would result in greater project-generated traffic noise on Allen Road, Stockdale Highway, and Jewetta Avenue compared to the Project's maximum modeled increase of 0.1 dBA CNEL. While this incremental traffic noise increase is not expected to exceed the General Plan Noise Element's 5 dB significance threshold (given the existing ambient levels of 44.9 to 57.1 dBA CNEL along these roadways), the operational mobile source noise contribution of Alternative 4 would be greater than the Project. Stationary noise sources under Alternative 4, HVAC equipment for a large medical office building and an 818-space parking lot, would also be significantly greater than those modeled for the Project, which assumed 17 HVAC units (temple phase) and 9 HVAC units (meetinghouse phase). Without a site-specific operational noise study for Alternative 4, precise receptor-level calculations are not possible at this level of analysis; however, all stationary noise sources would be required to comply with the City's daytime limit of 55 dBA Leq and nighttime limit of 50 dBA Leq at all sensitive receptors, and project design features, including the existing 6.5-foot CMU wall along the northern property line, would continue to provide attenuation benefits to the residential uses to the north. Operational noise impacts under Alternative 4 would be less than significant but greater than the Project.

Construction and Operational Vibration

With respect to groundborne vibration (**Impact NOI-2**), construction of Alternative 4 would not require pile driving. Vibratory equipment, primarily a vibratory roller, would generate a worst-case PPV of 0.268 in/sec at the nearest residential building (20 feet north of the project site boundary), which is below the Caltrans threshold of 0.50 in/sec PPV for new residential structures, consistent with the Project analysis. The extended grading duration associated with the larger site coverage under Alternative 4 would increase the period of potential vibration exposure at northern residences; however, the PPV levels remain within acceptable thresholds. Operationally, a medical office building does not introduce substantive vibration

sources beyond those associated with the loading and unloading of delivery vehicles on adjacent streets. Construction and operational vibration impacts under Alternative 4 would be less than significant and similar to the Project.

Overall, noise and vibration impacts under Alternative 4 would be less than significant but greater than the Project for both construction and operational noise, due to the larger construction scope and substantially higher trip generation and stationary noise sources associated with the 200,000-square-foot medical office use.

Transportation

The Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office) would develop the same 13.07-acre Project Site at the northwest corner of Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue with a four-story, 200,000-square-foot medical office building, an 818-space surface parking lot, landscaping, and 300 trees. Because Alternative 4 would occur at the same Project Site, the same roadway network context applies: Stockdale Highway is classified as a six-lane Arterial with capacity for up to 60,000 daily vehicles, and Jewetta Avenue is classified as a four-lane Collector with capacity for up to 30,000 daily vehicles. The same Class II bike lanes, GetBus Route 82 transit stops, and existing pedestrian infrastructure gaps on the site frontage all apply.

With respect to conflicts with programs, plans, ordinances, or policies addressing the circulation system (**Impact TR-1**), Alternative 4 would generate substantially more vehicle trips than the proposed Project. A 200,000-square-foot medical office building generates significantly higher daily and peak-hour trips than the Project's religious assembly campus, which operates on a limited, scheduled basis with low weekday trip volumes (71 AM peak-hour trips, 139 PM peak-hour trips). Based on a supplemental trip generation analysis prepared by Fehr & Peers (**Appendix 5.0**) using the ITE Trip Generation Manual, 12th Edition (Land Use Code 720), the 200,000-square-foot medical office building would generate approximately 6,806 daily trips, including 642 AM peak-hour trips and 684 PM peak-hour trips. These higher volumes would increase demand at the Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue access points and intersections. As with the Project, Alternative 4 would be required to construct frontage improvements along the full site frontage, preserve the existing Class II bike lanes on both frontages, maintain the GetBus Route 82 stops, and comply with all applicable provisions of the General Plan Circulation Element and BMC. Alternative 4 would also be required to provide 818 off-street parking stalls, nearly three times the Project's 292 stalls, consistent with BMC parking standards for medical office uses, thereby preventing on-street parking conflicts. Due to the high design capacity of Stockdale Highway as a six-lane Arterial and Jewetta Avenue as a four-lane Collector, these roadways are capable of absorbing substantially higher volumes than the Project generates. With compliance with applicable Circulation Element policies, BMC requirements, and any necessary access improvements, impacts related to conflicts with circulation plans, ordinances, and policies under

Alternative 4 would be less than significant, though greater than the Project due to the substantially higher trip generation of the medical office use.

With respect to consistency with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.3(b) (**Impact TR-2**), a 200,000-square-foot medical office building would generate substantial new VMT at the Project Site, as medical office uses attract both local and regional patient trips and employee commutes. Unlike the proposed Project, which generates no new regional VMT and instead reduces existing regional VMT by approximately 718,209 annual miles by redirecting long-distance temple trips to a local destination, a medical office building would produce a net increase in VMT relative to existing conditions at the vacant Project Site. While the City of Bakersfield and Kern COG have not formally adopted a quantitative VMT threshold, recent City practice utilizes a threshold of 15 percent below the Kern County average VMT per employee for employment-generating uses, consistent with the OPR Technical Advisory guidelines. According to the supplemental VMT analysis prepared by Fehr & Peers (**Appendix 5.0**), the Kern County average is 13.6 Home-Based-Work VMT per employee, establishing a significance threshold of 11.6 VMT per employee. The medical office building under Alternative 4 would generate 11.5 Home-Based-Work VMT per employee. Because this falls below the 11.6 threshold, the VMT impact of Alternative 4 would be less than significant. However, because Alternative 4 results in a net addition of 2,376,667 annual VMT compared to the proposed Project's substantial net reduction in regional VMT, impacts under Alternative 4 would be greater than the Project.

With respect to substantial increases in hazards due to geometric design features (**Impact TR-3**), Alternative 4 would use the same Project Site driveway locations on Stockdale Highway (approximately 550 feet west of Jewetta Avenue) and Jewetta Avenue (approximately 500 feet north of Stockdale Highway). However, the substantially higher peak-hour trip volumes associated with the 200,000-square-foot medical office building, calculated at 642 AM and 684 PM peak-hour trips, would likely meet or exceed the CA MUTCD Warrant 3 peak-hour signal threshold at one or both driveways, as the Project's driveways were specifically found to be below warrant thresholds based on the Project's substantially lower trip generation of 71 AM and 139 PM peak-hour trips. If signal warrants are met under Alternative 4, traffic signals or other access improvements may be required at one or both driveways. Alternative 4 would also need to accommodate the loading, delivery, and service vehicle activity typical of a large medical office campus, including ambulance access consistent with emergency services requirements. With appropriate driveway design and any required access improvements, impacts regarding hazards due to geometric design features under Alternative 4 would be less than significant; however, these impacts would be greater than the Project due to the substantially higher vehicle volumes at site access points.

Overall, transportation impacts under Alternative 4 would be less than significant but greater than the Project for all three impact topics: the higher trip generation creates greater circulation system demands,

the net VMT increase forgoes the regional trip-reduction benefit central to the Project's less than significant VMT finding (despite passing the employment VMT efficiency threshold), and the substantially higher driveway volumes increase the likelihood that signal warrants and access improvements would be required.

Relationship to the Project Objectives

The Project's objectives are included in **Table 5.0-4, Alternative 4 Relationship to the Project Objectives**. As shown, Alternative 4 would fail to meet Project objective 1, would partially meet Project objectives 2 through 5, and would fully satisfy Project objective 6. While the development of a medical office building is consistent with the Project Site's C-O zoning and requires fewer discretionary approvals than the proposed Project, and would partially meet Project objectives 2 through 5 because it would provide space for the Church's family ancestral search and ancillary clothing distribution and sale uses, it would not result in the design, construction, or operation of a temple or meetinghouse and would therefore not advance any aspect of the Church's fundamental purpose in proposing the Project as reflected in Project objective 1.

Table 5.0-4
Alternative 4 Relationship to the Project Objectives

Project Objective	Relationship to the Objective
Objective #1: Design, build, and maintain a temple and meetinghouse whose physical and functional features symbolize the core beliefs of the Church and its members, and that provide places of worship consistent with these beliefs.	**Not Met.** Alternative 4 would develop a four-story, 200,000-square-foot medical office building with an 818-space surface parking lot on the Project Site. No temple or meetinghouse would be designed, constructed, or maintained. The architectural and functional features that express the Church's core beliefs, the temple spire, celestial room, ordinance rooms, and meetinghouse chapel, would not be provided. This objective would not be met.
Objective #2: Locate the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions to optimize their accessibility to the Church's members, taking into account their location relative to: • The existing Church membership within and near the Bakersfield community • The projected growth in Church membership • The nearest existing temples where local Church members now need to travel to worship	**Partially Met.** Alternative 4 would not develop a temple or meetinghouse on the Project Site or any other location, but would provide space for related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions. Bakersfield-area Church members in the nine assigned stakes would continue to travel to worship at the nearest temples in Los Angeles, Redlands, and Fresno, distances of approximately 110 to 160 miles round-trip, with no reduction in regional travel distances, but could benefit from the family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions at the medical office building. This objective would thus be partially met.

Project Objective	Relationship to the Objective
Objective #3: Place the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions in a location where they are compatible with surrounding uses.	**Partially Met.** Alternative 4 would not place a temple or meetinghouse on the Project Site, but would provide space for related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions. While a medical office building would itself be a compatible use within the C-O zone and the Stockdale Highway commercial corridor, the objective specifically concerns the siting of the Church's places of worship in a compatible location. Because no temple or meetinghouse would be developed but would provide space for related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions, this objective would be partially met.
Objective #4: Site the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions in a stable community that will have long-term uses.	**Partially Met.** Alternative 4 would not site a temple or meetinghouse anywhere within the Bakersfield metropolitan area, but would provide space for related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions. The Project Site's characteristics as a stable, growing suburban community with long-term institutional uses, which make it well-suited for the proposed Project, would benefit a medical office campus rather than the Church's places of worship. This objective would be partially met.
Objective #5: Situate the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions to provide optimal accessibility to major highways, roadways, and arterial streets.	**Partially Met.** Alternative 4 would not construct a temple or meetinghouse at the Project Site or elsewhere, but would provide space for related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions. While the Project Site itself offers regional accessibility due to direct access to Stockdale Highway (an Arterial), Jewetta Avenue (a Collector) and proximity to SR-58 (0.4 miles north), SR-99 (5.4 miles east), and I-5 (7.7 miles southwest), this accessibility would serve medical office patients and employees, but also Church members who would benefit from family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution services. This objective would be partially met.
Objective #6: Ensure that the proposed site for the temple and meetinghouse and related family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions will conform to the extent reasonably possible with existing land use and zoning regulations and will minimize the number and type of discretionary local approvals needed to facilitate a timely completion of construction and opening of the Church's places of worship.	**Partially Met.** A medical office building is a permitted by-right use in the C-O zone and would require fewer discretionary approvals than the proposed Project (i.e., no Zone Modification would be required, as the four-story building would comply with the C-O zone's 60-foot height limit). The objective of minimizing regulatory burden would be partially satisfied to the extent that Alternative 4 would provide space for family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution uses. However, this streamlining of regulatory processing does not advance the core objective of designing, building and operating a temple and meeting house. The objective is specifically directed at facilitating the timely delivery of the Church's places of worship. Because Alternative 4 would not result in the construction or opening of a temple or meetinghouse under any approval framework, but would provide space for family ancestral search and ancillary clothing sale and distribution functions, this objective would be partially met.

5.6 COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Table 5.0-5 summarizes the effects of the alternatives compared to the Project.

Table 5.0-5
Comparison of Alternatives to the Project

Environmental Issue Area	Project Impact	Alternative 1: No Project/No Development	Alternative 2: Site A Alternative	Alternative 3: Site B Alternative	Alternative 4: Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office)
Aesthetics	Less than Significant	**Less** — No impact; site remains vacant.	**Less** — Less than Significant; temple-only buildout generates less light and glare compared to the Project, and impacts related to scenic regulatory compliance would be similar to the Project.	**Similar** — Less than Significant; full project program developed on a similarly vacant site in a comparable suburban context.	**Mixed** — Less than Significant; light and glare impacts would be greater than the Project due to the 818-space parking lot and commercial glazing, while impacts related to regulatory compliance would be similar to the Project.
Air Quality	Less than Significant with Mitigation Measure MM AQ-1	**Less** — No impact; no construction or operational emissions.	**Similar** — Less than Significant with MM AQ-1; while localized operational emissions decrease, regional operational mobile emissions remain comparable due to displaced meetinghouse trips, and construction emissions incrementally increase due to demolition; MM AQ-1 applies.	**Similar** — Less than Significant with MM AQ-1; comparable construction scope and operational trip generation; MM AQ-1 applies.	**Greater** — Less than Significant with MM AQ-1; larger construction program and substantially higher operational trip generation increase emissions compared to the Project; MM AQ-1 applies.
Biological Resources	Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures MM BIO-1 through MM BIO-5	**Less** — No impact; no ground disturbance; no vegetation removal.	**Similar** — Less than Significant with MM BIO-1 through MM BIO-5; Site A is a developed urban parcel with lower biological sensitivity, though mature trees introduce a nesting bird consideration not present at the Project Site; same mitigation framework applies.	**Similar** — Less than Significant with MM BIO-1 through MM BIO-5; Site B is a vacant parcel in a comparable urban-edge context; same mitigation framework applies.	**Greater —** Less than Significant with MM BIO-1 through MM BIO-5; larger development footprint eliminates all on-site grassland habitat; Project retains 5.89 acres of open space not preserved under Alternative 4; same mitigation framework applies.

Environmental Issue Area	Project Impact	Alternative 1: No Project/No Development	Alternative 2: Site A Alternative	Alternative 3: Site B Alternative	Alternative 4: Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office)
Cultural, Tribal Cultural, & Paleontological Resources	Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures MM CR-1, MM TCR-1, and MM PR-1	**Less** — No impact; no ground disturbance; MM CR-1, MM TCR-1, and MM PR-1 not required.	**Similar** — Less than Significant with MM CR-1, MM TCR-1, and MM PR-1; assuming the existing modern meetinghouse lacks historical significance, impacts are similar to the Project; new AB 52/SB 18 consultation required for Site A.	**Similar** — Less than Significant with MM CR-1, MM TCR-1, and MM PR-1; comparable vacant site with similar subsurface sensitivity; new AB 52/SB 18 consultation required for Site B.	**Similar** — Less than Significant with MM CR-1, MM TCR-1, and MM PR-1; same Project Site; completed AB 52/SB 18 consultation directly applicable; expanded grading footprint slightly increases probability of encountering subsurface resources.
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Less than Significant	**Less** — No impact; no construction or operational GHG emissions generated.	**Similar** — Less than Significant; regional mobile source emissions remain similar to the Project due to the redistribution of displaced meetinghouse trips; PCAP consistency maintained; overall GHG impact similar to the Project.	**Similar** — Less than Significant; full project program generates comparable emissions; PCAP and Kern COG RTP/SCS consistency maintained; slightly longer average trip lengths for some stakes than the Project.	**Greater** — Less than Significant; substantially higher operational trip generation and larger construction program produce greater GHG emissions than the Project, though PCAP consistency maintained through mandatory regulatory compliance.
Land Use and Planning	Less than Significant	**Less** — No impact; no development; no discretionary approvals required; existing designations and zoning maintained by default.	**Similar** — Less than Significant; while Site A requires a CUP, this process ensures physical compatibility with surrounding residential uses, and the difference in discretionary approvals does not constitute a physical environmental impact.	**Similar** — Less than Significant; while Site B requires a CUP, this administrative requirement does not constitute a physical environmental impact.	**Less** — Less than Significant; medical office use is fully by-right and avoids a Zone Modification and Vesting Tentative Parcel Map, but this administrative difference does not constitute a physical environmental impact.
Noise & Vibration	Less than Significant	**Less** — No impact; no construction or operational noise or vibration generated.	**Construction:** Similar to Greater — Less than Significant; demolition of existing meetinghouse adds a construction phase not present at the Project Site, increasing noise exposure duration at nearby residential receptors. **Operations:** Less — Less than Significant; elimination of meetinghouse	**Construction:** Similar — Less than Significant; comparable construction scope and equipment at a similarly vacant site near residential receptors. **Operations:** Similar — Less than Significant; full project program generates comparable mobile source and stationary noise; lower ambient environment at Site	**Construction:** Greater — Less than Significant; larger building program extends construction duration and increases cumulative noise exposure at northern residential receptors. **Operations:** Greater — Less than Significant; substantially higher trip generation and larger HVAC and parking lot noise sources exceed the

Environmental Issue Area	Project Impact	Alternative 1: No Project/No Development	Alternative 2: Site A Alternative	Alternative 3: Site B Alternative	Alternative 4: Alternative Use (By-Right Medical Office)
			reduces peak Sunday vehicle trips and associated mobile source and parking lot noise compared to the Project.	B may increase perceived noise increment but compliance with BMC standards required.	Project's operational noise profile.
Transportation	Less than Significant	**Less** — No impact; no trips generated; however, sidewalk gaps on Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue frontages would remain unimproved, forgoing the Project's pedestrian connectivity benefit and the approximately 718,209 annual VMT reduction.	**Similar** — Less than Significant; local driveway trips are reduced but regional meetinghouse trips are redistributed; Class II bike lanes on Panorama Drive and Fairfax Road preserved; regional VMT reduction achieved but at a reduced magnitude due to Site A's greater distance from eastern and southern Bakersfield stakes.	**Similar** — Less than Significant; full project program generates comparable trips; Stine Road (Arterial) and McKee Road (Collector) provide adequate capacity; no existing bicycle lane or transit facilities on site frontage corridors; regional VMT reduction achieved but at a reduced magnitude due to Site B's greater distance from western Bakersfield stakes.	**Greater** — Less than Significant; substantially higher trip generation creates greater circulation system demands and requires access improvements; additionally, while it passes the employment VMT efficiency threshold, the resulting net VMT increase forgoes the regional VMT reduction benefit central to the Project's less than significant VMT finding.

5.7 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(2) requires that an EIR identify an "environmentally superior alternative" from among the alternatives evaluated. The environmentally superior alternative is generally the alternative that would be expected to generate the fewest significant adverse environmental impacts. If the No Project Alternative is identified as the environmentally superior alternative, the Guidelines require that the EIR also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the remaining alternatives.

Table 5.0-5, Comparison of Alternatives to the Project, summarizes the environmental impacts of each alternative relative to the Project across all issue areas analyzed in this Draft EIR.

As shown in **Table 5.0-5**, Alternative 1 (No Project/No Development) would result in no environmental impacts across all issue areas, as no construction would occur and the Project Site would remain vacant. In this narrow sense, Alternative 1 would be the environmentally superior alternative because it would generate fewer adverse impacts than the Project in every environmental issue area analyzed. However, as discussed in **Table 5.0-1** and the accompanying analysis, Alternative 1 would fail to meet five of the six

Project objectives outright and would not advance the fundamental purpose of any Project objective, including the establishment of a local temple and meetinghouse to serve Bakersfield-area Church members, the reduction of regional VMT by eliminating long-distance temple travel to Los Angeles, Redlands, and Fresno, and the implementation of pedestrian connectivity improvements along the Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue frontages. While Alternative 1 would technically satisfy the regulatory minimization component of Objective 6 by requiring no discretionary approvals, it would not result in the construction of the Church's places of worship. Consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(e)(2), because the No Project Alternative is identified as the environmentally superior alternative, another environmentally superior alternative must be identified from among the remaining alternatives.

Among Alternatives 2, 3, and 4, the comparative environmental analysis summarized in **Table 5.0-5** demonstrates the following:

- **Alternative 4** (Alternative Use By-Right Medical Office) would result in greater impacts than the Project in five of eight environmental issue areas (air quality, biological resources, greenhouse gas emissions, noise and vibration, and transportation), as well as mixed impacts in aesthetics (greater light and glare), due to the substantially larger building program (200,000 square feet vs. 50,122 square feet), 818-space parking lot, and significantly higher operational trip generation associated with a regional medical office campus. Alternative 4 would also forgo the regional VMT reduction benefit central to the Project's less than significant transportation finding and would fail to meet five of the six Project objectives outright, although it would fully meet the regulatory efficiency aspect of Objective 6 by requiring no discretionary approvals. Alternative 4 is not the environmentally superior alternative among the remaining alternatives.

- **Alternative 2** (Site A Project Alternative) would result in impacts that are generally similar to the Project, with reduced operational impacts in aesthetics and noise due to the elimination of the meetinghouse. However, it would result in similar to greater construction noise impacts due to the required demolition phase. Alternative 2 would also only partially meet four of the six Project objectives and would fail to meet Objectives 3 and 6 entirely. Alternative 2 is not the environmentally superior alternative among the remaining alternatives.

- **Alternative 3** (Site B Project Alternative) would result in impacts that are similar to the Project across the entirety of issue areas, with no issue area resulting in a greater significance determination than the Project. Alternative 3 would develop the full project program on a vacant site in a comparable suburban context, maintain all applicable mitigation measures, and achieve regional VMT reductions comparable to the Project. Alternative 3 would meet Objectives 1, 3, and 4 to the same extent as the Project, and while it would meet Objectives 2, 5, and 6 to a lesser extent due to Site B's peripheral location and

limited freeway access, it would still meet or partially advance all six Project objectives, which is an advantage over Alternatives 2 and 4.

Therefore, Alternative 3 (Site B Project Alternative) is identified as the environmentally superior alternative among the non-No Project alternatives. While Alternative 2 would physically reduce long-term operational noise and lighting by eliminating the meetinghouse, Alternative 3 would result in impacts that are similar to the Project across all environmental issue areas for the full project program, would avoid the demolition-related construction noise increases of Alternative 2, would not generate the substantially greater operational impacts of Alternative 4, and would still achieve the Project's fundamental purpose of establishing a local Bakersfield-area temple and meetinghouse to serve the assigned membership base. While the Project Site at Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue remains the superior location for achieving the Project's objectives, particularly with respect to regional highway accessibility, centrality to the assigned stake membership, bicycle and transit connectivity, and land use compatibility, Alternative 3 represents the least environmentally impactful means of still substantially advancing the Project's core purpose.

6.0 OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter addresses the content requirements of the *State CEQA Guidelines* that are not covered in the other chapters. It discusses the effects of Project implementation related to (1) growth-inducing impacts, (2) significant unavoidable environmental effects, and (3) significant irreversible environmental changes. Each of these impact categories is addressed below in compliance with *State CEQA Guidelines* requirements.

6.1 SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED IF THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS IMPLEMENTED

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126(b) requires an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to disclose the significant environmental effects of a project that cannot be avoided if the proposed project is implemented. As described in detail in the preceding environmental impact analysis of this EIR, the Project would not result in any significant and unavoidable environmental impacts. All potentially significant impacts identified in the Draft EIR would be reduced to less than significant through compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and implementation of the mitigation measures identified throughout Section 3.0.

6.2 SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Section 21100(b)(2)(B) of the Public Resources Code and Section 15126.2(c) of the *State CEQA Guidelines* require an EIR to include a detailed statement setting forth "[a]ny significant effect on the environment that would be irreversible if the project is implemented" (Public Resources Code Section 21100(b)(2)(B)). "Significant irreversible environmental changes" include the use of nonrenewable natural resources during the initial and continued phases of the project, should this use result in the unavailability of these resources in the future. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also, irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with projects. Irretrievable commitments of these resources are required to be evaluated in an EIR to ensure that such consumption is justified (*State CEQA Guidelines* §15126.2(c)).

Implementation of the Project would cause irreversible environmental changes consisting of the following:

Construction of the Project would result in the consumption of natural resources, including water, electricity, natural gas, and fossil fuels. Implementation of the Project would involve construction that would use fossil fuels and other natural materials, such as wood and metals. As described throughout **Section 3.0** of the Draft EIR, as well as in the Initial Study (see **Appendix 1.0-2**), the Project would be required to comply with federal, state, and local requirements, such as Title 24 energy efficiency standards.

The use of such resources would be typical of similar construction projects and would not substantially affect the long-term availability of these resources. Furthermore, the Project would not involve wasteful, inefficient, or unjustifiable use of energy or other resources.

6.3 GROWTH INDUCEMENT

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) requires an EIR to evaluate the growth-inducing impacts of a proposed action. A growth-inducing impact is defined by *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.2 (d) as follows:

> *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. Included in this are projects which would remove obstacles to population growth…Increases in the population may tax existing community service facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. Also…the characteristic of some projects which may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively.*

There are two types of growth-inducing impacts a project may have: direct and indirect. To assess the potential for growth-inducing impacts, the project features that may encourage and facilitate activities that individually or cumulatively may affect the environment must be evaluated.

Direct growth-inducing impacts occur when the development of a project imposes new burdens on a community that directly induces population growth or the construction of additional developments in the same area of the proposed project, thereby triggering related growth-associated impacts. Included in this analysis are projects that would remove physical obstacles to population growth (such as a new road into an undeveloped area or a wastewater treatment plant that could allow more construction in the service area). Construction of these types of infrastructure projects cannot be considered isolated from the development they trigger. In contrast, projects that physically remove obstacles to growth, projects that indirectly induce growth, are those that may provide a catalyst for future unrelated development in an area (such as a new residential community that requires additional commercial uses to support residents).

A project can have a direct and/or indirect growth-inducement potential. Direct growth inducement would result if a project, for instance, is involved in the construction of new housing. A project would have indirect growth-inducement potential if it establishes substantial new permanent employment opportunities (e.g., commercial, industrial, or governmental enterprises) or if it would involve a construction effort with substantial short-term employment opportunities that would indirectly stimulate the need for additional housing and services to support the new employment demand. Similarly, a project would indirectly induce growth if it would remove an obstacle to additional growth and development, such as removing a

constraint on a required public service. For example, a project providing increased water supply in an area where water service has historically limited growth could be considered growth inducing.

The *State CEQA Guidelines* explain that the environmental effects of induced growth are considered indirect impacts of the proposed action. These indirect impacts or secondary effects of growth may result in significant, adverse environmental impacts. Potential secondary effects of growth include increased demand on other community impacts such as degradation of air and water quality, degradation or loss of plant and animal habitat, and conversion of agricultural and open space land to developed uses.

Typically, the growth-inducing potential would be considered significant if it stimulates population growth or a population concentration above what is assumed in local and regional land use plans, or in projections made by regional planning authorities. Significant growth potential could also occur if the project provides infrastructure or service capacity to accommodate growth levels beyond those permitted by local or regional plans and policies.

As discussed below, this analysis evaluates whether the Project would directly or indirectly induce economic, population, or housing growth in the surrounding environment.

Direct and Indirect Growth-Inducing Impacts

The Project proposes to develop a religious campus on a vacant lot within an urbanized area of the City. The Project Site is designated Office Commercial (O-C) and is surrounded by existing residential, commercial, and institutional uses. The Project would not displace residents or businesses. The Project would not directly include the construction or development of housing facilities. Therefore, the Project would not directly induce population growth.

Regarding indirect growth inducement, the Project objectives are to serve the existing Church membership within the community and projected membership growth. The Project is a response to existing and projected population growth in the region, rather than a catalyst for new growth. Furthermore, the Project would connect to existing municipal utilities and infrastructure located on Stockdale Highway and Jewetta Avenue. It does not propose the extension of new roadways or utility infrastructure into undeveloped or open space areas that would remove a physical obstacle to growth in the surrounding environment.

Construction that would occur as a result of the implementation of the Project would include a need for construction labor during short time periods. Phase 1 construction is anticipated to last approximately 30 months, and Phase 2 construction is anticipated to last approximately 18 months. Due to the employment patterns of construction workers in Bakersfield, and the market for construction labor, construction workers are not likely, to any significant degree, to relocate their households because of the job

opportunities presented by the proposed Project. The construction industry differs from most other industry sectors in several important ways that are relevant to potential impacts on housing:

- There is no regular place of work. Construction workers commute to job sites that change many times in the course of a year. These often-lengthy daily commutes are made possible by the off-peak starting and ending times of the typical construction workday.
- Many construction workers are highly specialized (e.g., crane operators, steel workers, and masons), and move from job site to job site as dictated by the demand for their skills.
- The work requirements of most construction projects are also highly specialized, and workers are employed on a job site only as long as their skills are needed to complete a particular phase of the construction process.

Therefore, the construction activities associated with the implementation of the Project would not induce indirect growth.

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