Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan

Tiered Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

City of McFarland, California

October 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Overview

The City of McFarland proposes adoption of the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan (Specific Plan), a comprehensive planning and implementation framework for approximately 1,150 acres located within the southern portion of the City's planned growth area. The Specific Plan establishes land use, circulation, infrastructure, development standards, economic development strategies, and implementation measures intended to facilitate future employment-generating development consistent with the City's General Plan.

The Specific Plan area is generally located south of Sherwood Avenue, north of Whisler Road, east of State Route 99 and west of Driver Road. The area includes approximately 988 acres designated for employment and commercial uses and approximately 162 acres of residentially designated land retained for compatibility and infrastructure coordination purposes.

Future development anticipated within the Specific Plan area may include advanced manufacturing, food and agricultural technology industries, industrial flex development, research and development facilities, business parks, supporting commercial uses, public facilities, and related infrastructure improvements.

Adoption of the Specific Plan does not approve a specific development project. Future development proposals will be subject to additional discretionary approvals and additional environmental review as appropriate.

CEQA Review Framework

This Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines.

Environmental review for the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan tiers from the City of McFarland General Plan Environmental Impact Report (General Plan EIR), which serves as the City's primary environmental planning document. The General Plan EIR and its supporting technical studies provide the environmental foundation for evaluation of development within the southern McFarland growth area, including the Specific Plan area.

Because the Specific Plan implements development anticipated by the General Plan and is located within an area previously evaluated by the General Plan EIR, this IS/MND focuses on whether the Specific Plan would:

Create a new significant environmental impact;

Result in a substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified impact;

Require substantially different mitigation; or

Result in project-specific impacts not adequately addressed in prior environmental review.

This environmental review has been prepared consistent with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15152, 15162, 15168, and 15183.

Project Objectives

The primary objectives of the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan are to:

- Implement the employment and economic development vision established in the City's General Plan.
- Expand opportunities for industrial, manufacturing, and technology-based employment.
- Promote economic diversification and job creation.
- Coordinate land use planning with infrastructure and transportation improvements.
- Improve access to State Route 99 and regional transportation facilities.
- Establish development standards and design expectations for future development.
- Protect adjacent residential neighborhoods and agricultural operations through appropriate compatibility measures.
- Facilitate orderly and phased growth within the planning area.
- Promote efficient use of public infrastructure and services.

Environmental Determinations

The Initial Study evaluated the environmental topics contained in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. As summarized below, implementation of mitigation measures and Specific Plan development standards would reduce project-specific impacts to less-than-significant levels.

Environmental Topic	Determination
Aesthetics	Less Than Significant with Mitigation
Agriculture and Forestry Resources	Less Than Significant with Mitigation
Air Quality	Within Prior EIR Envelope; No New Significant Effect
Biological Resources	Less Than Significant with Mitigation
Cultural Resources	Less Than Significant with Mitigation
Energy	Less Than Significant
Geology and Soils	Less Than Significant with Mitigation
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Within Prior EIR Envelope; No New Significant Effect
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Less Than Significant with Mitigation
Hydrology and Water Quality	Less Than Significant with Mitigation
Land Use and Planning	Less Than Significant

Mineral Resources	No Impact
Noise	Less Than Significant with Mitigation; No New Significant Effect
Population and Housing	Less Than Significant
Public Services	Less Than Significant
Recreation	Less Than Significant
Transportation	Less Than Significant with Mitigation
Tribal Cultural Resources	Less Than Significant with Mitigation
Utilities and Service Systems	Less Than Significant with Mitigation
Wildfire	No Impact or Less Than Significant

Mitigation Measures
The IS/MND identifies mitigation measures addressing:

- Construction-related visual impacts;
- Agricultural compatibility;
- Air quality and health-risk review;
- Biological resource surveys and species protection;
- Cultural and tribal cultural resource protection;
- Geotechnical and paleontological review;
- Hazardous materials management;
- Water quality and drainage controls;
- Noise and vibration management;
- Transportation and truck-routing analysis;
- Utility capacity verification.

Applicable mitigation measures from the General Plan EIR are also incorporated into the Specific Plan implementation process and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

CEQA Conclusion

Based on the Initial Study and supporting technical information, the City has determined that:

1. The Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan is within the geographic area and development framework evaluated by the certified McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR.
2. The Specific Plan does not expand the City's previously evaluated growth boundary.
3. The Specific Plan does not create a new significant environmental impact.
4. The Specific Plan does not substantially increase the severity of previously identified significant impacts.

5. Project-specific impacts can be reduced to less-than-significant levels through implementation of identified mitigation measures and Specific Plan development standards.

Accordingly, the City intends to adopt a Tiered Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of This Document

The City of McFarland (City), as Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has prepared this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) to evaluate the potential environmental effects associated with adoption and implementation of the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan (Specific Plan).

The Specific Plan establishes a comprehensive planning framework for approximately 1,150 acres located within the southern portion of the City's planning area. The Specific Plan is intended to guide future industrial, commercial, office, infrastructure, transportation, and supporting development consistent with the City's General Plan.

The purpose of this IS/MND is to determine whether implementation of the Specific Plan would result in environmental impacts requiring mitigation and to identify appropriate measures to reduce project-specific impacts to less-than-significant levels.

This document has been prepared in accordance with CEQA (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.).

1.2 Project Background

The City of McFarland has identified economic development, employment growth, and infrastructure investment as important long-term community goals. To support these goals, the City previously adopted amendments to the General Plan establishing a framework for future growth within the southern portion of the City and Sphere of Influence.

Following adoption of the General Plan, the City completed and adopted its comprehensive General Plan and certified the accompanying General Plan Environmental Impact Report (General Plan EIR). The General Plan EIR evaluated long-range growth within the City and Sphere of Influence. The General Plan EIR provides the City's principal environmental planning framework and establishes the basis for subsequent planning documents, including the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan.

The Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan has been prepared to implement a portion of the planned growth area identified by the General Plan. The Specific Plan provides more detailed guidance regarding future employment-generating development, circulation improvements, infrastructure planning, development standards, and implementation measures for the southern employment area.

1.3 Environmental Review Process

This Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared pursuant to CEQA to evaluate the environmental effects associated with adoption of the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan.

Because the Specific Plan implements land uses, development patterns, and infrastructure planning anticipated by the City of McFarland General Plan, environmental review has been prepared as a tiered environmental document. The General Plan EIR serves as the primary environmental planning document supporting this review and incorporates applicable environmental analysis and technical studies supporting the General Plan.

This IS/MND evaluates whether adoption and implementation of the Specific Plan would result in environmental effects beyond those analyzed in prior environmental documents or whether additional mitigation is necessary to reduce project-specific environmental impacts to less-than-significant levels.

A detailed discussion of applicable CEQA requirements, prior environmental review, and the City's tiering strategy is provided in Chapter 3, Environmental Review Basis and Tiering Analysis.

1.4 Project Overview

The Specific Plan encompasses approximately 1,150 acres located within the southern portion of McFarland. The plan area includes approximately 988 acres of employment and commercial land and approximately 162 acres of residentially designated land.

The Specific Plan establishes:

- A land use framework for future employment-generating development;
- Employment overlay areas intended to support business recruitment and economic development;
- A circulation framework for vehicles, freight, bicycles, and pedestrians;
- Infrastructure planning policies for water, wastewater, drainage, utilities, and transportation facilities;
- Development standards and design requirements; and
- Implementation and financing strategies to guide future development.

Adoption of the Specific Plan does not approve a specific development project. Future development proposals will require additional discretionary approvals and environmental review, as appropriate.

A detailed description of the proposed project is provided in Chapter 2, Project Description.

1.5 Document Organization

This Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration is organized as follows:

Chapter 1.0 – Introduction	Describes the purpose of the document, project background, environmental review process, and organization of the IS/MND.
Chapter 2.0 – Project Description	Provides a description of the Specific Plan area, land use framework, circulation framework, infrastructure planning elements, and project objectives.
Chapter 3.0 – Environmental Review Basis and Tiering Analysis	Describes the CEQA review framework, prior environmental review, tiering strategy, relationship to the General Plan EIR and supporting technical studies, and basis for preparation of the IS/MND.
Chapter 4.0 – Environmental Checklist and Impact Analysis	Evaluates environmental effects using the CEQA Appendix G Environmental Checklist and identifies mitigation measures where necessary.
Chapter 5.0 – Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program	Identifies mitigation measures, implementation timing, monitoring responsibilities, and verification requirements.
Chapter 6.0 – CEQA Findings	Presents findings supporting adoption of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
Chapter 7.0 – Certification	Provides the Lead Agency's environmental determination, wildlife-fee determination, and certification provisions.

1.6 Lead Agency

The Lead Agency for the proposed project is:

City of McFarland
Community Development Department
401 West Kern Avenue
McFarland, California 93250

The City is responsible for evaluating the proposed project under CEQA and determining whether to adopt the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Introduction

The City of McFarland proposes adoption of the **Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan (Specific Plan)**, a long-range planning document that establishes a framework for future industrial, commercial, office, residential-supporting, infrastructure, and transportation improvements within approximately 1,150 acres located in the southern portion of the City's planning area.

The Specific Plan is intended to implement the land use and economic development policies of the McFarland General Plan by providing a coordinated framework for future employment-generating development. The Specific Plan does not approve specific development projects, subdivision maps, grading permits, building permits, or municipal service extensions. Future development proposals will require additional discretionary approvals, technical studies, infrastructure review, environmental review, and permits, as applicable.

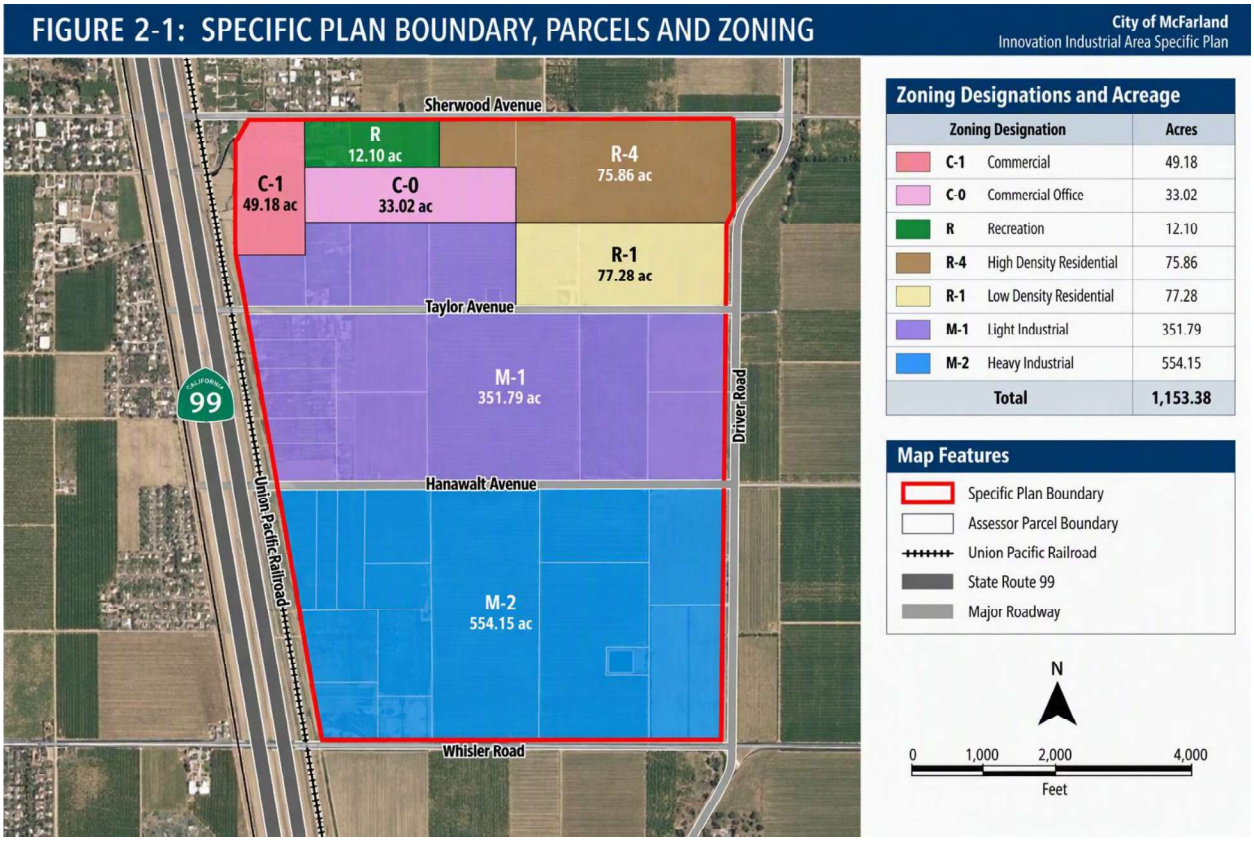
2.2 Project Location

The Specific Plan area encompasses approximately **1,150.24 acres** located within the southern portion of the City of McFarland planning area in Kern County, California.

As Figure 2-1 shows, the plan area is generally bounded by:

- Sherwood Avenue to the north;
- Whisler Road to the south;
- Driver Road to the east; and
- State Route 99 to the west.

The planning area is located within the broader southern growth area previously analyzed in the McFarland General Plan Environmental Impact Report and includes land planned for future urban development.



2.3 Existing Conditions

Existing land uses within the planning area consist primarily of:

- Agricultural land and agricultural operations;
- Rural residential uses;
- Vacant and undeveloped land;
- Transportation and utility corridors;
- Limited industrial and commercial development; and
- Public infrastructure and drainage facilities.

Agricultural uses currently occupy a substantial portion of the planning area and are expected to remain in operation until individual properties are developed in accordance with City approvals and applicable regulations.

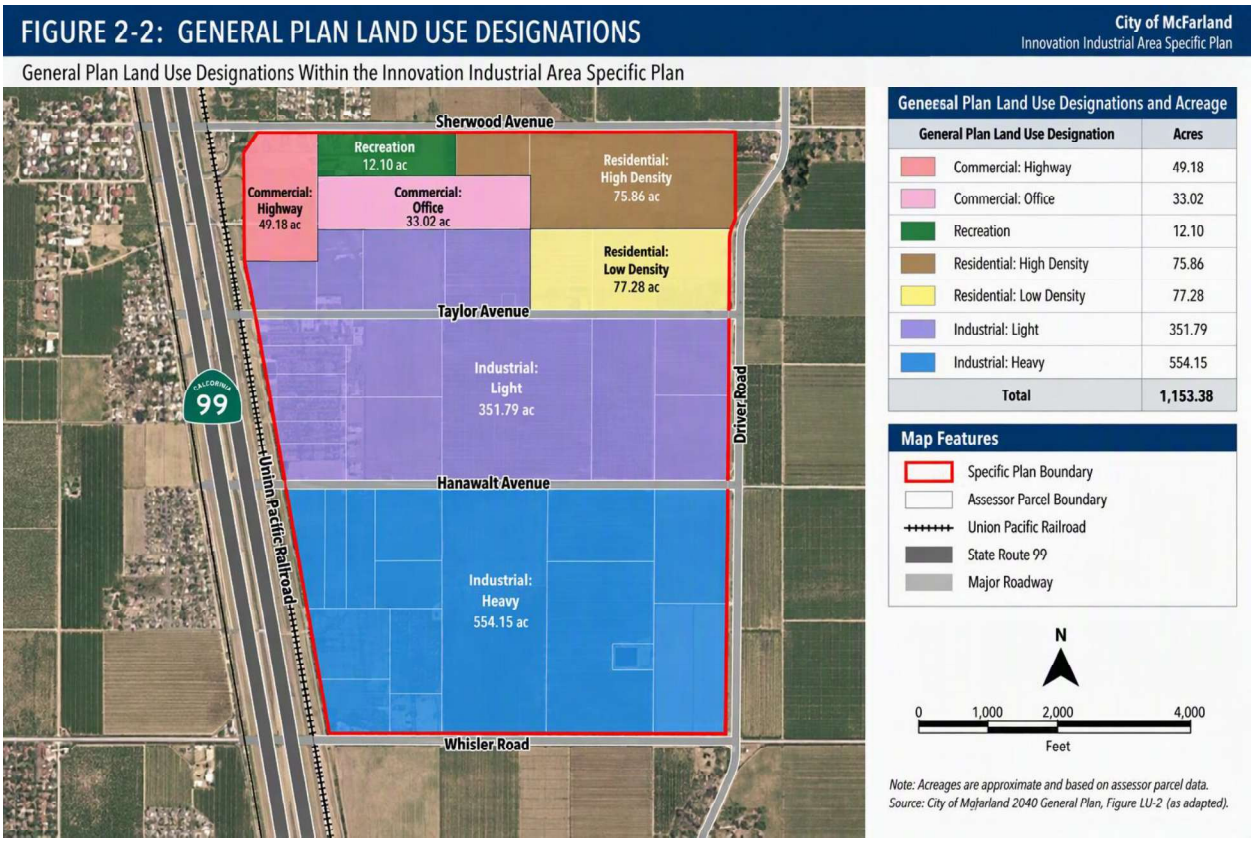
2.4 Land Use Framework

The Specific Plan establishes a land use framework for future employment-generating development and supporting uses.

The approximately 1,150.24-acre plan area includes:

Land Use Category	Acreage
Employment and Commercial Uses	988.14
Residentially Designated Land	162.10
Total	**1,150.24**

The residentially designated properties are included within the planning area to facilitate coordinated infrastructure planning, circulation planning, environmental review, and compatibility between future employment uses and existing or planned residential development. Figure 2-2 shows the General Plan Land Use Designations.



Future development within the planning area may include:

- Industrial and manufacturing uses;
- Food processing and agricultural technology uses;
- Research and development facilities;
- Business park and office development;
- Commercial and service uses;
- Public and utility facilities; and
- Transportation and infrastructure improvements.

2.5 Employment Overlay Areas

The Specific Plan establishes five employment-oriented overlay areas intended to support business attraction and economic development:

1. Innovation Industrial
2. Advanced Manufacturing
3. Food and Agricultural Technology
4. Industrial Flex
5. Business Park and Research & Development

These overlay areas are intended to guide future development and industry recruitment. The overlays do not independently modify underlying General Plan land use designations or zoning regulations. Figure 2-3 shows the Employment Overlay Areas.



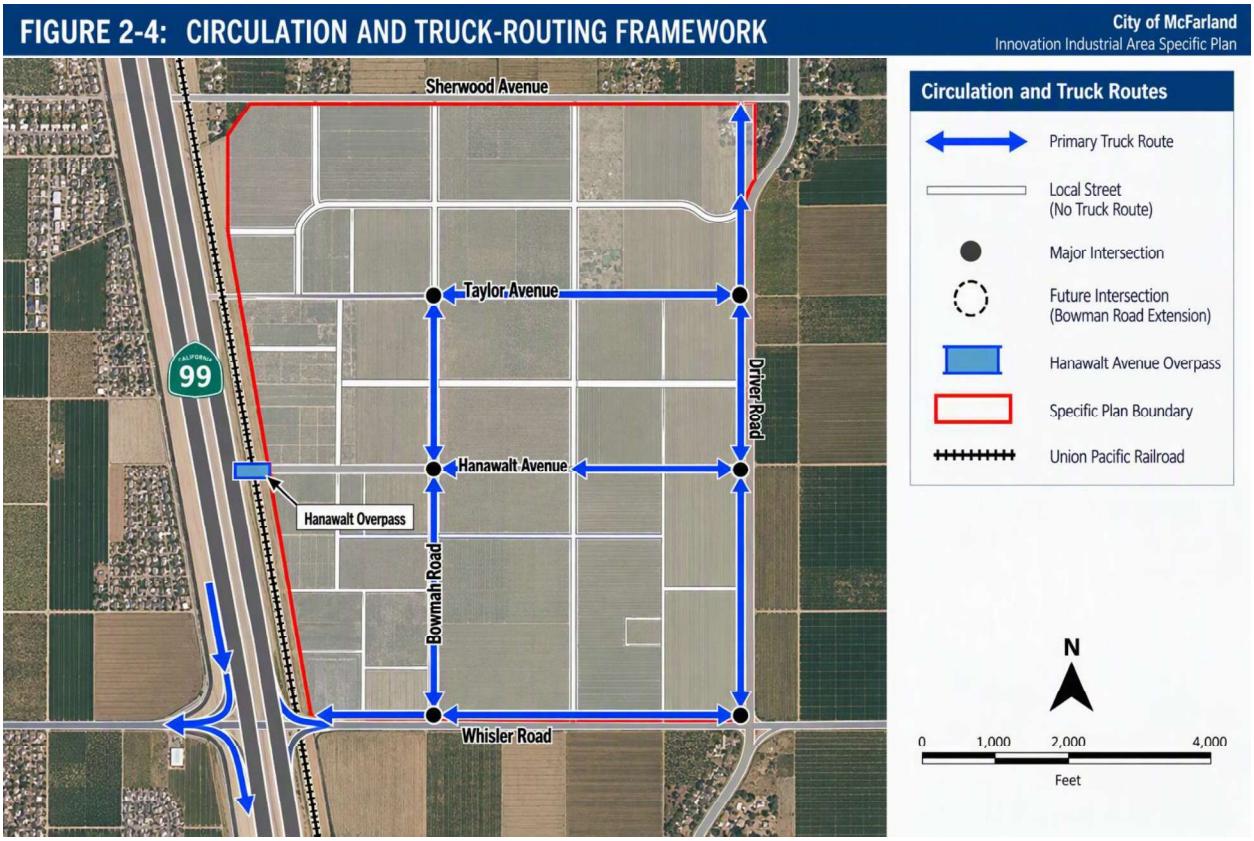
2.6 Circulation Framework

The Specific Plan establishes a transportation framework intended to support future employment growth while protecting existing residential neighborhoods and maintaining efficient regional access.

Major circulation elements include:

- Continued use of the Whisler Road interchange as the primary regional access point;
- Improvements to Whisler Road, Driver Road, Taylor Avenue, and related roadway facilities;
- A future Hanawalt Avenue overpass connection;
- Designated truck circulation routes serving employment areas; and
- Pedestrian and bicycle facilities where appropriate.

Figure 2-4 shows the Circulation and Truck-Routing Framework. Specific roadway improvements will be subject to future engineering design, funding, environmental review, and agency approvals.



2.7 Infrastructure Framework

Future development within the Specific Plan area will require expansion and extension of public infrastructure, including:

- Water supply and distribution facilities;
- Wastewater collection and treatment facilities;
- Storm drainage and flood management facilities;
- Electrical and communications infrastructure; and

- Transportation improvements.

Infrastructure improvements will be phased as development occurs and will be reviewed through subsequent planning, engineering, financing, and environmental processes.

2.8 Project Objectives

The objectives of the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan are to:

1. Implement the economic development goals and land use framework established by the McFarland General Plan.
2. Expand opportunities for employment-generating industrial, manufacturing, office, and commercial development.
3. Promote economic diversification and job creation.
4. Support advanced manufacturing, food processing, agricultural technology, and related industries.
5. Coordinate future land use with transportation and infrastructure improvements.
6. Improve regional and local access to employment areas.
7. Establish development standards and implementation procedures to guide future growth.
8. Protect adjacent residential neighborhoods and agricultural operations through appropriate compatibility measures.
9. Promote efficient use of public facilities and infrastructure.
10. Facilitate orderly and phased development within the planning area.

2.9 Future Approvals

Adoption of the Specific Plan does not authorize specific development projects or infrastructure construction.

Future projects within the Specific Plan area may require additional approvals, including but not limited to:

- Annexation proceedings;
- Subdivision maps;
- Development agreements;
- Site plan review;
- Conditional use permits;
- Building permits;
- Infrastructure permits; and
- Additional environmental review under CEQA, where required.

Future development will be required to demonstrate consistency with the General Plan, Specific Plan, applicable regulations, available infrastructure capacity, and environmental mitigation requirements.

2.10 Project Summary

The proposed project consists of adoption of the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan for approximately 1,150 acres within southern McFarland. The Specific Plan establishes a framework for future employment-generating development, transportation improvements, infrastructure planning, and economic development initiatives consistent with the City's General Plan. Future development will occur incrementally and remain subject to subsequent approvals, technical review, environmental review, and applicable regulatory requirements.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW BASIS AND TIERING ANALYSIS

This chapter establishes the legal and analytical framework for relying on the General Plan EIR, together with the supporting analysis contained in the General Plan EIR, while evaluating the more detailed Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan.

3.1 Purpose and Scope

The City of McFarland has prepared this Tiered Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration to evaluate the environmental effects associated with adoption and implementation of the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan. The Specific Plan provides a detailed land use, development, circulation, infrastructure, financing, and administrative framework for approximately 1,150.24 acres within the southern portion of the McFarland General Plan planning area.

The Specific Plan area lies within the broader geographic area evaluated in the City of McFarland General Plan Environmental Impact Report. The prior EIR was prepared as a Program EIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168 and evaluated the long-term environmental consequences of assigning urban land use designations to lands within the southern portion of the City's Sphere of Influence and modifying land use designations on additional properties within the City.

The General Plan Program EIR analyzed development through a 2040 planning horizon. The development program included residential, professional office, commercial, highway commercial, mixed-use, light industrial, heavy industrial, public, institutional, circulation, and infrastructure improvements. The prior EIR estimated that the General Plan could accommodate approximately 4,850 dwelling units and approximately 24.8 million square feet of nonresidential development. The EIR's Reduced Residential Development Alternative evaluated approximately 3,446 dwelling units and approximately 28.18 million square feet of nonresidential development, including approximately 10.43 million square feet of light industrial development and approximately 9.85 million square feet of heavy industrial development.

The purpose of this Initial Study is not to repeat the regional and programmatic analysis contained in the General Plan EIR. Instead, this Initial Study:

1. Determines whether the Specific Plan is within the geographic and development scope analyzed in the prior Program EIR.
2. Identifies the environmental effects adequately addressed in the prior EIR.
3. Evaluates whether the Specific Plan would result in effects peculiar to the Specific Plan or affected properties.
4. Determines whether circumstances have changed materially since certification of the prior EIR.
5. Evaluates whether new information of substantial importance demonstrates a new or substantially more severe environmental effect.

6. Identifies applicable mitigation measures from the General Plan EIR.
7. Establishes additional Specific Plan-level mitigation where necessary.
8. Determines whether an additional EIR is required or whether the environmental review may be completed through a tiered Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration.

3.2 Prior Environmental Review

3.2.1 McFarland General Plan Environmental Impact Report

Subsequent to adoption of its comprehensive General Plan, the City certified the accompanying General Plan Environmental Impact Report (General Plan EIR).

The General Plan EIR evaluated long-term development anticipated by the General Plan, including residential, commercial, office, industrial, transportation, utility, public-facility, and infrastructure improvements throughout the City's planning area.

The General Plan EIR serves as the primary environmental planning document for the City and provides the principal environmental framework for evaluation of the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan.

Environmental analysis contained in the General Plan EIR is incorporated by reference into this IS/MND to the extent relevant to the proposed project.

For purposes of this Initial Study, the General Plan EIR serves as the primary environmental document supporting tiered review of the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan. The General Plan EIR remains relevant because it contains technical analyses, environmental conclusions, and supporting studies specific to the southern growth area and Specific Plan vicinity that continue to inform environmental review.

3.2.2 Environmental Document Hierarchy and Availability

The City relies on the following planning and environmental documents for this review. The documents shall be made available for public inspection through the City Community Development Department and through the City's project webpage or other electronic repository identified in the Notice of Intent.

Document	Role in This IS/MND	Public Availability
McFarland 2040 General Plan	Current adopted land use and policy framework.	City Community Development Department and City electronic repository.
McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR	Primary programmatic environmental document for tiering.	City Community Development Department and City electronic repository.
Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan	Current implementing plan evaluated by this IS/MND.	Project file and City electronic repository.

3.2.3 Technical Studies

The environmental analysis was supported by technical studies addressing:

- Transportation and traffic.
- Air quality and greenhouse-gas emissions.
- Existing noise conditions and future noise effects.
- Cultural resources.
- Biological resources.
- Hazardous-material records.
- Hydrology and water quality.
- Public services and utility capacity.

The Traffic Impact Analysis evaluated 26 intersections and 61 roadway segments in and around the southern McFarland growth area. The study included State Route 99 ramp intersections, Whisler Road, Hanawalt Avenue, Taylor Avenue, Sherwood Avenue, Driver Road, Bowman Road, Browning Road, Mast Avenue, Garzoli Avenue, and related future roadway connections. It estimated approximately 172,022 daily vehicle trips under General Plan buildout.

The air quality and greenhouse-gas modeling included approximately 1.84 million square feet of office development, 7.12 million square feet of light industrial development, 9.76 million square feet of heavy industrial development, 5.03 million square feet of retail development, 1.03 million square feet of restaurant development, approximately 4,850 dwelling units, a school, park uses, and approximately 182,080 daily trips.

The biological assessment covered the area generally bounded by Sherwood Avenue, Whisler Road, Garzoli Avenue, and Driver Road. It identified agriculture as the predominant land cover, with agricultural stock ponds, disturbed land, and developed land also present. The assessment identified potential habitat for tricolored blackbird, burrowing owl, Swainson's hawk, nesting birds, and San Joaquin kit fox and recommended project-level field review and focused surveys before development.

The cultural resources investigation included a records search covering the General Plan project area and a 200-foot buffer. The investigation identified no known significant cultural resource within the planning area, although the adjacent Friant-Kern Canal was identified as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and listed in the California Register of Historical Resources.

The hydrology and water quality analysis evaluated the southern Sphere of Influence, including the area extending to Whisler Road and Driver Road. It identified flood exposure east of State Route 99, flat topography, regional runoff influences, drainage constraints, increased impervious surface associated with urbanization, and the need for retention and drainage improvements.

The hazardous-materials database review identified agricultural, industrial, fuel-storage, waste-handling, railroad, and other regulatory listings within and surrounding the General Plan area. The prior review was programmatic and did not constitute a parcel-specific Phase I Environmental Site Assessment.

The public-service and utility correspondence documented existing and anticipated future needs for fire protection, schools, parks, libraries, water supply, water distribution, wastewater collection, wastewater treatment, and related infrastructure. The correspondence recognized that future development in the southern growth area would require phased expansion of water and wastewater facilities.

3.2.4 Prior Impact Conclusions

The General Plan EIR determined that many environmental effects would be less than significant or could be reduced below significance through General Plan policies, regulatory compliance, and mitigation.

The prior EIR identified effects requiring mitigation in the following areas:

- Construction-related aesthetics.
- Light and glare.
- Biological resources.
- Cultural and paleontological resources.
- Geology and soils.
- Hazardous materials.
- Hydrology and water quality.
- Construction noise and vibration.
- Water supply and facilities.
- Transportation and circulation.

The prior EIR identified significant and unavoidable effects associated with:

- Operational and cumulative air quality.
- Project-related and cumulative greenhouse-gas emissions.
- Long-term mobile-source and cumulative traffic noise.
- Inconsistency with a General Plan Noise Element policy.

Those significant and unavoidable effects form part of the existing environmental record. This Initial Study does not reverse or disregard those determinations. The City must determine whether the Specific Plan would remain within the development and impact envelope previously evaluated or would create a new significant effect or a substantial increase in the severity of a prior effect.

3.3 CEQA Tiering

3.3.1 General Principles

CEQA Guidelines Section 15152 defines tiering as the use of the analysis of general matters contained in a broader environmental impact report with a later environmental impact report or negative declaration prepared for a narrower project. The broader discussion is incorporated by reference, and the later environmental document concentrates on environmental issues specific to the later project.

Tiering is encouraged for separate but related planning and development actions, including general plans, zoning actions, specific plans, and site-specific development projects. The purpose is to eliminate repetitive discussion and focus environmental review on the issues that are ripe for decision at each stage.

Tiering does not excuse the lead agency from adequately analyzing reasonably foreseeable significant environmental effects of the action presently under consideration. It also does not permit deferral of analysis when sufficient information is available to identify and evaluate an environmental effect at the present planning stage.

The Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan is a narrower planning action than the General Plan. It applies detailed policies, overlays, development regulations, infrastructure requirements, and implementation procedures to a defined portion of the broader General Plan project area. Tiering is therefore appropriate if the Specific Plan remains consistent with the land use and development assumptions analyzed in the General Plan EIR.

3.3.2 Use of the Prior EIR

The General Plan EIR is used in this Initial Study as the principal environmental planning document supporting environmental review of the Specific Plan. The General Plan EIR establishes the environmental setting, development assumptions, infrastructure planning framework, cumulative growth assumptions, mitigation measures, and environmental conclusions used to evaluate consistency of the Specific Plan.

- The regional environmental setting.
- The previously analyzed geographic area.
- The General Plan development program.
- The previously evaluated land use mix and development intensity.
- Program-level air quality and greenhouse-gas emissions.
- Program-level transportation and noise conditions.
- Regional and cumulative growth assumptions.
- Applicable mitigation measures.
- Prior significant and unavoidable effects.
- The framework for subsequent project review.

This Initial Study adds analysis concerning:

- The Specific Plan's geographic boundary.
- Employment overlays.
- Residential-industrial interfaces.
- Freight routing and truck restrictions.
- Water and wastewater planning ranges.
- Drainage and retention requirements.
- Electrical and communications infrastructure.
- Infrastructure phasing and capacity verification.
- Updated environmental review requirements.
- Project-level technical studies.

- Development capacity monitoring.
- Additional mitigation needed to implement the Specific Plan.

3.3.3 Limits on Tiering

Tiering is not appropriate as a substitute for environmental analysis when:

- The Specific Plan would allow more intensive development than the prior EIR analyzed.
- Development would extend beyond the previously evaluated geographic area.
- The Specific Plan would introduce a materially different land use or operational characteristic.
- New circumstances create an environmental effect not examined in the prior EIR.
- New information demonstrates that a prior effect is substantially more severe.
- A significant project-specific effect cannot be reduced through existing standards or feasible mitigation.
- A prior mitigation measure is no longer feasible, effective, or enforceable.
- The Specific Plan would rely on infrastructure whose environmental effects were not adequately addressed.
- The current environmental baseline differs materially from the conditions assumed in the prior EIR.

Section 3.8 provides the quantitative and qualitative comparison used to determine whether the Specific Plan remains within the development envelope evaluated by the General Plan EIR.

3.4 Program EIR Provisions

3.4.1 Applicability of CEQA Guidelines Section 15168

CEQA Guidelines Section 15168 authorizes preparation of a Program EIR for a series of related actions that are geographically connected, constitute logical parts of a continuing program, implement rules or plans, or have similar environmental effects that can be addressed through common mitigation.

The City's General Plan EIR was prepared as a program-level environmental document intended to evaluate long-range growth and provide a framework for subsequent environmental review. The General Plan EIR incorporated the General Plan analysis and serves as the City's current environmental planning document for purposes of evaluating consistency with planned development.

For a later activity within the program, the lead agency must evaluate whether the activity's environmental effects were adequately analyzed in the Program EIR. If the later activity would have no effects beyond those examined in the Program EIR, the activity may be determined to be within the scope of the prior program. If the later activity may have effects that were not adequately analyzed, additional environmental review is required.

The General Plan EIR specifically anticipated use of a written checklist or similar device to document whether later site-specific activities were covered by the Program EIR.

This Initial Study serves that function for the Specific Plan. It evaluates the Specific Plan as a detailed implementing plan while preserving the obligation to evaluate later development proposals as more project-specific information becomes available.

3.4.2 Program-Level and Project-Level Review

The General Plan EIR provided a program-level evaluation of:

- Broad land use changes.
- Long-term growth.
- Regional infrastructure.
- Cumulative development.
- General environmental constraints.
- Program-wide mitigation.

The Specific Plan provides a greater level of detail but remains a planning document. It does not identify the final design, tenant, construction schedule, operational characteristics, emissions, water use, wastewater strength, hazardous materials, truck volumes, or site plan for every future project.

Accordingly, the environmental review occurs at three levels:

Primary Programmatic Tier: McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR

The McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR addressed the Citywide development program, including regional and cumulative environmental effects applicable to the Specific Plan area.

Second Tier: Specific Plan IS/MND

The second tier evaluates the Specific Plan's land use framework, overlays, circulation plan, infrastructure program, development standards, phasing, and implementation requirements. It identifies Specific Plan-level effects and mitigation.

Third Tier: Future Development Review

Later subdivision maps, conditional use permits, site plans, development agreements, infrastructure projects, and other discretionary approvals will be reviewed to determine whether their environmental effects were adequately addressed in the prior documents or whether additional review is required.

3.5 Subsequent Environmental Review

3.5.1 CEQA Guidelines Section 15162

CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 governs subsequent environmental review after certification of an EIR. A subsequent EIR is required when substantial evidence shows that:

1. Substantial changes are proposed in the project that will require major revisions to the prior EIR due to new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified effects.

2. Substantial changes occur in the circumstances under which the project is undertaken that will require major revisions to the prior EIR due to new significant environmental effects or substantially more severe effects.
3. New information of substantial importance shows that the project will have a significant effect not discussed in the prior EIR, a previously examined effect will be substantially more severe, mitigation or alternatives previously found infeasible are now feasible and would substantially reduce a significant effect, or considerably different mitigation or alternatives would substantially reduce a significant effect but the project proponent declines to adopt them.

The Section 15162 inquiry is not limited to whether the current action resembles the prior project. It requires a substantive comparison of the environmental effects and the available mitigation.

3.5.2 Application to the Specific Plan

For the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan, the Section 15162 analysis addresses:

- Whether the Specific Plan area is within the General Plan project area.
- Whether the land use pattern is consistent with the General Plan designations.
- Whether the Specific Plan allows more development than the prior EIR analyzed.
- Whether the project would generate more vehicle trips or VMT than previously evaluated.
- Whether planned industrial operations may produce new stationary emissions, odors, noise, vibration, wastewater, or hazardous-material effects.
- Whether the infrastructure program creates effects beyond those addressed in the prior EIR.
- Whether current biological, cultural, flood, groundwater, or hazardous-material conditions differ materially from the prior environmental setting.
- Whether current law or technical information establishes a more severe environmental effect.
- Whether additional mitigation is required.

The Initial Study concludes that the Specific Plan is generally within the geographic and land use scope of the General Plan EIR. The development-envelope comparison in Section 3.8 supports the conclusion that the Specific Plan remains within the geographic and land-use scope evaluated by the General Plan EIR. Final reliance on the General Plan EIR also requires completion of the applicable technical consistency reviews and consultation identified in this document.

3.5.3 Later Development Projects

A later development project within the Specific Plan area will not automatically be exempt from further CEQA review solely because it is located within the Specific Plan boundary.

For each later discretionary activity, the City will determine whether:

- The activity is consistent with the General Plan, zoning, and Specific Plan.

- The activity is within the development capacity analyzed.
- The site was included within the prior geographic analysis.
- The applicable mitigation measures have been incorporated.
- Current conditions reveal a new environmental constraint.
- The proposed operation has atypical characteristics.
- Additional project-specific technical analysis is required.
- A CEQA exemption, checklist, addendum, negative declaration, supplemental EIR, subsequent EIR, or other environmental document is appropriate.

3.6 Projects Consistent with the General Plan and Zoning

3.6.1 CEQA Guidelines Section 15183

CEQA Guidelines Section 15183 provides streamlined environmental review for projects consistent with the development density established by an existing community plan, general plan, or zoning action for which an EIR was certified.

For qualifying projects, environmental review is limited to effects that:

1. Are peculiar to the project or affected parcel.
2. Were not analyzed as significant effects in the prior EIR.
3. Are potentially significant off-site or cumulative effects not discussed in the prior EIR.
4. Are previously identified significant effects that new information shows will be substantially more severe.

An effect need not be treated as peculiar to a project or parcel if it was adequately addressed in the prior EIR or can be substantially mitigated through uniformly applied development policies or standards. Section 15183 applies only when the project is consistent with the applicable general plan, community plan, or zoning and an EIR was certified for that planning action.

3.6.2 Consistency Requirement

Use of Section 15183 requires more than general consistency with the City's economic development objectives. The City must determine that the proposed development is consistent with the applicable development density or intensity established by the General Plan, zoning, or other qualifying plan.

For the Specific Plan and later development projects, the consistency determination will consider:

- Permitted land use.
- Building intensity.
- Residential density.
- Maximum lot coverage.
- Floor area.
- Building height.
- Employment assumptions where relevant.

- Trip generation.
- Water and wastewater demand.
- Infrastructure requirements.
- Environmental performance standards.
- Applicable General Plan policies.

The employment overlays do not independently increase development intensity. A use encouraged by an overlay remains subject to the underlying General Plan designation, zoning district, Specific Plan standards, environmental mitigation, and infrastructure capacity.

3.6.3 Peculiar Effects

A peculiar effect is an environmental effect unique to the Specific Plan, a later project, or a particular parcel and not generally applicable to the broader General Plan development program.

Potential peculiar effects in the Specific Plan area may include:

- A previously unidentified biological resource.
- A tribal cultural resource.
- An eligible historical structure.
- A jurisdictional water feature.
- Parcel-specific contamination.
- A high-hazard industrial operation.
- A use with unusually high water demand.
- High-strength industrial wastewater.
- A substantial stationary air-emission source.
- An unusually intensive truck terminal or distribution operation.
- A noise-generating activity near residential property.
- A project requiring substantial floodplain modification.
- Infrastructure extending outside the area previously analyzed.

The City will require project-specific studies where needed to determine whether such an effect exists and whether uniformly applied standards or mitigation can reduce the effect below significance.

3.7 Incorporation by Reference

CEQA allows an environmental document to incorporate material from another document by reference when the incorporated material is adequately identified and made available for public inspection.

The following documents are incorporated into this Initial Study by reference to the extent relevant:

- City of McFarland General Plan.
- McFarland Land Use Element.
- McFarland Circulation Element.
- McFarland Housing Element.

- McFarland Noise Element.
- McFarland Safety and Seismic Safety Element.
- McFarland Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element.
- McFarland General Plan Draft EIR
- McFarland General Plan Final EIR.
- General Plan CEQA findings.
- General Plan Statement of Overriding Considerations, if adopted.
- General Plan Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
- General Plan Traffic Impact Analysis.
- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data.
- Noise Data.
- Cultural Resource Data and Correspondence.
- Programmatic Habitat Assessment.
- Hazardous Materials Database Records Search.
- Hydrology and Water Quality Report.
- Public Service and Utility Correspondence.
- Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan.

The incorporated documents provide the programmatic environmental setting, impact analysis, mitigation, cumulative analysis, and technical information supporting this Initial Study.

The City will make these materials available for public review at the location and through the methods identified in the Notice of Intent.

3.8 Development-Envelope Comparison

3.8.1 Purpose

A principal requirement for tiering is demonstrating that the Specific Plan remains within the development envelope evaluated by the General Plan EIR and supporting environmental analyses.

The comparison must address both the numerical development capacity and the environmental characteristics of the proposed development. A smaller geographic area does not necessarily result in lesser environmental effects if the Specific Plan concentrates more intensive, water-intensive, truck-intensive, emissions-intensive, or hazardous operations within that area.

3.8.2 Geographic Comparison

The General Plan project area encompassed approximately 2,179.66 acres. The Specific Plan encompasses approximately 1,150.24 acres.

The Specific Plan area is within the geographic area evaluated by the certified McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR. The certified McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR and its supporting technical studies evaluated the southern growth area, including the Specific Plan area and adjoining lands.

The Specific Plan does not expand the General Plan growth boundary or assign urban land use designations to land outside the General Plan study area.

3.8.3 Land Use Comparison

The General Plan EIR evaluated a broad mixture of residential, office, commercial, highway commercial, mixed-use, light industrial, heavy industrial, and public uses.

The Specific Plan includes approximately:

- 988.14 acres of employment and commercial land.
- 162.10 acres of residentially designated land.

The Specific Plan's employment overlays guide economic development and preferred industry clusters but do not independently modify the underlying General Plan or zoning authority.

The land use comparison demonstrates that:

- The Specific Plan's residential acreage does not exceed the applicable General Plan allocation.
- The Specific Plan's commercial and office capacity remains within the General Plan assumptions.
- The Specific Plan's light and heavy industrial capacity remains within the General Plan EIR or Reduced Residential Development Alternative envelope.
- No overlay authorizes an intensity beyond that assumed in the prior environmental analysis.

3.8.4 Quantitative Comparison

Development Factor	Prior Environmental Analysis	Specific Plan Framework	Consistency Determination
Geographic area	Approximately 2,179.66 acres	Approximately 1,150.24 acres	Specific Plan covers a smaller area within the prior project area.
Nonresidential development	The General Plan EIR evaluated approximately 24.8 million square feet of nonresidential development under the General Plan development program.	Development governed by General Plan designations, zoning, and Specific Plan standards; tracked through City capacity ledger.	No independent increase in allowable intensity. Later projects exceeding applicable assumptions require additional CEQA review.
Reduced Residential Alternative nonresidential development	The General Plan EIR's Reduced Residential Development Alternative evaluated approximately 28.18 million square feet of	Not adopted as a separate Specific Plan entitlement or capacity limit.	Retained only as supporting context; the certified General Plan EIR is the primary tiering document.

	nonresidential development.		
Light industrial development	The General Plan EIR evaluated programmatic light industrial development, including approximately 10.43 million square feet under the Reduced Residential Development Alternative.	Allowed only where consistent with underlying General Plan and zoning designations.	Project-level uses must remain within applicable intensity, emissions, utility, and transportation assumptions.
Heavy industrial development	The General Plan EIR evaluated programmatic heavy industrial development, including approximately 9.85 million square feet under the Reduced Residential Development Alternative.	Allowed only where consistent with underlying General Plan and zoning designations.	Atypical or high-impact operations require project-specific analysis and, where necessary, additional CEQA review.
Residential units	The General Plan EIR evaluated a General Plan development program containing approximately 4,850 residential units.	162.10 acres retain existing General Plan residential designations; the Specific Plan does not add residential acreage or density.	Within the General Plan land use framework, subject to later project consistency review.
Daily trips	The General Plan EIR transportation, VMT, air-quality, and greenhouse-gas analyses included applicable daily-trip assumptions.	No project-specific trip entitlement is created by Specific Plan adoption.	Later projects must demonstrate consistency with the General Plan EIR VMT analysis and applicable screening or analysis requirements.
Water demand	General Plan-wide demand addressed programmatically	Approximately 1.5 to 3.0 MGD planning range	Capacity and consistency must be verified.

Wastewater flow	Approximately 3.34 MGD of additional flow estimated for broader General Plan project	Approximately 1.5 to 3.8 MGD planning range	Project-specific flow and treatment requirements must be reconciled with prior assumptions.
Electrical demand	Addressed generally	Approximately 25 to 75 MW planning range	Utility feasibility and environmental effects of major facilities require confirmation.

The Specific Plan does not independently increase allowable development density or intensity beyond the underlying General Plan designations and zoning. Future development shall be tracked through the City's capacity ledger and reviewed for consistency with the development, transportation, emissions, water, wastewater, and utility assumptions evaluated in the General Plan EIR and supporting incorporated analyses. A project that exceeds an applicable assumption or introduces materially different operational characteristics shall undergo an additional environmental review required by CEQA.

3.8.5 Qualitative Comparison

In addition to the numerical comparison, the City evaluated whether the Specific Plan introduces operational characteristics that differ materially from the generic land use assumptions in the prior EIR.

The qualitative comparison addresses:

- Advanced manufacturing.
- Food and beverage processing.
- Agricultural technology.
- Refrigeration and cold storage.
- Industrial flex development.
- Warehousing and distribution.
- Truck terminals or high-cube warehouse characteristics.
- Research and laboratory activity.
- Hazardous-material storage and use.
- High-strength industrial wastewater.
- Substantial stationary-source air emissions.
- Continuous or nighttime operations.
- High electrical demand.
- High water consumption.
- Outdoor storage or processing.

3.9 Changed Circumstances and New Information

3.9.1 Passage of Time

The technical studies supporting the General Plan EIR were generally prepared in 2020. The passage of time does not, by itself, invalidate a certified EIR. However, current conditions must be considered when determining whether new information or changed circumstances affect the prior conclusions.

The Initial Study identifies the following topics for verification in future environmental studies.

3.9.2 Transportation and Vehicle Miles Traveled

The certified McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR includes vehicle miles traveled analysis addressing long-term development under the General Plan. The General Plan Traffic Impact Analysis also evaluated intersection and roadway level of service and remains relevant to circulation planning, roadway design, safety, truck routing, and improvement phasing.

For the Specific Plan and later development proposals, transportation review shall use the General Plan EIR VMT analysis as the primary programmatic foundation and shall:

- Evaluate Specific Plan trip generation.
- Evaluate VMT under current City or regional methodology.
- Identify screening criteria.
- Evaluate employee and truck travel.
- Address transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and emergency access.
- Identify mitigation when a VMT threshold may be exceeded.
- Distinguish CEQA impacts from operational roadway improvements.

The General Plan EIR VMT analysis provides the primary programmatic CEQA transportation analysis. The earlier roadway and intersection analysis remains supporting information for infrastructure planning, safety, truck routing, and improvement phasing. Project-level VMT analysis shall be required where a later proposal is not adequately addressed by the General Plan EIR, does not satisfy applicable screening criteria, or presents materially different travel characteristics.

3.9.3 Air Quality

Air district rules, emissions factors, construction fleets, stationary-source requirements, health-risk guidance, and climate regulations have changed since preparation of the prior EIR.

Future project-level analysis must confirm:

- Applicable San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District thresholds.
- Current construction controls.
- Current operational emissions.
- Diesel particulate matter and health-risk screening.
- Sensitive-receptor locations.
- Current requirements for stationary sources.
- Current odor-screening distances.
- Consistency with adopted air-quality plans.

3.9.4 Greenhouse-Gas Emissions

State climate policy, building standards, electricity supply, vehicle regulations, and greenhouse-gas reduction targets have changed since 2020.

Future project-level analysis must evaluate:

- Current greenhouse-gas thresholds or consistency methodology.
- State climate plans.
- Building electrification and efficiency.
- Renewable energy.
- Vehicle and fleet transition.
- Refrigerants.
- Industrial process emissions.
- Specific Plan sustainability requirements.

The prior EIR's significant and unavoidable GHG finding remains part of the environmental record and cannot be reclassified without substantial evidence.

3.9.5 Biological Resources

Species occurrence, listing status, habitat conditions, agricultural practices, ponds, nesting sites, and agency guidance may have changed.

Before ground disturbance, current review may be required for:

- Tricolored blackbird.
- Burrowing owl.
- Swainson's hawk.
- San Joaquin kit fox.
- Nesting birds.
- Western spadefoot.
- Jurisdictional waters.
- Agricultural stock ponds.
- Other special-status species identified through current database review.

3.9.6 Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources

Tribal consultation and tribal cultural resource issues were addressed as part of the environmental review for the McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR, which provides the programmatic environmental foundation for this tiered IS/MND. No new tribal cultural resources have been identified through preparation of the Specific Plan. Future development proposals will remain subject to review for tribal cultural resources and may require updated records searches, field surveys, monitoring, consultation, or other measures where required by applicable law or warranted by project-specific conditions.

3.9.7 Water Supply and Groundwater Sustainability

Groundwater regulation and basin management have changed materially since preparation of the prior EIR. Future project-level analysis must evaluate:

- Current groundwater-basin conditions.
- Sustainable Groundwater Management Act implementation.
- Available municipal well capacity.
- Water quality and treatment.
- Storage and fire flow.
- Water-supply assessments where required.
- Demand from water-intensive industries.
- Conservation, recycling, and alternative supply.

3.9.8 Wastewater

Current collection, treatment, disposal, reuse, and permit capacity must be verified. Industrial wastewater characteristics may require treatment beyond that assumed for conventional urban development.

3.9.9 Floodplain and Drainage Conditions

Current Federal Emergency Management Agency maps, drainage improvements, agricultural grading, surrounding development, regional flood conditions, and basin capacity must be verified.

3.9.10 Hazardous Materials

Current regulatory database searches and parcel-specific investigation may reveal conditions not documented in the EIR database review.

3.9.11 Public Services and Utilities

Fire, police, school, park, library, water, wastewater, solid-waste, electrical, gas, and communications conditions must be updated through current provider information or project-level capacity confirmation.

3.10 Mitigation Applicability

Applicable mitigation measures adopted through the General Plan EIR remain enforceable for later activities within the program. The City may clarify the implementation of a prior mitigation measure by specifying:

- The activity to which the measure applies.
- The responsible party.
- The required technical study.
- The submittal timing.
- The reviewing agency.
- The monitoring procedure.
- The verification document.
- Continuing operational requirements.

An administrative clarification may not weaken the substantive environmental protection required by the prior measure.

3.11 Uniformly Applied Development Standards

The Specific Plan contains mandatory development standards addressing:

- Industrial and residential transitions.
- Agricultural interfaces.
- Building placement.
- Loading and service areas.
- Truck routing and queuing.
- Lighting and glare.
- Noise-generating equipment.
- Landscaping and screening.
- Outdoor storage.
- Drainage and stormwater.
- Water and wastewater capacity.
- Industrial pretreatment.
- Energy and utility coordination.
- Hazardous materials.
- Fire access.
- Construction practices.
- Continuing operational compliance.

Where these provisions qualify as uniformly applied development policies or standards and substantially mitigate an environmental effect, they may support streamlined review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15183. The City must ensure that the standards are mandatory, enforceable, and applicable to the project under review.

A recommended policy, economic development objective, or design preference does not qualify as mitigation unless it imposes a definite and enforceable requirement.

3.12 Future Project Consistency Checklist

The City will use a project consistency checklist or equivalent written analysis for future discretionary projects within the Specific Plan area. The checklist should address:

Project Consistency

- Is the project within the Specific Plan boundary?
- Is the proposed use allowed by the General Plan, zoning, and Specific Plan?
- Is the project within the analyzed building, trip, utility, and infrastructure capacity?
- Is the project consistent with the applicable employment overlay?
- Does the project comply with development and compatibility standards?

Environmental Conditions

- Have current biological conditions been evaluated?
- Has cultural and tribal cultural-resource review been completed?
- Has contamination review been completed?

- Is the property within a flood hazard area?
- Are water, wastewater, drainage, energy, and public-service capacities available?
- Are sensitive receptors located nearby?
- Does the project involve substantial truck traffic, stationary emissions, noise, odor, hazardous materials, or industrial wastewater?

Mitigation

- Which mitigation measures apply?
- Which Specific Plan mitigation measures apply?
- Are mitigation measures included in enforceable conditions?
- Is additional mitigation required?

CEQA Determination

- Is the effect adequately addressed in a prior environmental document?
- Is the effect peculiar to the project or parcel?
- Is there a new significant effect?
- Is a prior effect substantially more severe?
- Is new information of substantial importance available?
- What form of CEQA review is required?

3.13 Tiering Determination

Based on the information available, the Specific Plan satisfies the basic conditions for tiering from the certified McFarland General Plan EIR. The McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR and its supporting technical studies provide the programmatic environmental foundation for this tiered review because:

1. The Specific Plan area is within the broader General Plan project area.
2. The Specific Plan covers a smaller geographic area than the General Plan.
3. The Specific Plan implements land use designations and development types evaluated in the prior EIR.
4. The prior technical studies included the Specific Plan area and surrounding roadways.
5. The Specific Plan does not expand the General Plan growth boundary.
6. Residentially designated land remains residentially designated.
7. The employment overlays do not independently increase allowable development intensity.
8. The Specific Plan adds mandatory development, compatibility, infrastructure, and monitoring requirements.
9. Future development remains subject to project-specific technical review and approvals.
10. Applicable prior mitigation will remain enforceable.

The tiering determination is supported by the development-envelope comparison in Section 3.8, the General Plan EIR VMT analysis, the Specific Plan standards, and the mitigation and future-project review requirements identified in this document.

3.14 Proposed Environmental Document

The City proposes preparation and adoption of a Tiered Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Specific Plan.

The proposed MND is appropriate only if the completed administrative record supports all of the following findings:

- The Specific Plan does not create a new significant environmental effect not adequately examined in the General Plan EIR.
- The Specific Plan does not substantially increase the severity of a previously identified significant effect.
- Current circumstances do not require major revisions to the prior EIR.
- New information does not demonstrate an unmitigated significant effect.
- Specific Plan-level potentially significant effects can be reduced below significance through enforceable mitigation.
- Applicable prior mitigation remains enforceable.
- The Specific Plan remains within the development envelope analyzed in the prior EIR.

If substantial evidence demonstrates that one or more of these findings cannot be made, the City will prepare the additional environmental documentation required by CEQA.

3.15 Conclusion

The certified McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR is the primary first-tier environmental document for the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan. The General Plan EIR evaluated long-range development within the City and Sphere of Influence, including the southern growth area and the environmental topics relevant to the Specific Plan. The General Plan EIR and its supporting technical studies are incorporated by reference to the extent relevant to this review.

The Specific Plan represents a second-tier planning action that provides more detailed direction for a portion of the General Plan planning area. This IS/MND relies on the General Plan EIR for effects adequately analyzed at the program level and concentrates on the Specific Plan's development standards, infrastructure assumptions, changed conditions, new information and project-specific mitigation.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST AND IMPACT ANALYSIS

This chapter evaluates the potential environmental effects associated with adoption and implementation of the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan using the environmental topics and significance questions contained in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. Consistent with the tiering framework established in Chapter 3, the analysis distinguishes effects adequately addressed in prior environmental review from new or substantially more severe effects associated with the Specific Plan.

The analysis is tiered from the certified McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR, which is the City's primary programmatic environmental document. The General Plan EIR and its supporting technical studies are incorporated by reference to the extent relevant to the Specific Plan. Those analyses evaluated approximately 2,179.66 acres, including the Specific Plan area and surrounding lands, and provide detailed land use, transportation, air quality, greenhouse-gas, noise, biological, cultural, hydrology, hazards, and utility information relevant to this review.

The General Plan EIR identified significant and unavoidable effects related to operational and cumulative air quality, project-related and cumulative greenhouse-gas emissions, long-term mobile-source and cumulative traffic noise, and inconsistency with a General Plan Noise Element policy. This Initial Study does not reverse or disregard those prior findings. Instead, it evaluates whether the Specific Plan would cause a new significant environmental effect or a substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified effect.

Because the Specific Plan is a programmatic planning document and does not approve individual development projects, certain site-specific information is not presently available. Future development will therefore remain subject to environmental consistency review, applicable mitigation, infrastructure-capacity verification, technical studies, responsible-agency permits, and additional CEQA review when required.

4.1 Impact Classification

The following classifications are used in this chapter:

Impact Classification Guide	
○ **No Impact**	The Specific Plan would not cause the environmental effect addressed by the checklist question.
● **Less Than Significant Impact**	The Specific Plan could cause the environmental effect, but the effect would not exceed the applicable significance threshold.
◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated**	The Specific Plan could cause a potentially significant environmental effect, but enforceable mitigation would reduce the effect below significance.
↺ **Previously Analyzed Significant Effect**	The effect was identified as significant in the General Plan EIR or in supporting environmental analysis incorporated therein. The Specific Plan would not cause a new effect or substantially

	increase the severity of the previously disclosed effect. Applicable prior mitigation and CEQA findings remain in effect.
▲ **Potentially Significant Impact**	Substantial evidence indicates that the Specific Plan may cause a significant environmental effect that has not been adequately addressed or cannot be reduced below significance through identified mitigation.

4.2 Aesthetics

The Specific Plan area consists primarily of flat agricultural land, rural development, transportation corridors, utility facilities, and limited urban development. There are no designated state scenic highways, identified scenic vistas, prominent rock outcroppings, or other formally designated scenic resources within the General Plan project area. The General Plan EIR nevertheless recognized agricultural fields, orchards, vineyards, and related vegetation as components of McFarland's visual character.

State Route 99 passes through the planning area and provides public views of agricultural land, rural development, railroad facilities, existing buildings, and transportation infrastructure. Future Specific Plan development would replace portions of the existing agricultural landscape with industrial, commercial, office, infrastructure, and related urban improvements.

a. Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	○ **No Impact**
No designated scenic vista has been identified within or directly adjoining the Specific Plan area. The area is relatively flat, and distant mountain views are not considered formally designated scenic vistas. The Specific Plan would therefore not obstruct or substantially alter a designated scenic vista. This conclusion is consistent with the General Plan EIR.	

b. Would the project substantially damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway?	○ **No Impact**
State Route 99 is not designated as a state scenic highway in the project vicinity. The Specific Plan area does not contain scenic highway resources such as prominent rock outcroppings, landmark trees, or designated historic buildings visible from a state scenic highway.	

c. Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated**

public views of the site and its surroundings?	
Specific Plan implementation would result in a substantial long-term change from an agricultural and rural landscape to an urban employment district. That change was anticipated by the General Plan land use designations and analyzed in the General Plan EIR. The prior EIR concluded that long-term changes in visual character would be less than significant, while temporary construction-related visual effects would require mitigation. The Specific Plan provides more detailed visual controls than the General Plan, including standards for architecture, building massing, State Route 99 frontage, landscaping, screening, outdoor storage, signs, loading areas, equipment, and gateway design. These requirements would create a coordinated development pattern and reduce the potential for visually incompatible industrial development.	

Mitigation Measure AES-1: Construction Site Appearance

Before issuance of a grading or building permit, the applicant shall submit a construction-site management plan for City approval. The plan shall identify measures for orderly material and equipment storage, removal of construction debris, screening of visually prominent storage areas where feasible, dust control, maintenance of perimeter fencing, and restoration of disturbed areas not incorporated into the completed project.

Mitigation Measure AES-2: Final Design Compliance

Before issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit final architectural, landscape, screening, signage, and site plans demonstrating compliance with the Specific Plan design standards. Loading areas, outdoor storage, refuse enclosures, utility equipment, mechanical equipment, and similar service functions shall be screened from public streets and adjoining residential property to the extent required by the Specific Plan.

With implementation of these measures and the mandatory Specific Plan design standards, this impact would be less than significant.

d. Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare?	◆ Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated
Industrial, commercial, roadway, parking, security, and loading-area lighting could introduce new nighttime illumination. Large building surfaces, roofing material, windows, solar installations, and vehicles could also create glare.	

Mitigation Measure AES-3: Lighting and Glare

All exterior lighting shall be fully shielded and directed downward or toward the area intended to be illuminated. Lighting shall not produce avoidable spillover onto residential property, agricultural land, public rights-of-way, or the night sky. Building materials shall be selected to minimize substantial glare. Photometric plans shall be required for industrial, commercial, public-facility, and common-area development. Lighting required for safety or security may be permitted when designed to achieve the minimum illumination needed for the intended purpose.

With compliance with AES-3 and the Specific Plan lighting standards, impacts would be less than significant.

4.3 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

Agricultural production is the dominant existing land use within much of the Specific Plan area. The General Plan EIR identified Prime Farmland and other Important Farmland within its broader project area and documented Williamson Act Prime Agricultural Land and land in nonrenewal status within the southern Sphere of Influence. The prior EIR concluded that adoption of General Plan designations would not itself physically convert agricultural land, terminate Williamson Act contracts, or alter Kern County zoning. Physical conversion would occur through later annexation and development.

No forest land, timberland, or Timberland Production Zone occurs within the Specific Plan area.

a. Would the project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
The General Plan EIR evaluated urbanization of the southern growth area, including future industrial and commercial development. The Specific Plan does not expand the geographic growth boundary established by the General Plan, but it provides a more detailed framework that would facilitate future conversion.	

Mitigation Measure AG-1: Current Farmland Evaluation

Before approval of an annexation, subdivision map, development agreement, or discretionary development project that would convert agricultural land, the applicant shall provide current Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program information identifying the classification of the affected land. The City shall document whether the conversion falls within the acreage and geographic extent analyzed in the General Plan EIR.

Mitigation Measure AG-2: Agricultural Mitigation Requirements

Where conversion of qualifying Important Farmland is subject to an adopted City or Kern County Local Agency Formation Commission agricultural-mitigation requirement, the applicant shall comply with that requirement before or concurrent with physical conversion. Compliance may include conservation, agricultural easements, fees, or another legally permissible mechanism determined by the responsible agency.

With implementation of AG-1 and AG-2, the impact would not be new or substantially more severe than the effect analyzed in the General Plan EIR.

b. Would the project conflict with existing agricultural zoning or a Williamson Act contract?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**

Specific Plan adoption would not itself cancel a Williamson Act contract or authorize development while a contract remains in effect. Annexation and development must reflect current contract status and applicable nonrenewal, cancellation, and LAFCO requirements.

Mitigation Measure AG-3: Williamson Act Verification

Before approval of an annexation or discretionary development application involving agricultural land, the applicant shall obtain current documentation of Williamson Act status. Development inconsistent with an active contract shall not be approved unless the contract has expired, entered nonrenewal and reached the applicable termination date, or been canceled or otherwise resolved in accordance with state law.

c. Would the project conflict with forest land or timberland zoning?	○ **No Impact.**
The planning area does not contain forest land, timberland, or Timberland Production Zone land.	

d. Would the project result in the loss or conversion of forest land?	○ **No Impact.**
No forest land occurs within the Specific Plan area.	

e. Would the project involve other changes that could indirectly convert farmland?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
Urban activity adjoining continuing agriculture could create conflicts involving dust, odor, equipment, pesticide use, drainage, access, lighting, noise, and trespass.	

Mitigation Measure AG-4: Agricultural Interface Protection

Development adjacent to continuing agricultural operations shall provide appropriate setbacks, fencing, access protection, drainage controls, right-to-farm disclosures, and design measures consistent with the Specific Plan. Development shall not obstruct established agricultural access or irrigation facilities unless an approved replacement is provided.

4.4 Air Quality

The Specific Plan is located in the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin under the jurisdiction of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. The basin experiences regional air-quality constraints resulting from topography, meteorology, transportation, agricultural activity, urban development, and stationary sources.

The McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR and its supporting technical studies evaluated development within the southern growth area and established the programmatic environmental framework applicable to the Specific Plan area. The air-quality analysis modeled a development

program containing substantial residential, office, commercial, light industrial, and heavy industrial development and approximately 182,080 daily trips. It concluded that construction effects could be controlled but that operational and cumulative air-quality effects at full General Plan buildout would remain significant and unavoidable.

a. Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of an applicable air-quality plan?	↺ **Previously Analyzed Significant Effect; No New or Substantially More Severe Effect Anticipated.**
The General Plan EIR identified significant operational and cumulative air-quality effects. The Specific Plan implements a smaller portion of the land use program evaluated by the EIR. Final reliance on the prior conclusion requires demonstration that the Specific Plan's building area, employment, trip generation, stationary sources, and operational emissions remain within the prior development and emissions envelope. The Specific Plan includes energy-efficiency, transportation-demand, truck-routing, electric-vehicle, solar-readiness, and infrastructure measures. Future stationary sources will remain subject to Air District permitting.	

Mitigation Measure AQ-1: Air-Quality Consistency Demonstration

Before public circulation of the Final IS/MND, the City shall complete an air-quality consistency memorandum comparing Specific Plan construction and operational emissions with the General Plan EIR assumptions and current Air District thresholds. If the analysis identifies a new or substantially more severe significant effect, the City shall complete the additional CEQA review required before project approval.

b. Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of a criteria pollutant?	↺ **Previously Analyzed Significant Effect.**
The General Plan EIR found full-buildout operational and cumulative air-quality impacts significant and unavoidable. The Specific Plan's contribution is part of the broader development program unless updated modeling demonstrates that it exceeds the prior assumptions. The Specific Plan cannot be found to eliminate the regional significant effect solely because it covers a smaller area. Applicable General Plan mitigation, Air District regulations, and project-level controls remain required.	

c. Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
Residentially designated and developed properties occur within and near the Specific Plan area. Future truck-intensive uses, diesel equipment, refrigeration, combustion equipment,	

manufacturing, food processing, and similar activities could expose sensitive receptors to toxic air contaminants.

Mitigation Measure AQ-2: Health-Risk Screening

Before approval of a use involving substantial diesel-truck activity, stationary combustion equipment, permitted toxic emissions, or another substantial source of toxic air contaminants within the screening distance established by current Air District guidance from a sensitive receptor, the applicant shall prepare a health-risk screening assessment. A detailed health-risk assessment shall be prepared when screening indicates a potential exceedance. The project shall incorporate feasible design, equipment, operational, routing, filtration, setback, or electrification measures necessary to reduce risk below applicable thresholds.

d. Would the project result in other emissions, such as odors, adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
The General Plan EIR concluded that objectionable odors would be less than significant because the program did not identify a particular odor-generating project. The Specific Plan now anticipates food processing, agricultural technology, cold storage, manufacturing, and related uses, some of which may create odor potential not associated with generic industrial modeling.	

Mitigation Measure AQ-3: Odor Review

Before approval of a use identified by current Air District guidance as having substantial odor potential, the applicant shall prepare an odor-management assessment addressing the type of emissions, proximity to receptors, prevailing winds, control equipment, enclosure, housekeeping, waste handling, complaint response, and operational practices. The City may require setbacks, enclosure, filtration, process changes, operating restrictions, or other feasible controls.

Mitigation Measure AQ-4: Construction Emissions

All construction shall comply with applicable Air District requirements, including Regulation VIII fugitive-dust controls. Projects shall implement anti-idling requirements, maintain equipment in proper working condition, stabilize disturbed areas, control track-out, cover haul loads, limit vehicle speeds on unpaved areas, and use lower-emission construction equipment where required by the project-level emissions analysis.

4.5 Biological Resources

The McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR and its supporting technical studies evaluated development within the southern growth area and established the programmatic environmental framework applicable to the Specific Plan area. The Programmatic Habitat Assessment found that agricultural activity had eliminated naturally occurring vegetation communities across the project area. The study identified approximately 2,044.55 acres of agriculture, 18.04 acres of agricultural stock ponds, 42.80 acres of disturbed land, and 110.34 acres of developed land.

The assessment identified moderate or greater potential for tricolored blackbird, burrowing owl, and Swainson's hawk; low potential for San Joaquin kit fox; potential nesting-bird habitat; and

possible state jurisdiction over agricultural stock ponds. The study recommended focused surveys before development and a field-based jurisdictional assessment.

a. Would the project adversely affect a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
Future development could disturb agricultural land and other habitats with potential to support special-status species identified in the General Plan EIR and supporting biological assessment. Because site conditions and species occurrence may change before individual properties are developed, current biological review and focused surveys may be required. Implementation of BIO-1 through BIO-3 would identify affected species and habitat and require avoidance, protection, permitting, monitoring, or compensatory mitigation. The impact would therefore be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.	

Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Current Biological Assessment

Before ground disturbance, vegetation removal, demolition, or infrastructure construction, a qualified biologist shall complete a current biological-resource assessment for the affected site and adjoining area. The assessment shall include current database review, habitat evaluation, and recommendations for focused surveys, avoidance, buffers, monitoring, permitting, and compensatory mitigation.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2: Focused Species Surveys

Where suitable habitat is present, focused surveys shall be conducted for burrowing owl, Swainson's hawk, tricolored blackbird, San Joaquin kit fox, western spadefoot, and other special-status species identified by the current assessment. Surveys shall follow then-current agency protocols.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3: Avoidance and Agency Coordination

If a special-status species or occupied habitat is identified, the project shall implement avoidance, protection, relocation, compensation, or other measures required by applicable law and responsible wildlife agencies. Required permits shall be obtained before disturbance.

b. Would the project adversely affect riparian habitat or another sensitive natural community?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
No riparian corridor or sensitive natural community was identified within the prior assessment area. Current field review is nevertheless required because land cover and drainage conditions may change. Implementation of BIO-1 would reduce this impact below significance.	

c. Would the project adversely affect state or federally protected wetlands?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
Agricultural stock ponds may qualify as waters of the state depending on their function and vegetation.	

Mitigation Measure BIO-4: Jurisdictional Delineation

Before disturbance of a pond, drainage, swale, ditch, wetland, or other potential aquatic feature, a qualified specialist shall complete a jurisdictional assessment. Required federal, state, or local permits shall be obtained before disturbance. Avoidance shall be required where feasible; unavoidable effects shall be mitigated in accordance with applicable permit requirements.

d. Would the project interfere with wildlife movement?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
The prior assessment found no functional wildlife corridor within the project area but recognized potential movement along agricultural land and the Friant-Kern Canal. BIO-1 through BIO-4 would identify and address any current movement function.	

e. Would the project conflict with a local policy protecting biological resources?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
Compliance with the General Plan, Specific Plan, and identified mitigation would avoid conflict with applicable resource-protection policies.	

f. Would the project conflict with an adopted habitat conservation plan?	○ **No Impact or Less Than Significant Impact.**
The prior assessment found that the project site was not within an adopted habitat conservation plan.	

4.6 Cultural Resources

The prior cultural-resources records search identified 14 previous studies and 14 recorded built-environment resources within or near the project area. Thirteen resources within the project area had been found ineligible for the California Register or National Register. The Friant-Kern Canal, located adjacent to the project area, was identified as eligible for the National Register and listed in the California Register. No known significant archaeological resource was identified within the planning area.

a. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change to a historical resource?	◆ Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.
Although the prior records search did not identify a known eligible historical resource within the planning area, buildings, structures, landscapes, or other features may become potentially eligible as time passes. CUL-1 requires evaluation of resources 45 years of age or older before demolition or substantial alteration and requires appropriate avoidance, documentation, or treatment. The impact would therefore be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.	

Mitigation Measure CUL-1: Historical Resource Review

Before demolition or substantial alteration of a building, structure, landscape, or feature 45 years of age or older, a qualified architectural historian shall determine whether the resource requires evaluation under CEQA. If eligible, the project shall avoid or minimize the substantial adverse change or implement appropriate documentation and treatment measures.

b. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change to an archaeological resource?	◆ Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.
No known significant archaeological resource was identified within the planning area, but previously unknown resources could be encountered during grading, excavation, or infrastructure construction. CUL-2 requires current records review and field evaluation where warranted, and CUL-3 establishes procedures for inadvertent discoveries. The impact would therefore be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.	

Mitigation Measure CUL-2: Archaeological Review

Before ground disturbance, the applicant shall obtain a current cultural-resources records search and complete field review when recommended by a qualified archaeologist. Where sensitivity is identified, the City may require avoidance, testing, construction monitoring, a treatment plan, or data recovery.

Mitigation Measure CUL-3: Inadvertent Discovery

If archaeological materials are discovered, work within the area of discovery shall stop. A qualified archaeologist shall evaluate the discovery and recommend appropriate treatment. Work may resume only after the City determines that the resource has been appropriately addressed.

c. Would the project disturb human remains?	◆ Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.
Ground-disturbing activity could encounter previously unknown human remains. Compliance with applicable state law and implementation of CUL-4 would require work to stop, notification of the Kern County Coroner, and appropriate treatment if remains are determined to be Native American. The impact would therefore be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.	

Mitigation Measure CUL-4: Human Remains

If human remains are discovered, work shall stop in the vicinity and the Kern County Coroner shall be contacted. If the remains are Native American, treatment shall proceed in accordance with applicable state law and consultation with the Native American Heritage Commission and Most Likely Descendant.

4.7 Energy

a. Would the project result in potentially significant environmental effects due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary energy consumption?	● **Less Than Significant Impact.**
Specific Plan development could require approximately 25 to 75 megawatts of electrical capacity, depending on the ultimate mix of manufacturing, refrigeration, processing, research, commercial, office, and fleet-charging uses. The range is a planning estimate and not a commitment of service. Future buildings and equipment must comply with applicable energy standards. The Specific Plan also promotes solar readiness, energy management, electric-vehicle infrastructure, battery storage, microgrid readiness, efficient refrigeration, broadband, and resource-efficient site design. Projects with unusually high energy demand shall provide project-specific utility and efficiency analyses. With regulatory compliance and Specific Plan requirements, wasteful or inefficient energy use is not anticipated.	

b. Would the project conflict with a state or local renewable-energy or energy-efficiency plan?	● **Less Than Significant Impact.**
The Specific Plan supports energy efficiency, renewable generation, electrification, and clean-fleet transition. No conflict is anticipated.	

4.8 Geology and Soils

a. Would the project expose people or structures to surface rupture, strong ground shaking, liquefaction, or landslides?	○ **Surface rupture: No Impact.** ◆ **Strong ground shaking: Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** ● **Liquefaction: Less Than Significant Impact.** ○ **Landslides: No Impact.**
The Specific Plan area is not within a mapped Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. Regional seismic activity could subject new structures to ground shaking. The prior EIR reported deep groundwater and low liquefaction potential. The area is relatively flat.	

Mitigation Measure GEO-1: Geotechnical Investigation

Before grading or building permits, the applicant shall prepare a project-specific geotechnical investigation addressing seismic design, settlement, subsidence, soil bearing, expansive soil, corrosivity, pavement design, earthwork, groundwater, and other site conditions. Recommendations shall be incorporated into final plans.

b. Would the project result in substantial erosion or loss of topsoil?	● **Less Than Significant Impact.**
Construction will comply with applicable erosion-control and stormwater requirements. Grading plans shall include stabilization and sediment-control measures.	

c. Would the project be located on unstable geologic or soil units?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
Implementation of GEO-1 would identify and address unstable soil conditions.	

d. Would the project be located on expansive soil?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
Site-specific expansive-soil conditions will be addressed through GEO-1.	

e. Would the project require septic systems on unsuitable soil?	○ **No Impact.**
Urban development will connect to an approved wastewater system. Septic systems are not included in the Specific Plan infrastructure framework.	

f. Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
Deep excavation into previously undisturbed geologic deposits could encounter paleontological resources not identified during program-level review. GEO-2 requires a qualified paleontologist to evaluate sensitivity, recommend monitoring where warranted, and establish discovery procedures. The impact would therefore be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.	

Mitigation Measure GEO-2: Paleontological Resources

For projects involving deep excavation into previously undisturbed geologic deposits, a qualified paleontologist shall assess sensitivity and recommend monitoring when warranted. If a fossil is discovered, work shall stop in the vicinity until the discovery is evaluated and appropriately treated.

4.9 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

a. Would the project generate greenhouse-gas emissions that may have a significant effect?	↺ Previously Analyzed Significant Effect; No New Determination Pending Updated Consistency Analysis.
The General Plan EIR estimated approximately 515,038 metric tons of carbon-dioxide-equivalent emissions and found project and cumulative GHG effects significant and unavoidable. The Specific Plan would implement a portion of that broader growth program. It includes energy efficiency, solar readiness, electric-vehicle infrastructure, fleet electrification, water conservation, waste reduction, and transportation-demand measures.	

Mitigation Measure GHG-1: Updated GHG Consistency Analysis

Before final action on the Specific Plan, the City shall complete a current greenhouse-gas consistency analysis comparing Specific Plan emissions with the prior EIR envelope and current state and local climate plans. The analysis shall identify feasible Specific Plan-level reduction measures and determine whether the project would cause a new significant effect or substantially increase the severity of the prior effect.

b. Would the project conflict with an applicable GHG reduction plan?	◆ Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated, subject to GHG-1.
The Specific Plan's efficiency and electrification requirements are generally consistent with state climate objectives. GHG-1 will document consistency using current standards.	

4.10 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

a. Would the project create a significant hazard through routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	◆ Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.
Industrial and manufacturing uses may handle regulated chemicals, fuels, refrigerants, cleaning materials, and hazardous waste.	

Mitigation Measure HAZ-1: Hazardous Materials Compliance

Future businesses shall identify hazardous materials and wastes and obtain all required permits. Projects shall provide compliant storage, secondary containment, spill prevention, emergency response, employee training, reporting, and disposal.

b. Would the project create a significant hazard through accidental release?	◆ Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.
Industrial and manufacturing operations could involve regulated processes or materials capable of accidental release. HAZ-2 requires applicable facilities to prepare risk-management, emergency-	

response, fire-protection, and release-prevention plans and obtain required agency approvals. These requirements would reduce the potential impact to less than significant.

Mitigation Measure HAZ-2: Risk Management and Emergency Planning

Uses involving acutely hazardous materials, substantial chemical inventories, regulated processes, or high-hazard occupancies shall prepare the risk-management, emergency-response, fire-protection, and release-prevention plans required by the appropriate agencies.

c. Would the project emit hazardous materials within one-quarter mile of a school?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
Where a future project is within one-quarter mile of a school, the applicant shall identify hazardous-material use and demonstrate compliance with applicable siting, notification, risk, and operational requirements.	

d. Would the project be located on a listed hazardous-material site?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
The 2015 database search identified numerous regulated sites in the surrounding area and one CERCLIS listing associated with the broader McFarland study area. The target property itself was not identified in the searched databases, but the report cautioned that only a property-specific environmental site assessment can evaluate parcel risk.	

Mitigation Measure HAZ-3: Environmental Site Assessment

Before property acquisition by a public agency, grading, demolition, or development, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment or equivalent investigation shall be prepared where historical use or database information indicates potential contamination. Additional investigation and remediation shall be completed when warranted.

e. Would the project create an airport safety hazard?	○ **No Impact.**
The Specific Plan area is approximately 4.15 miles from Delano Municipal Airport and outside the applicable airport planning boundary identified by the prior EIR.	

f. Would the project impair an emergency-response or evacuation plan?	● **Less Than Significant Impact.**
The circulation plan provides phased roadway improvements and emergency access. Future projects must demonstrate compliant primary and secondary access.	

g. Would the project expose people or structures to wildland fire?	○ No Impact or Less Than Significant Impact.
The prior EIR found no mapped fire-hazard severity zone within the planning area.	

4.11 Hydrology and Water Quality

The Specific Plan area is relatively flat and relies on retention and infiltration because of limited drainage outlets. Portions east of State Route 99 are affected by mapped 100-year flood conditions. Regional runoff is influenced by Poso Creek, the Friant-Kern Canal, State Route 99, and the railroad corridor.

a. Would the project violate water-quality or waste-discharge requirements?	◆ Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.
Construction and operation could generate sediment, pollutants, industrial runoff, spills, or other discharges affecting surface water or groundwater. HYD-1 requires compliance with applicable construction stormwater requirements and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan. HYD-2 requires operational source and treatment controls and Industrial General Permit coverage where applicable. The impact would therefore be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.	

Mitigation Measure HYD-1: Construction Water Quality

Projects disturbing the acreage subject to the Construction General Permit shall obtain coverage, prepare and implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, and install erosion, sediment, materials-management, spill-prevention, and stabilization controls.

Mitigation Measure HYD-2: Operational Water Quality

Projects shall incorporate post-construction source and treatment controls addressing parking, loading, outdoor storage, refuse, industrial activity, landscaping, and stormwater conveyance. Industrial facilities subject to the Industrial General Permit shall obtain coverage before operation.

b. Would the project substantially decrease groundwater supply or interfere with recharge?	◆ Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.
The prior utility correspondence reported approximately 1,825 acre-feet of annual municipal groundwater extraction and concluded that groundwater was available, provided future development secured supply consistent with groundwater-sustainability requirements. That information is dated and must be updated.	

Mitigation Measure HYD-3: Water-Supply Verification

Before approval of development requiring municipal water, the City shall verify available source capacity, groundwater sustainability, treatment, storage, pressure, fire flow, conveyance, and

financing. Water-intensive users shall submit process-specific demand information and implement feasible conservation, reuse, or supplemental-capacity measures.

c. Would the project alter drainage patterns, cause erosion, flooding, or exceed drainage capacity?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
Development would increase impervious surface and could alter runoff volume, direction, timing, and water quality. Because portions of the planning area have limited drainage outlets and mapped flood exposure, project-specific drainage analysis and adequate retention or conveyance facilities are required. HYD-4 and HYD-5 would prevent increased flooding, erosion, or off-site drainage impacts, reducing the impact to less than significant.	

Mitigation Measure HYD-4: Drainage Study

Before grading approval, a project-specific hydrology and hydraulic analysis shall demonstrate that the project will retain or safely convey stormwater without increasing flood risk, erosion, or drainage impacts on other property.

Mitigation Measure HYD-5: Regional Basin Capacity

A project may rely on the planned northwest retention basin or another shared facility only after the City verifies property control, construction, conveyance, available capacity, maintenance, and financing. Otherwise, the project shall provide an independently functioning on-site or approved shared drainage solution.

d. Would the project impede or redirect flood flows?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
Development within a mapped flood hazard area must comply with applicable floodplain regulations and demonstrate that fill, structures, and drainage improvements will not increase flood elevations or redirect damaging flows.	

e. Would the project risk release of pollutants due to inundation?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
Hazardous materials and waste storage shall be located and designed to prevent flood-related release.	

f. Would the project conflict with a water-quality control or groundwater-management plan?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
HYD-1 through HYD-5 and current groundwater-sustainability review would avoid conflict.	

4.12 Land Use and Planning

a. Would the project physically divide an established community?	● Less Than Significant Impact.
The Specific Plan continues the planned urban development pattern south of established McFarland. It retains residential designations and establishes roadway connections rather than erecting a new barrier through an established neighborhood. State Route 99 and the railroad are existing barriers. The planned Hanawalt overpass would improve connectivity.	

b. Would the project conflict with a land use plan adopted to avoid an environmental effect?	● Less Than Significant Impact.
The Specific Plan implements the General Plan's industrial, commercial, office, and residential framework. Employment overlays do not independently change underlying land use authority. The prior EIR identified a significant land use inconsistency related to Noise Element Policy 2 because projected traffic noise would affect noise-sensitive uses. That prior finding remains applicable at the program level. The Specific Plan adds truck-route restrictions, interface standards, acoustical review, and operational controls but does not rescind the prior finding.	

4.13 Mineral Resources

a. Would the project result in the loss of a known mineral resource?	○ No Impact.
No known regionally valuable mineral resource has been identified within the Specific Plan area.	

b. Would the project result in the loss of a locally important mineral-resource recovery site?	○ No Impact.
The area is not designated as a locally important mineral-resource recovery site. This conclusion is consistent with the prior EIR.	

4.14 Noise

Existing noise sources include State Route 99, local traffic, railroad operations, agricultural equipment, and existing development. Measurements collected in 2015 documented representative noise levels at locations along Taylor Avenue, Hanawalt Avenue, Whisler Road, and other portions of the planning area.

The McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR and its supporting technical studies evaluated development within the southern growth area and established the programmatic environmental framework applicable to the Specific Plan area. The General Plan EIR found construction noise and vibration reducible with mitigation, stationary-source noise less than significant, and long-term mobile-source and cumulative traffic noise significant and unavoidable.

a. Would the project generate noise exceeding applicable standards?	◆ **Construction: Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
Construction equipment and future industrial operations could generate noise affecting nearby residential or other sensitive uses. NOI-1 establishes construction-noise controls, while NOI-2 requires acoustical review and project-specific design or operational controls for substantial stationary or truck-related noise sources. Long-term regional mobile-source noise remains a previously analyzed significant effect. Project-specific construction and stationary-source effects would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.	

Mitigation Measure NOI-1: Construction Noise

Construction shall comply with City hours and applicable standards. Equipment shall be fitted with properly maintained mufflers. Stationary equipment shall be located away from sensitive receptors where feasible. Contractors shall designate a contact for noise complaints and implement corrective measures when reasonable.

Operations: Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

Mitigation Measure NOI-2: Operational Acoustical Study

A project involving substantial truck activity, outdoor loading, refrigeration, manufacturing equipment, rooftop equipment, continuous operations, alarms, or another substantial source near a sensitive receptor shall prepare an acoustical study. The study shall identify setbacks, barriers, enclosure, equipment selection, orientation, operating limits, or other measures required to meet applicable standards.

Mobile noise: Previously Analyzed Significant Effect.

The prior significant and unavoidable mobile-source noise finding remains applicable. The Specific Plan directs trucks away from residential streets and improves freight routing but does not establish that the regional cumulative effect has been eliminated.

b. Would the project generate excessive groundborne vibration?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
Pile driving, vibratory compaction, demolition, and similar activities could generate vibration affecting nearby structures or sensitive uses. NOI-3 requires a vibration-control plan addressing equipment, setbacks, monitoring, notification, and damage prevention where high-vibration activity would occur near a sensitive structure. The impact would therefore be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.	

Mitigation Measure NOI-3: Construction Vibration

Where pile driving, vibratory compaction, demolition, or similar high-vibration activity would occur near a sensitive structure, the applicant shall prepare a vibration-control plan addressing equipment selection, setback, monitoring, notification, and damage prevention.

c. Would the project expose people to airport noise?	○ **No Impact.**
The Specific Plan area is outside the applicable airport noise-planning area identified by the prior EIR.	

4.15 Population and Housing

a. Would the project induce substantial unplanned population growth?	• **Less Than Significant Impact.**
The Specific Plan principally facilitates employment development. Approximately 162.10 acres retain residential designations already established by the General Plan. The Specific Plan does not add residential acreage beyond the General Plan framework. Employment growth could indirectly increase housing demand, but job growth was a stated objective of the General Plan. The prior EIR evaluated City growth to approximately 19,300 people and 5,200 jobs by 2040.	

b. Would the project displace substantial housing or people?	• **Less Than Significant Impact.**
The Specific Plan does not require removal of substantial numbers of residences. Future projects affecting an occupied residence will be reviewed individually.	

4.16 Public Services

Fire Protection	• **Less Than Significant Impact.**
The prior correspondence identified target response times of five to seven minutes and recognized that additional stations, equipment, and personnel could be required as development occurs. Development must demonstrate fire flow, hydrants, access, secondary access, sprinklers, hazardous-material controls, and compliance with Fire Department requirements. Required facility improvements will be evaluated when their location and design are established.	

Police Protection	• **Less Than Significant Impact.**
Future development will increase calls for service. Phasing, site-security standards, lighting, access control, and development funding will allow services to expand with growth. No specific new police facility is approved by the Specific Plan.	

Schools	• Less Than Significant Impact.
The Specific Plan does not create new residential designations. Development will pay applicable statutory school fees. The prior school correspondence documented existing facilities and developer-fee requirements.	

4.16.4 Parks	• Less Than Significant Impact.
Employment development would not directly create the same park demand as residential development. Residential development will remain subject to applicable park requirements. The Specific Plan does not approve construction of a particular public park.	

4.16.5 Other Public Facilities	• Less Than Significant Impact.
The prior correspondence identified the existing McFarland library as adequate at that time but recognized possible future expansion if population increased substantially. Future facility needs will be evaluated as development proceeds.	

4.17 Recreation

a. Would the project increase use of existing parks such that deterioration would occur?	• Less Than Significant Impact.
The Specific Plan primarily facilitates employment development and does not add new residential acreage. Applicable park fees and requirements will address residential demand.	

b. Would the project include recreational facilities that could cause environmental effects?	• Less Than Significant Impact.
The planned railroad-corridor trail remains subject to property rights, engineering, railroad approval, environmental review, and maintenance arrangements. Its site-specific effects will be evaluated when a defined project is available.	

4.18 Transportation

The McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR and its supporting technical studies evaluated development within the southern growth area and established the programmatic environmental framework applicable to the Specific Plan area. The General Plan Traffic Impact Analysis evaluated 26 intersections, 61 roadway segments, State Route 99 ramp intersections, and multiple 2040 scenarios. It estimated approximately 172,022 daily trips at General Plan buildout and identified improvements to Whisler Road, Mast Avenue, and other facilities.

The certified McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR includes vehicle miles traveled analysis addressing long-term development under the General Plan. The supporting General Plan Traffic Impact Analysis also evaluated intersection and roadway level of service, which remains relevant to circulation planning, roadway design, safety, truck routing, and improvement phasing.

a. Would the project conflict with a transportation plan addressing circulation, transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
The Specific Plan establishes a coordinated road, freight, bicycle, pedestrian, trail, and transit framework. The Hanawalt facility is identified as an overpass, not a new interchange.	

Mitigation Measure TRA-1: Transportation Consistency Analysis

Before final Specific Plan adoption, the City shall complete an updated transportation memorandum documenting Specific Plan trip generation, consistency with the circulation network, roadway improvement triggers, safety, truck routing, multimodal facilities, and fair-share obligations.

b. Would the project conflict with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 concerning VMT?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated, subject to updated analysis.**
The General Plan EIR contains programmatic VMT analysis applicable to the Specific Plan area. The Specific Plan does not independently approve a site-specific development project or establish a separate trip entitlement. TRA-2 requires VMT consistency review and additional analysis where a proposed development is not adequately addressed by the General Plan EIR, does not qualify for applicable screening, or presents materially different travel characteristics. The impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.	

Mitigation Measure TRA-2: VMT Analysis

Before final Specific Plan adoption, the City shall prepare a VMT consistency memorandum documenting whether the Specific Plan remains within the development and travel assumptions evaluated by the General Plan EIR. Additional VMT analysis shall be completed if the consistency review identifies development intensity, land-use characteristics, travel behavior, or other circumstances not adequately addressed in the General Plan EIR. If an applicable VMT threshold may be exceeded, the City shall incorporate feasible VMT-reduction measures or complete the additional environmental review required by CEQA.

Potential measures may include transportation-demand management, carpooling, vanpooling, transit coordination, bicycle facilities, flexible work schedules, local hiring programs consistent with law, charging infrastructure, and mixed employee-serving uses.

c. Would the project substantially increase hazards due to design features or incompatible uses?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
The Specific Plan directs routine truck traffic to Driver Road, Taylor Avenue east of Bowman Road, Bowman Road south of Taylor Avenue, Hanawalt Avenue east of Bowman Road, and Whisler Road	

to the State Route 99 interchange. Routine truck traffic is prohibited on local streets north of Taylor Avenue and on other residential streets not designated as truck routes.

Mitigation Measure TRA-3: Site Access and Truck Study

Truck-intensive projects shall submit a site-access and truck-circulation analysis demonstrating adequate driveway spacing, sight distance, turning movements, queuing, loading, emergency access, and routing. Trucks shall not routinely queue or maneuver within public travel lanes.

d. Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?	• **Less Than Significant Impact.**
Future development must demonstrate compliant primary and secondary emergency access. Phases that cannot be safely served shall not proceed.	

4.19 Tribal Cultural Resources

a. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in a tribal cultural resource listed or eligible for listing?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
The prior cultural-resources review did not identify a known listed or eligible tribal cultural resource within the planning area. Tribal cultural resources may nevertheless be identified through consultation or during ground disturbance. TCR-1 requires completion of applicable tribal consultation before final action, and TCR-2 establishes procedures for discoveries. The impact would therefore be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.	

b. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in a resource determined by the lead agency to be a tribal cultural resource?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
The prior cultural review did not identify a known significant resource within the planning area, but tribal cultural resources may not be reflected in conventional records searches.	

Mitigation Measure TCR-1: Tribal Consultation

Tribal consultation and tribal cultural resource review completed in connection with the McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR shall provide the programmatic foundation for this tiered IS/MND. Future discretionary development proposals shall be reviewed for the potential presence of tribal cultural resources and shall comply with applicable tribal consultation requirements and any project-specific avoidance, protection, monitoring, or treatment measures required by law.

Mitigation Measure TCR-2: Tribal Cultural Resource Discovery

If a potential tribal cultural resource is discovered, work shall stop in the vicinity, the City and consulting tribes shall be notified, and a qualified specialist shall evaluate the discovery. Treatment shall prioritize avoidance and preservation where feasible.

The final IS/MND must document completion of consultation before adopting the determination.

4.20 Utilities and Service Systems

4.20.1 Water

a. Would the project require new or expanded water facilities with significant environmental effects?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
The prior correspondence identified the need for distribution mains, metered services, wells, storage tanks, and booster pumping.	

Mitigation Measure UTIL-1: Water Infrastructure Plan

Before approval of the first development phase requiring new municipal facilities, the City shall approve an infrastructure plan identifying required wells, treatment, storage, pumping, transmission, distribution, fire flow, phasing, financing, and environmental review.

b. Would sufficient water supplies be available?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
Implementation of HYD-3 and UTIL-1 would require verification before development.	

4.20.2 Wastewater

c. Would the project require new or expanded wastewater facilities?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
The prior correspondence reported an existing treatment expansion from 1.55 to 2.5 MGD and projected approximately 3.34 MGD of additional General Plan flow.	

Mitigation Measure UTIL-2: Wastewater Capacity and Pretreatment

Before approval of development, the City shall verify conveyance, treatment, disposal or reuse capacity. Industrial users shall characterize wastewater flow and strength and provide pretreatment, monitoring, recycling, or special discharge controls when required.

4.20.3 Stormwater

d. Would the project require new stormwater facilities?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**

Implementation of HYD-4 and HYD-5 would ensure adequate facilities and environmental review.

4.20.4 Solid Waste

e. Would the project generate solid waste beyond landfill capacity?	• **Less Than Significant Impact.**
The prior EIR concluded that regional landfill capacity was adequate. Development must comply with current recycling, organics, construction-waste, hazardous-waste, and solid-waste requirements.	

f. Would the project conflict with solid-waste regulations?	• **Less Than Significant Impact.**
Compliance with applicable state and local requirements is mandatory.	

4.20.5 Energy and Communications

g. Would the project require new or expanded electric, gas, or communications facilities with significant effects?	◆ **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.**
Specific Plan development could require expansion of electrical, gas, or communications infrastructure, particularly for energy-intensive industrial, refrigeration, processing, research, or fleet-charging uses. UTIL-3 requires provider confirmation or an approved utility plan identifying capacity, improvements, phasing, easements, and environmental review. Major off-site facilities not adequately analyzed in this IS/MND would require separate CEQA review. The impact would therefore be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.	

Mitigation Measure UTIL-3: Utility Capacity Confirmation

Before approval of development with substantial electrical, gas, or communications demand, the applicant shall obtain provider confirmation or an approved utility plan identifying capacity, required improvements, phasing, easements, and environmental review. Major off-site facilities not adequately analyzed in this document shall undergo separate CEQA review.

4.21 Wildfire

The prior EIR found that the planning area was not within a mapped fire-hazard severity zone. The area is predominantly agricultural and urbanizing rather than wildland.

a. Would the project impair an emergency-response or evacuation plan?	• **Less Than Significant Impact.**

The circulation plan provides multiple routes and phased access requirements.

b. Would the project exacerbate wildfire risk due to slope, winds, or other factors?	○ **No Impact or Less Than Significant Impact.**
The area is flat and outside the previously identified fire-hazard severity zones.	

c. Would the project require infrastructure that could exacerbate fire risk?	• **Less Than Significant Impact.**
Electrical and utility infrastructure will comply with applicable safety standards.	

d. Would the project expose people or structures to post-fire hazards?	○ **No Impact.**
The flat valley setting is not subject to substantial post-fire slope instability, landslide, or debris-flow risk.	

4.22 Summary of Mitigation Measures

The Initial Study identifies the following Specific Plan-level mitigation measures:

AES-1: Construction Site Appearance.
AES-2: Final Design Compliance.
AES-3: Lighting and Glare.
AG-1: Current Farmland Evaluation.
AG-2: Agricultural Mitigation Requirements.
AG-3: Williamson Act Verification.
AG-4: Agricultural Interface Protection.
AQ-1: Air-Quality Consistency Demonstration.
AQ-2: Health-Risk Screening.
AQ-3: Odor Review.
AQ-4: Construction Emissions.
BIO-1: Current Biological Assessment.
BIO-2: Focused Species Surveys.
BIO-3: Avoidance and Agency Coordination.
BIO-4: Jurisdictional Delineation.
CUL-1: Historical Resource Review.
CUL-2: Archaeological Review.
CUL-3: Inadvertent Discovery.
CUL-4: Human Remains.
GEO-1: Geotechnical Investigation.
GEO-2: Paleontological Resources.
GHG-1: Updated GHG Consistency Analysis.
HAZ-1: Hazardous Materials Compliance.
HAZ-2: Risk Management and Emergency Planning.
HAZ-3: Environmental Site Assessment.
HYD-1: Construction Water Quality.
HYD-2: Operational Water Quality.
HYD-3: Water-Supply Verification.
HYD-4: Drainage Study.
HYD-5: Regional Basin Capacity.
NOI-1: Construction Noise.
NOI-2: Operational Acoustical Study.
NOI-3: Construction Vibration.
TRA-1: Transportation Consistency Analysis.

TRA-2: VMT Analysis.
TRA-3: Site Access and Truck Study.
TCR-1: Tribal Consultation.
TCR-2: Tribal Cultural Resource Discovery.
UTIL-1: Water Infrastructure Plan.
UTIL-2: Wastewater Capacity and Pretreatment.
UTIL-3: Utility Capacity Confirmation.

These measures are supplemental to applicable mitigation adopted through the General Plan EIR. The final Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program shall integrate both sets of measures, identify implementation responsibility and timing, and avoid duplication.

4.23 Conclusion

The environmental analysis indicates that most Specific Plan-level effects would be less than significant or could be reduced below significance through the mandatory Specific Plan standards, applicable General Plan EIR mitigation, and the additional measures identified in this chapter.

The General Plan EIR's significant and unavoidable findings for operational and cumulative air quality, greenhouse-gas emissions, mobile-source and cumulative traffic noise, and the related land use inconsistency remain part of the environmental record.

Based on the analysis in this IS/MND, the City may rely on the certified McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR and its supporting technical studies and adopt the proposed tiered Mitigated Negative Declaration, provided the administrative record documents completion of consultation and other pre-approval requirements identified herein.

5.0 MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

5.1 Introduction

Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21081.6, the City of McFarland shall adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan. The purpose of the MMRP is to ensure that mitigation measures identified in the Tiered Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration are implemented and monitored throughout project approval, design, construction, and operation.

The MMRP establishes:

- The mitigation measure.
- Timing of implementation.
- Responsible implementing party.
- Responsible monitoring agency.
- Verification of compliance.
- Ongoing operational obligations where applicable.

This MMRP incorporates applicable mitigation measures from the McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR, together with the additional mitigation identified in this IS/MND.

The City shall require implementation of applicable mitigation measures through conditions of approval, subdivision maps, development agreements, improvement plans, grading permits, building permits, conditional use permits, site plan review approvals, operating permits, and other discretionary approvals.

5.2 Monitoring Responsibilities

Agency/Department	Responsibilities
City Community Development Department	Primary CEQA compliance review, permit conditions, development consistency review
City Public Works Department	Infrastructure, drainage, transportation, utility, grading, water and wastewater improvements
City Engineer	Improvement plan review and construction compliance
Building Official	Building permit compliance and construction verification
Kern County Fire Department	Fire access, fire flow, hazardous materials, emergency response compliance
San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District	Air permits and emissions compliance
Regional Water Quality Control Board	Stormwater and discharge compliance

California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Biological resource permitting and mitigation
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Federal species compliance
Qualified Consultant Specialists	Biological, cultural, geotechnical, acoustical, traffic, air quality, hydrology and other technical monitoring

5.3 Aesthetics

Mitigation Measure	Timing	Responsible Party	Verification
AES-1 Construction Site Appearance	Prior to grading permit and throughout construction	Developer	City inspection
AES-2 Final Design Compliance	Prior to building permit issuance	Developer	Design Review approval
AES-3 Lighting and Glare Standards	Prior to occupancy and throughout operations	Property Owner	City verification of photometric plans

5.4 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

Mitigation Measure	Timing	Responsible Party	Verification
AG-1 Current Farmland Evaluation	Prior to annexation or discretionary development approval	Developer	City review
AG-2 Agricultural Mitigation Compliance	Prior to land conversion	Developer	LAFCO/City documentation
AG-3 Williamson Act Verification	Prior to development approval	Developer	City review
AG-4 Agricultural Interface Protection	During project design and operation	Developer/Property Owner	Site Plan Review

5.5 Air Quality

Mitigation Measure	Timing	Responsible Party	Verification
AQ-1 Air Quality Consistency Demonstration	Prior to Final IS/MND adoption	City	Technical memorandum
AQ-2 Health Risk Screening Assessment	Prior to approval of applicable industrial facilities	Applicant	City review
AQ-3 Odor Management Assessment	Prior to approval of odor-generating uses	Applicant	City review

AQ-4 Construction Emission Controls	During construction	Contractor	Field inspections

AQ-4 Required Actions

- Comply with SJVAPCD Regulation VIII.
- Water exposed soil surfaces.
- Cover haul trucks.
- Limit equipment idling.
- Maintain equipment.
- Stabilize disturbed areas.

5.6 Biological Resources

Mitigation Measure	Timing	Responsible Party	Verification
BIO-1 Biological Assessment	Prior to disturbance activities	Applicant	Qualified biologist report
BIO-2 Focused Species Surveys	Prior to grading	Applicant	Biological survey report
BIO-3 Species Avoidance/Coordination	During planning and construction	Applicant	Agency permits
BIO-4 Jurisdictional Delineation	Prior to impacts to aquatic features	Applicant	Delineation report

Additional Monitoring

If protected species are identified:

- Establish buffers.
- Conduct biological monitoring during construction.
- Obtain state and federal permits where required.
- Implement compensatory mitigation when required.

5.7 Cultural Resources

Mitigation Measure	Timing	Responsible Party	Verification
CUL-1 Historic Resource Evaluation	Prior to demolition/alteration	Applicant	Historian report
CUL-2 Archaeological Review	Prior to grading	Applicant	Archaeological study
CUL-3 Inadvertent Discovery Protocol	During construction	Contractor	City/Archaeologist verification
CUL-4 Human Remains Procedure	During construction	Contractor	Coroner determination

5.8 Tribal Cultural Resources

Mitigation Measure	Timing	Responsible Party	Verification
TCR-1 Tribal Consultation	During review of future discretionary development, as required by applicable law	City	Consultation record
TCR-2 Tribal Resource Discovery Procedures	Construction phase	Contractor	City documentation

5.9 Geology and Soils

Mitigation Measure	Timing	Responsible Party	Verification
GEO-1 Geotechnical Investigation	Prior to grading permit	Applicant	Geotechnical report
GEO-2 Paleontological Review	Prior to deep excavation and during construction if required	Applicant	Paleontologist verification

5.10 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Mitigation Measure	Timing	Responsible Party	Verification
GHG-1 Greenhouse Gas Consistency Analysis	Prior to Final IS/MND adoption	City	Technical memorandum

Required Sustainability Measures

Future development shall implement:

- EV-ready parking.
- Energy-efficient equipment.
- Solar-ready construction.
- Water conservation.
- Transportation demand management.
- Efficient site design.

5.11 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Mitigation Measure	Timing	Responsible Party	Verification
HAZ-1 Hazardous Materials Compliance	Prior to operations	Owner/Operator	Permit documentation
HAZ-2 Risk Management/Emergency Planning	Prior to occupancy	Owner/Operator	Fire Department approval

HAZ-3 Environmental Site Assessment	Prior to development on potentially contaminated sites	Applicant	Phase I ESA

5.12 Hydrology and Water Quality

Mitigation Measure	Timing	Responsible Party	Verification
HYD-1 Construction Water Quality Controls	During construction	Contractor	SWPPP inspections
HYD-2 Operational Water Quality Controls	Prior to occupancy	Applicant	City review
HYD-3 Water Supply Verification	Prior to development approval	City/Applicant	Utility review
HYD-4 Drainage Study	Prior to improvement plans	Applicant	City Engineer approval
HYD-5 Regional Basin Capacity Verification	Prior to connection to regional drainage facilities	Applicant	Public Works verification

5.13 Noise

Mitigation Measure	Timing	Responsible Party	Verification
NOI-1 Construction Noise Controls	During construction	Contractor	City inspection
NOI-2 Acoustical Study	Prior to approval of applicable projects	Applicant	Acoustical report
NOI-3 Construction Vibration Control	Prior to high-vibration activities	Contractor	Vibration plan review

5.14 Transportation

Mitigation Measure	Timing	Responsible Party	Verification
TRA-1 Transportation Consistency Analysis	Prior to major development approvals	City/Applicant	Technical memorandum
TRA-2 Vehicle Miles Traveled Analysis	Prior to discretionary approvals	Applicant	City review
TRA-3 Truck Access and Circulation Study	Prior to truck-intensive projects	Applicant	Transportation review

Operational Transportation Requirements

- Truck routing shall comply with Specific Plan requirements.
- Industrial traffic shall avoid restricted residential roadways.

- Adequate on-site truck queuing shall be provided.
- Emergency access shall be maintained at all times.

5.15 Utilities and Service Systems

Mitigation Measure	Timing	Responsible Party	Verification
UTIL-1 Water Infrastructure Plan	Prior to development approval	Applicant	Public Works review
UTIL-2 Wastewater Capacity and Pretreatment	Prior to utility connection	Applicant	City approval
UTIL-3 Utility Capacity Confirmation	Prior to development approval	Applicant	Utility provider documentation

5.16 Ongoing Operational Mitigation

The following mitigation measures shall continue throughout operation of applicable facilities:

- Agricultural interface requirements.
- Truck routing restrictions.
- Lighting controls.
- Outdoor storage screening.
- Noise controls.
- Hazardous-material management.
- Wastewater pretreatment requirements.
- Water conservation requirements.
- Stormwater BMP maintenance.
- Biological resource easements or mitigation areas.
- Transportation demand management programs.
- Air-quality permit compliance.

The City may require annual or periodic reporting for facilities with significant operational obligations.

5.17 Mitigation Compliance Documentation

Prior to issuance of a grading permit, building permit, occupancy permit, or other discretionary entitlement, the City shall verify that applicable mitigation measures have been satisfied.

Documentation may include:

- Biological surveys.
- Cultural resource reports.
- Tribal consultation records.
- Geotechnical reports.
- Acoustical studies.
- Traffic analyses.
- Air quality studies.

- GHG analyses.
- Hydrology studies.
- Utility availability letters.
- Environmental permits.
- Phase I/II Environmental Site Assessments.
- Recorded easements.
- Funding agreements.
- Improvement plans.

5.18 Monitoring Program Administration

The Community Development Department shall maintain the official mitigation-compliance record for the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan.

The record shall include:

- Approved mitigation measures.
- Verification dates.
- Responsible agencies.
- Applicable permit numbers.
- Monitoring documentation.
- Technical reports.
- Compliance certifications.

The MMRP shall remain in effect for the life of the Specific Plan and shall apply to future discretionary development approvals unless modified through subsequent CEQA review.

5.19 MMRP Finding

Based upon implementation of the mitigation measures identified in this Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, the City of McFarland finds that all project-specific potentially significant environmental impacts associated with the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan can be reduced to less-than-significant levels.

The City further finds that implementation of this MMRP satisfies the requirements of California Public Resources Code Section 21081.6 and provides a reasonable and enforceable mechanism for ensuring mitigation implementation throughout the life of the Specific Plan.

6.0 CEQA FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

The City of McFarland has prepared these CEQA Findings in support of its consideration of the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan ("Specific Plan"), the Tiered Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND), and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP).

These Findings have been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq., and the CEQA Guidelines.

The City Council, as Lead Agency, has independently reviewed and considered:

- The Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan.
- The Tiered Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration.
- The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
- The McFarland General Plan Environmental Impact Report (State Clearinghouse No. 2021040288).
- Supporting technical studies and appendices.
- Tribal consultation documentation.
- Public comments and agency comments received during review.
- Responses to environmental comments.
- The complete administrative record.

The City finds that the environmental review documents reflect the City's independent judgment and analysis.

6.2 Findings Regarding Tiering

The City finds that preparation of a tiered environmental document is appropriate pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15152, 15168, and 15183.

The basis for this finding includes the following:

Finding 2.1	The Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan is located within the geographic area evaluated by the McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR, which serves as the City's primary programmatic environmental document.
Finding 2.2	The General Plan EIR evaluated future residential, commercial, office, public, industrial, transportation, infrastructure, utility and public-service development within the City and Sphere of Influence, including development applicable to the Specific Plan area.
Finding 2.3	The Specific Plan implements and refines the General Plan land use framework and does not expand the General Plan growth boundary.
Finding 2.4	The Specific Plan establishes more detailed development standards, infrastructure requirements, environmental protections, truck-routing requirements, agricultural transition standards, residential buffering standards,

	utility-capacity verification requirements, and monitoring procedures than were available at the General Plan level.
Finding 2.5	The Initial Study has evaluated whether the Specific Plan would: • Create new significant environmental impacts. • Cause previously identified impacts to become substantially more severe. • Require substantially different mitigation. • Involve changed circumstances. • Involve new information of substantial importance.
Finding 2.6	The Initial Study concludes that implementation of the Specific Plan will not create a new significant environmental effect or substantially increase the severity of an environmental effect beyond that previously analyzed in the General Plan EIR.

6.3 Findings Regarding Mitigation

The City finds that mitigation measures identified in the Initial Study and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program are feasible and capable of reducing project-specific impacts to less-than-significant levels.

The City further finds that:

Finding 3-1	Mitigation measures incorporated into the Specific Plan have been adopted as enforceable development standards, permit conditions, implementation requirements, or operational requirements.
Finding 3-2	Mitigation measures identified in the General Plan EIR remain applicable where relevant and continue to provide environmental benefit to future development within the Specific Plan area.
Finding 3-3	The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program provides an enforceable mechanism for ensuring implementation of mitigation.
Finding 3-4	Future discretionary development projects shall remain subject to environmental consistency review and implementation of applicable mitigation measures.

6.4 Findings by Environmental Topic

Aesthetics	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.
The City finds that the Specific Plan contains design standards, architectural requirements, landscaping standards, lighting standards, screening requirements, and corridor enhancement requirements sufficient to reduce project-specific visual impacts to a less-than-significant level.	
Agriculture and Forestry Resources	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.
The City finds that: • Conversion of agricultural land was evaluated in the General Plan EIR. • The Specific Plan does not expand the urban growth area previously analyzed. • Agricultural conversion will occur only through future annexation and discretionary development approvals. • Agricultural compatibility measures and farmland review procedures have been incorporated into the Specific Plan.	
Air Quality	No New Significant Effect and No Substantial Increase in Severity of Previously Identified Significant Impacts.
The City finds that: • The General Plan EIR identified significant and unavoidable operational and cumulative air-quality impacts. • The Specific Plan does not independently increase development intensity beyond the broader development assumptions previously analyzed. • Construction, operational, health-risk, and odor controls have been incorporated into the Specific Plan and MMRP. • Future projects shall comply with San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District requirements.	
Biological Resources	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.
The City finds that: • Future development may affect special-status species, nesting birds, or jurisdictional resources. • Biological surveys, avoidance measures, permitting, monitoring, and compensatory mitigation requirements have been incorporated into the MMRP. • Biological impacts can be reduced below significance.	

Cultural Resources	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.
The City finds that: • Previously unknown archaeological, historical, or paleontological resources may be encountered. • Discovery procedures, monitoring requirements, and resource evaluation requirements have been adopted. • Human remains protocols are required.	
Energy	Less Than Significant Impact.
The City finds that: • Future development shall comply with applicable building efficiency standards. • The Specific Plan encourages renewable energy, electric vehicle infrastructure, energy-efficient facilities, and sustainability measures. • Wasteful or unnecessary energy consumption will not occur.	
Geology and Soils	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.
The City finds that: • The planning area is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. • Site-specific geotechnical review is required. • Standard engineering practices and building standards will reduce impacts.	
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	No New Significant Effect and No Substantial Increase in Severity of Previously Identified Significant Impacts.
The City finds that: • The General Plan EIR identified significant and unavoidable project-level and cumulative greenhouse-gas impacts. • The Specific Plan contributes to but does not expand beyond the broader development program analyzed in the EIR. • Sustainability, energy efficiency, electrification, and transportation-demand measures will reduce project-specific emissions.	
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.
The City finds that: • Future uses involving hazardous materials will be regulated by local, state, and federal agencies. • Site-specific environmental investigations and hazardous-material controls are required.	

• Risks can be reduced to less-than-significant levels.	
Hydrology and Water Quality	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.
The City finds that: • Development will require site-specific drainage analysis. • Water quality requirements and stormwater controls will be implemented. • Water supply, wastewater, and drainage capacity verification is required before development.	
Land Use and Planning	Less Than Significant Impact.
The City finds that: • The Specific Plan implements the McFarland General Plan. • The Specific Plan promotes orderly urban expansion anticipated by the General Plan. • The Specific Plan will not physically divide an established community.	
Mineral Resources	No Impact.
The City finds that no known mineral resource recovery site would be affected.	
Noise	No New Significant Effect and No Substantial Increase in Severity of Previously Identified Significant Impacts.
The City finds that: • Construction noise impacts can be controlled through mitigation. • Stationary operational noise impacts can be mitigated through acoustical review and project design. • The General Plan EIR identified significant and unavoidable mobile-source traffic noise impacts. • The Specific Plan does not create a new or substantially more severe traffic-noise impact.	
Population and Housing	Less Than Significant Impact.
The City finds that: • Growth anticipated by the Specific Plan was contemplated by the General Plan EIR. • Residentially designated lands remain residentially designated. • No substantial housing displacement would occur.	
Public Services	Less Than Significant Impact.
The City finds that: • Fire, police, schools, parks, libraries, and other public services may require expansion over time.	

• Future development must demonstrate service availability. • No specific public service impact requiring an EIR has been identified.	
Recreation	Less Than Significant Impact.
The City finds that: • Recreational demand generated by the Specific Plan is consistent with anticipated community growth. • Future recreational facilities will be subject to separate project review, as necessary.	
Transportation	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.
The City finds that: • The Specific Plan establishes designated truck routes and circulation improvements. • Vehicle Miles Traveled analysis and transportation consistency review are required. • Future development shall fund its fair share of transportation improvements. • Transportation impacts can be reduced below significance.	
Tribal Cultural Resources	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.
The City finds that: • Tribal consultation has been conducted or will be completed prior to final project approval. • Discovery procedures and consultation-based mitigation measures are incorporated into the MMRP.	
Utilities and Service Systems	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.
The City finds that: • Water, wastewater, electrical, drainage, communications, and solid-waste infrastructure improvements will be phased as development occurs. • Future development shall demonstrate capacity prior to approval. • Utility impacts can be mitigated to less-than-significant levels.	
Wildfire	No Impact or Less Than Significant Impact.
The City finds that: • The Specific Plan area is not located within a mapped high fire hazard severity zone. • Standard fire protection measures and development regulations are sufficient.	

6.5 CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 Findings

The City finds that none of the conditions requiring preparation of a Subsequent Environmental Impact Report pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 are present.

Finding 5-1	The Specific Plan does not propose substantial changes requiring major revisions to the General Plan EIR due to new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified effects.
Finding 5-2	No substantial changes have occurred with respect to the circumstances under which the project will be undertaken that require major revisions to the Program EIR.
Finding 5-3	No new information of substantial importance has been identified that demonstrates: • A new significant environmental impact. • A substantially more severe impact. • Previously infeasible mitigation that has become feasible. • New mitigation measures that would substantially reduce a previously identified significant effect and have not been incorporated.

6.6 Findings Regarding the Mitigated Negative Declaration

The City finds, based upon the whole record, that:

1. The Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan is within the scope of development anticipated by the McFarland 2040 General Plan and evaluated in the certified General Plan EIR.
2. The Initial Study adequately evaluates the environmental effects associated with implementation of the Specific Plan.
3. Applicable mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
4. Project-specific potentially significant impacts have been reduced to less-than-significant levels.
5. The Specific Plan will not result in a new significant environmental effect.
6. The Specific Plan will not substantially increase the severity of a previously identified significant environmental effect.
7. No Subsequent Environmental Impact Report is required.
8. A Tiered Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration is the appropriate environmental document for the Specific Plan.

6.7 Environmental Determination

Based upon the entire administrative record, the City of McFarland finds that the Innovation Industrial Area Specific Plan will not result in a significant environmental effect that was not previously analyzed in the certified McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR or that cannot be reduced to a less-than-significant level through the mitigation measures identified in this IS/MND.

Project-specific potentially significant impacts will be reduced to less-than-significant levels through implementation of the mitigation measures identified in this IS/MND and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

7.0 CERTIFICATION

7.1 Determination

The City of McFarland Community Development Department, based upon the evaluation contained in this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, the certified McFarland 2040 General Plan EIR, its supporting technical studies and the entire administrative record, makes the following determination:

[ ] I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION is hereby determined.

[X] I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measures described on an attached sheet have been added to the project. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

[ ] I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

[ ] I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment unless mitigated, but at least one effect (1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets, An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

[ ] I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, and nothing further is required.

7.2 De Minimis Fee Determination

Pursuant to Chapter 1706, Statutes of 1990-AB 3158,

[X] It is hereby found that this project involves no potential for any adverse effect, either individually or cumulatively, on wildlife resources and that a "Certificate of Fee Exemption" shall be prepared for this project pending approval of the No Effect Determination.

[ ] It is hereby found that this project could potentially impact wildlife, individually or cumulatively, and therefore fees shall be paid to the County Clerk in accordance with Section 711.4(d) of the Fish and Game Code.

7.3 Environmental Determination

The initial study for this project has been reviewed and the environmental determination, contained in Section 6 preceding, is hereby approved.

_____

Brianahi De Leon, Senior City Planner