DRAFT INITIAL STUDY AND MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

D.R. HORTON, AMERICA'S BUILDER

PRATT FAMILY RANCH PROJECT

State of California

City of Visalia

MARCH 2023

DRAFT INITIAL STUDY AND MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

PRATT FAMILY RANCH PROJECT

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January 2023

Project #200180

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND INTENT TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

This is to advise that the City of Visalia has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project identified below that is scheduled to be held at the Planning Commission of the City of Visalia meeting on Monday, August 14, 2023.

PLEASE BE ADVISED that the Planning Commission of the City of Visalia will consider adopting the Mitigated Negative Declaration at the meeting to be held on Monday, August 14, 2023. Presentations will be made at approximately 7:00 p.m. Action on items on the agenda will occur after the presentations. The meeting will be held at the Visalia Council Chambers, 707 W. Acequia Avenue, Visalia, California 93291.

Project Name

Pratt Family Ranch

Project Location

The Project is located north and west of the Mooney Boulevard and Riverway Drive intersection. The Project site is bounded by the St. Johns River to the north, the Shannon Ranch residential development to the south, and agricultural land to the west and east. The Project site is adjacent to the current City of Visalia limits, within Tulare County, California.

The Project site includes Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN): 078-010-025, 078-010-028, 078-010-029, 078-110-022, 078-110-023, approximately 95 acres. The site is within Section 13, Township 18 South, and Range 24 East.

Project Description

The Project proposed to develop a residential community with 544 dwelling units, associated infrastructure, and a park on approximately 95 acres of undeveloped land.

The Project is located outside of the current Visalia city limits north of Mooney Boulevard in the northern portion of the City of Visalia and would be annexed into the City's boundary.

Road improvements proposed by the Project include the construction of a traffic circle at the intersection of Mooney Boulevard and Riverway Avenue. In accordance with the City's General Plan Planned Circulation Systems Improvements requirements, Avenue 320 will be built out to half a four-lane arterial street. Improvements such as curb and gutter to Avenue 320 will only be installed on the south side of the street abutting the northern frontage of the Project. Mooney Boulevard will also be constructed as a two-lane arterial north of the traffic circle to the end of the dog park, including curb and gutter along the dog park and the Project's eastern frontage. Pratt Road will be constructed to its full extent through the Project site.

The Project would include approvals of the following discretionary actions:

1. Annexation No. 2021-04 of approximately 95 acres from unincorporated Tulare County (County) into the City of Visalia (City) for future residential development.

2. General Plan Amendment No. 2021-05:

   From existing County Land Use Designations(see Figure 3-2):

   - 16 acres of Residential Very Low Density
   - 50 acres of Residential Low Density
   - 25 acres of Residential Medium Density and
   - 4 acres of Park/Recreation

   To Proposed City Land Use Designations(see Figure 3-3):

   - 62 acres of Residential Low Density
   - 25 acres of Residential Medium Density
   - 8 acres of Parks/Recreation

   The General Plan establishes the pre-zone for the Project. Therefore, no separate action is needed for a pre-zone. Upon annexation, the Project will have the following City Zone Districts (see Figure 3-5):

   - 35 net acres of R-1-5 (5,000 SF Min Site Area)
   - 20 net acres of R-M-2 (Multi-Family Residential)
   - 6 net acres of QP (Quasi-Public) in the City of Visalia

3. A Specific Plan – Pratt Family Ranch

The Specific Plan is divided into two tiers (Tier 2 and Tier 3) of development that coincide with the City of Visalia's General Plan Urban Development Boundaries. Infrastructure will be constructed to the extent to which the Project will be adequately served or as recommended by the City of Visalia. There are two main phases proposed for the development of the Plan Area (Figure 3-1).

Phase 1 consists of the development of the Tier 2 Planning Area. Phase 1 development will include the build-out of the Tier 2 portion of the Plan Area and include perimeter landscaping, sidewalk, and roadways of Pratt Road, landscaping, sidewalk, and roadways of a portion of Mooney Boulevard, the construction of the Riverway Drive and Mooney Boulevard traffic circle. Tier 2 is 39.39 acres and will consist of approximately 247 lots within the Medium Density Residential and Low Density Residential land use designations.

Phase 2 consists of the development of the Tier 3 Planning Area. Phase 2 development will include the build-out of the Tier 3 portion of the Plan Area and include perimeter landscaping, sidewalk, and roadways of Avenue 320 and the completion of the perimeter landscaping, sidewalk, and roadways of Mooney Boulevard as it meets Avenue 320. Tier 3 is 37.88 acres consisting of 297 lots within the Medium Density Residential and Low Density Residential land use designations.

4. Pratt Family Ranch Tentative Subdivision Maps

Construction is anticipated to start in mid-2024 and take approximately three years for full build-out of all homes.

The document and documents referenced in the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration are available for review at the City of Visalia Community Development Department, 315 East Acequia Avenue, Visalia, California 93291, and at the website:

https://www.visalia.city/depts/community_development/planning/ceqa_environmental_review.asp.

As mandated by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the public review period for this document will be 30 days (CEQA Section 15073[b]). The public review period begins on July 20, 2023 and ends on August 9, 2023. For further information, please contact Brandon Smith, AICP, Project Manager at (559) 713-4636 or brandon.smith@visalia.city.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Assembly Bill
ADT	average daily trips
AE-20	Exclusive Agriculture Zone – 20 Acre
AE-40	Exclusive Agriculture Zone – 40 Acre Minimum
APN	Assessor's Parcel Number
AQPs	air quality plans
BAU	Business as Usual
BG	below grade
BMPs	best management practices
BPS	Best Performance Standards
BSA	Biological Survey Area
Cal Water	California Water Service Company
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBC	California Building Code
CBC	California Building Codes
CDF	California Department of Forestry
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CEUS	California Commercial End-Use Survey
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNPS	California native Plant Society
CSU	California State University
CWA	Clean Water Act
DOGGR	Department of Conservation, Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Ecological Sensitive Area
ESA	Ecological Sensitive Area
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FMMP	Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
GHG	greenhouse gases
gpcd	gallons per capita per day
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
IRWM	Integrated Regional Water Management
IS	Initial Study
ITE	Institute of Transportation Engineers
KDWCD	Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District
LAFCo	LAFCo
LDR	Low Density
LOMR	Letter of Map Revision
LOS	Level of Service

MDR	Medium Density
mgd	million gallons per day
MM	Mitigation Measure
MMRP	Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
MND	Mitigated Negative Declaration
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NCCP	Natural Community Conservation Plan
NHD	National Hydrography Dataset
NOI	Notice of Intent
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
PPV	peak particle velocity
PRC	Public Resources Code
QP	Quasi-Public
R-1-5	Residential Low Density
RASS	Residential Appliance Saturation Survey
R-M-2	Residential Medium Density
RS	records search
RTP/SCS	Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB	Senate Bill
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SJVAB	San Joaquin Valley Air Basin
SJVAPCD	San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
SR	State Route
SVP	Society of Vertebrate Paleontology
SWIS	Solid Waste Information System
SWMP	Stormwater Management Program
SWPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
TACs	toxic air contaminants
TCAG	Tulare County Association of Governments
TID	Tulare Irrigation District
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
UWMP	Urban Water Management Plan
VLDR	Very Low Density
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
VPD	Visalia Police Department
VT	Visalia Transit
WCP	Water Conservation Plant

MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

As Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the City of Visalia reviewed the Project described below to determine whether it could have a significant effect on the environment because of its development. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15382, "[s]ignificant effect on the environment" means a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance.

Project Name

Pratt Family Ranch

Project Location

The Project is located north and west of the Mooney Boulevard and Riverway Drive intersection. The Project site is bounded by the St. Johns River to the north, the Shannon Ranch residential development to the south and west, and agricultural land to the east.

The Project site includes Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN): 078-010-025, 078-010-028, 078-010-029, 078-110-022, 078-110-023, approximately 95 acres. The site is within Section 13, Township 18 South, and Range 24 East.

Project Description

The Project proposed to develop a residential community with 544 dwelling units, associated infrastructure, and a park on approximately 95 acres of undeveloped land.

The Project is located outside of the current Visalia city limits north of Mooney Boulevard in the northern portion of the City of Visalia and would be annexed into the City's boundary.

Road improvements proposed by the Project include the construction of a traffic circle at the intersection of Mooney Boulevard and Riverway Avenue. In accordance with the City's General Plan Planned Circulation Systems Improvements requirements, Avenue 320 will be built out to half a four-lane arterial street. Improvements such as curb and gutter to Avenue 320 will only be installed on the south side of the street abutting the northern frontage of the Project. Mooney Boulevard will also be constructed as a two-lane arterial north of the traffic circle to the end of the dog park, including curb and gutter along the dog park and the Project's eastern frontage. Pratt Road will be constructed to its full extent through the Project site.

The Project would include approvals of the following discretionary actions:

1. Annexation No. 2021-04 of approximately 95 acres from unincorporated Tulare County (County) into the City of Visalia (City) for future residential development.

2. A General Plan Amendment:

   From existing County Land Use Designations(see Figure 3-2):

   - 16 acres of Residential Very Low Density
   - 50 acres of Residential Low Density
   - 25 acres of Residential Medium Density and
   - 4 acres of Park/Recreation

   To Proposed City Land Use Designations(see Figure 3-3):

   - 25 acres of Residential Medium Density
   - 8 acres of Parks/Recreation

3. A Prezone:

   From existing County Zone District (see Figure 3-4):

   - AE-40 (Exclusive Agriculture Zone – 40 Acre Minimum)
   - AE-20 (Exclusive Agriculture Zone – 20 Acre)

   To proposed City Zone Districts (see Figure 3-5):

   - 35 net acres of R-1-5 (5,000 SF Min Site Area)
   - 20 net acres of R-M-2 (Multi-Family Residential)
   - 6 net acres of QP (Quasi-Public) in the City of Visalia

4. A Specific Plan – Pratt Family Ranch

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37.88 acres consisting of 297 lots within the Medium Density Residential and Low Density Residential land use designations.

5. Tentative Subdivision Map

The document and documents referenced in the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration are available for review at the Visalia Planning and Zoning Department, 315 East Acequia Avenue, Visalia, California 93291.

As mandated by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the public review period for this document will be 30 days (CEQA Section 15073[b]). The public review period begins on July 20, 2023 and ends on August 9, 2023. For further information, please contact Brandon Smith, AICP, Project Manager at (559) 713-4636 or brandon.smith@visalia.city.

Mailing Address and Phone Number of Contact Person

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Visalia, CA 93291
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Findings

As Lead Agency, the City of Visalia finds that the Project will not have a significant effect on the environment. The Environmental Checklist (CEQA Guidelines Appendix G) or Initial Study (IS) (see *Section 3 - Environmental Checklist*) identified one or more potentially significant effects on the environment, but revisions to the Project have been made before the release of this Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), or mitigation measures would be implemented that reduce all potentially significant impacts less-than-significant levels. The Lead Agency further finds that there is no substantial evidence that this Project would have a significant effect on the environment.

Mitigation Measures Included in the Project to Avoid Potentially Significant Effects

AG - 1: Prior to the issuance of grading or building permits, the Project proponent shall mitigate impacts for loss of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance on the Project site at a 1:1 ratio. The Project proponent shall implement one or more of the following measures to mitigate the loss: Payment of In-Lieu Fees, Mitigation Banks, Fee Title Acquisition, Conservation Easements, and/or Land Use Regulation on land(s)within the Southern San Joaquin Valley of California, specifically within Kern County, Tulare County, Kings County, Fresno County, or Madera County. The City shall require, at a minimum: evidence that the preserved land has adequate water supply, agricultural zoning, evidence of land encumbrance documentation, documentation that the easement/regulations are

permanent and monitored, and documentation that the mitigation strategy is appropriately endowed. This mitigation shall be verified by the City prior to issuance of grading or building permits. Should the City of Visalia develop an Agricultural Mitigation Program before future construction within the Project begins, the Project proponent shall mitigate for the loss of agricultural land pursuant to the Program that is adopted by the City.

MM BIO-1: Within 14 days of the start of Project activities, a pre-activity survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist knowledgeable in the identification of these species. The pre-activity survey shall include walking transects to identify the presence of burrowing owls and their burrows and American badgers, and San Joaquin kit foxes and their dens. The transects shall be spaced at no greater than 30-foot intervals in order to obtain 100 percent coverage of the Project site and a 250-foot buffer. Areas devoid of habitat incapable of supporting these species would not require surveys. If no evidence of these special-status species is detected, no further action is required.

MM BIO-2: If dens or burrows that could support these species are discovered during the pre-activity survey conducted under Measure BIO-1, avoidance buffers outlined below shall be established. No work shall occur within these buffers unless a qualified biologist approves and monitors the activity.

Burrowing Owl (active burrows)

- Non-breeding season: September 1 – January 31 – 160 feet
- Breeding season: February 1 – August 31 – 250 feet

American Badger and San Joaquin Kit Fox

- Potential or Atypical den – 50 feet
- Known den – 100 feet
- Natal or pupping den – Contact agencies for further guidance

Any Ecological Sensitive Area (ESA) buffer established shall remain in place until the species has left on its own. Once the species has left, the burrow may be monitored using trail cameras or a tracking medium such as diatomaceous earth once the species has left. If no species are detected for a minimum of three consecutive days/nights, the burrow may be hand excavated under the direct supervision of a qualified biologist. All burrow tunnels must be hand excavated to their terminus or examined before backfilling to ensure no burrowing owls, kit foxes, or other animals are hiding.

Alternatively, burrowing owls can be passively excluded from a non-nest burrow through the installation of one-way doors. Prior to engaging in such passive exclusion activities, an Exclusion Plan shall be prepared following the guidance outlined in the CDFW's Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (QK, 2021). The Exclusion Plan shall be submitted to the CDFW for review and approval prior to implementation. Once approved, one-way doors may be installed at non-nest burrows. The doors shall be monitored for a minimum of three days to ensure burrowing owls have left the burrow. The burrow may then be excavated as

described above. If at any time during excavation a burrowing owl is detected within the burrow, excavation activities shall immediately cease, and the one-way door reinstalled and monitored until the owl has left the burrow. Hand excavation may then resume. Exclusion efforts shall be documented.

MM BIO-3: The following avoidance and minimization measures shall be implemented during all phases of the Project to reduce the potential for impact from the Project. They are modified from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Standardized Recommendations for Protection of the Endangered San Joaquin Kit Fox Prior to or During Ground Disturbance (QK, 2021).

- Project-related vehicles shall observe a daytime speed limit of 20 mph throughout the site in all Project areas, except on County roads and State and federal highways.
- All Project activities shall occur during daylight hours, but if work must be conducted at night, then a night-time construction speed limit of 10 mph shall be established.
- Off-road traffic outside of designated Project areas shall be prohibited.
- To prevent inadvertent entrapment of kit foxes or other animals during the construction of the Project, all excavated, steep-walled holes or trenches more than two feet deep shall be covered at the close of each working day by plywood or similar materials. If the trenches cannot be closed, one or more escape ramps constructed of earthen fill or wooden planks shall be installed.
- Before holes or trenches are filled, they shall be thoroughly inspected for trapped animals. If at any time a trapped or injured kit fox is discovered, the USFWS and the CDFW shall be contacted before proceeding with the work.
- In the case of trapped animals, escape ramps or structures shall be installed immediately to allow the animal(s) to escape, or the USFWS and CDFW shall be contacted for guidance.
- All construction pipes, culverts, or similar structures with a diameter of four inches or greater that are stored at a construction site for one or more overnight periods shall be thoroughly inspected for kit foxes and burrowing owls before the pipe is subsequently buried, capped, or otherwise used or moved in any way. If a kit fox is discovered inside a pipe, that section of pipe shall not be moved until the USFWS has been consulted. If necessary, and under the direct supervision of the biologist, the pipe may be moved only once to remove it from the path of construction activity until the fox has escaped.
- All food-related trash items such as wrappers, cans, bottles, and food scraps shall be disposed of in securely closed containers and removed at least once a week from a construction or Project site.
- No pets, such as dogs or cats, shall be permitted on the Project site.
- Project-related use of rodenticides and herbicides shall be restricted.
- A representative shall be appointed by the Project proponent, who will be the contact source for any employee or contractor who might inadvertently kill or injure a kit fox or who finds a dead, injured, or entrapped kit fox. The representative shall be identified during the employee education program, and their name and telephone numbers shall be provided to the USFWS and CDFW.

- Upon completion of the Project, all areas subject to temporary ground disturbances (including storage and staging areas, temporary roads, pipeline corridors, etc.) shall be recontoured if necessary and revegetated to promote restoration of the area to pre-Project conditions. An area subject to "temporary" disturbance means any area that is disturbed during the Project, but after Project completion, will not be subject to further disturbance and has the potential to be revegetated.
- Any Project personnel who are responsible for inadvertently killing or injuring one of these species shall immediately report the incident to their representative. This representative shall contact the CDFW (and USFWS in the case of San Joaquin kit fox) immediately in the case of a dead, injured, or entrapped San Joaquin kit fox, American badger, or burrowing owl.
- The Sacramento Fish and Wildlife office and CDFW Region 4 office shall be notified in writing within three working days of the accidental death or injury to a San Joaquin kit fox during Project-related activities. The CDFW shall be notified in the case of accidental death to an American badger or western burrowing owl. Notification must include the date, time, and location of the incident or of the finding of a dead or injured animal and any other pertinent information.
- New sightings of San Joaquin kit fox, American badger, or burrowing owl shall be reported to the CNDDB. A copy of the reporting form and a topographic map clearly marked with the location of where a San Joaquin kit fox was observed shall also be provided to the USFWS.

MM BIO-4: If Project activities must occur during the nesting season (February 15 to August 31), pre-activity surveys shall be conducted for Swainson's hawk nests in accordance with the Recommended Timing and Methodology for Swainson's Hawk Nesting Surveys in California's Central Valley, Swainson's Hawk Technical Advisory Committee (QK, 2021). The surveys shall be conducted on the Project site plus a 0.5-mile buffer. To meet the minimum level of protection for the species, surveys shall be conducted during at least two survey periods.

If no Swainson's hawk nests are found, no further action is required.

MM BIO-5: If an active Swainson's hawk nest is discovered at any time within 0.5 miles of active construction, a qualified biologist shall complete an assessment of the potential for current construction activities to impact the nest. The assessment would consider the type of construction activities, the location of construction relative to the nest, the visibility of construction activities from the nest location, and other existing disturbances in the area that are not related to the construction activities of this Project. Based on this assessment, the biologist will determine if construction activities can proceed and the level of nest monitoring required. Construction activities shall not occur within 500 feet of an active nest but depending upon conditions at the site, this distance may be reduced. Full-time monitoring to evaluate the effects of construction activities on nesting Swainson's hawks may be required. The qualified biologist shall have the authority to stop work if it is determined that Project construction is disturbing the nest. These buffers may need to

increase depending on the sensitivity of the nesting Swainson's hawk to disturbances and at the discretion of the qualified biologist.

MM BIO-6: If Project activities must occur during the nesting season (February 1 to September 15), pre-activity nesting bird surveys shall be conducted within seven days prior to the start of construction at the construction site, plus a 250-foot buffer for songbirds and a 500-foot buffer for raptors (other than Swainson's hawk). If no active nests are found, no further action is required. However, existing nests may become active, and new nests may be built at any time prior to and throughout the nesting season, including when construction activities are in progress. If active nests are found during the survey or at any time during the construction of the Project, an avoidance buffer ranging from 50 feet to 500 feet may be required, with the avoidance buffer from any specific nest being determined by a qualified biologist. The avoidance buffer shall remain in place until the biologist has determined that the young are no longer reliant on the adults or the nest. Work may occur within the avoidance buffer under the approval and guidance of the biologist, but full-time monitoring may be required. The biologist shall have the ability to stop construction if nesting adults show any sign of distress.

MM BIO-7: Prior to the initiation of construction activities, all personnel shall attend a Worker Environmental Awareness Training program developed by a qualified biologist. The program shall include information on the life histories of special-status species with the potential to occur on the Project, their legal status, the course of action shall these species be encountered onsite, and avoidance and minimization measures to protect these species.

MM CUL-1: If prehistoric or historic-era cultural materials are encountered during construction activities, all work in the immediate vicinity of the find shall halt until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the find and make recommendations. If the qualified archaeologist determines that the discovery represents a potentially significant cultural resource, additional investigations may be required to mitigate adverse impacts from Project implementation. These additional studies may include avoidance, testing, and evaluation or data recovery excavation. Cultural resource materials may include prehistoric resources such as flaked and ground stone tools and debris, shell, bone, ceramics, fire-affected rock, and historic resources such as glass, metal, wood, brick, or structural remnants. Implementation of the mitigation measure below would ensure that the proposed Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

MM CUL-2: Prior to any ground disturbance, if the City of Visalia receives a request from a Native American tribal group, a surface inspection of the site shall be conducted by a tribal monitor. The tribal staff shall provide pre-project-related activities briefings to supervisory personnel and any excavation contractor, including information on potential cultural material, finds, and any excavation contractor, which will include information on potential cultural material finds, and the procedures to be enacted if resources are found. The tribal cultural staff shall monitor the site during grading activities.

Prior to any ground disturbance, the applicant shall offer the tribe the opportunity to provide a Native American Monitor during ground-disturbing activities. Tribal participation would be dependent upon the availability and interest of the tribe.

MM CUL-3: If human remains are discovered during construction or operational activities, further excavation or disturbance shall be prohibited pursuant to Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code. The specific protocol, guidelines, and channels of communication outlined by the Native American Heritage Commission, in accordance with Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code, Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code (Chapter 1492, Statutes of 1982, Senate Bill 297), and Senate Bill 447 (Chapter 44, Statutes of 1987), shall be followed. Section 7050.5(c) shall guide the potential Native American involvement, in the event of the discovery of human remains, at the direction of the county coroner.

MM GEO-1: Prior to issuing of grading or building permits, if required, the Project applicant shall submit to the Lead Agency (1) the approved Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and (2) the Notice of Intent (NOI) to comply with the General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. The requirements of the SWPPP and NPDES shall be incorporated into design specifications and construction contracts. Recommended best management practices for the construction phase may include the following:

- Stockpiling and disposing of demolition debris, concrete, and soil properly.
- Protecting existing storm drain inlets and stabilizing disturbed areas.
- Implementing erosion controls.
- Properly managing construction materials.
- Managing waste, aggressively controlling litter, and implementing sediment controls.

Evidence of the approved SWPPP shall be submitted to the Lead Agency.

MM GEO-2: Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, the Project owner shall develop and implement a Paleontological Worker Education and Awareness Program. If paleontological resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities (e.g., during Project construction or decommissioning), all earthwork or other types of ground disturbance within 50 feet of the find shall stop immediately until a qualified professional paleontologist (meeting the standards of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology [SVP]) can assess the nature and importance of the find. Based on the scientific value or uniqueness of the find, the paleontologist may record the find and allow work to continue or recommend salvage and recovery of the fossil. The paleontologist may also propose modifications to the stop-work radius based on the nature of the find, site geology, and the activities occurring on the site. If treatment and salvage are required, recommendations will be consistent with the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology standards that are current as of the discovery and with currently accepted scientific practice.

MM NSE-1: During construction, the contractor shall implement the following measures:

a. All stationary construction equipment on the Project site shall be located so that noise-emitting objects or equipment face away from any potential sensitive receptors.
b. The construction contractor shall ensure that all construction equipment is equipped with manufacturer-approved mufflers and baffles. During construction, stationary construction equipment shall be placed such that emitted noise is directed away from sensitive noise receivers.
c. Construction activities shall take place during daylight hours, when feasible.

MM TRA-1: Prior to the issuance of building permits, the developer shall pay its pro-rata share for signalization of the following intersections:

a. Riggin Avenue at County Center Street
b. Riggin Avenue at Giddings Street
c. Ferguson Avenue at Mooney Boulevard

MM TRA-2: Prior to the issuance of building permits, the developer shall pay its pro-rata share to widen the eastbound approach to two left-turn lanes, two through-lanes, and one right-turn lane at the intersection of Riggin Avenue at Dinuba Boulevard (SR 63).

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 - Overview

The Project proposes to develop a residential community with 544 dwelling units, associated infrastructure, and a park on approximately 95 acres of undeveloped land within the City of Visalia.

1.2 - California Environmental Quality Act

The City of Visalia is the Lead Agency for this Project pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines (Public Resources Code Section 15000 et seq.). The Environmental Checklist (CEQA Guidelines Appendix G) or Initial Study (IS) (see *Section 3 – Initial Study*) provides analysis that examines the potential environmental effects of the construction and operation of the Project. Section 15063 of the CEQA Guidelines requires the Lead Agency to prepare an IS to determine whether a discretionary project will have a significant effect on the environment. A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is appropriate when an IS has been prepared, and a determination can be made that no significant environmental effects will occur because revisions to the Project have been made or mitigation measures will be implemented that reduce all potentially significant impacts to less-than-significant levels. The content of an MND is the same as a Negative Declaration, with the addition of identified mitigation measures and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) (see *Appendix A – Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program*).

Based on the IS, the Lead Agency has determined that the environmental review for the proposed application can be completed with an MND.

1.3 - Impact Terminology

The following terminology is used to describe the level of significance of impacts.

- A finding of "no impact" is appropriate if the analysis concludes that the Project would not affect a topic area in any way.
- An impact is considered "less than significant" if the analysis concludes that it would cause no substantial adverse change to the environment and requires no mitigation.
- An impact is considered "less than significant with mitigation incorporated" if the analysis concludes that it would cause no substantial adverse change to the environment with the inclusion of environmental commitments that have been agreed to by the applicant.
- An impact is considered "potentially significant" if the analysis concludes that it could have a substantial adverse effect on the environment.

1.4 - Document Organization and Contents

The content and format of this IS/MND is designed to meet the requirements of CEQA. The report contains the following sections:

- *Section 1 – Introduction:* This section provides an overview of CEQA requirements, intended uses of the IS/MND, document organization, and a list of regulations that have been incorporated by reference.

- *Section 2 – Project Description:* This section describes the Project and provides data on the site's location.

- *Section 3 – Environmental Checklist:* This section contains the evaluation of 21 different environmental resource factors contained in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. Each environmental resource factor is analyzed to determine whether the proposed Project would have an impact. One of four findings is made, which include: no impact, less-than-significant impact, less than significant with mitigation, or significant and unavoidable. If the evaluation results in a finding of significant and unavoidable for any of the 21 environmental resource factors, then an Environmental Impact Report will be required.

- *Section 4 – List of Preparers:* This section identifies the individuals who prepared the IS/MND.

- *Section 5 – Bibliography:* This section contains a full list of references that were used in the preparation of this IS/MND.

- *Appendix A – Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program:* This appendix contains the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

1.5 - Incorporated by Reference

The following documents and/or regulations are incorporated into this IS/MND by reference:

- City of Visalia General Plan Update (2014)
- Tulare County General Plan 2030 (2021)
- City of Visalia 2020-2023 Adopted Housing Element (2019)
- City of Visalia Storm Water Management Plan (2005)
- Visalia Airport Master Plan (1971)
- Visalia City Improvement Standards (Updated Improvement Standard Implementation 2016)
- Tulare County Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan (2012)
- Mid-Kaweah GSA Groundwater Sustainability Plan (2019)
- 2018
- Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS)

SECTION 2 - PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 - Introduction

The Project intends to create 544 residential lots on approximately 95 acres and the appurtenant infrastructure that is consistent with the General Plan designation of Residential Low Density and Residential Medium Density. As required for the Project, a General Plan Amendment is required and will cover the approximately 95-acre total Project site. Future zoning designations will be consistent with the land use designations (Residential Low Density, Residential Medium Density, Quasi Park), respectively R-1-5, R-M-2, and QP. The Project will also be required to be consistent with the accompanying Specific Plan and the policies textualized therein.

2.2 - Project Location

The Project area is primarily located north and west of the Mooney Boulevard and Riverway Drive intersection (see Figure 3-1).

The Project site includes Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN): 078-010-025, 078-010-028, 078-010-029, 078-110-022, 078-110-023, approximately 95 acres. The site is within Section 13, Township 18 South, and Range 24 East.

2.3 - Surrounding Land Uses

The Project site is in a developing area of north Visalia. Surrounding land uses consist of existing single-family residences to the south, agriculture and existing rural single-family residential to the west, vacant land and the St. Johns River to the north, and agricultural land to the east.

2.4 - Proposed Project

The Project proposed to develop a residential community with 544 dwelling units, associated infrastructure, and a park on approximately 95 acres of undeveloped land within the City of Visalia. The Project would include approvals of the following actions:

The Project is located outside of the current Visalia city limits north of Mooney Boulevard in the northern portion of the City of Visalia and would be annexed into the City's boundary.

Road improvements proposed by the Project include the construction of a traffic circle at the intersection of Mooney Boulevard and Riverway Avenue. In accordance with the City's General Plan Planned Circulation Systems Improvements requirements, Avenue 320 will be built out to half a four-lane arterial street. Improvements such as curb and gutter to Avenue 320 will only be installed on the south side of the street abutting the northern frontage of the Project. Mooney Boulevard will also be constructed as a two-lane arterial north of the traffic circle to the end of the dog park, including curb and gutter along the dog park and the

Project's eastern frontage. Pratt Road will be constructed to its full extent through the Project site.

1. Annexation No. No. 2021-04 of approximately 95 acres from unincorporated Tulare County (County) into the City of Visalia (City) for future residential development.

2. A General Plan Amendment:

   From existing County Land Use Designations(see Figure 3-2):

   - 16 acres of Residential Very Low Density
   - 50 acres of Residential Low Density
   - 25 acres of Residential Medium Density and
   - 4 acres of Park/Recreation

   To Proposed City Land Use Designations(see Figure 3-3):

   - 25 acres of Residential Medium Density
   - 8 acres of Parks/Recreation

3. A Prezone:

   From existing County Zone District (see Figure 3-4):

   - AE-40 (Exclusive Agriculture Zone – 40 Acre Minimum)
   - AE-20 (Exclusive Agriculture Zone – 20 Acre)

   To proposed City Zone Districts (see Figure 3-5):

   - 35 net acres of R-1-5 (5,000 SF Min Site Area)
   - 20 net acres of R-M-2 (Multi-Family Residential)
   - 6 net acres of QP (Quasi-Public) in the City of Visalia

4. A Specific Plan – Pratt Family Ranch

   The Specific Plan is divided into two tiers (Tier 2 and Tier 3) of development that coincide with the City of Visalia's General Plan Urban Development Boundaries. Infrastructure will be constructed to the extent to which the Project will be adequately served or as recommended by the City of Visalia. There are two main phases proposed for the development of the Plan Area (Figure 3-1).

   Phase 1 consists of the development of the Tier 2 Planning Area. Phase 1 development will include the build-out of the Tier 2 portion of the Plan Area and include perimeter landscaping, sidewalk, and roadways of Pratt Road, landscaping, sidewalk, and roadways of a portion of Mooney Boulevard, the construction of the Riverway Drive and Mooney Boulevard traffic circle. Tier 2 is 39.39 acres and will consist of approximately 247 lots within the Medium Density Residential and Low Density Residential land use designations.

Phase 2 consists of the development of the Tier 3 Planning Area. Phase 2 development will include the build-out of the Tier 3 portion of the Plan Area and include perimeter landscaping, sidewalk, and roadways of Avenue 320 and the completion of the perimeter landscaping, sidewalk, and roadways of Mooney Boulevard as it meets Avenue 320. Tier 3 is 37.88 acres consisting of 297 lots within the Medium Density Residential and Low Density Residential land use designations.

5. Tentative Subdivision Map

   The document and documents referenced in the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration are available for review at the Visalia Planning and Zoning Department, 315 East Acequia Avenue, Visalia, California 93291.

As mandated by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the public review period for this document will be 30 days (CEQA Section 15073[b]). The public review period begins on July 20, 2023 and ends on August 9, 2023. For further information, please contact Brandon Smith, AICP, Project Manager at (559) 713-4636 or brandon.smith@visalia.city.

SECTION 3 - INITIAL STUDY

3.1 - Environmental Checklist

1. **Project Title:**

   Pratt Family Ranch

2. **Lead Agency Name and Address:**

   City of Visalia Community Development Department
   315 East Acequia Avenue
   Visalia, California 93291

3. **Contact Person and Phone Number:**

   Brandon Smith (559) 713-4636

4. **Project Location:**

   The Project is located north and west of the Mooney Boulevard and Riverway Drive intersection. The Project site is bounded by the St. Johns River to the north, the Shannon Ranch residential development to the south and west, and agricultural land to the east. The Project site is adjacent to the current City of Visalia limits, within Tulare County, California.

5. **Project Sponsor's Name and Address:**

   D.R. Horton
   419 West Murray
   Visalia, CA 93291
   Contact Person : Corine Demetrios
   Phone : (559) 631-6208

6. **General Plan Designation:**

   a. Existing:
      i. Residential Very Low Density
      ii. Residential Low Density
      iii. Residential Medium Density
      iv. Park/Recreation
   b. Proposed:
      i. Residential Low Density
      ii. Residential Medium Density
      iii. Parks/Recreation

7. Zoning:

a. Existing:
   i. AE-40 (Exclusive Agriculture Zone – 40 Acre Minimum) and AE-20 (Exclusive Agriculture Zone – 20 Acre) - 95 acres
b. Proposed (Net):
   i. R-1-5 (5,000 SF Min Site Area) –
   ii. R-M-2 (Multi-Family Residential)
   iii. QP (Quasi-Public)

8. Description of Project:

The Project proposed to develop a residential community with 544 dwelling units, associated infrastructure, and a park on approximately 95 acres of undeveloped land within the City of Visalia. The Project would include approvals of the following actions:

The Project is located outside of the current Visalia city limits north of Mooney Boulevard in the northern portion of the City of Visalia and would be annexed into the City's boundary.

Road improvements proposed by the Project including the construction of a traffic circle at the intersection of Mooney Boulevard and Riverway Avenue. In accordance with the City's General Plan Planned Circulation Systems Improvements requirements, Avenue 320 will be built out to half a four-lane arterial street. Improvements such as curb and gutter to Avenue 320 will only be installed on the south side of the street abutting the northern frontage of the Project. Mooney Boulevard will also be constructed as a two-lane arterial north of the traffic circle to the end of the dog park, including curb and gutter along the dog park and the Project's eastern frontage. Pratt Road will be constructed to its full extent through the Project site.

a. Annexation No. No. 2021-04 of approximately 95 acres from unincorporated Tulare County (County) into the City of Visalia (City) for future residential development.

b. A General Plan Amendment:

   From existing County Land Use Designations (see Figure 3-2):

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c. A Prezone:

From existing County Zone District (see Figure 3-4):

- AE-40 (Exclusive Agriculture Zone – 40 Acre Minimum)
- AE-20 (Exclusive Agriculture Zone – 20 Acre)

To proposed City Zone Districts (see Figure 3-5):

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d. A Specific Plan – Pratt Family Ranch

The Specific Plan is divided into two tiers (Tier 2 and Tier 3) of development that coincide with the City of Visalia's General Plan Urban Development Boundaries. Infrastructure will be constructed to the extent to which the Project will be adequately served or as recommended by the City of Visalia. There are two main phases proposed for the development of the Plan Area (Figure 3-1).

Phase 1 consists of the development of the Tier 2 Planning Area. Phase 1 development will include the build-out of the Tier 2 portion of the Plan Area and include perimeter landscaping, sidewalk, and roadways of Pratt Road, landscaping, sidewalk, and roadways of a portion of Mooney Boulevard, the construction of the Riverway Drive and Mooney Boulevard traffic circle. Tier 2 is 39.39 acres and will consist of approximately 247 lots within the Medium Density Residential and Low Density Residential land use designations.

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e. Tentative Subdivision Map

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9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:

Surrounding land uses consist of existing single-family residences to the south, agriculture and existing rural single-family residential to the west, undeveloped land and the St. Johns River to the north, and agricultural land to the east.

10. Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required:

- Tulare County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo)

11. Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?

A Sacred Land Files search was requested from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), and a response was received on May 26, 2020. The NAHC responded with its findings that indicate negative results. Based on the results of cultural records search findings and the lack of historical or archaeological resources previously identified within a half-mile radius of the proposed Project, the potential to encounter subsurface cultural resources is minimal. Additionally, the Project construction would be conducted within the partially developed and previously disturbed parcel. The potential to uncover subsurface historical or archaeological deposits would be considered unlikely.

NOTE: Conducting consultation early in the CEQA process allows tribal governments, lead agencies, and Project proponents to discuss the level of environmental review, identify and address potential adverse impacts to tribal cultural resources, and reduce the potential for delay and conflict in the environmental review process. (See Public Resources Code Section 21083.3.2.) Information may also be available from the California Native American Heritage Commission's Sacred Lands File per Public Resources Code Section 5097.96 and the California Historical Resources Information System administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation. Please also note that Public Resources Code Section 21082.3(c) contains provisions specific to confidentiality.

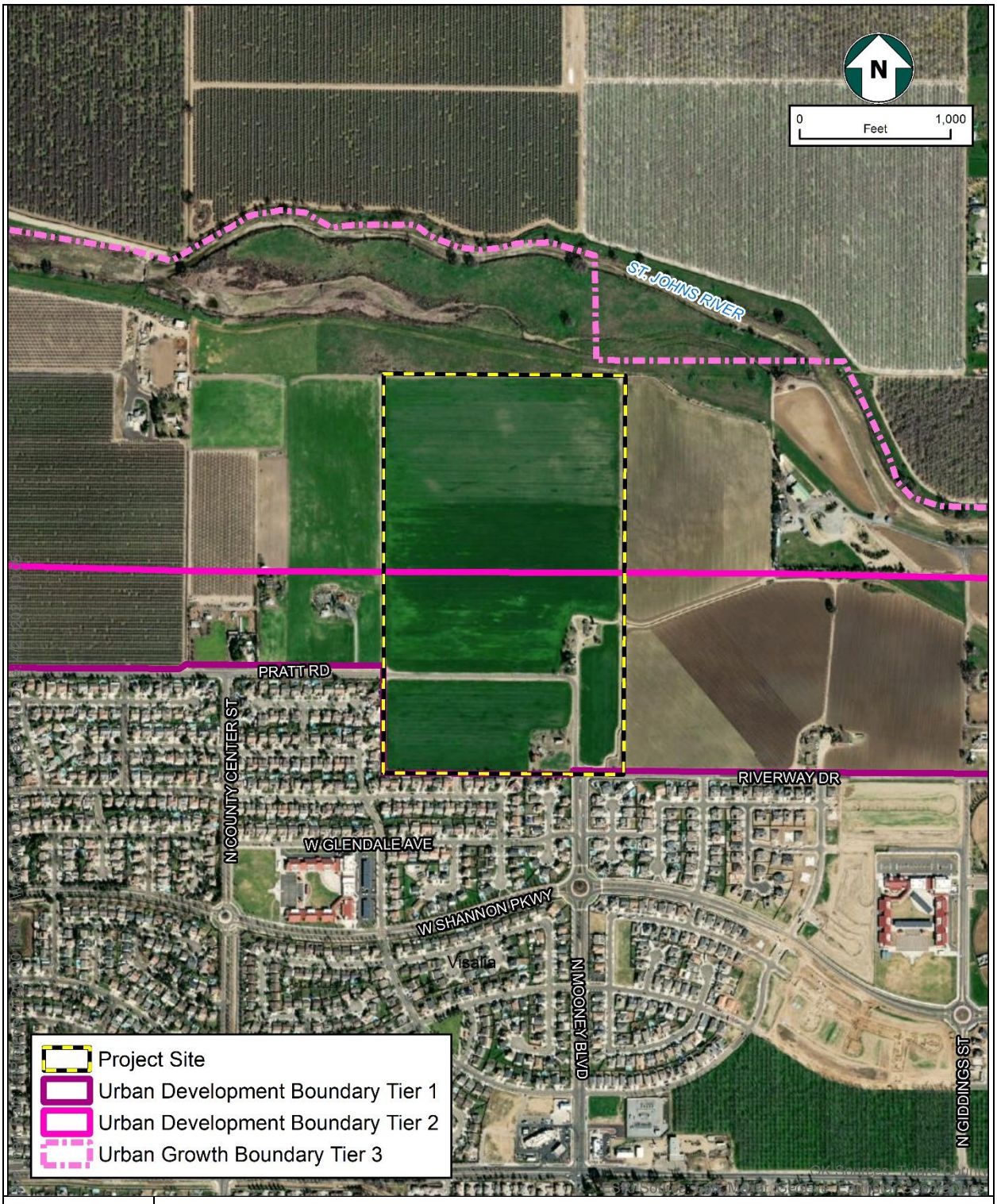

Figure 3-1
Proposed Project Site

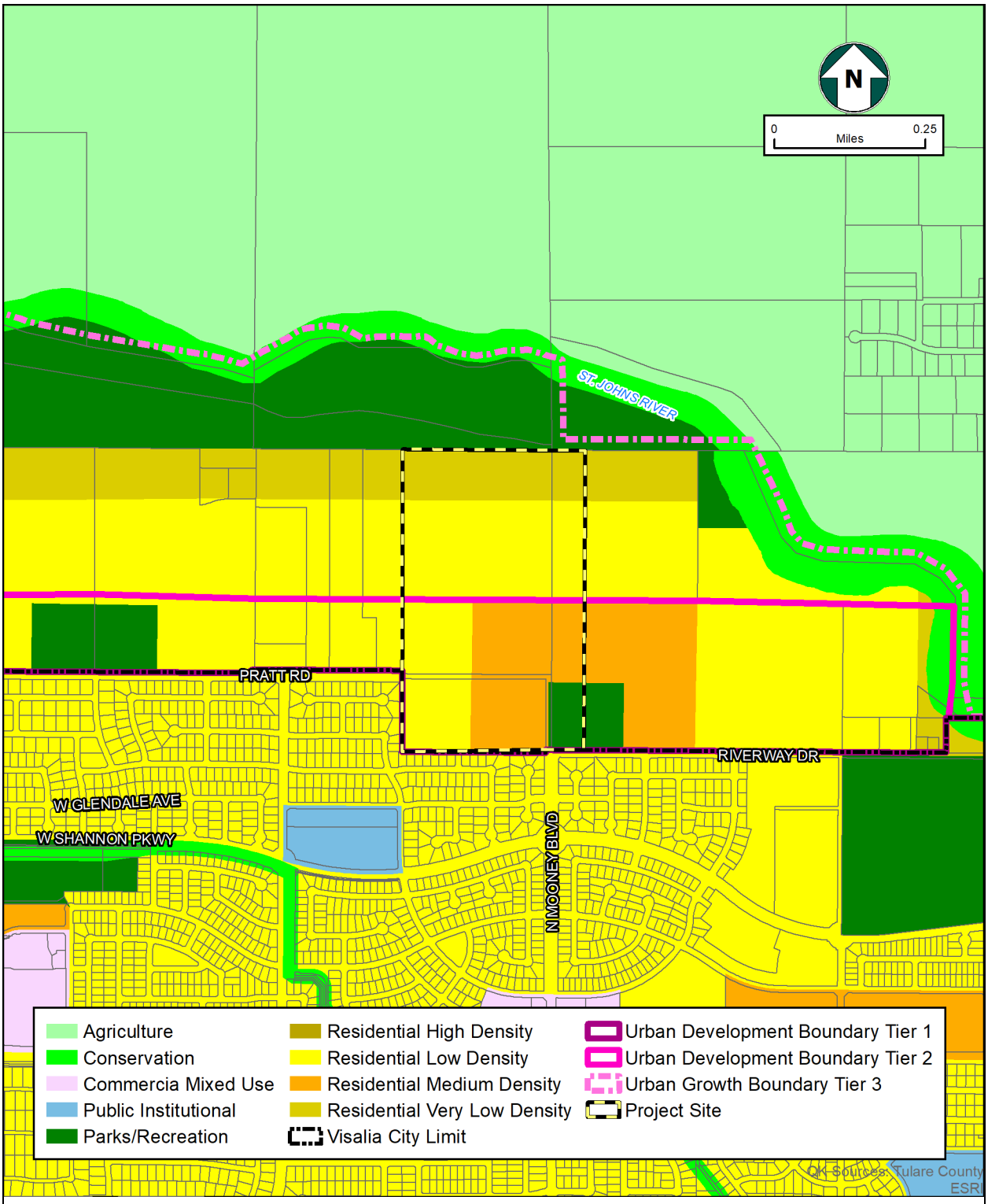

Figure 3-2
Existing General Plan Land Use

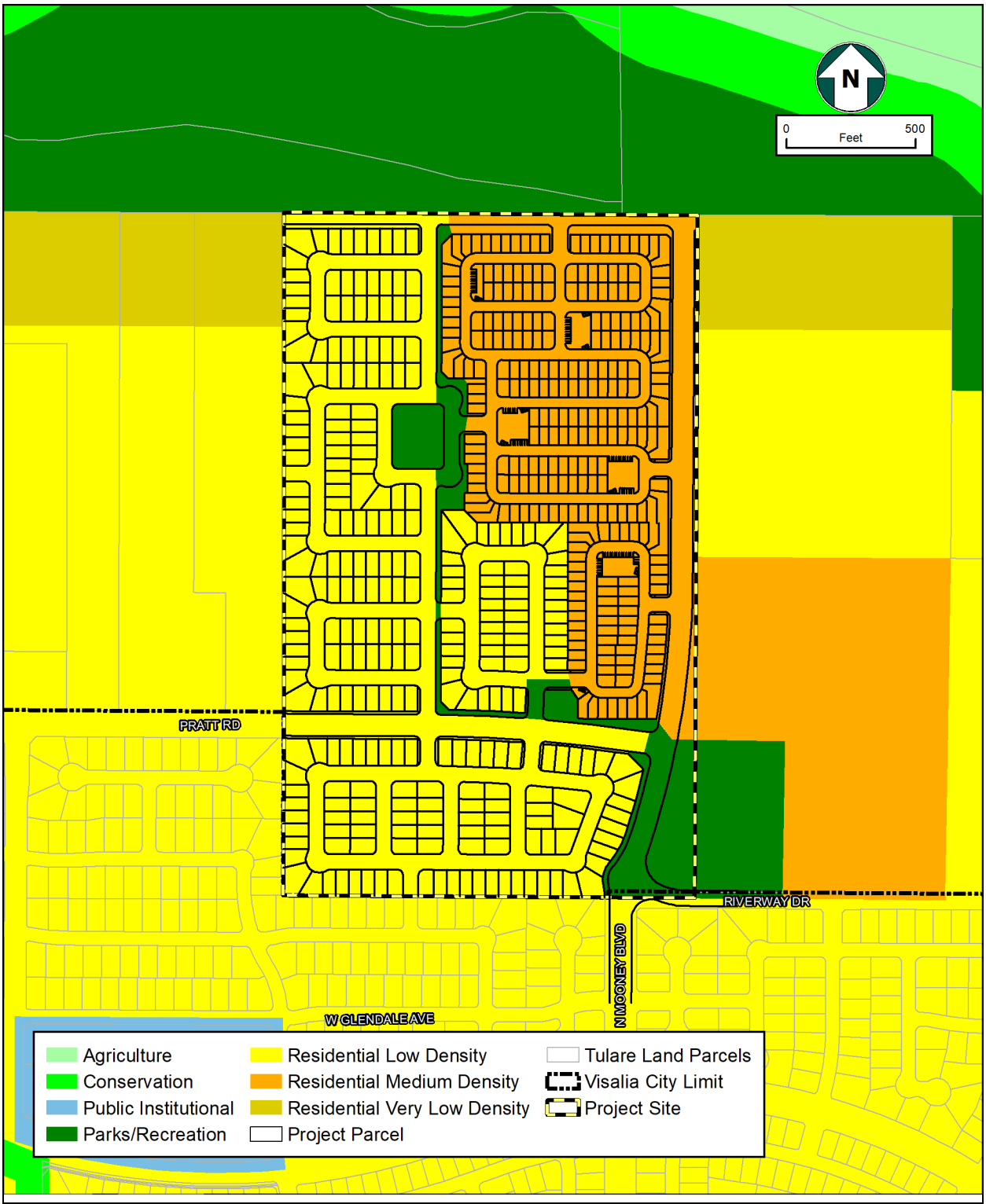

Figure 3-3
Proposed General Plan Land Use

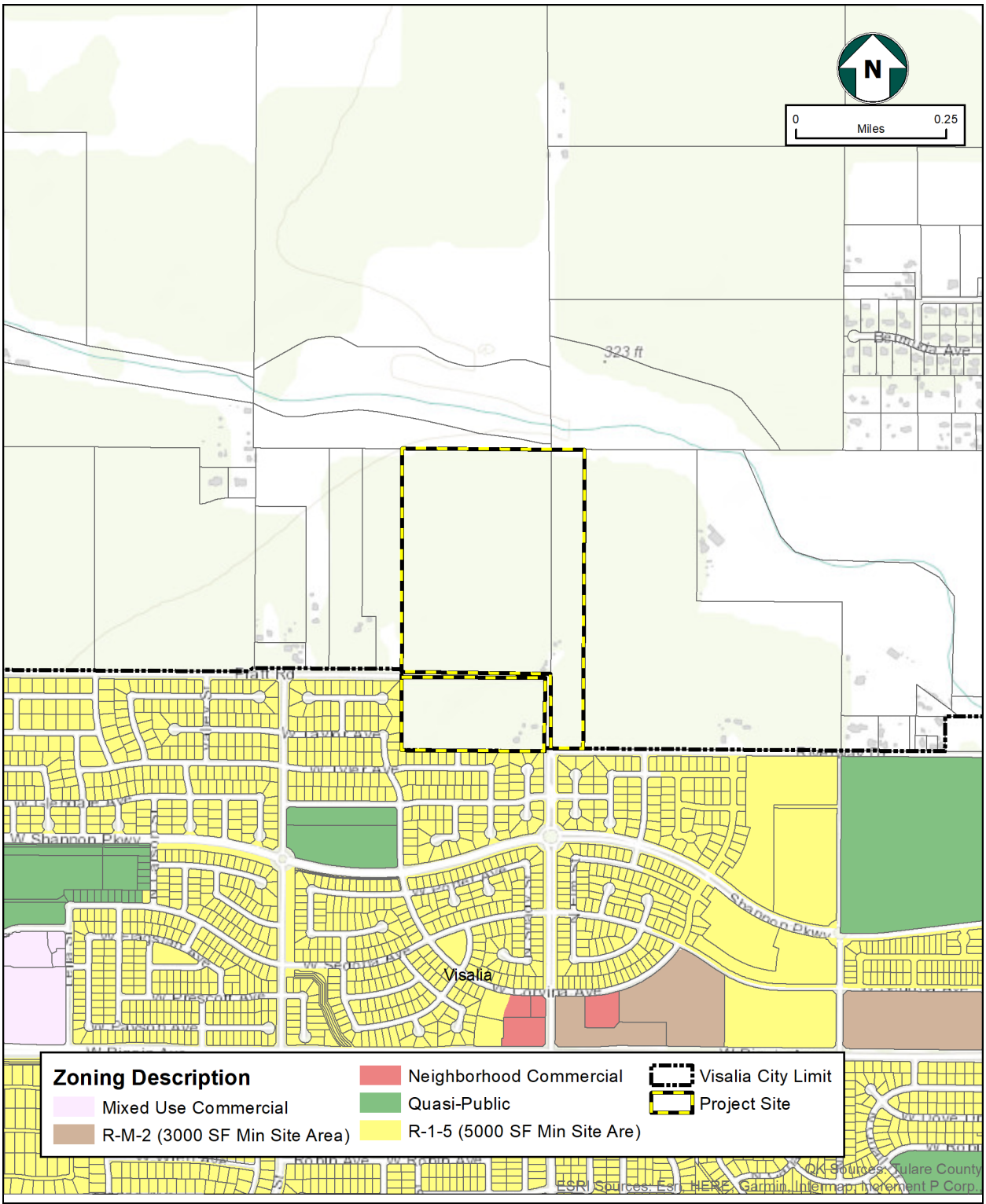

Figure 3-4
Existing Zoning Designation

Figure 3-5
Proposed Zoning Designation

3.2 - Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this Project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

☐ Aesthetics	☐ Agriculture and Forestry Resources	☐ Air Quality
☐ Biological Resources	☐ Cultural Resources	☐ Energy
☐ Geology and Soils	☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐ Hazards and Hazardous Materials
☐ Hydrology and Water Quality	☐ Land Use and Planning	☐ Mineral Resources
☐ Noise	☐ Population and Housing	☐ Public Services
☐ Recreation	☐ Transportation	☐ Tribal Cultural Resources
☐ Utilities and Service Systems	☐ Wildfire	☐ Mandatory Findings of Significance

3.3 - Determination

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ 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 revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. 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 “potentially significant impact” or “potentially significant unless mitigated” impact on the environment, but at least one effect (a) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (b) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENT 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, nothing further is required.

Signature — Date: July 18, 2023

Brandon Smith — City of Visalia

Printed Name — For

3.4 - Evaluation of Environmental Impacts

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).

2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including offsite as well as onsite, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.

3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.

4. "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less-Than-Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less-than-significant level (mitigation measures from "Earlier Analyses," as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).

5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:

    a. Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.

    b. Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.

    c. Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.

6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.

7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.

8. This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.

9. The explanation of each issue should identify:

    a. The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question.

    b. The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
3.4.1 - AESTHETICS					
Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the Project:					
a.	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b.	Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c.	In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the Project is in an urbanized area, would the Project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d.	Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

Impact #3.4.1a – Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

The Sierra Nevada mountain range is the only natural and visual resource in the Project area. Views of these distant mountains are afforded only during clear conditions due to poor air quality in the Valley. The City of Visalia does not identify views of these features as required to be "protected." The Project will not impact a scenic vista.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have ***no impact***.

Impact #3.4.1b - Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

There are no listed State scenic highways within or near the City of Visalia, nor are there scenic highways in Tulare County (California Department of Transportation, 2021). The closest eligible scenic highway is a portion of SR 198, approximately 2.5 miles south of the Project site. Further, the Project does not include the removal of trees determined to be scenic or of scenic value, the destruction of rock outcroppings, or the degradation of any historic building. The Project will not result in substantially different development from surrounding land uses. Therefore, the Project will have no impact.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have *no impact*.

Impact #3.4.1c - Would the Project in non-urbanized areas substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the Project is in an urbanized area, would the Project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

The area surrounding the Project site consists of urban development, orchards, non-native grassland, and undeveloped land.

The Sierra Nevada provides scenic views to the east, and much of the rural agricultural land surrounding the City is beyond Visalia's jurisdiction. The Project would be visible to passing motorists driving along Mooney Boulevard, Riverway Drive, and other City roads. The Project will change the visual character of the site, but its appearance will be similar in character to the existing residential developments in the vicinity. The Project will be pre-zoned for single- and multi-residential development and, once annexed into the City, will be consistent with the proposed zoning and City General Plan. The development of the Project will be in compliance with the City's Municipal Code and development standards. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.1d - Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the Project create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

According to the City's General Plan, the construction of new buildings in the Planning Area may result in nighttime light pollution or daytime glare; however, the General Plan identifies construction impacts as likely to be insignificant (City of Visalia, 2014a).

As in most typical residential areas, homes emit light and glare during the day and evening hours. Development under the proposed General Plan would include indoor and outdoor lighting for safety purposes but would generally not be consistent with the existing urban environment. The increase in street lighting would enhance nighttime security for residents and pedestrians in the area and provide safer driving conditions for motorists along the proposed local streets. The City's General Plan policies outline standards related to light and glare to reduce impacts from new sources of light. The Project street lights will be designed to adhere to these standards. These requirements would substantially reduce potential nuisances from light or glare. The Project will comply with applicable local development standards and would not create new sources of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. Therefore, the Project will have a less-than-significant impact.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a ***less-than-significant impact***.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact

3.4.2 - AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

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

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

Discussion

Impact #3.4.2a – Would the Project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

CEQA uses the California Department of Conservation Division of Land Resource Protection's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) categories of "Prime Farmland,"

"Farmland of Statewide Importance," and "Unique Farmland" to define "agricultural land" for the purposes of assessing environmental impacts (PRC Section 21060.1[a]). According to the California Department of Conservation (DOC) Important Farmland Finder, the Project site is designated as Prime Farmland (California Department of Conservation, 2022).

According to the Department of Conservation - FMMP (California Department of Conservation, 2021), 95 acres of the Project site are identified as Prime Farmland. The 95 acres are currently within Tulare County boundaries, and the intent of the Project is to annex the 95 acres into the City boundaries for residential development. Although the Project is within Prime Farmland designation, the property is not under an existing Williamson Act contract. The 95-acre site is not currently used for agricultural cultivation.

The City of Visalia 2030 General Plan has designated the Project site for urban uses under the Urban Growth Development Tier 2 and Tier 3. Implementation of this Project will support the General Plan designation for future urban land use Policy LU-P-21 for residential development. The General Plan established criteria, dependent upon land use type, for when development may advance from the first tier (Tier 1) to subsequent tiers (Tiers 2 and 3), which are contained in Policy LU-P-21 of the General Plan. For residential uses, the threshold is the issuance of permits for 5,850 housing units within Tier 1 since April 1, 2010. The City met the residential permit threshold in July 2021 and now considers development located with Tiers 1 and/or 2 (City of Visalia, 2021).

The General Plan identifies the need for the conversion of agricultural land to urban development. The City has set aside three-tiered areas planned for development, including Prime Farmland areas. The Project is within Tier 2 and Tier 3, which has been deemed as land to be converted from agricultural land to urban development.

The 2014 General Plan Policy LU-P-34 contained a requirement for an Agricultural Mitigation Program to address the conversion of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance within the Tier 2 and Tier 3 growth boundaries. Policy LU-P-34 requires the adoption of this type of program notwithstanding that such a program would not reduce the environmental effects from the loss of such farmland to a level of less than significant. In order to meet the requirements of this policy, the City has prepared an Agricultural Preservation Ordinance applicable to properties within Tier 2 and Tier 3 that requires a 1:1 ratio of agricultural land preserved to agricultural land converted towards urban development. The Ordinance is anticipated to be adopted in May 2023 and must be adopted for other pending entitlements submitted to the City of Visalia that are located within Tier 2 to be developed. The Ordinance will require that an equivalent amount of agricultural land converted be preserved outside the urban development boundary and within the southern San Joaquin Valley, or that a project comply with regulations within the Ordinance that will cause an equivalent amount of agriculture land to be preserved. Additionally, the preserved agricultural land must demonstrate adequate water supply and agricultural zoning. Policy

LU-P-34 notes that such a program shall, to the extent feasible and practicable, be integrated with the agricultural easement programs adopted by Tulare County and nearby cities. The City of Visalia's program shall allow for compliance with the preservation ordinance to be completed by purchase of easements, and that such easements be held by a qualifying entity, such as a local land trust, and require the submission of annual monitoring reports to the City. Prior to the adoption of the Ordinance the Project proponent could mitigate for the loss of agricultural land and begin conversion of agricultural lands by providing verification to the City that it has preserved agricultural land at a 1:1 ratio using easements that meet the requirements identified in Policy LU-P-34 or participation in an agricultural preservation program adopted by another agency within the southern San Joaquin Valley that meet the these requirements for preserving agricultural land.

As this is a requirement for consistency with the General Plan, the Project's compliance is mandatory. Therefore, compliance with General Plan Policy LU-P-34 and implementation of AG-1 will allow the Project to convert Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance and preserve offsite farmland outside of the urban development boundaries at an equivalent ratio and result in a less-than-significant impact.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

AG - 1: Prior to the issuance of grading or building permits, the Project proponent shall mitigate impacts for loss of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance on the Project site at a 1:1 ratio. The Project proponent shall implement one or more of the following measures to mitigate the loss: Payment of In-Lieu Fees, Mitigation Banks, Fee Title Acquisition, Conservation Easements, and/or Land Use Regulation on land(s)within the Southern San Joaquin Valley of California, specifically within Kern County, Tulare County, Kings County, Fresno County, or Madera County. The City shall require, at a minimum: evidence that the preserved land has adequate water supply, agricultural zoning, evidence of land encumbrance documentation, documentation that the easement/regulations are permanent and monitored, and documentation that the mitigation strategy is appropriately endowed. This mitigation shall be verified by the City prior to issuance of grading or building permits. Should the City of Visalia develop an Agricultural Mitigation Program before future construction within the Project begins, the Project proponent shall mitigate for the loss of agricultural land pursuant to the Program that is adopted by the City.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a ***less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated.***

Impact #3.4.2b – Would the Project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?

According to the Tulare County Assessor, the Project is not subject to a Williamson Act Land Use contract. Therefore, there is no impact.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have ***no impact***.

Impact #3.4.2c – Would the Project conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220[g]), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104[g])?

The Project site has no forest land or timberland zoning or production related to the Project site. Therefore, there is no impact.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have ***no impac***t.

Impact #3.4.2d – Would the Project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

See Impacts #3.4.2a-c above. There will be no impact on forest land.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have ***no impact***.

Impact #3.4.2e – Would the Project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

See Impacts #3.4.2a above. There will be a less-than-significant impact related to the conversion of agricultural land to a residential use.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a ***less-than-significant impact.***

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact

3.4.3 - AIR QUALITY

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

a.	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b.	Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c.	Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d.	Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

The impact analyses in this section are based on an *Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment* prepared for the Project (VRPA Technologies, Inc, 2021a), which is included in Appendix B.

Impact #3.4.3a – Would the Project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

The proposed Project lies within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB) and is under the jurisdiction of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD). The SJVAB is designated in non-attainment for federal and State air quality standards for ozone, in attainment of federal standards and non-attainment for State standards for PM_{10}, and non-attainment for federal and State standards for $PM_{2.5}$.

The SJVAPCD has prepared the 2016 and 2013 Ozone Plans, 2007 PM_{10} Maintenance Plan, and 2012 $PM_{2.5}$ Plan to achieve federal and State standards for improved air quality in the SJVAB regarding ozone and PM. Inconsistency with any of the plans would be considered a cumulatively adverse air quality impact. The Project is consistent with the currently adopted General Plan for the City. Therefore, the Project is consistent with the growth assumptions used in the 2016 and 2013 Ozone Plan, 2007 PM_{10} Maintenance Plan, and 2012 $PM_{2.5}$ Plan (VRPA Technologies, Inc, 2021a).

The primary way of determining consistency with the air quality plans (AQPs) assumptions is determining consistency with the applicable General Plan to ensure that the Project's population density and land use are consistent with the growth assumptions used in the AQPs for the air basin.

As California law requires, city and county general plans contain a land use element that details the types and quantities of land uses that the city or county estimates will be needed for future growth and designate locations for land uses to regulate growth. Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) uses the growth projections and land use information in adopted general plans to estimate future average daily trips and then vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which are then provided to San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) to estimate future emissions in the AQPs. Existing and future pollutant emissions computed in the AQP are based on land uses from area general plans. AQPs detail the control measures and emission reductions required for reaching attainment of the air standards.

The Project would be consistent with the General Plan upon preparation and approval of a General Plan Amendment according to General Plan Policy LU-P-24, AQ-P-9, and AQ-P-2, which addresses the development of project sites located within the Urban Boundary and are currently zoned agricultural.

Therefore, the Project would be consistent with the City's anticipated population growth and VMT applied in the plan and the growth assumptions used in the applicable AQPs. As a result, the Project will not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of any air quality plans. Therefore, the impacts of the Project would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.3b – Would the Project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard?

The SJVAPCD has established thresholds of significance for determining environmental significance, which are provided in Table 3.4.3-1 below. Project-specific emissions that exceed the thresholds of significance for criteria pollutants would be expected to result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the County is in non-attainment under applicable federal or State ambient air quality standards. It should be noted that a project is not characterized as cumulatively insignificant when project emissions fall below thresholds of significance.

Table 3.4.3-1
SJVAPCD Pollutant Thresholds of Significance

Criteria Pollutant	Significance Level	
	Construction (tons/year)	Operational (tons/year)
CO	100 tons/yr	100
NOx	10	10
ROG	10	10
SOx	27	27
PM_{10}	15	15
$PM_{2.5}$	15	15

(SJVAPCD, 2015)

Short-Term Impacts

The annual emissions from the Project's construction phase will be less than the applicable SJVAPCD emission thresholds for criteria pollutants, as shown in Table 3.4.3-2 below. Therefore, construction emissions associated with the Project are considered less than significant.

Table 3.4.3-2
Project Construction Emissions

Pollutant	CO	NOx	ROG	SOx	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$	CO_2e
Construction Emissions	10.18	11.36	10.62	0.02	2.87	1.44	2037.37
Project Emissions (Phased over 3.5 years)	2.91	3.25	3.03	0.005	0.82	0.41	582.11
SJVAPCD Level of Significance	100	10	10	27	15	15	None
Does the Project Exceed Standard?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Long-Term Impacts

Emissions from long-term operations generally represent a project's most substantial air quality impact. Long-term emissions from the Project are generated primarily by mobile source (vehicle) emissions from the Project site and area sources such as lawn maintenance equipment. Table 3.4.3-3 below summarizes the Project's operational impacts by criteria pollutants.

Table 3.4.3-3
Project Operational Emissions (tons/year)

Pollutant	CO	NO_x	ROG	SOx	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$	CO_2e
Project Operational Emissions	19.09	8.10	6.41	0.08	2.83	1.63	9842.1
SJVAPCD Level of Significance	100	10	10	27	15	15	None
Does the Project Exceed Standard?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Results from Table 3.4.3-3 indicate that the annual operational emissions from the Project will be less than the SJVAPCD emission thresholds for criteria pollutants. Therefore,

operational emissions associated with the Project are considered less than significant. Results of the analysis show that emissions generated from the construction and operation of the Project will be less than the applicable SJVAPCD emission thresholds for criteria pollutants. Therefore, the Project will have a less-than-significant impact.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.3c – Would the Project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

From a health risk perspective, the proposed Project is a "Type B" project in that it may potentially place sensitive receptors in the vicinity of existing sources. Sensitive receptors refer to those segments of the population most susceptible to poor air quality (i.e., children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing serious health problems affected by air quality). Land uses that have the greatest potential to attract these types of sensitive receptors include schools, parks, playgrounds, daycare centers, nursing homes, hospitals, and residential communities. The Shannon Ranch Elementary School is approximately 550 feet southwest, and Riverway Elementary School is approximately 2,500 feet southeast of the Project site. The nearest hospital, Kaweah Health Medical Center, is approximately 2.6 miles southeast of the Project site. The nearest nursing home, Quail Park at Shannon Ranch, is approximately 3,000 feet southwest of the Project site. There are two at-home daycares within 3,000 feet of the Project site and one preschool approximately 4,400 feet west of the Project site. The Project will be developed adjacent to existing residential subdivisions directly to the south of the Project site.

Short-term impacts are mainly related to the construction phase of a project and are recognized to be short in duration. Construction air quality impacts are generally attributable to dust and exhaust pollutants generated by equipment and vehicles. Fugitive dust is emitted both during construction activity and as a result of wind erosion over exposed earth surfaces. Clearing and earth-moving activities comprise major sources of construction dust emissions, but traffic and general disturbances of soil surfaces also generate significant dust emissions. Further, dust generation is dependent on soil type and soil moisture. Exhaust pollutants are the non-useable gaseous waste products produced during the combustion process. Engine exhaust contains CO, HC, and NOx pollutants that are harmful to the environment.

Emissions from long-term operations generally represent a project's most substantial air quality impact. Long-term emissions from the Project are generated primarily by mobile source (vehicle) emissions from the Project site and area sources such as lawn maintenance equipment. As noted in Table 3.4.3-3, the Project's operational impacts annual operational

emissions will be less than the SJVAPCD emission thresholds for criteria pollutants. Therefore, operational emissions associated with the Project are considered less than significant.

The screening-level analysis for the Project shows that TACs are not a concern based on the recommendations provided in Table 3.4.3-4. An evaluation of nearby land uses considering California Air Resources Board's (CARB) Pollution Mapping Tool shows that the Project will not place sensitive receptors in the vicinity of existing toxic sources. Table 3.4.3-4 shows that the Project is located more than 3,000 feet away from SR 198. Therefore, TACs from sources in the study area will not significantly impact the Project. In addition, the Project will not generate TACs that would have a significant impact on the environment or adjacent sensitive receptors. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required, and impacts are less than significant.

Table 3.4.3-4
Recommendations on Siting New Sensitive Land Uses Such As Residences, Schools, Daycare Centers, Playgrounds, or Medical Facilities*

Source Category	Advisory Recommendations
Freeways and High-Traffic Roads	Avoid siting new sensitive land uses within 500 feet of a freeway, urban roads with 100,000 vehicles/day, or rural roads with 50,000 vehicles/day.
Gasoline Dispensing Facilities	Avoid siting new sensitive land uses within 300 feet of a large gas station (defined as a facility with a throughput of 3.6 million gallons per year or greater). A 50-foot separation is recommended for typical gas dispensing facilities.

*Notes
- These recommendations are advisory. Land use agencies have to balance other considerations, including housing and transportation needs, economic development priorities, and other quality-of-life issues.
- Site-specific project design improvements may help reduce air pollution exposures and should also be considered when siting new sensitive land uses.
- A summary of the basis for the distance recommendations can be found in the ARB Handbook: Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective.

(VRPA Technologies, Inc, 2021a)

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.3d – Would the Project result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

The SJVAPCD requires that an analysis of potential odor impacts be conducted for the following two situations:

- Generators – projects that would potentially generate odorous emissions proposed to be located near existing sensitive receptors or other land uses where people may congregate.
- Receivers – residential or other sensitive receptor projects or other projects built for the intent of attracting people located near existing odor sources.

The Project will not generate odorous emissions given the nature or characteristics of residential developments. The intensity of an odor source's operations and its proximity to sensitive receptors influence odor emissions' potential significance. The SJVAPCD has identified some common types of facilities that have been known to produce odors in the SJV Air Basin. The types of facilities that are known to produce odors are shown in Table 3.4.3-5, along with a reasonable distance from the source within which the degree of odors could possibly be significant. None of the facilities shown in Table 3.4.3-5 are located within the vicinity of the Project. Therefore, no mitigation is needed.

Table 3.4.3-5
Screening Levels for Potential Odor Sources

Type of Facility	Distance
Wastewater Treatment Facility	2 miles
Sanitary Landfill	1 mile
Transfer Station	1 mile
Composting Facility	1 mile
Petroleum Refinery	2 miles
Asphalt Batch Plant	1 mile
Chemical Manufacturing	1 mile
Fiberglass Manufacturing	1 mile
Painting/Coating Operations (e.g., auto body shops)	1 mile
Food Processing Facility	1 mile
Feed Lot/Dairy	1 mile
Rendering Plant	1 mile

Table 3.4.3-3 shows that operational emissions will be less than the SJVAPCD level of significant thresholds. The Project is not within SJVACPD potential odor sources shown in Table 3.4.3-5. Long-term potential odors in the area would be limited to vehicular and lawn equipment emissions once the Project site is operational. Therefore the Project will have a less-than-significant impact.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact.*

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact

3.4.4 - BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the Project:

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

Discussion

The impact analysis in this section is based on a Biological Analysis Report that was prepared for the Project (QK, 2021), included as Appendix C.

Impact #3.4.4a – Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Project activities have the potential to affect biological resources. A reconnaissance survey of the Project and a 250-foot buffer (Biological Survey Area, or BSA), where feasible, was conducted on May 22, 2020. The survey consisted of walking meandering pedestrian transects throughout the BSA. A portion of the buffer was inaccessible because it overlapped with private residential and industrial properties. Those areas were surveyed visually with binoculars to gather a representative inventory of the plant and wildlife species present.

Reviews of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (California Department of Fish and Wildlife, 2021), the California Native Plant Society's Rare Plant Program Inventory (California Native Plant Society, 2021), and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Information for Planning and Consultation online tool (US Fish and Wildlife Service, 2021) were conducted to identify special-status plant and wildlife species with the potential to occur within the Project and in the vicinity of the Project (the Visalia 7.5" USGS quadrangle, within which the Project is situated, and the surrounding eight quadrangles). Information regarding the presence of Critical Habitat in the Project vicinity was obtained from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Critical Habitat Mapper database (USFWS, 2021b). The results of the database inquiries were reviewed to evaluate the potential for the occurrence of special-status species and other sensitive biological resources known to occur on or near the Project site prior to conducting the biological reconnaissance survey.

An assessment of the potential for federal- and State-listed and special-status plant and wildlife species to occur on and near the Project site and an assessment for migratory birds and raptors to nest on and near the Project site was conducted. No special-status species or signs of them were observed during the survey. There were no special-status plant species identified within the Project site or survey buffer, and based on historical disturbance and current conditions, none are expected to occur. However, three special-status animal species were determined to have the potential to occur onsite and potentially be affected by the Project. The literature review identified 32 special-status animal species known or with the potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project. Of those, three were determined to have the potential to occur onsite.

Burrowing Owl

There is no evidence that the burrowing owl is present within the BSA. California ground squirrel burrows were observed along the western boundary of the BSA, which could be used by a burrowing owl. The agricultural and urban habitat types provide some foraging habitat, but there is no evidence that those areas are used for foraging. This species is known to be present in the region year-round, and it is possible for a transient burrowing owl to occur onsite at any time. Direct impacts to burrowing owl could occur if there is an active burrow or transient individual within the BSA during the period of construction activities.

Construction activities could result in crushing or destroying a burrow with a burrowing owl inside. Noise and vibration from the Project construction activities could alter the daily behaviors of individual owls and affect foraging activities or the rearing of young. Implementation of Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 and BIO-7, listed below, would reduce any impacts to the species to less-than-significant levels.

Swainson's Hawk

Swainson's hawks were observed foraging within and near the BSA during the survey. The Project site does not contain suitable nesting habitat for Swainson's hawk, but the site may be used by Swainson's hawks for foraging. The St. Johns River and the adjacent cropland, located to the north, east, and west, provide suitable nesting and foraging habitat. Two unoccupied stick nests were observed in oak trees adjacent to the BSA.

The Project site lies within an expansive area of agricultural habitat, similar to what occurs on the site. The loss of a small area such as this, with a very low prey base and low potential to provide substantial foraging opportunities, does not warrant the acquisition or preservation of compensatory habitat. Direct impacts to nesting and foraging habitat for the species are reduced to below significant levels.

Impacts to nesting Swainson's hawks could occur during construction due to noise, vibration, and the presence of construction workers, which may alter normal behaviors and possibly lead to nest failure. Implementation of Mitigation Measures (MM) BIO-4, MM BIO-5, and MM BIO-7 would reduce any impacts to the species to below significant levels.

American Badger

There is no positive evidence that the American badger is present within the BSA, but potential denning and foraging habitat exists to the north of the Project boundary. Because this species is highly mobile, this species may be present on the site as a transient forager. Direct impacts could include injury or death of individuals and entrapment in trenches or pipes. Noise, vibration, and the presence of construction workers could alter normal behaviors if badgers are present, which could affect reproductive success. Increased human presence at the new residential homes following Project activities could indirectly impact American badgers by deterring them from denning or foraging in the vicinity of the Project. Implementation of Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3, and BIO-7, listed below, would reduce any impacts to the species to a less-than-significant level.

San Joaquin Kit Fox

There is no evidence that the San Joaquin kit fox is present within the BSA. The BSA and surrounding land are highly developed and provide minimal denning and foraging habitat, but the species inhabit the region and adapt to urban environments. Because this species is highly mobile, it may be present from time to time on the BSA as a transient forager or part-time resident. Direct impacts resulting in injury, death, or entrapment in trenches or pipes could occur if a fox travels into the construction area. Construction activities could result in

crushing or destroying a den with a kit fox inside. Noise, vibration, and the presence of construction workers may alter normal behaviors, which could affect reproductive success. Implementation of MM BIO-1 through MM BIO-3 and MM BIO-7 would reduce impacts to the species to a less-than-significant level.

Nesting Birds

The BSA contains suitable habitat for a wide variety of nesting bird species. The St. Johns River corridor and annual grassland would support birds that nest in trees, shrubs, grasses, and man-made structures within the BSA urban habitat. In active cultivation, dryland grain crops and irrigated grain crops would support birds that use these agriculture fields for foraging. One unoccupied stick nest was observed in the abandoned barn located on the southern edge of the Project site, and two unoccupied stick nests were observed in the oak trees located outside of the northern boundary of the BSA. If birds were to nest on or near the Project site, construction-related vibration, noise, dust production, and human presence could alter the normal behaviors of nesting birds in the vicinity of the Project and lead to nest failure. Implementation of MM BIO-1, MM BIO-6, and MM BIO-7 would reduce impacts to these species to below significant levels.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

MM BIO-1: Within 14 days of the start of Project activities, a pre-activity survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist knowledgeable in the identification of these species. The pre-activity survey shall include walking transects to identify the presence of burrowing owls and their burrows and American badgers, and San Joaquin kit foxes and their dens. The transects shall be spaced at no greater than 30-foot intervals in order to obtain 100 percent coverage of the Project site and a 250-foot buffer. Areas devoid of habitat incapable of supporting these species would not require surveys. If no evidence of these special-status species is detected, no further action is required.

MM BIO-2: If dens or burrows that could support these species are discovered during the pre-activity survey conducted under Measure BIO-1, avoidance buffers outlined below shall be established. No work shall occur within these buffers unless a qualified biologist approves and monitors the activity.

Burrowing Owl (active burrows)

- Non-breeding season: September 1 – January 31 – 160 feet
- Breeding season: February 1 – August 31 – 250 feet

American Badger and San Joaquin Kit Fox

- Potential or Atypical den – 50 feet
- Known den – 100 feet
- Natal or pupping den – Contact agencies for further guidance

Any Ecological Sensitive Area (ESA) buffer established shall remain in place until the species has left on its own. Once the species has left, the burrow may be monitored using trail cameras or a tracking medium such as diatomaceous earth once the species has left. If no species are detected for a minimum of three consecutive days/nights, the burrow may be hand excavated under the direct supervision of a qualified biologist. All burrow tunnels must be hand excavated to their terminus or examined before backfilling to ensure no burrowing owls, kit foxes, or other animals are hiding.

Alternatively, burrowing owls can be passively excluded from a non-nest burrow through the installation of one-way doors. Prior to engaging in such passive exclusion activities, an Exclusion Plan shall be prepared following the guidance outlined in the CDFW's Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (QK, 2021). The Exclusion Plan shall be submitted to the CDFW for review and approval prior to implementation. Once approved, one-way doors may be installed at non-nest burrows. The doors shall be monitored for a minimum of three days to ensure burrowing owls have left the burrow. The burrow may then be excavated as described above. If at any time during excavation a burrowing owl is detected within the burrow, excavation activities shall immediately cease, and the one-way door reinstalled and monitored until the owl has left the burrow. Hand excavation may then resume. Exclusion efforts shall be documented.

MM BIO-3: The following avoidance and minimization measures shall be implemented during all phases of the Project to reduce the potential for impact from the Project. They are modified from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Standardized Recommendations for Protection of the Endangered San Joaquin Kit Fox Prior to or During Ground Disturbance (QK, 2021).

- Project-related vehicles shall observe a daytime speed limit of 20 mph throughout the site in all Project areas, except on County roads and State and federal highways.
- All Project activities shall occur during daylight hours, but if work must be conducted at night, then a night-time construction speed limit of 10 mph shall be established.
- Off-road traffic outside of designated Project areas shall be prohibited.
- To prevent inadvertent entrapment of kit foxes or other animals during the construction of the Project, all excavated, steep-walled holes or trenches more than two feet deep shall be covered at the close of each working day by plywood or similar materials. If the trenches cannot be closed, one or more escape ramps constructed of earthen fill or wooden planks shall be installed.
- Before holes or trenches are filled, they shall be thoroughly inspected for trapped animals. If at any time a trapped or injured kit fox is discovered, the USFWS and the CDFW shall be contacted before proceeding with the work.
- In the case of trapped animals, escape ramps or structures shall be installed immediately to allow the animal(s) to escape, or the USFWS and CDFW shall be contacted for guidance.
- All construction pipes, culverts, or similar structures with a diameter of four inches or greater that are stored at a construction site for one or more overnight periods shall be thoroughly inspected for kit foxes and burrowing owls before the pipe is

subsequently buried, capped, or otherwise used or moved in any way. If a kit fox is discovered inside a pipe, that section of pipe shall not be moved until the USFWS has been consulted. If necessary, and under the direct supervision of the biologist, the pipe may be moved only once to remove it from the path of construction activity until the fox has escaped.

- All food-related trash items such as wrappers, cans, bottles, and food scraps shall be disposed of in securely closed containers and removed at least once a week from a construction or Project site.
- No pets, such as dogs or cats, shall be permitted on the Project site.
- Project-related use of rodenticides and herbicides shall be restricted.
- A representative shall be appointed by the Project proponent, who will be the contact source for any employee or contractor who might inadvertently kill or injure a kit fox or who finds a dead, injured, or entrapped kit fox. The representative shall be identified during the employee education program, and their name and telephone numbers shall be provided to the USFWS and CDFW.
- Upon completion of the Project, all areas subject to temporary ground disturbances (including storage and staging areas, temporary roads, pipeline corridors, etc.) shall be recontoured if necessary and revegetated to promote restoration of the area to pre-Project conditions. An area subject to "temporary" disturbance means any area that is disturbed during the Project, but after Project completion, will not be subject to further disturbance and has the potential to be revegetated.
- Any Project personnel who are responsible for inadvertently killing or injuring one of these species shall immediately report the incident to their representative. This representative shall contact the CDFW (and USFWS in the case of San Joaquin kit fox) immediately in the case of a dead, injured, or entrapped San Joaquin kit fox, American badger, or burrowing owl.
- The Sacramento Fish and Wildlife office and CDFW Region 4 office shall be notified in writing within three working days of the accidental death or injury to a San Joaquin kit fox during Project-related activities. The CDFW shall be notified in the case of accidental death to an American badger or western burrowing owl. Notification must include the date, time, and location of the incident or of the finding of a dead or injured animal and any other pertinent information.
- New sightings of San Joaquin kit fox, American badger, or burrowing owl shall be reported to the CNDDB. A copy of the reporting form and a topographic map clearly marked with the location of where a San Joaquin kit fox was observed shall also be provided to the USFWS.

MM BIO-4: If Project activities must occur during the nesting season (February 15 to August 31), pre-activity surveys shall be conducted for Swainson's hawk nests in accordance with the Recommended Timing and Methodology for Swainson's Hawk Nesting Surveys in California's Central Valley, Swainson's Hawk Technical Advisory Committee (QK, 2021). The surveys shall be conducted on the Project site plus a 0.5-mile buffer. To meet the minimum level of protection for the species, surveys shall be conducted during at least two survey periods.

If no Swainson's hawk nests are found, no further action is required.

MM BIO-5: If an active Swainson's hawk nest is discovered at any time within 0.5 miles of active construction, a qualified biologist shall complete an assessment of the potential for current construction activities to impact the nest. The assessment would consider the type of construction activities, the location of construction relative to the nest, the visibility of construction activities from the nest location, and other existing disturbances in the area that are not related to the construction activities of this Project. Based on this assessment, the biologist will determine if construction activities can proceed and the level of nest monitoring required. Construction activities shall not occur within 500 feet of an active nest but depending upon conditions at the site, this distance may be reduced. Full-time monitoring to evaluate the effects of construction activities on nesting Swainson's hawks may be required. The qualified biologist shall have the authority to stop work if it is determined that Project construction is disturbing the nest. These buffers may need to increase depending on the sensitivity of the nesting Swainson's hawk to disturbances and at the discretion of the qualified biologist.

MM BIO-6: If Project activities must occur during the nesting season (February 1 to September 15), pre-activity nesting bird surveys shall be conducted within seven days prior to the start of construction at the construction site, plus a 250-foot buffer for songbirds and a 500-foot buffer for raptors (other than Swainson's hawk). If no active nests are found, no further action is required. However, existing nests may become active, and new nests may be built at any time prior to and throughout the nesting season, including when construction activities are in progress. If active nests are found during the survey or at any time during the construction of the Project, an avoidance buffer ranging from 50 feet to 500 feet may be required, with the avoidance buffer from any specific nest being determined by a qualified biologist. The avoidance buffer shall remain in place until the biologist has determined that the young are no longer reliant on the adults or the nest. Work may occur within the avoidance buffer under the approval and guidance of the biologist, but full-time monitoring may be required. The biologist shall have the ability to stop construction if nesting adults show any sign of distress.

MM BIO-7: Prior to the initiation of construction activities, all personnel shall attend a Worker Environmental Awareness Training program developed by a qualified biologist. The program shall include information on the life histories of special-status species with the potential to occur on the Project, their legal status, the course of action shall these species be encountered onsite, and avoidance and minimization measures to protect these species.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a ***less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated***.

Impact #3.4.4b – Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Sensitive natural communities are designated by various resource agencies, including the CDFW, USFWS, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, or are designated by local agencies through policies, ordinances, and regulations.

There is no riparian habitat or sensitive natural communities within the Project boundaries, and no protected species were observed during the survey. The St. Johns River and a parkway are directly north of the Project. However, this area will not be impacted by the implementation of the Project. Therefore, the Project's impacts would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.4c – Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect on State or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has regulatory authority over the Clean Water Act (CWA), as provided for by the EPA. The USACE has established specific criteria for the determination of wetlands based on the presence of wetland hydrology, hydric soils, and hydrophilic vegetation. There are no federally protected wetlands or vernal pools that occur within the Project.

Wetlands, streams, reservoirs, sloughs, and ponds typically meet the criteria for federal jurisdiction under Section 404 of the CWA and State jurisdiction under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Streams and ponds typically meet the criteria for State jurisdiction under Section 1602 of the California Fish and Game Code. There are no known or observed water features on the Project site.

A review of the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) and National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) identified water or wetland features in the vicinity of the Project site; however, none were observed within the Project site. An irrigation canal located along the southeastern boundary of the Project site is a branching man-made irrigation canal and will not be impacted by the Project. The St. Johns River is located directly north of the Project site, and a small portion of the floodplain is within the BSA. However, the Project footprint is outside of the St. Johns River floodplain, and the Project would not impact this feature. There are no

other identified water features, federal waters, or wetlands located on or near the Project. Therefore, the Project's impacts would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.4d – Would the Project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

Wildlife movement corridors also referred to as dispersal corridors or landscape linkages, are generally defined as linear features along which animals can travel from one habitat or resource area to another. Wildlife movement corridors can be large tracts of land that connect regionally important habitats that support wildlife in general, such as stop-over habitat that supports migrating birds or large contiguous natural habitats that support animals with very large home ranges (e.g., coyotes, mule deer). They can also be small-scale movement corridors, such as riparian zones, that provide connectivity and cover to support the movement at a local scale.

The Project is not located within any identified wildlife movement corridors identified by the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project. The nearest wildlife movement corridor is located approximately 5.5 miles northwest of the BSA. The St. Johns River and adjoining native habitat area are likely to be used as a local travel corridor for many species of wildlife. However, the Project does not encroach into that corridor, and significant impacts to that corridor are not anticipated. Therefore, the Project's impacts would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.4e – Would the Project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

The City of Visalia General Plan contains policies aimed at the preservation of biological resources and promotes coordination with federal and State resource agencies. These policies are listed in Appendix A of the BAR prepared for the Project (QK, 2021). The General Plan outlines a work plan with implementation measures to uphold these policies, including

biological resource review for proposed projects and the development of mitigation measures for these projects. The City of Visalia Valley Oak Ordinance establishes policies for the care, trimming, and removal of Valley Oaks. However, there are no Valley Oaks on the Project site, and no trees will be removed. The Project is consistent with the City of Visalia General Plan, the Valley Oak Tree Ordinance, or any other local ordinances related to biological resources. Therefore, there are no impacts with respect to local policies and ordinances, and no measures are warranted.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have ***no impact***.

Impact #3.4.4f – Would the Project conflict with the provisions of an adopted habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan?

The Project is located within an area covered by the PG&E San Joaquin Valley Operation and Maintenance Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). That HCP only applies to the maintenance and operations of PG&E facilities and does not apply to this Project. There are no other pertinent HCP or NCCP within the Project area. The Project would have no impact.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have ***no impact***.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact

3.4.5 - CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the Project:

a.	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b.	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c.	Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☒	☐	☐

The discussion below is based on the Cultural Resources Technical Memo completed for the Project, attached as Appendix D (QK, 2020).

Discussion

Impact #3.4.5a – Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5?

The City maintains a Local Register of Historic Structures within its General Plan, which features approximately 340 buildings, including residential, commercial, civic, and religious structures. These are classified into three categories: exceptional, focus, and background structures. Exceptional structures or sites are those having preeminent historical, cultural, architectural, archaeological, or aesthetic significance, considered candidates for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Currently, four of these buildings have national and State historic designations: the Bank of Italy Building on East Main Street; the U.S. Post Office on West Acequia Avenue; Hyde House on South Court Street; and the Pioneer statue in Mooney Grove Park. None of these are located near the Project, and therefore, there would be no impact.

A cultural resources records search (RS #20-211) was conducted at the Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center, CSU Bakersfield, to determine whether the proposed Project would impact cultural resources. The records search covered an area within one-half mile of the Project and included a review of the National Register of Historic Places, California Points of Historical Interest, California Registry of Historic Resources, California Historical Landmarks, California State Historic Resources Inventory, and a review of cultural resource reports on file.

A Sacred Lands File request was also submitted to the Native American Heritage Commission. A response dated May 26, 2020, indicates negative results.

Based on the results of cultural records search findings and the lack of historical or archaeological resources previously identified within a half-mile radius of the proposed Project, the potential to encounter subsurface cultural, historical, or archaeological resources is minimal.

Although there is no obvious evidence of historical or archaeological resources on the Project site, there is the potential during construction for the discovery of cultural resources. Grading and trenching and other ground-disturbing actions have the potential to damage or destroy these previously unidentified and potentially significant cultural resources within the Project area, including historical resources. Although unlikely, the disturbance of any deposits that can provide significant cultural data would be considered a significant impact under CEQA. However, the implementation of MM CUL-1 and MM CUL-2 would reduce potential impacts to cultural resources to less-than-significant levels.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

MM CUL-1: If prehistoric or historic-era cultural materials are encountered during construction activities, all work in the immediate vicinity of the find shall halt until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the find and make recommendations. If the qualified archaeologist determines that the discovery represents a potentially significant cultural resource, additional investigations may be required to mitigate adverse impacts from Project implementation. These additional studies may include avoidance, testing, and evaluation or data recovery excavation. Cultural resource materials may include prehistoric resources such as flaked and ground stone tools and debris, shell, bone, ceramics, fire-affected rock, and historic resources such as glass, metal, wood, brick, or structural remnants. Implementation of the mitigation measure below would ensure that the proposed Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

MM CUL-2: Prior to any ground disturbance, if the City of Visalia receives a request from a Native American tribal group, a surface inspection of the site shall be conducted by a tribal monitor. The tribal staff shall provide pre-project-related activities briefings to supervisory personnel and any excavation contractor, including information on potential cultural material, finds, and any excavation contractor, which will include information on potential cultural material finds, and the procedures to be enacted if resources are found. The tribal cultural staff shall monitor the site during grading activities.

Prior to any ground disturbance, the applicant shall offer the tribe the opportunity to provide a Native American Monitor during ground-disturbing activities. Tribal participation would be dependent upon the availability and interest of the tribe.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a ***less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated***.

Impact #3.4.5b – Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5?

See Impact #3.4.5a above. Based on the results of cultural records search findings and the lack of historical or archaeological resources previously identified within a half-mile radius of the proposed Project, the potential to encounter subsurface cultural resources is minimal. However, there is still a possibility that historical or archaeological materials may be exposed during construction. Grading and trenching and other ground-disturbing actions have the potential to damage or destroy these previously unidentified and potentially significant cultural resources within the Project area, including historical or archaeological resources. To reduce the Project's potential impacts on cultural resources, implementation of CUL-1 and CUL-2 would reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

Implementation of Mitigation Measure MM CUL-1 and MM CUL-2.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a ***less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated***.

Impact #3.4.5c – Would the Project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

There are no known cemeteries or burials on or near the Project. Although unlikely, subsurface construction activities, such as trenching and grading, associated with the proposed Project could potentially disturb previously undiscovered human burial sites. Accordingly, this is a potentially significant impact. However, considered unlikely subsurface construction activities could cause a potentially significant impact to previously undiscovered human burial sites. The cultural resources and Sacred Lands File records searches did not indicate the presence of human remains, burials, or cemeteries within or in the vicinity of the Project site. No human remains have been discovered at the Project site, and no burials or cemeteries are known to occur within the area of the site. However, construction would involve earth-disturbing activities, and it is still possible that human remains may be discovered, possibly in association with archaeological sites. Implementation of the below mitigation measure would ensure that the proposed Project would not directly or indirectly destroy previously unknown human remains. It is unlikely that the proposed Project would disturb any known human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries. However, with the implementation of MM CUL-3, the Project would have a less-than-significant impact.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

MM CUL-3: If human remains are discovered during construction or operational activities, further excavation or disturbance shall be prohibited pursuant to Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code. The specific protocol, guidelines, and channels of

communication outlined by the Native American Heritage Commission, in accordance with Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code, Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code (Chapter 1492, Statutes of 1982, Senate Bill 297), and Senate Bill 447 (Chapter 44, Statutes of 1987), shall be followed. Section 7050.5(c) shall guide the potential Native American involvement, in the event of the discovery of human remains, at the direction of the county coroner.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a ***less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated***.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
3.4.6 - ENERGY				
Would the Project:				
a. Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during Project construction or operation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

The analysis is based on data from the Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment prepared for the Project (VRPA Technologies, Inc, 2021a), which is found in Appendix B.

Impact #3.4.6a – Would the Project result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during Project construction or operation?

CEQA Guidelines require consideration of the potentially significant energy implications of a project. CEQA requires mitigation measures to reduce "wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary" energy usage (Public Resources Code Section 21100, subdivision [b][3]). The means to conserve energy include decreasing overall energy consumption, decreasing reliance on natural gas and oil, and increasing reliance on renewable energy sources.

Construction

ON-ROAD VEHICLES (CONSTRUCTION)

Due to the nature of the Project, construction of the Project would be limited to the Project site and would only generate onsite (off-road) construction trips and would not contribute to on-road vehicle trips during Project construction (from construction workers and vendors).

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES (CONSTRUCTION)

Off-road construction vehicles would use diesel fuel during the proposed Project's construction phase. Based on the total amount of CO_2 emissions expected to be generated by the proposed Project (as provided by the CalEEMod output) and a CO_2 to diesel fuel conversion factor (provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), the proposed

Project would use a total of approximately 22,981 gallons of diesel fuel for off-road construction vehicles for the entirety of the Project's construction. A non-exhaustive list of constructive off-road vehicles expected to be used during the proposed Project's construction phase includes cranes, forklifts, generator sets, tractors, excavators, and dozers.

Short-term energy use during the construction phase would be in the form of fuel consumption (e.g., gasoline and diesel fuel) to operate heavy equipment, light-duty vehicles, and machinery. Energy demand during the construction phase would be the result of transportation of materials, construction equipment, and construction worker vehicle trips. Compliance with local and regional regulations during construction would minimize fuel consumption. Energy-saving strategies will be implemented where possible to further reduce the Project's energy consumption during the construction phase. Strategies being implemented include those recommended by the CARB that may reduce the Project's energy consumption, including diesel anti-idling measures, light-duty vehicle technology, alternative fuels such as biodiesel blends and ethanol, and heavy-duty vehicle design measures to reduce energy consumption.

Operations

According to Appendix A: Calculation Details for CalEEMod, CalEEMod uses the California Commercial End-Use Survey (CEUS) database to develop energy intensity values for non-residential buildings. The energy use from residential land uses is calculated based on the Residential Appliance Saturation Survey (RASS). Similar to CEUS, this is a comprehensive energy use assessment that includes the end-use for various climate zones in California. As shown in Table 3.4.6-1, the Project would use approximately 1.78186e+007 kBTU (17,818,600) of natural gas per year and approximately 5,226,520 kWh of electricity per year.

Table 3.4.6-1
Project Operational Natural Gas and Electricity Usage

Emissions[a]	Natural Gas (kBTU/year)	Electricity (kWh/year)
Single-Family Housing	17,818,600	5,226,520

Source: CalEEMod (V.2016.3.1).

The long-term operation of the proposed includes electricity and natural gas service to power internal and exterior building lighting and heating and cooling systems.

ELECTRICITY AND NATURAL GAS

Electricity and natural gas used by the proposed Project would be used primarily to power each residential dwelling unit. Total annual electricity (kWh) and natural gas (kBTU) usage associated with the operation of the proposed Project are shown in Table 3.4.6-1 (as provided by CalEEMod).

The Project would be required to comply with California's Title 24 energy efficiency requirements and other applicable City development standards. That would include the installation of solar panels on each home's rooftop, which would provide energy from a renewable power source to offset energy generated by fossil fuel-run. The Project will be required to comply with all applicable standards and building codes included in the 2019 California Green Building Standards Code regarding the use of energy-efficient appliances and lighting, low-flow toilets and faucets, drip irrigation, etc. Therefore, the Project will have a less-than-significant impact.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.6b – Would the Project Conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

See Impact #3.4.6a above. The construction and operation of the Project would comply with State and local plans and regulations. The proposed Project would be in compliance with all applicable federal, State, and local regulations regulating energy usage. The Project will comply with Title 24 Energy Efficiency Standards and CalGreen Code requirements for solar-ready roofs, electric vehicle charging, and water conservation. Energy would also be indirectly conserved through water-efficient landscaping requirements consistent with the City Landscaping Ordinance.

Stringent solid waste recycling requirements applicable to Project construction and operation would reduce energy consumed in solid waste disposal. In summary, the Project will implement all mandatory federal, State, and local conservation measures, project design features, and voluntary energy conservation measures to reduce energy demands further. Therefore, the Project will not conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Project-related impacts are less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
3.4.7 - GEOLOGY AND SOILS				
Would the Project:				
a. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv. Landslides?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems in areas where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☒	☐	☐

The discussion below is based on the Geotechnical Engineering Investigation (Consolidated Testing Laboratories, Inc, 2020) completed for the Project, which is also attached as Appendix E.

Discussion

Impact #3.4.7a(i) – Would the Project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault?

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act (formerly the Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone Act) requires the delineation of zones along active faults in California. Within these zones, cities and counties must regulate certain development, including withholding permits until geologic investigations demonstrate that development sites are not threatened by future surface displacement. The purpose of the Alquist-Priolo Act is to regulate development on or near active fault traces to reduce the hazard of fault rupture; however, surface fault rupture is not necessarily restricted to the area within the Alquist-Priolo Zone. The Alquist-Priolo Act prohibits the location of most structures for human occupancy across active fault traces.

There are no designated Alquist-Priolo zones in the City of Visalia, according to the General Plan Safety Element (City of Visalia, 2014a).

All new structures are required to conform to current seismic protection standards in the California Building Code. By adhering to the 2019 California Building Code and City development standards, the Project will have a less-than-significant impact of endangering people and structures associated with earthquakes.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a ***less-than-significant impact***.

Impact #3.4.7a(ii) – Would the Project expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving strong seismic groundshaking?

See discussion of Impact #3.4.7a(i) above.

Secondary hazards from earthquakes include ground shaking/rupture. Since there are no known faults within the immediate area, ground shaking/rupture from surface faulting, seiches, and landslides would not be hazards in the area. While such seismic shaking would

be less severe from an earthquake that originates at a greater distance from the Project site, the side effects could potentially be damaging to residential buildings and supporting infrastructure. The Project is required to design residential buildings and associated infrastructure to withstand substantial ground shaking in accordance with all applicable State law and applicable codes included in the California Building Code (CBC) Title 24 for earthquake construction standards and building standards code including those relating to soil characteristics (California Building Standards Commission, 2019). The Project will adhere to all applicable local and State regulations to reduce any potentially significant impacts to structures resulting from strong seismic ground shaking at the Project site. Therefore, Project impacts would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.7a(iii) – Would the Project expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

According to the General Plan, no specific liquefaction hazard areas have been identified in the City; however, the potential for liquefaction is recognized through the San Joaquin Valley in locations where the water table is high. Ground shaking is considered the greatest seismic hazard in the City. Low levels of shaking, with less frequency, would be expected to damage weaker masonry buildings, and very infrequent, large earthquakes could cause strong shaking. Given the distance to major faults, the region is considered to have a relatively low ground shaking hazard.

Adherence to existing regulations, in addition to the General Plan and Building Code policies, would reduce this potential impact to less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.7a(iv) – Would the Project expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving landslides?

Landslides include rockfalls, deep slope failure, and shallow slope failure. Factors such as geological conditions, drainage, slope, vegetation, and others directly affect the potential for landslides.

The Project site has very little elevation change; therefore, the risk of landslides is minimal (Consolidated Testing Laboratories, Inc, 2020).

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.7b – Would the Project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

The subsurface soils encountered onsite generally consist of sandy silt, clayey sand, sandy clay, and sand. The upper surface is generally loose to medium-dense sandy silt, clayey sand, and sandy clay to four feet below grade (BG), underlain by medium-dense silty sand to eight feet BG. The silty sand is underlain by sand to 16.5 feet BG, the maximum depth explored (Consolidated Testing Laboratories, Inc, 2020).

Expansive was encountered within the near-surface soils at the site. The expansion index test results ranged from 12 to 13 or very low; therefore, special mitigation is not required. The result of additional laboratory tests indicated that the near-surface soils are collapse-prone. The soils obtained from the boring had a volume reduction range of 2.3 to 6.4 percent when the soils were saturated. Therefore, there is a moderate potential for settlement from soil collapse. The subject site is not near any active known fault, and surface rupture does not apply. The site does not have any significant slope. The potential for slope instability is low.

Construction activities associated with the proposed Project will disturb surface vegetation and soils and expose these disturbed areas to erosion by wind and water. To reduce the potential for soil erosion and loss of topsoil during construction, the Project would comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Permit from the State of California Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) during construction. Under the NPDES, the preparation and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) are required for construction activities that would disturb an area of one acre or more. An SWPPP must identify potential sources of erosion or sedimentation and identify and implement best management practices (BMPs) that ensure reduced erosion. If an SWPPP was not required, the Project would implement the standard BMPs. Typical BMPs intended to control erosion include sandbags, silt fencing, street sweeping, etc. Mitigation Measure GEO-1 requires the approval of an SWPPP to comply

with the NPDES General Construction Permit, if appropriate. Compliance with local grading and erosion control ordinances would also help minimize adverse effects associated with erosion and sedimentation. Any stockpiled soils would be watered and/or covered to prevent loss due to wind erosion as part of the SWPPP during construction.

The Project will comply with all the City's grading requirements outlined in Title 24 and Appendix J of the California Building Code. The Project is not expected to result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil with the incorporation of Mitigation Measure MM GEO-1.

Once constructed, the Project will have both impermeable surfaces and permeable surfaces. Impermeable surfaces would include existing roadways, driveways, and structures. Permeable surfaces would include open areas of the site and any landscaped areas. Overall, the development of the Project would not result in conditions where substantial surface soils would be exposed to wind and water erosion.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

MM GEO-1: Prior to issuing of grading or building permits, if required, the Project applicant shall submit to the Lead Agency (1) the approved Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and (2) the Notice of Intent (NOI) to comply with the General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. The requirements of the SWPPP and NPDES shall be incorporated into design specifications and construction contracts. Recommended best management practices for the construction phase may include the following:

- Stockpiling and disposing of demolition debris, concrete, and soil properly.
- Protecting existing storm drain inlets and stabilizing disturbed areas.
- Implementing erosion controls.
- Properly managing construction materials.
- Managing waste, aggressively controlling litter, and implementing sediment controls.

Evidence of the approved SWPPP shall be submitted to the Lead Agency.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a ***less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated***.

Impact #3.4.7c – Would the Project be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the Project, and potentially result in on- or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

See discussion in Impact #3.4.7a(iii) and 3.4.7a(iv) above.

There are no slopes on or near the property, and the Project would not expose the people or structures to significant risks from landslides.

The proposed Project will comply with all City and State regulations pertaining to construction, including the Visalia Municipal Code. In addition, the California Geologic Society, in implementing the CA Seismic Hazards Mapping Program, has not identified any seismically induced landslide hazard zones in Visalia(City of Visalia, 2014a). Therefore, complying with the existing regulatory framework would be adequate to reduce any potential impacts to less-than-significant levels.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.7d – Would the Project be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

See discussion in Impact #3.4.7a(iii) and 3.4.7a(iv) above.

There are no slopes on or near the property, and the Project would not expose the people or structures to significant risks from landslides.

The Project will comply with all City and State regulations pertaining to construction, including the Visalia Municipal Code. In addition, the California Geologic Society, in implementing the CA Seismic Hazards Mapping Program, has not identified any seismically induced landslide hazard zones in Visalia. Therefore, complying with the existing regulatory framework would be adequate to reduce any potential impacts to less-than-significant levels.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.7e – Would the Project have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems in areas where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

The proposed Project would not include septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. The dwelling units will be required to connect to the existing City sewer system. Therefore, there would be no impact related to the use of septic systems.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have *no impact*.

Impact #3.4.7f – Would the Project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Paleontological resources are the mineralized (fossilized) remains of prehistoric plant and animal life exclusive of human remains or artifacts. Fossil remains such as bones, teeth, shells, and leaves are found in geologic deposits (rock formations) where they were originally buried. Fossil remains are considered to be important as they provide indicators of the earth's chronology and history. These resources are afforded protection under CEQA and are considered to be limited and nonrenewable, and they provide invaluable scientific and educational data.

The Project site does not have any known paleontological resources or unique geologic features. There is no evidence that any type of paleontological or unique geologic features exists on the Project site. Nevertheless, MM GEO-2 will be imposed as there is some possibility that a buried feature may exist in the area and be obscured by vegetation, fill, or other activities, leaving no surface evidence. Implementation of MM GEO-2 will reduce impacts to paleontological resources to less than significant levels.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

MM GEO-2: Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, the Project owner shall develop and implement a Paleontological Worker Education and Awareness Program. If paleontological resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities (e.g., during Project construction or decommissioning), all earthwork or other types of ground disturbance within 50 feet of the find shall stop immediately until a qualified professional paleontologist (meeting the standards of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology [SVP]) can assess the nature and importance of the find. Based on the scientific value or uniqueness of the find, the paleontologist may record the find and allow work to continue or recommend salvage and recovery of the fossil. The paleontologist may also propose modifications to the stop-work radius based on the nature of the find, site geology, and the activities occurring on the site. If treatment and salvage are required, recommendations will be consistent with the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology standards that are current as of the discovery and with currently accepted scientific practice.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated*.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact

3.4.8 - GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the Project:

a.	Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b.	Conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The impact analyses in this section are based on an Air Quality & Greenhouse Impact Assessment (VRPA Technologies, Inc, 2021a), which is attached as Appendix B.

Discussion

Impact #3.4.8a – Would the Project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

The SJVAPCD acknowledges the current absence of numerical thresholds and recommends a tiered approach to establish the significance of the GHG impacts on the environment.

i. If a project complies with an approved GHG emission reduction plan or GHG mitigation program which avoids or substantially reduces GHG emissions within the geographic area in which the project is located, then the project would be determined to have a less-than-significant individual and cumulative impact for GHG emissions.

ii. If a project does not comply with an approved GHG emission reduction plan or mitigation program, it would be required to implement Best Performance Standards (BPS).

iii. If a project is not implementing BPS, it should demonstrate that its GHG emissions would be reduced or mitigated by at least 29 percent compared to Business as Usual (BAU).

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) guidance identifies a threshold of 10,000 $MTCO_2eq.$/year for GHG for construction emissions amortized over a 30-year project lifetime, plus annual operation emissions. Although the Project is under SJVAPCD jurisdiction, the SCAQMD GHG threshold provides some perspective on the GHG emissions generated by the Project. Table 3.4.8-1 shows the yearly GHG emissions generated by the Project as determined by the CalEEMod model, which is less than the threshold identified by the SCAQMD.

Table 3.4.8-1
Project Operational Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Summary Report	CO_2e
Project operation Emissions Per Year	9,910 MT/yr

The data also indicates that the resulting permanent greenhouse gas increases related to Project operations would be within the greenhouse gas increases analyzed in the City of Visalia General Plan EIR (City of Visalia, 2014b), so there would be no increase in severity to the previously identified greenhouse gas impacts. Implementation of the Project will not result in Project-specific or site-specific significant adverse impacts from greenhouse gas emissions within the Project study area. Therefore, no mitigation is required, and impacts are less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.8b – Would the Project conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

California passed the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. AB 32 requires that statewide GHG emissions be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020. Under AB 32, CARB must adopt regulations by January 1, 2011, to achieve reductions in GHGs to meet the 1990 emission cap by 2020. On December 11, 2008, CARB adopted its initial Scoping Plan, which functions as a roadmap of CARB's plans to achieve GHG reductions in California required by AB 32 through subsequently enacted regulations. CARB's 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan builds on the efforts and plans encompassed in the initial Scoping Plan.

Senate Bill (SB) 375 aligns regional transportation planning efforts, regional GHG reduction targets, and land use and housing allocation. CARB has provided each affected region with reduction targets for GHGs emitted by passenger cars and light trucks in the region 2020 and 2035.

TCAG's 2018 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) projects that the Tulare County region would achieve the prescribed emissions targets. For the TCAG region, CARB set targets at a 13 percent per capita decrease in 2020 and a 16 percent per capita decrease in 2035 from the base year of 2005.

The Project is consistent with the adopted 2030 General Plan and the adopted 2018 RTP/SCS. Therefore, it is consistent with the population growth and VMT applied in those plan documents. Therefore, the Project is consistent with the growth assumptions used in

the applicable AQP. The yearly GHG emissions generated by the Project (Table 3.4.8-1) are less than the threshold identified by the SCAQMD (see the discussion for Impact #3.4.3b above).

CARB's 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan builds on the efforts and plans encompassed in the initial Scoping Plan. The current plan has identified new policies and actions to accomplish the State's 2030 GHG limit. Below is a list of applicable strategies in the Scoping Plan and the Project's consistency with those strategies.

- California Light-Duty Vehicle GHG Standards – Implement adopted standards and planned second phase of the program. Align zero-emission vehicles, alternative and renewable fuel, and vehicle technology programs for long-term climate change goals.

- The Project is consistent with this reduction measure. This measure cannot be implemented by a particular project or lead agency since it is a statewide measure. When this measure is implemented, standards would be applicable to light-duty vehicles that would access the residential development. The Project would not conflict with or obstruct this reduction measure.

- Energy Efficiency – Pursuit of a comparable investment in energy efficiency from all retail providers of electricity in California. Maximize energy efficiency building and appliance standards.

- The Project is consistent with this reduction measure. Though this measure applies to the State to increase its energy standards, the Project would comply with this measure through existing regulation. The Project would not conflict with or obstruct this reduction measure.

- Low Carbon Fuel – Development and adoption of the low carbon fuel standard.

- The Project is consistent with this reduction measure. This measure cannot be implemented by a particular project or lead agency since it is a statewide measure. When this measure is implemented, standards would be applicable to the fuel used by vehicles that would access the residential development. The Project would not conflict with or obstruct this reduction measure.

The Project furthers the achievement of the County's greenhouse gas reduction goals. Based on the assessment above, the Project will not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases. Therefore, any impacts would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a ***less-than-significant impact***.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact

3.4.9 - HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the Project:

a.	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b.	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c.	Emit hazardous emissions or involve handling hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d.	Be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e.	For a Project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the Project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the Project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f.	Impair implementation of, or physically interfere with, an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g.	Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The discussion below is based on available public databases and a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment completed for the Project and is attached as Appendix F (Wasatch Environmental, Inc., 2021).

Discussion

Impact #3.4.9a – Would the Project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Project Construction

Project construction-related activities may involve the use and transport of hazardous materials. These materials may include fuels, oils, mechanical fluids, and other chemicals used during construction-related activities. These materials could expose human health or the environment to undue risks associated with their use, and no significant impacts will occur during construction activities.

Transportation, storage, use, and disposal of hazardous materials during construction activities will be required to comply with applicable federal, State, and local statutes and regulations. U.S. Department of Transportation and Caltrans regulate the transportation of hazardous materials. Additionally, the City's routes that have been designated for hazardous materials transport would be used. Any hazardous waste or debris that is generated during the construction of the proposed Project would be collected and transported away from the site and disposed of at an approved offsite landfill or other such facilities. In addition, sanitary waste generated during construction would be managed through portable toilets located at reasonably accessible onsite locations.

Hazardous materials such as paint, bleach, water treatment chemicals, gasoline, oil, etc., may be used during construction. These materials are stored in appropriate storage locations and containers in the manner specified by the manufacturer and disposed of in accordance with local, federal, and State regulations. Residential construction generally uses fewer hazardous chemicals or chemicals in relatively small quantities and concentrations compared to commercial or industrial uses. No significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous waste during the construction or operation of the new residential development would occur.

Project Operation

Once constructed, the use of such materials as paint, bleach, etc., is considered common for residential developments. It would be unlikely for such materials to be stored or used in such quantities that would be considered a significant hazard. The Project will not generate or use hazardous materials outside health department requirements. Operation activities will comply with the California Building Code, local building codes, and applicable safety measures.

Based on the analysis above, Project construction and operation are not anticipated to result in significant impacts due to the transportation, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.9b – Would the Project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

As noted in Impact #3.4.7b, hazardous materials handling on the Project site over the short-term construction of the Project may result in soil and groundwater contamination from accidental spills. Prior to the start of construction, the Project would prepare and implement an SWPPP, under the NPDES general permit for construction sites over one acre, as required by MM GEO-1. The SWPPP identifies potential sources of pollution from the Project that may affect the stormwater discharge quality and requires that BMPs be implemented to prevent contamination at the source. Implementing BMPs during construction would contain accidental spills of hazardous materials, and soil and groundwater contamination would be minimized or prevented.

The Project site was historically used for agricultural purposes. A soils assessment found no evidence of a significant release of arsenic or organo-chlorine pesticides that might expose workers during construction (Wasatch Environmental, Inc., 2021). The concentration is considered a *de minimis* condition and would be less than significant. As noted in Section 3.4.3 - Air Quality, the Project would comply with the SJVAPCD's Regulation VIII (Fugitive PM10 Prohibitions). The site is relatively flat, and grading of the site will be minimal. With the appropriate application of water or other dust suppression during construction, impacts from potential pesticides in the soil during construction will be minimal. Once the homes are constructed, there will be little to no areas of exposed dirt that might be dispersed into the air and create a health concern.

There is also a known underground storage tank onsite, which was used to store gasoline (Wasatch Environmental, Inc., 2021). This tank will be removed in accordance with the removal standards of the Tulare County Department of Public Health. Dust control measures will be employed during UST excavation activities in order to mitigate inhalation hazards and offsite migration of fugitive dust.

There are two residential structures on the Project, and these will be demolished. Given the ages of these structures, it is assumed that asbestos or lead paint would have been used. Before demolition, the structures will be analyzed for the presence/absence of toxic materials, and a demolition permit will be obtained from the SJVAPCD. Removal of any identified toxic materials will comply with local, State, and federal codes and regulations.

As noted in Impact #3.4.9a above, if there is a use of hazardous materials during the Project's construction phase, the safe handling and storage of hazardous materials consistent with applicable local and State regulations will be required.

The proposed Project is not anticipated to create a significant hazard to the public or the environment; as mentioned previously, the residential Project would not routinely transport, use, dispose of, or discharge hazardous materials into the environment. With the implementation of MM GEO-1 during construction, impacts would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

Implementation of MM GEO-1.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant with mitigation incorporated*.

Impact #3.4.9c – Would the Project emit hazardous emissions or involve handling hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

The Shannon Ranch Elementary School is approximately 550 feet southwest, and Riverway Elementary School is approximately 2,500 feet southeast of the Project site. Construction activities for residential development could result in the temporary use of hazardous materials and or substances, such as lubricant and diesel fuel during construction. Exhaust from construction and related activities is expected to be minimal and not significant. All future construction-related activities resulting from the proposed Project would be subject to local, State, and federal laws related to hazardous materials and substances emissions. However, construction of the Project would require the use of minimal hazardous materials and require implementation of BMPs when handling any hazardous materials, substances, or waste. As noted in Impact #3.4.3a, emissions from construction-related activities are expected to be minimal and not significant. Once constructed, residential development is not expected to result in hazardous emissions; therefore, the Project would have a less-than-significant impact.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.9d – Would the Project be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

According to ENVIROSTOR, the closest active cleanup program is approximately 2,500 feet northwest of the Project site (Case#: 60002181) (California Water Resources Control Board, 2022).

The property is not included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) (Wasatch Environmental, Inc., 2021). The Project itself will not generate or use hazardous materials outside health department requirements.

Therefore, because the Project is not located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, it can be seen there is a less-than-significant impact of hazards to the public or environment.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.9e – Would the Project for a Project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the Project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the Project area?

The Project site is located approximately five miles east of Visalia Municipal Airport, included in the adopted Tulare Comprehensive Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. The Project is not within a Safety Compatibility Zone area (County of Tulare, 2012). The construction and operation of the Project would not result in the generation of noise levels beyond those that exist in the surrounding area. The construction and operation of the Project would not result in the generation of noise levels beyond those that exist in the surrounding area.

The Project site is not located within two miles of a public airport/airstrip; therefore, it has no impact.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have *no impact*.

Impact #3.4.9f – Would the Project impair implementation of, or physically interfere with, an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

The City of Visalia utilized Tulare County's Emergency Operations Plan, which includes planning and response scenarios for seismic hazards, extreme weather conditions, landslides, dam failure, other flooding, wildland fires, hazardous materials incidents, transportation emergencies, civil disturbance, and terrorist attacks. In addition, the Project would also comply with the appropriate local and State requirements regarding emergency response plans and access(City of Visalia, 2014a). The Project would also comply with the appropriate local and State requirements regarding emergency response plans and access. The proposed Project would not inhibit the ability of local roadways to continue to accommodate emergency response and evacuation activities.

The Traffic Study prepared for the proposed Project did not identify any traffic hazards that impede emergency response or evacuation plans (VRPA Technologies, Inc, 2021b). The Project site and surrounding area are relatively flat, with little to no topography that might obscure visibility to motorists. Additionally, roadway improvements have been proposed to maintain traffic safety with the anticipated increase in vehicle trips. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.9g – Would the Project expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?

The City of Visalia is located within a zone considered by CAL FIRE to have low to no potential for wildland fires. The proposed Project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or residences are intermixed with wildlands.

The Project site is 1.5 miles northwest of the Visalia Fire Department Station 54, the closest station in the Local Responsibility Area. The Project will comply with all applicable State and local building standards as required by local fire codes and impact fees to support additional fire protection services. The Project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires.

Given that the Project is not surrounded by wildland areas and is in proximity to existing fire services, the Project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. There would be no impact related to wildfires.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have ***no impact***.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
3.4.10 - HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY				
Would the Project:				
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the Project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would?				
i. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on or offsite;	☐	☒	☐	☐
ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on or offsite;	☐	☒	☐	☐
iii. Create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv. Impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to Project inundation?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The analysis presented here is based in part on data presented in a Water Supply Assessment prepared for the Project (QK, 2022), which is included as Appendix G.

Discussion

Impact #3.4.10a – Would the Project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?

See Impact #3.4.7b. During construction, potential impacts on water quality arising from erosion and sedimentation are expected to be temporary conditions during the construction of the new development. The new development must develop and comply with an SWPPP that specifies BMPs to prevent construction pollutants from contacting stormwater to keep all erosion products from moving offsite and into receiving waters. The intention is to eliminate or reduce non-stormwater discharge to storm sewer systems and other waters of the United States.

To reduce potential impacts to water quality during construction activities, Mitigation Measure MM GEO-1 requires the Project proponent to prepare an SWPPP. The Project SWPPP would include BMPs to minimize and control the construction and post-construction runoff and erosion to the maximum extent practicable.

The SWPPP is required to be approved by the RWQCB prior to construction. Furthermore, the proposed Project has been designed to control stormwater runoff and erosion, both during and after construction. Project-specific drainage improvements would reduce the proposed Project's potential to violate water quality standards during construction to a less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

Implement Mitigation Measure MM GEO-1.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated*.

Impact #3.4.10b – Would the Project substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the Project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

The Visalia area is located within the Kaweah Groundwater Subbasin of the San Joaquin Valley Groundwater Basin. The Subbasin's 696 square miles generally comprises lands in the Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District (KDWCD) and include the Kaweah and St. Johns Rivers. The former is the primary source of groundwater recharge. The alluvial fans of waterways provide highly permeable areas in which groundwater is readily replenished. Annual rainfall in Visalia usually ranges from eight to 12 inches; however, there is no estimate of what percentage of rainfall reaches the groundwater supply. Groundwater flow

is generally southwestward. Based on groundwater elevation maps, horizontal groundwater barriers do not appear to exist in the subbasin.

The Project site is located within the City of Visalia's 2030 General Plan Planning Area, which is located in the Kaweah River's delta system. Surface runoff generally flows from east to west and terminates in the Tulare Lake Basin. Major surface water resources in the area include St. Johns River, Mill Creek, Packwood Creek, Cameron Creek, Deep Creek, Evans Creek, Modoc Ditch, Mill Creek Ditch, Persian Ditch, Tulare Irrigation District (TID) Canal, and some other local ditches.

Throughout the City of Visalia, water is primarily distributed by the California Water Service Company (Cal Water); at least one mutual water district is located within city limits. Cal Water's 75 active supply wells in the Visalia District extract groundwater from the Kaweah Groundwater Subbasin and distribute it over approximately 519 miles of pipeline. The Cal Water system includes two elevated 300,000-gallon storage tanks, an ion exchange treatment plant, four granular activated carbon filter plants, and one nitrate blending facility. These facilities are in place to provide Cal Water's customers with safe drinking water of quality and quantity to meet State and federal drinking water standards (California Water Service, 2022).

Surface Water

According to the City's General Plan, the water quality of the Kaweah River Delta system is considered to be excellent, with no known water quality impairments in the area. The City complies with the terms of its permits for stormwater discharges from small municipal separate storm sewer systems. In November 2005, the City adopted a Storm Water Management Plan that includes a detailed analysis of plans to handle stormwater runoff from increased amounts of impervious surface. These plans include retention/detention facilities, street sweeping, the establishment of a water quality hotline, and an illicit discharge protection system that will allow the City to determine if there is a serious water quality problem from illegal discharges.

Groundwater

The Visalia General Plan Planning Area is within the Kaweah Groundwater Subbasin of the San Joaquin Valley Groundwater Basin. The Subbasin's 696 square miles generally comprises lands in the Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District (KDWCD) and include the Kaweah and St. Johns Rivers. The former is the primary source of groundwater recharge. The alluvial fans of waterways provide highly permeable areas in which groundwater is readily replenished. Annual rainfall in Visalia usually ranges from eight to 12 inches; however, there is no estimate of what percentage of rainfall reaches the groundwater supply. Groundwater flow is generally southwestward. Based on groundwater elevation maps, horizontal groundwater barriers do not appear to exist in the subbasin.

Construction is estimated to take approximately 24 months. Construction water demands are estimated to be approximately 38 acre-feet, which is equivalent to approximately

12,380,000 gallons. Bottled drinking water will be provided for crews during construction activities.

Initial construction water usage will be in support of site preparation and grading activities. During earthwork for grading of access road foundations, building foundations and project components, the principal use of water would be for compaction and dust control. Smaller quantities would be required for the preparation of the concrete required for foundations and other minor uses. After the earthwork activities, water usage will be used for dust suppression and normal construction water requirements that are associated with the construction of the buildings, internal access roads, and revegetation.

The long-term average day operational water demand will be for the residential users and is anticipated to be approximately 118.917 million gallons per year or 364.94 acre-feet per year for the total build-out of the Project. This is based on residential users having an average daily water demand of 150 gallons per day/bedroom across the entire estimated bedroom count of 2,172 for the buildout of the site. The District has a projected 14,969 million gallons of available water when looking at the fifth dry year based on 2045 projections (Table 3.4.10-3). The Project's long-term operational water demand is 0.7944 percent (118.917 MG/14,969 MG) of the available water supply in the District (QK, 2022).

The City has adopted policies to reduce water demand through conservation and other means and to increase surface water imports to the City and surrounding areas. These include the Groundwater Recharge Fee, Groundwater Impact Fee, Groundwater Mitigation Fee, and the Water Conservation Ordinance.

The developer will be responsible for paying the City of Visalia's Groundwater Overdraft Mitigation Fee, and therefore the Project will result in a less-than-significant impact.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a less-than-significant impact.

Impact #3.4.10c(i) – Would the Project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on or offsite?

As noted previously the Project site is relatively flat, and grading would be minimal. The topography of the site would not appreciably change because of grading activities. The site does not contain any blue-line water features, including streams or rivers. The Project has a proposed storm basin that will collect stormwater runoff on the site. The Project would develop areas of impervious surfaces that would reduce the rate of percolation at the site, but areas of open space would allow for the percolation of stormwater to recharge the

aquifer, or the water would be directed into the City's existing stormwater sewer system. The Project would comply with applicable City development standards and codes. Therefore, the Project would have a less-than-significant impact on drainage patterns or cause substantial erosion or siltation on or off the site.

As discussed in Impact #3.4.10a above, potential impacts on water quality from erosion and sedimentation are expected to be localized and temporary during construction. Construction-related erosion and sedimentation impacts due to soil disturbance would be less than significant after implementing an SWPPP and BMPs as required by MM GEO-1. No drainages or other water bodies are present on the Project site, and therefore, the proposed Project would not change the course of any such drainages.

The existing drainage pattern of the site and area would be affected by Project development because of the increase in impervious surfaces at the site. The Project design includes natural features such as landscaping and vegetation that would allow for the percolation of stormwater. However, there will be an addition in impervious surfaces that could increase the potential for stormwater runoff and soil erosion. The Project would connect to existing City stormwater sewer infrastructure. The Project will comply with all applicable local building codes and regulations to minimize impacts during construction and post-construction. With the implementation of MM GEO-1, impacts that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on or offsite are less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

Implementation of MM GEO-1.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated*.

Impact #3.4.10c(ii) – Would the Project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner that would substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on or offsite?

No drainages or other water bodies are present on the Project site. Therefore, the development of the site would not change the course of any such drainages that may potentially result in on or offsite flooding. Water would be used during the temporary construction phase of the Project (e.g., for dust suppression). However, any water used for dust control would be mechanically and precisely applied and would generally infiltrate or evaporate prior to running off.

The Project site is flat, and the proposed grading would not substantially alter the overall topography of the Project site. Although the amount of surface runoff on the Project site would not substantially increase with the construction of the Project, runoff patterns and concentrations could be altered by grading activities associated with the Project. Improper

design of the access road or building pads could alter drainage patterns that would cause flooding on or offsite. The potential for the construction of the proposed Project to alter existing drainage patterns would be minimized through compliance with the preparation of an SWPPP as required by MM GEO-1. With the implementation of such measures, the Project would not substantially increase the amount of runoff to result in flooding on or offsite. Impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels.

Additionally, with the approval of grading plans and site development requirements by the City Building Division that incorporates BMPs and design standards, the new development operations would not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on or offsite. Impacts would be less than significant with the implementation of MM GEO-1.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

Implement Mitigation Measure MM GEO-1.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a ***less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated***.

Impact #3.4.10c(iii) – Would the Project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner that would create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

Water would be used during the temporary construction phase of the proposed Project (e.g., for dust suppression). However, any water used for dust control would be mechanically and precisely applied and would generally infiltrate or evaporate prior to running off.

The Project would comply with all applicable State and City codes and regulations. The Project will construct a stormwater retention basin onsite to capture stormwater, and engineering calculations will support the storm drainage plan to ensure that the Project does not create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. Therefore, the Project would not create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. Impacts would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a ***less-than-significant impact***.

Impact #3.4.10c(iv) – Would the Project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would impede or redirect flood flows?

Please see response #3.4.10a through c(iii), above. The Project would comply with all applicable State and City codes and regulations. The Project will construct a stormwater retention basin onsite to capture stormwater. Engineering calculations will support the storm drainage plan to ensure that the Project does not create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. Therefore, the Project would not create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. Impacts would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.10d – Would the Project in flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to Project inundation?

The Project site is not located by the ocean or lake large enough to produce seiches. Therefore, there is no risk that the new development would be inundated by tsunamis or seiches. The Project area is flat and does not contain slopes steep enough to cause a mudflow, avalanche, or significant ground-related risks. As noted above, the Project site is not located within the 100-year floodplain, and there do not appear to be any significant levees that could potentially affect people or structures if they were to fail.

There is no potential for the inundation of the Project site by seiche. Therefore, the Project would not contribute to inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. There would be no impact from the Project.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have *no impact*.

Impact #3.4.10e – Would the Project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

See also Impact #3.4.10b, above. The City of Visalia obtains the majority of its domestic water from the California Water Service (California Water Service, 2022). Implementation of the City of Visalia General Plan policies, California Water Service's 2015 Urban Water Management Plan, the Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District (KDWCD) 2010 Groundwater Management Plan, and the City's involvement with the KDWCD Integrated Regional Water Management Planning (IRWM) program, in addition to the City's Stormwater Master Plan and Management Program and the Waterways and Trails Master Plan, will address the issues of providing an adequate, reliable, and sustainable water supply for the Project's future urban domestic and public safety consumptive purposes.

The sufficiency of the Project water supply is analyzed on two bases: the physical availability of the District to provide water in the amounts required for Project construction and operation; and the estimates (in the 2020 Visalia Water District, Urban Water Management Plan) of normal water years, single dry water year and multiple dry water years, water supply and demand-related water availability with respect to projected water demand during a 20-year projection.

The following tables show the supply and demand comparisons for a normal year, a single dry year, and five consecutive dry years (QK, 2022).

Table 3.4.10-1
Normal Year Supply and Demand Comparison

	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
Supply totals	10,597	11,495	12,483	13,444	14,510
Demand totals	10,597	11,495	12,483	13,444	14,510
Difference	0	0	0	0	0

As shown in Table 3.4.10-1, future water supplies are anticipated to be met. Projected supplies were compared to the increased demands for a single dry year and are presented in Table 3.4.10-2 below.

Table 3.4.10-2
Single Dry Year Supply and Demand Comparison

	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
Supply totals	10,803	11,718	12,726	13,706	14,823
Demand totals	10,803	11,718	12,726	13,706	14,823
Difference	0	0	0	0	0

As shown in Table 3.4.10-2, anticipated groundwater supplies are sufficient to meet all demands through the year 2045, even under single-year drought conditions.

Projected supplies were compared to the increased demands for five consecutive dry-year scenarios and are presented in Table 3.4.10-3.

Table 3.4.10-3
Five Consecutive Dry Year Supply and Demand Comparison

		2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
First Year	Supply totals	10,930	11,857	12,878	13,869	14,969
	Demand totals	10,930	11,857	12,878	13,869	14,969
	Difference	0	0	0	0	0
Second Year	Supply totals	10,930	11,857	12,878	13,869	14,969
	Demand totals	10,930	11,857	12,878	13,869	14,969
	Difference	0	0	0	0	0
Third Year	Supply totals	10,930	11,857	12,878	13,869	14,969
	Demand totals	10,930	11,857	12,878	13,869	14,969
	Difference	0	0	0	0	0
Fourth Year	Supply totals	10,930	11,857	12,878	13,869	14,969
	Demand totals	10,930	11,857	12,878	13,869	14,969
	Difference	0	0	0	0	0
Fifth Year	Supply totals	10,930	11,857	12,878	13,869	14,969
	Demand totals	10,930	11,857	12,878	13,869	14,969
	Difference	0	0	0	0	0

As shown in Table 3.4.10-3, anticipated groundwater supplies are sufficient to meet all demands through the year 2045, even under multiple dry-year drought conditions.

The City of Visalia Public Works Department will review any future development as a result of the Project approval and associated water demand analysis to determine if water service will be available through the City of Visalia. The future development will be required to show water infrastructure connections to the nearest water main, and water mains would be extended within the proposed lot to provide service to each unit created, subject to payment of applicable water charges.

Additionally, the City of Visalia has implemented a Groundwater Overdraft Mitigation Ordinance, which imposes a groundwater mitigation fee on new development and a groundwater impact fee on all residential, commercial, and industrial water suppliers. These

fees are used by the City to construct and improve groundwater recharge facilities and to purchase water for groundwater recharge.

Therefore, compliance with payment of the City's Groundwater Overdraft Mitigation Fee would reduce Project impacts to less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact

3.4.11 - LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the Project:

a.	Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b.	Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

Impact #3.4.11a – Would the Project physically divide an established community?

The Project is surrounded by undeveloped property to the east, west, and north. There is existing residential development to the south.

The Project would increase an established community within the area and promote orderly land use development by providing the ability to develop the 95 acres, which is a supported goal under the General Plan, and, therefore, would have no impact. The Project proposes connecting to existing roadways, providing future connectivity access, and not dividing an established or future community. Future development would not be built in a pre-existing community area and would not create any physical barrier between an established community.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have ***no impact***.

Impact #3.4.11b – Would the Project cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

The Project is located in unincorporated Tulare County with a current zone classification AE – 40 and AE – 20 (Exclusive Agriculture). The Project site/subject properties are within the City's Sphere of Influence and are currently designated by the General Plan for Residential Very Low Density (VLDR), Low Density (LDR), Medium Density (MDR), and Parks/Recreation planned land uses. The Project will require approval of an annexation and pre-zoning to designate the site with consistent zoning districts. Once annexed into the City, the Project would be consistent with land use planning.

As proposed as part of the Specific Plan, which covers the entire Project site, there are three proposed land use designations and zone districts (Figures 3-2 through 3-4). The aforementioned land use designations require that certain developments abide by the density requirements outlined by the General Plan. As proposed, the Specific Plan is consistent with the General Plan; it only differs from the City's Municipal Code-specific sections regarding development standards. The City's General Plan and Project's Specific Plan require that Low Density Residential allows for densities between 2 to 10 units per gross acre, intended for single-family dwelling housing developments. Additionally, Medium Density Residential allows for densities between 10 to 15 units per gross acre and is intended for small lot subdivisions and multi-family housing developments. The Project as a whole will include 274 single-family units on approximately 51 acres of undeveloped land for a density of approximately 5.35 dwelling units per gross acre. In addition, the Project also includes 270 small-lot single-family units on approximately 26 acres of undeveloped land for a density of approximately 10 units per gross acre.

The City of Visalia 2030 General Plan has designated the Project area within the proposed city limits as developable under the Tier 2 and Tier 3 Urban Development Boundaries. Tier 2 supports a target buildout population of approximately 178,000 by 2030. Tier 3 comprises the full buildout of the General Plan. The expansion criteria for land in Tier 3 is that land would become available for development after 12,800 building permits for housing units have been issued in Tier 1 and Tier 2 areas.

The Specific Plan is consistent with the General Plan, which allows City Council approval of Master Plans, following Planning Commission review and recommendation, for sites under single ownership or unified control, including developable land within both development tiers. Additionally, the policy allows for the pre-zoning of this master-planned land, subject to execution of a development agreement between the City and the landowner conforming to the requirements of Government Code Section 65864, with the Project allowed to annex and develop while the City is still limiting development approvals to land within the Tier 1 or Tier 2 designation.

The proposed residential uses (single-family and small-lot detached single-family) will be considered a permitted use with the approval of the Pratt Family Ranch Specific Plan. As proposed, the Project includes a General Plan Amendment, Pre-zone, and a Specific Plan. The

General Plan Amendment removes the existing VLDR land use and spreads that area among LDR and MDR land uses, thus increasing the estimated amount of dwelling units for the 95-acre site. The subsequent Pre-zone will be consistent with the proposed amendment. Section 3.4.10a depicts that the proposed Project meets the density requirements per the proposed land use designations as required by the Visalia General Plan. The Specific Plan also outlines policies and development standards that alter some existing development standards of the City's Municipal Code.

The Project will be consistent with the following General Plan goals, objectives, and policies:

- OSC-0-7: Preserve and enhance qualities that make Visalia an ideal place to do business and promote a positive image of Visalia as a desirable place to live, visit, and do business.
- LU-P-19: Ensure that growth occurs in a compact and concentric fashion by implementing the General Plan's phased growth strategy.
- LUP-P-20: Allow annexation and development of residential, commercial, regional retail, and industrial land to occur within the Urban Development Boundary (Tier 2) and the Urban Growth Boundary (Tier 3) consistent with the City's Land Use Diagram, according to the following phasing thresholds:
    - "Tier 2": Tier 2 supports a target buildout population of approximately 178,000. The expansion criteria for land in Tier 2 is that land would only become available for development when building permits have been issued in Tier 1 at the following levels, starting from April 1, 2010: Residential: after permits for 5,850 housing units have been issued; Residential: after permits for 5,850 housing units have been issued.
    - "Tier 3": Tier 3 comprises full buildout of the General Plan. The expansion criteria for land in Tier 3 is that land would only become available for development when building permits have been issued in Tier 1 and Tier 2 at the following levels, starting from April 1, 2010; Residential: after permits for 12,800 housing units have been issued.
- LU-P-22: Allow for City Council approval of Master Plans, following Planning Commission review and recommendation, for sites under single ownership or unified control, which may include developable land within both multiple development tiers. Allow for pre-zoning of this master-planned land, subject to execution of a development agreement between the City and the landowner conforming to the requirements of Government Code Section 65864 et seq., with the Project allowed to annex and develop while the City is still limiting development approvals to land within the Tier 1 or Tier 2 designation.
- LU-O-19: Ensure the adequate land area is available for future housing needs, enabling an average citywide gross density of 5.3 dwelling units per acre of new residential development.
- LU-O-22: Create inclusive, compact neighborhoods with well-integrated single-family and multi-family residential development and activity nodes featuring schools, neighborhood parks, and neighborhood commercial areas.

- HE-5: Provide a range of housing types and prices within new neighborhoods to meet the needs of all segments of the community.
- LU-O-25: Create an open space system that links neighborhoods, complements adjacent land uses, and serves multiple needs.

These objectives and policies contribute to an overall homogenous citywide land use planning strategy to meet the City's economic goals and policies. The proposed small-lot detached single-family residential units will be considered a permitted use within the R-M-2 zone district as depicted within the Specific Plan. The single-family uses proposed in the R-1-5 zone district are considered permitted use. As mentioned in Impact #3.4.11a, the overall Project does not exceed the maximum density for both proposed residential land uses. It is determined that the Project is consistent with respective General Plan objectives and policies and will not significantly conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations of the City of Visalia. Therefore, the Project impacts would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less–than-Significant Impact	No Impact
3.4.12 - MINERAL RESOURCES					
Would the Project:					
a.	Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b.	Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion

Impact #3.4.12a – Would the Project result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the State?

According to the Department of Conservation Division of Mine Reclamation SMARA mapping tool, the nearest open mine (Kaweah South 91-54-0036) to the Project site is approximately 13 miles to the northeast (Department of Conservation, 2022). Additionally, the Department of Conservation, Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR) well finder tool does not designate an active oil or gas well in proximity to the Project site (Department of Conservation, 2022).

The Project site is not designated as a valuable mineral resources preservation or recovery area. The Project will not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the State. The Project will have no impact.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have ***no impact***.

Impact #3.4.12b – Would the Project result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?

The most economically significant mineral resources in Tulare County are sand, gravel, and crushed stone, used as sources for aggregate (road materials and other construction). In

Tulare County, the major sources of aggregate are alluvial deposits and hard rock quarries. Subsequently, most Tulare County mines are all located along rivers at the base of the Sierra Foothills (City of Visalia, 2014a).

The Project site is not delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan as a locally-important mineral resource recovery site; therefore, it will not result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource. Therefore, the Project would have no impact.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have ***no impact***.

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
3.4.13 - NOISE					
Would the Project result in:					
a.	Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b.	Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c.	For a Project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the Project expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

Impact #3.4.13a – Would the Project result in generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

Sound is a process that consists of three components: the sound source, the sound path, and the sound receiver. All three components must be present for sound to exist. Without a source to produce sound or a medium to transmit sound-pressure waves, there is no sound. Sound also must be received; a hearing organ, sensor, or object must be present to perceive, register, or be affected by sound and noise. There are many different sound sources, paths, and receivers in most situations, not only one of each. Noise is defined as loud, unpleasant, unexpected, or undesired sounds (City of Visalia, 2014b).

Land uses deemed sensitive receptors include schools, hospitals, rest homes, and long-term care and mental care facilities, which are considered to be more sensitive to ambient noise levels than others. The nearest sensitive land uses include residential homes bordering the site to the south and the west.

Stationary noise sources can also influence the population, and unlike mobile, transportation-related noise sources, these sources generally have a more permanent and

consistent impact on people. These stationary noise sources involve a wide spectrum of uses and activities, including various industrial uses, commercial operations, agricultural production, school playgrounds, high school football games, HVAC units, generators, lawn maintenance equipment, and swimming pool pumps.

As noted previously, the Shannon Ranch Elementary School is approximately 550 feet southwest, and Riverway Elementary School is approximately 2,500 feet southeast of the Project site. The nearest hospital, Kaweah Health Medical Center, is approximately 2.6 miles southeast of the Project site. The nearest nursing home, Quail Park at Shannon Ranch, is approximately 3,000 feet southwest of the Project site. There are two at-home daycares within 3,000 feet of the Project site.

During the construction phase of the project, noise-generating activities will be present. Construction activities would be temporary in nature and are anticipated to occur during normal daytime working hours. The Project must comply with Chapter 8.36 – Noise of City of Visalia Municipal Code. Specifically, Section 8.36.050 requires construction equipment such as jackhammers, portable generators, pneumatic equipment, trenchers, or other such equipment that can only be operated between the weekday hours of 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. and weekend hours of 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. The Project does not anticipate the use of jackhammers or piledriving equipment. However, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure NSE-1, which requires locating stationary construction equipment as far away from sensitive receptors, using mufflers or other noise baffling, and working during daylight hours as is feasible, temporary noise impacts from construction-related activities will be reduced to levels that are less than significant.

The Project proposes single-family and small-lot detached single-family units within the Low Density and Multi-Family Residential land uses. The primary noise generated by the Project will be attributable to traffic noise. Once constructed, the Project would not significantly increase traffic on local roadways. Residential activities could also result in an increase in ambient noise levels in the immediate Project vicinity. Activities that could be expected to generate noise include cars entering and exiting the development and mechanical systems related to heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems located in residential buildings. This noise would be similar to those generated by the nearby existing residential development and would not be of a level that exceeds thresholds.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

MM NSE-1: During construction, the contractor shall implement the following measures:

a. All stationary construction equipment on the Project site shall be located so that noise-emitting objects or equipment face away from any potential sensitive receptors.
b. The construction contractor shall ensure that all construction equipment is equipped with manufacturer-approved mufflers and baffles. During construction, stationary construction equipment shall be placed such that emitted noise is directed away from sensitive noise receivers.

c. Construction activities shall take place during daylight hours, when feasible.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a ***less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated***.

Impact #3.4.13b – Would the Project result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

The operation of heavy construction equipment, particularly pile driving and other impact devices such as pavement breakers, create seismic waves that radiate along the surface of the earth and downward into the earth. These surface waves can be felt as ground vibration. Vibration from the operation of this equipment can result in effects ranging from the annoyance of people to damage to structures. Varying geology and distance will result in different vibration levels containing different frequencies and displacements. In all cases, vibration amplitudes will decrease with increasing distance (City of Visalia, 2014b). The construction phase is the only phase where vibration generated from the construction activities could pose an impact. Perceptible groundborne vibration is generally limited to areas within a few hundred feet of construction activities. In Table 3.4.13-1, The City's General Plan EIR outlines common construction equipment and their peak particle velocity (PPV). The table does not include an exhaustive list of construction equipment but common equipment with an estimated PPV of 25 feet.

Table 3.4.13-4
Vibration Source Levels for Construction Equipment

Equipment	PPV at 25 feet
Vibratory Roller	0.210
Hoe Ram	0.089
Large bulldozer	0.089
Caisson drilling	0.089
Loaded trucks	0.076
Small bulldozer	0.003

Source: (City of Visalia, 2014b)

Vibration generated from construction activities is considered a temporary source. Most of the Project site is not adjacent to developed areas, except for the southern Project boundary. However, the Project will be required to abide by the City's Municipal Code. Therefore, all construction activities will be prohibited during twilight and early morning hours to reduce the potential impacts to nearby sensitive receptors. The operation of the Project site will produce identical amounts of traffic in comparison to the neighboring developments. The Project's impacts will be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.13c – Would the Project result in for a Project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the Project expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels?

The Project is located approximately five miles northeast of the Visalia Municipal Airport. The noise levels that the Airport generates will not adversely affect the Project nor expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive levels. The impacts will be less than significant. The Project is not located within a safety zone identified in the ALUCP (County of Tulare, 2012).

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less- than Significant Impact	No Impact

3.4.14 - POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the Project:

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

Discussion

Impact #3.4.14a – Would the Project induce substantial population unplanned growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

According to the 2020 Decennial Census conducted by the United States Census Bureau, the total population of the City of Visalia is 141,384 people, and the average household size is 3.02 (United States Census Bureau, 2022). The Project's density is 5.72 units per gross acre (on a 95-acre site), which would result in the construction of 544 residential units with approximately 1,642 residents. The General Plan assumes an average annual growth rate of 2.6 percent, with an average residential density going forward of 5.3 units per gross acre.

The Project would generate approximately 1.1 percent growth within Visalia. However, that percentage applies to the construction of the entire Project, which will not be developed all at once, but in two phases consisting of 247 units for Phase 1 and 297 units for Phase 2. Phase 2 is within the General Plan's Tier 3. The development of Tier 3 land designated for residential uses will be permitted (opened) after the City has issued building permits for 12,8000 housing units, resulting in a target population of 178,000. Using 2.6 percent annual growth, it is estimated that the City of Visalia will reach the Tier 3 development threshold of 178,000 residents in 2029. Thus, the Project is limited in the number of units constructed and will not induce substantial unplanned population growth.

In addition, it is likely some portion of the 1,642 people may already reside in Visalia or the surrounding communities, thereby reducing the overall impact on the population the Project may generate. The Project would not include upsizing of offsite infrastructure or roadways. This is a less-than-significant impact.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.14b – Would the Project displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

The surrounding parcels are mostly undeveloped with residential uses south and the St. Johns River to the north of the Project. The properties to the east and west are undeveloped agricultural land. The General Plan's existing land use designations for the Project site are Residential – Very Low, Low, and Medium Density and Parks/Recreation. The proposed General Plan Amendment eliminates the Residential Very Low Density designation and increases the acreage of the Low and Medium designations.

Construction of the Project would likely be completed by construction workers residing in the City or the surrounding area; they would not require new housing. The Project will not result in the displacement of any persons as there are no residential units on the Project site. As such, no impact associated with the displacement of housing or people would occur. In conclusion, with the implementation of the Project, the Project will not result in any population and housing impacts.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have *no impact*.

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact

3.4.15 - PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the Project:

a.	Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or to other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
	i. Fire protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
	ii. Police protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
	iii. Schools?	☐	☐	☒	☐
	iv. Parks?	☐	☐	☒	☐
	v. Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

Impact #3.4.15a(i) – Would the Project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or to other performance objectives for any of the public services - Fire Protection?

The nearest City of Visalia Fire Department is located two miles southeast of the Project site.

Prior to the recordation of the proposed subdivision maps, the developer will be required to pay development impact fees. A portion of those funds will be specifically earmarked for the use of the Fire Department to maintain an adequate level of service within its service boundary. The entire Project, whether submitted in phases or not, will be subject to review by the City of Visalia Engineering, Public Works, and Fire Department in order to determine whether the Projects infrastructure design is in compliance with City policies for development. The Project's water system will be reviewed to verify that the system can supply the required fire flow for fire protection purposes. The establishment of gallons-per-

minute requirements for fire flow shall be based on the review of the City of Visalia Fire Department.

Development of the Project will increase the need for fire protection services and expand the service area and response times of the local City Fire Department. As previously mentioned, the Project will be required to adhere to any conditions/policies pertaining to the construction of infrastructure needed for the Visalia Fire Department to provide an adequate level of fire protection service.

According to the General Plan and the standard review procedures for development projects within the City of Visalia, the Project's plans and permits will be reviewed for input from the Fire Department. The Project's proposed construction would be located adjacent to existing residential areas, which the City Fire Department already serves. The developer will be required to pay development impact fees to offset the growth in population in the area that would impact fire protection. Impacts would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.15a(ii) – Would the Project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or to other performance objectives for any of the public services – Police Protection?

The Visalia Police Department (VPD) provides police protection in the City of Visalia and collaborates with other law enforcement agencies and the District Attorney's office on crime prevention. The City has approximately 143 sworn officers working out of two districts. The Project site is located approximately two miles northwest of the nearest City of Visalia Police Station - District 1. This station serves northern Visalia. The Project is proposing development in an area that is adjacent to residential development and undeveloped agricultural land. The Project proposes additional residential development in a previously undeveloped location, which will increase the need for police services. However, the Project will pay appropriate development fees based on the adopted fee calculations and is responsible for constructing any infrastructure needed to serve the Project. Impacts would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.15a(iii) – Would the Project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or to other performance objectives for any of the public services – Schools?

The Visalia Unified School District provides education services from kindergarten through 12th grade in the Planning Area. The nearest school is the Shannon Ranch Elementary School, approximately 500 feet southeast of the Project site. The increased population generated by the Project will increase the potential number of students attending schools within the jurisdiction of the Visalia Unified School District.

The increased population generated by the proposed Project would increase the number of students attending local schools and could result in significant impacts to these facilities by requiring new facilities. The developer will be required to pay the appropriate school impact fees in order to receive building permits. According to Government Code Section 65996, the development fees authorized by SB 50 are deemed "full and complete school facilities mitigation." School districts would utilize the General Plan and codes to establish new school sites and make decisions on school amenities and facility size. The development will be subject to school impact fees to mitigate any increased impacts on school facilities.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.15a(iv) – Would the Project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or to other performance objectives for any of the public services – Parks?

The City maintains several types of parks and facilities. Almost all parkland described here is owned by the City or another public body and used for public recreational purposes, though some small parks are maintained by local landscaping and lighting districts.

Visalia classifies parks and public open space into five general categories. Facilities at each park type vary according to size. Park sizes within the City of Visalia include Pocket Park, Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Large City Park, and Natural Corridors and Greenways. As mentioned in previous sections, the Project is proposing a centralized public

park, private green space, and a public dog park in the southeast portion of the Project site, all connected through a trail and landscape system. The approximate one-acre public park has been designed to serve the immediate community. The dog park will serve a larger area due to the lack of availability of dog parks within the northern portion of the City.

A park's development impact fee must be satisfied in order to issue building permits. Each developer will be required to either pay this fee and/or development or dedicate parkland as a part of their proposed project. The developer of the Pratt Family Ranch Project will be subject to dedicating the park and/or paying the park impact fee. The final determination will be made by the City of Visalia.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.15a(v) – Would the Project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or to other performance objectives for any of the public services – Other Public Facilities?

Community facilities are the network of public and private institutions that support the civic and social needs of the population. They offer a variety of recreational, artistic, and educational programs and special events. The City also provides animal control services, refuse pick-up (via an agreement with Tulare County Resource Management Agency and Consolidated Waste Management Authority), and drainage management (City of Visalia, 2014b). These services receive funds allocated through the General Fund, usage fees, penalties, or impact fees.

The City collects planning and building fees and impact fees for new development. Since the demand for other public facilities is driven by population/development, the Project would be required to pay fees to offset the demand for that service to ensure an adequate level of service. Therefore, the impact will be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less–than-Significant Impact	No Impact

3.4.16 - RECREATION

Would the Project:

a.	Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b.	Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion

Impact #3.4.16a – Would the Project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

See Impact #3.4.15a(iv) above.

Visalia classifies parks and public open space into five general categories. Facilities at each park type vary according to size. Park sizes within the City of Visalia include Pocket Park, Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Large City Park, and Natural Corridors and Greenways. Pocket parks and neighborhood parks are dispersed throughout City neighborhoods. The Riverway Sports Park is approximately 0.6 miles southeast of the Project site, and there are trails and open space running along the St. Johns River directly north of the Project.

The Project is proposing the development of a centralized pocket park and a dog park that will be available for the community/public. The City's General Plan defines an overall parkland standard of 7.6 acres per 1,000 residents; however, this total consists of separate standards for city parks, school sites, and private open space. The City has a ratio of five acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. However, pocket parks have not counted as meeting this ratio (City of Visalia, 2014b). The parkland being proposed as part of this Project is equal to the area designated by the City's General Plan; therefore, it is greater than the park dedication requirement outlined in the City's Municipal Code. Furthermore, with the dedication and development of park facilities within the Project site, the developer will be required to pay park development impact fees for the development and acquisition of parkland, community centers, recreational facilities, park amenities, and impact fee nexus studies.

Although the Project may impact City park facilities, the Project also proposes to develop park amenities that are greater than what is required by the City's development standards. In addition, the Project developer will pay the required park impact fees. Therefore, the Projects impacts to the neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.16b – Would the Project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

The Project proposes to construct and dedicate an approximate one-acre park and a dog park to be utilized by the immediate community and public. The Project does not propose the construction or expansion of any recreational facilities. There will be no impact.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have *no impact*.

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
3.4.17 - TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC					
Would the Project:					
a.	Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b.	Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, Subdivision (b)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c.	Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d.	Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

This discussion is based on the Traffic Impact Study prepared for the Project (VRPA Technologies, Inc, 2021b), which is attached as Appendix H.

Impact #3.4.17a – Would the Project conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

Transit Services

Visalia Transit (VT) is the transit operator in the City of Visalia. The closest is VT Route 16, which runs east/west along Riggin Avenue, then south of Demaree Street, located approximately 0.5 miles south of the Project site. VT operates several fixed routes that serve City residents, with some routes serving the outlying cities and communities. VT operates fixed route service seven days a week with operational hours Monday through Friday between 6:00 a.m. and 9:30 p.m., 9:00 a.m., and 6:30 p.m. on Saturdays, and between 8:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. on Sundays (City of Visalia, 2014a).

The Project is not expected to disrupt or impede existing transit facilities and therefore has a less-than-significant impact.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Visalia's flat topography and dry, moderate climate make choosing to walk or bicycle an attractive transportation option during much of the year. The City of Visalia Active Transportation Plan was adopted in March 2017 and is intended to guide bikeway policies, programs, and facility improvements to improve safety, comfort, and convenience for all bicyclists in the City of Visalia (City of Visalia, 2017).

Currently, no bike lanes exist in the vicinity of the Project site. However, the Project will propose a trail system interconnecting to the edges of the Project boundary to the interior park and dog park and any future bike paths located along Mooney Boulevard. The Project is not expected to disrupt or impede existing or planned bicycle facilities and will add to the citywide bike path network. Therefore, the Project will have a less-than-significant impact.

Pedestrian

Currently, walkways do not exist in the vicinity of the Project site along Pratt Road (future collector) that runs through the Project boundary. As a part of the intent of the Project, Pratt Road, Mooney Boulevard, Avenue 320 will be developed in order to provide pedestrian connectivity landscape easements, and sidewalks will encompass the Project and feed into the interior of the community, as well as connect to the nearby dog park. The Project proponent will be responsible for implementing all applicable requirements for updating sidewalks and other related infrastructure as directed by the City of Visalia. The Project will not generate any impacts.

Roadways

Vehicular access to the site would be provided from Pratt Road, Mooney Boulevard, and Avenue 320. The segment of Mooney Boulevard between Riverway Drive and Avenue 320 is identified as an 84-foot collector per current City standards. The Project proposes to build Mooney Boulevard to this standard and realign the roadway slightly to the east. In addition, the Project proposes to build a roundabout at the Mooney Boulevard/Riverway Drive intersection, which would be dedicated as a public right of way and would be constructed to Caltrans or City-approved standards.

Private gated driveways are proposed as a part of this Project and will require access from Pratt Road, Mooney Boulevard, and Avenue 320. To function properly, gated driveways need to have sufficient storage space to minimize queuing of vehicles that would extend into the roadway system. It was determined the implementation of gated driveways would not significantly impact the surrounding roadways due to the allocated space for queued vehicles, estimated processing time, and the design standard of the gated drive approaches (VRPA Technologies, Inc, 2021b).

The list below is a collection of street and highway intersections and segments that may be impacted by the Project and were analyzed.

- Avenue 320/Demaree Street

- Pratt Road/Demaree Street
- Riggin Avenue-Avenue 312/Demaree Street
- Riggin Avenue/County Center Drive
- Pratt Road/Mooney Boulevard
- Riverway Drive/Mooney Boulevard
- Shannon Parkway/Mooney Boulevard
- Riggin Avenue/Mooney Boulevard
- Shannon Parkway/Giddings Street
- Riggin Avenue/Giddings Street
- Riggin Avenue/Dinuba Boulevard-State Route (SR) 63
- Shannon Parkway/Demaree Avenue
- Riverway Drive/Demaree Avenue
- County Center Drive/Pratt Road
- County Center Drive/Shannon Parkway
- Ferguson Street/Mooney Boulevard
- Avenue 320/Mooney Boulevard
- County Center Drive/Avenue 320

The Project trip generation and design hour volumes shown in Table 3.4.17-1 were estimated using the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual, 10th Edition.

Table 3.4.17-1
Project Estimated Trips

Land Use	Quantity	Daily Trip Ends (ADT)		Weekday AM Peak Hour					Weekday PM Peak Hour				
		Rate	Volume	Rate	In:Out Split	In	Volume Out	Total	Rate	In:Out Split	In	Volume Out	Total
Single Family Residential (210)	555 D.U.	9.44	5,239	0.74	25.75	103	308	411	0.99	63.37	345	203	549
Total Trip Generation			**5,239**			**103**	**308**	**411**			**346**	**203**	**549**

. Trip ends are one-way traffic movements, entering or leaving. The numbers in parenthesis are ITE land use codes.

The City adopted a threshold of LOS D for street segments and intersections. Table 3.4.17-2 illustrates the intersections within the scope of the study and indicates the anticipated Level of Service (LOS) prior to and with the addition of Project traffic. In addition to the analysis of the Project, there are several other development projects within the Project's vicinity that will add additional trips to the study intersections and segments. The majority of these projects are southeast of the Project site, between Mooney Boulevard and Dinuba Boulevard, and south of Riverway Drive, some of which are adjacent to the impacted intersections.

Table 3.4.17-2
Intersection Operations

Intersection	Target LOS	Peak Hour	Opening Year Without Project		Opening Year Plus Project		5-Year Horizon Without Project		5-Year Horizon Plus Project		10-Year Horizon Without Project		10-Year Horizon Plus Project		20-Year Horizon Without Project		20-Year Horizon Plus Project	
			Delay	LOS	Delay	LOS	Delay	LOS	Delay	LOS	Delay	LOS	Delay	LOS	Delay	LOS	Delay	LOS
1.Avenue 320/Demaree Street	D	AM	11.4	B	11.5	B	11.9	B	12.0	B	17.0	C	17.0	C				
		PM	13.7	B	13.9	B	15.0	C	15.2	C	23.1	C	24.7	C				
2. Avenue 320/County Center Street (Future)	D	AM									8.6	A	8.8	A				
		PM									8.6	A	8.7	A				
3. Avenue 320/Mooney Boulevard (Future)	D	AM									0.0	A	0.0	A				
		PM									0.0	A	0.0	A				
4. Pratt Road/Demaree Street	D	AM	14.8	B	15.0	C	16.1	C	16.4	C	17.2	C	17.3	C				
		PM	14.9	B	15.4	C	16.1	C	16.7	C	17.1	C	17.3	C				
5. Pratt Road/County Center Street	D	AM	9.4	A	11.1	B	9.5	A	11.2	B	10.7	B	12.8	B				
		PM	9.9	A	11.3	B	10.0	B	11.5	B	11.1	B	13.7	B				
6. Pratt Road/Mooney Boulevard	D	AM	0.0	A	10.3	B	0.0	A	10.4	B	0.0	A	10.0	B				
		PM	0.0	A	11.0	B	0.0	A	11.2	B	0.0	A	10.7	B				
7. Riverway Drive/Demaree Street	D	AM	11.1	B	11.2	B	11.5	B	11.6	B	11.6	B	11.7	B				
		PM	11.0	B	11.4	B	11.5	B	11.9	B	11.6	B	12.0	B				
8. Riverway Drive/Mooney Boulevard	D	AM	7.5	A	4.2	A	7.5	A	4.3	A	7.5	A	4.2	A				
		PM	7.6	A	4.5	A	7.7	A	4.5	A	7.8	A	4.6	A				
9. Riggin Avenue/Dinuba Boulevard	D	AM	28.1	C	28.6	C	29.1	C	29.7	C	30.4	C	31.1	C	34.1	C	34.7	C
		PM	41.5	D	45.1	D	45.3	D	49.8	C	51.4	D	54.8	D	**81.3**	**F**	**84.6**	**F**
10. Shannon Parkway/Demaree Street	D	AM	17.9	C	17.9	C	20.8	C	20.8	C	24.1	C	24.1	C				
		PM	17.0	C	17.0	C	19.3	C	19.3	C	19.7	C	19.7	C				
11. Shannon Parkway/County Center Street	D	AM	5.2	A	5.7	A	5.5	A	6.0	A	4.8	A	5.1	A				
		PM	3.5	A	4.0	A	3.7	A	4.1	A	3.8	A	4.2	A				
12. Shannon Parkway/Mooney Boulevard	D	AM	3.6	A	4.7	A	3.7	A	4.8	A	3.7	A	4.9	A				
		PM	4.3	A	6.2	A	4.5	A	6.5	A	4.5	A	6.3	A				
13. Shannon Parkway/Gidding Street	D	AM	6.9	A	6.9	A	7.6	A	7.7	A	6.7	A	6.8	A				
		PM	4.2	A	4.3	A	4.4	A	4.4	A	4.4	A	4.4	A				
14. Riggin Avenue /Demaree Street	D	AM	34.8	C	36.6	D	36.3	D	38.3	D	36.8	D	38.8	D				
		PM	36.9	D	40.7	D	39.9	D	44.4	D	36.8	D	48.9	D				
15. Riggin Avenue/County Center Street	D	AM	**68.4**	**F++**	**92.0**	**F++**	**91.4**	**F++**	**121.3**	**F++**	**127.4**	**F++**	**158.7**	**F++**				
		PM	**101.3**	**F++**	**138.0**	**F++**	**138.4**	**F++**	**174.3**	**F++**	**155.6**	**F++**	**194.0**	**F++**				
16. Riggin Avenue/Mooney Boulevard	D	AM	32.6	C	35.3	D	32.9	C	35.9	D	33.4	C	36.5	D				
		PM	40.2	D	45.2	D	42.2	C	47.3	D	49.0	D	53.5	D				
17. Riggin Avenue/Gidding Street	D	AM	242.1	F++	289.9	F++	287.0	F++	336.9	F++	301.2	F++	348.4	F++				
		PM	**166.6**	**F++**	**212.9**	**F++**	**205.2**	**F++**	**253.2**	**F++**	**249.4**	**F++**	**299.7**	**F++**				
18. Ferguson Avenue/Mooney Boulevard	D	AM	13.8	B	16.1	C	15.1	C	17.9	C	15.5	C	18.2	C				
		PM	**80.2**	**F++**	**127.7**	**F++**	**109.7**	**F++**	**158.9**	**F++**	**146.7**	**F++**	**201.2**	**F++**				

As shown above, three of the study intersections (Riggin Avenue at County Center Street, Riggin Avenue at Giddings Street, and Ferguson Avenue at Mooney Boulevard) were found to exceed the City LOS threshold at the 10-year horizon, and one intersection (Riggin Avenue at Dinuba Boulevard (SR 63) will exceed LOS D at the 20-year horizon.

The Project will generate approximately 5,239 ADT and will cause, in addition to other nearby developments, significant LOS impacts relating to the generation of unacceptable LOS at three intersections. Mitigation will be required to alleviate the LOS impacts caused by the Project and other proposed development in the area. Mitigation Measure MM TRA-1 requires the Project developer to pay their pro-rata portion of the cost to signalize three intersections. Mitigation Measure MM TRA-2 requires payment of their pro-rata portion of the cost to add additional turn lanes to alleviate congestion at Riggin Avenue and Dinuba Boulevard. With the implementation of the MM TRA-1 and MM TRA-2, the impacts will be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

MM TRA-1: Prior to the issuance of building permits, the developer shall pay its pro-rata share for signalization of the following intersections:

a. Riggin Avenue at County Center Street
b. Riggin Avenue at Giddings Street
c. Ferguson Avenue at Mooney Boulevard

MM TRA-2: Prior to the issuance of building permits, the developer shall pay its pro-rata share to widen the eastbound approach to two left-turn lanes, two through-lanes, and one right-turn lane at the intersection of Riggin Avenue at Dinuba Boulevard (SR 63).

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a ***less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated***.

Impact #3.4.17b – Would the Project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, Subdivision (b)?

Under SB 743, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is a key measure used for gauging the environmental impacts of projects under CEQA.

An assessment of potential VMT impacts associated with the Project was analyzed in the TIS to address changes in CEQA requirements. The VMT analysis compared the Project's expected VMT/capita to regional averages. The Project's VMT impacts will be considered less than significant if the VMT per capita is 16 percent below regional averages (or lower). The Tulare Council of Governments (TCAG) regional travel demand model was used in this calculation. The results are as follows:

- Project VMT/capita: 8.4
- Regional VMT/capita: 11.7

The Project's VMT/capita is 28.2 percent less than the regional average. Therefore, the Project's VMT impacts are less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.17c – Would the Project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

The Project will be designed to meet current standards and safety regulations. All intersections will be constructed to comply with the City and Caltrans regulations, and design and safety standards of Chapter 33 of the California Building Codes (CBC) and the guidelines of Title 24 to create safe and accessible roadways.

Vehicles exiting the subdivision will be provided with a clear view of the roadway without obstructions. Landscaping associated with the entry driveways could impede such views if improperly installed. Specific circulation patterns and roadway designs will incorporate all applicable safety measures to ensure that hazardous design features or inadequate emergency access to the site or other areas surrounding the Project area would not occur.

Therefore, the Project will have a less-than-significant impact with the incorporated design features and all applicable rules and regulations.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.17d – Would the Project result in inadequate emergency access?

See the discussion in Impact #3.4.9f.

State and City Fire Codes establish standards by which emergency access may be determined. The proposed Project would have to provide adequate unobstructed space for fire trucks to turn around. The proposed Project site would have adequate internal circulation capacity, including entrance and exit routes to provide adequate unobstructed space for fire trucks and other emergency vehicles to gain access and to turn around. The proposed Project would not inhibit the ability of local roadways to continue to accommodate

emergency response and evacuation activities. Therefore, the Project would result in a less-than-significant impact associated with emergency access.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less–than-Significant Impact	No Impact

3.4.18 - TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the Project:

a. Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or	☐	☒	☐	☐
ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☐	☒	☐	☐

Discussion

Impact #3.4.18a(i) – Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k)?

See also Section 3.4.5, *Cultural Resources*.

Native American Tribal Consultation was completed for the Project in compliance with Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) and Senate Bill 18 (SB 18), CEQA, and the Public Resources Code.

A Sacred Land Files search was requested from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) to identify previously recorded sacred sites or cultural resources of special importance to tribes and provide contact information for local Native American representatives who may have information about the Project area. A response was received on May 26, 2020, indicating negative results that did not indicate the presence of any cultural places within the Project site and within a half-mile buffer around the Project site. The City of Visalia, as Lead Agency, sent consultation request letters pursuant to SB 18 and AB 52 to the tribal groups on the NAHC list.

The Lead Agency has not received information from a local tribal group indicating that the Project would impact tribal cultural resources. With the implementation of Mitigation Measures MM CUL-1 through MM CUL-3, ground disturbance generated during the construction of the Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource that is listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historic resources.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

Implementation of MM CUL-1 through MM CUL-3.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated*.

Impact #3.4.18a(ii) – Would the Project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is a resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?

See discussion in Section 3.4.5, *Cultural Resources* and Impact #3.41.18(i) above.

With the implementation of Mitigation Measures MM CUL-1 through MM CUL-3, the Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource that is a resource determined by the Lead Agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

Implementation of MM CUL-1 through MM CUL-3.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a ***less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated***.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
3.4.19 - UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS				
Would the Project:				
a. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which would cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the Project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the Project that it has adequate capacity to serve the Project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

Impact #3.4.19a – Would the Project require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which would cause significant environmental effects?

The Project proposes to construct new wet and dry utility infrastructure to connect to the existing City and private service provider infrastructure. Services that will be installed during the construction of the Project include water, wastewater, storm drain drainage connections, natural gas, electric power, and telecommunications facilities. The proper sizing and placement of the utilities will be designed per the City and other utility

development design standards. All proposed wet infrastructure will be connected to existing infrastructure already located within Mooney Boulevard right of way.

As noted in Impacts #3.4.10b and #3.4.10e, based on data regarding the availability of water at and near to the Project site, it was determined that the groundwater aquifer pumping history are sufficient for both Project construction and Project operation and that there will be sufficient water to serve project needs for 20 years under the water scenarios including multiple-dry year drought conditions (QK, 2022).

See Impact #3.4.10 for the discussion of wastewater disposal. The Project will not require the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities. Water usage for dust control during construction-related activities will be minimal due to the small footprint and short duration of construction-related activities of the proposed Project.

The proposed Project would be subject to the payment of any applicable connection charges and/or fees and extension of services in a manner that is compliant with the Visalia standards, specifications, and policies. All applicable local, State, and federal requirements and best management practices will be incorporated into the construction and operation of the Project.

As stated in previous sections, the Project will occur in Tier 2 and Tier 3 of the City's urban development boundaries and are allowed to develop consistent with the General Plan and policies allowing development within their particular tiers. The Project's impacts will be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.19b – Would the Project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the Project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years?

See Impacts #3.4.10b and #3.4.10e.

The groundwater supply is distributed by the California Water Service Company (Cal Water). Cal Water Visalia District supply wells extract groundwater from the Kaweah Groundwater Subbasin. The Cal Water system includes 75 operational groundwater wells, about one-third of which have auxiliary power for backup. There are 519 miles of main pipelined in the system, ranging from two inches in diameter to 12 inches in diameter. The Cal Water system includes two elevated 300,000-gallon storage tanks, an ion exchange treatment plant, four granular activated carbon filter plants, and one nitrate blending facility. In addition to the system serving the City of Visalia, Cal Water also operates three other small systems in the

Visalia area, defined as Oak Ranch (wells with distribution pipeline), Post Mitts (two wells with distribution pipeline), and Fairway (well with distribution pipeline). These systems are within Cal Water's Visalia District system but outside Visalia city limits (City of Visalia, 2014b).

The system serves an estimated population of 138,404, which could grow to 204,896 by 2030, according to the adopted 2015 UWMP. Cal Water estimated that it was serving 39,205 residential, commercial, and industrial customers in 2010, with expected growth to 61,956 customers (households and businesses) by 2030.

The California Water Resources has defined the Kaweah Subbasin as "critically overdrafted." Overdraft occurs when the average annual amount of groundwater extraction exceeds the long-term average annual supply of water to the basin. Native yield is defined as the groundwater supply, which is based on the natural, normal, unavoidable recharge that occurs within the basin. The KRGSA GSP estimates the native yield of the subbasin at 0.15 acre-ft/acre, which equates to approximately 4.32 acre-feet/year. This results in a shortfall of approximately 16.65 acre-feet/year for the proposed development, i.e. 20.97 acre-feet/year minus 4.32 acre-feet/year. However, the KRGSA is currently in balance and has not yet implemented any pumping restrictions.

It has been determined that the Project water supply is in accordance with SB 610's normal year/dry year/multiple dry year requirements. There is sufficient water available to support the Project, and impacts would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.19c – Would the Project result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the Project that it has adequate capacity to serve the Project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

The existing Waste Discharge Requirements placed on the City Water Conservation Plant (WCP) limit discharge to an average flow of 20 mgd and require that the ammonia concentration in the discharge be reduced to 0.025 mg/l by 2011. The certified EIR for the WCP analyzed impacts for average flow volumes of 22 mgd and 26 mgd (City of Visalia, 2014b).

With the proposed upgrades to the plant processing capabilities and the rerouting of the discharge stream away from Mill Creek, the WCP has sufficient capacity to process the expected flows from land use classifications noted in the proposed General Plan for the near future and would expand its treatment capacity as the need dictates. The projected sanitary sewer flows entering the WCP at the proposed General Plan buildout (25,034,050 gpd in

2030) is expected to be less than the volume previously anticipated for the SWMP (25,949,996 gpd in 2030), meaning further expansions could be delayed. In 2014, the WCP was upgraded to provide the ability to increase capacity to 26 mgd as demand increases. Additionally, mandated water conservation measures will likely cause reductions in average daily flows to the WCP. This will also help delay the need for future expansions of the Water Conservation Plant and give the City more flexibility in determining the types of development that are appropriate.

Expansion at the outer rings of the development boundaries will not cause significant impacts to the sewer system since the majority of the area was included in the WCP Solid Waste Master Plan. Thus, the inclusion of the Project's requirement to account for its impacts on the City's wastewater system and development impact fees will reduce the overall impact the Project may cause. The impact will be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.19d – Would the Project generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?

The Tulare County Resource Management Agency manages solid waste disposal in accordance with the Tulare County Integrated Waste Management Plan. The County landfills accumulate approximately 300,000 tons of waste per year, which is equivalent to about five pounds per person per day or one ton per County resident per year. The County operates three disposal sites: the Visalia Disposal Site, northwest of Visalia; the Woodville Disposal Site, southeast of Tulare; and the Teapot Dome Disposal Site, southwest of Porterville (City of Visalia, 2014b). The City operates its own solid waste disposal fleet.

The California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery's Solid Waste Information System (SWIS) manages information regarding the operations and disposal of all solid waste sites throughout California. According to the SWIS database, the Teapot and Visalia Landfills are operationally active. However, the Woodville landfill is operationally inactive (California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, 2022). The City will require the appropriate solid waste receptacles (compliance with the California Solid Waste Reuse and Recycling Access Act of 1991) to be provided to the Project. In addition, the Project will be required to pay solid waste development impact fees, thus reducing the perceived impact the Project may generate. The impact will be less than significant.

The Project does not and would not conflict with federal, State, or local regulations related to solid waste. The proposed Project would be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted

capacity to accommodate the Project's solid waste disposal needs in compliance with federal, State, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Therefore, the Project would have a less-than-significant impact.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a ***less-than-significant impact***.

Impact #3.4.19e – Would the Project comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

See Impact #3.4.19d.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a ***less-than-significant impact***.

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
3.4.20 - WILDFIRE				
Would the Project:				
a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose Project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion

Impact #3.4.20a – Would the Project substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

See Impact #3.4.9f regarding emergency response.

The Project is located on the edge of an urbanized area to the south, and rural agriculture to the east, west and north. Access for emergency vehicles to the site would be maintained throughout the construction period. The Project would not interfere with any local or regional emergency response or evacuation plans and would not result in a substantial alteration to the adjacent and area circulation system. The City has established emergency response and evacuation plans based on the Visalia Emergency Operations Plan. Impacts related to fire hazards and emergency response plans would be less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.20b – Would the Project due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose Project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

The potential for fire hazard is largely dependent on the extent and type of vegetation, known as surface fuels, that exists within the region. Fire hazard probability is typically highest in undeveloped, heavily wooded areas, as trees are a greater source of fuel rather than low-lying brush or grassland (City of Visalia, 2014b).

The City General Plan indicates that a few very small portions of the City are classified by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) as having moderate fire hazards. In general, the threat of wildland fires in Visalia is minimal because of the area's flat topography and the relative absence of forests, grassland, and brush. In addition, the CDF designates the Project site as non-wildland/non-urban and adjacent to the urban unzoned area.

In addition, the City requires that any construction comply with the Uniform Fire Code provisions and is subject to review and approval by the City's Fire Department. Therefore, the impacts related to the Project are considered less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.20c – Would the Project require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?

See discussion in Impact #3.4.20a-b.

The Project proposes to construct 544 single-family residences and includes the development of infrastructure (water, sewer, electrical power lines, and storm drainage) required to support the proposed residential uses. The Project site is surrounded by existing and future urban development.

The Project would require installing or maintaining additional electrical distribution lines and natural gas lines to connect the residences to the existing utility grid. However, the Project would be constructed in accordance with all local, State, and federal regulations

regarding power lines and other related infrastructure, as well as fire suppression requirements. The design of all proposed utilities will be subject to the review and approval of the City. This will ensure the viability of the utility infrastructure's ability for fire protection and suppression activities. Therefore, impacts for the Project would be considered as less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

Impact #3.4.20d – Would the Project expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

The General Plan characterizes the City as being relatively flat with little topographic variation. The Project is in close proximity to the St. Johns River, north of the Project site. The surrounding land adjacent to the Project site is similarly flat, undeveloped agricultural land with the exception of the developed subdivision to the south.

Portions of the Project site are located in both the A Hazard Zone (100-year flood zone) and X Flood Hazard Zone (500-year flood zone) as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and are further surrounded by properties that are identified as an Area of Minimal Flood Hazard. The Project will be required to provide additional fill to the site to raise the elevation to construct residences that will not be affected by the potential 1 percent or 0.2 percent Annual Chance of Flood. Coordination and approval of a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR-F) through FEMA are required as a part of this Project (Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2022). Subject to the approval from FEMA, this Project's impacts will be considered less than significant.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

No mitigation is required.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Project would have a *less-than-significant impact*.

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
3.4.21 - MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE					
a.	Does the Project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b.	Does the Project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a Project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past Projects, the effects of other current Projects, and the effects of probable future Projects.)	☐	☒	☐	☐
c.	Does the Project have environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Discussion

Impact #3.4.21a – Does the Project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

As evaluated in this IS/MND, the Project would not substantially degrade the quality of the environment; substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species; cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels; threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community; reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species; or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory including paleontological resources. Mitigation measures have been

included to reduce the significance of potential impacts. Similar mitigation measures would be expected of other projects in the surrounding area, most of which share similar cultural, paleontological, and biological resources. Consequently, after mitigation, the incremental effects of the proposed Project would not contribute to a cumulative adverse impact on these resources. Therefore, the Project would have a less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

Implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-7, CUL-1, through CUL-3.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

Impacts would be *less than significant with mitigation incorporated*.

Impact #3.4.21b - Does the Project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a Project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past Projects, the effects of other current Projects, and the effects of probable future Projects.)?

As described in the impact analyses in sections of this IS/MND, any potentially significant impacts of the Project would be reduced to a less-than-significant level following incorporation of the mitigation measures listed in Appendix A – Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program. All planned projects in the vicinity of the Project would be subject to review in separate environmental documents and required to conform to the 2030 City of Visalia General Plan and the Visalia Municipal Code. The Project would also be required to mitigate for Project-specific impacts and provide appropriate engineering to ensure the Project meets all applicable federal, State, and local regulations and codes. As currently designed and with compliance with the recommended mitigation measures, the proposed Project would not be cumulative. Thus, the cumulative impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects would be less than cumulatively considerable.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

Implementation of Mitigation Measures AG-1 BIO-1 through BIO-7, CUL-1 through CUL-3, GEO-1, GEO-2, NSE-1, TRA-1, and TRA-2.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

Impacts would be *less than significant with mitigation incorporated*.

Impact #3.4.21c - Does the Project have environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

The ways in which people can be subject to substantial adverse effects from projects include potential exposure to significant levels of local air pollutants; potential exposure to seismic and flooding hazards; potential exposure to hazardous materials; potential exposure to

contamination from hazardous materials; potential exposure to traffic hazards; and potential exposure to excessive noise levels. The risks from these potential hazards would be avoided or reduced to less-than-significant levels through compliance with existing laws, regulations, or requirements. All of the Project's impacts, both direct and indirect that are attributable to the Project were identified and mitigated to a less-than-significant level. As shown in the *Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program*, the Project proponent has agreed to implement mitigation substantially reducing or eliminating impacts of the Project.

Therefore, the Project would not either directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects on human beings because all potentially adverse direct impacts of the proposed Project are identified as having no impact, less-than-significant impact, or less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

Implementation of Mitigation Measures AG-1, BIO-1 through BIO-7, CUL-1 through CUL-3, GEO-1, GEO-2, NSE-1, TRA-1, and TRA-2.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

Impacts would be ***less than significant with mitigation incorporated.***

SECTION 4 - LIST OF PREPARERS

4.1 - Lead Agency

- Paul Bernal – Community Development Director

4.2 - QK Inc.

- Jaymie Brauer – Principal Planner
- Ethan Davis – Associate Planner
- Trevor Stearns – Associate Planner

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APPENDIX A

MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

Mitigation Measure	Timeframe	Responsible Monitoring Agency	Date	Initial
AG - 1: Prior to the issuance of grading or building permits, the Project proponent shall mitigate impacts for loss of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance on the Project site at a 1:1 ratio. The Project proponent shall implement one or more of the following measures to mitigate the loss: Payment of In-Lieu Fees, Mitigation Banks, Fee Title Acquisition, Conservation Easements, and/or Land Use Regulation on land(s)within the Southern San Joaquin Valley of California, specifically within Kern County, Tulare County, Kings County, Fresno County, or Madera County. The City shall require, at a minimum: evidence that the preserved land has adequate water supply, agricultural zoning, evidence of land encumbrance documentation, documentation that the easement/regulations are permanent and monitored, and documentation that the mitigation strategy is appropriately endowed. This mitigation shall be verified by the City prior to issuance of grading or building permits. Should the City of Visalia develop an Agricultural Mitigation Program before future construction within the Project begins, the Project proponent shall mitigate for the loss of agricultural land pursuant to the Program that is adopted by the City.	Prior to grading or building permits	**Lead Agency**		
MM BIO-1: Within 14 days of the start of Project activities, a pre-activity survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist knowledgeable in the identification of these species. The pre-activity survey shall include walking transects to identify the presence of burrowing owls and their burrows and American	Prior to construction	**Lead Agency**		

Mitigation Measure	Timeframe	Responsible Monitoring Agency	Date	Initial
badgers, and San Joaquin kit foxes and their dens. The transects shall be spaced at no greater than 30-foot intervals in order to obtain 100 percent coverage of the Project site and a 250-foot buffer. Areas devoid of habitat incapable of supporting these species would not require surveys. If no evidence of these special-status species is detected, no further action is required.				
MM BIO-2: If dens or burrows that could support these species are discovered during the pre-activity survey conducted under Measure BIO-1, avoidance buffers outlined below shall be established. No work shall occur within these buffers unless a qualified biologist approves and monitors the activity. Burrowing Owl (active burrows) • Non-breeding season: September 1 – January 31 – 160 feet • Breeding season: February 1 – August 31 – 250 feet American Badger and San Joaquin Kit Fox • Potential or Atypical den – 50 feet • Known den – 100 feet • Natal or pupping den – Contact agencies for further guidance Any Ecological Sensitive Area (ESA) buffer established shall remain in place until the species has left on its own. Once the species has left, the burrow may be monitored using trail cameras	Prior to construction	**Lead Agency**		

Mitigation Measure	Timeframe	Responsible Monitoring Agency	Date	Initial
or a tracking medium such as diatomaceous earth once the species has left. If no species are detected for a minimum of three consecutive days/nights, the burrow may be hand excavated under the direct supervision of a qualified biologist. All burrow tunnels must be hand excavated to their terminus or examined before backfilling to ensure no burrowing owls, kit foxes, or other animals are hiding. Alternatively, burrowing owls can be passively excluded from a non-nest burrow through the installation of one-way doors. Prior to engaging in such passive exclusion activities, an Exclusion Plan shall be prepared following the guidance outlined in the CDFW's Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (QK, 2021). The Exclusion Plan shall be submitted to the CDFW for review and approval prior to implementation. Once approved, one-way doors may be installed at non-nest burrows. The doors shall be monitored for a minimum of three days to ensure burrowing owls have left the burrow. The burrow may then be excavated as described above. If at any time during excavation a burrowing owl is detected within the burrow, excavation activities shall immediately cease, and the one-way door reinstalled and monitored until the owl has left the burrow. Hand excavation may then resume. Exclusion efforts shall be documented.				
MM BIO-3: The following avoidance and minimization measures shall be implemented during all phases of the Project to reduce the potential for impact from the Project. They are modified from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Standardized Recommendations	Prior to construction	**Lead Agency**		

Mitigation Measure	Timeframe	Responsible Monitoring Agency	Date	Initial
for Protection of the Endangered San Joaquin Kit Fox Prior to or During Ground Disturbance (QK, 2021). • Project-related vehicles shall observe a daytime speed limit of 20 mph throughout the site in all Project areas, except on County roads and State and federal highways. • All Project activities shall occur during daylight hours, but if work must be conducted at night, then a night-time construction speed limit of 10 mph shall be established. • Off-road traffic outside of designated Project areas shall be prohibited. • To prevent inadvertent entrapment of kit foxes or other animals during the construction of the Project, all excavated, steep-walled holes or trenches more than two feet deep shall be covered at the close of each working day by plywood or similar materials. If the trenches cannot be closed, one or more escape ramps constructed of earthen fill or wooden planks shall be installed. • Before holes or trenches are filled, they shall be thoroughly inspected for trapped animals. If at any time a trapped or injured kit fox is discovered, the USFWS and the CDFW shall be contacted before proceeding with the work. • In the case of trapped animals, escape ramps or structures shall be installed immediately to allow the animal(s) to escape, or the USFWS and CDFW shall be contacted for guidance. • All construction pipes, culverts, or similar structures with a diameter of four inches or greater that are stored at a construction site for one or more overnight periods shall be thoroughly inspected for kit foxes and burrowing owls				

Mitigation Measure	Timeframe	Responsible Monitoring Agency	Date	Initial
before the pipe is subsequently buried, capped, or otherwise used or moved in any way. If a kit fox is discovered inside a pipe, that section of pipe shall not be moved until the USFWS has been consulted. If necessary, and under the direct supervision of the biologist, the pipe may be moved only once to remove it from the path of construction activity until the fox has escaped. • All food-related trash items such as wrappers, cans, bottles, and food scraps shall be disposed of in securely closed containers and removed at least once a week from a construction or Project site. • No pets, such as dogs or cats, shall be permitted on the Project site. • Project-related use of rodenticides and herbicides shall be restricted. • A representative shall be appointed by the Project proponent, who will be the contact source for any employee or contractor who might inadvertently kill or injure a kit fox or who finds a dead, injured, or entrapped kit fox. The representative shall be identified during the employee education program, and their name and telephone numbers shall be provided to the USFWS and CDFW. • Upon completion of the Project, all areas subject to temporary ground disturbances (including storage and staging areas, temporary roads, pipeline corridors, etc.) shall be recontoured if necessary and revegetated to promote restoration of the area to pre-Project conditions. An area subject to "temporary" disturbance means any				

Mitigation Measure	Timeframe	Responsible Monitoring Agency	Date	Initial
area that is disturbed during the Project, but after Project completion, will not be subject to further disturbance and has the potential to be revegetated. • Any Project personnel who are responsible for inadvertently killing or injuring one of these species shall immediately report the incident to their representative. This representative shall contact the CDFW (and USFWS in the case of San Joaquin kit fox) immediately in the case of a dead, injured, or entrapped San Joaquin kit fox, American badger, or burrowing owl. • The Sacramento Fish and Wildlife office and CDFW Region 4 office shall be notified in writing within three working days of the accidental death or injury to a San Joaquin kit fox during Project-related activities. The CDFW shall be notified in the case of accidental death to an American badger or western burrowing owl. Notification must include the date, time, and location of the incident or of the finding of a dead or injured animal and any other pertinent information. • New sightings of San Joaquin kit fox, American badger, or burrowing owl shall be reported to the CNDDB. A copy of the reporting form and a topographic map clearly marked with the location of where a San Joaquin kit fox was observed shall also be provided to the USFWS.				
MM BIO-4: If Project activities must occur during the nesting season (February 15 to August 31), pre-activity surveys shall be conducted for Swainson's hawk nests in accordance with the Recommended Timing and Methodology for Swainson's Hawk Nesting Surveys in California's Central Valley, Swainson's Hawk	Prior to construction	**Lead Agency**		

Mitigation Measure	Timeframe	Responsible Monitoring Agency	Date	Initial
Technical Advisory Committee (QK, 2021). The surveys shall be conducted on the Project site plus a 0.5-mile buffer. To meet the minimum level of protection for the species, surveys shall be conducted during at least two survey periods. If no Swainson's hawk nests are found, no further action is required.				
MM BIO-5: If an active Swainson's hawk nest is discovered at any time within 0.5 miles of active construction, a qualified biologist shall complete an assessment of the potential for current construction activities to impact the nest. The assessment would consider the type of construction activities, the location of construction relative to the nest, the visibility of construction activities from the nest location, and other existing disturbances in the area that are not related to the construction activities of this Project. Based on this assessment, the biologist will determine if construction activities can proceed and the level of nest monitoring required. Construction activities shall not occur within 500 feet of an active nest but depending upon conditions at the site, this distance may be reduced. Full-time monitoring to evaluate the effects of construction activities on nesting Swainson's hawks may be required. The qualified biologist shall have the authority to stop work if it is determined that Project construction is disturbing the nest. These buffers may need to increase depending on the sensitivity of the nesting Swainson's hawk to disturbances and at the discretion of the qualified biologist.	Prior to construction	**Lead Agency**		

Mitigation Measure	Timeframe	Responsible Monitoring Agency	Date	Initial
MM BIO-6: If Project activities must occur during the nesting season (February 1 to September 15), pre-activity nesting bird surveys shall be conducted within seven days prior to the start of construction at the construction site, plus a 250-foot buffer for songbirds and a 500-foot buffer for raptors (other than Swainson's hawk). If no active nests are found, no further action is required. However, existing nests may become active, and new nests may be built at any time prior to and throughout the nesting season, including when construction activities are in progress. If active nests are found during the survey or at any time during the construction of the Project, an avoidance buffer ranging from 50 feet to 500 feet may be required, with the avoidance buffer from any specific nest being determined by a qualified biologist. The avoidance buffer shall remain in place until the biologist has determined that the young are no longer reliant on the adults or the nest. Work may occur within the avoidance buffer under the approval and guidance of the biologist, but full-time monitoring may be required. The biologist shall have the ability to stop construction if nesting adults show any sign of distress.	Prior to construction	**Lead Agency**		
MM BIO-7: Prior to the initiation of construction activities, all personnel shall attend a Worker Environmental Awareness Training program developed by a qualified biologist. The program shall include information on the life histories of special-status species with the potential to occur on the Project, their legal status, the course of action shall these species be encountered onsite, and avoidance and minimization measures to protect these species.	Prior to construction	**Lead Agency**		

Mitigation Measure	Timeframe	Responsible Monitoring Agency	Date	Initial
MM CUL-1: If prehistoric or historic-era cultural materials are encountered during construction activities, all work in the immediate vicinity of the find shall halt until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the find and make recommendations. If the qualified archaeologist determines that the discovery represents a potentially significant cultural resource, additional investigations may be required to mitigate adverse impacts from Project implementation. These additional studies may include avoidance, testing, and evaluation or data recovery excavation. Cultural resource materials may include prehistoric resources such as flaked and ground stone tools and debris, shell, bone, ceramics, fire-affected rock, and historic resources such as glass, metal, wood, brick, or structural remnants. Implementation of the mitigation measure below would ensure that the proposed Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.	During construction	**Lead Agency**		
MM CUL-2: Prior to any ground disturbance, if the City of Visalia receives a request from a Native American tribal group, a surface inspection of the site shall be conducted by a tribal monitor. The tribal staff shall provide pre-project-related activities briefings to supervisory personnel and any excavation contractor, including information on potential cultural material, finds, and any excavation contractor, which will include information on potential cultural material finds, and the procedures to be enacted if resources are found. The tribal cultural staff shall monitor the site during grading activities. Prior to any ground disturbance, the applicant shall offer the tribe the opportunity to provide a Native American Monitor during	Prior to construction	Lead Agency		

Mitigation Measure	Timeframe	Responsible Monitoring Agency	Date	Initial
ground-disturbing activities. Tribal participation would be dependent upon the availability and interest of the tribe.				
MM CUL-3: If human remains are discovered during construction or operational activities, further excavation or disturbance shall be prohibited pursuant to Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code. The specific protocol, guidelines, and channels of communication outlined by the Native American Heritage Commission, in accordance with Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code, Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code (Chapter 1492, Statutes of 1982, Senate Bill 297), and Senate Bill 447 (Chapter 44, Statutes of 1987), shall be followed. Section 7050.5(c) shall guide the potential Native American involvement, in the event of the discovery of human remains, at the direction of the county coroner.	During construction			
MM GEO-1: Prior to issuing of grading or building permits, if required, the Project applicant shall submit to the Lead Agency (1) the approved Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and (2) the Notice of Intent (NOI) to comply with the General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. The requirements of the SWPPP and NPDES shall be incorporated into design specifications and construction contracts. Recommended best management practices for the construction phase may include the following: • Stockpiling and disposing of demolition debris, concrete, and soil properly.	Prior to construction	Lead Agency		

Mitigation Measure	Timeframe	Responsible Monitoring Agency	Date	Initial
• Protecting existing storm drain inlets and stabilizing disturbed areas. • Implementing erosion controls. • Properly managing construction materials. • Managing waste, aggressively controlling litter, and implementing sediment controls. Evidence of the approved SWPPP shall be submitted to the Lead Agency.				
MM GEO-2: Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, the Project owner shall develop and implement a Paleontological Worker Education and Awareness Program. If paleontological resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities (e.g., during Project construction or decommissioning), all earthwork or other types of ground disturbance within 50 feet of the find shall stop immediately until a qualified professional paleontologist (meeting the standards of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology [SVP]) can assess the nature and importance of the find. Based on the scientific value or uniqueness of the find, the paleontologist may record the find and allow work to continue or recommend salvage and recovery of the fossil. The paleontologist may also propose modifications to the stop-work radius based on the nature of the find, site geology, and the activities occurring on the site. If treatment and salvage are required, recommendations will be consistent with the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology standards that are current as of the discovery and with currently accepted scientific practice.	Prior to construction	**Lead Agency**		

Mitigation Measure	Timeframe	Responsible Monitoring Agency	Date	Initial
MM NSE-1: During construction, the contractor shall implement the following measures: a. All stationary construction equipment on the Project site shall be located so that noise-emitting objects or equipment face away from any potential sensitive receptors. b. The construction contractor shall ensure that all construction equipment is equipped with manufacturer-approved mufflers and baffles. During construction, stationary construction equipment shall be placed such that emitted noise is directed away from sensitive noise receivers. c. Construction activities shall take place during daylight hours, when feasible.	During Construction	Lead Agency		
MM TRA-1: Prior to the issuance of building permits, the developer shall pay its pro-rata share for signalization of the following intersections: a. Riggin Avenue at County Center Street b. Riggin Avenue at Giddings Street c. Ferguson Avenue at Mooney Boulevard	Prior to Building Permits	Lead Agency		
MM TRA-2: Prior to the issuance of building permits, the developer shall pay its pro-rata share to widen the eastbound approach to two left-turn lanes, two through-lanes, and one right-turn lane at the intersection of Riggin Avenue at Dinuba Boulevard (SR 63).	Prior to Building Permits	Lead Agency		