California Environmental Quality Act

Draft Environmental Impact Report

(State Clearinghouse No. 2020039018)

First Responders Campus Project

Fresno, California

Lead Agency and Project Sponsor:

State Center Community College District

July 2021

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act, California Resources Code, Division 13, Environmental Quality
"CEQA Guidelines" or "State CEQA Guidelines"	Title 14. California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3: Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act
"City"	City of Fresno
"City of Fresno General Plan"	*Fresno General Plan* (December 5, 2014)
"City of Fresno General Plan MEIR"	*Master Environmental Impact Report, General Plan and Development Code Update, City of Fresno, Fresno County, California* (December 5, 2014)
"County"	County of Fresno
"Draft EIR"	Draft Environmental Impact Report for the First Responders Campus Project (This document.)
"Final EIR"	Final Environmental Impact Report for the First Responders Campus Project (The Final EIR will include this Draft EIR document and additional information the State CEQA Guidelines requires for Final EIRs.)
FMFCD	Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District
"Fresno County General Plan"	*Fresno County General Plan Policy Document* (October 3, 2000)
LAFCo	Fresno Local Agency Formation Commission
MM	Mitigation Measure
NOC	Notice of Completion
NOD	Notice of Determination
NOP	Notice of Preparation
"Project"	SCCCD First Responders Campus Project (The subject of this EIR)
SCCCD	State Center Community College District
SJVAPCD	San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
SOI	Sphere of Influence (In this context, the City of Fresno's Sphere of Influence)

California Environmental Quality Act Definitions

The following terms from the State CEQA Guidelines are used in this EIR:

15352 APPROVAL

"Approval" means the decision by a public agency which commits the agency to a definite course of action in regard to a project intended to be carried out by any person. The exact date of approval of any project is a matter determined by each public agency according to its rules, regulations, and ordinances. Legislative action in regard to a project often constitutes approval.

15355 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

"Cumulative impacts" refers to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.

15358 EFFECTS

"Effects" and "impacts" as used in these Guidelines are synonymous.

(a) Effects include:

(1) Direct or primary effects which are caused by the project and occur at the same time and place.

(2) Indirect or secondary effects which are caused by the project and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect or secondary effects may include growth-inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density, or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.

(b) Effects analyzed under CEQA must be related to a physical change.

15360 ENVIRONMENT

"Environment" means the physical conditions which exist within the area which will be affected by a proposed project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historical or aesthetic significance. The area involved shall be the area in which significant effects would occur either directly or indirectly as a result of the project. The "environment" includes both natural and man-made conditions.

15362 EIR or ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

"EIR" or "Environmental Impact Report" means a detailed statement prepared under CEQA describing and analyzing the significant environmental effects of a project and discussing ways to mitigate or avoid the effects. The contents of an EIR are discussed in Article 9, commencing with Section 15120 of these Guidelines. The term "EIR" may mean either a draft or a final EIR depending on the context.

15364 FEASIBLE

"Feasible" means capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors.

15367 LEAD AGENCY

"Lead Agency" means the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project.

15370 MITIGATION

"Mitigation" includes:

(a) Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.

(b) Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation.

(c) Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the impacted environment.

(d) Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action.

(e) Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments, including through permanent protection of such resources in the form of conservation easements.

15372 NOTICE OF COMPLETION

"Notice of Completion" means a brief notice filed with the Office of Planning and Research by a Lead Agency as soon as it has completed a draft EIR and is prepared to send out copies for review.

15373 NOTICE OF DETERMINATION

"Notice of Determination" means a brief notice to be filed by a public agency after it approves or determines to carry out a project which is subject to the requirements of CEQA.

15375 NOTICE OF PREPARATION

"Notice of Preparation" means a brief notice sent by a Lead Agency to notify the Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, the Office of Planning and Research, and involved federal agencies that the Lead Agency plans to prepare an EIR for the project. The purpose of the notice is to solicit guidance from those agencies as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR.

15161 PROJECT EIR

A "Project EIR" examines the environmental impacts of a specific development project. This type of EIR should focus primarily on the changes in the environment that would result from a development project. The EIR shall examine all phases of a project including planning, construction, and operation.

15378 PROJECT

"Project" means the whole of an action, which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, and that is any of the following:

(1) An activity directly undertaken by any public agency including but not limited to public works construction and related activities clearing or grading of land, improvements to existing public structures, enactment and amendment of zoning ordinances, and the adoption and amendment of local General Plans or elements thereof pursuant to Government Code Sections 65100–65700.

(2) An activity undertaken by a person which is supported in whole or in part through public agency contacts, grants, subsidies, loans, or other forms of assistance from one or more public agencies.

(3) An activity involving the issuance to a person of a lease, permit, license, certificate, or other entitlement for use by one or more public agencies.

15382 SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

"Significant 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. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment. A social or economic change related to a physical change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.

Summary

This Draft Environmental Impact Report ("EIR" or "Draft EIR") has been prepared on behalf of State Center Community College District ("SCCCD" or "the District") for its proposed First Responders Campus Project ("project"). The District must prepare an EIR to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") and the State CEQA Guidelines ("CEQA Guidelines"). The purpose of preparing this EIR is to inform SCCCD and the public of the significant environmental effects of the project identify possible ways to avoid the significant effects or reduce the impacts to a less than significant level.

The First Responders Campus Project includes the development and operation of new educational and administrative facilities to provide instruction and training for police, fire, corrections, EMT and paramedic programs at a single specialized campus. The project would encompass approximately 20.0 acres of a 39.21-acre parcel located at the northwest corner of Willow and North Avenues in Fresno County, approximately one-quarter mile southeast of the existing City of Fresno city limits. The project site is within the City of Fresno Sphere of Influence, and the scope of the project includes future annexation to the City of Fresno.

Facilities planned as part of the proposed campus include approximately 61,600 square feet of academic building space and approximately 116,300 square feet of space for specialized site facilities. The academic buildings would house the District's Police, Fire, and EMS programs and include facilities such as classrooms, breakout rooms, conference rooms, administrative offices, restrooms, lounges, locker rooms, and storage space. The specialized site facilities include a scenario village, physical training areas, a grinder pad, a portable burn tower structure, a burn box, a driving pad, maintenance/facilities yard, and vehicle storage. The campus would also include asphalt-paved parking areas, landscaping, and a retention pond.

The campus is planned to accommodate up to approximately 270 students at one time and be staffed by up to 50 employees, including administrators, faculty, and support staff. Operational hours would range from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm on weekdays throughout the year, with most activity on the campus taking place during morning and afternoon hours and more limited activities occurring during evenings and weekends.

SCCCD's objectives in seeking to develop and operate the First Responders Campus Project are as follows:

- Provide facilities for police, fire, and other emergency response programs which will allow for high-quality instruction, increased student capacity, and greater programming opportunities.
- Consolidate and integrate existing police, fire, and other emergency response training at one accessible location.
- Provide a site which can physically accommodate the specialized facilities needed for emergency response training programs, satisfy applicable criteria for the siting of community college facilities, and operate with minimal disturbance occurring to and from surrounding uses.
- Provide a location that is regionally centralized and accessible to users throughout SCCCD's enrollment boundaries.
- Support the substantial need for trained police, fire, and other emergency response personnel by agencies in the region.
- Provide training for good-paying stable jobs in a socioeconomically disadvantaged area.
- Reduce crime by providing an adequate supply of well-trained personnel to area agencies.
- Provide for continuing professional education for existing police, fire, and emergency response personnel.
- Develop new community college facilities in a manner consistent with the SCCCD Master Plan

This EIR identifies and analyzes the potential impacts of the project based on the environmental resources and conditions listed in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. The conclusions regarding the significance of the project's environmental impacts are as follows:

1. Two project impacts, even with the inclusion of mitigation measures, have been identified as significant and unavoidable. A significant and unavoidable transportation impact would occur because the amount of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) generated by the project would be above the Fresno County regional average reduction rate. A significant and

unavoidable impact involving greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions would occur because the project would result in GHG emissions above the GHG efficiency threshold calculated for the project.

2. Besides the two significant unavoidable impacts identified under No. 1, above, other potentially significant environmental effects of the project have been identified in the following subject areas: air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, noise, transportation, and tribal cultural resources. These impacts can be avoided or reduced to a less than significant level by incorporating the mitigation measures listed in the Summary Table of Mitigation Measures on the following pages.
3. The project would have a less than significant impact or no impact on many of the environmental resources and conditions evaluated in the EIR. The EIR explains why there would be no impacts or the impacts would be less than significant.

The CEQA Guidelines require that an EIR must describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant and unavoidable effects of the project, while also evaluating the comparative merits of the alternatives.

The EIR considered three alternatives, one of which was a "No Project" alternative as required by CEQA. The other two alternatives evaluated alternate site locations for the proposed First Responders Campus. The analysis determined identification and evaluation of alternative designs for the project was unnecessary.

Among the alternatives evaluated, the No Project alternative is environmentally superior to the proposed project because it would not result in VMT generation above the regional average reduction rate or GHG emissions above the calculated GHG efficiency threshold. However, this alternative cannot feasibly attain the objectives of the project. Of the remaining two alternatives, Alternative Location #1 (located at the southwest corner of Fowler Avenue and Clinton Avenue) is considered to be the environmentally superior alternative. This alternative would not result in a significant impact related to generation of VMT in comparison to the proposed project by siting the campus in an area where the modeled per-capita employee VMT is below the VMT reduction threshold for Fresno County. GHG emissions, however, would still be significant at the alternative location. With Alternative Location # 2 (west side of Orange Avenue between California and Church Avenues), the VMT generation would be lower than that of the project site, but development of the project at this site may not achieve project-specific VMT below the regional VMT threshold. Additionally, Alternative Location #2 would have several substantial environmental drawbacks compared to Alternative Location #1 and the project site.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15123 requires that this summary identify any "areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency including issues raised by agencies and the public." At this time, there are no areas of potential controversy known to SCCCD regarding the proposed project or the consideration of environmental impacts.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15123 requires that this summary "identify issues to be resolved including the choice among alternatives and whether or how to mitigate the significant effects." This Draft EIR has not identified any issues that remain to be resolved, and all project impacts can be mitigated to a less than significant level except for impacts involving greenhouse gas emissions and transportation (VMT). The alternatives to the project would not meet important project objectives and are therefore not considered feasible.

SUMMARY OF POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Level of Significance
Air Quality		
Impact: The project may conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan.	**MM AQ-1**. On-road diesel vehicles shall comply with Section 2485 of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations. This regulation limits idling from diesel-fueled commercial motor vehicles with gross vehicular weight ratings of more than 10,000 pounds and licensed for operation on highways. It applies to California and non-California based vehicles. In general, the regulation specifies that drivers of said vehicles: a. Shall not idle the vehicle's primary diesel engine for greater than 5 minutes at any location, except as noted in Subsection (d) of the regulation; and, b. Shall not operate a diesel-fueled auxiliary power system to power a heater, air conditioner, or any ancillary equipment on that vehicle during sleeping or resting in a sleeper berth for greater than 5.0 minutes at any location when within 1,000 feet of a restricted area, except as noted in Subsection (d) of the regulation. **MM AQ-2**. Heavy-duty, off-road diesel-fueled equipment (50 horsepower, or greater) shall comply with the 5-minute idling restriction identified in Section 2449(d)(2) of the California Air Resources Board's In-Use Off-road Diesel regulation. **MM AQ-3**. Heavy-duty, off-road diesel-fueled equipment (50 horsepower, or greater) shall be fitted with diesel particulate filters, per manufacturer's recommendations, or shall meet at minimum Tier 3 emissions standards. To the extent locally available, Tier 4 should be used. **MM AQ-4**. Signs shall be posted at the project site construction entrance to remind drivers and operators of the state's five-minute idling limit. **MM AQ-5**. To the extent available, fossil-fueled equipment shall be replaced with alternatively-fueled (e.g., natural gas) or electrically-driven equivalents. **MM AQ-6**. Construction truck trips shall be scheduled, to the extent possible, to occur during non-peak hours. **MM AQ-7**. The burning of vegetative material shall be prohibited.	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

SUMMARY OF POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

	MM AQ-8. The proposed project shall comply with SJVAPCD Regulation VIII for the control of fugitive dust emissions. Regulation VIII can be obtained on the SJVAPCD's website: https://www.valleyair.org/rules/1ruleslist.htm. At a minimum, the following measures shall be implemented: a. All disturbed areas, including storage piles, which are not being actively utilized for construction purposes, shall be effectively stabilized of dust emissions using water, chemical stabilizer/suppressant, covered with a tarp or other suitable cover or vegetative ground cover. b. All on-site unpaved roads and off-site unpaved access roads shall be effectively stabilized of dust emissions using water or chemical stabilizer/suppressant. c. All land clearing, grubbing, scraping, excavation, land leveling, grading, and cut & fill activities shall be effectively controlled of fugitive dust emissions utilizing application of water or by presoaking. d. When materials are transported off-site, all material shall be covered, or effectively wetted to limit visible dust emissions, and at least six inches of freeboard space from the top of the container shall be maintained. e. Trackout shall be immediately removed when it extends 50 or more feet from the site and at the end of each workday. (The use of dry rotary brushes is expressly prohibited except where preceded or accompanied by sufficient wetting to limit the visible dust emissions. Use of blower devices is expressly forbidden.) f. Following the addition of materials to, or the removal of materials from, the surface of outdoor storage piles, said piles shall be effectively stabilized of fugitive dust emissions utilizing sufficient water or chemical stabilizer/suppressant. g. On-road vehicle speeds on unpaved surfaces of the project site shall be limited to 15 mph. h. Sandbags or other erosion control measures shall be installed sufficient to prevent silt runoff to public roadways from sites with a slope greater than one percent.	

SUMMARY OF POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

	i. Excavation and grading activities shall be suspended when winds exceed sustained speeds of 20 miles per hour (Regardless of wind speed, an owner/operator must comply with Regulation VIII's 20 percent opacity limitation). **MM AQ-9**. The above measures for the control of construction-generated emissions shall be made available to project contractors and included on site grading and construction plans.	
Impact: The project could expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.	**Mitigation Measures:** Implement MM AQ-1 through AQ-9.	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated
Biological Resources		
Impact: The project could have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on 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 (CDFW) or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).	***MM BR-1: Special Status Birds (except Burrowing Owl—see MM BR-2)*** 1. Avoidance. If feasible, any vegetation removal will take place between September 1 and February 1 to avoid impacts to nesting birds in compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. If vegetation removal must occur during the nesting season, project construction may be delayed due to actively nesting birds and their required protective buffers. 2. Pre-construction Surveys. a. If vegetation removal or ground disturbance will commence between February 1 and August 31, a qualified biologist will conduct a pre-construction survey for nesting birds within 10 days of the initiation of disturbance activities. This survey will cover: i. Potential nest sites in trees, bushes, or grass within species-specific buffers of the project area (Swainson's hawk – 0.5 mile, other raptor species – 500 feet, non-raptor species – 250 feet). ii. Survey protocol developed by the Swainson's Hawk Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) should be followed, which includes survey timing and requirements for repeated visits. b. If no active nests are detected during the pre-construction survey, then no further action is required. If an active nest is detected, then minimization measures (described below) shall be implemented.	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

SUMMARY OF POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

	3. Minimization/Establish Buffers. a. Special status bird species and MBTA-protected species: If any active nests are discovered (and if construction will occur during bird breeding season), the USFWS and/or CDFW will be contacted to determine protective measures required to avoid take. These measures could include fencing off an area where a nest occurs, or shifting construction work temporally or spatially away from the nesting birds. Biologists are required on site to monitor construction while protected migratory birds are nesting in the project area to ensure that the buffer is adequate and that the nest is not stressed and/or abandoned. If an active nest is found after the completion of the pre-construction surveys and after construction begins, all construction activities will stop until a qualified biologist has evaluated the nest and erected the appropriate buffer around the nest. 4. If avoidance is not possible a qualified biologist will develop appropriate mitigations that will reduce project impacts to sensitive biological resources to a less than significant level. The type and amount of mitigation will depend on the resources impacted, the extent of the impacts, and the quality of habitats to be impacted. Mitigations may include, but are not limited to: 1) Compensation for lost habitat in the form of preservation or creation of in-kind habitat protected by conservation easement; 2) Purchase of appropriate credits from an approved mitigation bank or land trust servicing the Tulare County Area; 3) Payment of in-lieu fees. 5. Take Authorization. In the event an active Swainson's hawk nest is detected during surveys and the one-half mile no-disturbance buffer around the nest cannot feasibly be implemented, SCCCD shall consult with CDFW is warranted to discuss how to implement the project and avoid take. If take cannot be avoided, take authorization through the acquisition of an Incidental Take Permit (ITP), pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081 subdivision (b) is warranted to comply with CESA. ***MM BR-2: Burrowing Owl*** 1. Pre-construction Surveys. a. Surveys for burrowing owl will occur within 14 days prior to any ground disturbance, no matter the season. Surveys will cover potential	

SUMMARY OF POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

	burrowing owl burrows in the project area and suitable habitat within 150 m (500 ft). Evaluation of use by owls shall be in accordance with California Department of Fish and Wildlife survey guidelines (CBOC 1993, CDFG 1995, CDFG 2012). Surveys will document if burrowing owls are nesting or using habitat in or directly adjacent to the project area. Survey results will be valid only for the season (breeding (Feb 1-Aug 31) or non-breeding (Sept 1-Jan 31) during which the survey is conducted. b. If no active burrows are detected during the pre-construction surveys, then no further action is required. If an active burrow is detected, then minimization measures (described below) shall be implemented. 2. Minimization/Establish Buffers: If burrowing owl are detected within the survey area, CDFW will be consulted to determine the suitable buffer, which can range from 50-500 meters depending on the level of disturbance of the project activity, existing disturbance of the site (vehicle traffic, humans, pets, etc.), and time of year (nesting vs. wintering). If avoidance is not feasible, the District will work with CDFW to determine appropriate mitigation, such as passive exclusion or translocation, and associated mitigation land offset (CDFG 2012).	
Cultural Resources		
Impact: The project could cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of historical and/or archaeological resources pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 and potentially disturb any human remains.	***MM CR-1:*** Prior to the start of ground disturbing activities, a field survey of the site shall be conducted by a qualified cultural resources specialist ascertain whether there are cultural resources on the surface of the project site. If surface resources are encountered and determined by the cultural resources specialist to be potentially significant, the specialist shall make recommendations to the Lead Agency on mitigation measures to be implemented to protect the discovered resources in accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15064.5 and Public Resources Code §21083.2. ***MM CR-2:*** If cultural resources are encountered during ground disturbing activities, work shall stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and a qualified cultural resources specialist shall be consulted to determine the significance of the resources in accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15064.5. If potentially significant, the qualified cultural resources specialist shall make recommendations to the Lead Agency on mitigation measures to be implemented	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

SUMMARY OF POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

	to protect the discovered resources in accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15064.5 and Public Resources Code §21083.2. ***MM CR-3:*** If cultural remains are encountered during ground disturbing activities, work shall stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and the County Coroner notified in accordance with Health and Safety Code §7050.5 and CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(e). If the remains are determined to be of Native American descent, the procedures and requirements set forth in in CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(d) and (e) and Public Resources Code §5097.98 shall be implemented.	
Geology and Soils		
Impact: The project could directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site.	**MM GS-1:** If paleontological resources are discovered during ground disturbing activities, work shall stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and a qualified paleontologist shall be consulted to determine whether the resources require further study. If the resources are determined to be potentially significant, the qualified paleontologist shall make recommendations to the District on the measures that shall be implemented to protect the discovered resources, including but not limited to, excavation and evaluation of the find, as well as providing the resources to an appropriate institution or person who is capable of providing long-term preservation to allow future scientific study.	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated
Greenhouse Gas Emissions		
Impact: The project would generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment.	**MM GHG-1:** To reduce the project's generation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the following measures shall be implemented at the project site prior to its initial operation and maintained throughout its operation: a. The project shall install infrastructure for at least 18 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. Further, the District shall pursue grant or other funding sources to implement EV charging stations on the site. b. The project shall install bicycle parking and shower/locker facilities. c. SCCCD shall establish a program (or programs) which promote alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle trips at the First Responders Campus. This shall include establishing a ride-sharing or ride-matching program that functions to coordinate pooled travel between the First Responders Campus and other SCCCD campuses, such that students and staff are able to make pooled trips to and from the First Responders	Significant and Unavoidable

SUMMARY OF POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

	Campus during periods of regular instruction at the project; instituting parking charges for students and employees at the campus; and providing a transit subsidy for students (e.g., free bus passes, as funding allows). d. SCCCD shall act to promote improved and increased access to transit for the project. In addition to the transit subsidy for students provided under c, above, SCCCD shall coordinate with the City of Fresno's Department of Transportation (FAX) regarding transit service in the vicinity of the project site, specifically to promote the routing of transit lines and placement of transit stops at the project site.	
Impact: The project would conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation of an agency adopted to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases.	**Mitigation Measures:** Implement MM GHG-1.	Significant and Unavoidable
Noise		
Impact: The project may result in a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in its vicinity that exceed standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies.	**MM N-1:** The following measures shall be implemented to reduce construction-generated noise levels. a. Noise-generating construction activities including equipment maintenance, shall be limited to the hours between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. on weekdays, and between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Saturday or Sunday. b. Stationary construction equipment that generates noise that exceeds 65 dBA at the project boundaries shall be shielded with a barrier that meets a sound transmission class rating of 25. c. All diesel equipment shall be operated with closed engine doors and shall be equipped with factory-recommended mufflers. d. Whenever feasible, electrical power shall be used to run air compressors and similar power tools. e. Construction staging areas shall be located at the furthest distance possible from nearby residential land uses.	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

SUMMARY OF POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Transportation		
Impact: Operation of the project could conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, considering all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit.	**MM T-1:** To ensure compatibility with the future planned widening of North Avenue set forth in the long-range planning of the City of Fresno and County of Fresno, the project site shall maintain a physical configuration which will allow for related improvements to facilitate appropriate widening of North Avenue as an arterial street, such as curb and gutter and utility relocations. **MM T-2: (Advisory LOS Measure – Not Required by CEQA)** SCCCD shall be responsible for contributing its proportionate share of the installation of improvements at the intersections identified in Equitable Share Responsibility Calculation (Table 21 in the Traffic Impact Study included as Appendix E of this EIR). Fair share contributions shall only be made for those facilities, or portion thereof, currently not funded by the responsible agencies roadway impact fee program(s) or grant funded projects, as appropriate. It is recommended that SCCCD work with the City of Fresno and Fresno County to develop the estimated construction costs.	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated
Impact: The project would be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b), regarding VMT significance.	**MM T-3:** To reduce the project's generation of vehicle miles traveled (VMT), the following measures shall be implemented at the project site prior to its initial operation and maintained throughout its operation: a. The project shall install infrastructure for at least 18 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. Further, the District shall pursue grant or other funding sources to implement EV charging stations on the site. b. The project shall install bicycle parking and shower/locker facilities. c. SCCCD shall establish a program (or programs) promoting alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle trips at the First Responders Campus. This shall include establishing a ride-sharing or ride-matching program that functions to coordinate pooled travel between the First Responders Campus and other SCCCD campuses, such that students and staff are able to make pooled trips to and from the First Responders Campus during periods of regular instruction at the project; parking charges for students and employees; and a transit subsidy for students (e.g., free bus passes, as funding allows).	Significant and Unavoidable

SUMMARY OF POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

	d. SCCCD shall act to promote improved and increased access to transit for the project. In addition to the transit subsidy for students provided under c, above, SCCCD shall coordinate with the City of Fresno's Department of Transportation (FAX) regarding transit service in the vicinity of the project site, specifically to promote the routing of transit lines and placement of transit stops at the project site.	
Tribal Cultural Resources		
Impact: There is the potential for undiscovered tribal cultural resources to be present that could be disturbed or damaged by construction and/or site preparation activities.	**MM TC-1**: If tribal cultural resources are discovered during ground disturbing activities, work shall stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and a qualified professional with expertise in tribal cultural resources shall be consulted to recommend an appropriate course of action with the input of potentially affected tribes. If it is determined that the project may cause a substantial adverse change to a tribal cultural resource, mitigation measures to be considered should include those identified in Public Resources Code Section 21084.3.	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of EIR

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR or Draft EIR) has been prepared on behalf of State Center Community College District (SCCCD or "the District") for its proposed First Responders Campus Project ("project"). The District must prepare an EIR to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines (CEQA Guidelines). The purpose of preparing this EIR is to inform SCCCD and the public of the significant environmental effects of the project and identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects. It focuses primarily on the changes in the environment that would result from the project and examines all phases of the project including planning, construction, and operation. Under CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, "significant effect or impact" means "a substantial, or potentially substantial adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project, including but not limited to land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance."

1.2 Type of EIR

This is a project EIR. A project EIR examines the environmental impacts of a specific development project, in this case the development and operation of the proposed First Responders Campus. This EIR focuses on the potentially significant changes in the environment that would result from the project and examines all phases of the project including planning, construction, and operation.

1.3 EIR Content and Organization

The information in this EIR is presented in three documents. The Draft EIR, the Draft EIR Technical Appendices, and the Final EIR. The Final EIR will be prepared after the Draft EIR public review period is completed. (The Table of Contents presents a comprehensive outline of the EIR content and organization.)

Additionally, to promote efficiency and reduce redundancy, this EIR incorporates by reference information from other documents and sources that is germane to the proposed project and is available for public review. Most of the information incorporated by reference is from the City of Fresno's General Plan and Development Code Update Master Environmental Impact Report ("City of Fresno General Plan MEIR"), which provides a comprehensive evaluation of impacts associated with implementation of the City of Fresno's General Plan.

1.4 Public Review Process

SCCCD has undertaken the following steps in the public review process for this Draft EIR:

- Prior to deciding to prepare an EIR for the project, SCCCD initially sent a Request for Consultation (RFC) for the project to all responsible, trustee, and interested agencies for the project. The RFC was also sent to nearby property owners and residents. The RFC included a summary description of the project, its location, and potential environmental effects. The purpose of the RFC was to solicit guidance from the agencies as to the scope and content of the environmental information that should be included in the project's evaluation of environmental impacts, and to allow nearby property owners and residents to provide environmental comments on the project for the District's consideration.
- SCCCD distributed a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the project to all responsible, trustee, and interested agencies for the project, as well as nearby property owners and residents. The purpose of the NOP was to solicit guidance from the agencies as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR and preliminary input from nearby property owners and residents.
- SCCCD distributed a Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft Project EIR. The notice stated that the District completed the Draft EIR and included a brief description of the project and its location, an address where copies of the Draft EIR were available, and a review period during which the agencies and the public may submit comments on the Draft EIR. The NOA was sent for publication to the California Office of Planning and Research's

CEQA State Clearinghouse; published the notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the area affected by the project; posted the notice along with project documents on the District's website consistent with requirements set forth under Executive Orders affecting the posting of environmental documents during California's State of Emergency related to COVID-19; mailed the notice to all organizations and individuals who previously requested the notice in writing; and mailed the notice to the owners and occupants of properties adjacent to the project area.

Following completion of the 45-day public review period for the Draft EIR, SCCCD will undertake the following steps to complete the public review process for the EIR:

- SCCCD will prepare a Final EIR for the project, which will include any revisions to the Draft EIR, responses to comments received during the public review period for the Draft EIR, and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program. The District will provide the Final EIR to anyone commenting on the Draft EIR at least 10 days prior to Board consideration of the project approval.
- The Final EIR will be presented to the SCCCD Board of Trustees for review and certification as part of its consideration of the project. The public and agencies may submit comments and/or appear at the Board meeting to present testimony to the Board on the project and Final EIR.

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2. Project Description

2.1 Project Title, Lead Agency, and Lead Agency Contact Information

Project Title: First Responders Campus Project

Lead Agency and Project Sponsor:

State Center Community College District
1171 Fulton Street
Fresno, CA 93721

Lead Agency Contact Person:

George Cummings
District Director of Facilities Planning
Telephone: (559) 243-7191
Email: facilities@scccd.edu

2.2 Lead Agency and Project Sponsor

State Center Community College District (SCCCD) is a public community college district within the California Community Colleges system. SCCCD's service population includes approximately 1.7 million people in more than 5,743 square miles of urban and rural territory, including most of Fresno and Madera counties and portions of Kings and Tulare counties. SCCCD is governed by a seven-member board of trustees who represent seven trustee areas. Total District enrollment for 2019-20 is over 69,000 students. At present, SCCCD operates four community college campuses (Fresno City College, Reedley College, Clovis Community College, and Madera Community College) and two educational centers (Madera Community College at Oakhurst and the Career and Technology Center).

2.3 Project Background

The First Responders Campus is envisioned in SCCCD's Facilities Master Plan as combining instruction and training for police, fire, corrections, EMT and paramedic programs at a single specialized campus. Currently, these programs are housed at separate locations throughout the District in facilities of varying age. Development of the proposed project would relocate these programs onto a single campus and into permanent modern facilities[1]. Additionally, the project may allow for local public agencies to utilize the facilities at the campus for trainings and exercises related to the provision of police, fire, and emergency medical services.

According to the SCCCD Facilities Master Plan, facilities for Police and Fire Academies have been in the planning process since Measure E was passed in 2002 with $30 million devoted to public safety buildings. Initially, a 120-acre site was purchased near southeast Fresno to build a new Career Technical Center featuring new facilities to house the Police and Fire Academies. Concept plans were developed for this site, but the project was suspended due to changes in the City of Fresno General Plan and services availability that resulted in the site no longer being viable.

In 2016, SCCCD's Measure C was passed and an additional $15 million in funding for a First Responder training center was secured. During the bond implementation planning process, it was evident that it would be advantageous to combine police, fire, corrections, EMT and paramedic programs into a First Responder Campus, as doing so creates an opportunity for programmatic synergy, shared spaces, and more efficient space utilization. Through program meetings with first responder professionals, FCC's police and fire academies, faculty, staff, and students, it was also determined that a minimum of 30 acres and approximately 40,000 square feet of academic space would be required to adequately house these academies and allow for sufficient outdoor training space.

[1] Currently, the Police Academy is located at the Fresno City College campus, and the Fire Academy is located at the CTC Campus on Annadale Avenue.

2.4 Project Objectives

SCCCD's objectives in seeking to develop and operate the First Responders Campus Project are as follows:

- Provide facilities for police, fire, and other emergency response programs which will allow for high-quality instruction, increased student capacity, and greater programming opportunities.
- Consolidate and integrate existing police, fire, and other emergency response training at one accessible location.
- Provide a site which can physically accommodate the specialized facilities needed for emergency response training programs, satisfy applicable criteria for the siting of community college facilities, and operate with minimal disturbance occurring to and from surrounding uses.
- Provide a location that is regionally centralized and accessible to users throughout SCCCD's enrollment boundaries.
- Support the substantial need for trained police, fire, and other emergency response personnel by agencies in the region.
- Provide training for good-paying stable jobs in a socioeconomically disadvantaged area.
- Reduce crime by providing an adequate supply of well-trained personnel to area agencies.
- Provide for continuing professional education for existing police, fire, and emergency response personnel.
- Develop new community college facilities in a manner consistent with the SCCCD Master Plan.

2.5 Project Location and Vicinity

The project is located on a 39.21-acre parcel situated at the northwest corner of Willow and North Avenues in an unincorporated area of Fresno County approximately 0.25 miles from the City of Fresno city limits (Fresno County APN 316-071-23). The project site encompasses the western 20.0 acres of the parcel. Figure 1 shows the regional location of the project site in relation to the greater Fresno area. Figure 2 provides an aerial view of the project site and its immediate vicinity. As shown in Figure 2, the project site parcel is currently vacant. Previously, the parcel had been used for agricultural purposes and was most recently farmed during 2017. The parcel also previously contained a single-family residence and accessory structures, which were demolished after having fallen into disrepair. Additional project site information is presented in Table 2.5-A.

The area surrounding the project site consists of a mixture of industrial, commercial, agricultural and rural residential uses. A large industrial area with many industrial and commercial operations existing immediately south of the site. East of the site are agricultural areas, few rural-density single-family residences, a PG&E electrical substation, and vacant land. North of the site are agricultural areas, truck/trailer storage areas, and vacant land. West of the site are a cluster of rural-density single-family residences, a radio transmission tower, and vacant land. South of the site are several buildings which house commercial and industrial uses. The project site is also in the vicinity of the unincorporated communities of Malaga (located approximately 0.5 miles south) and Calwa (located 1.5 miles northwest). Notable roadways in the area include SR-99, Chestnut Avenue, Golden State Boulevard, Jensen Avenue, and North Avenue.

2.6 Project Facilities and Operational Details

Facilities planned as part of the project include approximately 61,600 square feet of academic building space and approximately 116,300 square feet of space for specialized site facilities. The academic buildings consist of single-story modular structures which would house facilities such as classrooms, breakout rooms, conference rooms, administrative offices, restrooms, lounges, locker rooms, and storage space. The specialized site facilities include a scenario village, physical training areas (including a running track and turfed recreation areas), a 38-foot tall portable burn tower structure, a burn box, a grinder pad, a driving pad, maintenance/facilities yard, and vehicle storage. The campus would also include asphalt-paved parking areas, landscaping, and a retention pond. (Figure 4 shows the project site plan)

The project site is within the City of Fresno Sphere of Influence and will eventually be annexed to the City of Fresno. Annexation to the City of Fresno is included as part of the project. Due to the current separation of the project site from City boundaries and current constraints that are problematic for near-term annexation, annexation to the City will not likely be feasible until sometime after the project is constructed. Therefore, an extraterritorial service agreement, which will allow City services to be provided to the project site prior to annexation (with LAFCo approval) will be necessary prior to operation of the project.

The project would include buildout and installation of public utilities infrastructure necessary for the project's operation, including water, wastewater, electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications. The project would receive water and wastewater services from the City of Fresno through the aforementioned extraterritorial service agreement. For its water supply, the project is planned to connect to the City of Fresno's existing water system pipeline infrastructure in North Avenue, west of Chestnut Avenue. Other utilities (including wastewater) are currently in place at or immediately adjacent to the project site. Additionally, a 250,000-gallon water tank would be installed at the site to provide additional water supply for fireflow purposes.

The campus is planned to accommodate up to approximately 270 students at one time and be staffed by up to 50 employees, including administrators, faculty, and support staff. Operational hours would range from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm on weekdays throughout the year, with most activity on the campus taking place during morning and afternoon hours and more limited activities occurring during evenings and weekends. If approved, the project is expected to begin construction in early 2022 and begin operating in late 2023.

Table 2.5-A: Project Location Information

City, County, and State	Unincorporated (Fresno Sphere of Influence), Fresno County, California
Major Cross Streets	Willow Avenue and North Avenue
Site Area	20.0 acres (western portion of 39.21-acre parcel)
USGS Map	Malaga, California Quadrangle, 7.5 Minute Series
Latitude & Longitude	36°41'39"N; 119°43'48"W
Section, Township, and Range	Section 19, Township 14 South, Range 21 East, MDB&M
Elevation	300 feet above mean sea level

Figure 1: Project Location

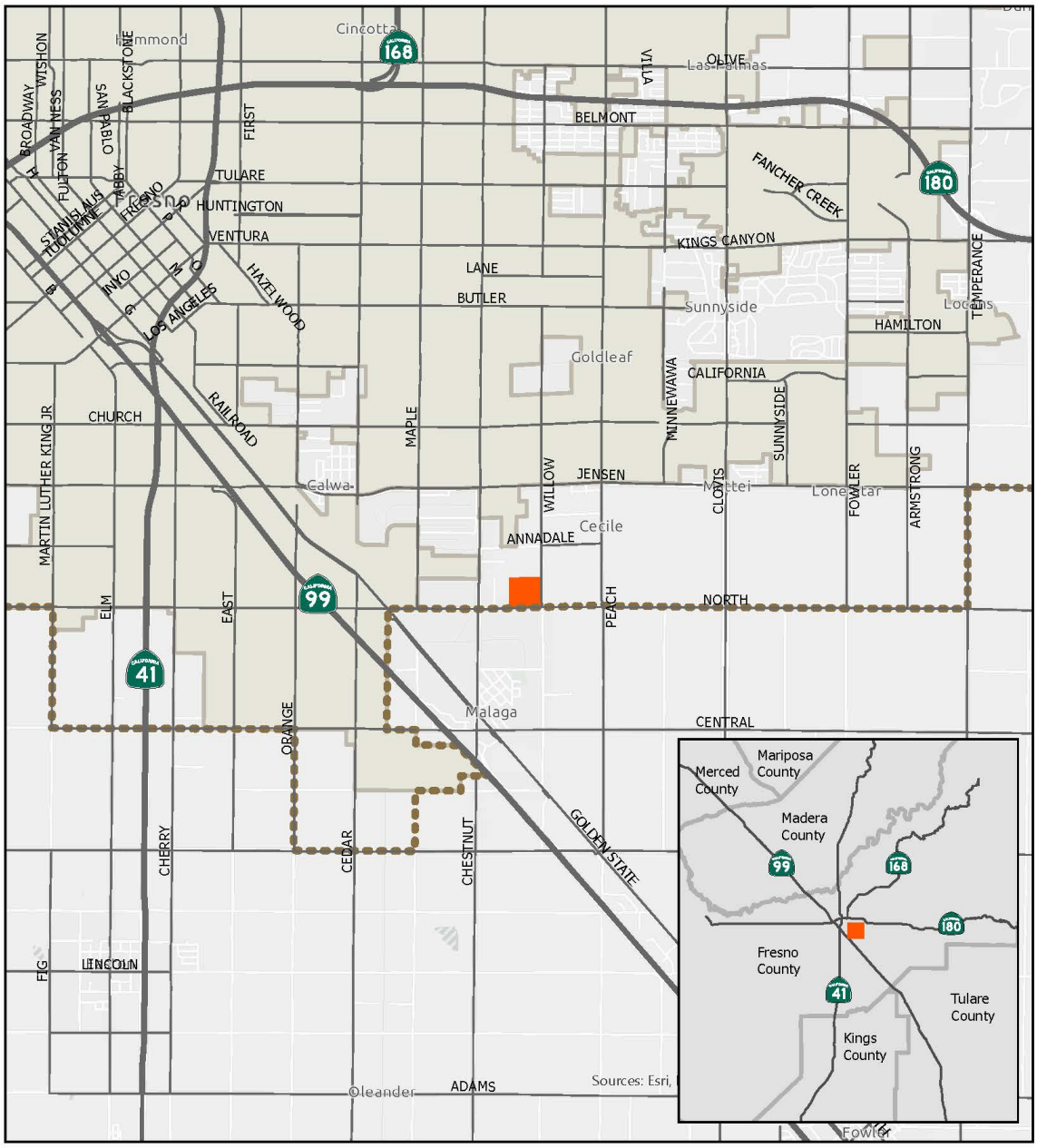
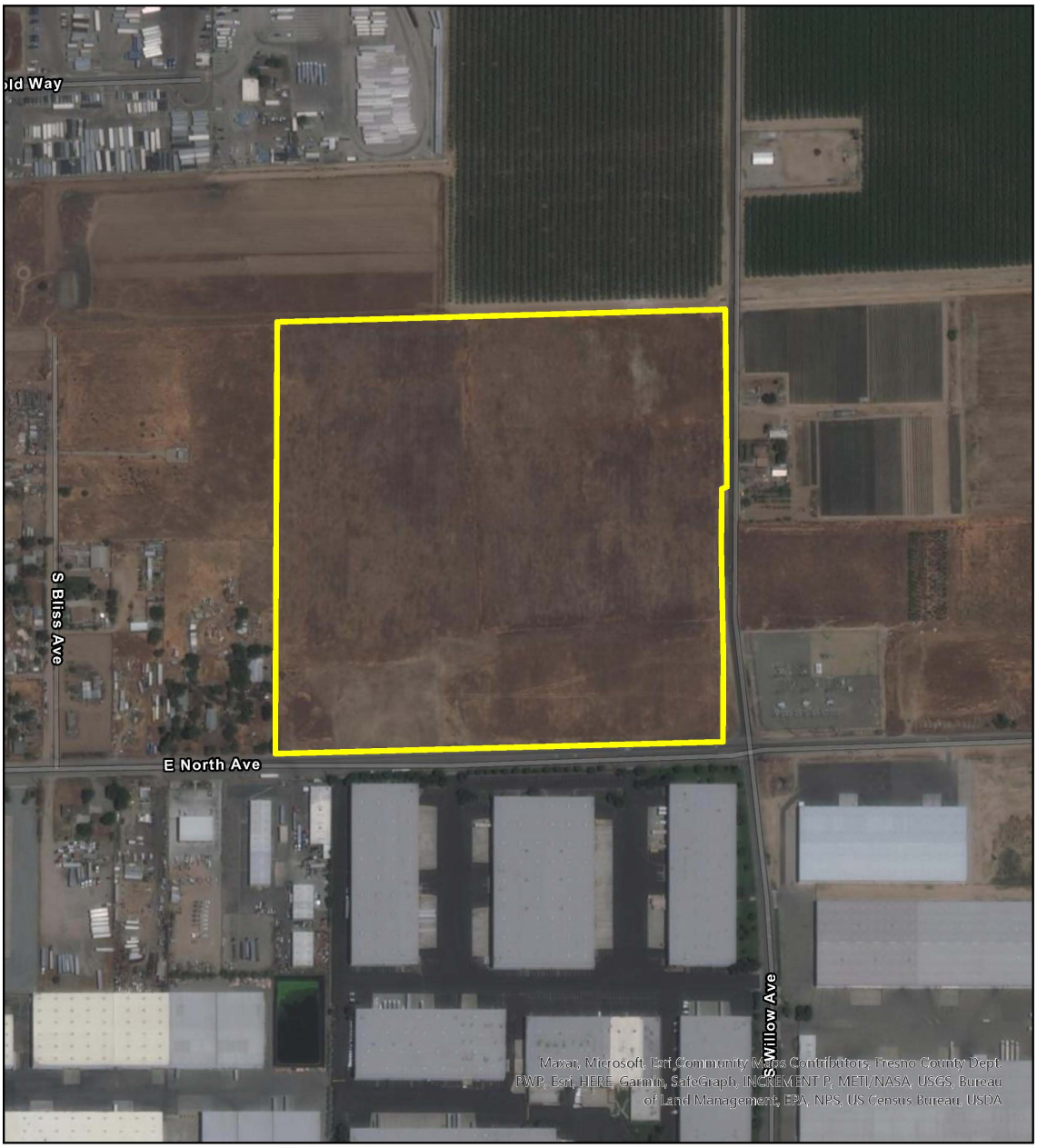


Figure 2: Project Site



Project Site — Figure 2

First Responders Campus Project
State Center Community College District

Project Site

N

0 125 250 500 Feet

ODELL Planning & Research, Inc.
Environmental Planning • School Facility Planning • Demographics

Figure 3: SCCCD Boundary and Campus Locations

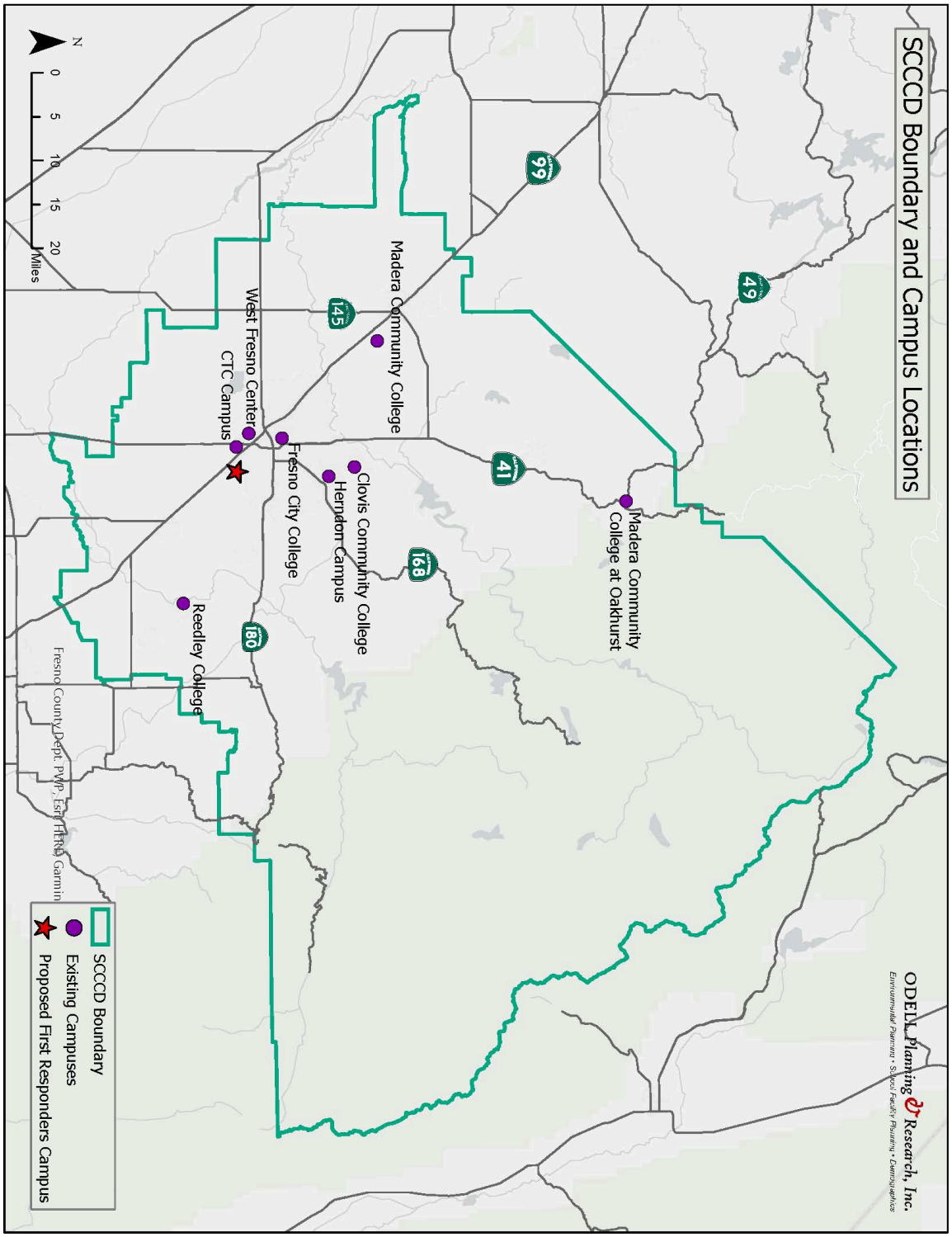
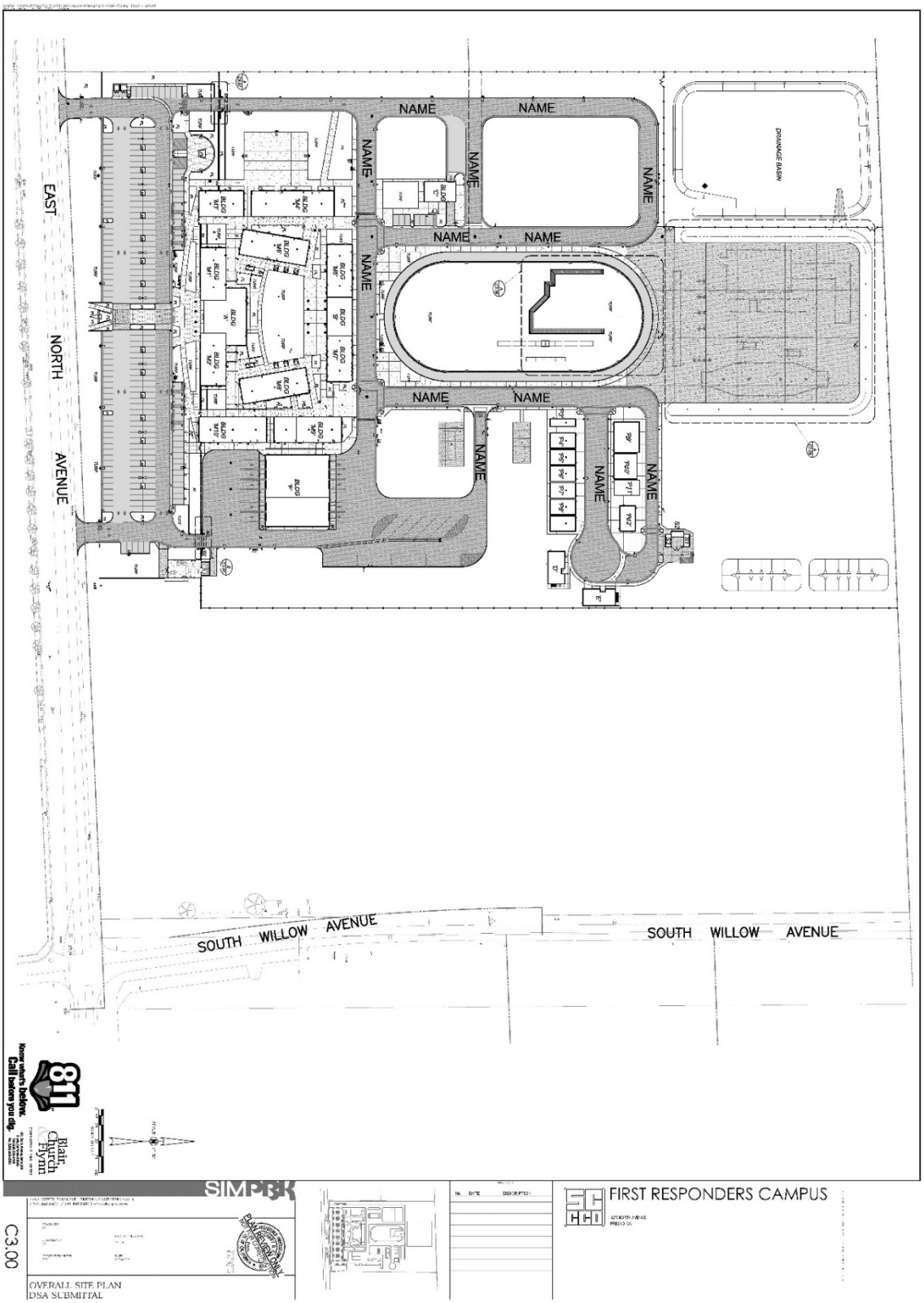


Figure 4: Site Plan



2.7 Lead Agency Role and Land Use Authority

In addition to being the project proponent for the First Responders Campus Project, SCCCD will serve as the Lead Agency for the project. The Lead Agency, as defined by CEQA, is the public agency that has the primary responsibility for carrying out or approving a project (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15367). The Lead Agency also has the primary responsibility for determining what level of CEQA review is required for a project and for preparing and approving the appropriate type of CEQA document. SCCCD has the primary responsibility for considering whether to grant its discretionary approval of the project. Additionally, SCCCD will be responsible for the implementation of all mitigation measures identified in the EIR.

The project is located in what is currently an unincorporated area of Fresno County and is within the City of Fresno's SOI, and as such, it is generally subject to those agencies' respective land use regulations and policies. (See Section 4.11, Land Use, for additional information regarding applicable land use regulations and policies.) However, it is important to note that a community college district is afforded unique discretion when developing educational facilities. When developing an educational facilities project, a community college district may take action pursuant to provisions of the California Government Code to act independently from land use regulations of the City or County in which the project is located. Government Code Section 65402(c) allows a community college district to overrule findings of a City or County regarding the General Plan conformity of a proposed project, and Government Code Section 53094 allows a community college district to exempt a proposed project from the zoning ordinances of the City or County.

2.9 Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required

Implementation of the project would require approvals from the following Responsible Agencies:

- The County of Fresno must review and approve plans and accept improvements related to the provision of public street access.
- The City of Fresno must review and approve plans and accept improvements related to the provision of water supply and wastewater collection facilities.
- The Fresno Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) must review and approve the extraterritorial service agreement proposed for the project to initially receive water and wastewater services from the City of Fresno prior to annexation.
- The Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District (FMFCD) must review and approve any plans for storm drainage improvements or modifications.
- The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District must review and approve the Rule 9510 Indirect Source Review application and determine compliance with Regulation VIII and any other applicable rules and regulations.
- The Fresno County Health Department must review and approve any plans for food preparation and service facilities.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is the only Trustee Agency identified for the project. The agency has jurisdiction over biological resources the project may impact.

2.8 Actions Required to Implement the Project

State Center Community College District must undertake the following actions in order to implement the project:

- Complete the California Environmental Quality Act process for the project. This would involve the preparation, review and certification of this environmental impact report;
- Adopt and implement the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program to be presented in the Final EIR;
- Approve the project;
- Secure approvals, permits, and agreements, as necessary, from agencies and utilities that are responsible for public facilities the project would construct, modify, or otherwise affect within or near the site.

3. Approach to Analyzing Environmental Impacts

3.1 State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G and Thresholds of Significance

This EIR identifies and analyzes the potential impacts of the project on the environmental resources and conditions listed in Appendix G in the State CEQA Guidelines[2], describes feasible mitigation measures that could be incorporated in the project to avoid the impacts or reduce them to an insignificant level, and determines the significance of the impacts without or with mitigation. The environmental resources and conditions listed in Appendix G are categorized as follows: Aesthetics, Agricultural 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, and Wildfire.

Under the State CEQA Guidelines, the impacts of a project on an environmental resource or condition may be considered "significant", "less than significant impact with project level mitigation", "less than significant", or "no impact".

The "significant" determination is applied if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. Under the State CEQA Guidelines, a significant effect, or impact, 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 (see Guidelines Section 15382).

The "less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated" determination applies when the incorporation of mitigation measures in the project would reduce an impact from potentially significant to less than significant. This EIR describes each mitigation measure the District has incorporated in the project to reduce potentially significant impacts to a less than significant level.

The "less than significant" determination applies when the project would not result in a significant effect on a resource or condition. The less than significant determination used only in cases where no mitigation measures are required to reduce an impact to a less than significant level.

The "no impact" determination applies when the project would have no impact on a resource or condition or the resource or condition does not apply to the project or its location. The no impact determination is used only in cases where no mitigation measures are required to avoid or eliminate an impact.

3.2 Existing Laws, Regulations, Policies, and Mitigation Measures

In some cases, an impact that that might appear to be significant will be within the regulatory scope of federal, state, regional, or local laws, regulations, or policies – the application of which will reduce the impact to a less than significant level. Preparation of this EIR included a review of applicable laws, regulations, and policies to determine if they would prevent or reduce the potentially significant impacts of the proposed project. This EIR does not identify such laws, regulations, and policies as mitigation measures because they would apply to the project regardless of the outcome of the EIR. For the proposed project, applicable laws, regulations, and policies include but are not limited to the following:

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

- SJVAPCD District Rules and Regulations

Fresno Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo)

- Commission Policies, Standards, and Procedures Manual

[2] The Appendix G Checklist can be viewed at: http://resources.ca.gov/ceqa/docs/2018_CEQA_FINAL_TEXT_122818.pdf

Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District

- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit
- 2016 District Services Plan

City of Fresno

- City of Fresno General Plan
- City of Fresno Citywide Development Code
- Standard Construction Drawings

County of Fresno

- Fresno County General Plan
- Fresno County Zoning Ordinance
- Standard Construction Drawings

3.3 Technical Studies

The analyses of several resources and conditions in this EIR are based on technical background studies in the areas of air quality, energy, greenhouse gas emissions, noise and vibration, and transportation/traffic. The studies are listed in the Table of Contents and Section 9 (Sources Consulted) and are presented as Appendices to this EIR.

3.4 Categories of Environmental Effects with No Impact

For the following categories of environmental effects listed in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, it has been determined that the project would have no impacts and subsequently do not require detailed analysis as part of this EIR.

Mineral Resources

The project would have no impacts on known mineral resources. The project site is located in an area that is generally urbanized, and development of the project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource because no known resources exist on or near the proposed site. Likewise, the project would not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site because none exists on or near the site (Fresno County General Plan Background Report (2000), City of Fresno General Plan DEIR (2014)).

Wildfire

No impacts related to wildfire would result from the project. The project site is located on the San Joaquin Valley floor within an urbanized area. It is not within a State Responsibility Area (SRA) or any area classified as high-risk for wildfire.

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4. Evaluation of Environmental Impacts

The following evaluation of environmental impacts is based on questions presented in the State CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G: Environmental Checklist Form, Evaluation of Environmental Impacts. For each environmental resource category, the following are provided:

- An environmental setting, which provides a description of the existing conditions relevant to the category of environmental effect being considered.
- A regulatory setting, which identifies plans, policies, regulations, and/or laws (which may be administered at the federal, state, and/or local level) that are applicable to the category of environmental effect being considered. (Note: In instances where a level of government authority does not appear in the regulatory setting, it can be inferred that no applicable regulations for the category of effect were identified at that level of government.)
- An evaluation of impacts, which is based on the questions included in the Appendix G Checklist.

4.1 Aesthetics

Environmental Setting

The existing visual setting in the area surrounding the project site consists of a mixture of commercial and industrial uses, agricultural uses, rural residential uses, utilities infrastructure, and vacant land. Views to the south are comprised of industrial and commercial warehouse development. Views to the north are comprised of agricultural orchards, truck/trailer parking, and vacant land. Views to the east are comprised of agricultural field crops, rural residences and landscaping, a PG&E electrical substation, vacant land, and wooden utility poles with electrical transmission lines along the east side of Willow Avenue. Views to the west are comprised of rural residences, truck/trailer parking, a radio broadcasting tower, and vacant land.

The project site itself is currently almost completely vacant, comprised mostly of flat terrain of former agricultural land. There are wooden utility poles with electrical transmission lines located at the south side of project site parcel along North Avenue, and along the south and east sides of the parcel there is a series of “No Trespassing” signs mounted on sign posts. At the east side of parcel there is a water well and an electrical panel located within a small chain-link fenced area.

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Figure 5: Photo Key and Site Photos

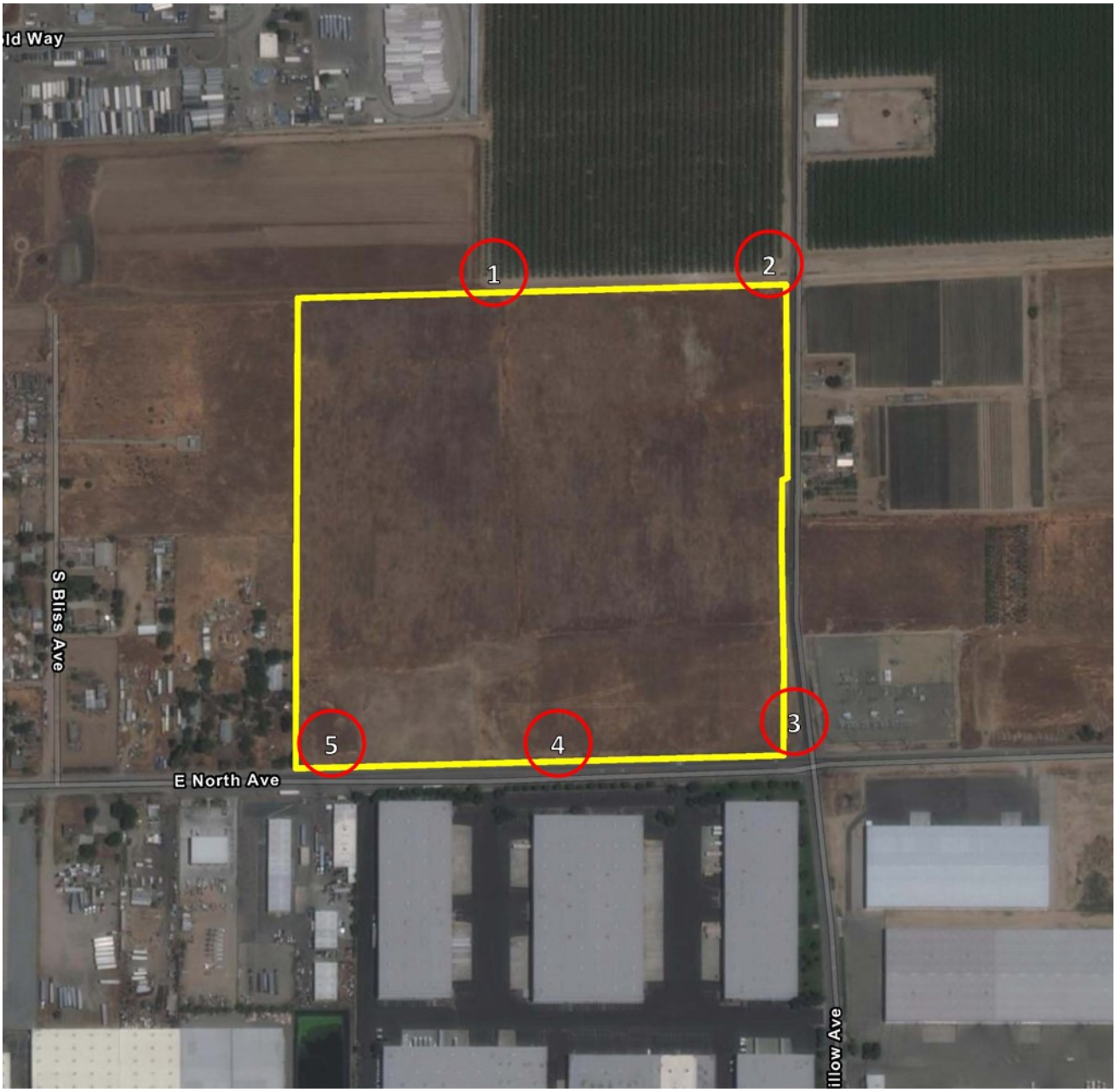

Figure 5: Photo Key and Site Photos

East-southeast view from Position 1

Southwest view from Position 1

East-southeast view from Position 2

South view from Position 2

North view from Position 3

West view from Position 3

Figure 5: Photo Key and Site Photos

East view from Position 4

West view from Position 4

North-northwest view from Position 5

Regulatory Setting

State

Caltrans Scenic Highway Program

State scenic highways are either designated officially as such by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) or are determined by Caltrans to be eligible for such designation. The scenic designation is based on the amount of natural landscape visible by motorists, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes on the motorist's enjoyment of the view. There are no officially designated or eligible state scenic highways in the vicinity of the project site.

Local

Fresno County General Plan

The Open Space and Conservation Element of the Fresno County General Plan features a Scenic Resources section which sets forth policies intended to protect the scenic resources of the County and ensure that development enhances those resources through the identification of important scenic resources, development review, acquisition, encouragement of easements, coordination with other agencies and groups, and other methods. (See Policies OS-K.1 through OS-K.4.) The Open Space and Conservation Element also includes a Scenic Roadways section which sets forth policies intended to protect the scenic resources along roadways of the County by identifying, developing, and maintaining of scenic amenities along roads and highways in the County and ensuring that development enhances those resources. (See Policies OS-L.1 through OS-L.9.)

Fresno County Zoning Ordinance

The Fresno County Zoning Ordinance generally includes provisions which directly or indirectly regulate aesthetic or scenic factors. For the "M-3" (Heavy Industrial) Zone District (discussed in Section 845 of the Fresno County Zoning Ordinance), while there are some regulations which incidentally relate to the form of development (e.g., building height, massing/arrangement of structures, and setbacks), there are no regulations expressly focused on aesthetic and/or scenic factors.

City of Fresno General Plan

The City of Fresno General Plan identifies an overall goal of improving Fresno's visual image and enhance its form and function through urban design strategies and effective maintenance, and the General Plan's Urban Form, Land Use, and Design Element sets forth objectives which include providing and maintaining an urban image that creates a "sense of place" throughout Fresno (Objective D-1).

City of Fresno Citywide Development Code (Zoning Ordinance)

Development projects within the City of Fresno are subject to regulations set forth in the Citywide Development Code pertaining to the urban form of development, which function in part to create and maintain visual character and scenic quality found in the Citywide Development Code. Applicable zoning regulations generally depend on the type of zone district that has been designated for an area (e.g., Residential, Mixed-Use, Commercial, Employment, and Public and Semi-Public Districts).

Discussion of Impacts

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

a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

The City of Fresno General Plan Master EIR defines a scenic vista is defined as a "viewpoint that provides a distant view of highly valued natural or man-made landscape features for the benefit of the general public." While noting that the City of Fresno has not formally designated or identified any scenic vistas, the General Plan Master EIR discusses scenic features and views present within the greater Fresno area, including views of downtown Fresno, the San Joaquin River, and the Sierra Nevada (City of Fresno General Plan MEIR, 2014). Similarly, while the County of Fresno has adopted policies in its General Plan which are intended to enhance

and protect scenic landscapes (e.g., river, mountain, and farmland views), it has not formally designated any scenic vistas.

There are no designated scenic vistas located at the project site or its vicinity. The project would not substantially adversely affect views of downtown Fresno, the San Joaquin River, the Sierra Nevada, or other local scenic features due to its distance from these features and because its design characteristics (e.g., building height, size, and lighting) would be similar to those of the existing urbanized development in the vicinity. The impact of the project on scenic vistas would therefore be less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

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

There are no scenic resources located on or within the vicinity of the project site, and there are no state scenic highways present near the site.

Level of Impact: No impact.

c. In non-urbanized area, 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?

Development of the project would introduce a level of activity and visual change to the project site during both its initial construction and its long-term operation. Visual changes associated with construction activities (e.g., the presence of heavy equipment, generation of dust from construction activities) would be temporary and not substantially adverse, as these activities are commonly observed throughout the agricultural and industrial use areas present throughout the project site's setting.

In the long-term, the presence of the First Responders Campus would change the visual character of the project site and surrounding area to a more urbanized setting; however, such a change would not necessarily result in a degradation of visual character or quality. As the project site is currently vacant, there are no on-site scenic resources which would be adversely impacted by the project's development. The project's physical form and character (i.e., the size, height, massing and arrangement of facilities at the campus) would be similar to existing commercial and industrial uses in the vicinity, and the project includes landscaping features which will function in part to enhance the visual character of the First Responders Campus. Additionally, the project would not conflict with any applicable County of Fresno policies or regulations governing visual character or quality.

Development projects within the City of Fresno are generally subject to regulations and guidelines governing visual character, urban form, and scenic quality found in the Citywide Development Code and the City's long-range planning documents (i.e., the City General Plan and various Specific Plans). The applicable scenic regulations act as a means of regulating land development to achieve the desired urban form for an area. While noting that the project site has not yet been annexed to the City of Fresno, and that the planned land use and zoning designations for the site are in the process of being refined during development of the City's South Central Specific Plan (SCSP), the facilities proposed as part of the project are consistent with common visual elements in the kind of urban setting that is being planned for the project site and its vicinity. The project's design characteristics are expected to be consistent with applicable form-based regulations and achieve the desired aesthetic environment and urban form sought for the area.

For these reasons, the resulting visual character and quality of the project would be compatible with both the existing aesthetic setting and the urban form envisioned in the City of Fresno's planning policies, and impacts of the project related to compatibility with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality would be less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

d. Create a new source of light and glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

The project includes features that may increase light and glare in its vicinity, such as buildings and parking areas that may be illuminated during early-morning and evening hours. Headlights from vehicles arriving at and departing from the campus during early-morning or evening hours would also be a potential source of glare from the project. However, this type of lighting and glare would not be unusual in the context of the existing commercial and industrial uses in the area, and it would have no effect on nearby agricultural uses. Further, the site configuration and setbacks of the First Responders Campus facilities plus the presence of landscaping features will provide additional reductions in lighting and glare. Based on the types of lighting and glare expected to result from the project and the context within which it would occur, this impact is considered less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

4.2 Agricultural and Forestry Resources

Environmental Setting

Fresno County is home to 1.88 million acres of the world's most productive farmland, with agricultural operations covering nearly half of the county's entire land base of 3.84 million acres. As Farmers raise more than 350 different crops contributing billions of dollars directly to the California economy and supporting 20 percent of all jobs in the Fresno area. Many of the county's crops are not grown commercially anywhere else in the nation. However, like most counties in the San Joaquin Valley, Fresno County is experiencing rapid non-agricultural growth, which is causing the loss of significant amounts of agricultural acreage. According to the Department of Conservation, a net conversion of 4,637 of agricultural land to non-agricultural use occurred in Fresno County between 2016 and 2018, and over 9,000 acres of agricultural land have been converted to non-agricultural use within the county since 2012.

The project is sited on former farmland that is currently vacant. While the site has historically supported row crops, no farming has occurred at the site since the end of 2017. According to the Department of Conservation's Important Farmland Map for Fresno County, the 39.21-acre parcel on which the project would be located contains a combination of Prime Farmland (approximately 35.01 acres) and Rural Residential Land (approximately 4.2 acres). The project site does not have an agricultural zoning designation and is not subject to a Williamson Act contract. There are areas adjacent to the project parcel's northern and eastern boundaries which are currently in agricultural use that also have agricultural zoning designations.

Fresno County's forestry resources are located in the mountainous areas in the eastern portion of the County. There are no areas identified as forest land, timberland, or land zoned timberland production located on the Valley floor where the project site is located.

Regulatory Setting

State

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The California Department of Conservation administers the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), which evaluates the quality of farmlands throughout the State. The suitability of the local soil resources plays a crucial part in the FMMP's farmland classifications. The FMMP uses the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA NRCS) soil survey information, land inventory, and monitoring criteria to classify most of the state's agricultural regions into five agricultural and three nonagricultural land types. Every two years, the FMMP publishes this information in its Important Farmland map series. The five agricultural land classifications are described below.

> ***Prime Farmland:*** Farmland with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long term agricultural production. This land has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

Farmland of Statewide Importance: Farmland similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to hold and store moisture. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

Unique Farmland: Farmland of less quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated, but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California. Land must have been cropped at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

Farmland of Local Importance: Land of importance to the local agricultural economy as determined by each county's board of supervisors and a local advisory committee. In some counties, Confined Animal Agriculture facilities are part of Farmland of Local Importance, but they are shown separately.

Grazing Land: Land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock. This category was developed in cooperation with the California Cattlemen's Association, University of California Cooperative Extension, and other groups interested in the extent of grazing activities.

California Land Conservation Act of 1965 ("Williamson Act")

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, better known as the Williamson Act, has been the state's premier agricultural land protection program since its enactment. The Williamson Act preserves agricultural and open space lands through property tax incentives and voluntary restrictive use contracts. Private landowners voluntarily restrict their land to agricultural and compatible open-space uses under minimum 10-year rolling term contracts with local governments. In return, restricted parcels are assessed for property tax purposes at a rate consistent with their actual income-producing use, rather than potential market value.

Local

Fresno County General Plan

The Agriculture and Land Use Element of the Fresno County General Plan contains policies that seek to sustain agriculture by protecting agricultural activities from incompatible land uses, promoting agricultural land preservation programs, developing programs to preserve or maintain soil conditions or improve soil productivity, facilitating agricultural production by supplying adequate land for support services, and controlling expansion of non-agricultural development onto productive agricultural lands.

- Goal LU-A: To promote the long-term conservation of productive and potentially productive agricultural lands and to accommodate agricultural-support services and agriculturally-related activities that support the viability of agriculture and further the County's economic development goals.
- Policy LU-A.1: The County shall maintain agriculturally-designated areas for agriculture use and shall direct urban growth away from valuable agricultural lands to cities, unincorporated communities, and other areas planned for such development where public facilities and infrastructure are available.
- Policy LU-A.13: The County shall protect agricultural operations from conflicts with nonagricultural uses by requiring buffers between proposed non-agricultural uses and adjacent agricultural operations.
- Policy LU-A.14: The County shall ensure that the review of discretionary permits includes an assessment of the conversion of productive agricultural land and that mitigation be required where appropriate.
- Program LU-A.E: The County shall continue to implement the County's Right-to-Farm Ordinance, and will provide information to the local real estate industry to help make the public aware of the right-to-farm provisions in their area.

Fresno County Right-to-Farm Ordinance

For certain activities within 300 feet of an AE Zone District, Section 17.72.075(A) of the Fresno County Code of Ordinances requires the recordation with the Fresno County Recorder of a notice by which residents of property in

or near agricultural districts acknowledge potential inconveniences and discomfort associated with normal farm activities.

Fresno County Zoning Ordinance

The Fresno County Zoning Ordinance includes two primary zoning designations for agricultural areas: the "AE" (Exclusive Agricultural) Zone District and the "AL" (Limited Agricultural) Zone District. The AE Zone District is intended to be an exclusive district for agriculture and for those uses which are necessary and an integral part of the agricultural operation. This district is intended to protect the general welfare of the agricultural community from encroachments of non-related agricultural uses which by their nature would be injurious to the physical and economic well-being of the agricultural district. There are no AE-zoned parcels in the immediate vicinity of the project site; the nearest AE-zone parcels are located one mile east of the project site to the east of Minnewawa Avenue.

The AL Zone District is a limited agricultural district intended to protect the general welfare of the agricultural community by limiting intensive uses in agricultural areas where such uses may be incompatible with, or injurious to, other less intensive agricultural operations. The AL Zone District is also intended to reserve and hold certain lands for future urban use by permitting limited agriculture and by regulating those more intensive agricultural uses which, by their nature, may be injurious to non-agricultural uses in the vicinity or inconsistent with the express purpose of reservation for future urban use. The 39.21-acre project site parcel is bordered to the north, east, and west by parcels that are zoned AL-20 (Limited Agricultural, 20-acre minimum parcel size).

City of Fresno General Plan

While recognizing that the County of Fresno retains the primary responsibility for agricultural land use policies and the protection and advancement of farming operations, one of the overall goals set forth in the City of Fresno General Plan is to support agriculture and food production as an integral industry. The General Plan calls for emphasizing the economic and cultural role of Fresno as a center of agriculture and food production systems by conserving farmland through a focus on developing vacant and underutilized land within the established Sphere of Influence of the City, limiting any further urban boundary expansion, and developing urban agriculture within the city and designated growth areas (City of Fresno General Plan, p. 1-6). The General Plan also establishes a "Buffer" land use designation that is intended to separate urban uses from long-term agricultural uses in order to preserve long-term viable agricultural areas. Additionally, for unincorporated land within the City's Planning Area, General Plan Policy RC-9-b directs the City to express opposition to residential and commercial development proposals in unincorporated areas within or adjacent to the Planning Area when these proposals would contribute to the premature conversion of agricultural, open space, or grazing lands.

Discussion of Impacts

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?

According to the Department of Conservation's Important Farmland Map for Fresno County, the 39.21-acre parcel on which the project would be located contains a combination of Prime Farmland (approximately 35.01 acres) and Rural Residential Land (approximately 4.2 acres). While the site has historically supported farming, no farming has occurred at the site since the end of 2017.

In response to the project's preliminary Request for Consultation that was distributed in March 2020, the Department of Conservation submitted a comment letter which included comments and recommendations regarding the project's potential impacts on agricultural land and resources. Among other things, the comment letter notes that "the conversion of agricultural land represents a permanent reduction and significant impact to California's agricultural land resources," and the letter recommended that discussion of the following be included under the Agricultural Resources section of the EIR: 1) Type, amount, and location of farmland

conversion resulting directly and indirectly from implementation of the proposed project. 2) Impacts on any current and future agricultural operations in the vicinity; e.g., land-use conflicts, increases in land values and taxes, loss of agricultural support infrastructure such as processing facilities, etc. 3) Incremental impacts leading to cumulative impacts on agricultural land. 4) Proposed mitigation measures for all impacted agricultural lands within the proposed project area.

To ensure thorough consideration of potential project impacts related to agricultural resources, the 39.21-acre parcel[3] was evaluated using the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment ("LESA") Model to identify the potentially significant impact of the loss of agricultural land as well as the economic viability of future agricultural use of the property. The LESA Model evaluates measures of soil resource quality, a given project's size, water resource availability, surrounding agricultural lands, and surrounding protected resource lands. For a given project, the factors are rated, weighted, and combined, resulting in a single numeric score ranging from 0 to 100. The project score then becomes the basis for determining a project's potential significance relative to the loss or conversion of agriculture or farmland. Table 4.2-A presents a breakdown of the model's scoring thresholds:

Table 4.2-A.
California LESA Model Scoring Thresholds

Point Range	Level of Significance
0 to 39 points	Not Considered Significant
40 to 59 points	Considered Significant only if LE and SA subscores are each greater than or equal to 20 points
60 to 79 points	Considered Significant unless either LE or SA subscore is less than 20 points
80 to 100 points	Considered Significant

Table 4.2-B shows the LESA score for the project site based on factors present at the site and its surrounding area (see the LESA scoring worksheet, included as part of Appendix A, for more detailed project scoring information). As shown in Table 4.2-B, the project site's LESA score is 54.46, which the LESA Model only considered significant if the LE and SA subscores are each greater than or equal to 20 points. Since the site's SA score is only 17.25, the conversion to nonagricultural use is not considered significant under the LESA Model.

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[3] Although the footprint of the proposed campus is planned to encompass only 20 acres, the entire 39.21-acre parcel was evaluated.

Table 4.2-B
Project Site LESA Model Evaluation

	Factor Score	Factor Weight	Weighted Score
LE Factors			
Land Capability Classification (LCC)	71.49	0.25	17.87
Storie Index	77.36	0.25	19.34
LE Subtotal		0.50	**37.21**
SA Factors			
Project Size	50.00	0.15	7.50
Water Resource Availability	65.00	0.15	9.75
Surrounding Agricultural Land	00.00	0.15	0.00
Surrounding Protected Resource Land	0.00	0.05	0.00
SA Subtotal		0.50	**17.25**
		Final LESA Score:	**54.46**

Source: Odell Planning & Research, 2021

In addition to the determination reached using the LESA Model, and as discussed in more detail under Section 4.2(e), the conversion of the project site to non-agricultural use has been previously anticipated and evaluated as part of the long-range planning activities conducted by both the City of Fresno and Fresno County. Conversion of the Farmland on the project size to non-agricultural use would not result in impacts different from what has been previously evaluated by those agencies. Based on these factors, the project's impact with respect to Farmland conversion is considered less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

The project site does not have an agricultural zoning designation and is not subject to a Williamson Act contract.

Level of Impact: No impact.

c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forestland, timberland, or timberland zoned timberland production?

No impacts regarding forestry resources would occur. There are no forestland or timberland areas or areas zoned for timberland production within the greater Fresno area where the project site is located.

Level of Impact: No impact.

d. Result in the loss of forestland or conversion of forestland to non-forest use?

Based on information presented in Section 4.2(c) above, no impact would occur.

Level of Impact: No impact.

e. Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forestland to non-forest use?

Development and operation of the First Responders Campus would not result in changes to the existing environment that would lead to significant impacts involving the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use. The project site is located within the City of Fresno's Sphere of Influence, which is where urbanized growth and development is intended to be directed per the long-range planning policies of both the City of Fresno and the County of Fresno. No areas within the City's SOI in the vicinity of the project (i.e., areas to the north of North Avenue) are designated for future agricultural use in the City of Fresno General Plan. The surrounding areas within the SOI that are currently in use as agriculture are zoned AL-20 (Fresno County), which is a reserve/buffer zoning designation for agricultural areas that are planned to eventually urbanize. It is noted that the eastern approximately 20 acres of the project site is not planned for development by SCCCD and will act as a buffer area between the areas north and east of the project site that are still in agricultural use.

In the area immediately south of the project site (i.e., 0.5 miles south of North Avenue between Chestnut and Peach Avenues), almost all of the land is designated for industrial use and has been built out in that manner. There is only a small area zoned for agriculture (two neighboring parcels, totaling about 7 acres), but this area does not include any agricultural development and is of a size that is considered too small to support agriculture.

The physical form and operational character of this special-purpose campus would be similar to the already-existing urbanized uses in the vicinity, and the eastern approximately 20 acres of the project site is not planned for development by SCCCD. As such, its development and operation is not anticipated to result in unplanned urbanization or other premature conversion of Farmland or agricultural areas. Regarding forestland, as mentioned in Sections 6.2(c) and (d), there is no forestland present which could be affected by the project. Based on these factors, this impact is considered less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

4.3 Air Quality

This section is based primarily on the Air Quality Impact Analysis prepared for the project, which is included as Appendix B of this EIR.

Environmental Setting

Topography, Meteorology, and Pollutant Dispersion

The project is located within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB). The SJVAB is within the jurisdiction of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD). Air quality in the SJVAB is influenced by a variety of factors, including topography, meteorology, climate, and atmospheric stability and inversions. (Refer to Appendix B for a more detailed discussion of these factors.)

Air pollutants of Concern

The Federal Clean Air Act (FCAA) required that the U.S. EPA establish National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for various pollutants. These pollutants are referred to as "criteria" pollutants because the U.S. EPA publishes criteria documents to justify the choice of standards. These standards define the maximum amount an air pollutant can be present in ambient air. An ambient air quality standard is generally specified as a concentration averaged over a specific time period, such as 1 hour, 8 hours, 24 hours, or 1 year. The different averaging times and concentrations are meant to protect against different exposure effects. Standards established for the protection of human health are referred to as primary standards; whereas, standards established for the prevention of environmental and property damage are called secondary standards. The FCAA allows states to adopt additional or more health-protective standards. Additionally, the State of California has established air quality standards for some pollutants not addressed by Federal standards. The ARB has established State standards for H2S, sulfates, vinyl chloride, and visibility reducing particles. Table 4.3-A provides descriptions of federal and state air pollutants of concern, including the pollutants' physical properties, sources, and the adverse effects to human health and other conditions.

Table 4.3-A
List of Air Pollutants

U.S. EPA Criteria Air Pollutants

Carbon Monoxide (CO): A colorless, odorless gas resulting from the incomplete combustion of hydrocarbon fuels. CO interferes with the blood's ability to carry oxygen to the body's tissues and results in numerous adverse health effects. Over 80 percent of the CO emitted in urban areas is contributed by motor vehicles. CO is a criteria air pollutant.

Hydrogen Sulfide (H_2S): A gas associated with geothermal activity, oil and gas production, refining, sewage treatment plants, and confined animal feeding operations. H_2S is extremely hazardous in high concentrations; especially in enclosed spaces (800 parts per million [ppm] can cause death). The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulates workplace exposure to H_2S.

Lead (Pb): A metal that is a natural constituent of air, water, and the biosphere. Pb is neither created nor destroyed in the environment, so it essentially persists forever. The health effects of Pb poisoning include loss of appetite, weakness, apathy, and miscarriage. Pb can also cause lesions of the neuromuscular system, circulatory system, brain, and gastrointestinal tract. Gasoline-powered automobile engines were a major source of airborne Pb through the use of leaded fuels. The use of leaded fuel has been mostly phased out, with the result that ambient concentrations of Pb have dropped dramatically.

Nitrogen Oxides (Oxides of Nitrogen, NO_x): A family of gaseous nitrogen compounds and is a precursor to the formation of O3 and particulate matter. Nitrogen oxides are typically created during combustion processes and are major contributors to smog formation and acid deposition. NO_2 is a criteria air pollutant and may result in numerous adverse health effects.

Ozone (O_3): A reactive gas consisting of three atoms of oxygen. In the troposphere, it is a product of the photochemical process involving the sun's energy. It is a secondary pollutant that is formed when oxides of nitrogen and volatile organic compounds react in the presence of sunlight. O_3 at the earth's surface causes numerous adverse health effects and is a criteria pollutant. It is a major component of smog. In the stratosphere, O3 exists naturally and shields Earth from harmful ultraviolet radiation. High concentrations of ground-level O_3 can adversely affect the human respiratory system and aggravate cardiovascular disease and many respiratory ailments. O_3 also damages natural ecosystems such as forests and foothill communities, crops, and some man-made materials, such as rubber, paint, and plastics.

Particulate Matter (PM): A complex mixture of extremely small particles and liquid droplets. Particle pollution is made up of a number of components, including acids (such as nitrates and sulfates), organic chemicals, metals, and soil or dust particles. The size of particles is directly linked to their potential for causing health problems. U.S. EPA is concerned about particles that are 10 micrometers in diameter or smaller because those are the particles that generally pass through the throat and nose and enter the lungs. Once inhaled, these particles can affect the heart and lungs and cause serious health effects. U.S. EPA groups particle pollution into three categories based on their size and where they are deposited (ARB 2020c):

- "Inhalable coarse particles (PM_{10})," such as those found near roadways and dusty industries, are between 2.5 and 10 micrometers in diameter. PM_{10} is deposited in the thoracic region of the lungs.
- "Fine particles ($PM_{2.5}$)," such as those found in smoke and haze, are 2.5 micrometers in diameter and smaller. These particles can be directly emitted from sources such as forest fires, or they can form when gases emitted from power plants, industries and automobiles react in the air. They penetrate deeply into the thoracic and alveolar regions of the lungs.
- “Ultrafine particles (UFP),” are very small particles less than 0.1 micrometers in diameter largely resulting from the combustion of fossils fuels, meat, wood, and other hydrocarbons. While UFP mass is a small portion of $PM_{2.5}$, its high surface area, deep lung penetration, and transfer into the bloodstream can result in disproportionate health impacts relative to their mass.

Generally speaking, $PM_{2.5}$ and UFP are emitted by combustion sources like vehicles, power generation, industrial processes, and wood burning, while PM_{10} sources include these same sources plus roads and farming activities. Fugitive windblown dust and other area sources also represent a source of airborne dust.

Reactive Organic Gas (ROG): A reactive chemical gas, composed of hydrocarbon compounds that may contribute to the formation of smog by their involvement in atmospheric chemical reactions. No separate health standards exist for ROG as a group. Because some compounds that make up ROG are also toxic, like the carcinogen benzene, they are often evaluated as part of a toxic risk assessment. Total Organic Gases (TOGs) include all of the ROGs, in addition to low reactivity organic compounds like methane and acetone. ROGs and volatile organic compounds are subsets of TOG.

Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2): A strong smelling, colorless gas that is formed by the combustion of fossil fuels. Power plants, which may use coal or oil high in sulfur content, can be major sources of SO_2 and other sulfur oxides contribute to the problem of acid deposition. SO_2 is a criteria air pollutant.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC): Hydrocarbon compounds that exist in the ambient air. VOCs contribute to the formation of smog and may also be toxic. VOC emissions are a major precursor to the formation of O_3. VOCs often have an odor, and some examples include gasoline, alcohol, and the solvents used in paints.

State of California ARB Air Pollutants

Sulfates (SO_4^{2-}): The fully oxidized ionic form of sulfur. Sulfates occur in combination with metal and/or hydrogen ions. In California, emissions of sulfur compounds occur primarily from the combustion of petroleum-derived fuels (e.g., gasoline and diesel fuel) that contain sulfur. This sulfur is oxidized to SO_2 during the combustion process and subsequently converted to SO_4^{2-} compounds in the atmosphere. The conversion of SO_2 to SO_4^{2-} takes place rapidly and completely in urban areas of California due to regional meteorological features.

The ARB SO_4^{2-} standard is designed to prevent aggravation of respiratory symptoms. Effects of SO42-exposure at levels above the standard include a decrease in ventilator function, aggravation of asthmatic symptoms, and an increased risk of cardiopulmonary disease. SO42- are particularly effective in degrading visibility, and, because they are usually acidic, can harm ecosystems and damage materials and property.

Visibility Reducing Particles: A mixture of suspended particulate matter consisting of dry solid fragments, solid cores with liquid coatings, and small droplets of liquid. The standard is intended to limit the frequency and severity of visibility impairment due to regional haze and is equivalent to a 10-mile nominal visual range.

Vinyl Chloride (C_2H_3Cl): A colorless gas that does not occur naturally. It is formed when other substances such as trichloroethane, trichloroethylene, and tetrachloro-ethylene are broken down. Vinyl chloride is used to make polyvinyl chloride (PVC) which is used to make a variety of plastic products, including pipes, wire and cable coatings, and packaging materials.

Ambient Air Quality

Air pollutant concentrations were measured at two monitoring stations in Fresno County. The Fresno-Drummond Street (4706 East Drummond Avenue) monitoring station and Fresno-Hamilton and Winery (Hamilton and Winery) monitoring station are the closest representative monitoring sites to the proposed project site with sufficient data to meet U.S. EPA and/or ARB criteria for quality assurance. The monitoring stations provide ambient concentrations of O_3, NO_2, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$. Ambient monitoring data was obtained for the last 3 years of available measurement data (i.e., 2017 through 2019) and are summarized in Table 4.3-B. As depicted, the state and national O_3 standards, state PM_{10} standards, and national $PM_{2.5}$ standards were exceeded on numerous occasions during the past 3 years.

Table 4.3-B: Summary of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Data

Measurement Criteria	2017	2018	2019
Ozone[1]			
Maximum concentration (1-hour/8-hour average)	0.125/0.104	0.119/0.097	0.099/0.080
Number of days state 1-hour standard exceeded	8	6	1
Number of days state/national 8-hour standard exceeded	31/29	34/32	11/10
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)[1]			
Maximum concentration (1-hour average)	64.7	75.9	42.3
Annual average	NA	13	NA
Number of days state/national standard exceeded	0/0	0/0	0/0
Suspended Particulate Matter (PM_{10})[1]			
Maximum concentration (state/national)	120.5/115.6	154.8/152.2	181.3/175.6
Number of days state standard exceeded (measured/calculated[3])	17/112	19/116	13/78
Number of days national standard exceeded (measured/calculated[3])	0/0	0/0	1/6
Suspended Particulate Matter ($PM_{2.5}$)[2]			
Maximum concentration (state/national)	88.3/88.3	89.8/89.8	44.7/44.7
Annual Average (state/national)	15.0/15.0	NA/17.1	NA/11.2
Number of days national standard exceeded	9	11	3

ppm = parts per million by volume; $\mu g/m^3$ = micrograms per cubic meter; NA = not available

1. Ambient O_3, NO_2, and PM_{10} data were obtained from the Fresno-Drummond Street (4706 East Drummond Avenue) monitoring station.

2. Ambient $PM_{2.5}$ data were obtained from the Fresno-Hamilton and Winery (Hamilton and Winery) monitoring station.

3. Measured days are those days that an actual measurement was greater than the standard. Calculated days are the estimated number of days that measurement would have been greater than the level of the standard had measurements been collected every day.

Source: ARB 2020

Odors

Odors are generally regarded as an annoyance rather than a health hazard. However, manifestations of a person's reaction to foul odors can range from the psychological (i.e., irritation, anger, or anxiety) to the physiological, including circulatory and respiratory effects, nausea, vomiting, and headache. The ability to detect odors varies considerably among the population and overall is quite subjective. Some individuals have the ability to smell very minute quantities of specific substances; others may not have the same sensitivity but may have sensitivities to odors of other substances. In addition, people may have different reactions to the same odor. An odor that is offensive to one person may be perfectly acceptable to another (e.g., fast food restaurant). It is important to also note that an unfamiliar odor is more easily detected and is more likely to cause complaints than a familiar one. This is because of the phenomenon known as odor fatigue, in which a person can become desensitized to almost any odor and recognition only occurs with an alteration in the intensity.

Neither the state nor the federal government has adopted rules or regulations for the control of odor sources. The SJVAPCD does not have an individual rule or regulation that specifically addresses odors; however, odors would be subject to SJVAPCD Rule 4102 (Nuisance). Any actions related to odors would be based on citizen complaints to the local government and the SJVAPCD.

Sensitive Receptors

One of the most important reasons for air quality standards is the protection of those members of the population who are most sensitive to the adverse health effects of air pollution, termed "sensitive receptors." The term refers to specific population groups, as well as the land uses where individuals would reside for long periods. Commonly identified sensitive population groups are children, the elderly, the acutely ill, and the chronically ill. Commonly

identified sensitive land uses would include facilities that house or attract children, the elderly, people with illnesses, or others who are especially sensitive to the effects of air pollutants. Residential dwellings, schools, parks, playgrounds, day care centers, convalescent homes, and hospitals are examples of sensitive land uses.

Nearby existing land uses include residential, agriculture, industrial, commercial, and utility uses. The nearest sensitive land uses located in the vicinity of the proposed project site include residential dwellings, which are located approximately 35 feet west of the western property boundary and approximately 100 feet east of the eastern project boundary along Willow Avenue.

Regulatory Setting

Federal

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

At the federal level, the U.S. EPA has been charged with implementing national air quality programs. The U.S. EPA's air quality mandates are drawn primarily from the FCAA, which was signed into law in 1970. Congress substantially amended the FCAA in 1977 and again in 1990.

Federal Clean Air Act

The FCAA required the U.S. EPA to establish NAAQS, and also set deadlines for their attainment. Two types of NAAQS have been established: primary standards, which protect public health, and secondary standards, which protect public welfare from non-health-related adverse effects, such as visibility restrictions. NAAQS are summarized in Table AQ-1 of the Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impact Analysis (Appendix B).

The FCAA also required each state to prepare an air quality control plan referred to as a State Implementation Plan (SIP). The FCAA Amendments of 1990 added requirements for states with nonattainment areas to revise their SIPs to incorporate additional control measures to reduce air pollution. The SIP is periodically modified to reflect the latest emissions inventories, planning documents, and rules and regulations of the air basins as reported by their jurisdictional agencies. The U.S. EPA has a responsibility to review all state SIPs to determine conformance with the mandates of the FCAA, and the amendments thereof, and determine if implementation will achieve air quality goals. If the U.S. EPA determines a SIP to be inadequate, a Federal Implementation Plan (FIP) may be prepared for the nonattainment area that imposes additional control measures.

Toxic Substances Control Act

The Toxic Substances Control Act first authorized the U.S. EPA to regulate asbestos in schools and public and commercial buildings under Title II of the law, which is also known as the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). AHERA requires Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to inspect their schools for asbestos-containing building materials (ACBM) and prepare management plans to reduce the asbestos hazard. The Act also established a program for the training and accreditation of individuals performing certain types of asbestos work.

National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants

Pursuant to the FCAA of 1970, the U.S. EPA established the NESHAP. These are technology-based source-specific regulations that limit allowable emissions of hazardous air pollutants.

State

California Air Resources Board

The ARB is the agency responsible for coordination and oversight of state and local air pollution control programs in California and for implementing the CCAA of 1988. Other ARB duties include monitoring air quality (in conjunction with air monitoring networks maintained by air pollution control districts (APCD) and air quality management districts), establishing CAAQS, which in many cases are more stringent than the NAAQS, and setting emissions standards for new motor vehicles. The CAAQS are summarized in Table AQ-1. The emission standards established for motor vehicles differ depending on various factors including the model year, and the type of vehicle, fuel, and engine used.

California Clean Air Act

The CCAA requires that all air districts in the state endeavor to achieve and maintain CAAQS for O3, CO, SO2, and NO2 by the earliest practical date. The CCAA specifies that districts focus particular attention on reducing the emissions from transportation and area-wide emission sources, and the act provides districts with authority to regulate indirect sources. Each district plan is required to either (1) achieve a 5 percent annual reduction, averaged over consecutive 3-year periods, in district-wide emissions of each non-attainment pollutant or its precursors, or (2) to provide for implementation of all feasible measures to reduce emissions. Any planning effort for air quality attainment would thus need to consider both state and federal planning requirements.

California Assembly Bill (AB) 170

AB 170, Reyes, was adopted by state lawmakers in 2003 creating Government Code Section 65302.1 which requires cities and counties in the San Joaquin Valley to amend their general plans to include data and analysis, comprehensive goals, policies, and feasible implementation strategies designed to improve air quality.

Assembly Bills 1807 & 2588 - Toxic Air Contaminants

Within California, TACs are regulated primarily through AB 1807 (Tanner Air Toxics Act) and AB 2588 (Air Toxics Hot Spots Information and Assessment Act of 1987). The Tanner Air Toxics Act sets forth a formal procedure for ARB to designate substances as TACs. This includes research, public participation, and scientific peer review before ARB designates a substance as a TAC. Existing sources of TACs that are subject to the Air Toxics Hot Spots Information and Assessment Act are required to: (1) prepare a toxic emissions inventory; (2) prepare a risk assessment if emissions are significant; (3) notify the public of significant risk levels; and (4) prepare and implement risk reduction measures.

The primary TACs of concern within the State of California include: Diesel Particulate Matter (DPM), Acetaldehyde, Benzene, 1,3-butadiene, Carbon Tetrachloride, Hexavalent Chromium, Para-Dichlorobenzene, Formaldehyde, Methylene Chloride, and Perchloroethylene. (Refer to Appendix B for more detailed descriptions of these TACs and their related health effects.)

California Air Resources Board's Truck and Bus Regulation

This regulation requires fleets that operate in California to reduce diesel truck and bus emissions by retrofitting or replacing existing engines. Amendments were adopted in December 2010 to provide more time for fleets to comply. The amended regulation required installation of PM retrofits beginning January 1, 2012, and replacement of older trucks starting January 1, 2015. By January 1, 2023, nearly all vehicles would need to have 2010 model year engines or equivalent.

The regulation applies to nearly all privately and federally owned diesel-fueled trucks and buses and privately and publicly owned school buses with a gross vehicle weight rating greater than 14,000 pounds. The regulation has provisions to provide extra credit for PM filters installed prior to July 2011, has delayed requirements for fleets with 3 or fewer vehicles, provisions for agricultural vehicles and other situations.

Airborne Toxic Control Measure to Limit School Bus Idling at Schools

ARB has approved an airborne toxic control measure (ATCM) that limits school bus idling and idling at or near schools to only when necessary for safety or operational concerns. The ATCM requires a driver of a school bus or vehicle, transit bus, or other commercial motor vehicles to manually turn off the bus or vehicle engine upon arriving at a school and to restart no more than 30 seconds before departing. A driver of a school bus or vehicle is subject to the same requirement when operating within 100 feet of a school and is prohibited from idling more than 5 minutes at each stop beyond schools, such as parking or maintenance facilities, school bus stops, or school activity destinations. A driver of a transit bus or other commercial motor vehicle is prohibited from idling more than 5 minutes at each stop within 100 feet of a school. Idling necessary for health, safety, or operational concerns is exempt from these restrictions. In addition, the ATCM requires a motor carrier of an affected bus or vehicle to ensure that drivers are informed of the idling requirements, track complaints and enforcement actions, and keep records of these driver education and tracking activities. This ATCM became effective in July 2003.

Local

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD)

The SJVAPCD is the agency primarily responsible for ensuring that NAAQS and CAAQS are not exceeded and that air quality conditions are maintained in the SJVAB, within which the proposed project is located. Responsibilities of the SJVAPCD include, but are not limited to, preparing plans for the attainment of ambient air quality standards, adopting and enforcing rules and regulations concerning sources of air pollution, issuing permits for stationary sources of air pollution, inspecting stationary sources of air pollution and responding to citizen complaints, monitoring ambient air quality and meteorological conditions, and implementing programs and regulations required by the FCAA and the CCAA. The SJVAPCD Rules and Regulations that are applicable to the proposed project include, but are not limited to, the following:

- *Regulation VIII (Fugitive PM10 Prohibitions) and Regulation VIII (Rules 8011-8081).* This regulation is a series of rules designed to reduce particulate emissions generated by human activity, including construction and demolition activities, carryout and track out, paved and unpaved roads, bulk material handling and storage, unpaved vehicle/traffic areas, open space areas, etc.
- *Rule 4002 (NESHAP).* This rule may apply to projects in which portions of an existing building would be renovated, partially demolished or removed. With regard to asbestos, the NESHAP specifies work practices to be followed during renovation, demolition or other abatement activities when friable asbestos is involved. Prior to demolition activity, an asbestos survey of the existing structure may be required to identify the presence of any ACBM. Removal of identified ACBM must be removed by a certified asbestos contractor in accordance with OSHA requirements.
- *Rule 4102 (Nuisance).* This rule applies to any source operation that emits or may emit air contaminants or other materials.
- *Rule 4103 (Open Burning).* This rule regulates the use of open burning and specifies the types of materials that may be open burned. Section 5.1 of this rule prohibits the burning of trees and other vegetative (non-agricultural) material whenever the land is being developed for non-agricultural purposes.
- *Rule 4601 (Architectural Coatings).* This rule limits volatile organic compounds from architectural coatings.
- *Rule 4641 (Cutback, Slow Cure, and Emulsified Asphalt, Paving and Maintenance Operations).* This rule applies to the manufacture and use of cutback, slow cure, and emulsified asphalt during paving and maintenance operations.
- *Rule 9510 (Indirect Source Review [ISR]).* This rule requires developers of larger residential, commercial, recreational, and industrial projects to reduce smog-forming and particulate emissions from their projects' baselines. If project emissions still exceed the minimum baseline reductions, a project's developer will be required to mitigate the difference by paying an off-site fee to the District, which would then be used to fund clean-air projects. For projects subject to this rule, the ISR rule requires developers to mitigate and/or offset emissions sufficient to achieve: (1) 20-percent reduction of construction equipment exhaust NOx; (2) 45-percent reduction of construction equipment exhaust PM10; (3) 33-percent reduction of operational NOx over 10 years; and (4) 50-percent reduction of operational PM10 over 10 years. SJVAPCD ISR applications must be filed "no later than applying for a final discretionary approval with a public agency."

Discussion of Impacts

Would the project:

a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

In accordance with SJVAPCD-recommended methodology for the assessment of air quality impacts, projects that result in significant air quality impacts at the project level are also considered to have a significant cumulative air quality impact. As subsequently noted in Section 4.3(b), short-term construction and long-term operational emissions would not exceed applicable thresholds. In addition, the proposed project's contribution

to localized concentrations of emissions, including emissions of CO, TACs, and odors, are considered less than significant. However, as noted in Section 4.3(c), the proposed project could result in a significant contribution to localized PM concentrations for which the SJVAB is currently designated non-attainment. For this reason, implementation of the proposed project could conflict with air quality attainment or maintenance planning efforts. This impact would be considered potentially significant.

Level of Impact: Potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures: Implement Mitigation Measures AQ-1 through AQ-9

Level of Significance after Mitigation: With mitigation, short-term construction activities would be required to comply with SJVPACD Regulation VIII (Fugitive PM10 Prohibitions). Mandatory compliance with SJVAPCD Regulation VIII would reduce emissions of fugitive dust from the project site and minimize the project's potential to adversely affect nearby sensitive receptors. Compliance with SJVAPCD Regulation VIII would reduce fugitive emissions of PM by approximately 50 percent, or more. Additional measures have also been included to minimize emissions generated by onsite equipment and vehicles. With mitigation, this impact would be considered less than significant.

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

The proposed project is located in the County of Fresno, which is within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB). The SJVAB is designated as a nonattainment area with respect to the state O_3, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ standards; and the national 8-hour O_3 and $PM_{2.5}$ standards. Potential air quality impacts associated with the proposed project could potentially occur during project construction or operational phases. Short-term construction and long-term air quality impacts associated with the proposed project are discussed, as follows:

Short-term Construction Emissions

Short-term increases in emissions would occur during the construction process. Construction-generated emissions are of temporary duration, lasting only as long as construction activities occur, but have the potential to cause a significant air quality impact. The construction of the proposed project would result in the temporary generation of emissions associated with site grading and excavation, paving, motor vehicle exhaust from construction equipment and worker trips, and the movement of construction equipment on unpaved surfaces.

Estimated annual construction-generated emissions are summarized in Table 4.3-C. As shown there, construction of the proposed project would generate maximum annual emissions of approximately 0.51 tons/year of ROG, 2.18 tons/year of NOx, 2.26 tons/year of CO, less than 0.01 tons/year of SO2, 0.35 tons/year of PM10, and 0.21 tons/year of PM2.5. Estimated construction-generated annual emissions would not exceed the SJVAPCD's significance thresholds of 10 tons/year of ROG, 10 tons/year of NOx, 100 tons/year of CO, 27 tons/year of SOx,15 tons/year of PM10, or 15 tons/year of PM2.5.

Construction of the proposed project would generate maximum daily on-site emissions of approximately 3.78 pounds/day of ROG, 18.47 pounds/day of NOx, 17.62 pounds/day of CO, 0.03 pounds/day of SO2, 2.36 pounds/day of PM10, and 1.50 pounds/day of PM2.5. Estimated construction-generated daily on-site emissions would not exceed the SJVAPCD's significance thresholds of 100 pounds/day of ROG, 100 pounds/day of NOx, 100 pounds/day of CO, 100 pounds/day of SOx, 100 pounds/day of PM10, or 100 pounds/day of PM2.5.

Table 4.3-C
Annual and Daily Construction Emissions (Unmitigated) – Tons/Year

Year	ROG	NO_X	CO	SO_2	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
2021	0.15	1.51	1.07	0.00	0.35	0.21
2022	0.24	2.18	2.26	0.00	0.16	0.11
2023	0.51	0.73	0.88	0.00	0.05	0.04
Maximum	*0.51*	*2.18*	*2.26*	*0.00*	*0.35*	*0.21*
SJVAPCD Significance Thresholds:	10	10	100	27	15	15
Exceeds Significance Thresholds?	No	No	No	No	No	No
Daily Emissions (lbs/day)	3.78	18.47	17.62	0.03	2.36	1.50
SJVAPCD Significance Thresholds:	100	100	100	100	100	100
Exceeds Significance Thresholds?	No	No	No	No	No	No

lbs/day = Pounds per day

Source: Ambient 2021. Refer to the Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Impact Analysis (Appendix B) for modeling results and assumptions.

Short-term construction of the proposed project would not result in a significant impact to regional or local air quality conditions. Furthermore, it is important to note that project construction, including excavation and grading activities, would be required to comply with SJVPACD Regulation VIII (Fugitive PM_{10} Prohibitions). Compliance with SJVAPCD Regulation VIII would reduce emissions of PM by approximately 50 percent, or more. Given that project-generated emissions would not exceed applicable SJVAPCD significance thresholds, this impact would be considered less than significant.

Long-term Operational Emissions

Long-term operational emissions from the project would include emissions associated with area sources, energy use, mobile sources, and live fire training exercises. Area sources include the use of architectural coatings and landscape maintenance activities. Energy use includes emissions associated with natural gas and electricity use. Mobile sources reflect emissions that would occur from vehicle trips to and from the project. Emissions from live fire training include emissions from Class A (solid) fuel, (typically wood pallets and straw) used approximately 10 to 15 days out of the year; Class B (gas) fuel, (propane); and off-road equipment (gas-powered chainsaws, rotary saws, and positive pressure fans).

Estimated annual operational emissions for the anticipated opening year (year 2024) of the proposed project are summarized in Table 4.3-D. As depicted, the proposed project would result in annual operational emissions of approximately 1.02 tons/year of ROG, 3.83 tons/year of NO_X, 6.98 tons/year of CO, 0.05 tons/year of SO_2, 2.07 tons/year of PM_{10}, and 0.66 tons/year of $PM_{2.5}$ during the initial year of operation. Estimated operational-generated annual emissions would not exceed the SJVAPCD's significance thresholds of 10 tons/year of ROG, 10 tons/year of NO_X, 100 tons/year of CO, 27 tons/year of SO_X,15 tons/year of PM_{10}, or 15 tons/year of $PM_{2.5}$.

Operation of the proposed project would generate maximum daily on-site emissions of approximately 7.87 pounds/day of ROG, 29.47 pounds/day of NO_X, 53.68 pounds/day of CO, 0.39 pounds/day of SO_2, 15.91 pounds/day of PM_{10}, and 5.04 pounds/day of $PM_{2.5}$. Estimated operational-generated daily on-site emissions would not exceed the SJVAPCD's significance thresholds of 100 pounds/day of ROG, 100 pounds/day of NO_X, 100 pounds/day of CO, 100 pounds/day of SO_X, 100 pounds/day of PM_{10}, or 100 pounds/day of $PM_{2.5}$.

Table 4.3-D
Annual and Daily Operational Emissions (Unmitigated) – Tons/Year

Category	ROG	NO_X	CO	SO_2	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
Area	0.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Energy	0.01	0.07	0.06	0.00	0.01	0.01
Live Fire Training	0.40	0.08	2.95	0.02	0.35	0.18
Mobile Source	0.32	3.68	3.97	0.03	1.46	0.42
Total:	1.02	3.83	6.98	0.05	2.07	0.66
SJVAPCD Significance Thresholds (tons):	10	10	100	27	15	15
Exceeds Thresholds/Significant Impact?:	No	No	No	No	No	No
Average Daily On-site Emissions (lbs)[4]:	7.87	29.47	53.68	0.39	15.91	5.04
SJVAPCD Significance Thresholds (lbs/day):	100	100	100	100	100	100
Exceeds Thresholds/Significant Impact?:	No	No	No	No	No	No

lbs/day = Pounds per day

Includes mobile source emission adjustments to account for SAFE Vehicles Rule Part One.

Source: Ambient 2021. Refer to the Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Impact Analysis (Appendix B) for modeling results and assumptions.

Long-term operation of the proposed project would not result in a significant impact to regional or local air quality conditions. Operational emissions would be projected to decline in future years, with improvements in fuel consumption emissions standards. It is important to note that estimated operational emissions are conservatively based on the default vehicle fleet distribution assumptions contained in the model, which include contributions from medium and heavy-duty trucks. Mobile sources associated with the proposed land use would consist predominantly of light-duty vehicles. As a result, actual mobile source emissions would likely be less than estimated. Operational emissions would not exceed applicable SJVAPCD significance thresholds. This impact would be considered less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Sensitive land uses located in the vicinity of the proposed project site consist predominantly of residential land uses. The nearest residential land uses are located adjacent to the western boundary of the project site. Residential land uses are also located to the south and east of the project site (refer to Figure 1). Long- term operational and short-term construction activities and emission sources that could adversely impact these nearest sensitive receptors are discussed, as follows:

Long-term Operation

Localized Mobile-Source CO Emissions

Carbon monoxide is the primary criteria air pollutant of local concern associated with the proposed project. Under specific meteorological and operational conditions, such as near areas of heavily congested vehicle traffic, CO concentrations may reach unhealthy levels. If inhaled, CO can be absorbed easily by the blood stream and can inhibit oxygen delivery to the body, which can cause significant health effects ranging from slight headaches to death. The most serious effects are felt by individuals susceptible to oxygen deficiencies, including people with anemia and those suffering from chronic lung or heart disease.

Mobile-source emissions of CO are a direct function of traffic volume, speed, and delay. The transport of CO is extremely limited because it disperses rapidly with distance from the source under normal meteorological conditions. For this reason, modeling of mobile-source CO concentrations is typically recommended for sensitive land uses located near signalized roadway intersections that are projected to operate at unacceptable levels of

service (i.e., LOS E or F). Localized CO concentrations associated with the proposed project would be considered less than significant impact if: 1) traffic generated by the proposed project would not result in deterioration of a signalized intersection to a LOS of E or F; or 2) the project would not contribute additional traffic to a signalized intersection that already operates at LOS of E or F.

The nearest signalized intersection in the project area is located at Chestnut Avenue and North Avenue. The intersection is projected to operate at LOS F for cumulative (year 2040) no-project conditions and LOS F for cumulative with-project conditions. However, with the implementation of signalization, the intersection is projected to operate at LOS D, or better, for cumulative with-project conditions. (For reference, see the Traffic Impact Study included as Appendix E of this EIR.) As a result, the proposed project would not be anticipated to contribute substantially to localized CO concentrations that would exceed applicable standards. For this reason, this impact would be considered less than significant.

Toxic Air Contaminants

Implementation of the proposed project would not result in the long-term operation of any major onsite stationary sources of TACs, nor would project implementation result in a significant increase in diesel-fueled vehicles traveling along area roadways. No major stationary sources of TACs were identified in the project vicinity that would result in increased exposure of students and employees to TACs. For these reasons, long-term increases in exposure to TACs would be considered less than significant.

Short-term Construction

Naturally Occurring Asbestos

Naturally-occurring asbestos, which was identified by Air Resources Board (ARB) as a Toxic Air Contaminant (TAC) in 1986, is located in many parts of California and is commonly associated with ultramafic rock. The project site is not located near any areas that are likely to contain ultramafic rock (DOC 2000). As a result, risk of exposure to asbestos during the construction process would be considered less than significant.

Asbestos-Containing Materials

Demolition activities can have potential negative air quality impacts, including issues surrounding proper handling, demolition, and disposal of asbestos containing material (ACM). Asbestos containing materials could be encountered during demolition of existing buildings, particularly older structures constructed prior to 1970. Asbestos can also be found in various building products, including (but not limited to) utility pipes/pipelines (transite pipes or insulation on pipes). If a project will involve the disturbance or potential disturbance of ACM, various regulatory requirements may apply, including the requirements stipulated in the National Emission Standard for Hazardous Air Pollutants (40CFR61, Subpart M-Asbestos NESHAP). These requirements include but are not limited to: 1) notification, within at least 10 business days of activities commencing, to the APCD, 2) an asbestos survey conducted by a Certified Asbestos Consultant, and, 3) applicable removal and disposal requirements of identified ACM. The proposed project would not include the demolition of existing onsite structures. This impact is considered less than significant.

Lead-Coated Materials

Demolition of structures coated with lead-based paint can have potential negative air quality impacts and may adversely affect the health of nearby individuals. Lead-based paints could be encountered during demolition of existing buildings, particularly older structures constructed prior to 1978. Improper demolition can result in the release of lead-containing particles from the site. Sandblasting or removal of paint by heating with a heat gun can result in significant emissions of lead. In such instances, proper abatement of lead before demolition of these structures must be performed in order to prevent the release of lead from the site. Federal and State lead regulations, including the Lead in Construction Standard (29 CFR 1926.62) and California Code of Regulations (CCR Title 8, Section 1532.1, Lead) regulate disturbance of lead-containing materials during construction, demolition, and maintenance-related activities. Depending on removal method, a SJVAPCD permit may be

required. The proposed project would not include the demolition of existing onsite structures. This impact is considered less than significant.

Diesel-Exhaust Emissions

Implementation of the proposed project would result in the generation of Diesel Particulate Matter (DPM) emissions during construction associated with the use of off-road diesel equipment for site grading and excavation, paving, and other construction activities. Health-related risks associated with diesel-exhaust emissions are primarily associated with long-term exposure and associated risk of contracting cancer. For residential land uses, the calculation of cancer risk associated with exposure of to TACs are typically calculated based on a 25- to 30-year period of exposure. The use of diesel-powered construction equipment, however, would be temporary and episodic and would occur over a relatively large area. Assuming that construction activities involving the use of diesel-fueled equipment would occur over an approximate 18-month period, project-related construction activities would constitute less than six percent of the typical exposure period. As a result, exposure to construction-generated DPM would not be anticipated to exceed applicable thresholds (i.e., incremental increase in cancer risk of 20 in one million). In addition, implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-1 would result in further reductions of on-site DPM emissions. For these reasons, this impact would be considered less than significant.

Localized PM Concentrations

Fugitive dust emissions would be primarily associated with site preparation and grading, and vehicle travel on unpaved and paved surfaces. On-site off-road equipment and trucks would also result in short-term emissions of DPM, which could contribute to elevated localized concentration at nearby receptors. Uncontrolled emissions of fugitive dust may also contribute to increased occurrences of Valley Fever and potential increases in nuisance impacts to nearby receptors. For these reasons, localized uncontrolled concentrations of construction-generated PM would be considered to have a potentially significant impact.

Mitigation Measures:

MM AQ-1 through AQ-9: Measures to Reduce Localized Pollutant Concentrations

The following measures shall be implemented to reduce potential expose of sensitive receptors to localized pollutant concentrations associate with project construction. The term “construction” as used here shall refer broadly to pre-operational site preparation activities including, but not limited to, excavation, grading, and paving.

MM AQ-1. On-road diesel vehicles shall comply with Section 2485 of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations. This regulation limits idling from diesel-fueled commercial motor vehicles with gross vehicular weight ratings of more than 10,000 pounds and licensed for operation on highways. It applies to California and non-California based vehicles. In general, the regulation specifies that drivers of said vehicles:

a. Shall not idle the vehicle’s primary diesel engine for greater than 5 minutes at any location, except as noted in Subsection (d) of the regulation; and,

b. Shall not operate a diesel-fueled auxiliary power system to power a heater, air conditioner, or any ancillary equipment on that vehicle during sleeping or resting in a sleeper berth for greater than 5.0 minutes at any location when within 1,000 feet of a restricted area, except as noted in Subsection (d) of the regulation.

MM AQ-2. Heavy-duty, off-road diesel-fueled equipment (50 horsepower, or greater) shall comply with the 5-minute idling restriction identified in Section 2449(d)(2) of the California Air Resources Board’s In-Use Off-road Diesel regulation.

MM AQ-3. Heavy-duty, off-road diesel-fueled equipment (50 horsepower, or greater) shall be fitted with diesel particulate filters, per manufacturer’s recommendations, or shall meet at minimum Tier 3 emissions standards. To the extent locally available, Tier 4 should be used.

MM AQ-4. Signs shall be posted at the project site construction entrance to remind drivers and operators of the state’s five-minute idling limit.

MM AQ-5. To the extent available, fossil-fueled equipment shall be replaced with alternatively-fueled (e.g., natural gas) or electrically-driven equivalents.

MM AQ-6. Construction truck trips shall be scheduled, to the extent possible, to occur during non-peak hours.

MM AQ-7. The burning of vegetative material shall be prohibited.

MM AQ-8. The proposed project shall comply with SJVAPCD Regulation VIII for the control of fugitive dust emissions. Regulation VIII can be obtained on the SJVAPCD's website: https://www.valleyair.org/rules/1ruleslist.htm. At a minimum, the following measures shall be implemented:

a. All disturbed areas, including storage piles, which are not being actively utilized for construction purposes, shall be effectively stabilized of dust emissions using water, chemical stabilizer/suppressant, covered with a tarp or other suitable cover or vegetative ground cover.

b. All on-site unpaved roads and off-site unpaved access roads shall be effectively stabilized of dust emissions using water or chemical stabilizer/suppressant.

c. All land clearing, grubbing, scraping, excavation, land leveling, grading, and cut & fill activities shall be effectively controlled of fugitive dust emissions utilizing application of water or by presoaking.

d. When materials are transported off-site, all material shall be covered, or effectively wetted to limit visible dust emissions, and at least six inches of freeboard space from the top of the container shall be maintained.

e. Trackout shall be immediately removed when it extends 50 or more feet from the site and at the end of each workday. (The use of dry rotary brushes is expressly prohibited except where preceded or accompanied by sufficient wetting to limit the visible dust emissions. Use of blower devices is expressly forbidden.)

f. Following the addition of materials to, or the removal of materials from, the surface of outdoor storage piles, said piles shall be effectively stabilized of fugitive dust emissions utilizing sufficient water or chemical stabilizer/suppressant.

g. On-road vehicle speeds on unpaved surfaces of the project site shall be limited to 15 mph.

h. Sandbags or other erosion control measures shall be installed sufficient to prevent silt runoff to public roadways from sites with a slope greater than one percent.

i. Excavation and grading activities shall be suspended when winds exceed sustained speeds of 20 miles per hour (Regardless of wind speed, an owner/operator must comply with Regulation VIII's 20 percent opacity limitation).

MM AQ-9. The above measures for the control of construction-generated emissions shall be made available to project contractors and included on site grading and construction plans.

Level of Impact after Mitigation: Implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-1 through AQ-9 would include measures to ensure compliance with applicable regulatory requirements. The measures would reduce construction-generated emissions that could contribute to increases in localized pollutant concentrations at nearby sensitive receptors. These measures include SJVAPCD-recommended measures, which would help to ensure compliance with applicable SJVAPCD rules and regulations. With mitigation, this impact would be considered less than significant.

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

Other emissions potentially associated with the proposed project would be predominantly from the generation of odors during project construction. The occurrence and severity of odor impacts depend on numerous factors, including the nature, frequency, and intensity of the source; wind speed and direction; and the sensitivity of the receptors. While offensive odors rarely cause any physical harm, they still can be very unpleasant, leading to considerable distress among the public and often generating citizen complaints to local governments and regulatory agencies. Land uses commonly considered to be potential sources of offensive odorous emissions

include agriculture (e.g., farming and livestock), wastewater treatment plants, food processing plants, chemical plants, composting facilities, refineries, landfills, dairies, and fiberglass molding facilities.

The construction of the proposed project would involve the use of a variety of gasoline or diesel-powered equipment that would emit exhaust fumes. Exhaust fumes, particularly diesel exhaust, may be considered objectionable by some people. In addition, pavement coatings and architectural coatings used during project construction would also emit temporary odors. However, construction-generated emissions would occur intermittently throughout the workday and would dissipate rapidly within increasing distance from the source. As a result, short-term construction activities would not expose a substantial number of people to frequent odorous emissions. The project's long-term operation would involve live fire training, which includes periodic burning of fuels and material plus the use of off-road equipment (e.g., gas-powered chainsaws, rotary saws, and positive pressure fans). The nature of the materials being burned as part of live fire training activities (natural gas, propane, wood, and hay) is not associated with significant offensive odors. Any odors from off-road equipment would be similar to those occurring from construction equipment, except to a lesser degree since fewer pieces of machinery would be in use. Additionally, the occurrence of burn activities (up to 15 times per year total) would be relatively infrequent, and any resulting odors would be localized and generally confined to the project site while dissipating rapidly with increasing distance from the source. Furthermore, SJVAPCD Rule 4103, indicates that burning activities at a stationary fire training structure are exempt from the District's Open Burning rules and do not require a burn plan (Rule 4103 Part 4.2.1 and 6.2.1, respectively). This impact would be considered less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

4.4 Biological Resources

Environmental Setting

Vegetation Communities

The City of Fresno General Plan MEIR identifies and discusses different types of vegetation communities that are present within the Planning Area, including areas within the City's Sphere of Influence where the project site is located. Following is a description of the types of vegetation communities present at the project site and its vicinity, which include Deciduous Orchard, Irrigated Row and Field Crops, Barren, and Urban:

Deciduous Orchard: Deciduous orchard communities occur along the western, southern and eastern margins of the Planning Area, where there are flat alluvial soils on valley floors, rolling foothills and relatively steep slopes. Orchard communities are typically comprised of artificially irrigated habitat dominated by one, sometimes several, tree or shrub species planted for cultivation. Trees are typically low and bushy, and the understory is open, with little ground cover. Deciduous orchard is a relatively disturbed vegetation community and contains very little groundcover and planted trees that provide moderately suitable habitat for only one special-status species, California horned lark.

Irrigated Row and Field Crops: Irrigated row and field crop communities frequently occur in floodplains or upland areas with high soil quality. Irrigated row and field crows include annual and perennial crops, grown in rows, with open space between the rows. Row and field crops are artificially irrigated and feature a moderate disturbance rate by vehicle and pedestrian encroachment typically associated with farming activities. Species composition changes frequently, both by season and by year. Since irrigated row and field crops contain active agriculture, and are therefore significantly disturbed with altered substrates, this vegetation community does not provide suitable habitat for any special-status plant species and limited habitat for special-status wildlife species. Special-status wildlife species with a potential to occur within this vegetation community include: burrowing owl, California horned lark, and Swainson's hawk.

Barren: Barren lands include areas in which the vegetative cover comprises less than 10 percent of the surface area (disregarding natural rock outcrops) and where there is evidence of soil surface disturbance and compaction from previous legal human activity, and/or areas in which the vegetative cover is greater than 10 percent, soils surface compaction is evident, and building foundations and debris are present (e.g., irrigation piping, fencing, old wells, abandoned farming or mining equipment) from legal activities (as opposed to illegal dumping). Vegetation within barren land has a high predominance of non-native or weedy species that are indicators of soil disturbance. Barren land only provides moderately suitable habitat for one special-status species, California horned lark.

Urban: Urban (or developed) lands have been constructed upon or otherwise covered with a permanent, unnatural surface (e.g., concrete, asphalt, buildings, homes, etc.) or large amount of debris or other materials. The Planning Area consists predominately of urban areas, which are concentrated in the central portion of the Planning Area, within the Fresno city limits. Urban land is less common within the rural and agricultural portions of the Planning Area. Urban land provides poor quality habitat for any special-status species. No special-status species is expected to occur within this vegetation community.

(Source: City of Fresno General Plan MEIR, p. 5-4-4 through 5-4-11)

Special-Status Species

The project site and its immediate vicinity were screened for the presence of species and habitat using the California Natural Diversity Database ("CNDDB", an inventory of the status and locations of rare plants and animals in California,) accessed through CDFW's Biogeographic Information and Observation System (BIOS) Viewer website. CNDDB queries did not indicate that any sensitive, special status, or candidate species are present or have previously been observed at the project site. However, the project site is mapped as habitat area for two special-status species: Swainson's hawk and burrowing owl.

Regulatory Setting

Federal

Federal Endangered Species Act

The Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) of 1973, as amended, was promulgated to protect and conserve any species of plant or animal that is endangered or threatened with extinction and the habitats in which these species are found. "Take" of endangered species is prohibited under Section 9 of the FESA. "Take," as defined under the FESA, means to "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, wound, kill, trap, capture, collect, or attempt to engage in any such conduct." Section 7 of the FESA requires federal agencies to consult with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on proposed federal actions which may affect any endangered, threatened, or proposed (for listing) species or critical habitat that may support the species. Section 4(a) of the FESA requires that critical habitat be designated by the USFWS "to the maximum extent prudent and determinable, at the time a species is determined to be endangered or threatened." Critical habitat is formally designated by USFWS to provide guidance for planners/managers and biologists with an indication of where suitable habitat may occur and where high priority of preservation for a particular species should be given. Section 10 of the FESA provides the regulatory mechanism that allows the incidental take of a listed species by private interests and non-federal government agencies during lawful activities. Habitat conservation plans for the impacted species must be developed in support of incidental take permits for nonfederal projects to minimize impacts to the species and develop viable mitigation measures to offset the unavoidable impacts.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA) is the domestic law that affirms and implements the United States' commitment to four international conventions with Canada, Japan, Mexico, and Russia for the protection of shared migratory bird resources. The MBTA governs the taking, killing, possession, transportation, and importation of migratory birds, their eggs, parts, and nests. It prohibits the take, possession, import, export, transport, sale,

purchase, barter, or offer of these activities, except under a valid permit or as permitted in the implementing regulations. Migratory birds include geese, ducks, shorebirds, raptors, songbirds, wading birds, seabirds, and passerine birds (such as warblers, flycatchers, swallows, etc.). USFWS administers permits to take migratory birds in accordance with the regulations by the MBTA.

Clean Water Act, Section 404

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) regulates discharges of dredged or fill material into "waters of the United States" (including wetlands and nonwetland bodies of water that meet specific criteria). Pursuant to Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA), a permit is required for any filling or dredging in waters of the United States. The permit review process entails an assessment of potential adverse impacts to ACOE wetlands and jurisdictional waters, wherein the ACOE may require mitigation measures. Where a federally listed species may be affected, a Section 7 consultation with USFWS may be required. If there is potential for cultural resources to be present, Section 106 review may be required. Also, where a Section 404 permit is required, a Section 401 Water Quality Certification would also be required from the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).

State

California Endangered Species Act

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) generally parallels the main provisions of the FESA and is administered by the CDFW. Its intent is to prohibit take and protect state-listed endangered and threatened species of fish, wildlife, and plants. Unlike its federal counterpart, CESA also applies the take prohibitions to species petitioned for listing (state candidates). Candidate species may be afforded temporary protection as though they were already listed as threatened or endangered at the discretion of the Fish and Game Commission. Unlike the FESA, CESA does not include listing provisions for invertebrate species. Under certain conditions, CESA has provisions for take through a 2081 permit or Memorandum of Understanding. In addition, some sensitive mammals and birds are protected by the State as Fully Protected Species. California Species of Special Concern are species designated as vulnerable to extinction due to declining population levels, limited ranges, and/or continuing threats. This list is primarily a working document for the CDFW's California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB) project which maintains a database of known and recorded occurrences of sensitive species. Informally listed taxa are not protected per se, but warrant consideration in the preparation of biological resources assessments.

California Fish and Game Code

California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3503.5, 3511, and 3513 prohibit the "take, possession, or destruction of birds, their nests or eggs." Disturbance that causes nest abandonment and/or loss of reproductive effort (killing or abandonment of eggs or young) is considered "take." Such a take would also violate federal law protecting migratory birds (MBTA). All raptors (e.g., hawks, eagles, owls) and their nests, eggs, and young are protected under California Fish and Game Code (Section 3503.5). Additionally, "fully protected" birds, such as the white-tailed kite (Elanus leucurus), are protected under California Fish and Game Code Section 3511. "Fully protected" birds may not be taken or possessed (i.e., kept in captivity) at any time.

Local

Fresno County General Plan

The Fresno County General Plan's Open Space and Conservation Element contains several provisions addressing fish and wildlife habitat, wetland and riparian areas, and vegetation. The following policies were identified as relevant to the project:

- *Policy OS-E.1:* The County shall support efforts to avoid the "net" loss of important wildlife habitat where practicable. In cases where habitat loss cannot be avoided, the County shall impose adequate mitigation for the loss of wildlife habitat that is critical to supporting special-status species and/or other valuable or unique wildlife resources. Mitigation shall be at sufficient ratios to replace the function, and value of the habitat that was removed or degraded. Mitigation may be achieved through any combination of creation, restoration, conservation easements, and/or mitigation banking. Conservation easements should include provisions for maintenance and management in perpetuity. The County shall recommend coordination with

the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game to ensure that appropriate mitigation measures and the concerns of these agencies are adequately addressed. Important habitat and habitat components include nesting, breeding, and foraging areas, important spawning grounds, migratory routes, migratory stopover areas, oak woodlands, vernal pools, wildlife movement corridors, and other unique wildlife habitats (e.g., alkali scrub) critical to protecting and sustaining wildlife populations.

- *Policy OS-E.2:* The County shall require adequate buffer zones between construction activities and significant wildlife resources, including both onsite habitats that are purposely avoided and significant habitats that are adjacent to the project site, in order to avoid the degradation and disruption of critical life cycle activities such as breeding and feeding. The width of the buffer zone should vary depending on the location, species, etc. A final determination shall be made based on informal consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and/or the California Department of Fish and Game.
- *Policy OS-E.3:* The County shall require development in areas known to have particular value for wildlife to be carefully planned and, where possible, located so that the value of the habitat for wildlife is maintained.
- *Policy OS-E.4:* The County shall encourage private landowners to adopt sound wildlife habitat management practices, as recommended by the California Department of Fish and Game officials and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- *Policy OS-E.13:* The County should protect to the maximum extent practicable wetlands, riparian habitat, and meadows since they are recognized as essential habitats for birds and wildlife.
- *Policy OS-E.16:* Areas that have unusually high value for fish and wildlife propagation should be preserved in a natural state to the maximum possible extent.
- *Policy OS-E.17:* The County should preserve, to the maximum possible extent, areas defined as habitats for rare or endangered animal and plant species in a natural state consistent with State and Federal endangered species laws.
- *Policy OS-F.5:* The County shall establish procedures for identifying and preserving rare, threatened, and endangered plant species that may be adversely affected by public or private development projects. As part of this process, the County shall require, as part of the environmental review process, a biological resources evaluation of the project site by a qualified biologist. The evaluation shall be based on field reconnaissance performed at the appropriate time of year to determine the presence or absence of significant plant resources and/or special-status plant species. Such evaluation shall consider the potential for significant impact on these resources and shall either identify feasible mitigation measures or indicate why mitigation is not feasible.

City of Fresno General Plan

The City of Fresno General Plan sets forth the objective of Provide for long-term preservation, enhancement, and enjoyment of plant, wildlife, and aquatic habitat (see Objective POSS-5). The Parks, Open Space, and Schools Element includes the following relevant policies which function to promote and protect biological species and habitat:

- *POSS-5:* Provide for long-term preservation, enhancement, and enjoyment of plant, wildlife, and aquatic habitat.
- *POSS-5-b: Habitat Conservation Plans.* Participate in cooperative, multijurisdictional approaches for area-wide habitat conservation plans to preserve and protect rare, threatened, and endangered species.
- *POSS-5-c: Buffers for Natural Areas.* Require development projects, where appropriate and warranted, to incorporate natural features (such as ponds, hedgerows, and wooded strips) to serve as buffers for adjacent natural areas with high ecological value.
- *POSS-5-f: Regional Mitigation and Habitat Restoration.* Coordinate habitat restoration programs with responsible agencies to take advantage of opportunities for a coordinated regional mitigation program.

Discussion of Impacts

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 Game or U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

In response to the project's NOP, the Central Region office of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) submitted comments indicating that the project could potentially result in impacts to special-status species and/or habitat – specifically Swainson's hawk (Buteo swainsoni) and burrowing owl, as well as migratory birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act – unless appropriate avoidance and minimization measures are implemented for the project. Regarding Swainson's hawk, potential impacts from construction activities could include nest abandonment, loss of nest trees, loss of foraging habitat that would reduce nesting success (loss or reduced health or vigor of eggs or young), and direct mortality. Regarding burrowing owl, potentially significant direct impacts associated with subsequent construction activities such as noise from heavy machinery, back up alarms, and movement of workers could potentially include burrow collapse, inadvertent entrapment, nest abandonment, reduced reproductive success, reduction in health and vigor of eggs and/or young, and direct mortality of individuals.

CDFW's comments included recommended mitigation measures for avoiding and/or reducing potential impacts. These include performing surveys, establishing avoidance/no-disturbance buffers, seeking Take Authorization, and mitigating for loss of habitat.

CDFW indicates that SHWA have been documented approximately 1.7 miles to the southwest of the project site and have the potential to forage and/or nest on or near the project site; that the project will involve activities near large trees that may serve as potential nest sites; that the hawks can forage in natural grasslands, pasture, hay crops, grassy ruderal lots, and some irrigated crops, and the vacant farmland at the project site has the potential to be used as foraging habitat.

The project site is vacant with no crops or trees on the site. Agricultural operations ceased on the project site in 2017 and the rural residences in the southwest corner of the site were removed in 2019. Large industrial operations have been adjacent to the project site since 2002 with associated traffic and activity, and rural residences are located adjacent to the site to the west. As such, the site experiences a substantial amount of disturbance from humans, vehicles, and domestic animals, and the site is disked regularly for fire prevention. For these reasons, SCCCD believes the site provides marginal habitat for SHWA. It is noted that SCCCD has no plans to develop the eastern approximately 20 acres of the site, thus the eastern half of the site will remain undeveloped and would provide potential foraging habitat.

There are large trees immediately adjacent to the project site to the west in conjunction with several older rural residences. These trees have the potential to harbor nesting sites and if SHWA or other bird species were nesting in this area, they would have the potential to be disturbed by project activities.

Level of Impact: Potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures:

MM BR-1: Special Status Birds (except Burrowing Owl—see MM BR-2)

1. Avoidance. If feasible, any vegetation removal or ground disturbance will take place between September 1 and February 1 to avoid impacts to nesting birds in compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. If vegetation removal must occur during the nesting season, project construction is at risk of being delayed due to actively nesting birds and their required protective buffers.

2. Pre-construction Surveys.
    a. If vegetation removal or ground disturbance will commence between February 1 and August 31, a qualified biologist will conduct a pre-construction survey for nesting birds within 10 days of the initiation of disturbance activities. This survey will cover:
        i. Potential nest sites in trees, bushes, or grass within species-specific buffers of the project area (Swainson's hawk – 0.5 mile, other raptor species – 500 feet, non-raptor species – 250 feet).
        ii. Survey protocol developed by the Swainson's Hawk Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) should be followed, which includes survey timing and requirements for repeated visits.
    b. If no active nests are detected during the pre-construction survey, then no further action is required. If an active nest is detected, then minimization measures (described below) shall be implemented.
3. Minimization/Establish Buffers.
    a. Special status bird species and MBTA-protected species: If any active nests are discovered (and if construction will occur during bird breeding season), the USFWS and/or CDFW will be contacted to determine protective measures required to avoid take. These measures could include fencing off an area where a nest occurs, or shifting construction work temporally or spatially away from the nesting birds. Biologists are required on site to monitor construction while protected migratory birds are nesting in the project area to ensure that the buffer is adequate and that the nest is not stressed and/or abandoned. If an active nest is found after the completion of the pre-construction surveys and after construction begins, all construction activities will stop until a qualified biologist has evaluated the nest and erected the appropriate buffer around the nest.
4. If avoidance is not possible: a qualified biologist, in consultation with CDFW, will develop appropriate mitigations that will reduce project impacts to sensitive biological resources to a less than significant level. The type and amount of mitigation will depend on the resources impacted, the extent of the impacts, and the quality of habitats to be impacted. Mitigations may include, but are not limited to: 1) Compensation for lost habitat in the form of preservation or creation of in-kind habitat protected by conservation easement; 2) Purchase of appropriate credits from an approved mitigation bank or land trust servicing the Fresno County area; 3) Payment of in-lieu fees.
5. Take Authorization. In the event an active Swainson's hawk nest is detected during surveys and the one-half mile no-disturbance buffer around the nest cannot feasibly be implemented, SCCCD shall consult with CDFW is warranted to discuss how to implement the project and avoid take. If take cannot be avoided, take authorization through the acquisition of an Incidental Take Permit (ITP), pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081 subdivision (b) is warranted to comply with CESA.

MM BR-2: Burrowing Owl

3. Pre-construction Surveys.
    a. Surveys for burrowing owl will occur within 14 days prior to any ground disturbance, no matter the season. Surveys will cover potential burrowing owl burrows in the project area and suitable habitat within 150 m (500 ft). Evaluation of use by owls shall be in accordance with California Department of Fish and Wildlife survey guidelines (CBOC 1993, CDFG 1995, CDFG 2012). Surveys will document if burrowing owls are nesting or using habitat in or directly adjacent to the project area. Survey results will be valid only for the season (breeding (Feb 1-Aug 31) or non-breeding (Sept 1-Jan 31) during which the survey is conducted.
    b. If no active burrows are detected during the pre-construction surveys, then no further action is required. If an active burrow is detected, then minimization measures (described below) shall be implemented.
4. Minimization/Establish Buffers: If burrowing owl are detected within the survey area, CDFW will be consulted to determine the suitable buffer, which can range from 50-500 meters depending on the level of disturbance of the project activity, existing disturbance of the site (vehicle traffic, humans, pets, etc.), and

time of year (nesting vs. wintering). If avoidance is not feasible, the District will work with CDFW to determine appropriate mitigation, such as passive exclusion or translocation, and associated mitigation land offset (CDFG 2012).

Note: If burrowing owl are found within the recommended buffers and avoidance is not possible, it is important to note that according to the Staff Report (CDFG 2012), exclusion is not a take avoidance, minimization, or mitigation method and is considered a potentially significant impact under CEQA. However, if necessary, CDFW recommends that burrow exclusion be conducted by qualified biologists and only during the non-breeding season, before breeding behavior is exhibited and after the burrow is confirmed empty through non-invasive methods, such as surveillance. CDFW recommends replacement of occupied burrows with artificial burrows at a ratio of 1 burrow collapsed to 1 artificial burrow constructed (1:1) as mitigation for the potentially significant impact of evicting burrowing owl. Burrowing owl may attempt to colonize or re-colonize an area that will be impacted; thus, CDFW recommends ongoing surveillance, at a rate that is sufficient to detect the owls if they return.

Level of Impact after Mitigation: Implementation of the proposed measures will avoid or reduce potential species and habitat impacts to Swainson's hawk and burrowing owl, such that any impacts will be less than significant.

b. Have a substantially adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U. S. Wildlife Service?

There are no riparian or sensitive natural communities located at the project site or in its immediate vicinity.

Level of Impact: No impact.

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?

There are no state or federally protected wetlands within the project site boundary. Implementation of typical ground disturbance and erosion control Best Management Practices (BMPs) and compliance with grading permits will ensure that there is no impact to storm drainage facilities or nearby canals.

Level of Impact: No impact.

d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

The project will not result in impacts that substantially interfere with wildlife movements. The site does not appear to constitute a "movement corridor" for native wildlife (USFWS 1998) that would attract wildlife to move through the site. As discussed above, the project is located on a heavily disturbed site in an urbanized area. The presence of existing urban development and busy arterial streets restricts access for wildlife. Smaller wildlife species and birds are not expected to be further inhibited by the project as compared with existing development and uses.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

The project would not conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources.

Level of Impact: No impact.

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

The project site is not located within the boundaries of any Habitat Conservation Plan or Natural Conservation Community Plan.

Level of Impact: No impact.

4.5 Cultural Resources

Environmental Setting

Cultural resources include prehistoric-era archaeological sites, historic-era archaeological sites, Native American traditional cultural properties, sites of religious and cultural significance, and historical buildings, structures, objects, and sites. The importance of any single cultural resource is defined by the context in which it was first created, current public opinion and modern yet evolving analysis. Cultural resources are generally older than 50 years and considered to be important to a culture, subculture, or community for scientific, traditional, religious, or other reasons. They include prehistoric resources, historic-era resources, and "tribal cultural resources" (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074).

Archaeological resources are locations where human activity has measurably altered the earth or left deposits of prehistoric or historic-era physical remains (e.g., stone tools, bottles, former roads, house foundations). Historical (or architectural) resources include standing buildings (e.g., houses, barns, outbuildings, cabins) and intact structures (e.g., dams, bridges, roads, districts), or landscapes. A cultural landscape is defined as a geographic area (including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife therein), associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values. Tribal cultural resources include site features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places or objects, which are of cultural value to a Native American tribe. (Note: Tribal Cultural Resources are specifically addressed in Section 4.17 of this EIR.)

The City of Fresno General Plan MEIR's Cultural Resources section provides comprehensive background information for the greater Fresno area in which the project site is encompassed. Information provided there includes a summary of the area's prehistoric era background (ranging in time from about 14,000 years before present to European contact), an ethnographic overview, and summary of the modern historic era background (ranging from initial European exploration of the Central Valley in the early 1800s to recent modern history). This EIR hereby incorporates the background information regarding cultural resources presented in the Cultural Resources section of the General Plan MEIR.

Regulatory Setting

Federal

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA)

The NHPA of 1966, as amended, is the primary mandate governing projects under federal jurisdiction that may affect cultural resources. Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal agencies, or those they fund or permit, to consider the effects of their actions on the properties that may be eligible for listing or are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The regulations implementing Section 106 are codified in 36 CFR 800 (2001).

State

California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP)

The OHP is the governmental agency primarily responsible for the statewide administration of the historic preservation program in California. The chief administrative officer for the OHP is the State Historic preservation Officer (SHPO). The SHPO is also the Executive Secretary of the State Historical Resources Commission. In addition to their role in the identification of National Register properties, OHP and SHPO are responsible for administering the State Historical Landmark, State Point of Historical Interest, California Register of Historical Resources (California Register), California Historical Resources Information Systems, and the California Heritage Fund programs. In accordance with federal and state laws and regulations, OHP comments on the impact of proposed projects and programs on historic resources, including those owned by the State of California. The OHP assists project sponsors in identifying historic resources; evaluating their significance; determining a project's impact on the resources; and

finding ways to avoid or satisfactorily mitigate any adverse effects. In addition, OHP develops guidelines and standards for cultural resource planning and management.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA requires that public or private projects financed or approved by public agencies be assessed to determine the effects of the projects on historical resources. CEQA states that if implementation of a project would result in significant effects on historical resources, then alternative plans or mitigation measures must be considered; however, only significant historical resources need to be addressed. Therefore, before impacts and mitigation measures can be identified, the significance of historical resources must be determined. The CEQA Guidelines define three ways that a property may qualify as a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA review.

- if the resource is listed in or determined eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR);
- if the resource is included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in PRC 5020.1(k), or identified as significant in an historical resource survey meeting the requirements of PRC 5024.1(g), unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant; or
- the lead agency determines the resource to be significant, as supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record (14 CCR 15064.5[a]).

Each of these ways of qualifying as an historical resource for the purpose of CEQA is related to the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the CRHR (PRC 5020.1[k], 5024.1, 5024.1[g]). A historical resource may be eligible for inclusion in the CRHR if it:

- is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
- is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
- embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
- has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. (CEQA Guidelines 15064.5[a][d].)

Properties that are listed or eligible for listing in the NRHP are considered eligible for listing in the CRHR and are therefore significant historical resources for the purpose of CEQA (PRC 5024.1[d][1]).

Local

The Fresno County General Plan's Open Space and Conservation Element includes a Historical, Cultural, and Geological Resources section that sets forth the following relevant cultural resources-related goals and policies:

- *Goal OS-J:* To identify, protect, and enhance Fresno County's important historical, archeological, geological, and cultural sites and their contributing environment, and promote and encourage preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of Fresno County's historically significant resources in order to promote historical awareness, community identify, and to recognize the County's valued assets that have contributed to past County events, trends, styles of architecture, and economy.
- *Policy OS-J.1:* Preservation of Historic Resources. The County shall encourage preservation of any sites and/or buildings identified as having historical significance pursuant to the list maintained by the Fresno County Historic Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission.
- *Policy OS-J.2:* Historic Resources Consideration. The County shall consider historic resources during preparation or evaluation of plans and discretionary development projects.
- *Policy OS-J.14:* Sites Protection and Mitigation. The County shall require that discretionary development projects, as part of any required CEQA review, identify and protect important historical, archeological, and cultural sites and their contributing environment from damage, destruction, and abuse to the maximum extent feasible. Project-level mitigation shall include accurate site surveys, consideration of project

alternatives to preserve archeological and historic resources, and provision for resource recovery and preservation when displacement is unavoidable.

City of Fresno General Plan

The Historic and Cultural Resources Element of the General Plan functions to protect, preserve, and enhance the city's cultural and historic resources. The following policies related to cultural resources may apply to the proposed project:

- *Policy HCR-2-a:* Identification and Designation of Historic Properties. Work to identify and evaluate potential historic resources and districts and prepare nomination forms for Fresno's Local Register of Historic Resources and California and National registries, as appropriate.
- *Policy HCR-2-c:* Project Development. Prior to project approval, continue to require a project site and its Area of Potential Effects (APE), without benefit of a prior historic survey, to be evaluated and reviewed for the potential for historic and/or cultural resources by a professional who meets the Secretary of Interior's Qualifications. Survey costs shall be the responsibility of the project developer. Council may, but is not required, to adopt an ordinance to implement this policy.
- *Policy HCR-2-d:* Native American Sites. Work with local Native American tribes to protect recorded and unrecorded cultural and sacred sites, as required by State law, and educate developers and the community-at-large about the connections between Native American history and the environmental features that characterize the local landscape.
- *Policy HCR-2-f:* Archaeological Resources. Consider State Office of Historic Preservation guidelines when establishing CEQA mitigation measures for archaeological resources.

Discussion of Impacts

Would the project:

a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5?

During the project's environmental review process, details of the project were submitted to the Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center (SSJVIC) for review. SSJVIC performed a search of the project area and its vicinity using its cultural resource files, which include known and recorded cultural resources sites; inventory and excavation reports filed with its office; and resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the OHP Built Environment Resources Directory, California State Historical Landmarks, California Register of Historical Resources, California Inventory of Historic Resources, and California Points of Historical Interest.

A response letter from the SSJVIC indicated the following:

- There have been no previous cultural resource studies conducted within the project area. There have been four cultural resource studies conducted within a one-half mile radius, FR-00135, FR-00286, FR-02177, and FR-02407.
- There are no recorded resources within the project area. There are eleven recorded resources within the one-half mile radius, P-10-003930, 004677, 004678, 005568, 005996, 005997, 005999, 006000, 006001, 006033, and 006226. These resources consist of an historic era railroad, three historic era canals, five historic era buildings, and two historic era trash scatters.
- There are no recorded resources within the project area or within the one-half mile radius that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, the California Points of Historical Interest, California Inventory of Historic Resources, or the California State Historic Landmarks.

Regarding the project site's prior agricultural use, the letter also noted that the prior utilization of the project site for agriculture does not destroy cultural resources but merely moves them around within the plow zone.

Because a cultural resources study has not previously been conducted on the property, SSJVIC further recommended that a qualified professional consultant conduct a field survey of the entire project area prior to any ground disturbance activities in order to determine if cultural resources are present.

While there are no known or visible cultural or archaeological resources that exist on the surface of the project area, development of the project could potentially impact yet-to-be-discovered historical, archaeological, or other subsurface resources within the project site area. The measures provided below will be incorporated into the project to mitigate potential effects in the event that subsurface cultural resources are discovered during development of the proposed facilities.

Level of Impact: Potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures:

MM CR-1 through CR-3: Mitigation for Potential Discovery of Cultural Resources

MM CR-1: Prior to the start of ground disturbing activities, a field survey of the site shall be conducted by a qualified cultural resources specialist ascertain whether there are cultural resources on the surface of the project site. If surface resources are encountered and determined by the cultural resources specialist to be potentially significant, the specialist shall make recommendations to the Lead Agency on mitigation measures to be implemented to protect the discovered resources in accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15064.5 and Public Resources Code §21083.2.

MM CR-2: If cultural resources are encountered during ground disturbing activities, work shall stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and a qualified cultural resources specialist shall be consulted to determine the significance of the resources in accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15064.5. If potentially significant, the qualified cultural resources specialist shall make recommendations to the Lead Agency on mitigation measures to be implemented to protect the discovered resources in accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15064.5 and Public Resources Code §21083.2.

MM CR-3: If cultural remains are encountered during ground disturbing activities, work shall stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and the County Coroner notified in accordance with Health and Safety Code §7050.5 and CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(e). If the remains are determined to be of Native American descent, the procedures and requirements set forth in in CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(d) and (e) and Public Resources Code §5097.98 shall be implemented.

Level of Significance after Mitigation: With incorporation of the proposed mitigation measures, the project's potential impact to historical resources will be less than significant.

b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archeological resource pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5?

This impact is addressed in Section 4.5(a) above.

Level of Impact: Potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures: Implement MM CR-1 through CR-3

Level of Significance after Mitigation: With incorporation of the proposed mitigation measures, the project's potential impact to archeological resources will be less than significant.

c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?

This impact is addressed in Section 4.5(a) above.

Level of Impact: Potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures: Implement MM CR-1 through CR-3

Level of Significance after Mitigation: With incorporation of the proposed mitigation measures, the project's potential impact related to human remains will be less than significant.

4.6 Energy

An Energy Impact Analysis, which presents a technical analysis of the project's energy impacts, is included as Appendix C of this EIR.

Environmental Setting

Energy use is typically associated with transportation, construction, and the operation of land uses. Transportation energy use is generally categorized by direct and indirect energy. Direct energy relates to energy consumption by vehicle propulsion. Indirect energy relates to the long-term indirect energy consumption of equipment, such as maintenance activities. Energy is also consumed by construction and routine operation and maintenance of land use. Construction energy relates to a direct one-time energy expenditure primarily associated with the consumption of fuel used to operate construction equipment. Energy related to land use is normally associated with direct energy consumption entailed in operating buildings, including lighting, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning.

Electricity

Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) provides electricity to the project site and to about 16 million people throughout a 70,000 square-mile service area covering most of northern and central California. PG&E operates approximately 42,141 circuit miles of electric distribution lines and 18,466 circuit miles of interconnected transmission lines, serving 5.4 million electric customer accounts. In 2019 (the most recent year for which data is available), PG&E customers used roughly 78,072 gigawatt-hours of electricity, 7,387 gigawatt-hours of which were used in Fresno County (CEC, California Energy Consumption Database). Sources of electrical generation within California in 2019 were renewable (31.7 percent; this category includes wind, geothermal, biomass, solar and small hydroelectric), natural gas (34.23 percent), large hydroelectric (14.62 percent), nuclear (8.98 percent), and unspecified (7.34 percent).

Natural Gas

PG&E's natural gas system encompasses approximately 70,000 square miles in northern and central California. Approximately 90 percent of the natural gas supply for PG&E is from out-of-state imports. In 2017, natural gas throughput provided by PG&E totaled 800,923 million cubic feet (MMcf). Natural gas throughput has decreased over by past few years. In comparison to year 2015 throughput, natural gas throughput has decreased by 103,599 MMcf, an approximate 11.5 percent reduction (PG&E 2019).

Transportation Fuels

Gasoline and diesel, both derived from petroleum (also known as crude oil), are the two most common fuels used for vehicular travel. According to the California Energy Commission (CEC), the state relies on petroleum-based fuels for almost 90 percent of its transportation needs (EIA 2020). In 2019, approximately 30 percent of California's crude oil was produced within the state, about 12 percent was produced in Alaska, and the remaining 58 percent was produced in foreign lands (CEC 2021).

Regulatory Setting

The Energy Impact Analysis (Appendix C of this EIR) identifies and discusses several federal, state, and local policies and regulations pertaining to energy resources and consumption. A summary of that information is presented here. For additional detail, refer to Appendix C.

Federal

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) is responsible for administering federal laws and guidelines governing energy resources. Relevant laws and guidelines include the following:

- Federal Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) Standards for Passenger Cars and Trucks
- Energy Policy and Conservation Act
- Energy Policy Act of 1992
- Energy Policy Act of 2005

State

The state of California has adopted and administers numerous regulations, policies, and plans related to energy resources. The California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal-EPA), the California Air Resources Board (ARB), the California Energy Commission (CEC) are state agencies who are frequently responsible for their implementation. Following is a list of regulations, policies, and plans which are identified in the Energy Impact Analysis:

- Warren-Alquist Act
- Assembly Bill 32: Climate Change Scoping Plan and Update
- Assembly Bill 1007: State Alternative Fuels Plan
- Assembly Bill 2076: Reducing Dependence on Petroleum
- Senate Bill 350: Clean Energy and Pollution Prevention Reduction Act of 2015
- Senate Bill 375
- Senate Bill 1078: California Renewables Portfolio Standard Program
- Senate Bill 32 and Assembly Bill 197 of 2016
- Executive Order S-06-06
- Executive Order B-48-18: Zero-Emission Vehicles
- Energy Action Plan
- California Building Code and Green Building Standards
- Advanced Clean Cars Programs

Local

Fresno County General Plan

Applicable energy policies and programs from the Fresno County General Plan include the following:

- *Policy LU-H.7(j):* Energy conservation, and utilization of renewable resources should be given prominent consideration.
- *Program H-I.B:* The County shall consider inclusion of design standards for new development that encourage alternative transportation (for example, bicycle lanes, bus turnouts, and direct pedestrian connections to transit lines) as a part of the update of the County Zoning Ordinance to conserve energy and improve air quality.
- *Policy H-J.2:* The County shall promote public awareness of the need for energy conservation.
- *Policy H-J.5:* The County shall promote and support Pacific Gas and Electric Company's "Energy Partnership Program" aimed at education and conservation efforts.
- *Policy H-J.5:* The County shall promote and encourage the use of architectural design standards that reduce energy use.

Discussion of Impacts

a. Would the project result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?

In December 2018, the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist was updated to include a section for analysis of potential energy impacts associated with a proposed project. Where necessary, CEQA requires that mitigation measures be incorporated to reduce the inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary consumption of energy. The State CEQA Guidelines, however, do not establish criteria that define inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary consumption. Compliance with the State's building standards for energy efficiency would result in decreased energy consumption for proposed buildings. However, compliance with building codes may not adequately

address all potential energy impacts associated with project construction and operation. As a result, this analysis includes an evaluation of electricity and natural gas usage requirements associated with future development, as well as energy requirements associated with the use of on-road and off-road vehicles. The degree to which the proposed project would comply with existing energy standards and applicable regulatory requirements and policies related to energy conservation was also taken into consideration for the evaluation of project-related energy impacts. (See the Energy Impact Assessment, included as Appendix C, for more information)

Implementation of the proposed project would increase electricity, diesel, gasoline, and natural gas consumption associated with both construction activities and long-term operational activities. Energy consumption associated with short-term construction and long-term operational activities are discussed in greater detail, as follows:

Construction-Related Energy Consumption

Energy consumption would occur during construction, including fuel use associated with the on-site operation of off-road equipment and vehicles traveling to and from the construction site. Table 4.6-A summarizes the levels of energy consumption associated with project construction. As depicted there, the operation of off-road construction equipment would use an annual estimated of 32,376 gallons of diesel. On-road vehicles would use an annual estimated of 31,490 gallons of gasoline and 322 gallons of diesel. In total, construction fuel use would equate to approximately 8,281 million British thermal units (MMBTU) per year. Construction equipment use and associated energy consumption would be typical of that commonly associated with the construction of new land uses. As a result, project construction would not be anticipated to require the use of construction equipment that would be less energy efficient than those commonly used for the construction of similar facilities. Furthermore, on-site construction equipment may include alternatively-fueled vehicles (e.g., natural gas) where feasible. Energy use associated with the construction of the proposed project would be temporary and would not be anticipated to result in the need for additional capacity, nor would construction be anticipated to result in increased peak-period demands for electricity. As a result, the construction of the proposed project would not result in an inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary consumption of energy. As a result, impacts are considered less than significant.

Table 4.6-A
Projected Construction Energy Consumption

Source	Total Fuel Use (gallons)	Total MMBTU
Off-Road Equipment Use (Diesel)	32,376	4,448
On-Road Vehicles (Gasoline)	31,490	3,789
On-Road Vehicles (Diesel)	322	44
	Total:	8,281

Fuel use was calculated based, in part, on default construction schedules, equipment use, and vehicle trips identified for the construction of similar land uses contained in the CalEEMod output files prepared for the air quality analysis conducted for this project. Refer to the Energy Impact Assessment (Appendix C) for modeling assumptions and results.

Source: Ambient 2021

Operational Mobile-Source Energy Consumption

Operational mobile-source energy consumption would be primarily associated with commute trips to and from the campus. Table 4.6-B summarizes the projected total fuel use at build-out of the proposed land uses. The vehicle trips associated with the proposed land use would consume an annual estimated 67,076 gallons of diesel and 138,738 gallons of gasoline. The development of increasingly efficient automobile engines would result in increased energy efficiency and energy conservation. Implementation of GHG Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would also ensure that the proposed project reduces motor vehicle use and operational fuel consumption. The proposed project would not result in increased fuel usage that would be considered unnecessary, inefficient, or wasteful. This impact would be considered less than significant.

Table 4.6-B
Projected Operational Fuel Consumption

Source	Annual Fuel Use (gallons)	Annual MMBTU
On-Road Vehicles (Diesel)	67,076	9,215
On-Road Vehicles (Gasoline)	138,738	16,695
	Total:	25,910

Fuel use was calculated based, in part, on default construction schedules, equipment use, and vehicle trips identified for the construction of similar land uses contained in the CalEEMod output files prepared for the air quality analysis conducted for this project. Refer to the Energy Impact Assessment (Appendix C) for modeling assumptions and results.

Source: Ambient 2021

Operational Building-Use Energy Consumption

The proposed project would result in increased electricity and natural gas consumption associated with the long-term operation of its facilities and uses. Estimated electricity and natural gas consumption associated with the proposed facilities are summarized in Table 4.6-C. As depicted, the project would result in the annual consumption of approximately 708,040 kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity, 27,291 kWh of water, and 1,369,580 kilo British thermal units (kBTU) of natural gas. The proposed project would consume an annual total of approximately 3,879 MMBTU. The development of increasingly efficient building fixtures would result in increased energy efficiency and energy conservation. The project would be subject to energy conservation requirements in the CEC (Title 24, Part 6, of the California Code of Regulations, California's Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings), and the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) (Title 24, Part 11 of the California Code of Regulations). Adherence to Title 24 requirements and previously noted, Fresno County General Plan energy policies and programs would ensure that the project would not result in wasteful and inefficient use of non-renewable resources due to building operation. For this reason, this impact would be considered less than significant.

Table 4.6-C
Projected Operational Electricity, Water, and Natural Gas Consumption

Source	Annual Energy Use	Annual MMBTU
Electricity Consumption (kWh)	708,040	2,416
Water (kWh)	27,291	116
Natural Gas Use (kBTU)	1,369,580	1,370
	Total:	3,879

Fuel use was calculated based, in part, on default construction schedules, equipment use, and vehicle trips identified for the construction of similar land uses contained in the CalEEMod output files prepared for the air quality analysis conducted for this project. Refer to the Energy Impact Assessment (Appendix C) for modeling assumptions and results.

Source: Ambient 2021

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

b. Would the project conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

The project's proposed buildings would be required to comply with Title 24 standards for energy-efficiency, which would include increased building insulation and energy-efficiency requirements, including the use of energy-efficient lighting, energy-efficient appliances, and use of low-flow water fixtures. The project will include programs that would contribute to reductions in the project's motor vehicle use and operational fuel consumption, which would comply with, and promote the objectives of, applicable Fresno County General Plan energy policies and programs. The energy policies and programs ensure the conservation and preservation of

energy resources by increasing the energy efficiency of buildings, appliances, and buildings to the use of alternative forms of energy. The project would not conflict with other goals and policies set forth Fresno County General Plan pertaining to renewable energy and energy efficiency. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with state or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency, and this impact would be considered less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

4.7 Geology and Soils

Environmental Setting

The project site is located within the San Joaquin Valley, which is a topographic and structural basin that is bounded on the east by the Sierra Nevada geomorphic province and on the west by the Coast Ranges geomorphic province. The San Joaquin (Great Valley Geomorphic Province) is an alluvial plain about 50 miles wide and 400 miles long in the central part of California (California Geologic Survey (CGS Note 36). The Great Valley is an elongated trough in which sediments have been deposited almost continuously for the last approximately 160 million years (Jurassic). The Great Valley reaches depths of about 30,000 feet at its southern end, and is filled with a large volume of sediments of Mesozoic through Recent age. Recent alluvium covers nearly the entire valley floor, and has largely been derived from the adjacent Sierra Nevada except in the westernmost portions of the valley floor.

The topography of the 39.21-acre project site parcel is generally flat, with elevations ranging from approximately 298 to 302 feet above mean sea level (amsl) at different points throughout the site. As indicated by the Natural Resource Conservation (NRCS) Web Soil Survey tool, the project is sited on an area underlain by sandy loam soils (Hesperia fine sandy loam and Hanford sandy loam).

Many geologic and soils conditions are regional in nature, and as such these conditions have previously been evaluated in the City of Fresno General Plan EIR. As discussed there, areas within the City of Fresno generally not at risk of seismic-related hazards due to the distance of hazardous faults from the area and the relatively flat topography of the area. Risks for other types of hazards related to expansive soils and/or soil stability (e.g., lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse) range from minimal to moderate depending on site-specific factors such as soil type, depth to groundwater, slope, and topography.

Regulatory Setting

State

Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act requires the delineation of zones along active faults in California. The purpose of the Alquist-Priolo Act is to regulate development on or near active fault traces to reduce the hazards associated with fault rupture and to prohibit the location of most structures for human occupancy across these traces. Cities and counties must regulate certain development projects within these zones, which include withholding development permits until geologic investigations demonstrate that development sites are not threatened by future surface displacement. Surface fault rupture is not necessarily restricted to the area within an Alquist-Priolo Zone.

Seismic Hazards Mapping Act

The Seismic Hazards Mapping Act was developed to protect the public from the effects of strong groundshaking, liquefaction, landslides, or other ground failure, and from other hazards caused by earthquakes. This act requires the State Geologist to delineate various seismic hazard zones and requires cities, counties, and other local permitting agencies to regulate certain development projects within these zones. Before a development permit is granted for a site within a seismic hazard zone, a geotechnical investigation of the site must be conducted and appropriate mitigation measures incorporated into the project design.

California Building Code

The California Building Code (CBC), which is codified in Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations, Part 2, establishes minimum standards related to structural strength, means of egress to facilities (entering and exiting), and general stability of buildings. The purpose of the CBC is to regulate and control the design, construction, quality of materials, use/occupancy, location, and maintenance of all buildings and structures within its jurisdiction. The California Building Standards Commission administers Title 24, and, by law, is responsible for coordinating all building standards. Under state law, all building standards must be centralized in Title 24 or they are not enforceable. The provisions of the CBC apply to the construction, alteration, movement, replacement, repair, location, maintenance, and demolition of every building or structure or any appurtenances connected or attached to such buildings or structures throughout California, and would apply to structures proposed on the project site.

Local

Fresno County General Plan

The Fresno County General Plan's Health and Safety Element of the outlines Fresno County's planning strategies regarding seismic and geological hazards. The following policies of the Health and Safety Element are relevant to seismic and geological hazards:

- *Policy HS-D.3:* The County shall require that a soils engineering and geologic-seismic analysis be prepared by a California-registered engineer or engineering geologist prior to permitting development, including public infrastructure projects, in areas prone to geologic or seismic hazards (i.e., fault rupture, ground shaking, lateral spreading, lurchcracking, fault creep, liquefaction, subsidence, settlement, landslides, mudslides, unstable slopes, or avalanche).
- *Policy HS-D.4:* The County shall require all proposed structures, additions to structures, utilities, or public facilities situated within areas subject to geologic-seismic hazards as identified in the soils engineering and geologic-seismic analysis to be sited, designed, and constructed in accordance with applicable provisions of the Uniform Building Code (Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations) and other relevant professional standards to minimize or prevent damage or loss and to minimize the risk to public safety.
- *Policy HS-D.5:* Pursuant to the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act (Public Resources Code, Chapter 7.5), the County shall not permit any structure for human occupancy to be placed within designated Earthquake Fault Zones unless the specific provisions of the Act and Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations have been satisfied.
- *Policy HS-D.8:* The County shall require a soils report by a California-registered engineer or engineering geologist for any proposed development, including public infrastructure projects, that requires a County permit and is located in an area containing soils with high "expansive" or "shrink-swell" properties. Development in such areas shall be prohibited unless suitable design and construction measures are incorporated to reduce the potential risks associated with these conditions.
- *Policy HS-D.9:* The County shall seek to minimize soil erosion by maintaining compatible land uses, suitable building designs, and appropriate construction techniques. Contour grading, where feasible, and revegetation shall be required to mitigate the appearance of engineered slopes and to control erosion.

City of Fresno General Plan

The City of Fresno General Plan's Noise and Safety Element includes planning strategies regarding seismic and geological hazards. Policy NS-2-b requires identification of areas with potential geologic and/or soils hazards, and require development in these areas to conduct a soil analysis and mitigation plan by a registered civil engineer (or engineering geologist specializing in soil geology) prior to allowing on-site drainage or disposal for wastewater, stormwater runoff, or swimming pool/spa water.

City of Fresno Building Code

The City of Fresno adopts the California Building Code with minor amendments that do not directly relate to geologic or soil conditions.

Discussion of Impacts

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?

Geologic and soils conditions at the project site were evaluated based on review of a site-specific Geotechnical Engineering Investigation and the Geology and Soils section of the City of Fresno General Plan MEIR. Based on review of those documents, impacts involving geologic and soils conditions would be less than significant. Specific determinations are presented as follows:

- The project site is not located within the boundaries of an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone, and no active faults are known to traverse the project site. The nearest zoned fault to the project site is a portion of the Nunez Fault, which is located more than 50 miles southwest of the site.
- Moderate ground shaking caused by events on distant and nearby active faults is considered a possible seismic hazard at the project site; however, this would be true for any potential site within the greater Fresno area and is thus not considered substantially adverse.
- The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Web Soil Survey tool shows the soils underlying the site as types of sandy loam. The site is not located within an area of soils known to have moderately high-to-high expansion potential, thus the risk of expansive soils at the site is considered negligible to low.
- The risk of seismic settlement is considered negligible based on the soil type mapped at the site.
- The risk of lateral spreading (i.e., the horizontal movement or spreading of soil toward an open face, such as a stream bank, the open side of fill embankments, or the sides of levees) is considered negligible based on the site's topography, soil types, and depth to groundwater.
- Liquefaction is a seismic phenomenon in which loose, saturated, fine-grained granular soils behave similarly to a fluid when subjected to high-intensity ground shaking. Liquefaction occurs when shallow groundwater; low density, fine, clean sandy soils; and high intensity motion occurs. With depth to groundwater greater than 50 feet and the moderate ground shaking potential at the project site, the risk of liquefaction is considered negligible.
- The project site is located in an area with little or no subsidence. As discussed in the City of Fresno MEIR, although subsidence or collapse is a significant concern in western Fresno County and other portions of the San Joaquin Valley, the City of Fresno's Planning Area (which includes the project site) is not known to be subject to such subsidence or collapse hazards.
- The project site and surrounding area is generally flat and not a landslide prone area.

In addition, buildings would be constructed in conformance with California Building Code (CBC) Title 24, which identifies specific design requirements to reduce damage from strong seismic ground shaking, ground failure, landslides, soil erosion, and expansive soils.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

The potential for water-or wind-borne erosion and loss of topsoil would exist during the construction phase of the proposed project, primarily due to clearing, grubbing, excavation, and grading activities. Once construction is completed, the potential for erosion would be minimal because the ground would be covered by buildings, hard surfaces, and landscaping. The project would be subject to requirements of the State Water Quality Control Board and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. General Construction Permit, Order No. 2012-0006-DWQ, issued by the State Water Quality Control Board in 2012, regulates construction projects of one acre or more, including the proposed project. Projects obtain coverage under the permit by developing and implementing the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans, which must specify best management practices that a project would employ to minimize pollution of storm water. Best management practices include erosion controls, sediment controls, wind erosion controls, non-storm water management controls, and waste management and controls (i.e., good housekeeping practices).

The intent of San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Regulation VIII (Fugitive PM_{10} Prohibitions) is to reduce ambient concentrations of fine particulate matter (PM_{10}) by requiring actions to prevent, reduce or mitigate anthropogenic fugitive dust emissions. The regulation includes specific measures for construction projects. Based on this information, impacts regarding soil erosion and/or loss of topsoil would be less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

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

Based on information presented in Section 4.7(a), impacts related to landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse are considered less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-a-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?

As discussed in Section 4.7(a), the site is not located within an area of soils known to have moderately high-to-high expansion potential, and the soil type mapped at the site does not appear likely to present an expansive soil hazard. Therefore, the impact is considered less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

The project would connect to a community wastewater system and does not involve the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. No impact would occur.

Level of Impact: No impact.

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

The project site contains no known surface-level paleontological resources or unique geological features. However, the possibility exists that subsurface paleontological resources may be discovered during project excavation and grading activities. SCCCD has incorporated in the project the following mitigation measure to protect any subsurface resources that may be discovered.

Level of Impact: Potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures

MM GS-1: Mitigation for Potential Discovery of Subsurface Paleontological Resources

MM GS-1: If paleontological resources are discovered during ground disturbing activities, work shall stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and a qualified paleontologist shall be consulted to determine whether the resources require further study. If the resources are determined to be potentially significant, the qualified paleontologist shall make recommendations to the District on the measures that shall be implemented to protect the discovered resources, including but not limited to, excavation and evaluation of the find, as well as providing the resources to an appropriate institution or person who is capable of providing long-term preservation to allow future scientific study.

Level of Significance after Mitigation: With incorporation of the proposed mitigation measure, the project's potential impact to paleontological resources will be less than significant.

4.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

A technical analysis of greenhouse gas emissions was conducted for the project and is included as part of the Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Impact Analysis (Appendix B of this EIR).

Environmental Setting

Following is selected background information which appears in the Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Impact Analysis prepared for the project (included as Appendix B). For additional details regarding GHG emissions and the effects of climate change, refer to Appendix B.

Greenhouse Effect and Types of GHGs

To fully understand global climate change, it is important to recognize the naturally occurring "greenhouse effect" and to define the greenhouse gases (GHGs) that contribute to this phenomenon. Various gases in the earth's atmosphere, classified as atmospheric GHGs, play a critical role in determining the earth's surface temperature. Solar radiation enters the earth's atmosphere from space and a portion of the radiation is absorbed by the earth's surface. The earth emits this radiation back toward space, but the properties of the radiation change from high-frequency solar radiation to lower-frequency infrared radiation. Greenhouse gases, which are transparent to solar radiation, are effective in absorbing infrared radiation. As a result, this radiation that otherwise would have escaped back into space is now retained, resulting in a warming of the atmosphere. This phenomenon is known as the greenhouse effect.

Primary GHGs attributed to the greenhouse effect and global climate change are: carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), nitrous oxide (N2O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), nitrogen trifluoride (NF3), Sulfur Hexafluoride (SF6), and black carbon (light-absorbing component of PM emitted from burning fuels such as coal, diesel, and biomass).

Sources of GHG Emissions

On a global scale, GHG emissions are predominantly associated with activities related to energy production; changes in land use, such as deforestation and land clearing; industrial sources; agricultural activities; transportation; waste and wastewater generation; and commercial and residential land uses. Worldwide, energy production including the burning of coal, natural gas, and oil for electricity and heat is typically considered the largest single source of global GHG emissions.

In 2018, GHG emissions within California totaled 425 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents (MMTCO2e). Within California, the transportation sector is the largest contributor, accounting for roughly 40 percent of the total state-wide GHG emissions. Emissions associated with the industrial sector are the second-largest contributor, totaling approximately 21 percent. Emissions from in-state electricity generation, imported electricity, agriculture & forestry, residential, and commercial uses constitute the remaining major sources of GHG emissions. In comparison to the year 2017 emissions inventory, overall GHG emissions in California increased by 0.8 MMTCO2e.

Effects of Climate Change

There are uncertainties as to exactly what the climate changes will be in various local areas of the earth. There are also uncertainties associated with the magnitude and timing of other consequences of a warmer planet: sea level rise, spread of certain diseases out of their usual geographic range, the effect on agricultural production, water supply, sustainability of ecosystems, increased strength and frequency of storms, extreme heat events, increased air pollution episodes, and the consequence of these effects on the economy.

Within California, climate changes would likely alter the ecological characteristics of many ecosystems throughout the state. Such alterations would likely include increases in surface temperatures and changes in the form, timing, and intensity of precipitation. For instance, historical records are depicting an increasing trend toward earlier snowmelt in the Sierra Nevada. This snowpack is a principal supply of water for the state, providing roughly 50 percent of state's annual runoff. If this trend continues, some areas of the state may experience an increased danger of floods during the winter months and possible exhaustion of the snowpack during spring and summer months. An earlier snowmelt would also impact the State's energy resources. Currently, approximately 20 percent of California's electricity comes from hydropower. An early exhaustion of the Sierra snowpack may force electricity producers to switch to more costly or non-renewable forms of electricity generation during spring and summer months. A changing climate may also impact agricultural crop yields, coastal structures, and biodiversity. As a result, resultant changes in climate will likely have detrimental effects on some of California's largest industries, including agriculture, wine, tourism, skiing, recreational and commercial fishing, and forestry.

Regulatory Setting

Federal

Executive Order 13514

Executive Order (EO) 13514 is focused on reducing GHGs internally in federal agency missions, programs, and operations. In addition, the EO directs federal agencies to participate in the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force, which is engaged in developing a national strategy for adaptation to climate change.

On April 2, 2007, in Massachusetts v. U.S. EPA, 549 U.S. 497 (2007), the Supreme Court found that GHGs are air pollutants covered by the FCAA and that the U.S. EPA has the authority to regulate GHG. The Court held that the U.S. EPA Administrator must determine whether or not emissions of GHGs from new motor vehicles cause or contribute to air pollution which may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health or welfare, or whether the science is too uncertain to make a reasoned decision.

On December 7, 2009, the U.S. EPA Administrator signed two distinct findings regarding GHGs under section 202(a) of the Clean Air Act:

- Endangerment Finding: The Administrator found that the current and projected concentrations of the six key well-mixed GHGs (CO2, CH4, N2O, HFCs, PFCs, and SF6) in the atmosphere threaten public health and welfare of current and future generations.
- Cause or Contribute Finding: The Administrator found that the combined emissions of these well-mixed GHGs from new motor vehicles and new motor vehicle engines contribute to the GHG pollution which threatens public health and welfare.

Although these findings did not themselves impose any requirements on industry or other entities, this action was a prerequisite to finalizing the U.S. EPA's Proposed Greenhouse Gas Emission Standards for Light-Duty Vehicles, which was published on September 15, 2009. On May 7, 2010, the final Light-Duty Vehicle Greenhouse Gas Emissions Standards and Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards (CAFE) was published in the Federal Register.

U.S. EPA and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) are taking coordinated steps to enable the production of a new generation of clean vehicles with reduced GHG emissions and improved fuel efficiency from on-road vehicles and engines. These next steps include developing the first-ever GHG regulations for heavy-duty engines and vehicles, as well as additional light-duty vehicle GHG regulations. These steps were outlined by President Obama in a Presidential Memorandum on May 21, 2010.

The final combined U.S. EPA and NHTSA standards that make up the first phase of this national program apply to passenger cars, light-duty trucks, and medium-duty passenger vehicles, covering model years 2012 through 2016. The standards require these vehicles to meet an estimated combined average emissions level of 250 grams of CO2 per mile (the equivalent to 35.5 miles per gallon if the automobile industry were to meet this CO2 level solely through fuel economy improvements). Together, these standards will cut GHG emissions by an estimated 960 MMTCO2e and 1.8 billion barrels of oil over the lifetime of the vehicles sold under the program (model years 2012-2016). On August 28, 2012, U.S. EPA and NHTSA issued their joint rule to extend this national program of coordinated GHG and fuel economy standards to model years 2017 through 2025 passenger vehicles.

State

The state of California has adopted and administers numerous regulations, policies, and plans related to addressing greenhouse gas emissions. Following is a list of regulations, policies, and plans which are identified and described in the Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impact Analysis:

- Assembly Bill 1493, addressing GHG emission standards for automobiles
- Executive Order No. S-3-05, establishing total GHG emission targets
- Assembly Bill 32: Climate Change Scoping Plan and Update
- Senate Bill 1078 and Governor's Order S-14-08: California Renewables Portfolio Standards
- Cap-and-Trade Regulation
- Senate Bill 32, which extends California's GHG emission-reduction goals from year 2020 to year 2030
- Senate Bill 97, which sets forth amendments to the CEQA Guidelines addressing the analysis and mitigation of GHG emissions
- Senate Bill 375, requiring Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to adopt a sustainable communities strategy (SCS) or alternative planning strategy (APS) that will address land use allocation in that MPOs regional transportation plan (RTP)
- California Building Code and Green Building Standards
- Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Strategy

Local

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

SJVAPCD Climate Change Action Plan

On August 21, 2008, the SJVAPCD Governing Board approved the SJVAPCD's Climate Change Action Plan with the following goals and actions:

Goals:

- Assist local land-use agencies with CEQA issues relative to projects with GHG emissions increases.
- Assist Valley businesses in complying with mandates of AB 32.
- Ensure that climate protection measures do not cause increase in toxic or criteria pollutants that adversely impact public health or environmental justice communities.

Actions:

- Authorize the Air Pollution Control Officer to develop GHG significance threshold(s) or other mechanisms to address CEQA projects with GHG emissions increases. Begin the requisite public process, including public workshops, and develop recommendations for Governing Board consideration in the spring of 2009.
- Authorize the Air Pollution Control Officer to develop necessary regulations and instruments for establishment and administration of the San Joaquin Valley Carbon Exchange Bank for voluntary GHG reductions created in the Valley. Begin the requisite public process, including public workshops, and develop recommendations for Governing Board consideration in spring 2009.

- Authorize the Air Pollution Control Officer to enhance the SJVAPCD's existing criteria pollutant emissions inventory reporting system to allow businesses subject to AB 32 emission reporting requirements to submit simultaneous streamlined reports to the SJVAPCD and the state of California with minimal duplication.
- Authorize the Air Pollution Control Officer to develop and administer voluntary GHG emission reduction agreements to mitigate proposed GHG increases from new projects.
- Direct the Air Pollution Control Officer to support climate protection measures that reduce GHG emissions as well as toxic and criteria pollutants. Oppose measures that result in a significant increase in toxic or criteria pollutant emissions in already impacted area.

SJVAPCD CEQA Greenhouse Gas Guidance

On December 17, 2009, the SJVAPCD Governing Board adopted "Guidance for Valley Land-use Agencies in Addressing GHG Emission Impacts for New Projects under CEQA" and the policy, "District Policy—Addressing GHG Emission Impacts for Stationary Source Projects Under CEQA When Serving as the Lead Agency." The SJVAPCD concluded that the existing science is inadequate to support the quantification of the impacts that project-specific GHG emissions have on global climatic change. The SJVAPCD found the effects of project-specific emissions to be cumulative, and without mitigation, that their incremental contribution to global climatic change could be considered cumulatively considerable. The SJVAPCD found that this cumulative impact is best addressed by requiring all projects to reduce their GHG emissions, whether through project design elements or mitigation.

The SJVAPCD's approach is intended to streamline the process of determining if project-specific GHG emissions would have a significant effect. Projects exempt from the requirements of CEQA, and projects complying with an approved plan or mitigation program would be determined to have a less than significant cumulative impact. Such plans or programs must be specified in law or adopted by the public agency with jurisdiction over the affected resources and have a certified final CEQA document.

Best performance standards (BPS) would be established according to performance-based determinations. Projects complying with BPS would not require specific quantification of GHG emissions and would be determined to have a less than significant cumulative impact for GHG emissions. Projects not complying with BPS would require quantification of GHG emissions and demonstration that GHG emissions have been reduced or mitigated by 29 percent, as targeted by ARB's AB 32 Scoping Plan. Furthermore, quantification of GHG emissions would be required for all projects for which the lead agency has determined that an Environmental Impact Report is required, regardless of whether the project incorporates BPS.

For stationary source permitting projects, BPS are "the most stringent of the identified alternatives for control of GHG emissions, including the type of equipment, design of equipment and operational and maintenance practices, which are achieved-in-practice for the identified service, operation, or emissions unit class." For development projects, BPS are "any combination of identified GHG emission reduction measures, including project design elements and land use decisions that reduce project-specific GHG emission reductions by at least 29 percent compared with business as usual (BAU)." The SJVAPCD proposes to create a list of all approved BPS to help in the determination as to whether a proposed project has reduced its GHG emissions by 29 percent.

Discussion of Impacts

a. Would the project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Implementation of the proposed project would contribute to increases of GHG emissions that are associated with global climate change. To evaluate the potential significance of the project's GHG generation, the Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Impact Analysis utilizes a GHG efficiency threshold based on the project's service population, which is calculated by dividing the GHG emissions inventory goal (allowable emissions) by the estimated service population of the individual project. As discussed in Appendix B, for most development projects the service population is defined as the sum of the number of jobs and the number of residents provided by a project. However, this traditional definition of service population may not be applicable to all

projects, depending on the end use; for instance, with regard to educational facilities, the student and employee population is the primary generator of GHG emissions with a majority of emissions being associated with student vehicle trips. Therefore, the calculated GHG efficiency of the proposed project was expanded to include the proposed student and employee population. GHG efficiency for the proposed project was calculated for year 2030 to be consistent with state GHG-reduction target years. The methodology used for quantification of the target efficiency threshold applied to the proposed project is summarized in Table 4.8-A.

Project-generated GHG emissions that would exceed the efficiency threshold of 2.3 $MTCO_2e$/SP/year in 2030 would be considered to have a potentially significant impact on the environment that could conflict with GHG-reduction planning efforts. To be conservative, construction-generated GHG emissions were amortized based on an estimated 30-year project life and included in annual operational GHG emissions estimates.

Table 4.8-A
Project-Level GHG Efficiency Threshold Calculation

	Year 2030
Land Use Sectors GHG Emissions Target[1]	149,000,000
Population	41,860,549
Employment	23,459,500
Service Population	65,320,049
GHG Efficiency Threshold ($MTCO_2e$/SP/yr)	2.3

GHG = Greenhouse gas; CO2e = Carbon dioxide equivalent; SP = Service population; MTCO2e = Metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent; yr = Year

1. Based on ARB 2017 Climate Scoping Plan Update/SB 32 Scoping Plan Emissions Sector targets. Does not include the agriculture, residential, commercial, and industrial sector. As well as the cap-and-trade program.

Source: Ambient 2021

Short-term and long-term GHG emissions associated with the development of the proposed project are evaluated as follows:

Short-term Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Estimated increases in short-term annual GHG emissions associated with the proposed project were calculated using the CalEEMod computer program and are summarized in Table 4.8-B. Based on the modeling conducted, annual emissions of GHGs associated with construction of the proposed project would total approximately 695.4 $MTCO_2e$. Amortized GHG emissions, when averaged over the conservative assumption of a 25-year project life, would total approximately 27.8 $MTCO_2e$/year. Actual emissions may vary, depending on the final construction schedules, equipment required, and activities conducted. Amortized construction-generated GHG emissions were included in the operational GHG emissions inventory for the evaluation of project-generated GHG emissions (see Table 4.8-C).

Table 4.8-B
Short-Term Construction GHG Emissions

Construction Year	GHG Emissions ($MTCO_2e$)
2021	184.9
2022	369.8
2023	140.6
Total:	695.4
Amortized Construction Emissions:	27.8

Source: Ambient 2021. Refer to the Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Analysis (Appendix B) for modeling results and assumptions.

Long-term Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Estimated long-term increases in GHG emissions associated with the proposed project were calculated using the CalEEMod computer program and are summarized in Table 4.8-C. As depicted, operational GHG emissions, with the inclusion of amortized construction GHGs, would total approximately 2,765.3 $MTCO_2e$/year. Based on the modeling conducted and measuring a service population of 320 (270 students and 50 employees), the calculated GHG efficiency for the proposed project would be 8.46 $MTCO_2e$/SP/yr. The GHG efficiency for the proposed project would exceed the efficiency thresholds of 2.3 $MTCO_2e$/SP/yr.

Table 4.8-C
Long-Term Operational GHG Emissions

Emissions Source	Emissions ($MTCO_2e$ per year)
Area	0.0
Energy Use	208.3
Live Fire Training	68.2
Mobile Sources	2,410.1
Waste Generation	40.5
Water Use	10.4
Total Project Operational Emissions:	2,737.5
Amortized Construction Emissions:	27.8
Total with Amortized Construction Emissions:	2,765.3
Service Population:	320
Project GHG Efficiency ($MTCO_2e$/SP/yr):	8.46
GHG Efficiency Threshold ($MTCO_2e$/SP/yr):	2.3
Exceeds Threshold/Significant Impact?	Yes

GHG = Greenhouse gas; SP = Service population; MTCO2e = Metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent
Includes mobile-source emission adjustments to account for the Final SAFE Vehicles Rule.
Source: Ambient 2021. Refer to the Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Analysis (Appendix B) for modeling results and assumptions.

As noted in the Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impact Analysis, a majority of the operational GHG emissions would be associated with energy use and the operation of motor vehicles. To a lesser extent, GHG emissions would also be associated with live fire training, solid waste generation, and water use. Project-generated GHG emissions are projected to decrease in future years due largely to improvements in energy efficiency and vehicle fleet emissions. Additionally, mobile-source emissions were conservatively calculated based on the default fleet-distribution assumptions contained in the model, which includes medium and heavy-duty vehicles. Mobile sources associated with educational facilities typically consist largely to light-duty vehicles, thus it is reasonably likely that actual mobile-source emissions would be less than modeled. Nonetheless, because the GHG efficiency for the proposed project would exceed the efficiency threshold, this impact is considered potentially significant.

The Air Quality and Greenhouse Impact Analysis includes a list of potential measures available to reduce GHG emissions which would result from the project. It is noted that these measures to reduce GHG impacts pertain almost entirely to aspects of how transportation to and from the site would occur. The report concludes, however, that even with implementation of mitigation measures the impacts related to GHG would remain significant and unavoidable. However, per the analysis, implementation

Level of Impact: Significant.

Mitigation Measures:

MM GHG-1: Reduction of GHG Emissions Generated by Motor Vehicle Use

MM GHG-1: To reduce the project's generation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the following measures shall be implemented at the project site prior to its initial operation and maintained throughout its operation:

a. The project shall install infrastructure for at least 18 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. Further, the District shall pursue grant or other funding sources to implement EV charging stations on the site.

b. The project shall install bicycle parking and provide shower/locker facilities.

c. SCCCD shall establish a program (or programs) which promote alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle trips at the First Responders Campus. This shall include establishing a ride-sharing or ride-matching program that functions to coordinate pooled travel between the First Responders Campus and other SCCCD campuses, such that students and staff are able to make pooled trips to and from the First Responders Campus during periods of regular instruction at the project; instituting parking charges for students and employees at the campus; and providing a transit subsidy for students (e.g., free bus passes, as funding allows).

d. SCCCD shall act to promote improved and increased access to transit for the project. In addition to the transit subsidy for students provided under c, above, SCCCD shall coordinate with the City of Fresno's Department of Transportation (FAX) regarding transit service in the vicinity of the project site, specifically to promote the routing of transit lines and placement of transit stops at the project site.

Level of Significance with Mitigation: Significant and unavoidable.

b. Would the project conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation of an agency adopted to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases?

As discussed in Section 4.8(a) above, the project would result in increased GHG emissions that would conflict with the State's GHG-reduction targets. The project would be designed to meet current building energy-efficiency standards, which includes measures to reduce overall energy use, water use, and waste generation. However, even with mitigation measures implemented, predicted increases in operational GHG emissions, primarily those occurring from mobile sources, would still exceed the threshold of significance. As a result, the proposed project could conflict with local, regional, or state GHG-reduction planning efforts. This impact would be considered potentially significant.

Level of Impact: Significant.

Mitigation Measures: Implement MM GHG-1.

Level of Significance with Mitigation: Significant and unavoidable.

4.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Environmental Setting

The project site is located in an unincorporated area of Fresno County amidst a mixture agricultural, commercial, industrial, and rural residential uses. Hazardous waste handlers and generators in Fresno County include industries, businesses, public and private institutions, and residences. Agricultural land use can also involve the storage and handling of hazardous materials and wastes including for the application of pesticides and the storage and use of fuels. Commercial and industrial facilities that utilize or store fuels, solvents, chemicals, or other hazardous materials represent other potential sources of hazardous materials in rural areas. The presence of these potential sources of hazardous materials, if encountered, can cause exposures that may result in adverse environmental and health effects depending on the extent of exposure.

Regulatory Setting

Federal

Federal agencies that regulate hazardous and toxic materials include the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Fed/OSHA), the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The following federal laws and guidelines govern transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials:

- Federal Water Pollution Control Act
- Clean Air Act
- Occupational Safety and Health Act
- Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act
- Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)
- Guidelines for Carcinogens and Biohazards
- Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act Title III
- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)
- Safe Drinking Water Act
- Toxic Substances Control Act

Additionally, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) provides oversight for aviation safety and administers regulations applicable to helicopter and helipad operations, including the existing helipad facilities.

State

The California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal-EPA) and Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) generally govern the use of hazardous materials and the management of hazardous waste. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) enforce hazardous substance transportation regulations. Chemical suppliers must comply with all applicable packaging, labeling and shipping regulations.

Applicable state laws include the following:

- Public Safety/Fire Regulations/Building Codes
- Hazardous Waste Control Law
- Hazardous Substances Information and Training Act
- Hazardous Materials Release Response Plans and Inventory Act
- Medical Waste Management Act
- California Occupational Safety and Health Act
- Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act
- Toxic Air Contaminant Identification and Control Act

The project is also subject to regulations administered by Caltrans' Division of Aeronautics regarding aviation hazards.

Government Code Section 65962.5(a), "Cortese List"

Section 65962.5(a)(1) of the California Government Code requires that DTSC "shall compile and update as appropriate, but at least annually, and shall submit to the Secretary for Environmental Protection, a list of all the following: . . . (1) [a]ll hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action pursuant to Section 25187.5 of the Health and Safety Code ("HSC")." The hazardous waste facilities identified in HSC Section 25187.5 are those where DTSC has taken or contracted for corrective action because a facility owner/operator has failed to comply with a date for taking corrective action in an order issued under HSC Section 25187, or because DTSC determined that immediate corrective action was necessary to abate an imminent or substantial endangerment.

Local

Fresno County Department of Public Health

At the local level, policies and regulations related to hazards and hazardous materials are largely within the purview of the Fresno County Department of Public Health's Environmental Health Division. The Environmental Health Division is responsible for performing a wide variety of public health services and enforcing numerous local and state regulations pertaining to public and environmental health. The HazMat Compliance Program is Fresno County's designated CUPA (Certified Unified Program Agency) and oversees six state-mandated programs in Fresno County: Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP), California Accidental Release Program (CalARP), Underground Storage Tank Program (UST), Aboveground Storage Tank Program (APSA), Hazardous Waste Generator Program, and Tiered Permitting Program. Additionally, the Environmental Health Division is responsible for regulating and permitting retail food facilities (including college campus eating and dining facilities), reviewing construction plans and inspection of new and remodeled food facilities, investigating complaints regarding violations involving unsanitary conditions, and investigating suspected food borne illnesses.

Fresno County General Plan

The Health and Safety Element of the Fresno County General Plan outlines Fresno County's planning strategies regarding emergency management and response, fire hazards, flood hazards, seismic and geological hazards, airport hazards, hazardous materials, and noise. The following list consists of the policies of the Health and Safety Element relevant to Hazards and Hazardous Materials:

- Policy HS-B.1: The County shall review project proposals to identify potential fire hazards and to evaluate the effectiveness of preventive measures to reduce the risk to life and property.
- Policy HS-B.5: The County shall require development to have adequate access for fire and emergency vehicles and equipment.
- Policy HS-B.8: The County shall refer development proposals in the unincorporated County to the appropriate local fire agencies for review of compliance with fire safety standards. If dual responsibility exists, both agencies shall review and comment relative
- Policy HS-B.11: The County shall require new development to have water systems that meet County fire flow requirements. Where minimum fire flow is not available to meet County standards, alternative fire protection measures, including sprinkler systems, shall be identified and may be incorporated into development if approved by the appropriate fire protection agency.
- Goal HS-F: To minimize the risk of loss of life, injury, serious illness, and damage to property resulting from the use, transport, treatment, and disposal of hazardous materials and hazardous wastes.
- Policy HS-F.1: The County shall require that facilities that handle hazardous materials or hazardous wastes be designed, constructed, and operated in accordance with applicable hazardous materials and waste management laws and regulations.
- Policy HS-F.3: The County, through its Hazardous Materials Incident Response Plan, shall coordinate and cooperate with emergency response agencies to ensure adequate Countywide response to hazardous materials incidents.

Discussion of Impacts

Would the project:

a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Construction of the project would involve the transport and use of fuels, lubricants, greases, solvents, and architectural coatings including paints. Operation of the project would involve hazardous materials used for

cleaning and maintenance of campus facilities and maintenance equipment; this includes (but is not limited to) cleansers, solvents, paints, pesticides, and fertilizers.

During both construction and operational activities, the project would be subject to federal, state, and local regulations governing the routine transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials and the release of hazardous materials into the environment. For instance, the project would be required to prepare a spill prevention and treatment plan for safe and effective clean-up and disposal of any spills or releases that may occur during construction at the project site. As required under state and federal law, notification and evacuation procedures for site workers and local residents would be included as part of the plan in the event of a hazardous materials release during on-site construction. SWRCB Construction General Permit (2009-0009 DWQ) additionally requires spill prevention and containment plans to avoid spills and releases of hazardous materials and wastes into the environment. Additionally, the use and storage of hazardous materials plus disposal of hazardous wastes are subject to numerous laws and regulations at all levels of government, including but not limited to submittal of a Hazardous Materials Business Plan to the Fresno County Health Department's Environmental Health Division. These regulations function to provide safe accommodations and prevent accidental release to the environment. SCCCD currently operates its campuses and facilities in compliance with such requirements and would continue to do so for operation of the proposed First Responders Campus.

Based on these factors, impacts pertaining to hazards and hazardous materials are considered less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

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?

The project site has undergone review and evaluation for the purpose of identifying potential environmental issues associated with the presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products (including their use, storage, and disposal) at the site and in its vicinity. During preparation of this EIR, the project site and its surroundings were reviewed using web-based mapping tools, including the SWRCB GeoTracker database, DTSC EnviroStor database, and the EPA Enviromapper website. Review of these sources did not identify any hazardous materials sites within the project site's boundaries or on nearby properties within one-quarter mile.

Additionally, as part of the project's environmental review process, a preliminary request for review and comment regarding the project was distributed to agencies with regulatory authority concerning potential hazards and hazardous materials conditions, including the Fresno County Health Department's Environmental Health Division and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). In response to this request, the Fresno County Environmental Health Division provided comments generally identifying potential on-site hazards issues to be aware of and procedures for addressing such issues, which included destruction of abandoned water wells and/or septic systems, discovery of underground storage tanks, presence of asbestos, and presence of lead-based paint. The project will comply with all existing regulations and requirements.

Prior to SCCCD's acquisition of the project site, Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments ("ESAs") were conducted for the purpose of identifying potential environmental issues associated with the presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products (including their use, storage, and disposal). The Phase I ESA (completed in May 2019) involved review of hazards and hazardous materials databases; reconnaissance of the property and surrounding site; interviews with the past and present owners and occupants; and a review of historical sources to help ascertain previous land use at the site and in the surrounding area. No Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs), Controlled Recognized Environmental Conditions (CRECs), or Historical Recognized Environmental Conditions (HRECs) were identified during the Phase I ESA, but there were some conditions at the site for which the Phase I recommended further analysis[4]. The Phase II ESA (completed in

[4] These conditions included a small quantity of chemical containers (less than 1 gallon) of cleaners, degreasers, and lubricants stored in a former shop building, unlabeled 55-gallon drums, one approximately 300-gallon empty aboveground storage tank (AST), and trash/debris piles at the site.

August 2019) addressed these conditions in more detail, including soil sampling and analysis. Based on the sampling and analysis, the Phase II ESA indicated no further areas of concern were identified and no further soils testing was recommended.

As discussed in Section 4.9(a) above, the project would be subject to federal, state, and local regulations governing the routine transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials and the release of hazardous materials into the environment. These regulations also function to avoid or reduce upset and accident conditions.

Based on this information, this impact would be less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

There are no existing or proposed schools located within one-quarter mile of the project site.

Level of Impact: No impact.

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?

Based on review of DTSC's Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List, the project site is not located on a Cortese List hazardous materials site. No impact would occur.

Level of Impact: No impact.

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?

The project site is not within two nautical miles of a public or private airport and is not within an area subject to an airport land use plan. Because the project site is a considerable distance from the nearest airports and is not subject to an airport land use plan, the project would not result in airport-related safety hazards for students and staff at the project site. Moreover, the project would not result in a change in airport traffic patterns, including an increase in traffic or change that results in substantial safety risks. There would be no impact in relation to airports.

Level of Impact: No impact.

f. Impair implementation of, or physically interfere with, an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

All community colleges have emergency response/evacuation plans. Research conducted for this EIR did not identify any adopted emergency response plans or emergency evacuation plans the project could impair. This impact is considered less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

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

The project site is in an urban area and not within or near an area subject to wildland fires, thus no impact would occur.

Level of Impact: No impact.

4.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Environmental Setting

Groundwater

The project site lies within the Kings Groundwater Subbasin, a hydrologic region that includes portions of Fresno, Tulare, and Kings Counties and is part of the larger San Joaquin Valley Groundwater Basin. Groundwater within the area is used to meet agricultural, urban, and domestic demands. The Kings Subbasin is critically overdrafted. Regarding groundwater quality, specific water quality concerns include nitrate, arsenic, DBCP, 1,2,3-TCP, MTBE, landfill leachate, uranium, and several solvent-related constituents, such as trichloroethylene (TCE) and hexavalent chromium. While some of these constituents are caused by human activity, several are naturally occurring.

Surface Water

Surface water features present in the vicinity of the project site consist primarily of irrigation water conveyance infrastructure controlled by the Fresno Irrigation District (FID). Nearby FID facilities include the Wilder Pipeline No. 289 (located immediately north of the project site parcel), the Central Canal No. 23 (located along Chestnut Avenue approximately 1,400 feet west), the Benefield Canal No. 239 (located approximately 2,100 feet north), and the Washington Colony Canal No. 15 (located approximately 3,125 feet east). There are no natural rivers or streams located at project site or its vicinity. The principal surface water features within the greater Fresno area – the San Joaquin River and the Kings River – are each located over 10 miles away from the project site.

Drainage

Stormwater runoff within the Fresno-Clovis metropolitan area is conveyed through a system of street gutters, underground storm drains, retention/detention basins, pumping stations, and open channels that are maintained by the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District (FMFCD). FMFCD's responsibilities include planning, constructing, and maintaining the stormwater drainage collection and disposal facilities necessary for urban development. FMFCD is divided into numerous drainage zones that have (or are planned to have) a system of underground gravity flow pipelines that drain to stormwater retention basins or drainage outfalls. The 39.21-acre project site parcel is located primarily in FMFCD's "AZ" basin area, with a small portion of land at the eastern edge of the parcel located within the "CU" basin area.

Flooding and Inundation

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is responsible for mapping areas subject to flooding during a 100-year flood event (i.e., 1 percent chance of occurring in a given year). According to the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), the project site is not located within a 100-year flood zone or any other special flood hazard zone.

Both the San Joaquin River and the Kings River feature major dams that function to control river flow in the foothill areas east of Fresno (Friant Dam on the San Joaquin, and Pine Flat Dam on the Kings). In addition to the dams on the two rivers, there are reservoirs and detention basins that have been constructed to prevent flooding. These facilities include two dams (Big Dry Creek Dam and Fancher Creek Dam), three detention basins (Redbank Creek, Pup Creek, and Alluvial Drain Detention Basins), and canals to convey discharges in and around the City of Fresno. Review of inundation maps maintained by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD), shows that a small portion near the northeast corner of the 39.21-acre project site parcel are located within the inundation area of Fancher Creek Dam. In the event of a dam failure at Fancher Creek Dam, portions of the parcel could experience inundation at a maximum depth of 1-2 feet.

As the project site is located inland and a great distance from large bodies of water, it is not located in tsunami or seiche zone.

Regulatory Setting

Federal

Clean Water Act and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System

The Clean Water Act (CWA) is the primary law governing pollution of the nation's surface waters. The CWA requires states to adopt water quality standards and prohibits discharge of pollutants into waters of the United States from any point source unless it complies with the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. The CWA establishes the framework for regulating municipal and industrial point source discharges under the NPDES program. In California, the NPDES program is administered through the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards, including the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). Non-point stormwater pollution sources are regulated by the RWQCB through the General Construction Activity NPDES permits. Construction activities subject to this general permit include clearing, grading, and disturbances to the ground, such as stockpiling or excavation that result in soil disturbances. Stormwater pollution prevention plans (SWPPPs) are required for the issuance of a construction NPDES permit and typically include Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce water quality impacts.

State

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act assigns overall responsibility for water rights and water quality protection to the State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB) and directs the nine statewide Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs) to develop and enforce water quality standards within their boundaries. California has been delegated permit authority for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program including stormwater permits for all areas except Indian lands. Additionally, each RWQCB must prepare a Basin Plan, which establishes beneficial uses of water designated for each water body to be protected; water quality standards, known as water quality objectives, for both surface water and groundwater; and actions necessary to maintain these standards in order to control non-point and point sources of pollution to the State's waters.

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)

The 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) mandates a framework for ensuring sustainable management of groundwater in California's groundwater basins by local public agencies and newly-formed groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs). In basins designated by the state Department of Water Resources (DWR) as medium and high priority, local public agencies and GSAs are required to develop and implement groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs) or alternatives to GSPs (Alternatives). The required components of a GSP include: measurable objectives and incremental milestones to achieve the sustainability goal in the basin within 20 years of the implementation of the plan; provisions for monitoring and management of groundwater levels, groundwater quality, inelastic land surface subsidence, and changes in surface flow and surface water quality that directly affect groundwater levels or quality; and mitigation of overdraft.

Local

Fresno County General Plan

The Fresno County General Plan includes several interrelated goals and policies that seek to protect and enhance water supply and water quality throughout the county. Major overarching goals include:

- *Goal PF-C:* To ensure the availability of an adequate and safe water supply for domestic and agricultural consumption.
- *Goal PF-E:* To provide efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally-sound storm drainage and flood control facilities that protect both life and property and to divert and retain stormwater runoff for groundwater replenishment.
- *Goal OS-A:* To protect and enhance the water quality and quantity in Fresno County's streams, creeks, and groundwater basins.

The Open Space and Conservation Element includes a "Water Resources" subsection composed of policies aimed at protecting and enhancing surface water and groundwater resources in the county. The policies address broad water planning issues, groundwater recharge, the relationship of land use decisions to water issues, and water quality problems. The Public Facilities and Services Element includes a "Water Supply and Delivery" subsection composed of policies that seek to ensure an adequate water supply for both domestic and agricultural users by providing

necessary facility improvements, ensuring water availability, and utilizing water conservation measures. The Public Facilities and Services Element includes a Storm Drainage and Flood Control which contains policies that seek to ensure safe, efficient, and environmentally-sound means to drain stormwater and provide flood control. Additionally, the Health and Safety Element includes a Flood Hazards subsection which includes policies designed to minimize flood hazards.

City of Fresno General Plan

The City of Fresno General Plan provides extensive discussion regarding protection and enhancement of the City's water resources. Objectives and policies from the City's General Plan that address topics of hydrology, water quality, and flooding include the following:

- *Objective PU-5:* Preserve groundwater quality and ensure that the health and safety of the entire Fresno community is not impaired by use of private, on-site disposal systems.
- *Objective NS-3:* Minimize the risks to property, life, and the environment due to flooding and stormwater runoff hazards.
- *Policy RC-6-g:* Protect Recharge Areas. Continue to protect areas of beneficial natural groundwater recharge by preventing uses that can contaminate soil or groundwater.

Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District

The Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District (FMFCD) is responsible for storm water management within the Fresno-Clovis metropolitan area, including the area of the proposed project site. Within the metropolitan area, storm runoff produced by land development is to be controlled through a system of pipelines and storm drainage retention basins. Discharges of stormwater to the storm drainage system within FMFCD's Storm Drainage and Flood Control Master Plan area are subject to the requirements of FMFCD's Fresno-Clovis Storm Water Quality Master Plan (SWQMP). The cities of Clovis and Fresno, Fresno County, FMFCD, and California State University Fresno, are co-permittees on this permit. The SWQMP incorporates a series of control measures, performance standards, and implementation schedules to achieve water quality standards and protect beneficial uses of the San Joaquin River, creeks, and canals.

North Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency and Groundwater Sustainability Plan

The North Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency (North Kings GSA) is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) formed in December 2016 to implement SGMA for a northern portion of the Kings Subbasin, which includes the greater Fresno metropolitan area. In January 2020, the North Kings GSA finalized the North Kings Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) and submitted it for review to the state Department of Water Resources. Pursuant to Water Code Section 10733.2, the regulations describe the components of groundwater sustainability plans, intra-basin coordination agreements, and the methods and criteria to be used by DWR to evaluate those plans and coordination agreements. Both the City of Fresno and the County of Fresno are member agencies in the JPA. FMFCD has entered into a Participating Agreement with the JPA. Malaga County Water District also participated in the GSA and GSP development as an interested party.

Discussion of Impacts

Would the project:

a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?

As discussed in section 4.18, the project has been planned to connect to community water and wastewater systems. These systems are subject to, and operate in compliance with, applicable water quality standards and waste discharge requirements. The design and operational characteristics of the project related to water and wastewater would not directly or incrementally cause these systems to violate the applicable requirements.

Potential impacts on water quality from erosion and sedimentation could temporarily occur during construction. Before beginning construction, SCCCD must prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP is a site-specific plan that is designed to control the discharge of pollutants from the construction site to local storm drains and waterways. The SWPPP would include site-specific BMPs to minimize erosion on-site and reduce or otherwise prevent conditions of erosion and stormwater runoff.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

The project site lies within the Kings Groundwater Subbasin, a hydrologic region that includes portions of Fresno, Tulare and Kings Counties and is part of the larger San Joaquin Valley Groundwater Basin. The Kings Subbasin is critically overdrafted.

The City of Fresno obtains its water supply from a combination of groundwater, surface water entitlements, and recycled water. While historically the City of Fresno relied entirely on groundwater for its water supply, according to the City's 2015 Urban Water Management Plan, it will have transitioned to a supply comprised of about 46 percent groundwater, 50 percent surface water, and 4 percent recycled water in the Year 2020 (City of Fresno UMWP, p. 7-13). Although the City has transitioned toward increasing surface water supplies and implementing measures to promote groundwater conservation and recharge, groundwater is likely to remain a major source of the City's water supply.

The water demand for the project is not expected to exceed the level of demand associated with the site's planned heavy industrial land use that is reflected in the City of Fresno's General Plan and its 2015 Urban Water Management Plan. The number of users at the project site would be comparable to that of commercial and industrial uses allowed in heavy industrial areas, and the facilities proposed as part of project would generally not require significant amounts of water to operate. The project's landscaping and grass-turfed physical training area will incorporate methods of reducing water consumption. Further, the project's potential impact specifically to groundwater supplies would be lessened because the City has adopted policies and developed facilities to increase utilization of surface water and recycled water while reducing or holding constant its use of groundwater to meet future water demands within the City's service area.

Regarding groundwater recharge, the project will increase impervious surfaces in the project area. However, the amount of impermeable surfaces added from buildout of the project would be similar to if not less than the development anticipated by the City's General Plan and the FMFCD Master Plan. Further, the project will include a drainage basin and landscape areas, features which will function in part to promote groundwater recharge at the site, and there are no development plans for the eastern half of the property, which would remain vacant.

Based on the above information, impacts to groundwater supplies and recharge would be less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

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 off-site;

ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;

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

iv. Impede or redirect flood flows?

Grading required for the proposed project would change the existing drainage pattern within the project site, and the additional covered surfaces would increase the amount of surface runoff and, potentially, the rate of

runoff. The runoff would have the potential to degrade surface and groundwater quality if not properly controlled.

In response to the NOP prepared for the project, FMFCD provided a comment letter regarding existing and future storm drainage conditions at the project site. Per the comment letter, permanent service from FMFCD's system is currently not available to the project site and therefore it is recommended that temporary facilities be provided until permanent service is available. Regarding future conditions, the comment letter mentions that FMFCD Master Plan facilities are located within the area, that the storm drainage patterns for the development are required to conform to FMFCD's Master Plan, and that FMFCD will need to review and approve all improvement plans for any proposed construction of curb and gutter or storm drainage facilities for conformance to its Master Plan within the project area.

The volume of stormwater runoff from the proposed First Responders Campus project would be consistent with that of the urbanized uses anticipated to occur on the project site in the City of Fresno's long-range planning and FMFCD's system planning. The 39.21-acre project site parcel has been designated in the City's General Plan as Heavy Industrial and Public Institutional – Fire Station. These land use designations entail development that would include land covered to a high degree with impermeable surfaces (e.g., building pads, parking lots, streets, driveways). The amount of impermeable surfaces added from buildout of the First Responders Campus would be similar to, if not less, than the anticipated development on which the City's General Plan and the FMFCD Master Plan are based, and there are no development plans for the eastern half of the property, which would remain vacant for the foreseeable future,

The project includes an on-site retention basin which will function to manage drainage prior to connection to FMFCD's system. The project will be required to submit improvement plans, including grading and drainage plans, to the Division of the State Architect (DSA) for review and approval to ensure that adjacent properties are not adversely impacted by the increase in stormwater runoff or alteration to existing drainage patterns.

Based on the above information, including compliance with applicable requirements pertaining to drainage and stormwater runoff, the impacts of the project would be less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

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

The project site is not located in a FEMA flood zone, tsunami zone, or seiche zone. A small area near the northeast corner of the 39.21-acre project site parcel is within a mapped dam inundation area. However, in addition to dam failure being an extremely rare occurrence, the mapped maximum flood depth at the parcel is 1-2 feet (the lowest mapped depth), and the northeast portion of the parcel is not proposed to include development as part of the project. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

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

The project is located within the Kings Subbasin, and through the implementation of SGMA, groundwater management within the subbasin is largely within the purview of the North Kings GSA and the North Kings Groundwater Sustainability Plan (North Kings GSP) has been prepared and adopted. The overarching goal of the North Kings GSP is to ensure the basin reaches sustainability by 2040.

As discussed above in Section 6.10(b), development and operation of the project is not expected to adversely affect groundwater supplies or recharge. The project's demand for water would not cause a substantial adverse effect on sustainable yields, and the project would be designed in such a way that it would not conflict with the GSP's groundwater recharge objectives. As such, the project would not conflict with or obstruct the North Kings GSP. No other potential conflicts pertaining to water quality planning and/or groundwater management have been identified as part of the environmental review process.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

4.11 Land Use and Planning

Environmental Setting

The project site is located in an unincorporated area of Fresno County, approximately one-half mile north of the unincorporated community of Malaga, and within the City of Fresno's Sphere of Influence. The 39.21-acre project site parcel is currently vacant.

Regulatory Setting

Local

Fresno County General Plan

The Fresno County General Plan (adopted October 2000) is a comprehensive, long-term framework for the protection of the County's agricultural, natural, and cultural resources and for development in the County. Designed to meet State general plan requirements, it outlines policies, standards, and programs and sets out plan proposals to guide day-to-day decisions concerning Fresno County's future. The Fresno County General Plan consists of seven elements: Economic Development; Agriculture and Land Use; Transportation and Circulation; Public Facilities and Services; Open Space and Conservation; Health and Safety; and Housing.

For new development occurring in the spheres of influence of an incorporated city, the General Plan is generally deferential to the planning policies of the city, as is illustrated by the following goals and policies:

> *Goal LU-G:* To direct urban development within city spheres of influence to existing incorporated cities and to ensure that all development in city fringe areas is well planned and adequately served by necessary public facilities and infrastructure and furthers countywide economic development goals.
>
> *Policy LU-G.1:* The County acknowledges that the cities have primary responsibility for planning within their LAFCO-adopted spheres of influence and are responsible for urban development and the provision of urban services within their spheres of influence.
>
> *Policy LU-G.2:* Fresno County shall work cooperatively with all cities of the county to encourage each city to adopt and maintain its respective plan consistent with the Fresno County General Plan. The County shall adopt complementary planning policies through a cooperative planning process to be determined by the respective legislative bodies.

Fresno County has entered into memoranda of understanding with all 15 incorporated cities within the County regarding land use and tax sharing for the development and annexation of lands within city spheres of influence. In general, the memoranda states that the County will consult with the affected city regarding growth management policies and when new development is proposed within the city's sphere of influence. In most cases the memoranda state that such development will be referred to the city for annexation before the County will consider approval, and that such development must be consistent with the city's general plan and development standards.

Fresno County Zoning Ordinance

According to the Fresno County Zoning Map, the 39.21-acre project site parcel is zoned M-3(C) (Heavy Industrial, Conditional). As described in Section 845 of the County's Zoning Ordinance, "The 'M-3' Heavy Industrial District is intended to provide for the establishment of industrial uses essential to the development of a balanced economic base."

City of Fresno General Plan and Land Use Map

The *City of Fresno 2014 Fresno General Plan* provides the adopted public land use policy for the City of Fresno. The General Plan's Urban Form, Land Use, and Design Element sets forth goals focused on "establishing a structural framework for the city, enhancing the character of neighborhoods and districts, creating vibrant centers of activity and a public realm that is engaging and livable, crafting a tapestry of distinctive, connected communities, and strengthening Fresno's identity and sense of place." Goals relevant to the project include the following:

- Increase opportunity, economic development, business and job creation.

- Emphasize conservation, successful adaptation to climate and changing resource conditions, and performance effectiveness in the use of energy, water, land, buildings, natural resources, and fiscal resources required for the long-term sustainability of Fresno.
- Emphasize achieving healthy air quality and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
- Provide for a diversity of districts, neighborhoods, housing types (including affordable housing), residential densities, job opportunities, recreation, open space, and educational venues that appeal to a broad range of people throughout the City.
- Promote a city of healthy communities and improve quality of life in established neighborhoods.
- Emphasize increased land use intensity and mixed-use development at densities supportive of greater use of transit in Fresno.
- Improve Fresno's visual image and enhance its form and function through urban design strategies and effective maintenance.

Land use designations for areas within the City's planning area are identified in the City's Land Use and Circulation Map. According to the Land Use and Circulation Map, most of the 39.21-acre parcel is designated as Heavy Industrial. A small portion of land located at the southeast corner of the parcel (approximately 1.31 acres) is designated as Public Facility – Fire Station.

The Heavy Industrial designation is described as accommodating the broadest range of industrial uses including manufacturing, assembly, wholesaling, distribution, and storage activities that are essential to the development of a balanced economic base. Small-scale commercial services and ancillary office uses are also permitted. The General Plan notes that the Heavy Industrial designation has a maximum allowed Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.5. The Public Facilities designation denotes the sites of existing and planned public facilities within the City of Fresno. Such facilities include City Hall, county buildings, schools, colleges, the municipal airports, hospitals, fire and police stations, City-operated recycling centers, sewage treatment plants, neighborhood, community and regional parks, recreational centers, golf courses, and multi-purpose trails.

The General Plan notes that jurisdiction over proposed development for unincorporated areas within the City's SOI is guided by provisions of California State Statutes referred to as the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000. Under the provisions of this law, the Fresno County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) is responsible for adopting an appropriate SOI and establishing standards of annexation. Application of these laws and standards determines the jurisdiction under which a property is developed and how important public services are to be provided.

City of Fresno South Central Specific Plan

The project site is located within the planning area of the City of Fresno's proposed South Central Specific Plan (SCSP)[5]. The SCSP planning area encompasses approximately 5,629 acres and includes land located in the southern portion of the City as well as land within the City's Sphere of Influence. The City of Fresno is currently preparing the South Central Specific Plan, with an aim to facilitate opportunities for economic growth and job creation while reducing impacts on the environment and improving quality of life. While adoption of the SCSP is still pending and its provisions have not yet been finalized, it is noted that the SCSP's current proposed land use map designates the project site parcel as "Public Facility," which reflects SCCCD's plans for development of the site with the First Responders Campus project.

City of Fresno Citywide Development Code (Zoning)

The City of Fresno's Citywide Development Code implements the City's General Plan (plus other operative plans) to protect and promote the public health, safety, peace, comfort, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of the

[5] This area was previously known as the South Industrial Priority Area (SIPA). There have been several iterations of plans for the area by the City of Fresno, primarily related to accommodating existing and future industrial development within the plan area.

City of Fresno. As the project site is currently located in an unincorporated area beyond the Fresno city limits, it has not yet been assigned a City zoning designation.

SCCCD Facilities Master Plan

SCCCD's Facilities Master Plan is a document which serves as a guide for future development at each of the eight campuses within the District. It provides a blueprint for the potential placement of future facilities, removal and/or renovation of existing facilities, and various site improvements. For some future development concepts, the plan includes conceptual drawings and schematic layouts that identify the location and purpose of improvements, with final designs for sites and projects occurring as projects are funded and detailed programming and design occur.

Discussion of Impacts

Would the project:

a. Physically divide an established community?

As shown in imagery of the project site and immediate vicinity, the site itself is currently vacant and is surrounded by a mixture of agricultural, commercial, industrial uses, and rural residential uses. The number and footprint of residential uses in the area is relatively small, with most of the residences located in a cluster of small parcels situated between the west side of the project site and Chestnut Avenue. Development of the project at the site would not cause any existing residential parcels to be isolated, nor would it cause a new or substantially increased physical division of a community. Further, the design and scale of the facilities proposed as part of the project are similar to the urbanized development that is existing and planned for in the area and would not cause physical division of a community. For these reasons, this impact is less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than Significant

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?

Development of the First Responders Campus would not result in a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted to avoid or mitigate an environmental effect. As identified in the Project Description (Section 2 of this EIR), the 20.0-acre portion of the project site to be developed is currently designated for heavy industrial use in both the Fresno County General Plan and City of Fresno General Plan, and the project site is within the City of Fresno's SOI and is ultimately planned to be annexed to the City.

The First Responders Campus entails unique special-purpose land use conditions, in that it would construct and operate public community college facilities designed in a specialized manner to provide instruction and training for police, fire, and other emergency responder programs. The intensity and general physical and operational character of the First Responders Campus would be consistent with the existing industrial land use designation, such that it would be able to operate in a manner that is consistent with, rather than disruptive to, other existing and planned uses in the industrial-designated areas. The City of Fresno Development Code allows "Colleges and Trade Schools" as permitted uses within Employment Districts (including the Heavy Industrial zone district, which would correspond to the site's current Heavy Industrial land use designation). At a more general level, the urbanization and eventual annexation of the project site has been called for in both the City and County's long-range planning documents, so development of the project would be consistent with the long-range visions of both agencies. Additionally, it is noted that the planned City of Fresno land use and zoning designations for the project site are in the process of being refined during development of the City's South Central Specific Plan (SCSP), and the most current iteration of the SCSP includes a land use map that designates the site as Public Facilities – a designation that would specifically accommodate development and operation of the First Responders Campus. Further, the project would develop new facilities consistent with the planning laid out in SCCCD's Facilities Master Plan. Based on these reasons, this impact would be less than significant

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

4.12 Noise

This section is based on the Noise & Groundborne Vibration Impact Analysis prepared for the project, included as Appendix D of this EIR. Refer to Appendix D for additional background information regarding the evaluation of noise and groundborne vibration conditions.

Environmental Setting

Noise-Sensitive Land Uses

Noise-sensitive land uses are generally considered to include those uses where noise exposure could result in health-related risks to individuals, as well as places where quiet is an essential element of their intended purpose. Residential dwellings are of primary concern because of the potential for increased and prolonged exposure of individuals to both interior and exterior noise levels. Additional land uses such as parks, historic sites, cemeteries, and recreation areas are also considered sensitive to increases in exterior noise levels. Schools, churches, hotels, libraries, and other places where low interior noise levels are essential are also considered noise-sensitive land uses.

Nearby existing land uses consist predominantly of residential, agriculture, industrial, commercial, and utility. The nearest noise-sensitive land uses located in the vicinity of the proposed project site include residential dwellings, which are located approximately 35 feet west of the western property boundary and 100 feet east of the eastern project boundary along Willow Avenue. The nearest non-noise-sensitive land uses include industrial and commercial business uses, located approximately 100 feet south of the southern property boundary along North Avenue; and utility uses, located approximately 100 feet east of the eastern property boundary along Willow Avenue.

Ambient Noise Environment

Existing ambient daytime noise levels measured at the project site as part of the Noise Impact Analysis are summarized in Table 4.12-A. Based on the measurements conducted, daytime average-hourly noise levels in the project vicinity ranged from the upper-40s to upper-50s (in dBA Leq). Ambient noise levels within the project area are predominantly influenced by vehicle traffic on area roadways.

Table 4.12-A
Summary of Measured Ambient Noise Levels

Location	Monitoring Period (24-hour time)	dBA L_{50}/L_{eq}	dBA L_{25}	dBA L_{25}	dBA L_{25}	dBA L_0/L_{max}
ST1: Project site along Willow Avenue	14:19-14:29	49.3	51.4	53.5	56.6	66.7
ST2: Edge of roadway of Willow Avenue	14:30-14:40	52.9	54.8	56.7	59.6	69.5
ST3: Edge of roadway of Willow Avenue	14:43-14:53	48.8	50.7	52.6	55.5	65.4
ST4: Edge of roadway of North Avenue	14:57-15:07	59.1	62.2	64.3	67.4	77.5
ST5: Edge of roadway of North Avenue	15:11-15:21	59.6	62.5	64.4	67.3	77.2

dBA = A-weighted decibel; Leq = Equivalent sound level; ST = Short-term noise measurement Ambient noise measurements were conducted on April 1, 2021, using a Larson Davis Laboratories, Type I, Model 820 integrating sound level meter placed at a height of 5 feet.
Source: Ambient 2021

Regulatory Setting

The regulatory setting for Noise is provided in Appendix D, which identifies and discusses federal, state, and local policies and regulations which pertain to noise and groundborne vibration impacts.

Discussion of Impacts

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?

Noise generated by the proposed project would occur during short-term construction and long-term operation. Noise-related impacts associated with short-term construction and long-term operations of the proposed project are discussed separately, as follows:

Short-Term Construction Noise Levels

Construction noise typically occurs intermittently and varies depending upon the nature or phase (e.g., demolition/land clearing, grading and excavation, erection) of construction. Noise generated by construction equipment, including earth movers, material handlers, and portable generators, can reach high levels.

Noise levels commonly associated with construction equipment are summarized in the Noise & Groundborne Vibration Impact Analysis (see Table 7 in Appendix D). As noted there, instantaneous noise levels (in dBA L_{max}) generated by individual pieces of construction equipment typically range from approximately 77 dBA to 90 dBA L_{max} at 50 feet. Typical operating cycles may involve two minutes of full power, followed by three-to-four minutes at lower settings. Based on typical off-road equipment usage rates and assuming multiple pieces of equipment operating simultaneously within a localized area, such as soil excavation activities, average-hourly noise levels could reach levels of approximately 83 dBA L_{eq} at 50 feet. Assuming that multiple pieces of equipment could be operating simultaneously, predicted average-hourly noise levels could reach levels of approximately 85 dBA at 50 feet.

The City of Fresno has not adopted noise standards that apply to short-term construction activities. However, based on screening noise criteria commonly recommended by federal agencies, construction activities would generally be considered to have a potentially significant impact if average-hourly daytime noise levels would exceed 80 dBA L_{eq} at noise-sensitive land uses, such as residential land uses (FTA 2006). Depending on the location and types of activities conducted (e.g., building demolition, soil excavation, grading), predicted noise levels at the nearest residences, which are located adjacent to and west of the project site, could potentially exceed 80 dBA L_{eq}. Furthermore, with regard to residential land uses, activities occurring during the more noise-sensitive evening and nighttime hours could result in increased levels of annoyance and potential sleep disruption. For these reasons, noise-generating construction activities would be considered to have a potentially significant short-term noise impact.

The nearest noise-sensitive land uses located in the vicinity of the proposed project site include residential dwellings, which are located approximately 35 feet west of the western property boundary. Assuming an average-hourly construction noise level of 85 dBA Leq at 50 feet and that construction activities were to occur at the property boundary, predicted noise levels would be approximately 88 dBA Leq at the nearest residential dwelling. With regards to residential land uses, activities occurring during the more noise-sensitive nighttime hours are of particular concern given the potential for sleep disruption and increased levels of annoyance for building occupants. For these reasons, this impact would be considered potentially significant.

Level of Impact: Potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures:

MM N-1: Reduction of Construction-Generated Noise Levels

MM N-1: The following measures shall be implemented to reduce construction-generated noise levels.

a. Noise-generating construction activities including equipment maintenance, shall be limited to the hours between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. on weekdays, and between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Saturday or Sunday.

b. Stationary construction equipment that generates noise that exceeds 65 dBA at the project boundaries shall be shielded with a barrier that meets a sound transmission class rating of 25.

c. All diesel equipment shall be operated with closed engine doors and shall be equipped with factory-recommended mufflers.

d. Whenever feasible, electrical power shall be used to run air compressors and similar power tools.

e. Construction staging areas shall be located at the furthest distance possible from nearby residential land uses.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Use of mufflers would reduce individual equipment noise levels by approximately 10 dBA. Implementation of the above mitigation measures would limit construction activities to the less noise-sensitive periods of the day. With implementation of the above mitigation measures, this impact would be considered less than significant.

Long-term Operational Noise Levels

Potential long-term increases in noise associated with the proposed project would be primarily associated with increases in vehicle traffic on nearby roadways; as well as on-site activities. Noise levels commonly associated with these sources and potential impacts to nearby noise-sensitive land uses are discussed as follows:

Building Maintenance and Mechanical Equipment

Proposed structures would be anticipated to include the use of building mechanical equipment, such as air conditioning units and exhaust fans. The specific building mechanical equipment to be installed and the locations of such equipment have not yet been identified. Building mechanical equipment (e.g., air conditioning units, exhaust fans) would typically be located within the structures, enclosed, or placed on rooftop areas away from direct public exposure. Exterior air conditioning units and exhaust fans can generate noise levels up to approximately 65 dBA L_{eq} at 10 feet. Based on these assumptions, predicted exterior noise levels at the nearest residence (270 feet from the nearest proposed building) would be approximately 36 dBA L_{eq}. Based on the exterior noise level and assuming an average exterior-to-interior noise reduction of 15 dB, with windows partially open, predicted interior noise levels at the nearest residence would be 21 dBA L_{eq}. Predicted noise levels would not exceed Fresno County's noise control ordinance exterior and interior noise standards. As a result, this impact would be considered less than significant.

Emergency Equipment

The project's facilities would include an emergency PA system, and training activities at the campus may occasionally utilize sirens or other types of emergency equipment that generate noise. As noted in the County's Code of Ordinances, noise source exemptions include any mechanical device, apparatus, or equipment used, related to, or connected with emergency activities or emergency work. The project's emergency PA system and emergency equipment utilized as part of training activities fall under this exemption.

Vehicle Parking Lot

The proposed project may include the construction of a 320-space parking lot (i.e., 270 students and 50 employees). Based on a conservative assumption that all parking spaces would be accessed over a one-hour period, predicted noise levels at the nearest residential dwelling would be approximately 46 dBA L_{eq} at the exterior and 31 dBA L_{eq} at the interior (refer to Appendix D). Predicted noise levels associated with on-site parking lot activities would not exceed Fresno County's noise control ordinance standards at the nearby residential land use. As a result, this impact would be considered less than significant.

Physical Fitness Training Activities

The project includes the construction of outdoor physical fitness training facilities (e.g., a running track) and would entail regularly-occurring physical training activities during the weekday between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. for the Fire Academy, and between 4:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. for the Police Academy. Associated noise from physical training includes chanting and counting. Elevated human voices typically generate noise levels of approximately 70 to 88 dBA L_{eq} at one foot. Assuming a very loud voice noise level of 82 dBA L_{eq} at one foot and a maximum of 90 students between the Fire Academy and Police Academy training simultaneously, combined

noise levels at 50 feet would be approximately 65 dBA L_{eq}. Based on this noise level, predicted exterior noise levels at the nearest residential dwelling (650 feet from the proposed track field) would be approximately 42 dBA L_{eq}. Predicted interior noise levels at the residential dwelling would be approximately 27 dBA L_{eq}. Predicted noise levels associated with physical training activities would not exceed the County's noise control ordinance exterior and interior noise standards at the residential dwelling. As a result, this impact would be considered less than significant.

Land Use Compatibility

Based on the traffic noise modeling conducted for this project, predicted onsite exterior noise levels at the nearest proposed buildings would range from approximately 36 dBA CNEL/L_{dn} to 48 dBA CNEL/L_{dn} for future project conditions (refer to Appendix D). Predicted on-site noise levels would not exceed Fresno County's General Plan "normally acceptable" noise standards for land use compatibility of 60 dBA CNEL/L_{dn} at the First Responders Campus. As a result, this impact would be considered less than significant.

Roadway Traffic

Predicted existing traffic noise levels, with and without implementation of proposed project, are summarized in Table 4.13-A. In comparison to existing traffic noise levels, the proposed project would result in a predicted increase in traffic noise levels of 1.7 to 3.0 along area roadways.

Predicted increases in future cumulative traffic noise levels along nearby roadways for proposed project are summarized in Table 4.13-B. In future years, the project's contribution to cumulative traffic noise levels would be anticipated to decline slightly as increases in vehicle traffic due to surrounding development increases. Under future cumulative conditions, the proposed project would result in predicted increases in traffic noise levels of 0.3 to 0.8 along area roadways.

As noted in the Noise Analysis, a change in sound level of at least 5 dB is required before any noticeable change in community response would be expected. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in substantial increases (i.e., 5 dBA or greater) in existing and future cumulative conditions along nearby roadways. Predicted traffic noise levels are not projected to exceed the County's noise control ordinance exterior and interior standards at the nearby residential land use (refer to Appendix B of the Noise Analysis). As a result, this impact would be considered less than significant.

Table 4.13-A
Predicted Increases in Existing Traffic Noise Levels

Roadway Segment	Existing Without Project (dba CNEL/Ldn)	Existing With Project (dba CNEL/Ldn)	Difference[2]	Substantial Increase?[3]	Exceeds County Noise Standard?
North Avenue, east of Chestnut Avenue	52.0	55.0	3.0	No	No
North Avenue, west of Willow Avenue	51.0	53.8	2.9	No	No
Willow Avenue, north of North Avenue	46.9	48.5	1.7	No	No

1. Traffic noise levels were calculated using the FHWA roadway noise prediction model (FHWA-RD-77-108), based on data obtained from the traffic analysis prepared for this project.

2. Difference in noise levels reflects the incremental increase attributable to the proposed project.

3. Defined as a substantial increase in ambient noise levels in excess of the City's exterior noise standard of 65 dBA CNEL.

Source: Ambient 2021. Refer to Noise & Groundborne Vibration Impact Analysis (Appendix D) for modeling results and assumptions.

Table 4.13-B
Predicted Increases in Future Traffic Noise Levels

Roadway Segment	Existing Without Project (dba CNEL/Ldn)	Existing With Project (dba CNEL/Ldn)	Difference[2]	Substantial Increase?[3]	Exceeds County Noise Standard?
North Avenue, east of Chestnut Avenue	57.0	57.8	0.8	No	No
North Avenue, west of Willow Avenue	56.9	57.3	0.4	No	No
Willow Avenue, north of North Avenue	52.4	52.7	0.3	No	No

1. Traffic noise levels were calculated using the FHWA roadway noise prediction model (FHWA-RD-77-108), based on data obtained from the traffic analysis prepared for this project.

2. Difference in noise levels reflects the incremental increase attributable to the proposed project.

3. Defined as a substantial increase in ambient noise levels in excess of the City's exterior noise standard of 65 dBA CNEL.

Source: Ambient 2021. Refer to Noise & Groundborne Vibration Impact Analysis (Appendix D) for modeling results and assumptions.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

b. Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

While there are no federal, state, or local regulatory standards for groundborne vibration, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has developed vibration criteria based on potential structural damage risks and human annoyance. The Caltrans-recommended criteria for the evaluation of groundborne vibration levels, with regard to structural damage and human annoyance, are summarized in Table 5 of Appendix D. Measurements in terms of velocity are expressed as peak particle velocity (ppv) with units of inches per second (in/sec).

Increases in groundborne vibration levels attributable to the proposed project would be primarily associated with short-term construction activities. Groundborne vibration levels associated with representative construction equipment likely to be required during project construction are summarized in Table 9 of Appendix D. As depicted, construction-generated vibration levels would range from approximately 0.003 to 0.210 in/sec ppv at 25 feet. The highest vibration levels would be associated with the use of vibratory rollers.

The nearest existing structures include residential dwellings (located approximately 35 feet west of the western property boundary), industrial and commercial business structures (located approximately 100 feet south of the southern property boundary along North Avenue. Predicted groundborne vibration levels at these nearby structures are summarized in Table 10 of Appendix D. As shown there, predicted construction vibration levels at nearby structures range from 0.046 to 0.145 in/sec ppv, which would not exceed the minimum recommended criteria for structural damage or human annoyance (0.5 and 0.2 in/sec ppv, respectively). Predicted groundborne vibration levels at the nearest off-site structures associated with construction activities would not exceed commonly applied thresholds for potential structural damage or human annoyance. As a result, this impact would be considered less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

c. For a project located within a private airstrip or airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

No impact would occur. The nearest airports in the project vicinity, Fresno Yosemite International Airport and Fresno Chandler Executive Airport, are each located approximately five miles away from the project site. The

proposed project is not located within the projected 60 dBA CNEL/L_{dn} noise contours of these airports (City of Fresno 2014). No private airstrips were identified within two miles of the project site.

Level of Impact: No impact.

4.13 Population and Housing

Environmental Setting

As discussed elsewhere in this EIR, the project site is located in an unincorporated area of Fresno County within the City of Fresno's Sphere of Influence. The project site parcel is currently unpopulated and does not include any existing housing or land designated for residential use. The site is located within Census Tract 15, which encompasses 14.7 square miles in the vicinity of the community of Malaga, which is an unincorporated disadvantaged community and has an estimated population of 2,475 and 644 households. Fresno County's total estimated population is 1,026,681; the City of Fresno's estimated population is 546,770; and the total population of the County's unincorporated areas is 170,067.

Regulatory Setting

Local

Fresno Council of Governments – Regional Housing Needs Allocation

The Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG) is a regional planning organization comprised of representatives from Fresno County and its 15 incorporated cities, including the City of Fresno. Fresno COG's primary responsibilities include transportation and housing planning. FCOG is the state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency and federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for Fresno County. FCOG is responsible for preparing the Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan (RHNA), a state-mandated document that determines the number of housing units each city and county are responsible for accommodating in the housing element section of their general plan. The Fresno County RHNA Plan was last updated in 2013 and approved in July 2014. The planning period for the 2013 RHNA extends for 11 years from January 2013 to December 2023. The plan, which relies on Census data from 2010, State Department of Finance Data, California Department of Housing and Community Development data, and Fresno COG calculations, determined how best to allocate regional housing needs to Fresno County jurisdictions.

The 2013 RHNA Plan identifies four Market Areas which are utilized in determining housing allocations: 1) Fresno Clovis Metropolitan Area ("FCMA", which includes the cities of Fresno and Clovis; the unincorporated communities of Easton and Friant; several unincorporated neighborhoods including Fig Garden, Malaga, and Sunnyside; and remaining unincorporated area); 2) East Valley (area located southeast of the FCMA, which includes the cities and communities of Orange Cove, Parlier, Reedley, Sanger, Fowler, Kingsburg, Selma, Del Rey, and Laton; and the remaining unincorporated area); 3) Westside (area located to the west and south of the FCMA, which includes the cities and communities of Kerman, Firebaugh, Mendota, San Joaquin, Huron, Coalinga, Tranquility, Biola, Caruthers, Lanare, Riverdale, Raisin City, and Cantua Creek; and the remaining unincorporated area); and 4) Sierra Nevada (area extending easterly of the Friant-Kern Canal and comprising the western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range, which includes the unincorporated communities of Auberry, Big Creek, Friant, Prather, Tollhouse, Squaw Valley and Shaver Lake and the remaining unincorporated area). The RHNA calls for the vast majority of housing to be allocated to the incorporated cities, and more than half of the total housing units are allocated to the City of Fresno.

City of Fresno Housing Element

The City of Fresno Housing Element sets forth a comprehensive strategy for promoting the production of safe, decent, and affordable housing for all community residents. This element is a stand-alone document that is subject to review and approval by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The Housing Element was last updated in 2017, separately from the rest of the general plan elements included in the 2014 Fresno General Plan. The current Housing Element, which is valid until 2023, includes 28 programs that together make up the City's housing strategy. This includes assessment of current and projected housing needs and setting out policies

and proposals for the improvement of housing and the provision of adequate sites for housing to meet the needs of all economic segments of the City. Each year, the City prepares a Housing Element Annual Progress Report which tracks progress of the Housing Element's implementation.

Discussion of Impacts

Would the project:

a. Induce substantial unplanned population growth either in an area, directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

The project site is located within the City of Fresno's Sphere of Influence and in an area that has been planned for urbanization with the development of new businesses and job growth. The project would bring students, faculty, staff, and occasional visitors to the site to access its specialized facilities and training for police, fire, and other emergency services. The planned capacity of the campus (daily maximum of 270 students and 50 staff) and the site-specific population would be similar to that of the business and industrial uses that already exist and are planned for at the project site and its vicinity. Due to the First Responders Campus's special-purpose operational nature and relatively limited enrollment, it is not anticipated to promote unplanned growth or development (as contrasted with development of a campus with greater student capacity and broader educational program offerings). Any growth induced by the project is expected to be consistent with the growth anticipated in, and sought after by, City plans and policies. Additionally, as there is already urban infrastructure in place to serve existing commercial and industrial uses in the surrounding vicinity, development of the project would not entail extension of infrastructure to previously unserved areas in a manner that would indirectly generate substantial unplanned population growth. Further, development of the project would not conflict with region-wide planning for housing and population growth. Therefore, this impact is considered less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

b. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

The project would not result in displacement of either people or housing. There are no residential units or any structures the project site.

Level of Impact: No impact.

4.14 Public Services

Environmental Setting

Fire Protection and Emergency Services

The Fresno County Fire Protection District (FCFPD) serves a population of more than 220,000 in a service area encompassing approximately 2,655 square miles throughout Fresno County, including both incorporated and unincorporated areas. FCFPD provides a full range of emergency response services, which include structural and wildland fire suppression, response to hazardous materials incidents, search and rescue, technical rescue, vehicle extrication, and basic life support medical services. The nearest fire station to the project site is FCFPD Station 87, located approximately 0.83 miles northwest of the site at 4706 E. Drummond Avenue in Fresno.

Within the City of Fresno city limits, the City of Fresno Fire Department (FFD) provides fire suppression, fire prevention, hazardous material mitigation, rescue, and emergency medical services. FFD is organized into five divisions, which include the Emergency Operations Division; the Prevention and Support Services Division; the Training, Emergency Medical Services, and Safety Division; the Personnel and Investigations Division; and the Administration and Fiscal Services Division. Fresno Fire Station No. 8, located at 1428 S. Cedar Avenue in Fresno approximately 2.6 miles northwest, is the closest existing FFD facility to the project site.

Police Protection

The City of Fresno Police Department (FPD) provides police service within the City of Fresno city limits. FPD has five policing districts: Northwest, Northeast, Central, Southwest, and Southeast (which is nearest to the project site). The Fresno County Sheriff's Department is responsible for providing law enforcement and crime prevention services in the unincorporated areas of Fresno County, including the communities of Malaga and Calwa located near the project site. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) also provides police protection to the unincorporated areas outside the city limits. The City of Fresno has a mutual aid assistance agreement with both agencies.

Schools, Parks, and Other Public Facilities

The project site is located within the boundaries of Fowler Unified School District. The site is within the enrollment area for Malaga Elementary School, John Sutter Middle School, and Fowler High School. Malaga Elementary School is located 0.8 miles south of the site, while both John Sutter Middle School and Fowler High School are located in the city of Fowler. There are also Fresno Unified School District schools located in the vicinity of the project site, including Ayensworth Elementary School (1.15 miles north), Terronez Middle School (1.25 miles north), Storey Elementary School (1.3 miles northeast), and Calwa Elementary School (1.35 miles northwest), and Phoenix Secondary School (1.4 miles northeast). Malaga Park and Arriaga Community Center are located at 3592 S. Winery Avenue in Malaga, approximately 0.5 miles south of the project site.

Regulatory Setting

Fresno County General Plan

The Public Facilities and Services Element of the County General Plan contains goals, policies, and implementation program measures to ensure public facilities and services are adequately available and accessible in a timely fashion to serve new development. Law Enforcement, Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services, and School and Library Facilities are addressed in this element. Policies in the Law Enforcement subsection seek to ensure the prompt and efficient provision of law enforcement service by providing that adequate staffing, facilities, and funding are available in new development areas. Policies in the Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services subsection seek to ensure the prompt and efficient provision of fire and emergency medical facility and service needs, ensure adequate funding is available in new development areas, and protect the life and property of residents of and visitors to Fresno County. Policies in the School and Library Facilities subsection seek to provide safe access to schools, maintain acceptable levels of service, and ensure adequate funding for new school and library facilities.

City of Fresno General Plan

The City General Plan's Public Utilities and Services Element sets forth objectives and policies addressing the provision of police and fire services. These include the following:

- *Objective PU-1:* Provide the level of law enforcement and crime prevention services necessary to maintain a safe, secure, and stable urban living environment through a Police Department that is dedicated to providing professional, ethical, efficient and innovative service with integrity, consistency and pride.
- *Objective PU-2:* Ensure that the Fire Department's staffing and equipment resources are sufficient to meet all fire and emergency service level objectives and are provided in an efficient and cost-effective manner.
- *Objective PU-3:* Enhance the level of fire protection to meet the increasing demand for services from an increasing population.

Objectives and policies addressing schools and parks are presented in the General Plan's Parks, Open Space, and Schools Element. These include the following:

- Objective POSS-1: Provide an expanded, high quality and diversified park system, allowing for varied recreational opportunities for the entire Fresno community.
- Objective POSS-2: Ensure that adequate land, in appropriate locations, is designated and acquired for park and recreation uses in infill and growth areas.
- Objective POSS-3: Ensure that park and recreational facilities make the most efficient use of land; that they

are designed and managed to provide for the entire Fresno community; and that they represent positive examples of design and energy conservation.

- Objective POSS-4: Pursue sufficient and dedicated funding for parks acquisition, operations, and maintenance.
- Objective POSS-8: Work cooperatively with school districts to find appropriate locations for schools to meet the needs of students and neighborhoods.
- Objective POSS-9: Work with California State University, Fresno, and other institutions of higher learning in Fresno, to enhance the City's workforce, job creation, and economic development, as well as its image and desirability as a place to live.

Discussion of Impacts

a. Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or altered governmental facilities, need for new or altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the following public services: fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, or other public facilities?

The project would not result in the need for new or physically altered fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, other public facilities in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives. The project is situated within an area of existing urbanized development where public facilities and services are already provided; as such, the project would not require expansion of existing public services areas. Neither the new facilities nor the presence of student and employee populations that would result from development of the project would cause substantially adverse impacts to public service performance measures. The physical and operational characteristics of the First Responders Campus would be consistent with already-existing and future-planned urbanized development in the area. Additionally, the project entails the provision of instruction and training grounds for police, fire, and other emergency responder services, which is expected to positively contribute to the availability and efficacy of public services within the greater Fresno area. Based on these factors, impacts to public services would be considered less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

4.15 Recreation

Environmental Setting

The project is sited in an area occupied by industrial and rural uses, and as such has very limited existing recreational facilities in its vicinity. The nearest existing recreational facilities are Malaga Park and Arriaga Community Center, which are located at 3592 S. Winery Avenue, approximately 0.5 miles south of the project site.

Regulatory Setting

Local

City of Fresno General Plan

The General Plan's Parks, Open Space, and Schools Element provides an inventory of existing and planned parks, recreation facilities, other open space, and public schools, and defines policies and standards relating to these services and amenities. (Refer to Section 4.14, Public Services, for a list of objectives relevant to park and recreation uses.) Additionally, the General Plan's Healthy Communities Element includes objectives and policies aimed at promoting access to parks and recreation for purposes of improving public and community health.

Fresno County General Plan

The Open Space and Conservation Element Policies included a Parks and Recreation section which sets forth goals and policies that seek to enhance recreational opportunities in the County. These goals and policies include encouraging the further development of public and private recreation lands, and requiring development to help fund additional parks and recreation facilities. Related policies are included in Section LU-C, River Influence Areas; Section OS-I, Recreational Trails; and Section OS-K, Scenic Resources.

Discussion of Impacts

Would the project:

a. Increase the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

The project is sited in an area occupied by industrial and rural uses, with the nearest notable recreational facilities located approximately 0.5 miles away in the community of Malaga. Given the specialized operational nature of the First Responders Campus, which includes physical fitness facilities and equipment that would be available to users at the campus, it is reasonable to conclude that the project would not result in any measurable increased demand for or use of any existing park and recreation facilities in the surrounding area. This impact is thus considered less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

b. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

The project includes areas for exercise and physical training. Potential impacts from these facilities have been considered as part of this EIR, and no substantial adverse effects specifically attributable to these features have been identified. The project would not require construction or expansion of recreational facilities elsewhere.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

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4.16 Transportation

A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) was prepared by Peters Engineering, Inc. as part of the process of evaluating the project's transportation and traffic impacts. The TIS is included as Appendix E of this EIR. Table 4.16-A provides definitions for traffic-related terms used in this section.

Table 4.16-A
Transportation Terminology and Standards

Roadway Categories
• *Freeway:* Freeways provide intra- and inter-regional mobility. Freeway access is restricted to primary arterials via interchanges. Multiple-lane divided (median island separation) roadways on adopted State route alignments servicing through and crosstown traffic, with no access to abutting property and no at-grade intersections. Freeways are under the jurisdiction of the State, outside the control of the City. • *Super Arterial:* Super arterials are four- to six-lane divided (median island separation) roadways with a primary purpose of moving multiple modes of travel traffic to and from major traffic generators and between community plan areas. • *Arterial:* Arterials are designed to move large volumes of traffic and are intended to provide a high level of mobility between freeways, expressways, other arterials, and collector roadways. Arterials also provide non-freeway/highway connections between major residential, employment, and activity centers. Unlike freeways, they are intended not only for motor vehicles, but also for bicycles and pedestrians. Arterial streets typically have more right-of-way and a higher degree of access control than collector roadways. • *Collector:* Collector streets are two- to four-lane undivided (opposing travel lanes not separated by a median island) roadways, with the primary function of connecting local streets and arterials and neighborhood traffic generators and providing access to abutting properties. Driveway access to collectors is less limited than on arterials. Speed limits on these streets are typically lower than those found on arterials. • *Local Street:* Local streets are designed to provide direct roadway access to abutting land uses and serve short distance trips within neighborhoods. Traffic volumes and speed limits on local streets are low, and these roadways have no more than two travel lanes.
Level of Service
Level of Service (LOS) is a measure of roadway performance based on a qualitative description of traffic flow from the perspective of motorists. The Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) developed by the Transportation Research Board defines the following six levels of service from LOS A to LOS F. These grades represent the perspective of drivers only and are an indication of the comfort and convenience associated with driving, as well as speed, travel time, traffic interruptions, and freedom to maneuver. • Level of Service A: Free-flow travel with an excellent level of comfort and convenience where individual vehicles are virtually unaffected by the presence of other vehicles. • Level of Service B: A stable operating condition, but the presence of other vehicles begins to be a noticeable, though slight. Freedom to select desired speeds is relatively unaffected, but there is a slight reduction in comfort, convenience, and maneuvering freedom. • Level of Service C: A stable operating condition, but this level marks the beginning of congestion and the operation of individual users is affected by the intersection with others in the traffic stream. • Level of Service D: High-density and crowded but stable traffic flow condition. Users experience substantial restriction in speed and freedom to maneuver with drivers experiencing generally poor level of comfort and convenience. • Level of Service E: Operations at or near capacity. Speeds are reduced to a low but relatively uniform value. Freedom to maneuver is difficult with users experiencing frustration and poor comfort and convenience. Small increases in traffic volume will cause breakdown in traffic movement. • Level of Service F: Forced or breakdown conditions (stop-and-go). This condition exists when the amount of traffic exceeds the amount that can travel to a destination. Long queues of vehicles can form behind these bottleneck points with the queued traffic traveling in a stop-and-go fashion.

Table 4.16-A
Transportation Terminology and Standards

Vehicle Miles Traveled
Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) refers to the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project. Calculating VMT simply involves the product of a number of trips and those trips' lengths. The first step in a VMT analysis is to establish the baseline average VMT, which requires the definition of a region. The OPR Technical Advisory states that existing VMT may be measured at the regional or city level. On the contrary, the Technical Advisory also notes that VMT analyses should not be truncated due to "jurisdictional or other boundaries."

Environmental Setting

Roadway Network

Following are descriptions of existing roadways in the vicinity of the project site:

- *North Avenue* is an east-west two-lane roadway located adjacent to the south side of the project site. The City of Fresno General Plan Circulation Element designates North Avenue as an Arterial in the project site vicinity.
- *Willow Avenue* is a north-south two-lane roadway located adjacent to the east site of the project site parcel. The City of Fresno General Plan Circulation Element designates Willow Avenue as a Collector in the project site vicinity.
- *Chestnut Avenue* is a north-south four-lane divided roadway located approximately 0.25 miles west of the project site. The City of Fresno General Plan Circulation Element designates Chestnut Avenue as an Arterial in the project site vicinity.
- *Annadale Avenue* is an east-west unstriped local street located approximately 0.25 miles north of the project site. The City of Fresno General Plan Circulation Element designates Annadale Avenue as a Collector in the project site vicinity.
- *Jensen Avenue* is an east-west four-lane divided roadway located approximately 0.5 miles north of the project site. The City of Fresno General Plan Circulation Element designates Jensen Avenue as a Super Arterial in the project site vicinity.
- *Peach Avenue* is a north-south two-lane roadway located approximately 0.5 miles east of the project site. The City of Fresno General Plan Circulation Element designates Peach Avenue as an Arterial in the project site vicinity.
- *Maple Avenue* is a north-south roadway with two-lane and four-lane sections located approximately 0.75 miles west of the project site. The City of Fresno General Plan Circulation Element designates Maple Avenue as a Collector in the project site vicinity.
- *Golden State Boulevard* is a north-south four-lane divided roadway approximately one mile west of the project site. The City of Fresno General Plan Circulation Element designates Golden State Boulevard as an Arterial in the project site vicinity.
- *California State Route 99 (SR 99)* is a north-south six-lane state freeway located approximately 1.5 miles west of the project site.

Transit

Fresno Area Express (FAX) is the transit operator in the City of Fresno and provides bus service throughout the city as well as in unincorporated areas within the City's Sphere of Influence. Presently, there is one FAX transit route that operate in the vicinity of the proposed project – Route 41, which operates at 30-minute intervals on weekdays and weekends and runs from the community of Malaga to the Shaw Avenue/Marks Avenue area in northwest Fresno via stops that include Fresno Pacific University and Manchester Center. Route 41 runs on Chestnut Avenue approximately 0.25 miles west of the proposed project and includes bus stops near the intersection of Chestnut

Avenue and North Avenue. It is noted that that FAX is currently in the process of implementing service changes throughout its service area, and retention of the existing routes and expansion of future routes is dependent on transit ridership demand and available funding.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Network

There are currently no bike lanes or sidewalks present at the project site or its vicinity. In the City of Fresno's Active Transportation Plan, which shows existing and future bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the City (including areas within the SOI), planning for Willow Avenue depicts future continuous Class II bike lanes and sidewalks, while planning for North Avenue depicts future continuous future Class II bike lanes and some planned sidewalk segments.

Regulatory Setting

State

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

Caltrans has authority over the state highway system, including freeways, interchanges, and arterial State Routes. Caltrans approves the planning, design, and construction of improvements for all state-controlled facilities, including State Route (SR) 99 and its associated interchanges and intersections in the vicinity of the project site. Caltrans also provides administrative support for transportation programming decisions made by the CTC for state funding programs. The State Transportation Improvement Program is a multiyear capital improvement program that sets priorities and funds transportation projects envisioned in long-range transportation plans.

Senate Bill 743 – Transportation Impacts

Senate Bill (SB) 743 (Steinberg 2013) creates a path to revise the definition of transportation impacts according to CEQA. As the guidelines are proposed today, CEQA transportation impacts are determined using LOS of intersections and roadways, which is a measure of congestion. The intent of SB 743 is to align CEQA transportation study methodology with and promote the statewide goals and policies of reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gases (GHG). Three objectives of SB 743 related to development are to reduce GHG, diversify land uses, and focus on creating a multimodal environment. It is hoped that this will spur infill development, particularly along transit corridors. In December 2018, the California Natural Resources Agency certified and adopted the CEQA Guidelines update package, including the Guidelines section implementing SB 743 (section 15064.3). The updated regulations went into effect on July 1, 2020.

OPR Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA

The Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) periodically issues technical assistance on issues that broadly affect the practice of land use planning and CEQA. Concurrent with the implementation of SB 743, OPR published its *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* ("Technical Advisory"), which provides advice and recommendations for assessing VMT impacts. The Technical Advisory acknowledges that agencies and other entities may use the document at their discretion, and that it does not alter lead agency discretion in preparing environmental documents subject to CEQA.

The Technical Advisory provides suggested screening criteria to utilize in quickly identifying when a project should be expected to cause a less than significant impact without conducting a detailed study. These criteria include project size, maps, transit availability, and provision of affordable housing. The Technical Advisory also includes recommended numeric thresholds for residential, office, and retail uses, citing these as the most common land uses. For projects with potentially significant VMT levels, the Technical Advisory provides several examples of potential mitigation measures and alternatives to reduce VMT. In addition to project-specific measures, because VMT is largely a regional impact, the Technical Advisory suggests that regional VMT-reduction programs may be an appropriate form of mitigation. The selection of particular mitigation measures and alternatives are left to the discretion of the lead agency, and mitigation measures may vary, depending on the proposed project and significant impacts.

Local

City of Fresno General Plan

The Mobility and Transportation Element of the City of Fresno General Plan sets forth policies, programs, and standards to maintain efficient circulation for vehicles and alternative modes of transportation within the City of Fresno. It creates a framework for provision of Complete Streets; identifies future street and bikeway improvements; and addresses trails, parking, public transit, goods movement, and long-term plans for the municipal airport.

The City of Fresno General Plan includes an LOS-based framework for evaluating traffic conditions on its major streets, which are dependent on four (4) Traffic Impact Zones (TIZs) within the City of Fresno. The standard LOS threshold for TIZ I is LOS F, that for TIZ II is LOS E, that for TIZ III is LOS D, and that for TIZ IV is LOS E. Additionally, the General Plan Master EIR made findings of overriding consideration to allow a lower LOS threshold that that established by the underlying TIZ. For those cases in which a LOS criterion for a roadway segment differs from that of the underlying TIZ, such criteria are identified in the roadway description.

Other relevant goals and policies include:

- *Goal MT-1:* Create and maintain a transportation system that is safe, efficient, provides access in an equitable manner, and optimizes travel by all modes.
- *Goal MT-2:* Make efficient use of the City's existing and proposed transportation system and strive to ensure the planning and provision of adequate resources to operate and maintain it.
- *Policy MT-2-b:* Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled and Trips. Partner with major employers and other responsible agencies, such the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and the Fresno Council of Governments, to implement trip reduction strategies, such as eTRIP, to reduce total vehicle miles traveled and the total number of daily and peak hour vehicle trips, thereby making better use of the existing transportation system.

Fresno County General Plan

The Transportation and Circulation Element of the Fresno County General Plan provides the framework for County decisions concerning the countywide transportation system, which includes various transportation modes and related facilities. It also provides for coordination with the cities and unincorporated communities within the county, with the Regional Transportation Plan adopted by the Fresno Council of Governments, and with State and Federal agencies that fund and manage transportation facilities within the county. The Element's goals, policies and implementation programs organized into six sections: Streets and Highways; Transit; Transportation System Management; Bicycle Facilities; Rail Transportation; and Air Transportation. Relevant policies include:

- *Policy TR-A.2:* The County shall plan and design its roadway system in a manner that strives to meet LOS D on urban roadways within the spheres of influence of the cities of Fresno and Clovis and LOS C on all other roadways in the County.
- *Policy TR-A.3:* The County shall require that new or modified access to property abutting a roadway and to intersecting roads conform to access specifications in the Circulation Diagram and Standards section. Exceptions to the access standards may be permitted in the manner and form prescribed in the Fresno County Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, provided that the designed safety and operational characteristics of the existing and planned roadway facility will not be substantially diminished.
- *Policy TR-A.5:* The County shall require dedication of right-of-way or dedication and construction of planned road facilities as a condition of land development, and require an analysis of impacts of traffic from all land development projects including impacts from truck traffic. Each such project shall construct or fund improvements necessary to mitigate the effects of traffic from the project. The County may allow a project to fund a fair share of improvements that provide significant benefit to others through traffic impact fees.
- *Policy TR-C.3:* The County shall work with the Cities of Fresno and Clovis to encourage new urban development within the FCMA to provide appropriate on-site facilities that encourage employees to use alternative transportation modes as air quality and transportation mitigation measures. The type of

facilities may include bicycle parking, shower and locker facilities, and convenient access to transit, depending on the development size and location.

City of Fresno Active Transportation Plan

The City of Fresno's Active Transportation Plan (ATP) is a comprehensive guide outlining the vision for active transportation in the City and a roadmap for achieving that vision. Active transportation is defined in the ATP as human-powered travel including walking, bicycling, and wheelchair use. The ATP strives to improve the accessibility and connectivity of the bicycle and pedestrian network in order to increase the number of persons that travel by active transportation and to provide walking and bicycling facilities equitably for all City residents. Goals set forth in the ATP include equitably improving the safety and perceived safety of walking and bicycling in Fresno; increasing walking and bicycling trips in Fresno by creating user-friendly facilities; improving the geographic equity of access to walking and bicycling facilities in Fresno; and filling key gaps in Fresno's walking and bicycling networks. To that end, the ATP also identifies a priority network of connected bikeways and priority pedestrian areas to focus the City's efforts in the near-term. These priority networks provide links to key destinations, support existing and future walking and biking activity areas, and equitably serve neighborhoods throughout the city.

Fresno Council of Governments SB 743 Implementation Regional Guidelines

Corresponding with the implementation of SB 743, the Fresno Council of Governments ("Fresno COG", the MPO for Fresno County) developed the Fresno County SB 743 Guidelines, which set forth recommended criteria and thresholds that balance the direction from OPR and the goals of SB 743 with the vision of Fresno and economic development, access to goods and services, and overall quality of life. The Fresno County SB 743 Guidelines include context for VMT analysis; project screening criteria; VMT significance thresholds and VMT analysis for land use development projects, transportation projects, and land use plans; and feasible mitigation strategies applicable for the Fresno region.

Discussion of Impacts

Would the project:

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

Presented below is discussion of potential impacts regarding automobile transportation as well as bicycle, pedestrian, and transit transportation. The Traffic Impact Study (TIS) prepared for the project includes a VMT-based analysis as well as a LOS-based analysis of conditions which would result from the project.

Level of Service

In accordance with SB 743, as of July 1, 2020, agencies considering the transportation impacts of new projects in the context of CEQA must analyze Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). Automobile delay, as described solely by Level of Service (LOS) or similar measure of traffic congestion, is no longer considered a significant environmental impact under CEQA. It is noted, however, that both Fresno County and the City of Fresno still have LOS-based policies included in their respective General Plans, thus the long-range transportation planning for the greater Fresno remains informed by LOS-related considerations. Although the congestion-based analysis presented in the Traffic Impact Study is no longer required for CEQA purposes, the aim of including this analysis is to help promote the provision of a transportation and circulation system that will be of mutual benefit to SCCCD, the County of Fresno, and the City of Fresno.

The TIS included analysis of five intersections under various scenarios. A scoping letter was provided to the County of Fresno, City of Fresno, and Caltrans. The scoping letter and agency responses are presented in Appendix A of the Traffic Impact Study. The study locations were determined based on the agency responses. The study time periods include the weekday AM and PM peak hours determined between 7:00 and 9:00 a.m. and between 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. Generally accepted traffic engineering principles and methods were employed to estimate the amount of traffic expected to be generated by the project, to analyze the existing traffic

conditions, and to analyze the traffic conditions projected to occur in the future. The intersections and scenarios that were evaluated are listed below:

Study Intersections

1. Maple Avenue / North Avenue
2. Chestnut Avenue / North Avenue
3. Willow Avenue / North Avenue
4. Peach Avenue / North Avenue

Study Scenarios

- Existing Conditions
- Existing Plus Project Conditions
- Existing Plus Approved-and-Pending-Projects Conditions
- Existing Plus Approved-and-Pending-Projects Plus Project Conditions
- Cumulative Year 2040 No Project Conditions
- Cumulative Year 2040 With Project Conditions

As noted in the TIS, considering the current preference to annex an entire roadway to the City rather than annexing to the centerline, the project site and the study locations are considered to be located within the sphere of influence of the City of Fresno. The City of Fresno would typically allow LOS E within Traffic Impact Zone (TIZ) IV and the County of Fresno would typically require LOS D in accordance with the County General Plan. For purposes of the TIS, LOS D is considered the target LOS unless the required improvements to accomplish LOS D are considered infeasible.

Based on its analysis of the project as well as existing and predicted future transportation conditions, the TIS presented the following conclusions:

- The trip generation analyses suggest that the project will generate approximately 144 trips during the AM peak hour and 295 trips during the PM peak hour (entering and exiting combined). It was found that, if the site were to be developed with industrial uses in accordance with the City of Fresno General Plan land use designation at the site instead of the project, the trips generated at the site could be substantially greater than the project trips.
- The traffic analyses indicate that the study intersections are currently operating at acceptable levels of service with acceptable queuing conditions. Traffic signal warrants are not satisfied at the study intersections based on the existing pandemic traffic volumes. The traffic signal warrants analyses suggest that the intersection of Maple and North Avenues very nearly meets traffic signal Warrants 1, 2, and 3 in the existing condition and would likely meet all three warrants in a non-pandemic condition.
- The crash experience warrant (Warrant 7) is almost satisfied at the intersection of Peach and North Avenues. In addition, it is noted that the signalized intersection of Chestnut and North Avenues experiences nearly 10 crashes per year, nearly 75 percent of which are broadsides.
- The study intersections are expected to continue to operate at acceptable levels of service with acceptable queuing conditions after opening of the approved and pending projects (Near-term No-Project conditions).
- The study intersections are expected to continue to operate at acceptable levels of service with acceptable queuing conditions after opening of the project in both the Existing-plus-Project conditions and the Near-term with-Project conditions. Therefore, the project does not cause a project-specific traffic issue or contribute to a cumulative near-term traffic issue based on LOS and queueing at the study intersections.

- All four of the study intersections are expected to operate below the target LOS by the year 2040, and the project will contribute to the cumulative issue. The intersections will require widening and signalization as described herein. The project is responsible only for an equitable share of the improvements. (Refer to p. 24 of Appendix E for Equitable Share Calculations)
- The analyses indicate that a dedicated left-turn lane at the site access driveway is warranted in the near-term condition. When North Avenue is ultimately developed as an arterial with a median, it is recommended that a median break with a dedicated left-turn lane into the site be considered to minimize the need for U-turns at the intersection of Willow and North Avenues.

General Plan Circulation Element

North Avenue in the vicinity of the project site is designated as an arterial street, which at full build out is a four-lane divided street. To ensure compatibility with the future widening of North Avenue set forth in the long-range planning of the City of Fresno and County of Fresno, the project site will need to maintain a physical configuration which will allow for related improvements to facilitate appropriate widening of North Avenue as an arterial street, such as curb, gutter and utility relocations.

Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Transit Conditions

No bicycle facilities currently exist in the vicinity of the project site. The City of Fresno has planned Class II bike lanes on all of the streets at the study intersections (with the exception of segments south of North Avenue, which are not within the sphere of influence of the City of Fresno). The project is not expected to disrupt or impede existing or planned bicycle facilities.

No sidewalks currently exist in the vicinity of the project site. The City of Fresno's Active Transportation Plan depicts future planned sidewalks adjacent to the 39.21-acre project site parcel along Willow Avenue and a portion of North Avenue. However, due to the largely commercial and industrial nature of urbanized development that exists and is planned for in the area, there may be areas where sidewalks are omitted due to land use compatibility considerations. The project is not expected to disrupt or impede installation of any planned sidewalks.

Fresno Area Express (FAX) provides bus service to the Fresno area. FAX Route 41, which serves the Malaga area, is the nearest route to the project site, with stops at approximately 30-minute headways near the Maple/North Avenues intersection and the Chestnut/North Avenues intersection. The walking distance from the project site to the nearest stop is approximately one-quarter mile. The project is not expected to disrupt or impede existing transit facilities.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

Impacts regarding VMT are addressed in detail in section 4.16(b). As discussed there, the project would result in a level of per-capita VMT that exceeds the regional average. This presents a conflict with plans and policies set forth pursuant to SB 743 at both the state and local levels of government.

Based on this analysis, the First Responders Campus project would be consistent with applicable transportation programs, plans, ordinances and policies, except as it relates to VMT. Regarding VMT, the project would result in a significant impact. Mitigation measures to reduce the project's VMT are presented in Section 4.16(b) below.

Level of Impact: Significant.

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measures T-1 through T-2: Accommodation of Future Roadway System Modifications

MM T-1: To ensure compatibility with the future planned widening of North Avenue set forth in the long-range planning of the City of Fresno and County of Fresno, the project site shall maintain a physical configuration which will allow for related improvements to facilitate appropriate widening of North Avenue as an arterial street, such as curb and gutter and utility relocations.

MM T-2: (Advisory LOS Measure – Not Required by CEQA) SCCCD shall be responsible for contributing its proportionate share of the installation of improvements at the intersections identified in Equitable Share

Responsibility Calculation (Table 21 in the Traffic Impact Study included as Appendix E of this EIR). Fair share contributions shall only be made for those facilities, or portion thereof, currently not funded by the responsible agencies roadway impact fee program(s) or grant funded projects, as appropriate. It is recommended that SCCCD work with the City of Fresno and Fresno County to develop the estimated construction costs.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Implementation of MMs T-1 and T-2 would ensure the project's compatibility with future roadway system modifications and mitigate any potential impacts to a less than significant level.

b. Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3 describes specific considerations for evaluating a project's transportation impacts and provides that, generally, vehicle miles traveled is the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. 15064.3(b)(1) addresses land use projects as follows:

> *Vehicle miles traveled exceeding an applicable threshold of significance may indicate a significant impact. Generally, projects within one-half mile of either an existing major transit stop or a stop along an existing high-quality transit corridor should be presumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact. Projects that decrease vehicle miles traveled in the project area compared to existing conditions should be presumed to have a less than significant transportation impact.*

15064.3(b)(4) addresses lead agency discretion and methodology for evaluating VMT impacts:

> *A lead agency has discretion to choose the most appropriate methodology to evaluate a project's vehicle miles traveled, including whether to express the change in absolute terms, per capita, per household or in any other measure. A lead agency may use models to estimate a project's vehicle miles traveled, and may revise those estimates to reflect professional judgment based on substantial evidence. [. . .]*

For purposes of evaluating the project's VMT impacts, SCCCD has opted to utilize the methodology established by Fresno COG. As discussed above in Section 4.16(a) and in the Traffic Impact Study prepared for the project, VMT associated with development and operation of the First Responders Campus is projected to exceed the Fresno County VMT threshold for employment uses of 13 percent below the existing regional VMT per capita.

The Traffic Impact Study presented the following conclusions regarding the project's VMT:

- The project-specific traffic modeling indicates a Project VMT of 28.7 miles per employee, which can also be reasonably estimated as the VMT per student. This value is greater than the regional (Countywide) average of 25.6 miles per employee. Although the project could potentially be considered to be exempt from VMT analyses on the basis that it is an educational facility and not specifically a residential, office, or retail project, it is more conservative to identify a significant transportation impact and explore potential mitigation measures.
- The project is likely to cause a significant transportation impact based on the project VMT exceeding the regional average VMT. The project is not expected to be able to fully mitigate the significant impact; however, potential mitigation measures provided by OPR may be considered in an effort to reduce the significant impact.

As mentioned in the Traffic Impact Study, OPR's SB 743 Technical Advisory provides examples of mitigation measures that can provide reductions in VMT, including the following:

- Improve or increase access to transit.
- Incorporate electric vehicle charging stations.
- Provide bicycle parking.
- Provide parking cash-out programs.
- Provide car-sharing, bike sharing, and ride-sharing programs.

- Provide transit passes.
- Shifting single occupancy vehicle trips to carpooling or vanpooling, for example providing ride-matching services.
- Providing employee transportation coordinators at employment sites.
- Providing a guaranteed ride home service to users of non-auto modes.

The TIS notes that effective mitigation measures for reducing VMT will be difficult to implement on a project level. Using the examples provided in the Technical Advisory for reference, mitigation measures that can be implemented and administered at the project level have been provided to reduce the levels of VMT which would result from the project.

Level of Impact: Potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation Measure T-3:

MM T-3: To reduce the project's generation of vehicle miles traveled (VMT), the following measures shall be implemented at the project site prior to its initial operation and maintained throughout its operation:

a. The project shall install infrastructure for at least 18 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. Further, the District shall pursue grant or other funding sources to implement EV charging stations on the site.

b. The project shall install bicycle parking and shower/locker facilities.

c. SCCCD shall establish a program (or programs) which promote alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle trips at the First Responders Campus. This shall include establishing a ride-sharing or ride-matching program that functions to coordinate pooled travel between the First Responders Campus and other SCCCD campuses, such that students and staff are able to make pooled trips to and from the First Responders Campus during periods of regular instruction at the project; instituting parking charges for students and employees at the campus; and providing a transit subsidy for students (e.g., free bus passes, as funding allows).

d. SCCCD shall act to promote improved and increased access to transit for the project. In addition to the transit subsidy for students provided under c, above, SCCCD shall coordinate with the City of Fresno's Department of Transportation (FAX) regarding transit service in the vicinity of the project site, specifically to promote the routing of transit lines and placement of transit stops at the project site.

Level of Significance with Mitigation: As discussed in the Traffic Impact Analysis, effective mitigation measures for reducing VMT will be difficult to implement on a project level. While implementation of the mitigation measures would help promote some reductions in project-related VMT compared to unmitigated conditions, it remains uncertain whether the measures would be able to reduce the project's VMT to a level below the regional VMT per capita threshold. Therefore, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable.

c. 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 would not substantially contribute to any hazardous transportation conditions involving geometric design features or incompatible uses. Access to the project site would be provided from two driveway locations on North Avenue. Design and construction of the project's access points are subject to design standards and policies set forth by the County of Fresno and the City of Fresno, and compliance with these standards and policies will function to ensure that site access is compatible with the roadway network. Likewise, the design and construction of any roadway and intersection improvements implemented as part of the project are subject to, and will comply with, applicable County of Fresno and City of Fresno design standards and policies.

The project's transportation-related characteristics (i.e., the character, frequency, and volume of transportation activities associated with the project during its construction and operation) will be compatible with both the existing mix of development and future planned land uses in the vicinity. The use of heavy or specialized

equipment, during either construction or operation of the project, would take place within the project site and not substantially affect the transportation network.

Based on these factors, this impact would be less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

d. Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?

SCCCD will work with the City of Fresno, the County of Fresno, and responsible emergency services agencies to ensure adequate emergency access exists for the proposed project. As mentioned in Section 4.16(c), the roadway improvements associated with the project will be designed and constructed according to applicable governmental agency design standards. During the project's construction it is conceivable that emergency access may be partially hindered on a temporary basis, but alternative emergency routes in the vicinity would be available. Further, SCCCD will follow applicable policies and regulations set forth by the County of Fresno and City of Fresno that will support implementation and provide adequate emergency access. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

4.17 Tribal Cultural Resources

Environmental Setting

The San Joaquin Valley and adjacent Sierran foothills and Coast Range have a long and complex cultural history with distinct regional patterns that extend back more than 11,000 years. Most of the San Joaquin Valley and the bordering foothills of the Sierra Nevada and Coastal Range were inhabited by speakers of Yokutsan languages. The southern San Joaquin Valley was home of speakers of Yokutsan languages. The bulk of the Valley Yokuts people lived on the eastern side of the San Joaquin Valley.

According to the City of Fresno General Plan, as of 2014 there have been sixteen Native American archeological sites recorded within the Planning Area by the Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center (SSJVIC). According to the SSJVIC the probability of finding subsurface cultural resources is considered low to moderate in most areas, with the exception of the waterways. Current and past waterways and their surrounding regions are considered especially sensitive for cultural resources, as indigenous people utilized these areas as permanent villages, temporary camps, and task specific sites.

Regulatory Setting

State

Native American Heritage Commission

The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) is a nine-member body appointed by the Governor to identify and catalog cultural resources (i.e., places of special religious or social significance to Native Americans, and known graves and cemeteries of Native Americans on private lands) in California. The Commission is charged with the duty of preserving and ensuring accessibility of sacred sites and burials, the disposition of Native American human remains and burial items, maintain an inventory of Native American sacred sites located on public lands, and review current administrative and statutory protections related to these sacred sites.

California Public Resources Code

Public Resources Code Section 5097.9–5097.991 provides protection to Native American historic and cultural resources and sacred sites, and identifies the powers and duties of the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). It also requires notification to descendants of discoveries of Native American human remains and provides for treatment and disposition of human remains and associated grave goods.

Assembly Bill (AB) 52

AB 52 requires as part of CEQA review a consultation process with all California Native American Tribes on the Native American Heritage Commission List. The list includes both federally and non-federally recognized tribes. The bill requires notification be provided to tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of a proposed project if they have requested notice of projects proposed within that area. If a tribe requests consultation within 30 days upon receipt of the notice, the lead agency must consult with the tribe. Consultation may include discussing the type of environmental review necessary, the significance of tribal cultural resources, the significance of the project's impacts on the tribal cultural resources, and alternatives and mitigation measures recommended by the tribe. The parties must consult in good faith, and consultation is deemed concluded when either of the parties agree to measures to mitigate or avoid a significant effect on a tribal cultural resource (if such a significant effect exists) or when a party concludes that mutual agreement cannot be reached.

Local

Fresno County General Plan

The Fresno County General Plan's Open Space and Conservation Element contains several objectives and policies relevant to the protection of cultural resources, which include tribal cultural resources. The Historical, Cultural, and Geological Resources section of the Open Space and Conservation Element provides policies directing the protection of historical and archaeological resources within the County. These policies include encouraging preservation of any sites and/or buildings identified as having historical significance (Policy OS-J.1), and requiring that discretionary development projects, as part of any required CEQA review, identify and protect important historical, archeological, and cultural sites and their contributing environment from damage, destruction, and abuse to the maximum extent feasible (Policy OS-J.14).

City of Fresno General Plan

In the Historic and Cultural Resources Element of the City of Fresno General Plan, Policy HCR-2-d directs the City to work with local Native American tribes to protect recorded and unrecorded cultural and sacred sites, as required by State law, and educate developers and the community-at-large about the connections between Native American history and the environmental features that characterize the local landscape. Other goals and policies aimed at protecting historical and cultural resources also encompass tribal cultural resources.

Discussion of Impacts

Would the project:

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

(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.

As part of the project's environmental review process, the District contacted the state Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) to request a Native American Contacts List and a Sacred Lands File Search for the project area. NAHC provided contact information for 13 people representing ten Native American tribes. A record search of the NAHC Sacred Lands File (SLF) was completed for the project. The results of the SLF record search were negative.

In accordance with AB 52, potentially affected Native American tribes were formally notified of this project and were given the opportunity to request consultation on the project. In response to the notification, no requests for consultation were received nor were any other comments provided by the notified tribes. As discussed in Section 4.5 (Cultural Resources), the project is located on a site that has been highly disturbed from prior agricultural usage, and it is not located near a current or past waterway, thus it is generally not known or expected to be a sensitive resource area. At this time, the District has no information or evidence that Tribal Cultural Resources exist in relation to the site or will be affected by the project. However, it is possible that subsurface resources could exist and be disturbed by project construction activities. To address the potential for impacts to previously undiscovered tribal cultural resources, the mitigation measure provided below has be incorporated into the project.

Level of Impact: Potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures:

MM TCR-1: Avoidance of Impacts to Undiscovered Subsurface Resources

MM TCR-1: If subsurface tribal cultural resources are discovered during excavation and/or construction activities, construction shall stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and a qualified tribal cultural resources professional shall be consulted to determine whether the resources require further study. If the resources are determined to be significant, mitigation measures shall be identified by the cultural resources professional and recommended to the District. If human remains are discovered, the procedures of Mitigation Measure CR-3 shall also apply.

Level of Significance after Mitigation: With implementation of the recommended mitigation measure, impacts of the project regarding tribal cultural resources would be less than significant.

4.18 Utilities and Service Systems

Environmental Setting

Water and Wastewater

The project site is not currently connected to a public water or wastewater system but is in the vicinity of two water and wastewater service providers: the Malaga County Water District (MCWD) and the City of Fresno. As discussed in more detail under the Regulatory Setting section, the project site is located within the "Half-Mile Agreement Area" that is the subject of a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Fresno, MCWD, and the Fresno Local Agency Formation Commission (Fresno LAFCo) regarding water service.

MCWD is a California Special District which covers an area of about 2.5 square miles and provides water distribution as well as wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal to a community that includes residential units, trailer park tenants, major industrial customers, and over 200 commercial businesses. MCWD's nearest water and wastewater system facilities are located on the south side of North Avenue across from the project site. MCWD sources its water supply from a series of groundwater wells. MCWD treats wastewater at its Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF), located at 3749 S. Maple Avenue, approximately 1.25 miles southwest of the project site.

The City of Fresno's Department of Public Utilities (DPU) is responsible for providing water and wastewater service to the majority of the city plus some users within the City's Planning Area outside of the City limits. According to the City's 2015 Urban Water Management Plan, the City has an aggregate of about 133,000 service connections and provides approximately 145,900 acre-feet of potable water annually. The City's primary source of potable water is groundwater, but in recent history it has transitioned towards greater utilization of surface water. As of 2016, the City's water system consisted of about 1,799 miles of transmission and distribution pipelines, 260 active municipal groundwater wells, two surface water treatment facilities, three water storage facilities, and four booster pump facilities. Additionally, the City of Fresno owns and operates a Recycled Water Distribution System which provides recycled water for approved uses to customers. The City's nearest existing water supply infrastructure is located in North Avenue, west of Chestnut Avenue.

The City's wastewater treatment and reclamation system encompasses collection and conveyance of wastewater, treatment of raw wastewater, and management of reclaimed water and bio solids. The City owns and operates two wastewater treatment facilities that serve the Fresno metropolitan area, the Fresno/Clovis Regional Wastewater Reclamation Facility (RWRF) and the North Fresno Wastewater Reclamation Facility (NFWRF). Its wastewater conveyance system is comprised of an extensive system of main lines, connection points, manholes, and lift stations. The collections pipelines consist of smaller diameter pipes (4 to 12 inches) serving individual properties, larger collection pipelines (13 to 33 inches) typically referred to as "oversized sewers," and sewer trunk interceptors (34 inches and larger) that convey sewage to the RWRF. There is existing City of Fresno wastewater infrastructure located adjacent to the site along North Avenue (North Avenue trunk sewer line).

Stormwater Drainage

The Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District (FMFCD) is responsible for planning, constructing, and maintaining the stormwater drainage collection and disposal facilities necessary for urban development within the Fresno-Clovis metropolitan area, including the area of the proposed project site. Stormwater runoff is conveyed through a system of street gutters, underground storm drains, retention/detention basins, pumping stations, and open channels that are maintained by FMFCD. FMFCD is divided into numerous drainage zones that have (or are planned to have) a system of underground gravity flow pipelines that drain to stormwater retention basins or drainage outfalls. As previously discussed in Section 6.11(c), the 39.21-acre project site parcel is located primarily within FMFCD's "AZ" basin area, with a small portion at the eastern edge of the parcel located within the Basin "CU" basin area. Review of FMFCD's Storm Drainage and Flood Control Master Plan Map shows there are future planned storm drainage pipelines located within the project area.

Solid Waste Disposal

Within the greater Fresno area, non-recyclable solid waste is generally taken to the American Avenue Landfill, located approximately six miles southwest of the City of Kerman. The American Avenue Landfill is owned and operated by Fresno County and began operations in 1992 for both public and commercial solid waste haulers. The American Avenue Landfill has a maximum permitted capacity of 32,700,000 cubic yards and a remaining capacity of 29,358,535 cubic yards, with an estimated closure date of August 31, 2031. The maximum permitted throughput is 2,200 tons per day (CalRecycle, 2014). Other landfills within the County of Fresno include the Clovis Landfill with a maximum remaining permitted capacity of 7,740,000 cubic yards, a maximum permitted throughput of 2,000 tons per day, and an estimated closure date of 2047 (CalRecycle, 2014). There is also the Coalinga Landfill with a maximum remaining capacity of 1,930,062 cubic yards, a maximum permitted throughput of 200 tons per day, and an estimated closure date of 2029 (CalRecycle, 2014).

Electrical, Natural Gas, Telecommunications

The project site is located in an area with existing electrical and natural gas service utilities in place as well as telecommunications facilities such as cellular towers and broadband internet connections. There are overhead powerlines and power poles present at the southern portion of the project site along the north side of North Avenue, and there is a PG&E electrical substation located at the northeast corner of Willow and North Avenues immediately to the east of the 39.21-acre project site parcel.

Regulatory Setting

Local

City of Fresno 2015 Urban Water Management Plan

The state's Urban Water Management Planning Act requires every urban water supplier in California providing water for municipal purposes either directly or indirectly to more than 3,000 customers, or supplying more than 3,000 acre-feet of water annually, to prepare and adopt an Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP). Each UWMP reports, describes, and evaluates water deliveries and uses, water supply sources, efficient water uses, and demand management measures. Water agencies are required to assess water demand and supply over a 20-year planning horizon which includes drought condition scenarios. These scenarios must address water shortage contingency

planning and drought responses. Urban water suppliers are required to include in updated plans a report of daily per capita water use (baseline); identify water use targets; and daily per capita water use compliance.

The City of Fresno adopted its 2015 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) on June 23, 2016. The UWMP describes the City's water demands and supplies, reliability and water conservation strategies, and presents projects that comprise City's long-term water supply strategy.

City of Fresno-Malaga County Water District Water Service Memorandum of Understanding

In March of 2016, Fresno LAFCo authorized approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Fresno, the Malaga County Water District (MCWD), and Fresno LAFCo related to the provision of water service in the vicinity of North Avenue. The MOU affects a "Half-Mile Agreement Area" which refers to the area extending one-half mile north of North Avenue between Maple and Minnewawa Avenues. The context of the MOU's adoption involved development constraints on properties in the southern part of the Fresno SOI, specifically constraints on annexing to the City and/or connecting to City services. Per the MOU, projects within the Half-Mile Agreement Area are eligible to receive public water service provided by MCWD. Under this agreement, a property owner/developer would contract with the City of Fresno for public utilities, and the City would then contract with MCWD to provide services, and would bill the property owner for the services. As part of the agreement, the property owner would agree to not protest any future annexation, and LAFCo would not lose its discretion as each application for service must be submitted to and evaluated by LAFCo in a manner compliant with LAFCo law and local policy.

Fresno County General Plan

The Public Facilities and Services Element is organized accordingly into ten sections: General Public Facilities and Services; Funding; Water Supply and Delivery; Wastewater Collection, Treatment, and Disposal; Storm Drainage and Flood Control; Landfills, Transfer Stations, and Solid Waste Processing Facilities; Law Enforcement; Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services; School and Library Facilities; and Utilities.

As stated in its General Plan, Fresno County development is dependent on a complex network of public facilities and services. Each type of service has a unique set of constraints and issues and must adapt to growth and change differently. The General Plan sets out policies and implementation programs to respond to this variety of issues and constraints. These include the following:

- *Policy PF-A.1:* The County shall ensure through the development review process that public facilities and services will be developed, operational, and available to serve new development. The County shall not approve new development where existing facilities are inadequate unless the applicant can demonstrate that all necessary public facilities will be installed or adequately financed and maintained (through fees or other means).
- *Policy PF-A.3:* The County shall require new urban commercial and urban-density residential development to be served by community sewer, stormwater, and water systems.
- *Policy PF-C.12:* The County shall approve new development only if an adequate sustainable water supply to serve such development is demonstrated.

City of Fresno General Plan

The General Plan's Public Utilities and Services Element provides a policy framework for the City to manage infrastructure and services, identify areas for improvement, and ensure that public utilities and services meet the needs of the community as the city grows. The Public Utilities and Services Element addresses the planning, provision, and maintenance of water, wastewater, solid waste systems, and other facilities operated by the City.

Would the project:

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

Potential impacts related to the relocation or construction of utility and service systems facilities are discussed as follows:

Water

Development of the project will entail buildout and installation of water system infrastructure (e.g., piping) that will connect to the City of Fresno's water system. Existing water system infrastructure currently exists in the area west of the intersection of North and Chestnut Avenues. The project's connection would be routed within existing right-of-way along North Avenue, totaling a distance of approximately 3,500 feet from the project site to the point of connection. The project will also install a 250,000-gallon water tank on site for fireflow purposes.

The connection to the City's water system is included as part of the project description. No aspects of the physical connection process would go beyond the analysis of environmental impacts presented in this EIR. The project would be developed in a manner compliant with City of Fresno Department of Public Utilities standards and specifications, as well as any applicable City of Fresno and/or County of Fresno policies and regulations regarding the construction of wastewater system connections.

Wastewater

Development of the project will entail project-specific buildout and installation of wastewater system infrastructure in order to connect the project to the City of Fresno's wastewater system. Existing wastewater system infrastructure currently exists near the project on North Avenue. The connection to the City of Fresno's wastewater system is included as part of the project description, and no aspects of the physical connection process would go beyond the analysis of environmental impacts presented in this EIR. As with its water supply connections, the project would be developed in a manner compliant with City of Fresno Department of Public Utilities standards and specifications, as well as any applicable City of Fresno and/or County of Fresno policies and regulations regarding the construction of wastewater system connections.

Storm Drainage

The project would initially utilize an on-site retention basin to control drainage and stormwater runoff at the project site, and at a future point in time the project would connect to FMFCD's drainage system when the future planned facilities set forth in its Master Plan are developed in the project area. The addition of new impervious surfaces that would occur from development of the project (e.g., building pads, parking lots, streets, driveways) is anticipated to increase stormwater runoff in comparison to existing conditions. As part of the project's development, SCCCD will submit plans and pay fees to FMFCD to ensure compatibility with the FMFCD system and ensure adequate stormwater drainage is provided.

Electrical Power, Natural Gas, and Telecommunications

The project site is located in a well-developed area where existing electrical and natural gas service utilities are in place as well as telecommunications facilities such as cellular towers and broadband internet connections. Development of the project will be subject to compliance with applicable rules, regulations, and policies regarding connections to these utilities. As such, any impacts that would occur related to relocation or construction of electrical, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities would be less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

b. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years?

The project's location and operational characteristics are consistent with the City of Fresno's water service capacity for existing and planned development within its service area. Regarding future conditions, the City of Fresno's 2015 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) includes a Water Supply Reliability Assessment, which evaluates the City's anticipated water supplies and water demands in normal year, single dry year, and multiple dry year scenarios. According to the UWMP, the City's water supplies are projected to meet its water demands under all three scenarios through 2040 (see 2015 UWMP Chapter 7). The proposed project's demand for water is not expected to substantially differ (and will likely be less) than the demand projected from the industrial uses

planned on the site in the City's General Plan, on which assumptions and projections of the UWMP are based. Therefore, this impact is considered less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

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

The City of Fresno owns and operates the Fresno-Clovis Regional Wastewater Reclamation Facility (RWRF), which provides a majority of the wastewater treatment for the City. Per the Fresno General Plan Master EIR, the facility received and treated approximately 64.5 million gallons per day (mgd) during 2011 with the permitted capacity to treat up to 88.0 mgd as a maximum monthly average flow; the quantity of wastewater received and treated has been declining since 2006, when it peaked at an annual average daily flow of approximately 72.1 mgd. The quantity of wastewater generated by the proposed First Responders Campus project would be similar to (if not less than) what was projected for the site in the General Plan MEIR, which contemplated the site being built out with industrial development. Therefore, this impact is considered less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

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?

Impacts of the proposed First Responders Campus project in relation to solid waste would be less than significant. SCCCD operates its existing facilities in compliance with applicable statutes and regulations related to solid waste and would continue to do so upon operation of the proposed project. Development and operation of the First Responders Campus is not anticipated to result in substantial generation of solid waste, and there is sufficient landfill capacity available to serve the project.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

e. Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

For reasons identified in Section 4.18(d), this impact would be less than significant.

Level of Impact: Less than significant.

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5. Additional CEQA Considerations

5.1 Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes

The CEQA Guidelines require that EIRs include discussion of any significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by a proposed project should it be implemented. Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines provides the following commentary regarding significant irreversible changes:

> *"Uses of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project may be irreversible since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely. Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts (such as highway improvement which provides access to a previously inaccessible area) generally commit future generations to similar uses. Also irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project. Irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified."*

Buildout of the First Responders Campus would require the commitment of energy, natural resources, and building materials (e.g., lumber, concrete). Energy commitments would include the consumption of non-renewable fuels, which would be used by construction equipment, trucks, and worker vehicles. Long-term operation of the project's facilities would include the use of electricity, natural gas, and water. The commitment of resources and energy required for the project, while irretrievable, would be commensurate with that of other projects of similar size and likely less than the industrial uses that could be built on the site if the project is not built (the site is designated in the City of Fresno General Plan for heavy industrial use). As discussed in Section 4.6, Energy, the project would not involve a wasteful or unjustifiable use of energy or other resources. It is noted that the project will be subject to regulations and mitigation measures designed to reduce consumption of energy and natural resources. The project site does not contain any significant mineral, oil, or other energy sources that would be adversely affected by project implementation.

Development of the project would also commit the land on which it is located to be utilized as a special-purpose community college campus providing instruction and training for first responder programs. Its development would preclude other land uses on the project site, including other types of urbanized uses (e.g., commercial or industrial development) and agricultural uses. As noted elsewhere in this EIR, the project is located in an area where urban growth and development has been planned for in the long-range planning policies of both the City of Fresno and the County of Fresno. As discussed in Section 4.2, Agricultural and Forestry Resources, development and operation of the project would not result in significant impacts to agricultural resources. Additionally, see Section 4.9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, regarding the low potential for the project to result in a significant impact from environmental accidents.

Based on the above, to the extent irretrievable commitments of resources are entailed in development and operation of the project, such commitments are considered to be justified.

5.2 Growth-Inducing Impacts

Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(e), an "EIR shall discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment." Growth inducement can occur directly if a project involves construction of new housing. Indirect growth inducement can occur from the provision of new employment opportunities. For instance, a project may indirectly induce growth if it includes substantial new permanent employment opportunities (e.g., commercial, industrial, or governmental enterprises) or substantial short-term employment opportunities (e.g., construction employment) that would generate the need for additional housing and services to support the new temporary employment demand. Indirect growth inducement can also occur from removal of an obstacle to additional growth and development, such as expansion of a roadway or removal of a constraint on a public utility or service (e.g., construction of a major sewer line with excess capacity through an undeveloped area).

The City of Fresno General Plan and Fresno County General Plan provide the overall framework for growth and development in the City and County, respectively. As shown in both of these long-range planning documents, the project site is located within the City of Fresno's Sphere of Influence (delineated along North Avenue) and is in an area that has been planned for urbanization with the development of new businesses and job growth. To an extent, the inducement for the urban development within the project area has been created through the both the City and County's long-range planning processes.

Project construction would generate temporary and short-term employment; however, these construction jobs are anticipated to be filled from the existing local employment pool, and they would not indirectly result in a population increase or induce growth by creating permanent new jobs.

The project would bring students, faculty, staff, and occasional visitors to the site to access its specialized facilities and training for police, fire, and other emergency services. The planned capacity of the campus (daily maximum of 270 students and 50 staff) and the site-specific population would be similar to that of the business and industrial uses that already exist and are planned for at the project site and its vicinity. Due to the First Responders Campus's special-purpose operational nature and relatively limited enrollment, it is not anticipated to promote unplanned growth or development. Any growth induced by the project is expected to be consistent with the growth anticipated, and sought after, by City plans and policies. Additionally, as there is already urban infrastructure in place to serve existing commercial and industrial uses in the surrounding vicinity, development of the project would not require extensions of infrastructure to previously unserved areas in a manner that would indirectly generate substantial unplanned population growth. Further, development of the project would not conflict with region-wide planning for housing and population growth.

As the project is located within the City of Fresno SOI, it is anticipated that the site will eventually be annexed to the City of Fresno. The process of annexing the project site would also likely entail annexation of additional parcels to the north and/or west of the project site in order to avoid leaving any "islands" or "peninsulas" of unincorporated land – effects which are prohibited or strongly discouraged by applicable long-range planning policies and regulations. However, as the areas to the north and west are also within the SOI, annexation and future growth within these areas would be consistent with the City of Fresno's long-range planning set forth for the area.

Based on these factors, the project would not induce growth that would lead to adverse unanticipated changes in in land use patterns and population densities and related impacts on environmental resources.

5.3 Cumulative Impacts

Framework for Analyzing Cumulative Impacts

The CEQA Guidelines require that an EIR consider the potential cumulative impacts of a project. The term "cumulative impacts" refers to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. Individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time. By looking outside of a particular project site or action, a cumulative impact analysis allows decisionmakers to look at the impacts of a project within the greater context.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 provides that "An EIR shall discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable." As defined in Guidelines Section 15065(a)(3), "cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of an individual 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.

The CEQA Guidelines provide that discussion of cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone, and should be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness (see CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b)). Where a project's incremental effect is not cumulatively considerable, a lead agency need not consider that effect significant, but shall briefly describe its basis for concluding that the incremental effect is not cumulatively considerable. Additionally, an EIR should not discuss impacts which do not result in part from the project evaluated in the EIR.

The CEQA Guidelines identify two basic methods for establishing the cumulative environment in which the project is to be considered: 1) the use of a list of past, present, and probable future projects; or 2) the use of adopted projections from a general plan, other regional planning document, or certified EIR for such a planning document. For this Draft EIR, the cumulative environment is based on the summary of projections included in the MEIR prepared for the 2014 City of Fresno General Plan and Development Code Update. This approach is used for the following reasons:

- The Plan Area encompasses the project site and designates the land within the project area for urban use. While the proposed project would entail an urban use different from the designation in the General Plan, the potential cumulative impacts would remain consistent with those which were considered in the MEIR.
- The analysis of cumulative impacts in the General Plan MEIR assumes as the cumulative development scenario the existing and probable future development within the City of Fresno as would be enabled by the City's general plan update, combined with existing and probable future development in communities within the vicinity of the City, including nearby unincorporated areas such as Malaga and Calwa.

Under the Plan Approach, a pertinent discussion of cumulative impacts contained in one or more previously certified EIRs may be incorporated by reference pursuant to the provisions for tiering and program EIRs. No further cumulative impacts analysis is required when a project is consistent with a general, specific, master or comparable programmatic plan where the lead agency determines that the regional or areawide cumulative impacts of the proposed project have already been adequately addressed.

Where a lead agency determines that a cumulative effect has been adequately addressed in the prior EIR, that effect is not treated as significant for purposes of the later EIR or negative declaration, and need not be discussed in detail. If the project contributes to a cumulative impact but the cumulative impact is not significant, the EIR must "briefly indicate" why the cumulative impact is not significant, and must identify facts and analysis supporting that conclusion.

In the City of Fresno General Plan MEIR, the following environmental effects were determined to be less than significant, or capable of being reduced to less than significant with the incorporation of mitigation measures: Biological Resources, Energy, Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Population and Housing, and Public Services, and Recreation.

The following environmental effects were determined to be potentially significant and unavoidable:

- Aesthetics – visual character and illumination of the dark sky.
- Agricultural Resources – loss of farmland and removal of Williamson Act Contract land.
- Air Quality – criteria pollutant emissions and toxic air contaminants pollutant concentrations.
- Cultural Resources – potential removal of historic resources.
- Greenhouse Gases – increase in greenhouse gas emissions beyond the year 2020.
- Noise – exceed noise standards and substantial permanent increases in noise levels.
- Transportation and Traffic – potentially exceed thresholds of levels of service on roadways under the jurisdictions of the County of Fresno, City of Clovis, and Caltrans.
- Utilities and Service Systems – construction of water, wastewater, and drainage facilities that could cause substantial impacts associated with loss of agriculture and increases in air emissions.

Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

Aesthetics

Implementation of the project would not result in a significant contribution to the aesthetics impacts that were identified in City of Fresno General Plan MEIR as significant and unavoidable at a cumulative level. As discussed in the evaluation of aesthetics impacts (Section 4.1), the project's physical form and character (i.e., the size, height, massing and arrangement of facilities at the campus) would be similar to existing commercial and industrial uses in

the vicinity, and the project includes landscaping features which will function in part to enhance its visual character. Additionally, lighting and glare associated with the project would not be unusual in the context of the existing commercial and industrial uses in the area and would have no effect on nearby agricultural uses. Further, the site configuration and setbacks of the First Responders Campus facilities plus the presence of landscaping features will function to enhance the project's visual character and provide additional reductions in lighting and glare.

Agricultural and Forestry Resources

The City of Fresno General Plan MEIR determined that the loss of farmland and removal of Williamson Act Contract land occurring as a result of the General Plan's buildout would constitute a significant and unavoidable impact. The project site includes 35.01 acres of land identified as Prime Farmland in the 2016 California Important Farmland Finder, and development of the project would commit the project site to non-agricultural use. However, for reasons discussed in the evaluation of impacts to agricultural resources (Section 4.2 of this EIR), the project's incremental contribution would not be considered cumulatively significant. Notably, the project site was evaluated using the LESA Model to determine the significance resulting from the loss of agricultural land, and the modeling indicated a less than significant impact. The project is also consistent with the goals and policies set forth by both the City of Fresno and Fresno County which call for directing growth toward existing urban areas in order to preserve agricultural areas. For these reasons, the impact of the project on agricultural resources would not be cumulatively considerable.

Air Quality

The City of Fresno General Plan MEIR determined that buildout of the City's General Plan would result in a significant and unavoidable cumulative impact to air quality associated with criteria pollutant emissions and toxic air contaminants pollutant concentrations. In the analysis of the project's Air Quality impacts (see Section 4.3, and the Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Impact Analysis included as Appendix B), potential cumulative air quality impacts associated with the project are addressed. The analysis encompasses both short-term construction and long-term operational air quality impacts associated with the proposed project. Based on this analysis, neither short-term construction nor long-term operational emissions would exceed applicable SJVAPCD significance thresholds. Therefore, the project would not result in a cumulatively considerable air quality impact.

Biological Resources

Implementation of the project would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts to biological resources. The City of Fresno General Plan MEIR previously determined that impacts to biological resources resulting from buildout of the Plan Area would be less than significant given adherence to the General Plan MEIR's mitigation measures. The project is located entirely within the Plan Area, the project's physical form and operational character are consistent with the type of development that was contemplated as part of the General Plan MEIR. Further, the project will comply with applicable mitigation measures set forth in the project EIR which are equal to or greater than the General Plan MEIR measures related to biological resources.

Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources

Implementation of the project would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts to either cultural resources or tribal cultural resources. The City of Fresno General Plan MEIR's analysis of impacts to cultural resources encompasses tribal cultural resources. The General Plan MEIR determined that buildout of the City General Plan would result in a significant and unavoidable cumulative impact to cultural resources due to potential removal of historic resources. For the proposed project, implementation of Mitigation Measures CR-1 through CR-3 would ensure that the project's contribution to cumulatively significant cultural resource impacts would not be considerable by requiring a field survey prior to ground-disturbing activities and requiring construction work to cease in the event of a subsequent discovery during construction, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Additionally, Mitigation Measure TCR-1 requires stoppage of construction and further study by a qualified tribal cultural resources professional in the event that subsurface tribal cultural resources are discovered during excavation and/or construction activities. Implementation of these mitigation measures would largely preempt the project's contribution to the potential cumulative impacts identified in the General Plan MEIR. Therefore, the

proposed project would not result in a considerable contribution to a significant cumulative impact related to either cultural resources or tribal cultural resources.

Energy

Implementation of the project would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts to energy. The City of Fresno General Plan MEIR previously determined that buildout of the Plan Area would not result in a significant impact. The project is located entirely within the Plan Area, and the project's physical form and operational character are consistent with the type of development that was contemplated as part of the General Plan MEIR's analysis of energy impacts. The analysis of the project's energy impacts (Section 4.6 of this EIR) further supports that no significant cumulative impact related to energy would occur from the project's development and operation.

Geology and Soils

Implementation of the project would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts involving geology and soils. The City of Fresno General Plan MEIR previously determined that impacts to geology and soils resulting from buildout of the Plan Area would be less than significant. The project is located entirely within the Plan Area, and the project's physical form and operational character, as well as the geologic and soils condition of the project site, are consistent with what was contemplated as part of the General Plan MEIR's analysis of geology and soils impacts.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The General Plan MEIR determined that cumulative impacts related to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions would be significant and unavoidable due to the General Plan's resulting increase in GHG emissions beyond the year 2020.

GHG emissions generated by project construction and operation are inherently cumulative. GHG emissions from one project cannot, on their own, result in changes in climatic conditions; therefore, the emissions from one project must be considered in the context of their contribution to cumulative global emissions. The GHG analysis presented in Section 4.8 of this EIR (as well as in Appendix B) evaluates the project's contribution in comparison to a GHG efficiency threshold based on its service population and its inventory goal (allowable emissions). The GHG analysis determined that the project would exceed its calculated GHG efficiency threshold, and even with implementation of mitigation measures the project's GHG emissions may remain above the threshold. Therefore, the project's cumulative impact regarding GHG emissions efficiencies is considered to be cumulatively considerable.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The General Plan MEIR determined that cumulative impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials would be less than significant with the implementation of mitigation measures. The project is located entirely within the Plan Area, and the project's physical form and operational character is consistent with the type of development that was contemplated as part of the General Plan MEIR. As mentioned during discussion of hazards and hazardous materials impacts (Section 4.9), both a Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment were conducted at the project site, and upon completion of the Phase II ESA there were no lingering issues identified involving hazards and hazardous materials. Therefore, the project would not result in any cumulatively considerable impacts to hazards and hazardous materials.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Implementation of the project would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts to hydrology and water quality. The City of Fresno General Plan MEIR previously determined that impacts to hydrology and water quality resulting from buildout of the Plan Area would be less than significant. The project is located entirely within the Plan Area, and the project's physical form and operational character are consistent with the type of development that was contemplated as part of the General Plan MEIR's analysis of hydrology and water quality impacts. Similarly, as discussed in prior sections of this EIR, the type and location of development entailed as part of the project have also been accounted for in the City's 2015 Urban Water Management Plan.

Land Use and Planning

Implementation of the project would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts related to land use and planning. The City of Fresno General Plan MEIR determined that cumulative impacts related to land use and planning

would be less than significant. The project is located entirely within the Plan Area, and the project's physical form and operational character are consistent with the type of development that was contemplated as part of the General Plan MEIR's impact analysis. As discussed in Section 4.11 (Land Use and Planning), the project would not physically divide an existing community or conflict with an applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. The determinations presented there extend to cumulative effects.

Noise

The City of Fresno General Plan MEIR determined that significant and unavoidable noise impacts would result from buildout of the General Plan due to resulting noise levels in excess of applicable noise standards and substantial permanent increases in noise levels in parts of the Plan Area. However, the proposed project would not contribute to these impacts to a cumulatively considerable degree. As discussed in the analysis of noise impacts (Section 4.12), implementation of the proposed project would not result in substantial increases (i.e., 5 dBA or greater) in existing and future cumulative traffic noise levels along nearby roadways. Predicted traffic noise levels are not projected to exceed Fresno County's noise control ordinance exterior and interior standards at the nearby residential land uses. As a result, the project's cumulative impacts related to noise would be considered less than significant.

Population and Housing

Implementation of the project would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts to population and housing. The General Plan MEIR determined that cumulative impacts related to population and housing would be less than significant. The project is located entirely within the Plan Area, the project's physical form and operational character are consistent with the type of development that was contemplated as part of the General Plan MEIR. As discussed in Section 4.13 (Population and Housing), the project site is located within the City SOI in an area that has been planned for urbanization with the development of new businesses and job growth. The planned capacity of the campus and the site-specific population would be similar to that of the business and industrial uses that already exist and are planned for at the project site and its vicinity. Additionally, as there is already urban infrastructure in place nearby to serve existing commercial and industrial uses in the surrounding vicinity, development of the project would not entail extension of infrastructure to previously unserved areas in a manner that would indirectly generate substantial unplanned population growth. Thus, the conclusion reached in the General Plan MEIR would not change with the project's implementation.

Public Services and Recreation

Implementation of the project would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts to public services or recreation. The City of Fresno General Plan MEIR, which addressed potential cumulative impacts pertaining to public services and recreation collectively, determined that cumulative impacts would be less than significant with mitigation. The project is located entirely within the Plan Area, and the project's physical form and operational character is consistent with the type of development that was contemplated as part of the General Plan MEIR's analysis of public services and recreation impacts, thus the conclusion reached would not change with the project's implementation.

Transportation

The City of Fresno General Plan MEIR determined that cumulative impacts related to transportation and traffic would be significant and unavoidable because buildout occurring from implementation of the General Plan could potentially exceed thresholds of levels of service (LOS) on roadways under the jurisdictions of the County of Fresno, City of Clovis, and Caltrans.

As discussed in Section 4.16 (Transportation), LOS is no longer considered an environmental impact under CEQA. However, there are LOS-based policies which remain in effect under the City's General Plan. The project's Traffic Impact Study evaluated future LOS conditions for Cumulative Near-Term and Cumulative Year 2040 scenarios and determined that the project could achieve acceptable levels of service with the installation of roadway improvements in the vicinity of the project site.

Regarding VMT, the General Plan MEIR did not analyze VMT impacts in 2014, as this was not a required analytical component at the time of its adoption. However, the City of Fresno has recently undertaken an effort to update its

General Plan, which entails preparation of an updated EIR to address an updated range of environmental issues, including VMT associated with buildout of the City's General Plan. As of this point in time, the City has released a Draft EIR (March 2020) and Recirculated Draft EIR (March 2021) for public review but has not yet certified the EIR. While the EIR has not yet been certified, the analysis presented in the draft documents is informative for purposes of considering at a cumulative level the topic of VMT as it relates to the City's General Plan.

The analysis in the Recirculated Draft EIR determined that continued implementation of the approved General Plan would result in an increase in VMT per capita and per employee. The City's Guidelines for VMT Thresholds includes a summary of the VMT mitigation measures and project alternatives that could be used to reduce VMT at a project-level. However, these efforts would take place through continued implementation of the approved General Plan and as discretionary projects are proposed. Therefore, because these future projects are unknown at this time, the General Plan Update EIR determined that VMT impacts remain significant and unavoidable at a plan level. As discussed in the analysis of transportation impacts (Section 4.16), the project would result in VMT per employee above the Fresno County regional threshold for VMT. As the regional VMT threshold reflects potential VMT characteristics at a regional level, the project's generation of VMT above the regional threshold would be considered a cumulatively considerable impact.

Utilities and Service Systems

The City of Fresno General Plan MEIR indicated significant and unavoidable impacts related to utilities and service systems could occur from the General Plan's implementation because construction of water, wastewater, and drainage facilities could cause substantial impacts associated with loss of agriculture and increases in air emissions. The General Plan MEIR attributed these cumulative impacts to expansions of the City's water and wastewater treatment plants that would be necessitated to accommodate new development, along with impacts that could potentially occur from development of new conveyance infrastructure.

The project would not substantially contribution to the significant cumulative utilities and services impacts identified in the General Plan MEIR. Analysis presented earlier in this section indicates that the project would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts to either agricultural resources or air quality. The project's physical form and operational character is consistent with the types of development that currently exist in the vicinity of the project site and have been planned for in the area as part of the General Plan. The project's demand for water and wastewater services relative to the City's existing water and wastewater service capacities is relatively minimal. Therefore, utilities and services impacts associated with the project would not be cumulatively considerable.

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6. Alternatives

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to identify and evaluate alternatives to the First Responders Campus project that would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project(s) but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. Section 15126.6 of the State CEQA Guidelines governs the evaluation of alternatives in an EIR. Key requirements of Section 15126.6 include the following:

(a) Section 15126.6(b): The discussions of alternatives in an EIR shall focus on alternatives to the project or its location that are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project, even if those alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly.

(b) Section 15126.6(f): The range of alternatives required in an EIR is governed by a "rule of reason" that requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice. The alternatives shall be limited to ones that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project.

(c) Section 15126.6(d): The EIR shall include sufficient information about each alternative to allow a meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the proposed project.

(d) Section 15126.6(e): The specific alternative of "no project" shall be evaluated along with its impacts. The purpose of describing and analyzing a "no project" alternative is to allow decision makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the project.

(e) Section 15126.6(f)(2): The EIR shall evaluate alternative locations for the project. The key question in addressing alternative locations is whether developing the project at another location would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project.

Because an EIR must identify ways to mitigate or avoid the significant effects that a project may have on the environment, the discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives to the project or its location which can avoid or substantially lessen any significant effects of the project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be costlier.

This EIR has identified two impacts of the project as significant and unavoidable: the generation of per-capita VMT in excess of the regional (Countywide) VMT threshold, and the generation of GHG emissions above the GHG efficiency threshold calculated for the project. The analysis of alternatives focuses on the two significant and unavoidable impacts, as the collection of impacts capable of being avoided or mitigated has been determined to be substantially the same as analyzed in this EIR (save for the "No Project" alternative).

The range of potential alternatives to the proposed project shall include those that could feasibly accomplish most of the basic objectives of the project and could avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the significant effects.

The EIR should also identify any alternatives that were considered by the lead agency but were rejected as infeasible during the scoping process and briefly explain the reasons underlying the lead agency's determination.

As identified in Section 2.4, SCCCD's objectives in seeking to develop and operate the First Responders Campus Project are as follows:

- Provide facilities for police, fire, and other emergency response programs which will allow for high-quality instruction, increased student capacity, and greater programming opportunities.
- Consolidate and integrate existing police, fire, and other emergency response training at one accessible location.
- Provide a site which can physically accommodate the specialized facilities needed for emergency response training programs, satisfy applicable criteria for the siting of community college facilities, and operate with minimal disturbance occurring to and from surrounding uses.

- Provide a location that is regionally centralized and accessible to users throughout SCCCD's enrollment boundaries.
- Support the substantial need for trained police, fire, and other emergency response personnel by agencies in the region.
- Provide training for good-paying stable jobs in a socioeconomically disadvantaged area.
- Reduce crime by providing an adequate supply of well-trained personnel to area agencies.
- Provide for continuing professional education for existing police, fire, and emergency response personnel.
- Develop new community college facilities in a manner consistent with the SCCCD Master Plan.

6.2 Selection and Evaluation of Alternatives

The alternatives that were considered as part of this EIR are described below, with discussion of how each alternative avoids the significant and unavoidable impacts of the subject project, whether any additional significant and unavoidable impacts would occur, and to what extent the project objectives would be met.

No Project Alternative

The State CEQA Guidelines require that an EIR evaluate the specific alternative of "No Project" along with its impact. The purpose of describing and analyzing a No Project alternative to allow decision makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the project. In this instance, the primary consequences of adopting the No Project alternative would be as follows:

- The increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) associated with the project in excess of the VMT threshold would not occur.
- The increase in GHG emissions associated with the project in excess of the calculated GHG efficiency threshold would not occur.
- The No Project alternative would result in SCCCD's Police and Fire academies remaining at their current respective locations.
- The objectives of SCCCD proposing the project would not be achieved. By not developing the proposed First Responders Campus or taking some other course of action to expand instructional facilities for its emergency responder programs, SCCCD's long-term ability to adequately house and provide instruction to students in its emergency responder programs would be hindered. Operational efficiencies of combining emergency responder programs onto a single specialized campus would not be achieved. Further, installation of modern infrastructure and technology would be impeded due to complexities and extra costs entailed in retrofitting older existing facilities.

As a practical matter, it is probable that proposed project site would be developed with urban development even if the First Responders Campus project was not carried out. Both the Fresno County General Plan and the City of Fresno General Plan currently designate the specific project site for industrial development. The project's Traffic Impact Study notes that development of the site in accordance with the Heavy Industrial land use and zoning could feasibly result in greater peak hour traffic volumes than those expected to be generated by the project. Consequently, development of these types of urbanized uses could result in the same issues of VMT and GHG emissions in excess of reduction targets as would occur with the proposed project.

Alternative Project Designs

The identification and evaluation of alternative designs for the project in this EIR was determined to be unnecessary. As presented in the foregoing analysis of this report, any potentially significant environmental impacts of the project associated with specific design aspects of the project would be avoided or rendered less than significant with the implementation of mitigation measures identified in the EIR. The project's two significant and unavoidable impacts (VMT and GHG emissions) are attributable to the project site's location (specifically, vehicle travel necessary to reach the location) rather than design aspects of the project.

Alternative Project Locations

Two alternative sites have been evaluated as part of this EIR. The two alternative sites were included in a preliminary list of sites under consideration by SCCCD as potential locations for the First Responders Campus. The alternative sites are discussed in more detail below, specifically addressing the following items: 1) whether VMT-related impacts would be avoided; 2) whether GHG-related impacts would be avoided; 3) what additional potentially significant impacts (if any) may occur from the alternative; 4) the extent to which the alternative would meet the project objectives; and 5) the extent to which the alternative would not meet the project objectives. (Figure 5 on the following page depicts the alternative locations in relation to the proposed project site.)

Alternative Location #1:

Alternative Location #1 is a 39.33-acre parcel located east of the City of Fresno at the southwest corner of Fowler Avenue and Clinton Avenue (2211 S. Fowler Avenue; Fresno County APN 496-220-17S). This site is within the City of Fresno SOI and is designated Light Industrial in the City of Fresno's General Plan Land Use Map. The site is currently occupied with agriculture (vineyards) with a single-family residence at the southern portion of the parcel. Approximately 34 acres of the parcel are designated as Prime Farmland, with the remainder designated as Semi-agricultural and Rural Commercial Land. Development in the vicinity of the site includes a mixture of agriculture, commercial and light industrial uses, single-family residential subdivisions, rural single-family residences, and Fresno Yosemite International Airport.

Using Fresno COG VMT mapping tool, the site's VMT per Employee is shown as "green" (i.e., "below") for both the 13-percent threshold and the 15-percent threshold.

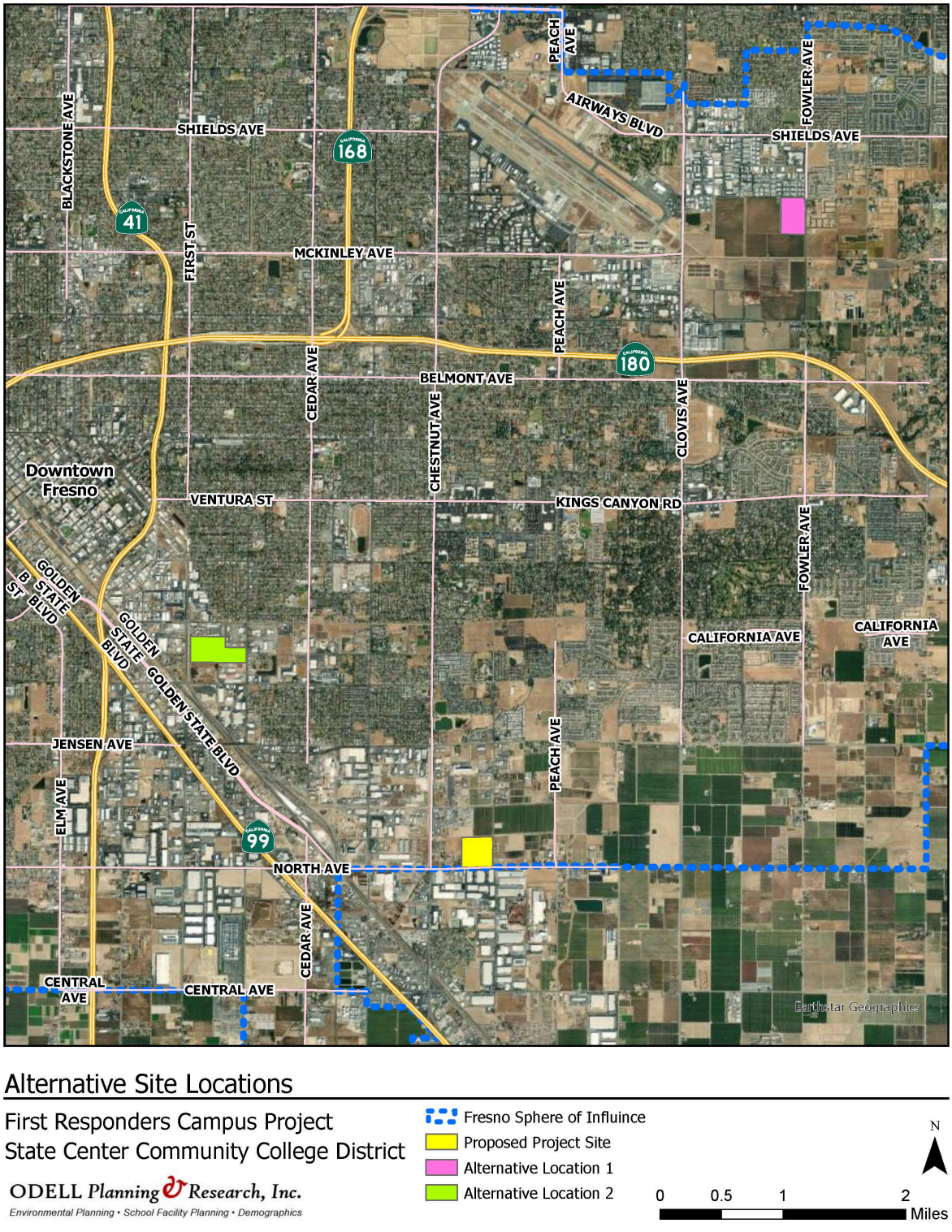
The primary results of proceeding with Alternative Location #1 would be as follows:

- Based on review of the site using Fresno COG's VMT mapping tool, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) associated with this site would be below the regional VMT threshold.
- Since GHG emissions resulting from the project are primarily associated with vehicular travel, this alternative is also projected to have less GHG emissions than the proposed project. However, GHG emissions would still be significant and remain above the GHG efficiency threshold.
- Other environmental impacts are anticipated to be comparable overall to those that would occur from the currently proposed project site. Like the project site, it is within the City of Fresno SOI and designated for industrial use, and the site was encompassed within the Plan Area evaluated as part of the City of Fresno General Plan MEIR. However, there could be site-specific environmental effects as a result of developing the project at this site. Particularly, this site may have a significant impact upon Agricultural Resources, as it is designated Prime Farmland and is currently farmed and is adjacent to other agricultural land.
- The objectives set forth by SCCCD in proposing the project appear to be mostly achievable. The site's physical properties appear capable of meeting SCCCD's long-term ability to adequately house and provide instruction to students as well as achieve operational efficiencies through combining emergency responder programs onto a single specialized campus. However, this site is at a less regionally centralized location than the proposed project site, which could affect the region-serving potential of the project. Further, as opposed to the project location, the alternative site would not be located in a socioeconomically disadvantaged area.

Alternative Location #2:

Alternative Location #2 is a 51.35-acre parcel located in an unincorporated area near Calwa on the west side of Orange Avenue between California Avenue and Church Avenue (2314 S. Orange Avenue; Fresno County APN 480-050-19). This site is within the City of Fresno SOI and is designated Heavy Industrial in the City's General Plan Land Use Map. The site is occupied by what appears to be the remnants of a former cotton processing facility or other commercial agricultural use; the remaining on-site development includes two vacant buildings and large asphalt and concrete paved areas. Development in the vicinity of the site consists primarily of industrial and warehouse uses, plus some small clusters of rural single-family residences to the east and west of the site. There is also a railroad line located on the west side of the site.

Figure 6: Alternative Site Locations



Using Fresno COG VMT mapping tool, VMT per Employee for Alternative Location #2 is shown as "orange" for both the 13-percent threshold and the 15-percent threshold, which the VMT tool describes as "within ± the regional average".

The primary results of proceeding with Alternative Project Location #2 would be as follows:

- Based on review of the site using Fresno COG's VMT mapping tool, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) associated with this site are within the mixed and/or margin-of-error range for meeting the regional VMT threshold. While the VMT of this alternative could be lower than that of the proposed project site, it is not clear if development of the project at this site would achieve project-specific VMT below the regional VMT threshold.
- Since GHG emissions resulting from the project are primarily associated with vehicular travel, this alternative would also be projected to generate less GHG emissions than the proposed project site. However, GHG emissions would still be significant and remain above the GHG efficiency threshold.
- Other environmental impacts are anticipated to be comparable overall to those that would occur from the currently proposed project site. Like the proposed project site, it is within the City of Fresno SOI and designated for industrial use, and the site was encompassed within the Plan Area evaluated as part of the City of Fresno General Plan MEIR. However, while many of the environmental impacts are likely to be comparable to the project site, there are several potential environmental drawbacks to this site. For instance, with respect to Hazards and Hazardous Materials, depending on the site's history and surrounding use history, there could be hazards present and/or cleanup required. In addition, development of the site would also involve the removal of extensive asphalt and concrete paved areas, as well as old structures from the past use of the site. Finally, the parcel's western boundary is adjacent to a rail line, which is problematic for satisfying applicable criteria for the siting of community college facilities.
- The objectives set forth by SCCCD in proposing the project would be largely achievable. This site is in a regionally centralized location that appears to offer a similar region-serving capacity as the proposed project site. The site's size and shape appear to be capable of meeting SCCCD's long-term ability to adequately house and provide instruction to students as well as achieve operational efficiencies through combining emergency responder programs onto a single specialized campus. Like the project site, the alternative site would also be located in a socioeconomically disadvantaged area. However, with the adjacent railroad, the site would not satisfy community college siting criteria.

6.3 Environmentally Superior Alternative

The No Project alternative is environmentally superior to the proposed project because it would not result in the generation of vehicle miles traveled above the Fresno County VMT reduction threshold, nor would it result in project-related GHG emissions above the GHG efficiency threshold. However, this alternative cannot feasibly attain the objectives of the project.

Of the remaining alternatives, the environmentally superior alternative is Alternative Location #1. Based on the Fresno COG VMT Screening Application, this alternative location would result in vehicle miles traveled below the VMT reduction threshold and thus avoid significant VMT-related transportation impacts. The remaining environmental impacts of the Alternative Location #1 would be largely similar to project site. Alternative Location #2, while it also is superior to the project site with respect to VMT, it has several substantial drawbacks that make it less desirable than Alternative Location No. 1.

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