Lindsay to Exeter Expressway

On State Route 65 in Lindsay from Hermosa Street to south of Avenue 300 on State Route 245

06-TUL-65-PM 29.5/R38.3

06-TUL-245-PM 0.0/0.5

Project ID 06-0000-0426

SCH# 2003111011

Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Assessment

Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation

The environmental review, consultation, and any other action required in accordance with applicable federal laws for this project is being, or has been, carried out by the California Department of Transportation under its assumption of responsibility pursuant to 23 U.S. Code 327.

July 2013

Caltrans

General Information about This Document

What's in this document?

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration, has prepared this Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment for review and comment. The name of the project and portions of the 2012 draft environmental document have been revised as a result of public comment received during the previous circulation period (September 28, 2012 to November 30, 2012). This supplemental document addresses changes made to the alternatives for the project, potential impacts from these changes, and proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

What should you do?

- Please read this document. Additional copies of this document as well as the technical studies are available for review at the Caltrans District 6 office, 1352 W. Olive Avenue, Fresno, CA 93728; Tulare County Public Library, Exeter Branch Library, 230 E. Chestnut Avenue, Exeter, CA 93221; and the Tulare County Public Library, Lindsay Branch Library, 157 N. Mirage Street, Lindsay, CA 93247. The document can also be accessed electronically at the following website: http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist6/factsheets/index.htm
- If you have any concerns about the proposed project, please send your written comments to Caltrans by the deadline. Submit comments via U.S. mail to Caltrans at the following address:

  Kelly Hobbs, Senior Environmental Planner
  Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
  California Department of Transportation
  855 M Street, Suite 200
  Fresno, CA 93721
- We welcome your comments on this supplemental document but request reviewers limit their comments to the **revisions presented in this document only**.
- In the future, Caltrans will respond to the comments received on the 2012 environmental document that relate to chapters or portions that **were revised** in this document, and to the comments received during this recirculation period in the final environmental document.
- Submit comments via email to: kelly_hobbs@dot.ca.gov.
- Submit comments by the deadline: **September 20, 2013**

What happens next?

After comments are received from the public and reviewing agencies, Caltrans, as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration, may 1) give environmental approval to the proposed project, 2) do additional environmental studies, or 3) abandon the project. If the project is given environmental approval and funding is appropriated, Caltrans could design and build all or part of the project.

Printing this document: To save paper, this document has been set up for two-sided printing (to print the front and back of a page). Blank pages occur where needed throughout the document to maintain proper layout of the chapters and appendices.

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document is available in Braille, in large print, on audiocassette, or on computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call or write to Caltrans, Attn: Kelly Hobbs, Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch, California Department of Transportation, 855 M Street, Suite 200, Fresno, CA 93721; (559) 445-5286 Voice, or use the California Relay Service TTY number, (559) 488-4066 or 711.

SCH# 2003111011
06-TUL-65-PM 29.5/R38.3
06-TUL-245-PM 0.0/0.5
Project ID 06-0000-0426

Realign State Route 65 (post miles 29.5 to R38.3) and construct a two-lane expressway on a four-lane right-of-way from Hermosa Street in Lindsay to Avenue 300 on State Route 245 (post miles 0.0 to 0.5) northeast of Exeter

SUPPLEMENTAL DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/ ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code
(Federal) 42 U.S. Code 4332(2)(C) and 23 U.S. Code 327

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation

7/23/13
Date of Approval

for
Christine Cox-Kovacevich, Chief
Central Region Environmental Division
California Department of Transportation
California Environmental Quality Act Lead Agency

❖

Table of Contents

Table of Contents iii
List of Figures iv
List of Tables iv
Chapter 1 Proposed Project 1
1.1 Alternatives 1
1.1.1 Revised Alternative 1 Alignment Closely Parallel to Spruce Avenue (Road 204) 1
1.1.2 Revised Alternative 2 West Alignment 9
1.2 Comparison of Alternatives 9
Chapter 2 Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures 13
2.1 Changes in the Regulatory Setting 14
2.2 Changes in the Affected Environment 14
2.3 Changes in Environmental Consequences 15
2.4 Changes to the Avoidance, Minimization and Mitigation Measures 20
Chapter 3 California Environmental Quality Act Evaluation 25
3.1 Unavoidable Significant Environmental Effects 25
3.2 Mitigation Measures for Sigificant Impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act 25
Chapter 4 Comments and Coordination 27
4.1 Scoping 27
Appendix A California Environmental Quality Act Checklist 28
Appendix B Title VI Policy Statement 37
Appendix C Minimization and/or Mitigation Summary 38
Appendix D Natural Resources Conservation Services–CPA 106 40
Appendix E Census Tracts Data 41

NOTE: *The headings and appendices included in this document may not correspond to the headings and appendices used in the previously circulated environmental document.*

NOTE: The figures and tables included in this document may not correspond to the figure and table numbering in the previously circulated environmental document.

List of Figures

Figure 1-1 Project Location Map 3
Figure 1-2 Phase 1 Frontage Road 5
Figure 1-3 New Frontage Road Access 7

List of Tables

Table 1.1 Comparison of Alternatives.....11
Table 2.1 Median Household Income and Percent Below Poverty Level.....14
Table 2.2 Impacts to San Joaquin Kit Fox Foraging Habitat 19
Table 2.3 San Joaquin Kit Fox Mitigation Compensation 23
Table C.1 San Joaquin Kit Fox Mitigation Compensation 39

Chapter 1 Proposed Project

The previously circulated draft environmental document has been revised in part and Caltrans is re-circulating the revised chapters or portions of the draft environmental document. Caltrans is requesting that reviewers limit their comments to the revised chapters or portions.

Introduction

This section has not been revised or changed from the previously circulated draft environmental document except for Figure 1.1, the Project Location map, which was changed to show the design changes discussed in Section 1.1. Areas that are affected by the changes are indicated in the blown-up aerials.

1.1 Alternatives

The design of both build alternatives has been modified due to public comment on the previously circulated draft environmental document. The changes would occur in Phases 1 and 2 only, and include the following:

- In Phase 1, the proposed frontage road connecting Mariposa Street to Tulare Road of both build alternatives was moved to the west intersecting with Oak Avenue
- In Phase 1, a new connector road was added to Fresno Street for both build alternatives
- In Phase 2, a frontage road was added between Avenues 260 and 268/Myer Avenue by the San Joaquin Valley Railroads to provide access to residents west of both proposed build alternatives

1.1.1 Revised Alternative 1 Alignment Closely Parallel to Spruce Avenue (Road 204)

The general description of Alternative 1 remains the same except for the New Roadway Connectors section in Phase 1 and Frontage Roads section in Phase 2.

Alternative 1 would realign State Route 65 on new right-of-way. Starting at Hermosa Street on existing State Route 65 in Lindsay at post mile 29.5, the alternative would end northeast of the city of Exeter about 0.5 mile north of State Route 198 on State Route 245, post mile 0.5. This alternative includes about 0.5 mile of transition improvements on State Route 245 starting at State Route 198. Alternative 1 closely parallels Spruce

Avenue (Road 204) on one side or the other and Spruce Avenue (Road 204) would no longer be a through-road.

Phase 1—Hermosa Avenue (Post Mile 29.5) to Avenue 244 (Post Mile R31.69)

New Roadways Connectors: East of the new alignment, existing State Routes 65 and 137 would be eliminated, and a new frontage road would be constructed from the Super 8 Motel north to Mariposa Street, and Oak Avenue would be extended south to connect with Mariposa Street. Tulare Road and Fresno Street would connect with the new Oak Avenue extension. A connector road would also be constructed between Cedar Avenue (Road 206) and Oak Avenue (see Figure 1.2).

Phase 2—Avenue 244 (Post Mile 31.69) to Avenue 268 (Myer Avenue) (Post Mile 34.70)

Frontage Roads: Spruce Avenue (Road 204) would become a frontage road with cul-de-sacs south of Lewis Creek and Avenue 268 (Myer Avenue). A new frontage road would be constructed from north of Avenue 260 to Avenue 268/Myer Avenue between the two railroad lines to provide access to residents living in the area (see Figure 1.3).

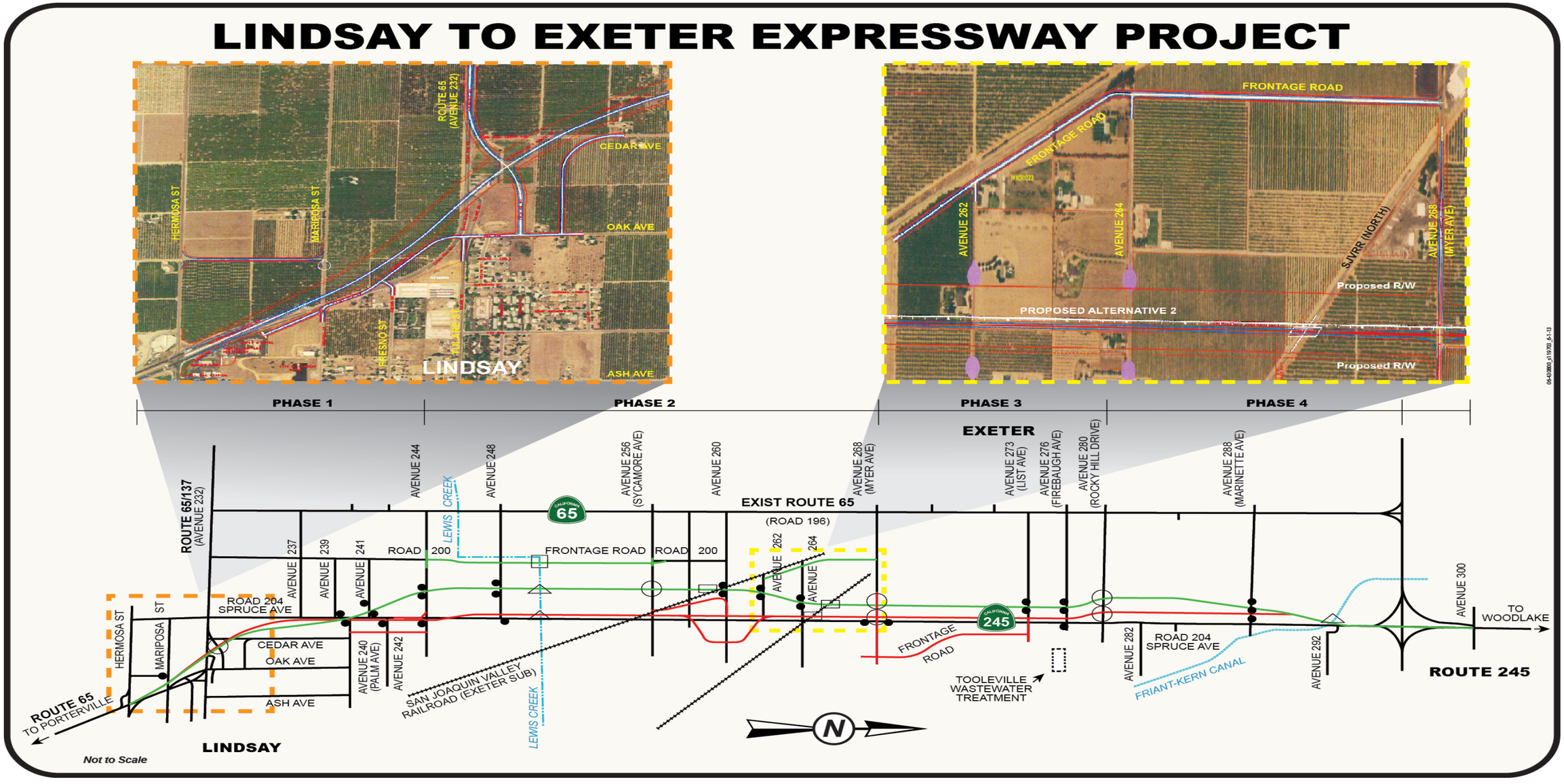


Figure 1-1 Project Location Map

❖

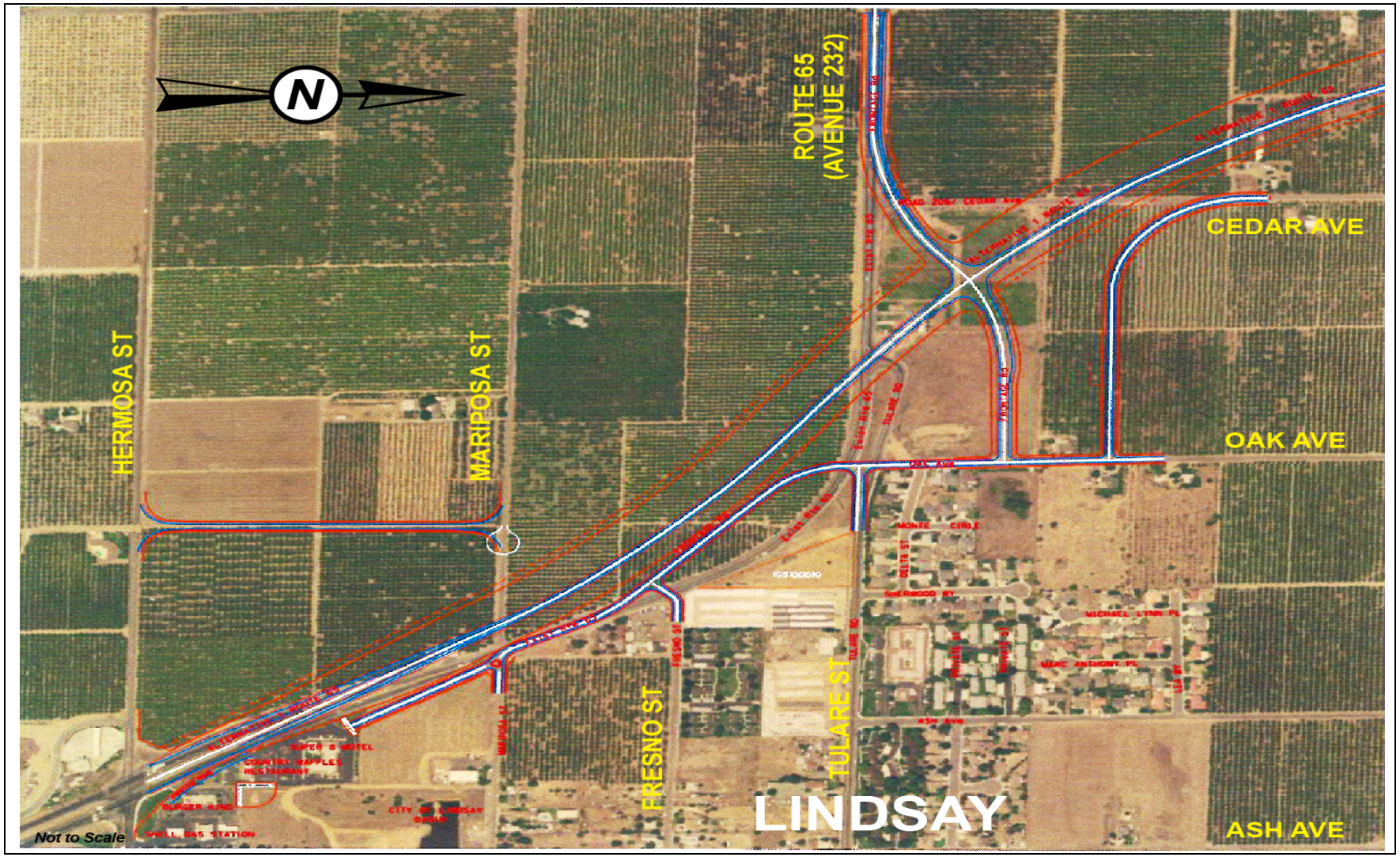


Figure 1-2 Phase 1 Frontage Road

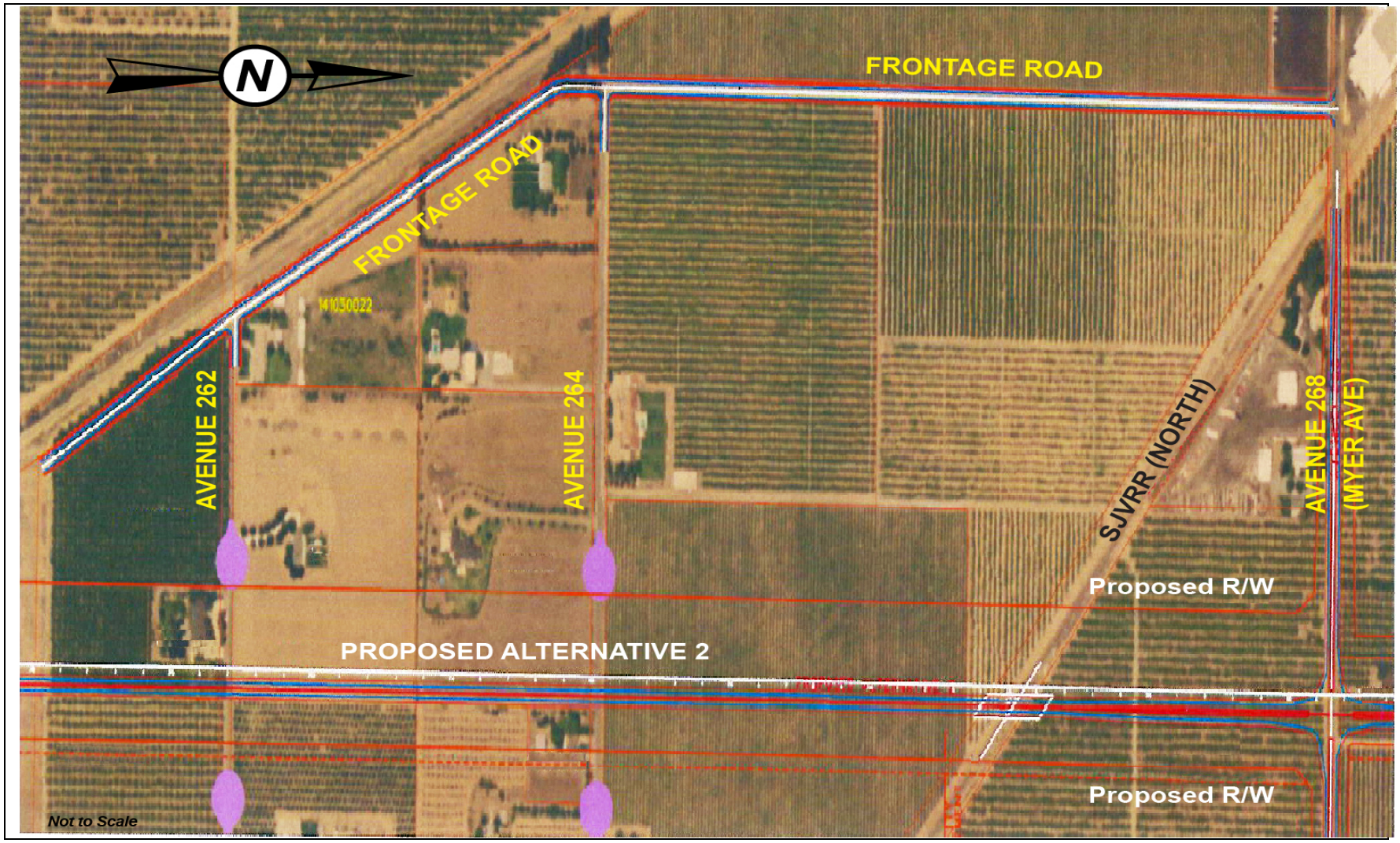


Figure 1-3 New Frontage Road Access

1.1.2 Revised Alternative 2 West Alignment

The general description of Alternative 2 remains the same except for the New Roadway Connectors section in Phase 1 and Frontage Roads section in Phase 2.

Alternative 2 would realign State Route 65 on new right-of-way. The alternative begins at Hermosa Street on existing State Route 65 in Lindsay at post mile 29.5 and ends northeast of the city of Exeter about 0.5 mile north of State Route 198 on State Route 245 at post mile 0.5. This alternative includes about 0.5 miles of transition improvements on State Route 245 starting at State Route 198. Alternative 2 parallels Spruce Avenue (Road 204) on the west after passing Avenue 241. Alternative 2 would make Spruce Avenue (Road 204) a non-continuous road.

Phase 1—Hermosa Avenue (Post Mile 29.5) to Avenue 244 (Post Mile R31.69)

New Roadways Connectors: East of the new alignment, existing State Routes 65 and 137 would be eliminated, and a new frontage road would be constructed from the Super 8 Motel north to Mariposa Street. Oak Avenue would be extended south to connect with Mariposa Street. Tulare Road and Fresno Street would connect with the new Oak Avenue extension. A connector road would also be constructed between Cedar Avenue (Road 206) and Oak Avenue (see Figure 1.2).

Phase 2—Avenue 244 (Post Mile R31.69) to Avenue 268 (Myer Avenue) (Post Mile R34.74)

Frontage Roads: A new frontage road would be built on Road 200 from Avenue 244 to Avenue 256, and from north of Avenue 260 to Avenue 268/Myer Avenue between the two railroads to provide access to residents living in the area (see Figure 1.3).Cul-de-sacs would be built on the east and west sides of the new alignment on Avenue 244, Avenue 248, Avenue 260, Avenue 262, and Avenue 264.

1.2 Comparison of Alternatives

After the public comment period of this supplemental draft environmental document, comments received on this document and the previously circulated draft environmental document will be considered, and Caltrans will select a preferred alternative and make the final determination of the project’s effect on the environment. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, Caltrans will certify that the project complies with the act, prepare findings for all significant impacts identified, prepare a Statement of Overriding Considerations for impacts that will not be mitigated below a level of

significance, and certify that the Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations have been considered prior to project approval.

Caltrans will then file a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse that will identify whether the project will have significant impacts, whether mitigation measures were included a conditions of project approval, whether findings were made, and whether a Statement of Overriding Considerations was adopted. Similarly, if the Department, as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration, determines the National Environmental Policy Act action does not significantly impact the environment, the Department will issue a Finding of No Significant Impact in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

The remainder of this section, except for Table 1.1 on the following page, has not been revised or changed from the previously circulated draft environmental document. For the convenience of the reader, Table 1.1 is shown in its entirety but the sections with changes from the previously circulated table are shaded.

Table 1.1 Comparison of Alternatives

Criteria	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	No-Build Alternative
Estimated total cost	Current cost estimate is $82.3 million	Current cost estimate is $84.4 million	Cost for maintenance of the existing roadway
Total disturbed area	Requires 326 acres, affects 131 property parcels, including approximately 90 parcels currently in agricultural production	Requires 331 acres, affects 130 property parcels, including approximately 95 parcels currently in agricultural production	No ground disturbance outside of normal maintenance
Environmental impacts: Land Use	Consistent with local, state, and regional land use	Consistent with local, state, and regional land use	An expressway would not be built
Growth	Improves intersections of local roadway network in areas zoned for agricultural use	Improves intersections of the local roadway network in areas zoned for agricultural use	No change
Farmland	Requires 63 acres of prime/unique farmland Potentially affects 149 acres under Williamson Act contracts	Requires 63 acres of prime/unique farmland Potentially affects 168 acres under Williamson Act contracts	Would not result in any environmental impacts
Relocation	Potentially relocates one business, 13 single-family residences, one mobile home, and two tenant-occupied mobile homes Relocates telephone and power lines, high-pressure gas lines, irrigation lines, waterline (fire hydrants), and fiber optics lines along Spruce Avenue (Road 204)	Potentially relocates up to 11 single-family residences, three mobile homes, and one tenant-occupied mobile home Requires new telephone poles, power lines, and irrigation lines	No relocations would be necessary
Water Quality	Creates 78.8 acres of impervious surface	Creates 74.2 acres of impervious surface	No change to resource
Hazardous Waste Materials	Requires further investigation of six parcels for hazardous waste	Requires further investigation of six parcels for hazardous waste	No land would be required
Wetlands and other Waters	Results in 0.11 acre of permanent impact to Waters of the U.S.	Results in 0.15 acre of permanent impact to Waters of the U.S.	No change to resources
Threatened and Endangered Species	Results in 240.20 acres of temporary impacts to San Joaquin kit fox foraging habit Results in 136.84 acres of permanent impacts to San Joaquin kit fox foraging habitat	Results in 249.93 acres of temporary impacts to San Joaquin kit fox foraging habit Results in 125.15 acres of permanent impacts to San Joaquin kit fox foraging habitat	No change to resource

❖

Chapter 2 Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Chapter 2 explains impacts the project would have on the human, physical, and biological environments in the project area, which are discussed in four sections:

- Regulatory Setting (laws or statutes)
- Affected Environment (existing conditions)
- Environmental Consequences (impacts)
- Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation measures

The design changes discussed in Chapter 1 of this document result in an increase in right-of-way needed for the proposed frontage roads but do not result in a change of impact to all the environmental sections discussed in the previously circulated environmental document. Chapter 2 of this document provides the sections that have been changed from the previously circulated document. The portions that have been changed are clearly stated in each section and are presented for consideration and comment.

Several environmental sections under the Human Environmental heading have been changed:

- Growth
- Farmland
- Environmental Justice
- Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities
- Cultural Resources: Archaeology

Only one environmental section under the Physical Environmental heading has been changed:

- Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff

Only one environmental section under the Biological Environmental heading has been changed:

- Threatened and Endangered Species: San Joaquin kit fox

2.1 Changes in the Regulatory Setting

No changes to any Regulatory Settings were made from the previously circulated environmental.

2.2 Changes in the Affected Environment

Only three environmental sections, Environmental Justice, Cultural Resources: Archaeology, and Threatened and Endangered Species: San Joaquin kit fox, have changes from the previously circulated environmental document.

Cultural Resources: Archaeology - A change to the Affected Environment section was made to document the field surveys conducted for the additional frontage roads. The additional information is included here:

A second Supplemental Historic Property Survey Report (May 2013) was completed that included a Supplemental Archaeological Survey Report (May 2013) to address the additional right-of-way needed for access. The 2013 reports included all the previous studies and surveys completed for the project.

Environmental Justice – The portion of the Affected Environment section that was changed discusses median household income and poverty levels. Additional information is provided for consideration.

Table 2.1 shows the median household income and percent of the population below poverty level for Tulare County and the cities of Lindsay and Exeter. The table includes data for the community of Tooleville because its population represents over one-third of the population within the project corridor.

Table 2.1 Median Household Income and Percent Below Poverty Level

2010 US Census Bureau	Tulare County	City of Lindsay	City of Exeter	Community of Tooleville
Median Household income (2006-2010)	$43,851	$30,085	$43,690	$43,977
Percent of persons below poverty level (2006-2010)	22.9 percent	34.7 percent	17.2 percent	0.0 percent

Source: 2010 U.S. Census Bureau

The median household income for Exeter ($43,690) and Tooleville ($43,977) are almost equal to the county's ($43,851); whereas, the median household income for Lindsay ($30,085) is substantially less than the county by about $13,000. However, according to

California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc., in 2005, Self-Help Enterprises conducted an independent household income survey in the community of Tooleville. The results of the survey found the median household income (MHI) to be only $15,500. Tooleville has about 78 household in the community and 61 households participated in that survey.

According the 2010 U.S. Census, Exeter has fewer people living below the poverty level than Tulare County, 17.9 percent and 22.9 percent, respectively. But Lindsay has 11.8 percent more people living below poverty level than Tulare County. According to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau, Table DP03, none of Tooleville's population lives below the poverty level.

An explanation for the differences in the median household income and poverty levels is not available. However, the community of Tooleville is divided into two Census Blocks (4000 and 4001) and higher earnings may be reported by their neighbors (See Appendix H).

Threatened and Endangered Species: San Joaquin kit fox – A change to the Affected Environment section was made to document the field surveys conducted for the additional frontage roads. The additional information is included here:

Caltrans qualified biologists completed a Natural Environment Study for the project in July 2012 and an amendment to the Natural Environment Study in May 2013 to address the additional right-of-way needed for access.

2.3 Changes in Environmental Consequences

All of the environmental sections except for Cultural Resources: Archaeology has changes to the Environmental Consequences section from the previously circulated environmental document.

Growth - The last two bullets included in the Environmental Consequences section were changed for clarification purposes but do not change the environmental impacts.

- No Williamson Act contracts are expected to be canceled because the amount of right-of-way needed for the project from each parcel would not be excessive; thereby, minimizing the potential for excess parcels or parcels that cannot continue to be farmed. Based on the acreage of the existing parcels under Williamson Act contracts within the project limits, it appears there are very small parcels (under 10 acres) that have been combined with adjacent parcels with the same ownership under Williamson Act contracts already. However, the future cancellation of existing contracts is

dependent upon Tulare County, which Caltrans would consult upon selection of the preferred alternative (see Section 2.1.3 Farmlands, Williamson Act).

- The project is not being proposed to support the newly planned but unapproved development project currently known as Yokohl Ranch. That project includes the improvement to East Myer Drive (Avenue 268) in their development plans. Transportation improvements to the corridor have been on record since 1994 (Caltrans Draft Project Report 2012). The project would help current planned land use within the cities of Exeter and Lindsay and Tulare County.

Farmland - Caltrans has determined the project would result in a significant impact to farmland. The Natural Resources Conservation Service determines the relative value of farmland to be converted. The Farmland Protection Policy Act requires consideration of impacts from those alternatives exceeding 160 points on the Natural Resource Conservation Service Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form, and Caltrans considers measures that would minimize or mitigate farmland impacts if the impact rating is more than 160 points.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service completed a Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form for the project in March 2012. Caltrans assigned a total point value of 155 points to the project in August 2012. However, during the previous circulation period (September 28 through November 30, 2012) an error was discovered in Caltrans' calculations. After correcting the error, the total impact rating for both build alternatives is over 160 points without the additional acreage added (see Appendix D).

A new impact rating form with the increase in right-of-way acreage resulting from the additional frontage roads was submitted to the Natural Resource Conservation Service in April 2013. Caltrans has not received a response from the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

The amount of right-of-way needed for each build alternative has increased due to the additional frontage road. The increase in right-of-way is not substantial and does not change the environmental impact of the project.

- Build Alternative 1 would require about 326 acres to construct the expressway and relocate utilities
- Build Alternative 2 would require about 331 acres to construct the expressway and relocate utilities

Environmental Justice – Information was added to the Environmental Consequences section for clarification purposes. The determination that based on the discussion and

analysis, the build alternatives would not cause disproportionately high and adverse effects on an minority or low-income population as per Executive Order 12898 regarding environmental justice does not change.

Both build alternatives avoid any displacements or relocations in the community of Tooleville, and within the city limits of Exeter and Lindsay, but relocation of approximately 15 homes (single-family residences, farm houses, or mobile homes) would occur scattered throughout the project corridor.

During the circulation of the previous draft environmental document, residents of Tooleville expressed concerns with maintaining the rural character of their community and for their health due to the potential increase in noise and air pollution during construction.

No construction activities are expected to occur in Tooleville because both Build Alternatives are to the west of the existing Spruce Avenue (Road 204).

Both build alternatives would use the existing Spruce Avenue (Road 204) as a frontage road, and construct cul-de-sacs at Avenues 273 (List Avenue) and Avenue 276 (Firebaugh Avenue). The cul-de-sacs at Avenue 276 (Firebaugh Avenue) would result in the residents of Tooleville losing direct access to the new expressway except through planned intersections at Avenue 280 (Rocky Hill Drive) or Avenue 268 (Myer Avenue). The planned intersection at Avenue 280 (Rocky Hill Drive) would be closer to Tooleville than the planned intersection at Avenue 268 (Myer Avenue), and leads directly into the city of Exeter past Exeter High School. The intersection would be safer for pedestrians and bicyclists coming from Tooleville because the intersections proposed by the project would include signalization and pedestrian crossings. In addition, the number of vehicles on the frontage road would be expected to decrease substantially making that route safer as well. However, the planned intersection at Avenue 280 (Rocky Hill Drive) would be further north than the route preferred by the citizens of Tooleville, Avenue 276 (Firebaugh Avenue), by about one-half mile.

The alignment of Alternative 1 is closer to Tooleville than Alternative 2, and is more than 100 feet west of the existing alignment of Spruce Avenue (Road 204). The proposed right-of-way and existing Spruce Avenue (Road 204) in Tooleville would be separated by rows of orchard trees. If the trees remain, it would appear that there would be no visual change at this location. If the orchard is removed, the mitigation proposed for visual impacts include preservation of the existing mature vegetation where possible because the mature vegetation currently provides a landscape buffer from the highway for rural

residents. If preservation of the mature vegetation is not possible, Caltrans would consider replanting if feasible.

Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities – At the end of each sub-section, additional information was added to the Environmental Consequences section from the previously circulated environmental document for clarification purposes.

Traffic and Transportation

Traffic would be routed west to existing State Route 65 after each phase (Phases 1–3) is constructed: Phase 1 at Avenue 244, Phase 2 at Avenue 268 (Myer Avenue), and Phase 3 at Avenue 280 (Rocky Hill Drive). However, because Spruce Avenue (Road 204) is already being used as the preferred route for the corridor, it is anticipated travelers would continue to use Spruce Avenue (Road 204). Therefore, it is expected the project would have a minimal effect on regional or commuter traffic circulation, and would improve traffic circulation with the addition of turning lanes and signals at the intersections.

Construction impacts on traffic and transportation would not be substantial because the proposed project would occur on the new alignment for the most part. However, with the completion of Phase 3, the residents of Tooleville will experience changes in their access. They will no longer have direct access onto the expressway except at the intersection located at Avenue 268 (Myer Avenue) or the closer intersection located at Avenue 280 (Rocky Hill Drive). Although their travel time to the expressway may increase by a few minutes, their access onto the expressway would be improved by the turn lanes and signalized intersections. In addition, with the removal of regional and commuter traffic from Spruce Road (Road 204), the number of vehicles traveling the frontage road should be reduced substantially and residents would no longer be subject to heavy cross traffic to access the frontage road or to enter their community.

Pedestrian Facilities

The project would include pedestrian facilities at the proposed intersections. Addressing the safety and mobility needs of bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users within the project limits will be part of this project and is facilitated by creating “complete streets,” which will require collaboration among Caltrans’ functional units and stakeholders during the design phase of the project.

The residents of Tooleville would lose their preferred pedestrian route via Avenue 276 (Firebaugh Avenue), which would end east and west of the expressway. Residents of Tooleville walking to Exeter would have to walk to the intersection located at Avenue 280 (Rocky Hill Drive) during and after the construction of Phase 3. During construction,

their path along Spruce Road (Road 204) would have regional and commuter traffic, but after the construction of Phase 3, the vehicular traffic would be reduced substantially.

Bicycle Facilities

None of the build alternatives include bicycle facilities planned on the expressway. During the design phase of the project, however, the county's plans for two long-term bicycle paths on Avenue 280 (Rocky Hill Drive) would be incorporated into the design of the preferred alternative. Both build alternatives would provide wider paved shoulders for bicyclists to use through the project corridor, and frontage roads would offer an alternative route.

Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff – The amount of right-of-way needed for each build alternative has increased due to the additional frontage roads. Although the increase in right-of-way is not substantial, the additional frontage roads increase the amount of impervious surface area for each Build Alternative.

The existing impervious surface area for Alternative 1 is 6.15 acres. With the additional frontage roads, the estimated impervious soil area would increase by about 2.5 acres. After Alternative 1 is built, the estimated impervious area will be about 78.8 acres.

The existing impervious surface area for Alternative 2 is 6.11 acres. With the additional frontage roads, the estimated impervious soil area would increase by about 3.1 acres. After Alternative 2 is constructed, the estimated impervious area will be approximately 74.2 acres.

Threatened and Endangered Species/San Joaquin kit fox – The amount of right-of-way needed for each build alternative has increased due to the additional frontage roads. Although the increase in right-of-way is not substantial, it results in an increase in the estimated acreage of temporary and permanent impacts to San Joaquin kit fox foraging habitat. Table 2.2 shows the estimated acreage of temporary and permanent impacts to San Joaquin kit fox foraging habitat.

Table 2.2 Impacts to San Joaquin Kit Fox Foraging Habitat

Type of Impact	Area of Impacts (acres)	
	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Permanent	136.84	125.15
Temporary	240.20	249.93
TOTAL	377.04	375.08

Source: Amended Natural Environment Study, July 2013

2.4 Changes to the Avoidance, Minimization and Mitigation Measures

Three environmental sections, Farmland, Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities, and Threatened and Endangered Species: San Joaquin kit fox, have changes in the Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation section from the previously circulated environmental.

Farmland – The total impact rating for both build alternatives is over 160 points without the additional acreage needed for the frontage roads; therefore, Caltrans considered measures that would minimize or mitigate farmland impacts.

Caltrans' policy is to avoid or minimize farmland impacts to the maximum extent possible. However, Caltrans cannot avoid farmland because the proposed project is surrounded by farmland, which makes the avoidance of farmland impacts impossible. Only the No-Build Alternative would completely avoid converting farmland, but it would not meet the purpose and need of the project.

In order to minimize the farmland impacts, the project proposes using segments of the existing Spruce Avenue (Road 204) as a frontage road, which eliminates the need for more right-of-way (including farmland).

Also, as part of the right-of-way process for purchasing land, Caltrans would negotiate parcel exchanges with neighboring farmers to reconfigure split farmland parcels for resale so that the parcels would continue to be farmed and not contribute further to the segmentation and conversion of farmland. Generally, when Caltrans resells or reconfigures land in an area zoned for agriculture as buffers or conservation easements, deed restrictions limiting future use to agriculture would be included to keep land in agricultural use in perpetuity. Remnant parcels of farmland are avoided as much as possible by acquiring right-of-way in "slivers" or linear strips of property adjacent to the existing parcels. When possible, Caltrans will allow farmland to be kept in production (after purchase) until it is needed for construction.

Caltrans would provide relocation advisory assistance to any person, business, farm, or non-profit organization that would be displaced, or that has onsite investments, such as wells and irrigation systems, displaced as a result of acquisition of real property for public use. Relocation resources would be available to all displaced individuals, free of discrimination. In addition, any right-of-way acquisition would be purchased at fair market value.

During construction, when irrigation pipes are replaced, release valves can be placed on either side of the new expressway, which would make crossing the highway to regulate the irrigation water unnecessary, thereby providing a safer condition for farmers that may have irrigation water piped under the new alignment of State Route 65.

If an excess parcel of farmland results from construction, adequate access to water for the irrigation of crops would be established and a permanent easement would be attached to ensure agricultural land use of the parcel in perpetuity. During construction, provisions for adequate access (temporary driveways/easements) would ensure that agricultural operations are not impaired along the project limits.

During the circulation of the previously circulated draft environmental document in October 2012, a letter from the California Department of Conservation was submitted to Caltrans with suggestions and recommendations for farmland impact mitigation. The California Department of Conservation recommended several measures to mitigate farmland including conservation easements, Farmland Security Zone contracts, Williamson Act contracts, and mitigation banks. Caltrans reviewed the conservation methods and determined that all the methods are outside the jurisdiction of Caltrans and would require some form of legislation, regulation, statute, or ordinance by the State, City or County except three: Williamson Act contracts, endowments, and conservation easements.

For endowments, Caltrans currently is allowed to transfer only title (ownership), but cannot transfer endowment or the donation of mitigation fees to a local, regional, or statewide organization or agency whose purpose includes the acquisition and stewardship of agricultural conservation easements. The transfer of direct endowment is considered a gift of public funds (actual dollars) and is prohibited by Article 16, Section 6 of the California Constitution. In other words, Caltrans cannot donate fees; therefore, this recommendation is not legally feasible.

The California Department of Conservation also recommends the use of conservation easements of land of at least equal quality and size as partial compensation for the direct loss of agricultural land. This agency states that this form of mitigation will protect a portion of those remaining land resources and lessen project impacts in accordance with California Environmental Quality Act Guideline 15370; however, Caltrans will not acquire conservation easements to reduce the farmland impacts resulting from this project.

The loss of farmland resulting from the project represents an unavoidable permanent reduction in California's agricultural land resources. However, mitigation measures already built into the project design, would partially compensate the direct loss of agricultural land and will protect a portion of California's remaining land resources in accordance with California Environmental Quality Act Guideline 15370.

Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities – Additional information was added to the Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation section from the previously circulated environmental document for clarification purposes at the end of each sub-section.

Traffic and Transportation

During construction, a Traffic Management Plan would be developed to handle local traffic patterns and reduce delay, congestion, and the likelihood of accidents during construction. The Traffic Management Plan includes notifying the public of construction activities via media outlets, using changeable message signs, construction strategies, and use of the Central Valley Traffic Management Center that reduces congestion by monitoring traffic and informing the public via media outlets, such as radio and television.

Traffic delays are expected to be minimal because most of the build alternatives would be built on new alignments. By building the proposed project in construction phases and rerouting traffic to local roads, disruption to local and regional traffic would be minimized with both build alternatives.

Three public open house/information meetings have been held in the City of Exeter to inform the general public about the project and to gain their input. The first meeting was held in 2001, the second in 2009 and the latest meeting was held in 2012. All the meetings were advertised in local newspapers and invitations were mailed to property owners, local businesses, and interested parties. Through this type of public outreach, the public was able to provide helpful information to Caltrans and to suggest alternatives to avoid or minimize impacts from the project.

Pedestrian Facilities

Curb ramps that are compliant with the Americans with Disability Act requirements would be provided at all improved intersections or new local road intersections, as well as at proposed ramp intersections as applicable.

Bicycle Facilities

Caltrans met with representatives from the Tulare Council of Governments in September 2011 regarding the proposed bicycle paths. It was agreed the project would incorporate the proposed bike lanes on Avenue 280 (Rocky Hill Drive) into their local road improvements and intersection proposals.

Threatened and Endangered Species: San Joaquin kit fox - The modified mitigation measures proposed below, along with the measures proposed in the previously circulated environmental document, would be discussed with and approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during the Section 7 formal consultation:

- Land acquisition or conservation easement—Agricultural lands permanently affected within the project area would be mitigated for at a 1.1-acre to 1-acre ratio and temporary impacts would be compensated for at a 0.5-acre to 1-acre ratio. Table 2.3 shows the estimated amount of permanent and temporary impacts for the two build alternatives and the potential mitigation acreage.

Table 2.3 San Joaquin Kit Fox Mitigation Compensation

Type of Impact	Area of Impacts (acres)		Compensation Ratio	Area of Mitigation (acres)	
	Alternative 1	Alternative 2		Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Permanent	136.84	125.15	1.1 acre to 1 acre	150.52	137.66
Temporary	240.20	249.93	0.5 acre to 1 acre	120.10	124.97
TOTAL	377.04	375.08		270.62	262.63

Source: Amended Natural Environment Study, June 2013

❖

Chapter 3 California Environmental Quality Act Evaluation

Only two sections were modified in Chapter 3 from the previously circulated environmental document. The Unavoidable Significant Environmental Effects section was modified to include the determination of significant impact to farmland, and the Mitigation Measures for Significant Impacts under the California Quality Act section is a new addition.

3.1 Unavoidable Significant Environmental Effects

All potential impacts identified for the project can be mitigated to a level below significance except for the impacts on farmland.

Farmland conversion was a consideration in determining which alternatives would warrant further consideration and which alternatives would be withdrawn. However, significant environmental effects to farmland are unavoidable because the project corridor is surrounded by farmland. Alternatives along the alignment of the existing Spruce Avenue/Road 204 would lessen the farmland conversion but would result in disproportionate impacts to low income and minority populations and numerous residential and utility relocations. Alternatives along the alignment of the existing State Route 65 through the City of Exeter would lessen the farmland conversion but would not meet the purpose and need of the project and would result in numerous residential, business, and utility relocations.

3.2 Mitigation Measures for Sigificant Impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act

This section normally provides additional analysis and explanation of feasible mitigation measures for loss of farmland. However, farmland impacts cannot be avoided and even with the adoption of the following mitigation measures <u>it is too uncertain</u> as to whether the impacts will be mitigated to less than significant.

According to Section 15370 of the California Environmental Quality Act, “mitigation” includes:

a) Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or part of an action
b) Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and 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

.

Chapter 4 Comments and Coordination

A few sections of Chapter 4 have not been revised or changed from the previously circulated draft environmental document except for the Public Information Meeting,

4.1 Scoping

Public Information Meetings

For the previously circulated draft environmental document, a public information meeting/open house was held on November 8, 2012, in the Veteran's Memorial Building, Exeter to gather comments from the public.

Consultation with Responsible/Coordinating Agencies and Interested Parties

March 1, 2013 - Caltrans met with the Federal Bureau of Reclamation to discuss the project and potential impacts to the Friant-Kern canal.

March 18, 2013 - Caltrans met with the Tulare County Resource Management and a representative from the Tulare County Association of Governments to discuss the project and alternatives under consideration.

April 23, 2013 – Caltrans met with the City of Lindsay's Director of City Services and Economic Development and Traffic Engineering and Planning Department to discuss the project and traffic circulation.

Appendix A California Environmental Quality Act Checklist

Appendix A has been modified from the previously circulated draft environmental document to reflect the significant impact of farmland, which is highlighted.

Supporting documentation of all California Environmental Quality Act checklist determinations was provided in the previously circulated environmental document in Chapter 2, except for noise, which was discussed in Chapter 3. The documentation of "No Impact" determinations was provided at the beginning of Chapter 2, and discussion of all impacts, avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures was under the appropriate topic headings in Chapter 2 of the previously circulated environmental.

The following checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the project. The California Environmental Quality Act impact levels include "potentially significant impact," "less than significant impact with mitigation," "less than significant impact," and "no impact."

.

	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
I. AESTHETICS: Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
II. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES: In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project; and the forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☒	☐	☐	☐
III. AIR QUALITY: Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non- attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☐	☒
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES: Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
V. CULTURAL RESOURCES: Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☐	☒	☐

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

VII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS: Would the project:

a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

An assessment of the greenhouse gas emissions and climate change is included in the body of environmental document. While Caltrans has included this good faith effort in order to provide the public and decision-makers as much information as possible about the project, it is Caltrans' determination that in the absence of further regulatory or scientific information related to greenhouse emissions and CEQA significance, it is too speculative to make a significance determination regarding the project's direct and indirect impact with respect to climate change. Caltrans does remain firmly committed to implementing measures to help reduce the potential effects of the project. These measures are outlined in the body of the environmental document.

	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS: Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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 for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	☐	☐	☐	☒
IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY: Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☐	☒
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	☐	☐	☐	☒
j) Result in inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	☐	☐	☐	☒
X. LAND USE AND PLANNING: Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b)Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
XI. MINERAL RESOURCES: Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
XII. NOISE: Would the project result in:				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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 expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
XIII. POPULATION AND HOUSING: Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒
XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES:				
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:	☐	☐	☐	☒
Fire protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
XV. RECREATION:				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
XVI. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC: Would the project:				
a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒
XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS: Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒

XVIII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Appendix B Title VI Policy Statement

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—BUSINESS, TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING AGENCY EDMUND G. BROWN Jr., Governor

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
P.O. BOX 942873, MS-49
SACRAMENTO, CA 94273-0001
PHONE (916) 654-5266
FAX (916) 654-6608
TTY 711
www.dot.ca.gov

Flex your power!
Be energy efficient!

March 16, 2012

NON-DISCRIMINATION
POLICY STATEMENT

The California Department of Transportation, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes, ensures that no person in the State of California shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity it administers.

For information or guidance on how to file a complaint based on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or age, please visit the following web page: http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/bep/title_vi/t6_violated.htm.

Additionally, if you need this information in an alternate format, such as in Braille or in a language other than English, please contact Mario Solis, Manager, Title VI and Americans with Disabilities Act Program, California Department of Transportation, 1823 14th Street, MS-79, Sacramento, CA 95811. Phone: (916) 324-1353, TTY 711, fax (916) 324-1869, or via email: *mario_solis@dot.ca.gov*.

MALCOLM DOUGHERTY
Acting Director

"Caltrans improves mobility across California"

Appendix C Minimization and/or Mitigation Summary

Appendix C was not revised except for the categories of Farmland and San Joaquin kit fox, which are included below.

Farmland
At the time of acquisition, when relocation would become necessary, all activities would then be conducted in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970, as amended. Last Resort Housing Payments may be made available to eligible residential displacees.
The project cannot avoid farmland because farmland surrounds most of the project area. The project uses segments of the existing Spruce Avenue/Road 204 as a frontage road, which eliminates the need for more right-of-way (including farmland). As part of the right-of-way process for purchasing land, Caltrans would negotiate parcel exchanges with neighboring farmers to reconfigure split farmland parcels for resale so that the parcels would continue to be farmed and not contribute further to the segmentation and conversion of farmland. Generally, when Caltrans resells or reconfigures land in an area zoned for agriculture as buffers or conservation easements, deed restrictions limiting future use to agriculture would be included to keep land in agricultural use in perpetuity. Remnant parcels of farmland are avoided as much as possible by acquiring right-of-way in “slivers” or linear strips of property adjacent to the existing parcels. When possible, Caltrans will allow farmland to be kept in production (after purchase) until it is needed for construction. Caltrans would provide relocation advisory assistance to any person, business, farm, or non-profit organization that would be displaced, or that has onsite investments, such as wells and irrigation systems, displaced as a result of acquisition of real property for public use. Relocation resources would be available to all displaced individuals, free of discrimination. In addition, any right-of-way acquisition would be purchased at fair market value. During construction, for farmers that may have irrigation water piped under the new alignment of State Route 65, release valves can be placed on either side of the new expressway. This action would make crossing the highway to regulate the irrigation water unnecessary and provide a safer condition. If an excess parcel of farmland results from construction, adequate access to water for the irrigation of crops would be established and a permanent easement would be attached to ensure agricultural land use of the parcel in perpetuity. During construction, provisions for adequate access (temporary driveways/easements) would ensure that agricultural operations are not impaired along the project limits. Caltrans will not acquire conservation easements to reduce the farmland impacts resulting from this project.

Biological Resources

Threatened and Endangered Species

San Joaquin kit fox: A pre-construction survey and a standard special provision (SSP) for the San Joaquin kit fox would be included in the construction contract and would minimize impacts to this special-status species. Construction activities would be conducted during daytime hours to avoid potential disruption of San Joaquin kit fox nocturnal (night-time) activities.

The mitigation measures proposed below would be discussed with and approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during the Section 7 formal consultation.

Pre-construction educational meeting

An employee education program regarding the San Joaquin kit fox would be conducted prior to the start of construction by a Caltrans biologist or other qualified biologist.

Protection provisions

San Joaquin kit fox protection provisions would be included in the Construction Contract Special Provisions and all persons on the project site would be required to adhere to these provisions.

Construction monitoring

A Caltrans biologist or other qualified biologist would periodically monitor the construction of the project based on specific conditions determined during Section 7 formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Land acquisition or conservation easement

Agricultural lands that will be permanently affected within the project area would be mitigated for at a 1.1:1 acre ratio and temporary impacts would be compensated for at a 0.5:1 acre ratio. Table F.12 shows the estimated amount of permanent and temporary impacts for the two build alternatives and the potential mitigation acreage.

Table C.1 San Joaquin Kit Fox Mitigation Compensation

Type of Impact	Area of Impacts (acres)		Compensation Ratio	Area of Mitigation (acres)	
	Alternative 1	Alternative 2		Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Permanent	136.84	125.15	1.1 to 1 acres	150.52	137.66
Temporary	240.20	249.93	0.5 to 1 acre	120.10	124.97
TOTAL	377.04	375.08		270.62	262.63

Appendix D Natural Resources Conservation Services–CPA 106

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Natural Resources Conservation Service

NRCS-CPA-106
(Rev. 1-91)

FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING FOR CORRIDOR TYPE PROJECTS

PART I *(To be completed by Federal Agency)*	3. Date of Land Evaluation Request 3/12/12	Sheet 1 of 1
1. Name of Project Tulare 65 Expressway	5. Federal Agency Involved Caltrans/FHWA	
2. Type of Project Highway project	6. County and State Tulare, CA	
PART II *(To be completed by NRCS)*	1. Date Request Received by NRCS March 14 2012	2. Person Completing Form Bradley Pannett
3. Does the corridor contain prime, unique statewide or local important farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply - Do not complete additional parts of this form).	YES ☒ NO ☐	4. Acres Irrigated 625,080 / Average Farm Size 240
5. Major Crop(s) Citrus, Cotton, Alfalfa	6. Farmable Land in Government Jurisdiction Acres: 638,739 % 70.7	7. Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: 867,965 % 28.1
8. Name Of Land Evaluation System Used California Storie System	9. Name of Local Site Assessment System None	10. Date Land Evaluation Returned by NRCS 5/20/12

PART III *(To be completed by Federal Agency)*	Alternative Corridor For Segment			
	Corridor A	Corridor B	Corridor C	Corridor D
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly	289.0	290.1		
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly, Or To Receive Services	30.6	30.5		
C. Total Acres In Corridor	319.6	320.6		
PART IV *(To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information*				
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland	62.64	62.64		
B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland	254.42	254.42		
C. Percentage Of Farmland in County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted	.000365	.000365		
D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value	N/A	N/A		
PART V *(To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information Criterion Relative value of Farmland to Be Serviced or Converted (Scale of 0 - 100 Points)*	79	79		

PART VI *(To be completed by Federal Agency) Corridor Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5(c))*	Maximum Points				
1. Area in Nonurban Use	15	14	14		
2. Perimeter in Nonurban Use	10	10	10		
3. Percent Of Corridor Being Farmed	20	17	17		
4. Protection Provided By State And Local Government	20	20	20		
5. Size of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average	10	0	0		
6. Creation Of Nonfarmable Farmland	25	0	0		
7. Availability Of Farm Support Services	5	4	4		
8. On-Farm Investments	20	16	16		
9. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services	25	0	0		
10. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use	10	5	5		
TOTAL CORRIDOR ASSESSMENT POINTS	160	86	86	0	0
PART VII *(To be completed by Federal Agency)*					
Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)	100	79	79	0	0
Total Corridor Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment)	160	165	165	0	0
TOTAL POINTS *(Total of above 2 lines)*	260	244	244	0	0

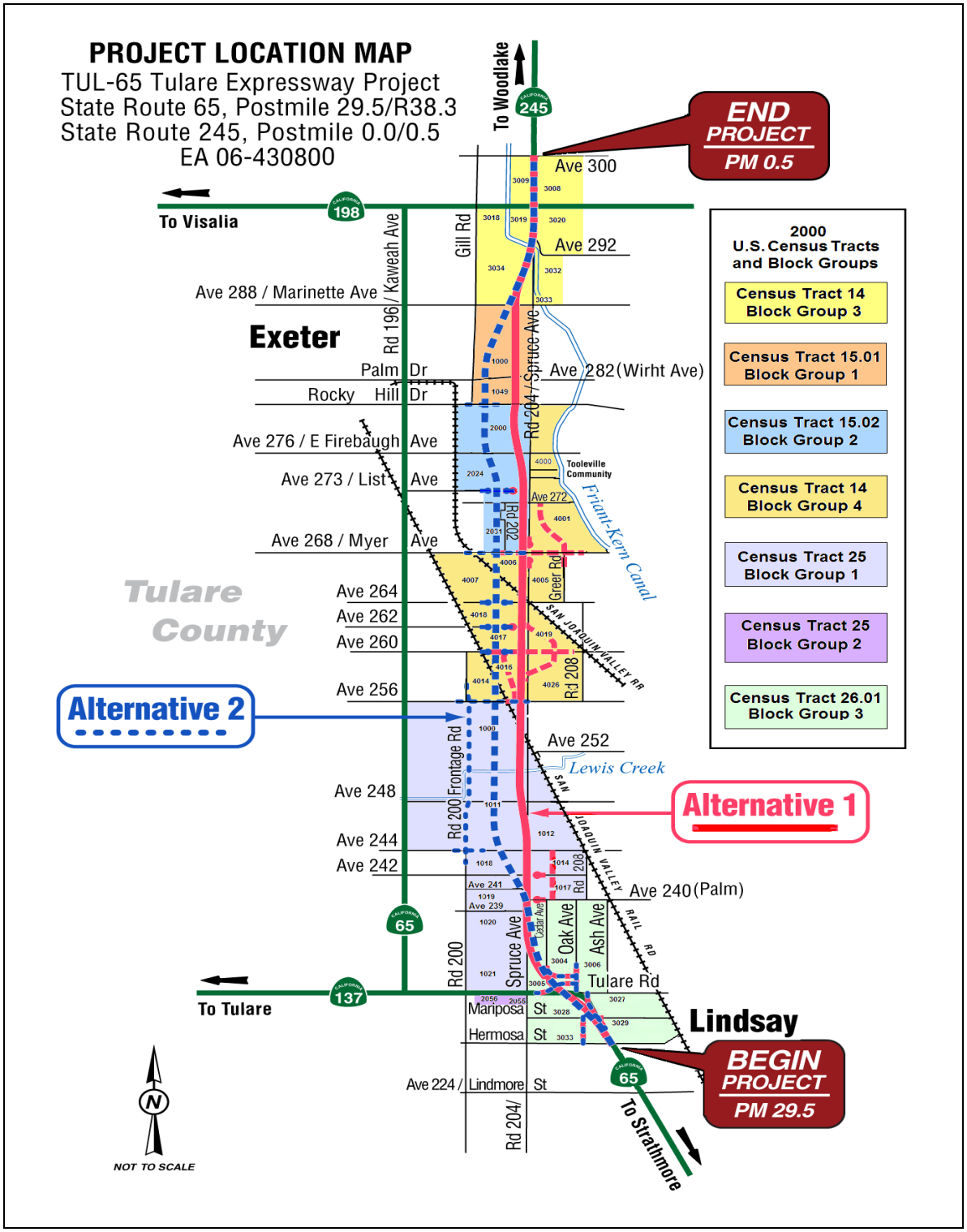
1. Corridor Selected	2. Total Acres of Farmlands to be Converted by Project	3. Date Of Selection	4. Was A Local Site Assessment Used?
Preferred alternative not identified yet	326-331	Pending	YES ☐ NO ☒

5. Reason For Selection:
conversion of farmland total points are equal for both build alternatives and exceed 160 points; therefore, minimization or mitigation measures will be considered.

Signature of Person Completing this Part: Julie [illegible] DATE 6-19-13

NOTE: Complete a form for each segment with more than one Alternate Corridor

Appendix E Census Tracts Data



Census Tract	Block Group	Block	TOTAL	Adults	White/ Caucasian	Black/ African American	Hispanic	American Indian/Native American	Asian	Pacific Islander	2 or more races
14	3	3008	28	24	20	0	2	0	4	0	2
		3009	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
		3018	24	20	24	0		0	0	0	0
		3019	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		3020	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		3032	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		3033	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		3034	34	24	30	0	4	0	0	0	0
	4	4000	126	74	50	0	72	0	0	0	4
		4001	436	244	118	2	304	10	0	0	2
		4005	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		4006	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
		4007	8	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
		4014	30	16	24	0	4	0	0	0	2
		4016	40	30	4	0	36	0	0	0	0
		4017	22	14	22	0	0	0	0	0	0
		4018	58	34	50	0	6	2	0	0	0
		4019	14	8	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
		4026	130	80	62	0	58	6	0	0	4
15.01	1	1000	42	34	40	0	2	0	0	0	0
		1049	72	42	58	0	0	12	2	0	0
15.02	2	2000	6	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	2
		2024	48	32	32	0	16	0	0	0	0
		2031	8	4	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
25	1	1000	68	48	36	0	32	0	0	0	0
		1011	16	12	0	0	16	0	0	0	0
		1012	34	22	16	0	18	0	0	0	0
		1014	28	16	0	0	28	0	0	0	0
		1017	24	24	0	0	24	0	0	0	0
		1018	18	14	16	0	0	0	0	0	0
		1019	14	14	6	0	8	0	0	0	0
		1020	66	40	54	0	12	0	0	0	0
		1021	112	66	54	0	58	0	0	0	0
	2	2055	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		2056	22	14	6	0	14	0	0	0	0
26.01	3	3004	78	46	30	0	48	0	0	0	0
		3005	22	14	22	0	0	0	0	0	0
		3006	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		3027	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		3028	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
		3029	4	4	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
		3033	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS			**1644**	**1038**	**814**	**4**	**766**	**30**	**6**	**0**	**26**
Percentage of Total				***63.1***	***49.5***	***0.2***	***46.6***	***1.8***	***0.4***	***0.0***	***1.6***

Source: http://www.gcensus.com