

Dickenson Avenue Roundabout

On State Route 180 at Dickenson Avenue in Fresno County

06-FRE-180-47.4/47.8

EA 06-0Y410/Project ID 0619000172

State Clearinghouse Number 2021100316

Initial Study with Negative Declaration

Volume 1 of 2



Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation

February 2022



General Information About This Document

Document prepared by: Phong Duong, Associate Environmental Planner

This document contains an Initial Study with Negative Declaration that examines the environmental effects of the roundabout project on State Route 180 between post miles 47.4 and 47.8 in Fresno County.

The Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration was circulated for public review and comment from October 20, 2021 to November 23, 2021. A public notice (English version) published in *The Fresno Bee* stated the circulation period for public review of the document; a date error occurred for that printed version of the notice. However, a Spanish version of the notice was published showing the comment period as October 20, 2021 to November 23, 2021. Due to the printing error in *The Fresno Bee*, Caltrans allowed two additional weeks for public comment. The extended deadline for comments ran to December 10, 2021.

Comments received on the draft environmental document and Caltrans' responses are provided in the Comment Letters and Responses section (Appendix C), which has been added since the draft environmental document was circulated. Language has been added throughout the document to indicate where a change has been made since the circulation of the draft environmental document. Minor editorial changes and clarifications have not been so indicated.

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document can be made available in Braille, in large print, on audiocassette, or on computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please write to or call Caltrans, Attention: Trais Norris, District 6 Environmental, 2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100, Fresno, California 93726; phone number (209) 601-3521 (Voice), or use the California Relay Service 1-800-735-2929 (TTY), 1-800-735-2929 (Voice), or 711.

Construct a single-lane roundabout at the intersection of State Route 180 and Dickenson Avenue from post miles 47.4 to 47.8 in Fresno County, California

INITIAL STUDY with Negative Declaration

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation
Responsible Agency: California Transportation Commission



Jennifer H. Taylor
Environmental Office Chief, District 6
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

02/15/2022

Date

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Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

State Clearinghouse Number: 2021100316

District-County-Route-Post Mile: 06-FRE-180-Post Miles 47.4 to 47.8

EA and Project Identification Number: 06-0Y410 and 0619000172

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to construct a single-lane roundabout at the intersection of State Route 180 and Dickenson Avenue in Fresno County, California.

Determination

An Initial Study has been prepared by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), District 6. On the basis of this study, it is determined that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons.

The project will have no effect on aesthetics, coastal resources, wild and scenic rivers, parks and recreational facilities, forest resources, growth, community character and cohesion, water quality and stormwater runoff, environmental justice, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazardous materials, paleontological resources, hydrology and floodplains, existing and future land use, mineral resources, noise, energy, public services, recreation, tribal cultural resources, invasive species, and wildfire.

The project will have no significant effect on farmland, population and housing, utilities and service systems, biology, traffic and transportation, air quality, and greenhouse gas emissions.



Jennifer H. Taylor
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02/15/2022

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Chapter 1 Proposed Project

1.1 Introduction

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to construct a single-lane roundabout at the intersection of State Route 180 and Dickenson Avenue, between post miles 47.4 and 47.8. See Figure 1-1 for the project vicinity map and Figure 1-2 for the project location map. The project lies in Fresno County, less than a mile west of the small unincorporated agricultural community of Rolinda.

This safety project is funded from the 2020 State Highway Operation and Safety Improvements Program 20.XX.201.010 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The project will improve safety and reduce the number of accidents at this intersection. The project's estimated cost is \$12,150,000. Construction is expected to begin in 2024 and end in 2025.

Existing State Route 180 is a two-lane conventional highway on level terrain. This rural highway provides access for the movement of agricultural goods and regional commuters (through Fresno, Kerman, and the small agricultural community of Rolinda) as well as interregional traffic from State Routes 145 and 33 on the west and to State Routes 99, 168 and 41 to the east.

This project is one of several projects that have been planned for State Route 180 within this area of Fresno County. Others include the following:

1. 06-0M7204 (FRE-180-24.5/53.6) completed in 2012—a rubberized hot mix asphalt overlay of the pavement.
2. 06-0N8204 (FRE-180-47.6) completed in 2014—a pavement rehabilitation of the westbound State Route 180 through lane at the Dickenson Avenue intersection.

1.2 Purpose and Need

1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the project is to improve safety at the intersection of State Route 180 and Dickenson Avenue.

1.2.2 Need

The intersection of State Route 180 and Dickenson Avenue has been experiencing a high number of collisions due to unsafe driver speed.

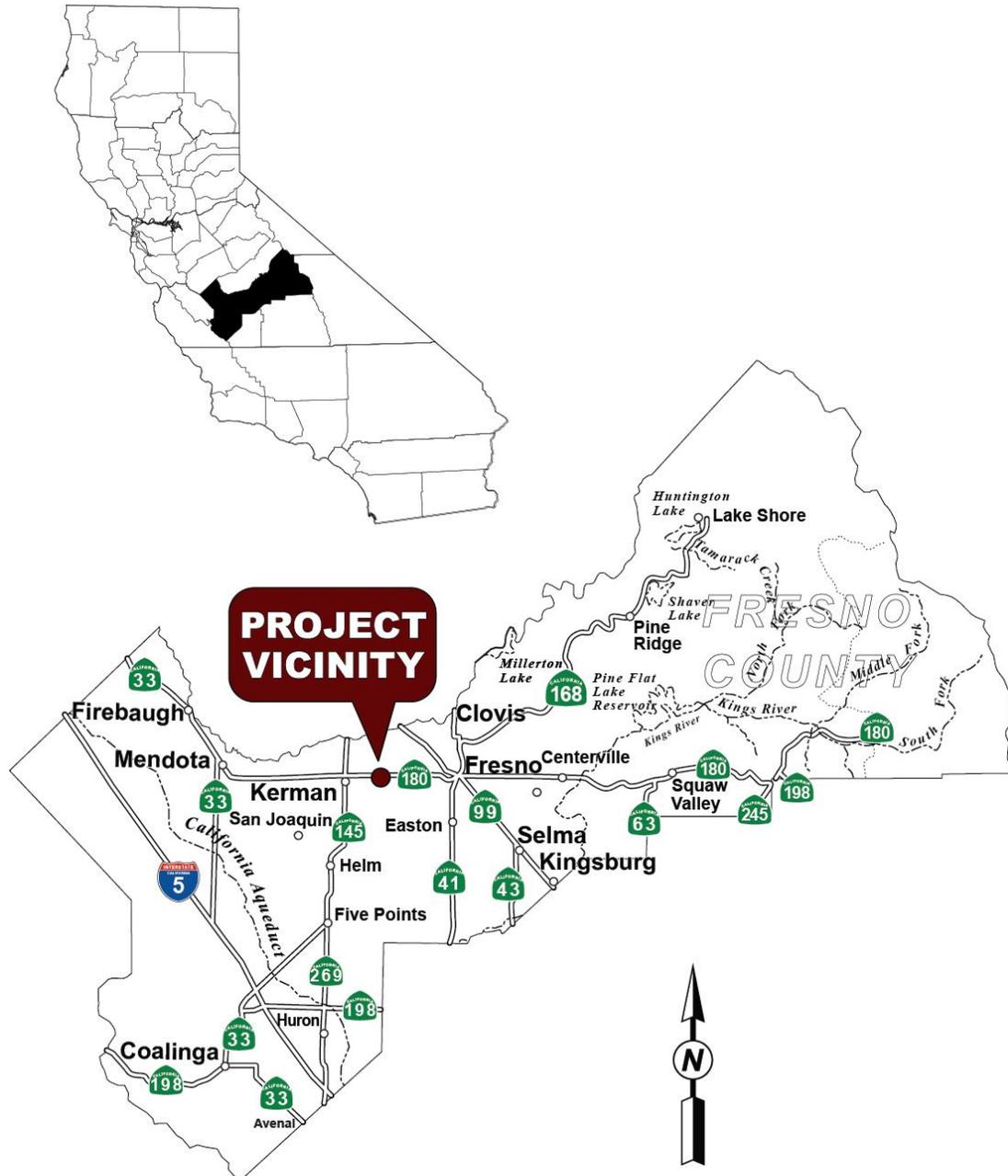
Fourteen accidents were recorded at the intersection during the three-year study period between January 2016 and December 2018. The actual fatal-plus-injury and total accident rates for the intersection are higher than the statewide average for similar intersections with comparable traffic volumes. The fatal accident rate, however, is 0.001, lower than the statewide average for similar intersections with comparable traffic volumes.

The main collision factors for the accidents were rear-end accidents and speeding under clear weather conditions.

1.3 Project Description

The project will improve safety at the intersection of State Route 180 and Dickenson Avenue by constructing a single-lane roundabout. The roundabout will accommodate larger trucks under the Federal Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982. The roundabout will maintain existing traffic patterns with modified driveways, a truck apron, a landscape buffer, a shared-use path and splitter islands with curb ramps. In addition, the existing drainage and electrical systems will be upgraded, and signs will be replaced or upgraded.

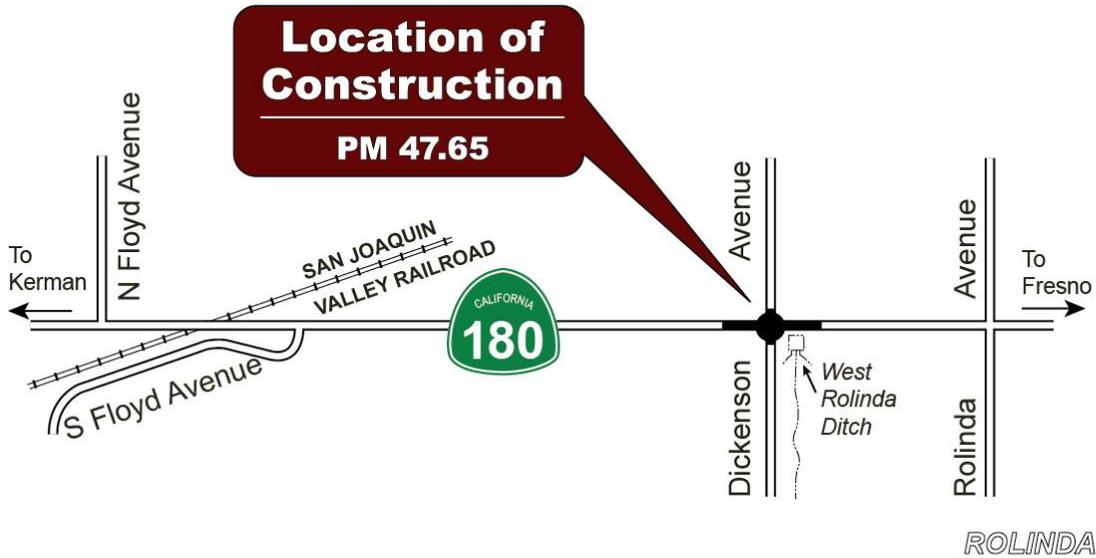
Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map



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Figure 1-2 Project Location Map



1.4 Project Alternatives

Two alternatives—the Build Alternative and the No-Build Alternative—are being considered.

1.4.1 Build Alternative

This safety improvement project proposes to improve the intersection of State Route 180 and Dickenson Avenue, ease traffic congestion, and introduce a traffic-calming circulation pattern by constructing a roundabout at the site. The project will do the following:

- Construct a single-lane roundabout that would accommodate oversized trucks and the Surface Transportation Assistance Act standard.
- Construct a truck apron approximately 20 feet wide.

- Construct eight curb ramps compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act standards.
- Construct 8 bike ramps, for each direction of traffic.
- Provide a central island with a diameter of 54 feet, and a 5-foot sidewalk hardscape buffer.
- Construct 300-foot-long splitter islands on all legs.
- Construct storage ditches along State Route 180 and Dickenson Avenue.
- Construct the roundabout, circulatory roadway and truck apron using colored jointed plain concrete pavement (JPCP) and hot mix asphalt (Type A). The legs of the roundabout will be constructed of hot mix asphalt (Type A) and aggregate base. The project will use shoulder widening, cold-planing and an overlay to conform to the existing pavement.
- Install a 10-foot shared-use path on all directions of the intersection, accommodating pedestrians and bicyclists with Americans with Disabilities Act curb ramps and bike ramps. Include high-visibility crosswalks and island refuges.
- Require utility adjustments and relocations for AT&T, Kerman Telephone doing business as (DBA) Sebastian, and PG&E. The project will also require work on Fresno Irrigation District facilities, done as part of the construction contract.
- Remove the existing lighting and flashing beacon systems and replace with new lighting and flashing beacon systems at all approaches to the roundabout. Also, replace existing Traffic Census Stations with powered Traffic Monitoring Stations.
- Acquire additional right-of-way and Temporary Construction Easements for construction of a temporary detour alignment during stage construction. Also acquire an easement outside of state right-of-way for the relocation of Fresno Irrigation District facilities. Approximately 7.32 acres will be acquired from five parcels within the project area.

There will be three stages of construction for the project:

1. Stage 1 will include the undergrounding and relocation of a portion of the Rolinda Canal and construction of a temporary detour alignment for traffic on State Route 180.
2. In Stage 2, the northern leg of Dickenson Avenue will be closed, and State Route 180 traffic will be rerouted to the temporary detour alignment. The roundabout circle, both legs of State Route 180, the northern leg of Dickenson Avenue, and the final portion of the Rolinda Canal relocation will then be constructed.
3. In Stage 3, the southern leg of Dickenson Avenue will be closed, traffic on State Route 180 will be shifted to the newly constructed roundabout, traffic

on the northern leg of Dickenson Avenue will be open to use the newly constructed roundabout, and the southern leg of Dickenson Avenue will be constructed. The northern leg of Dickenson Avenue will be closed during Stage 2 and the southern leg of Dickenson Avenue will be closed during Stage 3 of construction, and local traffic will be rerouted.

1.4.2 No-Build (No-Action) Alternative

The No-Build Alternative would leave the intersection of State Route 180 and Dickenson Avenue as it is, without a roundabout. This alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the project to reduce the number and severity of collisions at this intersection.

1.4.3 Alternative Considered but Eliminated from Further Discussion

The following alternative was considered for the project but was eliminated for the reason stated.

An alternative proposing to construct a traffic signal at the intersection of State Route 180 and Dickenson Avenue was considered, but it was not advanced further. According to an Intersection Control Evaluation Step One Screening from Caltrans Traffic Operations dated October 9, 2019, the intersection does not achieve the required safety warrant for a proposed traffic signal. In addition, the 2017 Highway Safety Improvement Program Guidelines indicated that the traffic signal alternative proposed at this intersection would not be a viable alternative to satisfy the purpose and need of the project. Therefore, this alternative was eliminated from further discussion.

The following text on the preferred alternative has been added since the draft environmental document was circulated.

1.5 Identification of a Preferred Alternative

The Build Alternative was selected by Caltrans as the preferred alternative. The No-Build Alternative would not meet the purpose and need for the project, which is to improve safety, ease traffic congestion and reduce the number of collisions at this intersection for the life of the project.

The following text on standard measures and best practices has been added since the draft environmental document was circulated.

1.6 Standard Measures and Best Management Practices

This project contains several standard measures and best management practices that are used on most, if not all, Caltrans projects and were not

developed in response to any specific environmental impact resulting from the project. These include the following:

- Air Quality—Effectively reduce and control emission impacts during construction via the provisions of Caltrans Standard Specifications, Section 14-9.02 “Air Pollution Control” and Section 10-5 “Dust Control.
- Biology—Swainson’s hawk preconstruction surveys will be completed according to the “Recommended Timing and Methodology for Swainson’s Hawk Nesting Surveys in California’s Central Valley” (May 31, 2001) during nesting season (February 1 to September 30) the year prior to groundbreaking activities to ensure no nesting Swainson’s hawks will be affected if construction is to occur during the nesting season.
- Hazardous Waste—Applicable Standard Special Provisions may include, but not be limited to: Standard Special Provision 7-1.02K (6)(j)(iii)—ground disturbance of unregulated materials; Standard Special Provision 14-11.08—ground disturbance of regulated Aerially Deposited Lead materials; Non-Standard Special Provision 14-11.14—disposal and handling of treated wood waste; Standard Special Provision 36-4 and/or 84-9.03B—cold-planing and/or removal of white/new yellow striping material; and/or Standard Special Provision 14-11.12—removal of old yellow striping material.
- Paleontology—If unanticipated fossil discovery occurs during utility work, Specification 14-7.03 of the *2018 Standard Specifications* identifies the procedures to be implemented to protect the paleontological resource(s).

1.7 Discussion of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion

This document contains information regarding compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and other state laws and regulations. Separate environmental documentation, supporting a Categorical Exclusion determination, has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. When needed for clarity, or as required by the California Environmental Quality Act, this document may contain references to federal laws and/or regulations (the California Environmental Quality Act, for example, requires consideration of adverse effects on species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species by the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—that is, species protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act).

1.8 Permits and Approvals Needed

No permits, licenses, agreements, and certifications are required for project construction.

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Chapter 2 CEQA Evaluation

2.1 CEQA Environmental Checklist

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the project. Potential impact determinations include Significant and Unavoidable Impact, Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated, Less Than Significant Impact, and No Impact. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with a project will indicate that there are no impacts to a particular resource. A “No Impact” answer reflects this determination. The questions in this checklist are intended to encourage the thoughtful assessment of impacts and do not represent thresholds of significance.

Project features, which can include both design elements of the project and standardized measures that are applied to all or most Caltrans projects such as Best Management Practices and measures included in the Standard Plans and Specifications or as Standard Special Provisions, are considered to be an integral part of the project and have been considered prior to any significance determinations documented below.

“No Impact” determinations in each section are based on the scope, description, and location of the project as well as the appropriate technical report (bound separately in Volume 2), and no further discussion is included in this document.

2.1.1 Aesthetics

Considering the information in the Visual Impact Assessment Memo dated March 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	No Impact.
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	No Impact.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a 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?	No Impact.
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	No Impact.

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

Considering the information included in the AD-1006 Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form evaluated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service on August 20, 2021 and based on the Fresno County Geographic Information System zoning designation as Unincorporated (source dated December 29, 2017), the following significance determinations have been made.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources
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?	Less Than Significant Impact. Additional right-of-way will be acquired from prime farmland next to the state right-of-way for the roundabout. However, it is a minor right-of-way acquisition. The Natural Resources Conservation Service Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form was completed and submitted for the project on August 13, 2021 (see Appendix B). The form was evaluated by Natural Resources Conservation Service staff on August 20, 2021.
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	No Impact.
c) Conflict with existing zoning, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?	No Impact.
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	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 forest land to non-forest use?	No Impact.

Affected Environment

The Natural Resources Conservation Service Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form was completed for the project on August 13, 2021 (see Appendix B). According to the 2017 California Department of Conservation, Fresno County has a total of 1,514,402 acres of prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, farmland of local importance, and unique farmland. The top commodities are almonds, grapes and pistachios.

The roundabout right-of-way acquisition area falls within five parcels. All five parcels are classified as “prime farmland” by the Department of Conservation. It is estimated that a total of 7.32 acres will be acquired for the roundabout from these five farmland parcels, all acreage devoted to agricultural use. Surrounding these parcels are mostly low-density rural settlements and agricultural land.

Environmental Consequences

Approximately 7.32 acres of land will be converted between these larger parcels: Assessor’s Parcel Number 025-071-047 (0.10 acre), Assessor’s Parcel Number 025-071-053 (1.52 acre), Assessor’s Parcel Number 025-071-62S (formerly 025-031S and 025-071-40S) (1.35 acre), Assessor’s Parcel Number 025-221-51 (2.61 acre) and 025-320-028 (1.74 acre). These parcels sit at the intersection of Dickenson Avenue and State Route 180. The land is not Williamson Act contract land but is designated as “prime farmland.”

The project will acquire approximately 7.32 acres that are currently zoned for agricultural use. According to the Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form (see Appendix B), the impact rating total for the Build Alternative is 110 points. This rating form determines the relative value of farmland to be converted by using a formula that weighs farmland classification, such as how much land is in nonurban use, the size of the present farm unit compared to the average in Fresno County, the availability of onsite farm investments, storage facilities and wherever the proposed project would reduce the demand for farm support service or the viability of the farms remaining in the area. If the impact rating is 160 or greater, the project is considered to have high potential for impacts and is suitable for protection under the Farmland Protection Policy Act.

Because the impact rating total for the roundabout area (110 points) of the project is less than the 160-point limit, protection under the Farmland Protection Policy Act is not needed for this project.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Land acquisition and impacts for the project are considered minimal and will not require mitigation measures.

2.1.3 Air Quality

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

Considering the information in the Dickenson Roundabout Air Quality Memorandum dated April 15, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	No Impact.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	No Impact.
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	No Impact.
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	No Impact.

2.1.4 Biological Resources

Considering the information in the Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts) dated February 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries?	Less Than Significant Impact. The project may affect the Swainson's hawk (<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>), which is state listed as threatened.
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	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?	No Impact.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources
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?	No Impact.
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	No Impact.
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?	No Impact.

Affected Environment

A Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts) was prepared for the project to determine to what extent the project may affect threatened, endangered, candidate, or sensitive species. This section focuses on the issues covered in the Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts) prepared for the project in February 2021 and describes a special-status species—the Swainson’s hawk—that may occur or have the potential to occur within the project limits.

Special-status animals are considered of “special concern” based on (1) federal, state, or local laws regulating their development; (2) limited distributions; and/or (3) the habitat requirements of special-status animals occurring onsite. Suitable habitat for the Swainson’s hawk was found within the project limits.

Swainson’s Hawk (Buteo swainsoni)

The Swainson’s hawk is state listed as threatened and is protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Swainson’s hawks are broad-winged hawks between 18 and 22 inches long; the female is slightly larger than the male. During summer, the Swainson’s hawk is found in California’s Central Valley. In winter, the hawk heads south toward South America.

Swainson’s hawks hunt for food in grasslands, agricultural fields, and livestock pastures. Their main food sources are mice, gophers, ground squirrels, rabbits, large insects, reptiles, amphibians, and small birds. Swainson’s hawks generally rest in trees but they will rest on the ground if no trees are present.

This hawk breeds in open stands of juniper-sage flats, riparian areas and oak savannahs in the Central Valley. Breeding areas are normally close to food sources. The Swainson’s hawk can also nest in landscape trees near human structures and sometimes in orchards. Breeding occurs from late March to late

August, with peak activity in late May or July. Swainson's hawks produce two to four eggs in the nest; eggs take 25 to 28 days to hatch.

Habitat types in the project area include scattered trees, large shrubs as well as agricultural areas. A site visit was made on May 28, 2020; no active or inactive Swainson's hawks' nests were seen. No hawks were seen flying or roosting during this field survey. Also, a California Natural Diversity Database query found no occurrences of Swainson's hawks in or around the project area, nor were any active raptor structures found. However, open fields that could provide a food source for Swainson's hawks are present and so are suitable nesting trees.

Environmental Consequences

Swainson's Hawk

The project will result in permanent impacts to about 7.32 acres of open fields or agricultural areas that may provide foraging habitat for the Swainson's hawk. Tree removal is anticipated for the project, and the project area contains suitable nesting trees for the Swainson's hawk. However, open fields next to State Route 180 contain very low-quality foraging habitat, and noise disturbance from the active highway nearby with a high volume of vehicle traffic may cause Swainson's hawks to avoid the project area.

The large suitable nesting trees will be surveyed for nesting raptors during the appropriate season prior to construction, and any nests found would be avoided per the minimization efforts described below.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Swainson's Hawk

While the likelihood that Swainson's hawks would be found in the project area is low, if Swainson's hawks were to nest within 600 feet of the project area, a no disturbance buffer would be implemented to avoid and minimize the potential for impacts to the species. If nests are found farther than 600 feet from the project area, any noise or disturbance from construction would have no greater impact to a Swainson's hawk than the current disturbances from vehicle traffic at the site of proposed work.

Caltrans proposes the following avoidance and minimization efforts to ensure the project will not result in measurable impacts to this species:

- Preconstruction surveys will be completed according to "Recommended Timing and Methodology for Swainson's Hawk Nesting Surveys in California's Central Valley" (May 31, 2001) during nesting season (February 1 to September 30) the year prior to groundbreaking activities to ensure no nesting Swainson's hawks will be affected if construction is to occur during the nesting season.

- A Worker Environmental Awareness Training (WEAT) will be administered by a qualified biologist to any personnel working onsite, covering the biology and life history of the Swainson’s hawk and the penalties for take of the species if discovered.
- If nesting Swainson’s hawks are observed onsite, then the nest site will be designated an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA), with a buffer zone of 600 feet until it has been determined that the young have fledged out of the nest.
- A biologist will be present to monitor the active nest during construction activities.
- A special provision for migratory birds will be included to ensure that no potential nesting migratory birds are affected during construction activities.
- Removal of any trees within the project area should be done outside of the nesting season; however, if a tree within the project area needs to be removed during the nesting season, a qualified biologist will inspect the tree prior to removal to ensure that no nests are present.

2.1.5 Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Archaeological Survey Report dated December 2020 and Historic Property Survey Report dated May 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Cultural Resources
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	No Impact.
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	No Impact.
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	No Impact.

2.1.6 Energy

Considering the project will construct a single roundabout with improvements for operation and visibility, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Energy
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation?	No Impact.
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	No Impact.

2.1.7 Geology and Soils

Considering the information in the Paleontological Identification Report dated April 2020, the California Geological Survey and Fresno County General Plan update in February 2000, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils
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.	No Impact.
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	No Impact.
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	No Impact.
iv) Landslides?	No Impact.
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	No Impact.
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 onsite or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	No Impact.
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?	No Impact.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils
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?	No Impact.
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	No Impact.

2.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Considering the information in the Climate Change Report dated July 2021 and Air Quality Memorandum dated April 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Greenhouse Gas Emissions
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	Less Than Significant Impact. The project would not generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment. Greenhouse gas emissions impacts of operational improvements projects such as this are considered less than significant under the California Environmental Quality Act because there would be no increase in operational emissions. While some greenhouse gas emissions during the construction period would be unavoidable, with implementation of standard measures or Best Management Practices designed to reduce or eliminate emissions as part of the project, the impact would be less than significant.
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	Less Than Significant Impact. The project would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.

Affected Environment

The project lies in Fresno County, less than a mile west of the small unincorporated agricultural community of Rolinda. Existing State Route 180 is a two-lane conventional highway on level terrain. This rural highway provides access for the movement of agricultural goods and regional commuters (through Fresno, Kerman, and the small agricultural community of Rolinda) as well as interregional traffic from State Routes 145 and 33 on the west and State Routes 99, 168 and 41 to the east.

Environmental Consequences

Construction greenhouse gas emissions would result from material processing, onsite construction equipment, and traffic delays due to construction. These emissions would be produced at different levels throughout the construction phase; their frequency and occurrence can be reduced through innovations in plans and specifications and by implementing better traffic management during construction phases. Also, construction emissions could be offset by the operational improvements that will result from the construction of the roundabout.

Per Caltrans protocol, carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions generated from construction equipment (which are used to gauge impacts to climate change) were estimated using the Caltrans Construction Emissions Tool (CALCET). The estimated carbon dioxide construction emissions are 216 U.S. tons over a 130-day work period.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

While the project would result in greenhouse gas emissions during construction, it is anticipated that the project would not result in any increase in operational greenhouse gas emissions. The project does not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. With the implementation of construction greenhouse gas reduction measures, the impacts would be less than significant.

Caltrans Specification 14.9.02, Air Pollution Control, requires contractors to comply with all air pollution control rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes. Measures that reduce construction vehicle emissions also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The following greenhouse gas reduction measures will be implemented for the project:

Project-Level Measures to be Implemented to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions Related to Construction Activities (Additional environmental measures would be determined at the final design phase)

- Schedule truck trips outside of peak monitoring and evening commute hours.

- Use alternate one-way (reversing) traffic control when lane closures are necessary during construction.

Project-Level Measures to be Implemented to Reduce Operational Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- Incorporate Complete Streets components.
- Use hardscape landscaping to reduce the need for irrigation and maintenance.

2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Considering the information in the Initial Site Assessment dated June 2020 and updated in July 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	No Impact.
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?	No Impact.
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	No Impact.
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?	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?	No Impact.
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	No Impact.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	No Impact.

2.1.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Considering the information in the Water Compliance Memorandum dated January 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface water or groundwater quality?	No Impact.
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	No Impact.
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 onsite or offsite;	No Impact.
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding onsite or offsite;	No Impact.
(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?	No Impact.
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	No Impact.
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	No Impact.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	No Impact.

2.1.11 Land Use and Planning

Considering the information in the Transportation Concept Report for State Route 180 dated October 2015, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Land Use and Planning
a) Physically divide an established community?	No Impact.
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?	No Impact.

2.1.12 Mineral Resources

Considering the information in the California Department of Conservation Mineral Land Classification Interactive Map dated 1998, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Mineral Resources
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?	No Impact.
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?	No Impact.

2.1.13 Noise

Considering the information in the Noise Compliance Study dated February 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project result in:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise
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?	No Impact.
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	No Impact.
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	No Impact.

2.1.14 Population and Housing

Considering the information in the Fresno County General Plan 2000 and the Caltrans Project Initiation Report dated January 2020, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Population and Housing
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	No Impact.
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	No Impact.

2.1.15 Public Services

Considering the information in the Fresno County General Plan 2000, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for 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?	No Impact.
Police protection?	No Impact.
Schools?	No Impact.
Parks?	No Impact.
Other public facilities?	No Impact.

2.1.16 Recreation

Considering the information in the Fresno County General Plan 2000, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for 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?	No Impact.
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?	No Impact.

2.1.17 Transportation

Considering the information in the Fresno County General Plan 2000 and the Caltrans Project Initiation Report dated January 2020, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Transportation
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	No Impact.
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	No Impact.
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	No Impact.
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	No Impact.

2.1.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Archaeological Survey Report dated December 2020 and Historic Property Survey Report dated May 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or	No Impact.
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	No Impact.

2.1.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Considering the information in the Draft Project Report dated August 2021 and Paleontological Identification Report dated April 2020, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems
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 or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	Less Than Significant Impact. The project will result in utility adjustments and relocations for AT&T, Kerman Telephone doing business as Sebastian, PG&E, and Fresno Irrigation District facilities.
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	No Impact.
c) 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?	No Impact.
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?	No Impact.
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	No Impact.

Affected Environment

Various utilities within the project area will have to be relocated or modified to construct the project. The utilities are located along State Route 180 and Dickenson Avenue. The utilities include AT&T overhead and underground telephone lines, Kerman Telephone doing business as Sebastian underground fiber optic and telephone lines, and PG&E overhead electric lines. The project will also affect the Fresno Irrigation District canal west of Rolinda.

Environmental Consequences

Utilities

This project will require utility coordination with AT&T, Kerman Telephone doing business as Sebastian, PG&E, and Fresno Irrigation District. Work includes but is not limited to pole relocation and undergrounding of existing

overhead lines, vault and pedestal relocations and modifications, and underground line reconfiguration. Potholing is anticipated to positively locate existing underground utilities. This project will also require an undergrounding and realignment of Fresno Irrigation District facilities, which would be done as part of the construction contract.

There will be excavation for underground utility line modifications, the undergrounding of AT&T overhead telephone line, pole removals and relocations, and Fresno Irrigation District canal undergrounding and irrigation pipe relocation. These excavation and ground-disturbing activities will impact the underlying paleontological resource, the Pleistocene-age Modesto Formation. However, as these excavations are limited in width, lateral extent, and/or located within soils and sediments that were previously disturbed during installation of the original utilities, it is unlikely scientifically significant fossils will be encountered.

Emergency Services

Emergency services provided by the Fresno County Fire Department, Fresno County Sheriff's Department, and the California Highway Patrol will not be impacted by the project. The nearest Fresno County Fire Station is the Fresno/North Central Fire Station 22 at 806 South Garfield Avenue in Fresno, approximately 3 miles south of the project site, south of State Route 180.

Law enforcement service is provided in the area by the Fresno County Sheriff's Department and the California Highway Patrol. The project will benefit emergency services by improving traffic operations and traffic safety at State Route 180/Dickenson Avenue intersection.

Either the southern leg or northern leg of Dickenson Avenue will be closed at times during construction. At least one leg on Dickenson Avenue will remain open for the duration of construction. A temporary detour alignment and alternate one-way (reversing) traffic control will be used to keep State Route 180 open during construction. There are no public facilities within the project area.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following avoidance and minimization measures will prevent temporary impacts to utilities and emergency services:

Utilities

- Utility relocation and modification are needed to accommodate construction of the project. The utility work for Kerman Telephone doing business as Sebastian, PG&E, and AT&T will be done by the utility companies. Utility users will be informed of the date and time in advance of any service disruptions.

- All construction work on the irrigation pipes and canal will be done as part of the construction contract and coordinated with the Fresno Irrigation District.
- Standard Special Provisions 7-1.02K (6)(j)(iii) and 14-11.08 are required if there is ground disturbance of unregulated earth material containing lead. Standard Special Provision 14-11.14 is required if treated wood waste will be generated during the project. Standard Special Provision 14-11.12 is required for proper management of hazardous waste residue (if yellow striping will be removed separately). Residue from removal of yellow thermoplastic pavement marking and/or yellow-painted traffic stripe may contain lead chromate. Residue produced from the separate removal of any yellow thermoplastic pavement marking and/or yellow-painted traffic stripe may contain heavy metals in concentrations that exceed thresholds established by the Health and Safety Code and 22 California Code of Regulations. Standard Special Provisions 36-4 and/or 84-9.03B will be required for work involving residue from grinding and cold-planing that contains lead from paint and thermoplastic and/or white, black, or new yellow paint/striping/markings that are removed separately.
- If unanticipated fossil discovery occurs during utility work, Specification 14-7.03 of the *2018 Standard Specifications* identifies the procedures to be implemented to protect the paleontological resource(s).

Emergency Services

A Traffic Management Plan will be developed to minimize delays and maximize safety during construction. The Traffic Management Plan may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Release of information through brochures and mailers, press releases, and notices from the Caltrans public information office to notify and inform motorists, businesses, community groups, local entities, and emergency services of upcoming closures or detours.
- Use of portable Changeable Message Signs and a Construction Zone Enhanced Enforcement Program may be used to minimize delay to the traveling public.

2.1.20 Wildfire

Considering the information in the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection online Fire Hazard Severity Zones Maps dated November 2007, the following significance determinations have been made:

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones:

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

2.1.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Mandatory Findings of Significance
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	No Impact.
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)?	No Impact.

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Mandatory Findings of Significance
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	No Impact.

a) **No Impact.** The project does not 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 major periods of California history or prehistory (Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts February 2021, Caltrans Archaeological Survey Report December 2020, Historic Property Survey Report May 2021).

b) **No Impact.** The project will not have a negative effect on current projects nearby or future projects; rather, it will provide additional operational improvements at the State Route 180 and Dickenson Avenue intersection.

c) **No Impact.** The project will not cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly. During project construction, the project will have temporary increases in noise and air pollution. Project construction is also expected to result in temporary and minor traffic delays that could affect response time of emergency services or affect evacuation time in emergency situations. However, these temporary effects will be minimized with implementation of the project's Transportation Management Plan, per Caltrans guidelines (see Noise Compliance Study February 2021 and Air Quality Memo April 2021).

Appendix A Title VI Policy Statement

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

Gavin Newsom, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
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Making Conservation
a California Way of Life.

August 2020

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

The California Department of Transportation, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ensures *"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."*

Caltrans will make every effort to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its services, programs and activities, whether they are federally funded or not, and that services and benefits are fairly distributed to all people, regardless of race, color, or national origin. In addition, Caltrans will facilitate meaningful participation in the transportation planning process in a nondiscriminatory manner.

Related federal statutes, remedies, and state law further those protections to include sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, and age.

For information or guidance on how to file a complaint, or obtain more information regarding Title VI, please contact the Title VI Branch Manager at (916) 324-8379 or visit the following web page:
<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/title-vi>.

To obtain this information in an alternate format such as Braille or in a language other than English, please contact the California Department of Transportation, Office of Civil Rights, at 1823 14th Street, MS-79, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 324-8379 (TTY 711); or at [<Title.VI@dot.ca.gov>](mailto:Title.VI@dot.ca.gov).

Original signed by
Toks Omishakin
Director

"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability"

Appendix B Farmland Conversion Impact

U.S. Department of Agriculture								
FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING								
PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency)				Date Of Land Evaluation Request 8/13/2021				
Name of Project: Dickenson Avenue Roundabout				Federal Agency Involved FHWA				
Proposed Land Use: Transportation				County and State: Fresno, California				
PART II (To be completed by NRCS)				Date Request Received By NRCS 08/13/2021		Person Completing Form: Philip Smith		
Does the site contain Prime, Unique, Statewide or Local Important Farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply - do not complete additional parts of this form)				YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Acres Irrigated 972,576	Average Farm Size 345	
Major Crop(s) Almonds, Grapes and Pistachios		Farmable Land In Govt. Jurisdiction Acres: 1,717,438 % 44.5		Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: 1,514,402 % 39.3				
Name of Land Evaluation System Used CA Revised Storie Index		Name of State or Local Site Assessment System None		Date Land Evaluation Returned by NRCS 08/20/2021				
PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)				Alternative Site Rating				
				Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D	
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly				7.18				
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly				0				
C. Total Acres In Site				7.18				
PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information								
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland				7.18				
B. Total Acres Statewide Important or Local Important Farmland				0				
C. Percentage Of Farmland in County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted				0.0005				
D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value				13.64				
PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Criterion Relative Value of Farmland To Be Converted (Scale of 0 to 100 Points)				88				
PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency) Site Assessment Criteria (Criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5 b. For Corridor project use form NRCS-CPA-106)				Maximum Points	Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D
1. Area In Non-urban Use				(15)	14			
2. Perimeter In Non-urban Use				(10)	10			
3. Percent Of Site Being Farmed				(20)	19			
4. Protection Provided By State and Local Government				(20)	20			
5. Distance From Urban Built-up Area				(15)	15			
6. Distance To Urban Support Services				(15)	14			
7. Size Of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average				(10)	1			
8. Creation Of Non-farmable Farmland				(10)	0			
9. Availability Of Farm Support Services				(5)	1			
10. On-Farm Investments				(20)	16			
11. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services				(10)	0			
12. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use				(10)	0			
TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS				180	110	0	0	0
PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)								
Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)				100	88	0	0	0
Total Site Assessment (From Part VI above or local site assessment)				180	110	0	0	0
TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)				280	198	0	0	0
Site Selected: Build Alternative				Date Of Selection 8/13/2021	Was A Local Site Assessment Used?			
					YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Reason For Selection: Build Alternative (Site A) is being selected because it meets the project purpose and need. Official approval of Build Alternative will occur upon the final environmental document in early 2022.								
Name of Federal agency representative completing this form: Phonga Duong						Date: 8/13/2021		
(See Instructions on reverse side)						Form AD-1006 (03-02)		

Appendix C Comment Letters and Responses

This appendix has been added since the draft environmental document was circulated.

This appendix contains the comments received during the public circulation and comment period from October 20, 2021 to November 23, 2021 (which was extended to December 10, 2021—as explained below). The comments have been retyped for readability. Copies of the original comment letters and documents are provided in Volume 2 of this document.

A public notice (English version) announcing the availability of the environmental document was published in *The Fresno Bee* and stated the circulation period for public review of the document; a date error occurred for that printed version of the notice. A Spanish version of the notice, however, was also published and showed the dates for the comment period (October 20, 2021 to November 23, 2021). Due to the printing error of the English version in *The Fresno Bee*, Caltrans allowed two additional weeks for public comment. The extended deadline for comments ran to December 10, 2021.

The public notices also offered the public an opportunity to request a virtual public hearing. There were no requests for a virtual public hearing during the public circulation period.

The following are the comments received. A Caltrans response follows each comment presented.

Note: The comment letters are stated verbatim as submitted, with acronyms, abbreviations, and any original grammatical or typographical errors.

Comment from Jeannie French

Tuesday, November 23, 2021 9:20 AM

To: Norris III, Trais G@DOT <trais.norris@dot.ca.gov>; D6 Public Info@DOT <D6.Public.Info@dot.ca.gov>

Subject: Planned roundabout at Hwy 180 and Dickenson Ave is a bad idea

Hello,

I have lived in the Rolinda area for 65 years. I was born and raised in this area as were you. The Fresno Bee ran a Public Notice regarding CalTrans plans for a roundabout to be place at the intersection of Hwy 180 and Dickenson Ave.

Yes, commuter traffic at this intersection backs up 1/4+ mile each work day in the mornings and evenings. A roundabout works well for car traffic.

A roundabout is a disaster waiting to happen for the trucks and school buses.

We need a traffic-controlled signal light NOT a roundabout. The number of trucks using this intersection during the harvest months, July - October is much greater than the rest of the year. Multiple school buses also travel this intersection.

I am upset with the planned roundabout; but the short amount of time we were given to voice our opinion and ask for a hearing is a sign that no one really wants the opinion of the public. The Public Notice was posted on Friday November 19, 2021 with an end date for responding of Tuesday November 23, 2021. Really 5 days for something this important?

I was told that it is a done deal and only an act of congress can change it. I was also told that a traffic-controlled light is cheaper to install but costs more in the long run because of the electricity to run it. We pay plenty in taxes to cover that electric bill.

The CalTrans does not understand that this round about will increase the commuter delays and therefore be a bigger traffic hazard than the 4-way stop. It will also push traffic to Belmont Ave and Kearney Blvd for commuters trying to avoid the roundabout.

If there is any way to change this project to a traffic light, please advise me the steps it will take to do so.

Sincerely,

Jeannie French
(559) 708-9079

Response to Comment from Jeannie French

Thank you for your comments on the project.

Regarding your comment about the public notice: The public notice was posted on October 20, 2021 with a comment deadline of Tuesday, November 23, 2021. There was an error on *The Fresno Bee* side of publishing the English version. The Spanish version was published on October 20, 2021 with a comment deadline of November 23, 2021. Due to the error with *The Fresno Bee*, Caltrans allowed two additional weeks for public comment. The new comment deadline was December 10, 2021. No one requested any additional time to submit comments, nor was any additional comments were received after December 10, 2021.

The project was initiated in 2019 after a public comment about the length of queuing (backed up traffic) at the intersection triggered an investigation that discovered a high number of collisions resulting from the long queues. Funding for improvements at the intersection was identified through the Safety Improvement Program given the high number of collisions.

An Intersection Control Evaluation summary, per Caltrans Policy Directive 13-02 (Traffic Operations Policy Directive), was performed to identify an intersection concept solution. A signal alternative was evaluated, and it was determined that a signal would not provide the safety benefit required to qualify for funding through the Safety Improvement Program.

Additionally, an Operational Analysis was performed to compare which control measures (traffic signals, stop signs, roundabouts) would work best for the intersection. The traffic flow through the proposed intersection was analyzed using current and future traffic volumes, including truck volumes. That analysis found that a roundabout intersection would operate with less overall delay when compared to a stop-controlled or signalized intersection.

A roundabout will provide satisfactory capacity for the future forecasted volumes and superior safety performance when compared to a traffic signal alternative. A roundabout will create fewer vehicular conflict points in comparison to conventional intersections and the potential for high-severity conflicts, such as right angle and left-turn head-on collisions, is greatly reduced with roundabouts. The curvature, low speed, and one-way travel around the roundabout allow for safer merges and eliminate the possibility for severe broadside and head-on collisions.

A summary of the results of the Operational Analysis is presented in the table below. During the design year of this project (2045), the overall traffic delay and queuing at the intersection with a roundabout are expected to be significantly lower than with a signalized intersection. Please see the performance table below

for a comparison between an all-way stop, signal and roundabout intersection. The table includes the level of service (LOS), overall intersection delay, and queuing length for the worst approach. Outcomes are based on AM and PM peak hours for the opening year (2025) and design year.

State Route 180 & Dickenson Avenue – Performance Analysis					
Intersection Alternative	Year	Peak Hour Period	LOS	Delay (sec)	Queuing (ft)
All-Way Stop (No-Build)	2025	AM	F	129	615
		PM	F	112.8	735
	2045	AM	F	581.2	1698
		PM	F	546.6	1875
Signal	2025	AM	B	15.4	228
		PM	B	16.1	272
	2045	AM	F	162.5	660
		PM	F	80.5	1059
Roundabout	2025	AM	A	7.3	135
		PM	A	8.1	123
	2045	AM	B	14	258
		PM	B	10.1	195

Notes: Congestion is often measured in terms of level of service, which is an indicator of driving conditions on a roadway segment or at an intersection. As shown in Figure 1-3, levels are defined in categories ranging from “A” to “F” for two-lane highways, intersections with traffic signals, and two-way stop intersections. Level “A” indicates free-flowing traffic with no hindrance to driving speed caused by traffic conditions; level “F” indicates substantial congestion with slow, stop-and-go traffic.

In 2025 (anticipated project opening year), it is expected that the intersection would operate with a Level of Service F during both the morning peak hour (with over 2 minutes of delay and 615 feet of queuing [backed up traffic]) and the evening peak hour (with less than 2 minutes of delay and 735 feet of queuing) if no improvements were made to the intersection. The Level of Service would improve to a B with a traffic signal and to an A with a roundabout.

The intersection was also analyzed for the year 2045 (the selected design year for the project, 20 years from opening year). In 2045, the intersection would operate with a Level of Service F during both the morning peak hour (with 2.7 minutes of delay and 660 feet of queuing) and the evening peak hour (with 1.3 minutes of delay and 1,059 feet of queuing), if a signal were constructed. The intersection would operate with a Level of Service B during both the morning peak hour (with 2.7 minutes of delay and 660 feet of queuing) and the evening peak hour (with 0.17 minutes of delay and 195 feet of queuing), if a roundabout were constructed. So, a roundabout would result in the least amount of delay and traffic congestion at the intersection.

Comment from Ron Appling

To: Norris III, Trais G@DOT

Subject: 180 / Dickinson round about.

To hom this may concern, I here that a round about will be put in at 180 and Dickinson. Before you do please know there is a major need for a 180 east bound Left turn lane at Blythe ave. East bound traffic does not wait for you to turn. Rather they pass you on the right hand shoulder at a high rate of speed. Very dangerous. No one slows down and I feel like a sitting duck waiting to get rear ended. Yes I could go to Brawley and turn but why? If you are spending money for a silly round about first take care of needed safety hazards

Ron Appling
concern citizen

Response to Comment from Ron Appling

Thank you for telling Caltrans of your concerns about the intersection of State Route 180 at Blythe Avenue. This location is outside of the limits of this project. However, your concern has been forwarded to the Caltrans Investigation unit to check the conditions at that intersection. If you would like to check the status of that investigation or need any additional information, please contact the Caltrans Public Information Office via its website at <https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-6> or call (559) 488-4067.

Comment from Molly Analla

Monday, November 22, 2021 2:26 PM

To: Norris III, Trais G@DOT

Subject: Proposed Roundabout at Hwy 180 & Dickenson

Whom It May Concern: My family is opposed to the proposed roundabout. The roundabout by Fresno State University is a disaster, along with the one by Alluvial/Temperence, and the one on the 168. First off, truck drivers with a load will have a hard time using it. Secondly, drivers do not know the proper etiquette of a roundabout. Also, you don't want the liability of the increase in accidents due to people's ignorance of a roundabout. A traffic light would be a much better fit for that area. A friend of mine had one of her trucker friends comment on the roundabout proposal. See his comment below. Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Molly Analla

Response to Comment from Molly Analla

Thank you for your comments.

The project was initiated in 2019 after a public comment about the length of queuing at the intersection triggered an investigation that discovered a high number of collisions resulting from the long queues. Funding for improvements at the intersection was identified through the Safety Improvement Program given the high number of collisions.

An Intersection Control Evaluation summary, per Caltrans Policy Directive 13-02 (Traffic Operations Policy Directive), was performed to identify an intersection concept solution. A signal alternative was evaluated and it was determined that a signal would not provide the safety benefit required to qualify for funding through the Safety Improvement Program

Additionally, an Operational Analysis was performed to compare intersection control types. The traffic flow through the proposed intersection was analyzed using current and future traffic volumes, including truck volumes. That analysis found that a roundabout intersection would operate with less overall delay when compared to a stop-controlled or signalized intersection.

A roundabout will provide satisfactory capacity for the future forecasted volumes and superior safety performance when compared to a traffic signal alternative. A roundabout will create fewer vehicular conflict points in comparison to conventional intersections and the potential for high-severity conflicts, such as right angle and left-turn head-on collisions. The curvature, low speed, and one-way travel around the roundabout allow for safer merges and eliminate the possibility for severe broadside and head-on collisions.

The roundabout is being designed and sized to accommodate commercial vehicles, trucks, and school buses. The footprint of the roundabout will include a truck apron, extra space adjacent to the lanes, intended especially for large trucks or wide vehicles moving through the roundabout.

The following video demonstrates how all types of vehicles, including commercial trucks merge, circulate, and diverge throughout a roundabout.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zPsUisOz_c

Research indicates that roundabouts provide an improvement in overall safety performance when compared to other traditional types of intersections (stop-controlled and signal). Roundabout intersections offer fewer vehicular conflict points, which lead to a lower frequency of anticipated crashes. A conflict point is a location on the intersection where the paths of two vehicles

diverge, merge, or cross each other. The potential for high severity collisions such as Broadside and Head-On is greatly reduced with a roundabout due to low speeds of traffic navigating the roundabout. Road users in a roundabout also travel at similar speeds, which reduces the crash severity as well, when compared to traditionally controlled intersections.

Note that there is no universal roundabout design for all intersection, but rather an appropriate design based on a specific geographic location, limitations of environmental impact, right-of-way requirements, operational desire, and safety needs. Therefore, the characteristics of each roundabout design may be different but its fundamental design principles are commonly applied to all roundabouts. Drivers are encouraged to learn more about roundabouts. Below are some resources that contain additional information about roundabouts and their benefits.

The Federal Highway Administration website provides outreach, education resources, and case studies regarding the effectiveness of roundabouts in California and other states such as Colorado, Florida, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, South Carolina, Indiana, and Vermont. More information can be found at the following website:

<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/research/deployment/roundabouts.cfm>.

Please see the following FHWA video demonstrating the rules of a roundabout. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=peUf2NRdWxs>

Comment from Robert Burnett

I've had my truck at roundabouts of one that would be that size. It would be nearly impossible for a truck to get a break to be able to merge in from the Dickenson do to the amount of car traffic from 180.

Response to Comment from Robert Burnett

Thank you for your comments on this project.

Truck traffic volumes, sight distance, entry speeds and truck turning are being considered in the design of the roundabout.

The traffic flow through the proposed roundabout was analyzed using current and future traffic volumes, including truck volumes, and the overall intersection is expected to operate at a satisfactory Level of Service, as are each of the approaching directions. The analysis indicates that while delays will generally be greater for the Dickenson Avenue approaches, the delays fall within the acceptable range even during morning and evening rush hour demand.

The roundabout is being designed for low speeds in the range of 15 to 25 miles per hour and sized to accommodate commercial vehicles, trucks, and school buses. The low speeds of a roundabout create a larger distance between vehicles circulating in a roundabout, therefore providing more time for entering drivers to judge, adjust speed, and enter the vehicle gap found in the circulating traffic. This allows for safe merges and an increase of vehicles passing through the intersection. The footprint of the roundabout, with inclusion of features such as truck aprons (extra space next to the lane for wider vehicles circling through the roundabout), will accommodate the wide wheel base of larger trucks and buses.

In addition to the operational benefits, roundabouts also provide an improvement in overall safety performance when compared to other traditional types of intersections (stop-controlled and signal). Roundabout intersections offer fewer vehicular conflict points, which lead to a lower frequency of anticipated crashes. A conflict point is a location on the intersection where the paths of two vehicles diverge, merge, or cross each other. The potential for high severity collisions such as Broadside and Head-On is greatly reduced with a roundabout since low speeds are generally associated. Road users in a roundabout also travel at similar speeds, this too reduces the crash severity when compared to traditionally controlled intersections. Some examples of recently converted rural stop-controlled intersections to roundabouts are the State Route 168 at Auberry Road (Fresno County), State Route 43 at Lacey Boulevard (Kings County), State Route 190 at Road 284 (Tulare County), State Route 43/137 (Kings County), and State Route 43/Stockdale Highway (Kern County) roundabouts. An

example of a recently converted traffic signal to a roundabout would be State Route 43 and State Route 119 (Kern County).

Comment from Jeremy Landrith, Fresno Irrigation District

Tuesday, November 23, 2021 7:49 AM

To: Norris III, Trais G@DOT

Subject: SR180-Dickenson Intersection

Trais,

Please see FID's attached comments, per your request.

Jeremy

Jeremy Landrith
Engineering Technician III
Fresno Irrigation District
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Fresno, CA 93725
Phone: (559) 233-7161 x7407
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e-mail: jlandrith@fresnoirrigation.com

Conveyance. Commitment. Customer Service

[The attached comments from the Fresno Irrigation District included the following issues and concerns.]

Summary of Requirements:

- FID Board Approval.
- Review and Approval of all Plans.
- Substitute Open Channel for 36" ASTM C-361 RGRCP (with MacWrap).
- Execute Pipeline Agreement.
- Execute additional Agreement(s), as necessary.
- Project Fees.
- No Encroachments [(i.e. trees, monuments, fences, PUE, etc.).

Area of Concern

1. FID's Gordon No. 89 runs southerly along the east side of Dickenson Avenue, traverses the project location, and crosses Whitesbridge Avenue, as shown on the attached FID exhibit map and will be impacted by the proposed project. Records indicate FID has a 30 feet wide exclusive easement recorded on February 27, 1958 as Document

No. 14285, in Book 4035, Page 352, Official Records of Fresno County. Should any street and/or utility improvements be required along Dickenson Avenue, Whitesbridge Avenue, or in the vicinity of this facility, FID requires it review and approve all plans.

2. A portion of this canal is currently a pipeline and will need to be improved as part of the proposed project. FID's conditions are as follows:
 - a) The attached plans for the Gordon indicates the pipeline was installed in 1957 (63 years old) as 36-inch inside diameter Cast-in-Place Monolithic Concrete Pipe (CIP-MCP). CIP-MCP is non reinforced monolithic pipe that is easily damaged, extremely prone to leakage and does not meet FID's minimum standards for developed (residential, industrial, commercial) roads, parcels or urban areas.
 - b) Pipe Requirement - FID requires the Department of Transportation replace impacted sections of pipeline with new 36-inch inside diameter ASTM C-361 Rubber Gasket Reinforced Concrete Pipe (RGRCP), in accordance with FID standards and that the applicant enter into an agreement with FID for that purpose.
 - c) Easement Requirements - The Department of Transportation shall grant to FID an additional 10 feet exclusive pipeline easement, where FID only has an existing 30 feet wide exclusive easement, such that FID has a total of 40 feet wide exclusive easement to meet current FID standards.
3. A portion of this canal is currently an open channel and will need to be improved as part of the proposed project. FID's conditions are as follows:
 - a) Pipe Requirement - FID requires the applicant pipe impacted sections of open canal across the proposed project with 36-inch inside diameter ASTM C-361 Rubber Gasket Reinforced Concrete Pipe (RGRCP) in accordance with FID standards and that the Developer enter into an agreement with FID for that purpose.
 - b) Easement Requirements - The applicant shall grant to FID an exclusive pipeline easement. The width of the easement depends on several factors including pipe size, alignment, depth, etc. The applicant can expect the easement to be a minimum of 40 feet wide.
4. All existing trees, bushes, debris, old canal structures, pumps, canal gates, and other non- or in-active FID and private structures must be

removed within FID's property/easement and the development project limits.

5. FID does not allow FID owned property or easements to be in common use with public utility and/or utility easements and right-of-ways, but will in certain instances allow for its property to be in common use with landscape easements if the Department of Transportation enters into the appropriate agreement.

General Comments

1. FID requires the Applicant/Developer to submit for FID's approval a grading and drainage plan which shows that the proposed development will not endanger the structural integrity of the Canal, or result in drainage patterns that could adversely affect FID.
2. FID requires its review and approval of all improvement plans which affect its property/easements and canal/pipeline facilities including but not limited to Sewer, Water, Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District (FMFCD), Street, Landscaping, Dry Utilities, and all other utilities.
3. FID requires the developer and/or the developer's engineer meet with FID at their earliest convenience to discuss specific requirements, e.g. easement width and alignment, right-of-way width and alignment, pipeline alignment, depth and size, fees, etc.
4. FID requires its easements be shown on all maps/plans with proper recording information, and that FID be made a party to signing all final maps/plans.
5. Footings of retaining walls shall not encroach onto FID property/easement areas.
6. Trees will not be permitted within FID's property/easement areas.
7. No large earthmoving equipment (paddle wheel scrapers, graders, excavators, etc.) will be allowed within FID's easement and the grading contractor will be responsible for the repair of all damage to the pipeline caused by contractors grading activities.
8. FID is concerned about the potential vibrations caused by construction efforts near existing District facilities as it may cause damage to FID's canals, pipelines and culverts. The developer and contractor(s) must keep all large equipment, construction material, and soil stockpile outside of FID's easement and a minimum of 30 feet away from existing cast-in-place concrete pipe. The developer and/or its contractor(s) will be responsible for all damages caused by construction activities.

9. For informational purposes, FID's Center Rolinda No. 88 runs southerly along the east side of Rolinda Avenue, and crosses Whitesbridge Avenue approximately 2,600 feet east of the project location, as shown on the attached FID exhibit map. Should this project include any street and/or utility improvements along Rolinda Avenue, Whitesbridge Avenue, or in the vicinity of this canal, FID requires it review and approve all plans.
10. For informational purposes, FID's Rolinda High No. 90 runs southwesterly, and crosses Whitesbridge Avenue approximately 2,700 feet west of the project location, as shown on the attached FID exhibit map. Should this project include any street and/or utility improvements along Whitesbridge Avenue, or in the vicinity of this canal, FID requires it review and approve all plans.
11. As with most developer and agency projects, there will be considerable time and effort required of FID's staff to plan, coordinate, engineer, review plans, prepare agreements, and inspect the project. FID's cost for associated plan review will vary and will be determined at the time of the plan review.
12. The above comments are not to be construed as the only requests FID will have regarding this project. FID will make additional comments and requests as necessary as the project progresses and more detail becomes available.

Response to Comment from Jeremy Landrith, Fresno Irrigation District

Thank you for your comments on this project. The Caltrans project team has been in contact with the Fresno Irrigation District (Jeremy Landrith, Engineering Technician III) and will continue to work with the Fresno Irrigation District staff to address the areas of concern and General Comments.

Specifically, regarding the area of concern #2.c. Easement Requirements, Caltrans will need a formal copy of the Fresno Irrigation District bylaws (board-approved letter) noting the 40-foot easement requirement. Without the letter, the additional 10-foot easement would be a "betterment" and not allowed under Caltrans policy.

List of Technical Studies Bound Separately (Volume 2)

Air Quality Memorandum
Noise Compliance Study
Water Quality Report
Natural Environment Study-Minimal Impacts
Floodplain Evaluation
Archaeological Survey Report
Hazardous Waste Reports

- Initial Site Assessment

Visual Impact Assessment
Paleontological Identification Report
Climate Change Report

To obtain a copy of one or more of these technical studies/reports or the Initial Study, please send your request to:

Trais Norris, Senior Environmental Planner
District 6 Environmental
California Department of Transportation
2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93726

Or send your request via email to: trais.norris@dot.ca.gov
Or call Trais Norris at: (209) 601-3521

Please provide the following information in your request:

Dickenson Avenue Roundabout
On State Route 180 at Dickenson Avenue
06-FRE-180-PM 47.4/47.8
EA: 06-0Y410/Project ID: 0619000172