

Mulberry Street and State Route 216 (Naranjo Boulevard) Roundabout

06-TUL-216-13.5

EA 06-1F640

Project ID 0623000070

Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration



Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation
and the City of Woodlake

June 2026



General Information About This Document

What's in this document:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has prepared this Initial Study, which examines the potential environmental impacts of alternatives being considered for the proposed project in Tulare County in California. The document explains why the project is being proposed, the alternatives being considered for the project, the existing environment that could be affected by the project, potential impacts of each of the alternatives, and proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

What you should do:

- Please read the document. Additional copies of the document and the related technical studies are available for review at the Caltrans District 6 Office at 1352 West Olive Avenue, Fresno, California 93728, weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and at the Woodlake City Hall at 350 North Valencia Boulevard, Woodlake, California 93286, Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. This document may be downloaded at the following website:
- <https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-6/district-6-projects/06-1f640>
- Tell us what you think. If you have any comments regarding the proposed project, please send your written comments to Caltrans by the deadline. Submit comments via U.S. mail to: Judith Lopez, District 6 Environmental Division, California Department of Transportation, 2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 200, Fresno, California 93726. Submit comments via email to: judith.lopez@dot.ca.gov
- Submit comments by the deadline: July 24, 2026.

What happens next:

After comments are received from the public and the reviewing agencies, Caltrans 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 construct all or part of the project.

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06-TUL-216-PM 13.5
EA: 06-1F640
Project ID Number: 0623000070

Construct a roundabout intersection at State Route 216 (Naranjo Boulevard)
and the proposed Mulberry Street at post mile 13.5 in Tulare County

**INITIAL STUDY
with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration**

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

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation
and
City of Woodlake

Responsible Agency: California Transportation Commission

David Johnson

David Johnson
Acting Environmental Office Chief, District 6
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

3/27/2026

Date

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DRAFT
Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

State Clearinghouse Number: pending

District-County-Route-Post Mile: 06-TUL-216-PM 13.5

EA/Project Number: 06-1F640/0623000070

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and City of Woodlake propose to construct a roundabout intersection at State Route 216 (Naranjo Boulevard) and the extension of Mulberry Street in Tulare County.

Determination

An Initial Study has been prepared by 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 would have no effect on Energy, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Land Use Planning, Mineral Resources, Noise, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Wildfire.

The project would have less than significant effects on Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hydrology and Water Quality and Utilities and Service Systems.

With the following mitigation measures incorporated, the project would have less than significant effects to Aesthetics and Paleontological Resources.

- Seven oak trees would be removed and will be compensated with eight valley oak trees and thirteen bay laurel trees as part of the project landscaping.
- A Paleontological Mitigation Plan will be prepared prior to construction.

David M. Johnson
Acting Environmental Office Chief, District 6
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

Date

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Chapter 1 Proposed Project

1.1 Introduction

Caltrans and the City of Woodlake propose to construct a roundabout intersection at State Route 216 (Naranjo Boulevard) and the proposed Mulberry Street to accommodate new residential, commercial, and industrial developments being designed and constructed in the vicinity of the project area. The proposed project would also provide pedestrian and bicycle access to the city's downtown area from the west. The new intersection would be located approximately 630 feet west of the State Route 216 (Naranjo Boulevard) and North Cypress Street intersection, within the City of Woodlake, along public right-of-way. See Figure 1-1 for the Project Vicinity Map and Figure 1-2 for the Project Location Map.

1.2 Purpose and Need

1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this project is to enhance future vehicular and pedestrian/bicycle travel, reduce congestion, and improve traffic operations by constructing a roundabout at State Route 216 and Mulberry Street in the City of Woodlake.

1.2.2 Need

A connection is needed at State Route 216 (Naranjo Boulevard) from the Mulberry Street intersection. This connection is needed to provide connectivity within the project limits, given that the existing intersection lacks curb ramps, sidewalks, and marked pedestrian crossings. This project is needed to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety by constructing a single-lane roundabout at the existing intersection.

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map

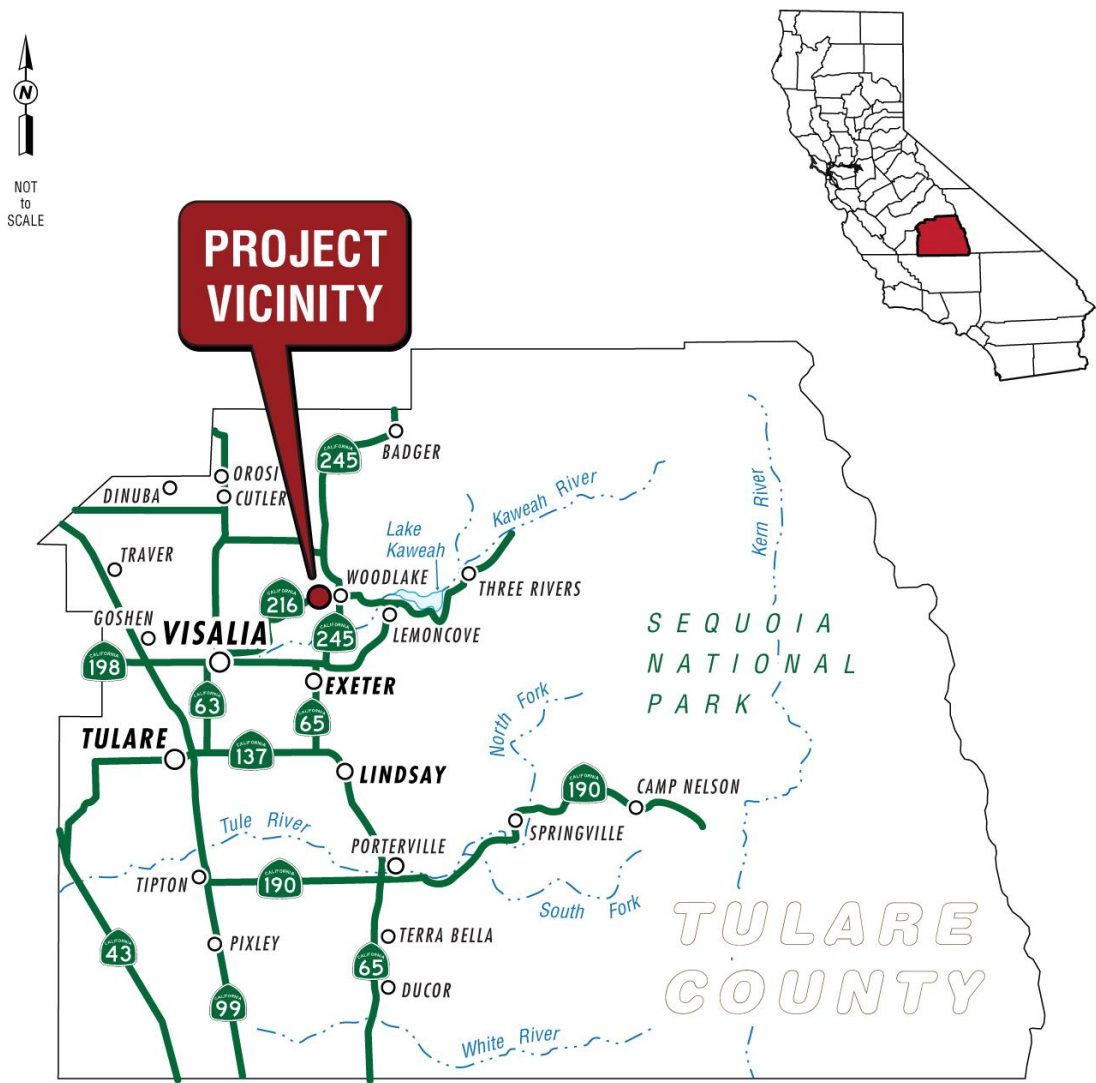
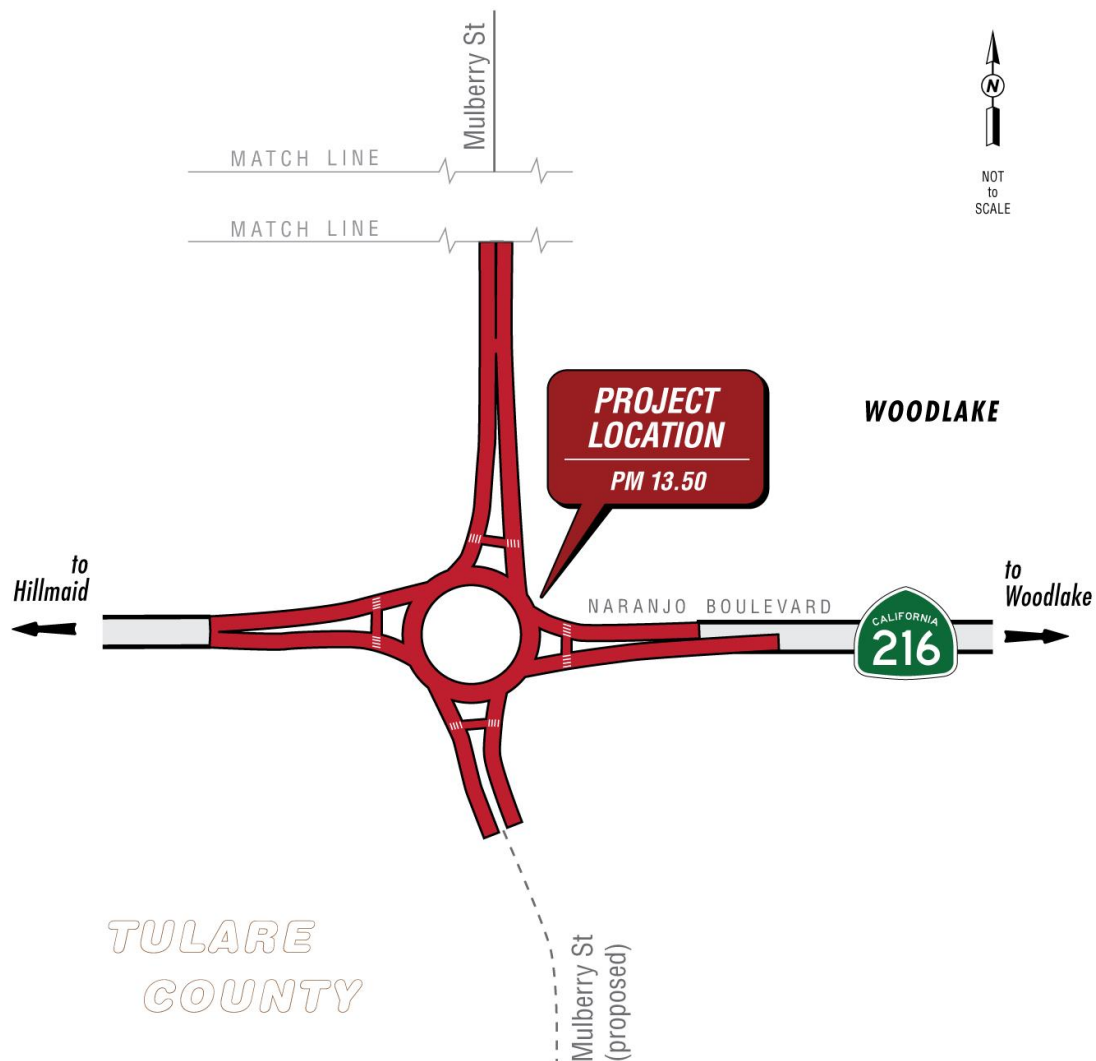


Figure 1-2 Project Location Map



1.3 Project Description

The proposed project would construct a single-lane, urban roundabout at State Route 216 (Naranjo Boulevard) and Mulberry Street. The work would include grading, paving, striping, signing, landscaping and irrigation, and installation of curb, gutter, medians, sidewalk, and Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant ramps, streetlights, bicycle lanes, public utility relocation, and storm drain improvements along Naranjo Boulevard and Mulberry Street. Road improvements along Naranjo Boulevard would extend approximately 486 feet west and 655 feet east of the Mulberry alignment; improvements along Mulberry Street would extend approximately 250 feet north and 250 feet south of the Naranjo Boulevard alignment.

The amount of ground disturbance for this project is approximately 3.57 acres. Approximately 17,831 square feet of additional right-of-way along Naranjo Boulevard and 15,876 square feet of additional right-of-way for the Mulberry Street will be acquired by the City of Woodlake. Roadway signage would be installed along the right-of-way to provide advanced warning of the roundabout. A temporary construction easement would be required at the Antelope Cemetery property.

The proposed work includes clearing and grubbing of the site, and removal of any shrubs, trees, pavement, concrete, and any other material on the site prior to construction. The project would remove seven oak trees. Some existing public utilities could be relocated. The site would then be graded, and an estimated 10,000 cubic yards of external fill soil would be brought in; the soil would come from a recent City of Woodlake storm drain project, about half a mile south of the project site. Excess soil from construction would be stored onsite at the northwest corner of the site; that area would also be used as a staging area. The area north of Naranjo Boulevard would be filled and leveled to the existing grade of the existing road. The ground would be compacted in areas where the pavement, curb, gutter, and sidewalk would be installed.

Storm drain culverts are proposed at a minimum size of 24 inches to a maximum of 42 inches and would pass stormwater runoff under the new road (Mulberry Street) to continue existing drainage patterns that eventually drain into Antelope Creek west of the project. The stormwater drainage system would include headwalls on each end and two drainage inlets/laterals throughout the proposed street. An approximate total of 480 to 500 linear feet of storm drain is proposed. The intent of the storm drain culvert is to continue existing drainage patterns, matching existing grades at either end of the system. The culvert outlet is proposed to end approximately 15 feet east of Antelope Creek at the same location as the existing dirt swale, matching existing drainage patterns, and is designed to mitigate erosion by adding rock lining at the outlet. The maximum trenching expected for the proposed 42-inch storm drain would be 3 feet in depth from the existing grade. It generally follows the existing dirt swale alignment.

Utilities will be installed along Naranjo Boulevard and will include 10-inch water pipe at an approximate depth of 5 feet and an 8-inch sanitary sewer pipe at an approximate depth of 7 feet. Along Mulberry Street, an 8-inch water pipe would be installed at an approximate depth of 4 feet, along with an 8-inch sanitary sewer pipe at varying depths up to a maximum of approximately 11 feet below grade.

The duration of construction for the roundabout is approximately 6 months, or 180 days. The types of equipment to be used to construct the intersection include, but are not limited to, the following: motor graders, paddle-wheel scrapers, steel drum vibratory rollers, sheepsfoot rollers, dump trucks, ready-mix concrete trucks, a paving machine, crew trucks (pickups), excavators and/or backhoes and water trucks.

1.4 Project Alternatives

A Build Alternative and a No-Build Alternative are being considered for this project.

1.4.1 Build Alternative

Caltrans and the City of Woodlake propose to develop an intersection at State Route 216 (Naranjo Boulevard) and Mulberry Street. With the new development in the area, the roadway could become congested over time as residential and commercial developments are constructed.

The Build Alternative would develop the intersection of Mulberry Street and Naranjo Boulevard to a modern, single-lane roundabout with curb, gutter, and sidewalk improvements. This alternative would provide road improvements extending along Naranjo Boulevard (east and west) and along Mulberry Street (north and south).

The Build Alternative would include the following:

- Right-of-way (R/W) acquisition.
- Temporary Construction Easements (TCEs) at existing driveway to maintain access.
- Staging of equipment and construction materials adjacent to State Route 216 and Mulberry Street within the project limits
- Demolition of existing roadway
- Clearing and grubbing of the site, including removal of shrubs, trees, pavement, concrete, and other materials to construct the project
- Filling and grading the site to accommodate right-of-way improvements
- Minor widening and realignment of intersection approaches
- Installing hot mix asphalt pavement structural sections and pavement striping within intersection limits and approaches
- Installing Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant curb ramps and crosswalks
- Installing sidewalks and bike lanes along State Route 216 and Mulberry Street within the project limits
- Modifying existing drainage facilities and installing new facilities where necessary to ensure proper drainage and treatment
- Installing new streetlighting and landscaping within the project limits

- Relocating overhead utility poles
- Adjusting utility boxes and manholes to grade
- Installing message signs to provide advanced warning

The roundabout alternative would result in low delays throughout the life cycle of the intersection. The roundabout is projected to operate proficiently as a single-lane roundabout through the design year. In addition, a single-lane roundabout is consistent with the existing single-lane roundabout at State Route 216/State Route 245.

1.4.2 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative would keep the streets and roadways as they are now and would not develop the intersection of Mulberry Street and Naranjo Boulevard. This alternative does not meet the project's purpose and need, which is to accommodate circulation needs for a growing city in an efficient and safe manner for both vehicles and pedestrians.

1.5 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Discussion

Two other Build alternatives were considered but later eliminated from further discussion for the reasons cited in the discussion below:

Alternative 2 – Traffic Stop-Control Intersection:

This alternative would develop the intersection of Mulberry Street and Naranjo Boulevard as a two-way or all-way stop-controlled intersection with separate left-turn lanes, shared right-through lanes, and curb, gutter, and sidewalk improvements. This alternative would provide road improvements extending along Naranjo Boulevard (east and west) and along Mulberry Street (north and south).

Alternative 3 – Traffic Signal Intersection:

This alternative would develop the intersection of Mulberry Street and Naranjo Boulevard to a signalized intersection with separate left-turn lanes, shared right-through lanes, and curb, gutter, and sidewalk improvements. This alternative would provide road improvements extending along Naranjo Boulevard (east and west) and along Mulberry Street (north and south).

Alternative 2 – The two-way stop control alternative would result in an unacceptable peak period performance for side street movements in the 2045 design year. While this does not substantially affect the overall delay for the intersection, which remains very low, it has a negative impact on safety performance over the life cycle of the intersection. The (Alternative 2) would have an unacceptable peak period performance for major street (State Route 216) movements in the 2045 design year.

This would result in excessive delay costs over the life cycle of the intersection and renders the all-way stop control alternative an undesirable alternative.

Alternative 3 – The signalized alternative has an acceptable delay but has higher safety costs over the life cycle of the intersection. In addition, the signalized intersection does not meet Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) signal warrants throughout the life cycle.

1.6 Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Build Alternatives

The project may include, but is not limited to, the following standard measures and Best Management Practices:

13-1. The contractor, as required in Caltrans Standard Specification Section 13-1, must abide by the Best Management Practices at a minimum and address all potential water quality impacts that may occur during construction. Per the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Program, the project will be required to comply with existing regulatory requirements to prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) designed to control erosion and the loss of topsoil to the extent practicable using Best Management Practices that the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) has deemed effective in controlling erosion, sedimentation, and runoff during construction activities.

14-1.02 Environmentally Sensitive Area: Pertains to environmentally sensitive areas marked on the ground. Do not enter an environmentally sensitive area unless authorized. If breached, notify the resident engineer.

14-6.03 Species Protection: Pertains to protecting regulated species and their habitat that occur within or near the job site. Upon discovery of a regulated species, notify the resident engineer.

14-6.03B Bird Protection: Pertains to protecting migratory and nongame birds, their occupied nests, and their eggs. Upon discovery of an injured or dead bird or migratory or nongame bird nests that may be adversely affected by construction activities, immediately stop all work and notify the resident engineer. Exclusion devices, nesting-prevention measures, and removing constructed and unoccupied nests may be used.

14-7.03 Discovery of Unanticipated Paleontological Resources: If paleontological resources are discovered at the job site, do not disturb the resources and immediately stop all work within a 60-foot radius of the discovery, secure the area, and notify the resident engineer. Do not move paleontological resources or take them from the job site.

14-9.02 Air Pollution Control: Comply with air pollution control rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes that apply to work performed under the construction

contract. A Dust Control Plan approved by the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District is needed if at least 2,500 cubic yards of material are moved in a day for at least three days of the project, or 5 or more acres of land will be disturbed during construction.

14-11 Hazardous Waste and Contamination: Includes specifications relating to hazardous waste and contamination.

14-11.02 Discovery of Unanticipated Asbestos and Hazardous Substances: Upon discovery of unanticipated asbestos or a hazardous substance, immediately stop work and notify the resident engineer.

14-11.04 Dust Control: Excavation, transportation, and handling of material containing hazardous waste or contamination must result in no visible dust migration. When clearing, grubbing, and performing earthwork operations in areas containing hazardous waste or contamination, provide a water truck or tank on the job site.

14-11.13C Safety and Health Protection Measures: Applies to worker protective measures for potential lead exposure.

14-11.14 Treated Wood Waste: Includes specifications for handling, storing, transporting, and disposing of treated wood waste.

14-8.02 Noise Control: Construction noise is regulated by Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 14-8.02, "Noise Control." Construction equipment is expected to generate noise levels ranging from 80 to 88 dBA at a distance of 50 feet, and noise produced by construction equipment would be reduced over distance at a rate of about 6 dB per doubling of distance. Furthermore, implementing the following measures would minimize the temporary noise impacts from construction:

- Do not exceed 86 dBA L_{max} at 50 feet from the job site activities from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.
- Equip an internal combustion engine with the manufacturer-recommended muffler. Do not operate an internal combustion engine on the job site without the appropriate muffler.

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 CEQA, this document may contain references to federal laws and/or regulations (CEQA, 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

The following permits, licenses, agreements, and certifications are required for project construction:

Agency	Permit/Approval	Status
California State Office of Historic Preservation	State Historic Preservation Officer Concurrence with Determinations of Eligibility	The Determinations of Eligibility were submitted to the State Historic Preservation Officer on April 10, 2025. The State Historic Preservation Officer formally responded on April 16, 2025, concurring with the Caltrans determinations for the Mulberry Street Roundabout.

Chapter 2 CEQA Evaluation

2.1 CEQA Environmental Checklist

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed project. Potential impact determinations include Significant and Unavoidable Impact, Less Than Significant Impact 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 proposed project as well as the appropriate technical report, and no further discussion is included in this document.

2.1.1 Aesthetics

A Visual Impact Assessment dated June 2025 was prepared for the project.

Considering the information presented, 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?	Less Than Significant 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 that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	Less Than Significant Impact

Affected Environment

b) Scenic Resources

This segment of highway is not included in the scenic highway system as eligible or designated. However, native oak trees are protected under Senate Concurrent Resolution Number 17, calling for public agencies to avoid the removal of native oak trees from oak woodlands. If removal is not avoidable, the resolution requires that public agencies provide replacement planting of the native oak trees.

d) Light and Glare

Construction of the project would result in an increase in temporary traffic impacts and equipment use that could result in light and glare. The project would also introduce street lighting to the new intersection and previously unlit sections of the state route.

Environmental Consequences

Scenic Resources

Build Alternative—Construction Phase

Implementation of the project would result in the construction of a roundabout intersection at State Route 216 (Naranjo Boulevard) and Mulberry Street. To accommodate the intersection improvements, approximately seven existing oak trees would be removed.

A Visual Impact Assessment (June 2025) was prepared in compliance with the Caltrans 2023 *Visual Impact Assessment Handbook* to determine if aesthetic impacts would occur as a result of the project. The Visual Impact Assessment found that the project would have a score of 19 to 28 and be categorized as having very limited visual resource-related regulatory requirements; the assessment also found that minor visual changes to the environment are proposed, and minor public

concern may be expected. It was further found that there are no other scenic resources, and no scenic highways identified on or near the project site.

As noted above, seven oak trees would likely be removed and would be replaced by up to 21 native species trees as part of the project landscaping. The project is also required to obtain an approved landscape plan that would enhance the visual appeal of the project and the surrounding area.

Light and Glare

Build Alternative—Construction Phase

Construction would occur during daytime hours, typically from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. If needed, lighting would be directed downward and shielded to focus illumination on the desired work areas only and prevent light spillage onto adjacent properties. Because lighting used to illuminate work areas would be shielded, focused downward, and turned off by 6:00 p.m., the potential for lighting to affect any residents adversely is minimal. Increased truck traffic and the transport of construction materials to the project site would temporarily increase glare conditions during construction. However, this increase in glare would be minimal. Construction activity would focus on specific areas on the sites, and any sources of glare would not be stationary for a prolonged period of time. Therefore, construction of the project would not create a new source of substantial glare that would affect daytime views in the area.

Nighttime lighting is required to provide safe levels of visibility for drivers and pedestrians. The project would install streetlights and new post lights for security as required by Caltrans Roadway Lighting Manual requirements and Woodlake Municipal Code Section 16.28.140. The light fixtures would be hooded and designed to face downward to reduce spillover light and glare.

The Visual Impact Assessment Memorandum concluded that the roundabout project would enhance the community and provide increased accessibility in the area. The overall visual impact of the proposed project is low and would result in a better visual impact than the existing view because of the new plantings and landscaping, the roundabout, and the sidewalks.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

As noted above, the project provides landscaping of the area surrounding the roundabout intersection. The landscaping plan would use drought-tolerant native plants as well as oak trees that are native to the region. Up to 21 native species of trees would be planted to replace the seven oak trees that would be removed within the project site.

The project would implement the following minimization measures to address light and glare impacts from construction and operation of the project:

- The project will conform to Caltrans Roadway Lighting Manual requirements.

- The project will conform with City of Woodlake Municipal Code Section 16.28.140 where lights will be installed to reduce spillover light and glare by designing fixtures to face downward.
- Senate Concurrent Resolution Number 17, calling for public agencies to avoid the removal of native oak trees from oak woodlands. If removal is not avoidable, the resolution requires that public agencies provide replacement planting of the native oak trees.

2.1.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

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

A Farmland Conversion Impact Rating (USDA Form AD-1006) dated January 22, 2025, was prepared for the project.

Based on the results of this study, 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
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	No Impact

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources
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

a) Farmland Conversion

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form AD-1006 was used to determine farmland impacts (see Appendix B). The form assigns a total score of up to 260 points, 100 points for the relative value of affected farmland plus up to 160 points for the alternative assessment. A value greater than 160 would require farmland mitigation.

Total acreage of the project site is 3.57 acres, with approximately 0.3057 acre of right-of-way acquisition anticipated for development.

Environmental Consequences

The project site totals 3.57 acres, with approximately 0.3057 acre of right-of-way acquisition anticipated for development. Pursuant to the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, approximately 1.8 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance would be impacted by the project development. However, it should be noted that this land is not currently in active agricultural cultivation, and the entire area surrounding the project is currently being developed for residential or commercial uses.

On January 22, 2025, Caltrans submitted the amount of acreage projected to be converted for the project on Form AD-1006 to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service for evaluation. Based on that evaluation, the project scored 27 points out of 100 for the relative value of farmland, and 37

points out of 160 for the total site assessment. Therefore, a total point score of 64 out of 260 possible points was concluded.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No avoidance, minimization or mitigation measures are necessary.

2.1.3 Air Quality

A Focused Air Quality Study, Climate Change Memorandum, both dated December 2024 were completed for this project. Additionally, an Air Quality Memo was prepared for the project, dated April 2025. Based on the results of these studies, 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?	Less Than Significant Impact
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?	Less Than Significant Impact
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	Less Than Significant Impact
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	No Impact

Affected Environment

a) and b) Air Quality

The City of Woodlake and the project site sits in the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin and under the jurisdiction of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. The project is in the San Joaquin Valley, which is in non-attainment for particulate matter 2.5 microns (PM 2.5) and attainment/maintenance for particulate matter 10 microns (PM 10).

The air quality technical studies were submitted to Interagency Consultation Partners; concurrence that the project is not a Project of Air Quality Concern was received from both the Environmental Protection Agency and Caltrans on March 5, 2025.

c) Sensitive Receptors

Sensitive receptors are defined as locations where young children, chronically ill individuals, the elderly, or people who are more sensitive than the general

population reside, such as schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and daycare centers. The nearest residential sensitive receptor to the project is approximately 0.05 mile east of the easterly end of the project site.

Environmental Consequences

Air Quality

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has established emission thresholds in its *Guidance for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts (GAMAQI)* to determine whether a project would create any potential air quality impacts that would require further analysis in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District air quality thresholds from the *Guidance for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts* are shown in Table 2.1.3-1.

Table 2.1.3-1 San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District CEQA Thresholds of Significance

Criteria Pollutant	Construction Emissions	Operational Permitted Emissions	Operational Non-Permitted Emission
CO (carbon monoxide)	100 tons per year	100 tons per year	100 tons per year
NOx (nitrogen oxides)	10 tons per year	10 tons per year	10 tons per year
ROG (reactive organic gases)	10 tons per year	10 tons per year	10 tons per year
SOx (sulfur oxides)	27 tons per year	27 tons per year	27 tons per year
PM ₁₀ (particulate matter 10)	15 tons per year	15 tons per year	15 tons per year
PM _{2.5} (particulate matter 2.5)	15 tons per year	15 tons per year	15 tons per year

Source: Focused Air Quality Study, November 2024

During construction, the project would generate air pollutants. Exhaust from construction equipment contains hydrocarbons, oxides of nitrogen, carbon monoxide, suspended particulate matter, and odors. However, the largest percentage of pollutants would be windblown dust generated during excavation, grading, hauling, and various other activities. The impacts of these activities would vary each day as construction progresses. Dust and odors during construction could cause occasional annoyance and complaints from residents along the project route. As shown in Table 2.1.3-2, the anticipated construction emissions are estimated to be below significance thresholds established by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. In the table, the following abbreviations are used for the pollutants: CO (carbon monoxide), NOx (nitrogen oxides), ROG (reactive organic gases), SOx (sulfur oxides), PM₁₀ (particulate matter 10), and PM_{2.5} (particulate matter 2.5).

Table 2.1.3-2 Short-Term Project Emissions

Emissions Source	ROG tons per year	NO_x tons per year	CO tons per year	SO₂ tons per year	PM₁₀ tons per year	PM_{2.5} tons per year
Mitigated — 2025	0.23	2.00	2.19	0.004	0.20	0.09
Significance Threshold	10	10	100	27	15	15
Is Threshold Exceeded for a Single Year After Mitigation?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Source: Focused Air Quality Study, November 2024

Long-term emissions are caused by operational mobile sources and area source emissions from the project. The operational emissions are not anticipated to increase as a result of the project; therefore, the project is not expected to cause or contribute to air violations within the project area.

Because both construction and operational emissions are not anticipated to exceed significance levels as established by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, the proposed project does not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan. The project will not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard.

Sensitive Receptors

Based on the predicted operational emissions and activity types, the project is not expected to affect any onsite or offsite sensitive receptors and is not expected to have any adverse impacts on any known sensitive receptor.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Caltrans Standard Specifications pertaining to dust control and dust palliative requirements are a required part of all construction contracts and should effectively reduce and control emission impacts during construction. The provisions of Caltrans Standard Specifications, Section 14-9.02 “Air Pollution Control” and Section 10-5 “Dust Control,” require the contractor to comply with the air pollution control rules, ordinances, and regulations and statutes that apply to work performed under the contract, including those provided in Government Code Section 11017.

Compliance with applicable San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Rules and Regulations and best management practices pertaining to dust control during construction activities would be applicable, including Regulation VIII – Fugitive PM₁₀ Prohibitions and its associated rules.

2.1.4 Biological Resources

The following technical studies were prepared for the project: Natural Environment Study—Minimal Impacts, dated March 2025, and Aquatic Resources Delineation Report, dated March 2025.

Considering the information in the above studies, 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
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?	Less Than Significant Impact
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) and c) Special-Status Species and Natural Communities

Qualified biologists conducted surveys that included the project footprint and a 250-foot survey buffer, known collectively as the Biological Study Area.

Existing conditions at the project site include sections of paved Naranjo Boulevard, a two-way, two-lane State Route 216, and its graveled northern and southern road shoulders. South of the project site, a residential housing tract and access roadways are under construction. The active construction is not part of the proposed Mulberry roundabout project and will be completed prior to the start of project activities.

The northwestern boundary of the project site contains an unnamed irrigation ditch running parallel to Naranjo Boulevard, about 35 feet north of the edge of the pavement. The section of the project site extending north from Naranjo Boulevard encompasses a portion of a recently cleared olive orchard, an unpaved agricultural access road, and an agricultural ditch. The section of the project site extending south from Naranjo Boulevard is currently a vacant lot that has been grubbed and potentially graded. The northeast corner of the Biological Study Area contains an existing cemetery and church with an associated parking lot. The northwest corner contains active olive orchards. The southeast and southwest corners contain an active construction site and an undeveloped lot (previously an orchard), respectively. Land use extending out from the Biological Study Area includes similar agricultural and urban development uses.

Table 3-3 of the Natural Environment Study—Minimal Impacts (NESMI) provides a list of all current federal and state-listed species, sensitive species without official state-listing status, natural communities of special concern, and critical habitats that have the potential to occur within the Biological Study Area. The table includes habitat descriptions, a determination of the presence or absence of suitable habitat within the Biological Study Area, and the rationale for the determinations.

As identified in the Natural Environment Study—Minimal Impacts, 20 special-status plant species, 22 special-status wildlife species, and 6 sensitive natural communities have the potential to occur within the Biological Study Area.

Special-Status Plant Species

Of the 20 special-status plant species, two species, the spiny sepaled button celery and Sanford's arrowhead—have limited potentially suitable habitat within the Biological Study Area. The remaining 18 special-status plant species were determined not to have potential habitat or the potential to occur within the Biological Study Area due to lack of suitable habitat to support the species, or the Biological Study Area is outside the normal range for that species.

Spiny-Sepaled Button-Celery

The spiny-sepaled button-celery (*Eryngium spinosepalum*) has a California Rare Plant Rank of 1B.2. It occurs in valley and foothill grasslands within vernal pools and

depressions at elevations from 260 to 900 feet above mean sea level. This species grows to 30 inches tall, and its leaves are lance-shaped with sharp edges. The spiny-sepaed button-celery has a distinctive inflorescence due to its array of spherical flower heads that are edged with points and bracts. The heads bloom in white petals. The blooming period of this species is from April to May.

There are multiple California Natural Diversity Database records of spiny-sepaed button-celery within 10 miles of the Biological Study Area. One of these records (EONDX 35393) overlaps the Biological Study Area, but it is mapped generally and centered approximately 0.35-mile northeast of the Biological Study Area. The only source of information for this record site is from a 1936 collection mapped in the vicinity of Woodlake, California. Because the area has largely been converted to agriculture and urban development, this record is likely absent. The nearest existing California Natural Diversity Database record (EONDX 92217) of the species is found 2.40 miles north of the Biological Study Area. This 2011 record documents the species within ephemeral pools and swales in non-native grassland habitat. This species was not identified during the site survey. Though the survey was conducted outside of the blooming period (April to May), there should have been remnants of this plant that would have been identifiable at the time of the survey.

Potentially suitable habitat for the species within the Biological Study Area is extremely limited and includes the non-native grassland habitat within the streambed crossing north-south through the western Biological Study Area and the unnamed ditch within the northwestern portion of the Biological Study Area. The habitat within the Biological Study Area is highly fragmented with no connectivity to the natural habitat, and it is unlikely the species is present within the Biological Study Area. High levels of disturbance from ongoing maintenance activities of the adjacent roadways and adjacent agricultural activities reduce the potential that the species would occur within the Biological Study Area.

Sanford's Arrowhead

Sanford's arrowhead (*Sagittaria sanfordii*) has a California Rare Plant Rank of 1B.2. It is an emergent perennial rhizomatous forb endemic to California that blooms from May to October and sometimes into November. It occurs in sandy loam and clay soils of assorted shallow freshwater marshes, swamps, and slow-moving waterways. It occurs at elevations from approximately sea level to 2,130 feet above mean sea level. It is thought to be extirpated from southern California and mostly absent from the Central Valley. It is threatened by grazing, development, recreational activities, non-native plants, road widening, and channel alteration and maintenance.

There is a single California Natural Diversity Database record (EONDX 111237) of Sanford's arrowhead within 10 miles of the Biological Study Area. This record is approximately 3.68 miles northwest of the Biological Study Area and is from 2018. The record identifies 250 plants observed growing within the bottom of a muddy irrigation ditch near the intersection of Avenue 356 and Road 180.

Potentially suitable habitat for the species within the Biological Study Area is limited to Antelope Creek and the unnamed ditch within the northwestern section of the project site. This species was not identified during the site surveys, which were conducted near the end of the blooming period (May to October and sometimes into November). The record amount of rainfall received last year further increased the likelihood of detecting the species if it were present. The species is unlikely to be present within the unnamed ditch because the water source is focused on the agriculture field and lacks seed recruitment of this species. Also, Antelope Creek's hydrologic regime is more conducive to a high-intensity flow rate, which is not suitable for this species. High levels of disturbance from ongoing maintenance activities of the adjacent roadways and adjacent agricultural activities also reduce the potential that the species would occur within the Biological Study Area.

Special-Status Wildlife Species

Three special-status wildlife species were identified in the Biological Study Area as having the potential to occur in the project area: western burrowing owl, American badger, and San Joaquin kit fox. The remaining 19 species were determined to be absent from the Biological Study Area based on a lack of habitat that would support them or other factors, such as the project being outside of the range of the species.

Western Burrowing Owl

The western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*) is a State Candidate for Endangered status and is protected by the California Fish and Game Code and Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The burrowing owl nests and roosts in earthen burrows, which typically relies on other fossorial mammals to construct. In California, this species is highly associated with California ground squirrels. The burrow entrance is a minimum of 4 inches in diameter and reaches 5 feet in depth. The burrow may be found in rock cavities, debris piles, or culverts. The species is opportunistic and has been known to use abandoned pipes, wooden pallets, and other structures as burrows. The burrowing owl may use several neighboring burrows to avoid predation.

The burrowing owl and its sign were not present within the Biological Study Area during the field survey. No burrows suitable for burrowing owl or other signs of this species were present within the Biological Study Area during the survey. The nearest California Natural Diversity Database record (EONDX 69905) of a burrowing owl is from 2006, found approximately 8.45 miles northwest of the project site. The Biological Study Area contains limited grassland and barren habitat that is potentially suitable for this species, but active construction within the Biological Study Area is converting most of the habitat to urban environment, leaving the habitat unsuitable. Because of the disturbed nature of the project footprint and because of the active construction within the Biological Study Area, very low potential exists for this species to occur within the impact area.

American Badger

The American badger (*Taxidea taxus*) is a California Species of Special Concern by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and an uncommon permanent

resident throughout California except for the northern North Coast. It can be found in grasslands, deserts, and drier habitats. Badgers are typically nocturnal and hunt or forage at night while spending daylight hours below ground. Normally, they have a single den entrance that is 8 to 12 inches in an elliptical or half-moon shape, similar to their body shape. Dens are usually found in friable soils, allowing the badger to dig easily. American badgers spend most of their time near a den, but they can have multiple dens in an area that can be used at the same time. American badgers are known to be able to dig a new den each night. During cooler nights, the entrance to the den may be partially plugged with soil to help regulate temperatures.

American badgers eat mostly small mammals that they capture by digging out the prey's burrows. Such prey may include pocket gophers, mice, chipmunks, and ground squirrels. Other prey may include birds, bird eggs, reptiles, invertebrates, and carrion.

The American badger and its signs were not present within the Biological Study Area during the field survey. No dens suitable for American badger or other signs of this species were present within the Biological Study Area during the survey. The nearest California Natural Database record (EONDX 56600) of the American badger is from 1994, approximately 7.17 miles southwest of the project site. The Biological Study Area contains limited grassland and barren habitat that is potentially suitable for this species, but active construction within the Biological Study Area is converting most of the habitat to urban environment, leaving the habitat unsuitable. There is also a lack of small mammals in the area as a prey base to support the species. Because of the disturbed nature of the project footprint, the lack of a suitable prey base, and because of the active construction within the Biological Study Area, a very low potential exists for this species to occur within the impact area.

San Joaquin Kit Fox

The San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*) is listed as Endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act; and is endangered or threatened species under the California Endangered Species Act. It is a small upland fox species that occurs mostly in the Central Valley, from Kern County north to eastern Contra Costa County and eastern Stanislaus County.

San Joaquin kit foxes are active year-round and are primarily active at night, though they are commonly seen during the day near dens in late spring and early summer. They use earthen dens throughout the year for temperature regulation, pup-rearing, shelter, and escape from predators. Individual foxes often use several dens within their home range. Though dens are most often earthen, they also use pipes, culverts, and other human-made structures as dens, most often as shelter.

In natural habitat, San Joaquin kit foxes eat various rodents, mostly kangaroo rats, pocket mice, harvest mice, and deer mice. They eat other rodents, including nocturnal and diurnal rodents, birds, rabbits, insects, and vegetation. They sometimes scavenge on larger carcasses. In urban areas, their diet is highly varied, consisting of natural prey but heavily supplemented with human food.

The San Joaquin kit fox and its signs were not present within the Biological Study Area during the field survey. No dens suitable for the San Joaquin kit fox or other signs of this species were present within the Biological Study Area during the survey. The nearest California Natural Diversity Database record (EONDX 70610) of the San Joaquin kit fox is from 1990 and overlaps the project site but is an imprecise representation of an observation made in the general vicinity of Woodlake, California. The Biological Study Area contains limited grassland and barren habitat that is potentially suitable for this species, but active construction within the Biological Study Area is converting most of the habitat to urban environment, leaving the habitat unsuitable. There is also a lack of small mammals in the area as a prey base to support the species. Because of the disturbed nature of the project footprint, the lack of a suitable prey base, and because of the active construction within the Biological Study Area, a very low potential exists for this species to occur within the impact area.

Sensitive Natural Communities

There were six sensitive natural communities identified in the database searches. These communities include Central Valley Drainage Hardhead/Pikeminnow Stream, Great Valley Oak Riparian Forest, Northern Claypan Vernal Pool, Northern Hardpan Vernal Pool, Sycamore Alluvial Woodland, and Valley Sacaton Grassland. None of these natural communities were present within the Biological Study Area.

Wetlands

An aquatic resources delineation study was completed for the project. The study identified two aquatic resources:

- **Antelope Creek:** Antelope Creek is an intermittent streambed that seasonally floods. It is part of the Upper Kaweah watershed in the San Joaquin Central Valley. Antelope Creek crosses under Naranjo Boulevard via a box culvert. Within the study area, Antelope Creek is 63 feet wide and contains a sandy bed. Antelope Creek contained earthen banks that were vegetated with non-native annual grass species, including wild oat (*Avena fatua*) and brome grasses (*Bromus* sp.) with an overstory of olive trees that were planted adjacent to the creek bank. The bed of the stream had visible surface soil cracks and contained a mix of upland and hydrophytic vegetation, including brome grasses, puncture vine (*Tribulus terrestris*), Johnsongrass (*Sorghum halepense*), pigweed amaranth (*Amaranthus albus*), curly dock (*Rumex crispus*), and common sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*). Small fluvial islands and sediment buildup were present within Antelope Creek.
- **Unnamed Canal:** This water feature is an artificially constructed ditch that originates north of the project site and does not connect to any water body upstream. The unnamed ditch crosses the northwestern section of the study area. The feature flows north to south, along the proposed Mulberry Street up to Naranjo Boulevard, where it then flows east to west parallel to Naranjo Boulevard, ultimately flowing into Antelope Creek. The unnamed ditch was dry at

the time of the survey, and both bed and banks contained dense upland vegetation consisting of non-native grasses and ruderal forbs such as puncture vine, prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), narrow-leaved plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), and common groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*). The unnamed ditch channel was 3 to 9 feet wide, and the banks were 2 to 8 feet tall. The left bank was taller than the right bank by approximately 4 to 6 feet.

Environmental Consequences

Special-Status Plant Species

Of the 20 special-status plant species, two species, the spiny-sepaed button-celery and Sanford's arrowhead—have limited potentially suitable habitat within the Biological Study Area. The remaining 18 special-status plant species were determined not to have potential habitat or the potential to occur within the Biological Study Area due to lack of suitable habitat to support the species, or the Biological Study Area is outside the normal range for that species.

Spiny-Sepaled Button-Celery

Potentially suitable habitat for the spiny-sepaed button-celery within the Biological Study Area is extremely limited; this habitat includes the non-native grassland within the streambed crossing north-south through the western Biological Study Area and the unnamed ditch within the northwestern portion of the Biological Study Area. The habitat within the Biological Study Area is highly fragmented with no connectivity to the natural habitat, and it is unlikely the species is present within the Biological Study Area. High levels of disturbance from ongoing maintenance activities of the adjacent roadways and adjacent agricultural activities reduce the potential that the species would occur within the Biological Study Area.

Sanford's Arrowhead

Potentially suitable habitat for Sanford's arrowhead within the Biological Study Area is limited to Antelope Creek and the unnamed ditch within the northwestern section of the project site. This species was not identified during the site surveys, and it is unlikely to be present within the unnamed ditch because the water source is focused on the agriculture field and lacks seed recruitment of this species. Also, Antelope Creek's favors a high-intensity flow rate, which is not suitable for this species. Disturbance from ongoing maintenance activities of the adjacent roadways and adjacent agricultural activities also reduce the potential that the species would occur within the Biological Study Area.

Because the two special-status plant species identified above are highly unlikely to be present within the project site, no project impacts to special-status plant species are anticipated.

Table 2.1.4 below provides an evaluation of Federal Endangered Species Act Effect Determinations of species that may have suitable habitat within the project limits.

Table 2.1.4 Summary of Federal Endangered Species Act Effect Determinations

Species	Federal Status	Effect Determination	Rationale
San Joaquin kit fox	Endangered	No Effect	No signs of the San Joaquin kit fox were present during the field survey. There were no dens found suitable for San Joaquin kit fox within the biological study area during the survey. Active construction activities within the biological study area made habitat unsuitable. All other occurrences within ten miles of the Biological study area are historical records from 1988 or earlier.

Special-Status Wildlife Species

The following federally listed species evaluated during biological surveys were determined to be absent from the Biological Study Area based on a lack of habitat that would support them or other factors, such as the project being outside of the range of the species. No further discussion or evaluation is required for the following species: Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*), conservancy fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta conservation*), vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*), monarch butterfly (*Danaus Plexippus*), valley elderberry longhorn beetle (*Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*), vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardii*), California tiger salamander - central California DPS (*Ambystoma californiense* pop. 1), northern leopard frog (*Lithobates pipiens*), foothill yellow-legged frog - south Sierra DPS (*Rana boylei* pop. 5), western spadefoot (*Spea hammondi*), Northern California legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra*), western pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*), tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*), California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*), fisher - southern Sierra Nevada DPS (*Pekania pennanti*).

One special-status wildlife species has the potential to occur: San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*). A "No Effect" determination has been made for the San Joaquin kit fox.

Western Burrowing Owl

The Biological Study Area contains limited grassland and barren habitat that is potentially suitable for the western burrowing owl, and active construction within the Biological Study Area is converting most of the habitat to urban environment, leaving the habitat unsuitable. Because of the disturbed nature of the project footprint and because of the active construction within the Biological Study Area, very low potential exists for this species to occur within the impact area.

American Badger

The Biological Study Area contains limited grassland and barren habitat that is potentially suitable for the American badger, but active construction within the Biological Study Area is converting most of the habitat to urban environment, leaving the habitat unsuitable. There is also a lack of small mammals in the area as a prey base to support the species. Because of the disturbed nature of the project footprint,

the lack of a suitable prey base, and because of the active construction within the Biological Study Area, a very low potential exists for this species to occur within the impact area.

San Joaquin Kit Fox

San Joaquin kit fox and its sign were not present within the Biological Study Area during the field survey. No dens suitable for the San Joaquin kit fox or other signs of this species were present within the Biological Study Area during the survey.

The Biological Study Area contains limited grassland and barren habitat that is potentially suitable for this species, but active construction within the Biological Study Area is converting most of the habitat to urban environment, leaving the habitat unsuitable. The area also lacks a prey base of small mammals to support the species. Because of the disturbed nature of the project footprint, lack of prey base, and because of the active construction within the Biological Study Area, a very low potential exists for this species to occur within the impact area. A “No Effect” determination has been made for the San Joaquin kit fox.

Potential impacts to the western burrowing owl, American badger, and San Joaquin kit fox would be minimal loss of very low-quality foraging habitat by removal of habitat from within the impact area, temporary alteration of behavior due to increased noise and vibrations associated with construction activities, and mortalities from vehicle strikes. However, since these species are not anticipated to be found within the Biological Study Area, impacts to these species are expected to be very minimal to non-existent.

Sensitive Natural Communities

Of the six sensitive natural communities identified in the database searches—Central Valley Drainage Hardhead/Pikeminnow Stream, Great Valley Oak Riparian Forest, Northern Claypan Vernal Pool, Northern Hardpan Vernal Pool, Sycamore Alluvial Woodland, and Valley Sacaton Grassland—none was found within the Biological Study Area. Sensitive natural communities would not be impacted by the project because there are no sensitive natural communities present within the Biological Study Area.

Wetlands

There would be no impacts to the following aquatic resources:

- Although Antelope Creek meets U.S. Army Corps of Engineers standard of non-wetland waters and exhibits a connection with a traditional navigable water, it would not be impacted by the construction of this project. The creek is just outside the western boundary of the project site but is within the biological study area.
- The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has indicated that the unnamed ditch is under the regulatory authority of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, primarily because the ditch is within a designated flood zone. The

installation of the pipeline would not result in any trimming or removal of riparian habitat. The installation of the roundabout would remove three canyon live oak trees and four valley oak trees, approximately 12 to 30 inches in diameter at breast height. There would be no impact to any jurisdictional waters as a result of the project.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Implementation of the following avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures will ensure that special-status plant species and wildlife species are not significantly impacted by project development:

BIO-1: Prior to commencement of work on the project, a Worker Environmental Awareness Training (WEAT) shall be conducted by a qualified biologist for all construction personnel; the Worker Environmental Awareness Training shall include information about any resources present onsite, and avoidance and minimization measures required to protect them. A sign-in sheet shall be sent to Caltrans and the City of Woodlake as evidence of compliance.

BIO-2: The following avoidance and minimization measures shall be implemented during all phases of the project to reduce the potential for impact from the project.

- a. All staging areas shall be approved by the project biologist and shall be clearly designated. Proof of environmental compliance, including all state and federal laws and regulations, shall be provided to the engineer if staging/storage areas occur outside of the project area or on private property.
- b. Project employees shall be directed to exercise caution when commuting within the habitats of listed species. A daytime 20-mile-per-hour speed limit shall be observed in all project areas, except on county roads and state and federal highways. Project employees shall be provided with written guidance governing vehicle use, speed limits on unpaved roads, fire prevention, and other hazards. A nighttime 10-mile-per-hour speed limit shall be observed in all project areas, except on county roads and state and federal highways.
- c. A qualified biologist(s) shall be available on call during all construction periods in the event of sightings of listed species onsite or near the project footprint.
- d. All steep-walled trenches or excavations deeper than 12 inches shall include escape ramps. At least one escape ramp shall be provided in any onsite trenches or excavations at no more than a 2-to-1 slope. Such trenches or excavations shall be inspected for wildlife immediately prior to backfilling.

Any holes, trenches, or excavations without escape ramps that shall not be filled within the working day must be covered overnight and inspected prior to beginning work on the following day.

- e. A litter control program shall be implemented for this project, and trash shall be removed daily from the project site.

- f. No pets or firearms (except for those carried by law enforcement officers and security personnel) shall be allowed onsite.
- g. To minimize the adverse effects of lighting, the proposed action shall confine lighting to areas within the construction footprint.
- h. Use of herbicides and pesticides shall be prohibited on the project.

BIO-3: If feasible, preconstruction botanical surveys shall be conducted during the typical bloom season for special-status plant species that may potentially occur within the Biological Study Area (in the bloom season prior to construction). All plant species that are observed shall be documented during preconstruction surveys. Plants that are not immediately identifiable shall be collected and identified using *The Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California* (Hickman and Jepson, 1993). If feasible, the preconstruction survey will be conducted in accordance with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Protocols for Surveying and Evaluation Impacts to Special-Status Native Plant Populations and Sensitive Natural Communities, dated March 20, 2018 (CDFW, 2018b). If protocol-level surveys are not feasible due to timing constraints, and work will occur during the typical blooming season of these special-status plant species, then preconstruction surveys for special-status plants shall be completed no more than two weeks prior to the start of work at each work location.

If any special-status plant species are discovered during preconstruction botanical surveys or during construction, the developer shall coordinate with applicable regulating entities as appropriate to determine the best plan of action to avoid impacts to sensitive plant species. A report shall be prepared outlining the results of the survey, and a copy of the report as well as any correspondence with regulatory agencies shall be submitted to Caltrans and the City of Woodlake.

BIO-4: If any special-status species is observed in the project work limits during construction, construction shall cease within a 100-foot buffer of the individual to allow the species to move out of harm's way on its own accord. Work within the buffer shall not continue until the species is outside of the 100-foot buffer area.

BIO-5: Within 14 days of the start of project construction activities, a preconstruction survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist knowledgeable in the identification of the western burrowing owl, San Joaquin kit fox, and American badger. The preconstruction survey shall include walking transects to identify the presence of burrowing owls and their burrows, American badgers and their dens, and San Joaquin kit foxes and their dens. The pre-activity survey shall be spaced at close enough intervals to provide 100 percent coverage of the project site and a 250-foot buffer where feasible. If no evidence of these special-status species is detected, no further action is required.

BIO-6: If dens or burrows that could support the western burrowing owl, San Joaquin kit fox, or American badger are discovered during the pre-activity survey conducted under Measure 3, the avoidance buffers outlined below should be

established, and den or burrow monitoring will be conducted in accordance with the California Department of Fish and Game Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (CDFG, 2012) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Standardized Recommendations for Protection of the Endangered San Joaquin Kit Fox Prior to or During Ground Disturbance (USFWS, 2011b). No work would occur within these buffers unless a qualified biologist approves and monitors the activity.

Burrowing Owl (active burrows only)

- Non-breeding season (September 1 to January 31): 160 feet
- Breeding season (February 1 to August 31): 250 feet

American Badger and San Joaquin Kit Fox

- Potential or Atypical den: 50 feet
- Known den: 100 feet
- Natal or pupping den: 200 feet

A copy of any correspondence with regulatory agencies shall be submitted to Caltrans and the City of Woodlake.

BIO-7: If construction activities will coincide with the avian nesting season (February 1 through September 30) and occur within 50 feet of suitable nesting habitat, then migratory bird surveys shall be conducted for areas containing suitable nesting habitat by a qualified biologist. These surveys shall be conducted within 30 days prior to the start of construction. During construction, a minimum no-disturbance buffer of 50 feet shall be maintained around active nests until the breeding season has ended or until a qualified biologist has determined the birds have fledged and are no longer reliant upon the nest or parental care for survival. A qualified biologist shall monitor the active nests for signs of disturbance when necessary.

Wetlands

There are no impacts to aquatic resources; and therefore, no avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures required.

2.1.5 Cultural Resources

The following technical studies were prepared for the project: Archaeological Survey Report, dated November 2024; Historic Property Survey Report, dated November 2024; Historic Resources Evaluation Report, dated November 2024.

Considering the information in the studies above, and a determination of concurrence of no adverse effect and no significant impact made by the State Historic Preservation Officer, 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?	Less Than Significant Impact

Affected Environment

c). The Antelope Cemetery is located at the northeast corner of the proposed intersection.

Environmental Consequences

No historic properties have been identified in the project area. However, the project would require a Temporary Construction Easement along the North Mulberry Extension at the Antelope Cemetery property.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The project would ensure that the easement area is included in the final design so that it would not encroach upon or disturb existing burial sites.

The following measures would be implemented during construction activities:

- An Environmentally Sensitive Area, in the form of high-visibility fencing would be established to protect the cemetery property. More detailed minimization measures would be developed during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase of the project.
- There shall be no grading or disturbance within the Temporary Construction Easement area.
- The contractor shall coordinate with the cemetery regarding any work activities on the property.

2.1.6 Energy

An Energy Analysis Technical Memo, dated October 2024, was prepared for the project. Considering the reasons provided and guidance from the Caltrans Standard Environmental Reference, Volume 1, Chapter 13- Energy, and Climate Change memo, dated December 2024, 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

The following technical studies were prepared for the project: Geotechnical Investigation, dated December 2, 2022; Paleontological Identification Report/Paleontological Evaluation Report and Paleontological Mitigation Plan, dated October 2024; California Earthquake Hazards Zone Application (EQ Zapp).

Considering the information in the studies noted above, 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 on-site or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	No Impact

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils
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
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?	Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

Affected Environment

f) Paleontological Resources

The project site sits along the east side of the San Joaquin Valley within the Great Valley Geomorphic Province along its border with the Sierra Nevada Geomorphic Province to the east. This area is characterized by Quaternary-age valley-filling sedimentary deposits blanketing the lower-lying foothills, which are primarily composed of Mesozoic-age crystalline basement rocks that form the bulk of the Sierra Nevada to the northeast. The project area is underlain by a geologic unit that is assigned a high paleontological potential ranking (i.e., Pleistocene older alluvium).

Environmental Consequences

Paleontological Resources

Paleontological resources preserved in this geologic unit may be impacted by excavations (extending more than 1 foot below ground surface) in areas underlain by high-potential geologic units. Project excavations are anticipated to include trenching for the new storm drain and trenching for relocated subgrade utilities (the future sewer and water pipe to be installed along Naranjo Boulevard and Mulberry Street). Excavation depths for these proposed activities range from 3 feet below ground surface (new storm drain) to 11 feet below ground surface (sewer pipe along Mulberry Street). It is expected that shallow grading associated with leveling of the site for roundabout and roadway construction would not require significant cuts and would involve mostly placement of fill to bring the surrounding area level with Naranjo Boulevard.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

It is anticipated that construction of the project would involve excavations that would disturb previously undisturbed deposits of geologic units assigned to a high paleontological potential ranking. As described in the Standard Environmental Reference guide for paleontology (SER, Chapter 8), several management strategies

are available to avoid or minimize impacts on paleontological resources with high potential/sensitivity. These strategies include avoidance and establishment of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs). The preliminary paleontological mitigation plan (San Diego Natural History Museum, 2024) prepared for the project is recommended to be included as a mitigation measure to reduce potential impacts to paleontological resources during project construction.

GEO-1: During any ground disturbance activities, if paleontological resources are encountered, all work within 50 feet of the find shall halt until a qualified paleontologist, as defined by the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology Standard Procedures for the Assessment and Mitigation of Adverse Impacts to Paleontological Resources (2010), can evaluate the find and make recommendations regarding treatment. Paleontological resource materials may include resources such as fossils, plant impressions, or animal tracks preserved in rock. The qualified paleontologist shall contact the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County or other appropriate facility regarding any discoveries of paleontological resources.

If the qualified paleontologist determines that the discovery represents a potentially significant paleontological resource, additional investigations and fossil recovery may be required to mitigate adverse impacts from project implementation. If avoidance is not feasible, the paleontological resources shall be evaluated for their significance. If the resources are not significant, avoidance is not necessary. If the resources are significant, they shall be avoided to ensure no adverse effects, or such effects must be mitigated. Construction in that area shall not resume until the resource-appropriate measures are recommended or the materials are determined to be less than significant. If the resource is significant and fossil recovery is the identified form of treatment, then the fossil shall be deposited in an accredited and permanent scientific institution. Copies of all correspondence and reports shall be submitted to the City of Woodlake Public Works Department.

2.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

A Focused Air Quality Study and Climate Change Memorandum, dated December 2024, and an Air Quality Memo, dated April 2025, were prepared for the project.

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
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	No Impact

Affected Environment

On December 17, 2009, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District adopted Guidance for Valley Land-use Agencies in Addressing Greenhouse Gas Emission Impacts for New Projects under CEQA (SJVAPCD 2009); which outlined the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's methodology for assessing a project's significance for greenhouse gas under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The following criteria were outlined in the document to determine whether a project could have a significant impact:

- Projects determined to be exempt from the requirements of CEQA would be determined to have a less than significant individual and cumulative impact for greenhouse gas emissions and would not require further environmental review, including analysis of project specific greenhouse gas emissions. Projects exempt under CEQA would be evaluated consistent with established rules and regulations governing project approval and would not be required to implement Best Performance Standards.
- Projects complying with an approved greenhouse gas emission reduction plan or greenhouse gas mitigation program that avoids or substantially reduces greenhouse gas emissions within the geographic area in which the project is located would be determined to have a less than significant individual and cumulative impact for greenhouse gas emissions. Such plans or programs must be specified in law or approved by the lead agency with jurisdiction over the affected resource and supported by a CEQA-compliant environmental review document adopted by the lead agency. Projects complying with an approved greenhouse gas emission reduction plan or greenhouse gas mitigation program would not be required to implement Best Performance Standards.
- Projects implementing Best Performance Standards would not require quantification of project-specific greenhouse gas emissions. Consistent with CEQA Guidelines, such projects would be determined to have a less than significant individual and cumulative impact for greenhouse gas emissions.
- Projects not implementing Best Performance Standards would require quantification of project-specific greenhouse gas emissions and demonstration that project-specific emissions would be reduced or mitigated by at least 29 percent, compared to Business-as-Usual (BAU), including greenhouse gas emission reductions achieved since the 2002-2004 baseline period. Projects achieving at least 29 percent greenhouse gas emission reduction compared to Business-as-Usual would be determined to have a less than significant individual and cumulative impact for greenhouse gas.
- Notwithstanding any of the above provisions, projects requiring preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for any other reason would require quantification of project specific greenhouse gas emissions. Projects implementing Best

Performance Standards or achieving at least a 29 percent greenhouse gas emission reduction compared to Business-as-Usual would be determined to have a less than significant individual and cumulative impact for greenhouse gas.

The City of Woodlake has not adopted specific thresholds for greenhouse gases. The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has developed thresholds to determine significance of a proposed project—either implement Best Performance Standards or achieve a 29 percent reduction from Business-as-Usual (a specific numerical threshold). However, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has established its Business-as-Usual and baseline emissions based on the years 2002-2004 and 2020, respectively. Since the 2020 projected baseline has passed, no new guidance has been approved for determining Business-as-Usual and projected baseline for the next target year. Therefore, the 29 percent reduction from Business-as-Usual cannot be applied to the subject project to determine significance. Also, a Best Performance Standards threshold has not been established. For this project, compliance with locally adopted climate plans will be used to determine level of significance for greenhouse gas.

Environmental Consequences

The project's greenhouse gas emissions come mostly from construction equipment source activities. Not all greenhouse gases exhibit the same ability to induce climate change; as a result, greenhouse gas contributions are commonly quantified as carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂e). The project's operational CO₂e emissions were estimated using California Emissions Estimator Model. The estimated carbon dioxide construction emissions are 470.63 tons over 180 days of work period. These emissions are summarized in Table 2.8.1-1 below.

**Table 2.8.1-1 Estimated Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions
(million tons per year)**

Source	Carbon Dioxide CO₂	Methane CH₄	Nitrous Oxide N₂O	Carbon Dioxide Equivalents CO₂e
Total Construction Emissions	466.99	0.02	0.01	470.63
Total Operational Emissions	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

The project would generate greenhouse gases from combustion of diesel fuels, which is regulated near the top of the supply chain. Each citizen of California (including those creating emissions of this project) would have to purchase fuels produced in a way that is acceptable to the California market. Project greenhouse gas emissions would be consistent with the relevant plan (i.e., Assembly Bill 32 Scoping Plan). The project would meet its fair share of the cost to mitigate the cumulative impact of global climate change based on energy purchases from the California market. The consumers of transportation fuels are in effect regulated by higher level emissions restrictions on the producers of these energy sources. Therefore, the project would have a less than significant impact on applicable

greenhouse gas reduction plans, and the project's contribution to cumulative global climate change impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 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. In addition, the following greenhouse gas reduction measures will be implemented for the project:

- Match the existing grade as much as possible, reducing earthwork.
- Where feasible and reasonable, detour traffic using one way control to avoid lane closures duration construction.
- Incorporate Complete Streets elements as much as possible.
- Where feasible, utilize native and drought-tolerant plants in roundabout and splitter island landscaping to reduce need for irrigation.

While the project would produce greenhouse gas emissions during construction, it is not expected to cause an increase in operational greenhouse gas emissions. The project would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases. With the implementation of construction greenhouse gas reduction measures, the impacts would be less than significant.

2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

An Initial Site Assessment, dated August 2, 2024, was prepared for the project. The Tulare County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, and Cal Fire Local Responsibility Maps were also used in this analysis.

Based on the results of this analysis, 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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and 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?	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
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

Based on the Water Quality Report, dated October 2025, and Aquatic Resources Delineation Report, dated March 2025, Location Hydraulic Study, dated January 2025, and standard regulatory development practices, 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 on-site or off-site;	No Impact
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on-site or off-site;	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; or	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
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 City of Woodlake General Plan (June, 2009), 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 City of Woodlake General Plan (June, 2009) and 2030 Update Tulare County General Plan (August, 2012), and Woodlake General Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report (June, 2009), 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 October 2025, 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

Question—Would the project result in:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise
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 project location and design, City of Woodlake General Plan (June, 2009), and Tulare County General Plan (August, 2012), 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 project location and design, City of Woodlake General Plan (June, 2009), and Tulare County General Plan (August, 2012), 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 City of Woodlake General Plan (June, 2009) and the design and location of the project, 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 City of Woodlake General Plan (June, 2009), Tulare County General Plan (August, 2012) and project location and design, 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

The following technical studies were prepared for the project: Archaeological Survey Report, dated November 2024; Historic Property Survey Report, dated November 2024; and Historic Resources Evaluation Report, dated November 2024.

Considering the information in the studies above, and results of Assembly Bill (AB) 52 Requests for Consultation with Native American Tribal Governments, 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

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources
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 project would construct a single-lane roundabout with improvements for operation, visibility, and safety for an intersection, 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
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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	No Impact

Affected Environment

a) Stormwater drainage and wastewater

The project requires construction of new storm water drainage infrastructure under the new road (Mulberry Street) that will continue the existing drainage pattern into Antelope Creek west of the project. Public utility infrastructure would also be constructed along Naranjo Boulevard.

Environmental Consequences

Stormwater drainage and wastewater

Build Alternative:

The project would construct new storm drain culverts at a minimum size of 24 inches to a maximum of 42 inches and would pass stormwater runoff under the new road (Mulberry Street) to continue existing drainage patterns that eventually drain into Antelope Creek west of the project. The stormwater drainage system would include headwalls on each end and two drainage inlets/laterals throughout the proposed site. An approximate 480 to 500 linear feet of storm drain pipelines are proposed. The intent of the storm drain culvert is to continue existing drainage patterns, matching existing grades at either end of the system. The culvert outlet is proposed to end approximately 15 feet east of Antelope Creek at the same location as the existing dirt swale, matching existing drainage patterns, and is designed to mitigate erosion by adding rock lining at the outlet. The maximum trenching expected for the proposed 42-inch storm drain would be 3 feet in depth from the existing grade. It generally follows the existing dirt swale alignment. The culvert outlet is proposed to end approximately 15 feet east of Antelope Creek at the same location as the existing dirt swale and is designed to match existing drainage patterns and mitigate erosion by adding rock lining at the outlet.

In addition, the project would construct a new 10-inch water pipe at an approximate depth of 5 feet and an 8-inch sanitary sewer pipe at an approximate depth of 7 feet along Naranjo Boulevard. An 8-inch water pipe would be installed at an approximate depth of 4 feet, along with an 8-inch sanitary sewer pipe at varying depths up to a maximum of approximately 11 feet below grade along Mulberry Street.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The project would protect or relocate existing utilities prior to or during construction to prevent interruptions to service during construction activities involving grading, excavation, and pipe installation. The project has been determined to have a less

than significant impact with the incorporation of avoidance and minimization measures to ensure that impacts to existing stormwater drainage and wastewater systems remain less than significant. The city of Woodlake will implement the following Best Management Practice measures during construction:

- Job Site Management – Job site management includes spill prevention and control, material management, waste management, non-stormwater management, and dewatering activities.
- Prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan.
- Stormwater Annual Report
- Street Sweeping
- Temporary Concrete Washout
- Water Pollution Control Maintenance Sharing – Conduct daily site inspections and maintain controls to prevent sediment and waste from entering storm drains.
- Temporary Drainage Inlet Protection
- Temporary Fiber Roll
- Temporary Construction Entrance
- Temporary Fencing (Type ESA)
- Postconstruction Temporary Best Management Practices: Swales and riprap

2.1.20 Wildfire

Considering the information provided in the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection’s online Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps (September 2025), 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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Wildfire
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?	Less Than Significant 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

Affected Environment

a) Biological Resources

As evaluated in this Initial Study, the project has the potential to impact biological resources.

Environmental Consequences

Biological Resources

As evaluated in this Initial Study, the project has the potential to impact biological resources, including special-status plant and wildlife species, and water features, through the development of the site. The project has been determined to have a less than significant impact with the incorporation of avoidance and minimization measures to ensure that the impact to special-status species and state water resources would be less than significant.

Direct and Indirect Adverse Effects

Due to construction and operation of the project, biological resources, including special-status plant and wildlife species and state water resources, could be potentially impacted. These impacts were reduced to a less than significant level with the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures BIO-1 through BIO-7, which are meant to survey, avoid and minimize impacts to biological resources that may occur within the project site.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

As discussed above, implementation of BIO-1 through BIO-7 measures would reduce impacts to special-status plant and wildlife species and state water resources to a less than significant impact.

Chapter 3 **Coordination**

Early and continuing coordination with the general public and public agencies is an essential part of the environmental process. It helps planners determine the necessary scope of environmental documentation and the level of analysis required, and to identify potential impacts and avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures and related environmental requirements. Agency and tribal consultation and public participation for this project have been accomplished through a variety of formal and informal methods, including Project Development Team meetings and interagency coordination meetings. This chapter summarizes the results of Caltrans' efforts to identify, address, and resolve project-related issues through early and continuing coordination. The following agencies, organizations, and individuals were consulted in the preparation of this environmental document.

3.1 Coordination with Resource Agencies

3.1.1 Biology

September 9, 2025—City of Woodlake received a refund for Notification of Lake or Streambed Alteration EPIMS-TUL-56033-R4 Mulberry Street/Naranjo Boulevard (State Route 216) Roundabout Project from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, which indicated the project is not subject to the notification requirement in Fish and Game Code Section 1602.

January 20, 2025—The project team obtained an official species list from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sacramento Office's IPaC website to provide information on federally listed species that have the potential to occur near the project limits.

January 20, 2025— The project team obtained the special-status species list through the California Natural Diversity Database.

December 2024)— The project team was consulted on potential waters of the State with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during preparation of the Aquatic Resources Delineation Report.

October 4, 2024— The project team reviewed the California Invasive Plant Council's (Cal-IPC) California Invasive Species Mapper from Tulare County to determine invasive species that are likely to be found on the project site.

3.1.2 Cultural

April 16, 2025—The State Historic Preservation Officer formally responded, concurring with Caltrans' determination that 600 West Naranjo Boulevard is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

March 21, 2025—North Fork Mono Tribe Chairman Ron Goode responded via email with “no comment refers to other local tribes.” No additional comments were received.

March 20, 2025—Caltrans Professionally Qualified Staff Christina Gaddis initiated Section 106 Consultation with letters including the project description and the Area of Potential Effects map to representatives of the following tribes:

- Chairperson Elizabeth Kipp, Big Sandy Rancheria of Western Mono Indians
- Chairman Ron Goode, North Fork Mono Tribe
- Cultural Specialist Samantha McCarty, Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi Yokut Tribe
- Chairperson Neil Peyron, Tule River Indian Tribe
- Chairperson Kenneth Woodrow, Wuksache Indian Tribe/Eshom Valley Band

April 17, 2024—Outreach letters were sent to tribal organizations on the Native American Heritage Commission contact list, and follow-up emails were sent on July 5, 2024. Additional follow-up calls were conducted February 6, 2025. No responses were received. Consultation packages were sent to representatives of the following tribes:

- Big Sandy Rancheria of Western Mono Indians
- North Fork Mono Tribe
- Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi Yokut Tribe
- Tule River Indian Tribe
- Wuksache Indian Tribe/Eshom Valley Band

No requests for consultation were received from any of the five tribes notified.

January 1, 2024—Caltrans submitted the Determinations of Eligibility to the State Historic Preservation Officer in December 2024.

October 26, 2022— The project team contacted the Native American Heritage Commission to request a search of the Sacred Lands Files. The Native American Heritage Commission responded with negative results and seven contacts from five Tribal groups.

3.1.3 Air Quality

March 5, 2025—Caltrans, acting for the Federal Highway Administration under the Memorandum of Understanding, and the Environmental Protection Agency concurred that the project is not a Project of Air Quality Concern.

February 2024—Per 40 CFR 93.105(e) public consultation procedures, the Interagency Consultation (IAC) checklist and presentation slides were posted on the San Joaquin Council of Governments website for public review. The public comment period concluded on March 3, 2024, and no comments were received.

3.2 Public Circulation of the Draft Environmental Document

The Initial Study with proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration will circulate for public and agency review and comment for 30 days (from Month XX to Month XX, 2025. During circulation, the document is made available to all appropriate parties and agencies, including the following:

- Responsible agencies.
- Trustee agencies that have resources affected by the project.
- Other state, federal, and local agencies that have regulatory jurisdiction, or that exercise authority over resources that may be affected by the project.

The document is available online at <https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-6/district-6-projects/06-1F640> and <https://cityofwoodlake.com/departments/planning/>

- Additional copies of the document are available for review at the following locations:

Caltrans District 6 office at 1352 West Olive Avenue, Fresno, California 93728

Woodlake City Hall at 350 North Valencia Boulevard, Woodlake, California 93286

Appendix A Title VI Policy Statement

CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR

California Department of Transportation

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
P.O. BOX 942873, MS-49 | SACRAMENTO, CA 94273-0001
(916) 654-6130 | FAX (916) 653-5776 TTY 711
www.dot.ca.gov



September 2025

TITLE VI/NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the assurances set forth in the Caltrans' Title VI Program Plan, to ensure that no person in the United States shall on the grounds 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. Related non-discrimination authorities, remedies, and state law further those protections, including sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, age, low income, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Caltrans is committed to complying with 23 C.F.R. Part 200, 49 C.F.R. Part 21, 49 C.F.R. Part 303, and the Federal Transit Administration Circular 4702.1B. 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 (including LEP). In addition, Caltrans will facilitate meaningful participation in the transportation planning process in a non-discriminatory manner.

The overall responsibility for this policy is assigned to the Caltrans Director. The Caltrans Title VI Coordinator is assigned to the Caltrans Office of Civil Rights Deputy Director, who then delegates sufficient responsibility and authority to the Office of Civil Rights' managers, including the Title VI Branch Manager, to effectively implement the Caltrans Title VI Program. Individuals with questions or requiring additional information relating to the policy or the implementation of the Caltrans Title VI Program should contact the Title VI Branch Manager at title.vi@dot.ca.gov or at (916) 639-6392, or visit the following web page: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/title-vi>.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dina El-Tawansy'.

Dina El-Tawansy (Sep 12, 2025 16:52:12 PDT)

DINA A. EL-TAWANSY
Director

"Improving lives and communities through transportation."

Appendix B Natural Resources Conservation Farmland Impact Rating

U.S. Department of Agriculture							
FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING							
PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency)				Date Of Land Evaluation Request 1/22/2025			
Name of Project Mulberry St./Naranjo Blvd. Roundabout				Federal Agency Involved Caltrans			
Proposed Land Use Road Right-of-Way				County and State Tulare County, California			
PART II (To be completed by NRCS)				Date Request Received By NRCS 1/22/2025		Person Completing Form: Luis Alvarez	
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 ☒	NO ☐	Acres Irrigated 568,184	Average Farm Size 299 ac.
Major Crop(s) Alfalfa-Hay, Cotton - Lint, Almonds		Farmable Land In Govt. Jurisdiction Acres: 851,527% 27.4		Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: 971,74% 31.3			
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 3/10/2025			
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				3.57			
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly				0			
C. Total Acres In Site				3.57			
PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information							
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland				0.00			
B. Total Acres Statewide Important or Local Important Farmland				3.60			
C. Percentage Of Farmland in County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted				0.0004			
D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value				80.67			
PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Criterion Relative Value of Farmland To Be Converted (Scale of 0 to 100 Points)				27			
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
1. Area In Non-urban Use				(15)	5		
2. Perimeter In Non-urban Use				(10)	1		
3. Percent Of Site Being Farmed				(20)	4		
4. Protection Provided By State and Local Government				(20)	20		
5. Distance From Urban Built-up Area				(15)	0		
6. Distance To Urban Support Services				(15)	0		
7. Size Of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average				(10)	0		
8. Creation Of Non-farmable Farmland				(10)	0		
9. Availability Of Farm Support Services				(5)	4		
10. On-Farm Investments				(20)	3		
11. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services				(10)	0		
12. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use				(10)	0		
TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS				160	37	0	0
PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)							
Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)				100	27	0	0
Total Site Assessment (From Part VI above or local site assessment)				160	37	0	0
TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)				280	64	0	0
Site Selected: Site A		Date Of Selection 1/22/2025		Was A Local Site Assessment Used? YES ☐ NO ☒			
Reason For Selection: Site A is being selected because an Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) determined that a roundabout design would be best suited for the intersection. Official approval of Site A will occur when the FED is signed in late 2025.							
Name of Federal agency representative completing this form: Phong Duong, Environmental Scientist						Date: 1/22/2025	

(See Instructions on reverse side)

Form AD-1006 (03-02)

List of Technical Studies Bound Separately

Visual Impact Assessment, June 2025

Air Quality Memo, April 2025

Noise Memorandum to file, October 2025

Water Quality Memorandum to file, October 2025

Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impact, March 2025

Natural Environmental Study Addendum Memorandum, October 2025

Aquatic Resources Delineation Report, March 2025

Climate Change Memorandum, March 2025

Archaeological Survey Report, April 2025

Historical Resources Evaluation Report, April 2025

Farmland Conversion Impact Rating (Form AD-1006), March 2025

Geotechnical Investigation, December 2022

Location Hydraulic Study Memorandum, January 2025

Hazardous Waste Technical Memo, August 2024

Paleontological Identification Report/Paleontological Evaluation Report, October 2024

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

Judith Lopez, Senior Environmental Scientist
District 6 Environmental Division
California Department of Transportation
2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 200
Fresno, CA 93726

Or send your request via email to: judith.lopez@dot.ca.gov

Or call: (559) 240-5068

Please provide the following information in your request:

Project title: Mulberry Street and State Route 216 (Naranjo Boulevard) Roundabout

General location information: At Mulberry Street and State Route 216 (Naranjo Boulevard) at post mile 13.5 in the City of Woodlake in Tulare County

District number-county code-route-post mile: 06-TUL-216-13.5

EA/Project ID number: 06-1F640/0623000070