

**Notice of Completion & Environmental Document Transmittal**

Mail to: State Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 95812-3044 (916) 445-0613  
 For Hand Delivery/Street Address: 1400 Tenth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

<b>SCH #</b>
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**Project Title:** East Side Regional Park

Lead Agency: City of Visalia Contact Person: Rebecca Keenan  
 Mailing Address: 315 E. Acequia Avenue Phone: (559) 713-4444  
 City: Visalia Zip: 93291 County: Tulare

**Project Location:** County: Tulare City/Nearest Community: Visalia  
 Cross Streets: see attachment for full details of Project Location Zip Code: 93291

Longitude/Latitude (degrees, minutes and seconds): \_\_\_\_\_ ° \_\_\_\_\_ ' \_\_\_\_\_ " N / \_\_\_\_\_ ° \_\_\_\_\_ ' \_\_\_\_\_ " W Total Acres: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Assessor's Parcel No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Section: \_\_\_\_\_ Twp.: \_\_\_\_\_ Range: \_\_\_\_\_ Base: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Within 2 Miles: State Hwy #: 198 Waterways: Mill Creek, Packwood Creek, Oakes Ditch  
 Airports: \_\_\_\_\_ Railways: \_\_\_\_\_ Schools: \_\_\_\_\_

**Document Type:**

CEQA:  NOP  Draft EIR NEPA:  NOI Other:  Joint Document  
 Early Cons  Supplement/Subsequent EIR  EA  Final Document  
 Neg Dec (Prior SCH No.) \_\_\_\_\_  Draft EIS  Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mit Neg Dec Other: \_\_\_\_\_  FONSI \_\_\_\_\_

**Local Action Type:**

General Plan Update  Specific Plan  Rezone  Annexation  
 General Plan Amendment  Master Plan  Prezone  Redevelopment  
 General Plan Element  Planned Unit Development  Use Permit  Coastal Permit  
 Community Plan  Site Plan  Land Division (Subdivision, etc.)  Other: Recreational Facilities

**Development Type:**

Residential: Units \_\_\_\_\_ Acres \_\_\_\_\_  
 Office: Sq.ft. \_\_\_\_\_ Acres \_\_\_\_\_ Employees \_\_\_\_\_  Transportation: Type \_\_\_\_\_  
 Commercial: Sq.ft. \_\_\_\_\_ Acres \_\_\_\_\_ Employees \_\_\_\_\_  Mining: Mineral \_\_\_\_\_  
 Industrial: Sq.ft. \_\_\_\_\_ Acres \_\_\_\_\_ Employees \_\_\_\_\_  Power: Type \_\_\_\_\_ MW \_\_\_\_\_  
 Educational: \_\_\_\_\_  Waste Treatment: Type \_\_\_\_\_ MGD \_\_\_\_\_  
 Recreational: Recreational Park  Hazardous Waste: Type \_\_\_\_\_  
 Water Facilities: Type Recharge Basins MGD \_\_\_\_\_  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Issues Discussed in Document:**

Aesthetic/Visual  Fiscal  Recreation/Parks  Vegetation  
 Agricultural Land  Flood Plain/Flooding  Schools/Universities  Water Quality  
 Air Quality  Forest Land/Fire Hazard  Septic Systems  Water Supply/Groundwater  
 Archeological/Historical  Geologic/Seismic  Sewer Capacity  Wetland/Riparian  
 Biological Resources  Minerals  Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading  Growth Inducement  
 Coastal Zone  Noise  Solid Waste  Land Use  
 Drainage/Absorption  Population/Housing Balance  Toxic/Hazardous  Cumulative Effects  
 Economic/Jobs  Public Services/Facilities  Traffic/Circulation  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Present Land Use/Zoning/General Plan Designation:**

Vacant land, agriculture, and orchards. Present General Plan designation is Parks / Recreation and Residential.

**Project Description:** (please use a separate page if necessary)

Please see attached Project Description.

Note: The State Clearinghouse will assign identification numbers for all new projects. If a SCH number already exists for a project (e.g. Notice of Preparation or previous draft document) please fill in.

## Reviewing Agencies Checklist

Lead Agencies may recommend State Clearinghouse distribution by marking agencies below with an "X".  
If you have already sent your document to the agency please denote that with an "S".

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|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Resources Board                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Office of Historic Preservation          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boating & Waterways, Department of             | <input type="checkbox"/> Office of Public School Construction                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> California Emergency Management Agency         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parks & Recreation, Department of        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> California Highway Patrol           | <input type="checkbox"/> Pesticide Regulation, Department of                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caltrans District # <u>6</u>        | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Utilities Commission                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caltrans Division of Aeronautics               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regional WQCB # <u>5</u>                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caltrans Planning                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Resources Agency                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Central Valley Flood Protection Board          | <input type="checkbox"/> Resources Recycling and Recovery, Department of     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coachella Valley Mtns. Conservancy             | <input type="checkbox"/> S.F. Bay Conservation & Development Comm.           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coastal Commission                             | <input type="checkbox"/> San Gabriel & Lower L.A. Rivers & Mtns. Conservancy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colorado River Board                           | <input type="checkbox"/> San Joaquin River Conservancy                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation, Department of                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Santa Monica Mtns. Conservancy                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corrections, Department of                     | <input type="checkbox"/> State Lands Commission                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Delta Protection Commission                    | <input type="checkbox"/> SWRCB: Clean Water Grants                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education, Department of                       | <input type="checkbox"/> SWRCB: Water Quality                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Commission                              | <input type="checkbox"/> SWRCB: Water Rights                                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fish & Game Region # <u>4</u>       | <input type="checkbox"/> Tahoe Regional Planning Agency                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food & Agriculture, Department of              | <input type="checkbox"/> Toxic Substances Control, Department of             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forestry and Fire Protection, Department of    | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Resources, Department of                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Services, Department of                | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Services, Department of                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing & Community Development                |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Native American Heritage Commission |  |

### Local Public Review Period (to be filled in by lead agency)

Starting Date February 2, 2023 Ending Date March 20, 2023

### Lead Agency (Complete if applicable):

Consulting Firm: <u>Provost &amp; Pritchard Consulting Group</u>	Applicant: <u>City of Visalia</u>
Address: <u>400 E. Main St., Ste 300</u>	Address: <u>315 E. Acequia Ave</u>
City/State/Zip: <u>Visalia, CA 93291</u>	City/State/Zip: <u>Visalia, CA 93291</u>
Contact: <u>Dawn E. Marple</u>	Phone: <u>(559) 713-4300</u>
Phone: <u>(559) 636-1166</u>	

Signature of Lead Agency Representative: Brandon Smith Digitally signed by Brandon Smith  
Date: 2023.02.01 13:31:25 -0800 Date: 2/1/2023

Authority cited: Section 21083, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 21161, Public Resources Code.

# Project Description

## Project Location and Boundaries

The City of Visalia (City) encompasses approximately 37.94 square miles and lies within northwestern Tulare County (County) in the central San Joaquin Valley. The Project evaluated in this DEIR is located partially within the City and partially within the County; one of the actions necessary for Project implementation is annexation of the unincorporated areas into the City.

The Project area evaluated in this DEIR comprises approximately 286 acres situated in the northeast quadrant of the City, lying north of State Route (SR) 198 and east of North McAuliff Street. Approximately 130 acres of the Project site, lying north of Mill Creek and south of Houston Avenue, Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) 103-110-24, -25, -26, -27, -28, -29, -32, and -33, are currently situated in the County and will need to be annexed to the City. The APNs within the City limits are 103-500-001, -002, -003; 103-510-002, -003, -004, -005, -006, -007 -008, and -009. The Project Site is generally bounded as follows: on the south by the proposed realigned Mineral King Avenue; on the west by existing single-family residences and proposed Tower Street; on the east by Road 152; and on the north by Houston Avenue (called Ivanhoe Drive within Tulare County). This segment of Houston Avenue is also designated as SR 216.

## Environmental Setting

The Project location is in an area that has historically been predominately agricultural. The San Joaquin Valley, like most of California, experiences a Mediterranean climate with warm, dry summers and cool, moist winters. The City experiences annual precipitation rates of approximately 10.93 inches, of which 85% falls between October and March.<sup>1</sup>

*Surrounding.* The northerly portion of the Project is located at the far easterly edge of city limits and would be annexed by the City. Land to the north, south and east within the unincorporated portion of the County are agricultural, commercial, and rural residential uses. There are also County commercial uses to the south and east of the Project, fronting Noble Avenue and Mineral King Avenue, both of which are frontage roads to SR 198. Land to the west lies within the city limits and contains urban uses – predominantly single-family residential development. There is one rural single-family parcel fronting on Mineral King Avenue directly south of the agricultural tail water/recharge basin.

Adjacent to the west of the Tower Street alignment is an existing Southern California Edison (SCE) high-voltage transmission line corridor approximately 150 feet in width. The portion of the corridor south of Mill Creek is owned in fee title by the City. The portion of the corridor north of Mill Creek is primarily owned in fee title by SCE with a small portion owned in fee title by the City. The portions not owned by SCE are subject to an easement.

The City has approved a plan for the construction of a multi-use trail called the Greenway Trail. The Greenway Trail project, once constructed, would be within the SCE power line corridor. The trail is planned to begin where Cameron Creek crosses Road 148 approximately 1.2 miles south of SR 198. The trail would extend north for 2.7 miles within the SCE power line corridor traveling along the west edge of the Project site and connecting to the existing St. John's River Trail. The St. John's River Trail lies approximately a 0.25-mile north of Houston Avenue and runs east-west along the south bank of the St. John's River. The City has received a Caltrans Active Transportation Planning Grant funding to construct the portion of the trail from Mineral King Avenue to Mill Creek. In the meantime, design and environmental clearance tasks are in progress.

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<sup>1</sup> (U.S. Climate Data. 2020). <https://www.usclimatedata.com/climate/visalia/california/united-states/usca1204> Accessed on August 23, 2020.

Cutler Park, owned and maintained by the County, is located approximately 0.75-mile to the northeast of the Project along Ivanhoe Road/SR 216 at the St. John's River. Cutler Park is a small rural park with access to the St. John's River and offers playgrounds, grassy areas, trails, and general outdoor nature areas.

*Project Site.* The Project site has historically been and is currently used for agricultural purposes. There are multiple orchards in various stages, such as removal, planting, and harvesting, on the site. Two seasonal channels traverse the property: Mill Creek, and Packwood Creek. Three irrigation ditches traverse a portion of and terminate on the property or along the property boundary: Fleming Ditch, Oakes Ditch and one unnamed ditch. The unnamed ditch originates on the property as a bifurcation of Oakes Ditch. A portion of the Project site south of Packwood Creek and fronting along Mineral King Avenue is currently fallow with two depressed areas; the depressed area in the southeast corner was utilized in the past as a temporary parking lot. A portion of the Project site north of Packwood Creek and in the southwest corner contains an existing agricultural recharge basin.

## **Project Components**

The purpose of the Project would be to co-locate city-wide/regional park amenities for both passive and active recreational uses, amongst functional groundwater recharge/storm water layoff basins. The Project would allocate approximately 148 acres park uses and approximately 104 acres for recharge/storm water facility purposes. The primary components of the Project are described in more detail below.

### **Groundwater Recharge and Storm Water Layoff Basins**

The groundwater recharge/storm water layoff basins would comprise approximately 104 acres and the site storm water runoff basins would comprise approximately 3.13 acres. The Project integrates both types of basins into the layout of the park amenities.

The site storm water runoff would be accommodated by strategically-located drainage facilities that would direct storm water runoff from the Project into the basins. The storm water runoff basins are located along the west side adjacent to Tower Street and along the east side adjacent to Road 152.

The Project would utilize the three existing waterways flowing through the property (Mill Creek, Packwood Creek, and Oakes Ditch) for groundwater recharge and storm water layoff functions. The dual-function design would include new control structures to divert recharge and layoff waters from these waterways into the basins, move water between basins, and return water to Mill Creek or Packwood Creek as needed.

Currently, the Oakes Ditch traverses the site east to west and goes underground to a drop inlet at the west end of the Project boundary. The inlet ultimately feeds a pipeline into an existing agricultural recharge basin outside the Project. As part of the Project, Oakes Ditch would be incorporated across the site as the low flow lines of one of the recharge basins. Oakes Ditch would then terminate within the recharge basin. The drop inlet and the pipeline would be removed as part of this Project.

### **Regional Park Amenities**

The regional park amenities generally span across the entire Project site. The active recreational amenities would comprise approximately 139 acres. The passive amenities would utilize approximately 130 acres, which includes the groundwater recharge and storm water layoff facilities described above. These amenities would include the following:

- Four (4) lighted and fenced adult softball fields (325' to outfield fence)
- Four (4) lighted and fenced youth baseball Fields (225' to outfield fence)
- Five (5) lighted full-size soccer fields (210' X 330')
- Cricket field
- Lighted tennis courts
- Lighted pickleball courts
- Lighted full basketball court
- 18-hole disc golf course
- Amphitheater with seating capacity of 1,500
- Community center building (approx. 30,000 sq. ft.) including outdoor swimming pools
- Dog park (approx. 3 acres)
- Multi-use trails with fitness equipment
- Event and open space turf areas
- Children's adventure play areas and splash pad
- Picnic areas (formal and informal)
- Agriculture education barn
- Resource center
- Maintenance yard
- Parking areas

To enhance the aesthetics of the park, the Project also proposes to realign Mill Creek to replicate its historical meandering alignment from 1937.

## Access and Roadways

*Mineral King Avenue.* Currently there are two segments of Mineral King Avenue: one segment runs east to west; and the other curves off of the main segment to the north and would run through the Project before realigning with the main road. The straight east-west roadway segment would be referred to as the Mineral King Avenue (frontage road). The curvilinear segment of Mineral King Avenue would be referred to as Mineral King Avenue (existing re-alignment) west of Tower Street and the Mineral King Avenue (proposed re-alignment) east of Tower Street (arterial roadway). The Project proposes to construct the Mineral King Avenue (proposed re-alignment) east of Tower Street in a mirror image of the existing re-alignment located on the west side of Tower Street to retain access from the east-west frontage road to Road 152.

The existing and proposed re-alignments of Mineral King Avenue would have their alignments finalized and be constructed as part of the future Caltrans interchange at the intersection of Tower Street and SR 198. When this future interchange moves forward, a separate environmental document would be prepared by Caltrans.

*Tower Street.* To provide access to the Project a new arterial roadway (Tower Street) would be constructed along the western edge of the Project site. Tower Street would be built to City standards for an arterial roadway with an ultimate right-of-way of 110 feet. Tower Street would connect to Mineral King Avenue (frontage road) at the south and Houston Avenue (SR 216) at the north. Existing stub streets and roadway connections would

be extended east across the 150-foot-wide SCE corridor to connect to Tower Street—from south to north, Mineral King Avenue (frontage road), Mineral King Avenue (existing re-alignment), Villoy Avenue, Murray Avenue, Race Avenue, Douglas Avenue, and McKinley Avenue.

These connections would be designed to allow the incorporation of the crossings of the Greenway Trail (a separate project) within the SCE corridor.

The improvements to the intersection of Tower Street and Houston Avenue (SR 216) would be made and a stop sign would be added. Later, Caltrans may either provide a signalized intersection or a roundabout pursuant to Caltrans direction and standards. This is not part of this Project's activities and would be addressed by Caltrans in a separate environmental review.

In addition to the connections from the west, two park entrances would be constructed off Tower Street generally at the easterly alignments of Villoy Avenue and McKinley Avenue. These entrance points lead to an internal roadway system that provides circulation within the park. Areas for parking are available immediately off this internal roadway system.

*Houston Avenue (SR 216).* Currently, SR 216 exists as a four-lane divided roadway between Lovers Lane and McAuliff Street and as a two-lane roadway between McAuliff Street and Road 152.

*Road 152.* Improvements and underground utility extensions along Road 152 (western half of the road) would consist of a 10-foot roadway widening, grading, sidewalks, and curb and gutter.

## Annexation and Land Use Approvals

Prior to pursuing development of the Project, the City would need to amend the General Plan Land Use designation of approximately 42 acres in the northern area from Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, and High Density Residential to Parks/Recreation consistent with the remaining 88 acres area north of Mill Creek and the portion already within the city limits. The City would also pre-zone the 130 acres between Mill Creek and Houston Avenue to the Quasi-Public (QP) zone district, under which the Project uses are permitted and which is also consistent with the area already within the city limits; the unincorporated acreage is currently zoned AE-20 (Exclusive Agricultural – 20-Acre Minimum) by the County. The City would then apply to the Tulare County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) for annexation of the northern 130 acres. LAFCo's approval and subsequent perfection of the annexation would bring the property into the city limits, at which time the City's zoning would take effect.

The majority of the southern two-thirds of the Project Site is located within Tier I of the City's Urban Development Boundary, while the remainder (which is planned for residential use) is within Tier III, the Urban Growth Boundary. The City's General Plan contains criteria to determine whether land within Tier III can be developed; however, it applies only to residential, commercial, and industrial development. Therefore, the City Council's decision to annex the land for the regional park use constitutes the necessary criteria to allow the Project to be developed in the Tier 3 Urban Growth Boundary.

## Site Plan Review

Proposed Concept Plans A1 and B1 were the subject of Site Plan Review on July 22, 2015. City Departments providing review comments included:

- Fire Department –Required fire hydrants and provided accessibility comments and conditions.
- Police Department – Comments were given related to sufficient lighting, accessibility, and visibility. Primarily in support of Concept B1 as that concept provides the most accessibility and visibility.
- Public Works (sewer/water/storm drain) – Comments required the Project to comply with City Ordinance No. 13.08 and water features must use recirculated water.

- Solid Waste – No comment.
- Planning – Comments were given regarding the annexation, general plan amendment, change of zone, and lighting and noise concerns.
- Building – No comment.
- Traffic Safety Division – Required a Traffic Impact Analysis.
- Engineering – Comments required the Project to comply with City Standards.
- Parks & Recreation – Preserve valley oak trees.

Ultimately, the Site Plan Review Committee noted that the project should revise and proceed with the entitlement process.

The Project is intended to be built in three phases over an extended period of time, the duration of which is currently unknown. Timing of construction of each phase would be largely dependent on funding. As the project moves forward from phase to phase, construction-level engineering drawings for site grading, utility installation, roadway construction, and other improvements would need to be completed and approved by the City before construction can begin.

## **Construction Phasing**

As noted, the Project would be constructed in multiple phases. The first phase would include the development of the groundwater recharge and stormwater layoff basins. The second phase would include the construction of Tower Street and Road 152 frontage improvements as well as the construction of the following park amenities: Adult Softball Fields, Youth Baseball Fields, Soccer Fields, and Ancillary facilities (maintenance yard, cricket field, basketball court, children's play area, and picnic area) interior roadways and three entrances/exists. The third phase would include construction of the remainder of the park amenities.