August 2019 | Initial Study

JACKSON RANCH SPECIFIC PLAN

Kings County

Prepared for:

Kings County
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PLACEWORKS

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAQS	ambient air quality standards
AB	Assembly Bill
ACM	asbestos-containing materials
ADT	average daily traffic
amsl	above mean sea level
AQMP	air quality management plan
AST	aboveground storage tank
BAU	business as usual
bgs	below ground surface
BMP	best management practices
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAFE	corporate average fuel economy
CalARP	California Accidental Release Prevention Program
CalEMA	California Emergency Management Agency
Cal/EPA	California Environmental Protection Agency
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CALGreen	California Green Building Standards Code
Cal/OSHA	California Occupational Safety and Health Administration
CalRecycle	California Department of Resources, Recycling, and Recovery
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBC	California Building Code
CCAA	California Clean Air Act
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDE	California Department of Education
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act
cfs	cubic feet per second
CGS	California Geologic Survey
CMP	congestion management program
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNEL	community noise equivalent level

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CO	carbon monoxide
CO_2e	carbon dioxide equivalent
Corps	US Army Corps of Engineers
CSO	combined sewer overflows
CUPA	Certified Unified Program Agency
CWA	Clean Water Act
dB	decibel
dBA	A-weighted decibel
DPM	diesel particulate matter
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
EIR	environmental impact report
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
EPCRA	Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GHG	greenhouse gases
GWP	global warming potential
HCM	Highway Capacity Manual
HQTA	high quality transit area
HVAC	heating, ventilating, and air conditioning system
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
L_{dn}	day-night noise level
L_{eq}	equivalent continuous noise level
LBP	lead-based paint
LCFS	low-carbon fuel standard
LOS	level of service
LST	localized significance thresholds
M_W	moment magnitude
MCL	maximum contaminant level
MEP	maximum extent practicable
mgd	million gallons per day
MMT	million metric tons

Abbreviations and Acronyms

MPO	metropolitan planning organization
MT	metric ton
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NO_X	nitrogen oxides
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
O_3	ozone
OES	California Office of Emergency Services
PM	particulate matter
POTW	publicly owned treatment works
ppm	parts per million
PPV	peak particle velocity
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
REC	recognized environmental condition
RMP	risk management plan
RMS	root mean square
RPS	renewable portfolio standard
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB	Senate Bill
SIP	state implementation plan
SLM	sound level meter
SO_X	sulfur oxides
SQMP	stormwater quality management plan
SRA	source receptor area [or state responsibility area]
SUSMP	standard urban stormwater mitigation plan
SWP	State Water Project
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAC	toxic air contaminants
TNM	transportation noise model
tpd	tons per day
TRI	toxic release inventory
TTCP	traditional tribal cultural places
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service

Abbreviations and Acronyms

USGS	United States Geological Survey
UST	underground storage tank
UWMP	urban water management plan
V/C	volume-to-capacity ratio
VdB	velocity decibels
VHFHSZ	very high fire hazard severity zone
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
VOC	volatile organic compound
WQMP	water quality management plan
WSA	water supply assessment

1. Introduction

The proposed project consists of the development and implementation of a specific plan for approximately 425 acres along Interstate 5 at the existing Utica Avenue off-ramp in unincorporated Kings County. The Jackson Ranch Specific Plan (Jackson Ranch or Specific Plan) would serve as an innovative service and commercial center that will encourage economic growth while preserving the agricultural heritage of the region. As the halfway point between San Francisco and Los Angeles, Jackson Ranch offers a key visible rest stop to the high volume of motorists who pass by annually. Upon completion, Jackson Ranch would be the only stop to offer food, lodging, a truck stop, and service stations within a 31-mile stretch of Interstate 5, stretching from Kettleman City to the north to State Route 46 to the south. A total of just under 2.5 million square feet of commercial space is planned for approximately 142 acres of the area covered by the Specific Plan. Approximately 207 acres is to be designated for agricultural use, and an additional 56 acres is to be designated as agricultural use with an overlay for a potential future airstrip. Approximately 15 acres are designated for public streets, and 5 acres has been set aside for public utility uses, including a wastewater treatment plant.

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Kings County, as the lead agency, is preparing the environmental documentation for the Specific Plan to determine if approval of the discretionary actions requested and subsequent development would have a significant impact on the environment. As defined by Section 15063 of the CEQA Guidelines, an Initial Study is prepared primarily to provide the lead agency with information to use as the basis for determining whether an environmental impact report (EIR), negative declaration, or mitigated negative declaration would provide the necessary environmental documentation for the Specific Plan. This Initial Study supports the preparation of an EIR for the Specific Plan.

1.1 PROJECT LOCATION

Figures 1, *Regional Location*, and 2, *Local Vicinity*, show the location of the Plan Area within the regional and local contexts of Kings County (also referenced as the County herein). Jackson Ranch is located in an unincorporated area of the County, consisting of 425 acres adjacent to and west of Interstate 5 (I-5) at the Utica Avenue off-ramp. The area covered by the Specific Plan (Plan Area) is approximately 70 miles northwest of the City of Bakersfield and 70 miles southwest of the City of Fresno. The nearest urbanized area to the Plan Area is Kettleman City, an unincorporated community of the County approximately 6 miles to the northwest (see Figure 1). As shown in Figure 2, Utica Avenue forms the northern Plan Area boundary, the southbound I-5 on-ramp forms the northeastern boundary, and I-5 forms the eastern boundary. A portion of the western Plan Area boundary abuts the California Aqueduct, and 25th Avenue bisects it from north to south (see Figure 2). Agricultural uses are located along the northern, western, and southern edges, as shown in Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*.

The Plan Area is accessed from I-5 via Utica Avenue, a two-lane Local Street with a 90-foot right-of-way. Outside of the vicinity of the Plan Area, Utica Avenue is designated by the Kings County Regional Transportation Plan as a Major Collector from the east side of I-5 to 6th Avenue, and for the portion west of the Plan Area where State Routes 33 and 41 are connected.

1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

1.2.1 Existing Land Use

Onsite land uses primarily consist of active and fallow agricultural land or rangeland, as shown in Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*. The agricultural production consists mainly of irrigated crops such as almonds pistachios, and stone fruits (apricots and plums); dry land grazing also occurs onsite. The Plan Area has historically been used for farming, and portions presently contain an orchard of almond trees near the end of their productive life expectancy. Other crops include pistachios, apricots, and plums. A portion of the Plan Area consists of disked lands formerly planted as orchards. Power lines on wooden poles line the northern site boundary, abutting Utica Avenue; they also traverse the entire stretch of the central portion of the Plan Area from the northern to southern boundary.

1.2.2 Surrounding Land Use

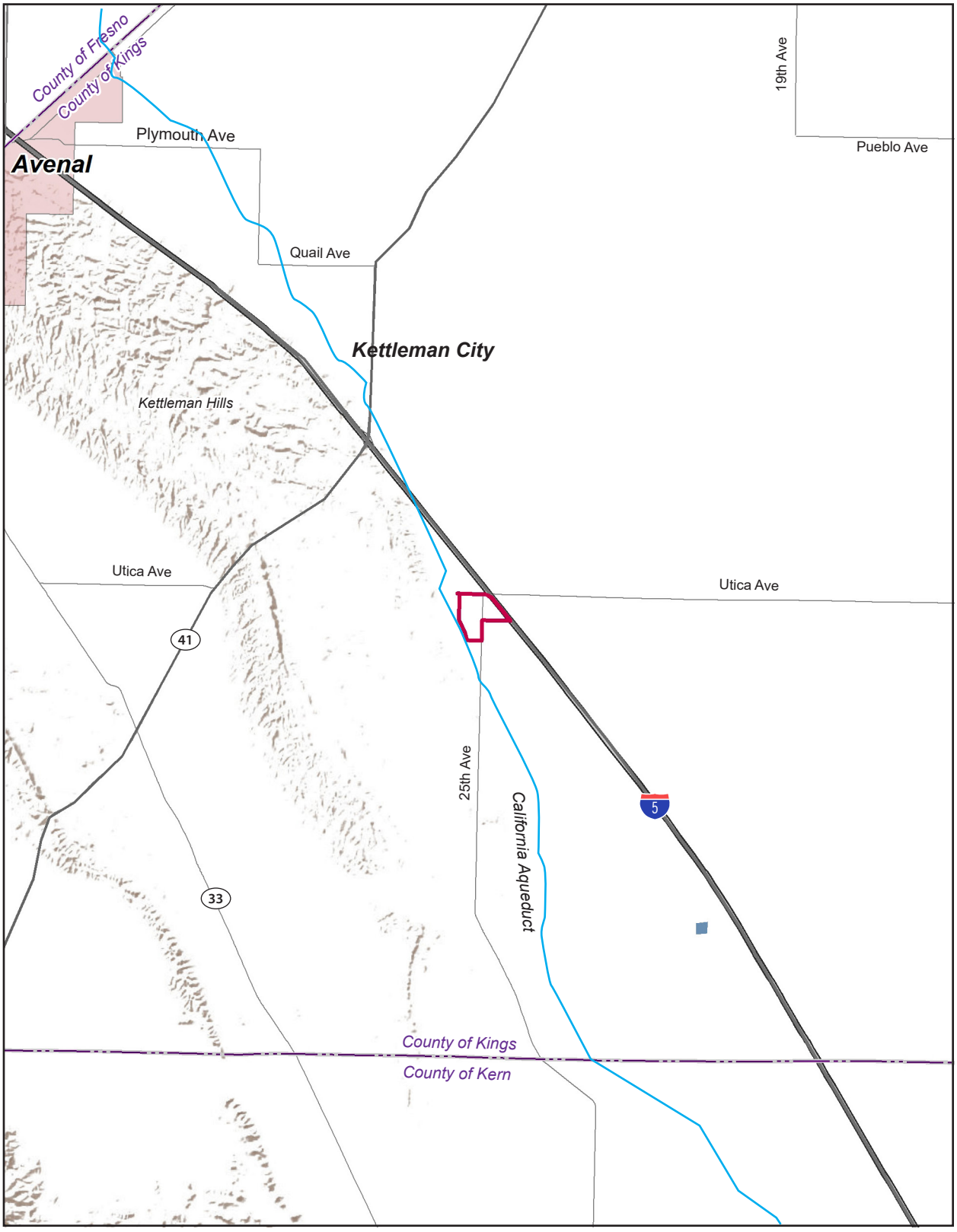
Surrounding land uses primarily consist of active and fallow agricultural land or grazing lands (see Figure 3). Major infrastructure surrounding the Plan Area includes I-5 to the east and the California Aqueduct to the west. Beyond the aqueduct are the Kettleman Hills.

1.3 EXISTING ZONING AND GENERAL PLAN

The County-designated zoning district of the Plan Area is General Agriculture-40 District (AG-40). This district is intended primarily for application to rural areas of the County, which are generally characterized by extensive and intensive agricultural uses of land.

The current Kings County General Plan was adopted on January 26, 2010, and designates all parts of the Plan Area under General Agriculture-40 Acre. This designation is applied to rural areas of the County; it allows intensive agricultural uses that by their nature may be incompatible with urban uses.

Figure 1 - Regional Location
1. Introduction



Source: ESRI, 2019

1. Introduction

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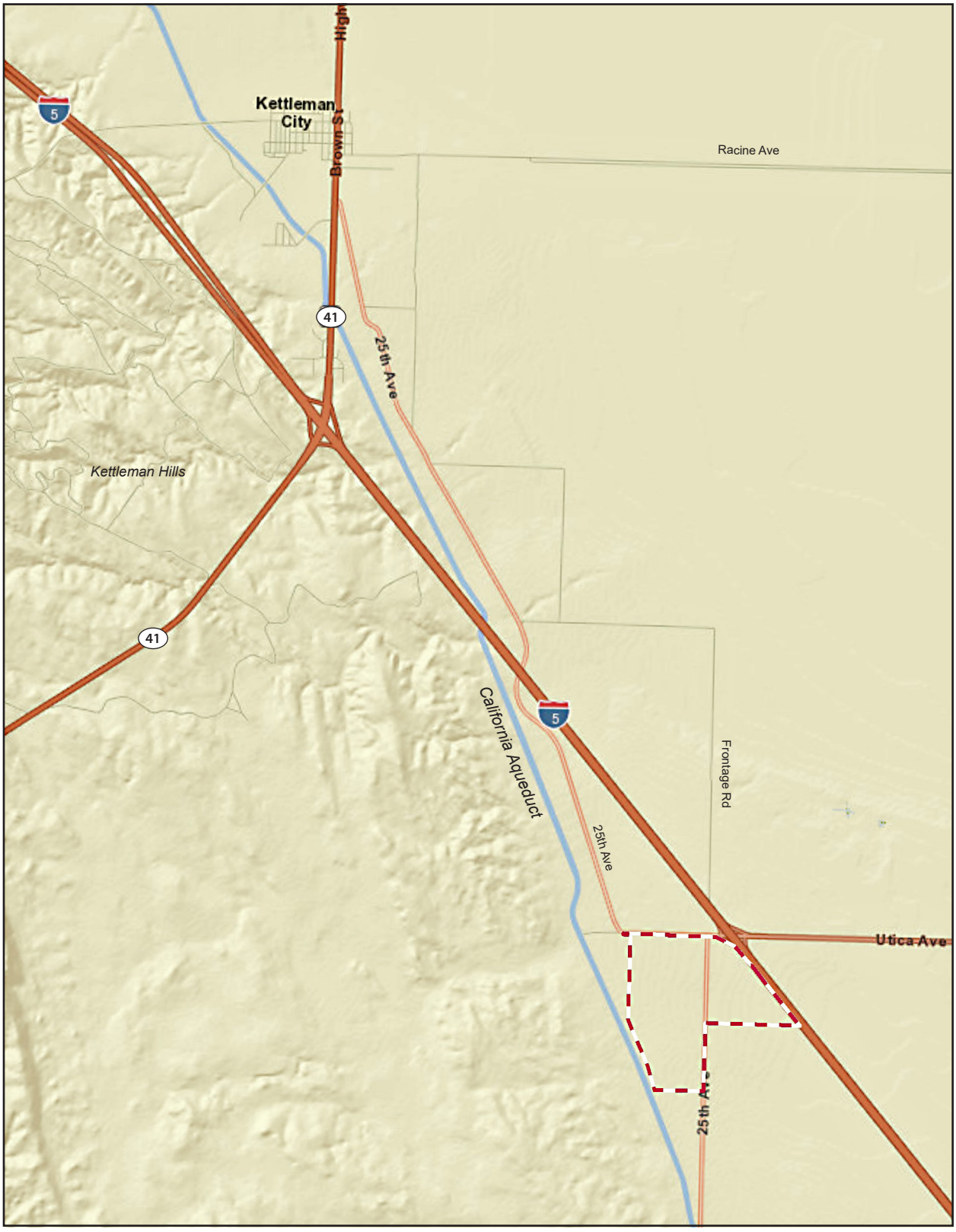
Figure 2 - Local Vicinity
1. Introduction



Plan Area Boundary

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Scale (Miles)

Source: ESRI, 2019

1. Introduction

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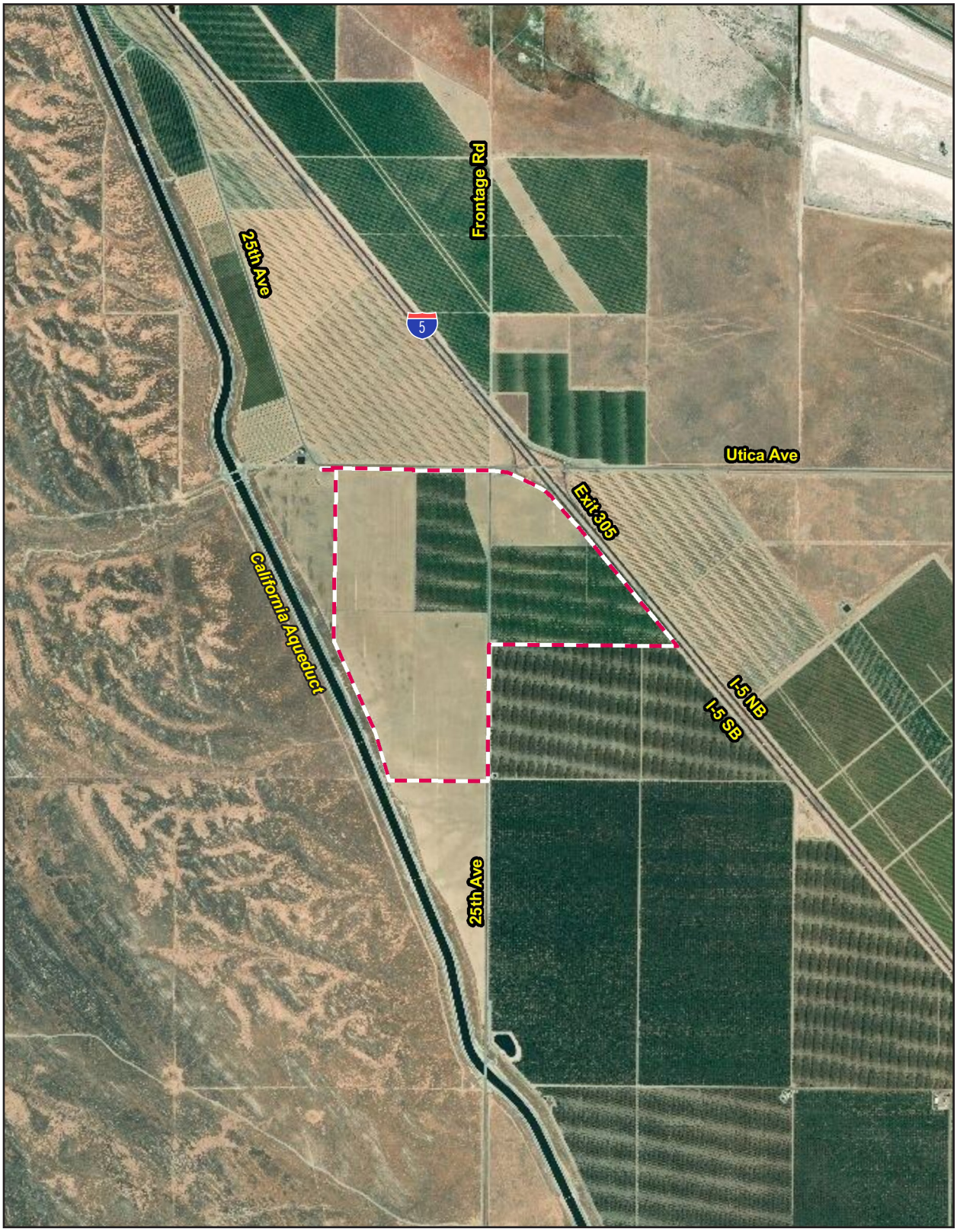
Figure 3 - Aerial Photograph
1. Introduction



Plan Area Boundary

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Scale (Feet)

Source: ESRI, 2019

1. Introduction

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Table 1 presents a breakdown of current Kings County General Plan land use designation in the County. As shown in this table, the County is currently divided into six land use designations, and the predominant land use is agriculture, comprising approximately 90 percent of the land in the County.

Table 1 Current General Plan Land Use Designations

General Plan Land Use Designation	Compatible Zoning District Abbreviation	Acres[1]	Percentage of Total Land Use
Agriculture	A	738,623.04	90.18%
Limited Agricultural	AL-10	22756.74	
General Agriculture – 20 Acre	AG-20	149,333.62	
General Agriculture – 40 Acre	AG-40	522,264.85	
Exclusive Agriculture – 40 Acre	AX	44,267.73	
Residential	R	3,073.10	0.36%
Very Low Density	RRE/RRA	1,073.99	
Low Density	R-1-20	324.19	
Low Medium Density	R-1-12	163.12	
Medium Density	R-1-8 or R-1-6	667.5	
Medium High Density	RM-3	226.39	
High Density	RM-2	83.31	
Very High Density	RM-1.5	15.18	
Reserve Low Medium Density	R(R)	53.13	
Reserve Medium Density	R(R)	278.82	
Reserve Medium High Density	R(R)	33.95	
Mixed Use	MU	158.72	0.02%
Downtown Mixed Use	MU-D	38.27	
Mixed Use	MU	86.23	
Reserve Mixed Use	MU(R)	34.22	
Commercial	C	813.36	0.10%
Neighborhood Commercial	CN	14.59	
Rural Commercial	CR	133.83	
Service Commercial	CS	274.59	
Transportation Commercial	CT, CH	210.60	
Multiple Commercial	CS, CH	135.74	
Reserve Multiple Commercial	C(R)	44.01	
Industrial	I	1,540.88	0.31%
Light Industrial	IL	507.54	
Heavy Industrial	IH	2,033.34	
Planned Industrial	IP	0.00	
Other Uses	527	73,940.53	9.03%
Overlay Districts	DD, NS, AC, OS, NRC, FH, RM, SD, CR	72,798.75	
Public	PF	1,141.78	
Total	—	818,996.11	100%

[1] Source: 2010 Kings County General Plan.

Approximately 45 percent of the Plan Area is designated by the California Department of Conservation as "Grazing Land," and approximately 50 percent is designated as "Prime Farmland." A small area in the southwestern portion of the Plan Area adjacent to the California Aqueduct is designated as "Prime Farmland" by the County Assessor's office. The "Prime Farmland" designation means that active farming has occurred within the past four years and indicates that the Plan Area is able to sustain long-term agricultural production because it offers the soil quality, growing season, and water supply to produce sustained high yields. The Plan Area is not currently enrolled in a Williamson Act contract.

1.4 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.4.1 Proposed Land Use

The proposed project consists of development and implementation of the Jackson Ranch Specific Plan (Jackson Ranch or Specific Plan), which covers approximately 425 acres along I-5 at the Utica Avenue off-ramp in unincorporated County (see Figure 4, *Specific Plan Land Use Plan*). Jackson Ranch would serve as an innovative service and commercial center that will encourage economic growth while preserving the agricultural heritage of the region. As the halfway point between San Francisco and Los Angeles, Jackson Ranch offers a visible rest stop to the high volume of motorists who pass by annually. Upon completion, Jackson Ranch would be the only stop to offer food, lodging, a truck stop, and service stations within a 31-mile stretch of I-5, stretching from Kettleman City to the north to State Route 46 to the south.

A General Plan Amendment to change the General Plan land use designation of the Plan Area from General Agriculture-40 Acre (current General Plan land use designation) to Jackson Ranch Specific Plan is required to implement the Specific Plan. Under the Specific Plan, approximately 175 acres, or 41 percent of the Plan Area, would be changed from General Agriculture-40 Acre to Innovation Center (IC-JR), Commercial Thoroughfare (CT-JR) and Public (P-JR), which would allow arrange of commercial, light industrial and public facility uses. Also, approximately 249 acres, or 59 percent of the Plan Area, is proposed to be changed from General Agriculture-40 Acre to Specialty Agriculture (A-JR). Approximately 56 acres of the 249 acres to be designated Specialty Agriculture would include an Air Strip Overlay, which would allow for the development of a potential future private air strip in the Plan Area. If the Air Strip Overlay is implemented in the future, additional CEQA review would be required to address the potential environmental impacts of developing an air strip. It is anticipated that active agriculture will continue in the Plan Area during and after the development of Jackson Ranch (see Figure 4). Proposed land use designations under the Specific Plan are identified in Table 2.

Table 2 Jackson Ranch Specific Plan Land Use Designations

Designation	Description
Innovation Center (IC-JR)	Provides a prime location for inventive new and expanding businesses. This designation allows for a range of uses including light industrial, research and development, medical offices, hospitals, office, hospitality, retail, and entertainment.
Commercial Thoroughfare (CT-JR)	Provides a safe stop for existing travelers along Interstate 5. This area is envisioned as a sophisticated transportation plaza, delivering food, lodging, amenities, and entertainment to both professional and leisure travelers along Interstate 5.
Public (P-JR)	Accommodates a public water and wastewater treatment facility.
Specialty Agriculture (A-JR)	Provides a buffer between more intensive agricultural uses of the General Agriculture district, and urban areas. This area is meant to be compatible with nonagricultural uses. The minimum parcel size is 10 acres.
Specialty Agriculture with Air Strip Overlay (A-JR) [1]	
Streets	Consists of Arterial, Collector and Local Street classifications.

[1] The proposed air strip overlay is a potential future use and is not a part of the project scope at this time. If the air strip overlay is implemented in the future, additional CEQA review would be required to address the potential environmental impacts of developing an air strip.

A statistical summary of the Specific Plan's land use designations is provided in Table 3. As shown in the table, a total of just under 2.5 million square feet of commercial space is planned for Jackson Ranch.

Table 3 Jackson Ranch Specific Plan Land Use Statistical Summary

Land Use Designation	Acres	FAR	Maximum Building Sq. Ft.
Innovation Center (IC-JR)	119.1	0.45	2,334,597
Commercial Thoroughfare (CT-JR)	23.8	0.25	161,245
Public (P-JR)	5.0	—	—
Specialty Agriculture (A-JR)	206.9	—	—
Specialty Agriculture with Air Strip Overlay (A-JR)	55.5	—	—
Streets	14.6	—	—
Total	424.9	—	2,495,842

Note: FAR = floor area ratio; Sq. Ft. = square feet

Implementation of the Specific Plan would also require an amendment to the Kings County Development Code and Zoning District Map. Specifically, the Development Code Amendment is needed to add the Jackson Ranch Specific Plan by reference and the Zoning District Map Amendment is needed to change the zoning district from AG-40 to Jackson Ranch Specific Plan. The Development Code Amendment would state that the regulating code contained in the Specific Plan would serve as the regulatory plan (zoning, development, and design standards and guidelines) for all development projects in the Plan area.

The California Government Code (Title 7, Division 1, Chapter 3, Article 8, Sections 65450–65457 [Specific Plans]) provides authority for a city/county to adopt a specific plan by ordinance (as a regulatory plan) or resolution (as a policy plan). When a specific plan is adopted by ordinance, the specific plan effectively replaces portions or all of the current zoning regulations for specified parcels and becomes an independent set of zoning regulations that provide specific direction to the type and intensity of uses permitted or define other

types of design and permitting criteria. The Specific Plan would be adopted by the Kings County Board of Supervisors as ordinance and function as the regulatory plan that serves as the implementing zoning for the Plan Area, thereby ensuring the orderly and systematic implementation of the Kings County General Plan.

1.4.2 Project Phasing

As detailed in the Specific Plan, Jackson Ranch is anticipated to be developed in four phases (described below). However, for purposes of this Initial Study and subsequent preparation of the EIR (including accompanying technical studies for air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, and traffic), the impact analysis only looks at two development phases: the first phase (Phase One described below) consists of the Plan Area designated as Commercial Thoroughfare in Figure 4, *Specific Plan Land Use Plan*, and the second phase (Phases Two through Four described below) consists of the remainder of the Plan Area. A detailed site plan is being developed at this time for the first phase; therefore, a site-specific analysis will be undertaken for this phase in the EIR and the detailed site plan will form the basis for this level of analysis. For the second phase, a broader programmatic-level analysis will be undertaken as no detailed site plan(s) will be developed at this time for this phase.

Phase One

Phase one, encompassing approximately 25 acres, is anticipated to provide approximately 150,000 square feet of travel-related commercial space. This phase will fill a need for travel-oriented services geared to meet the needs of existing travelers along I-5. Proposed uses include a 10-acre truck stop, potentially offering a restaurant, service station, and short term resting place for large transport vehicles. The remaining 15 acres have been divided into smaller parcels to easily accommodate fast food and sit down restaurants, motels, service stations, and an open area for community events such as a Farmer's Market.

The primary infrastructure (roads and accompanying utilities) would be constructed prior to or at the same time as Phase One. Major access will be provided via Utica Avenue and the new alignment of 25th Avenue. The proposed public water and wastewater treatment facility in the Public designated area (see Figure 4) would also be completed in Phase One.

Phase Two

Phase two consists of approximately 30 acres and 588,000 square feet of commercial space in the Innovation Center designated area of the Specific Plan (see Figure 4). This designation allows for a range of uses, including light industrial, research and development, medical offices, hospitals, office, hospitality, retail, and entertainment. The primary access to Phase Two will be directly from Utica Avenue and interior local streets connected to 25th Avenue. Sidewalk connections would link Phase Two to the Phase One travel plaza area, allowing pedestrian access to retail areas.

Figure 4 - Specific Plan Land Use Plan

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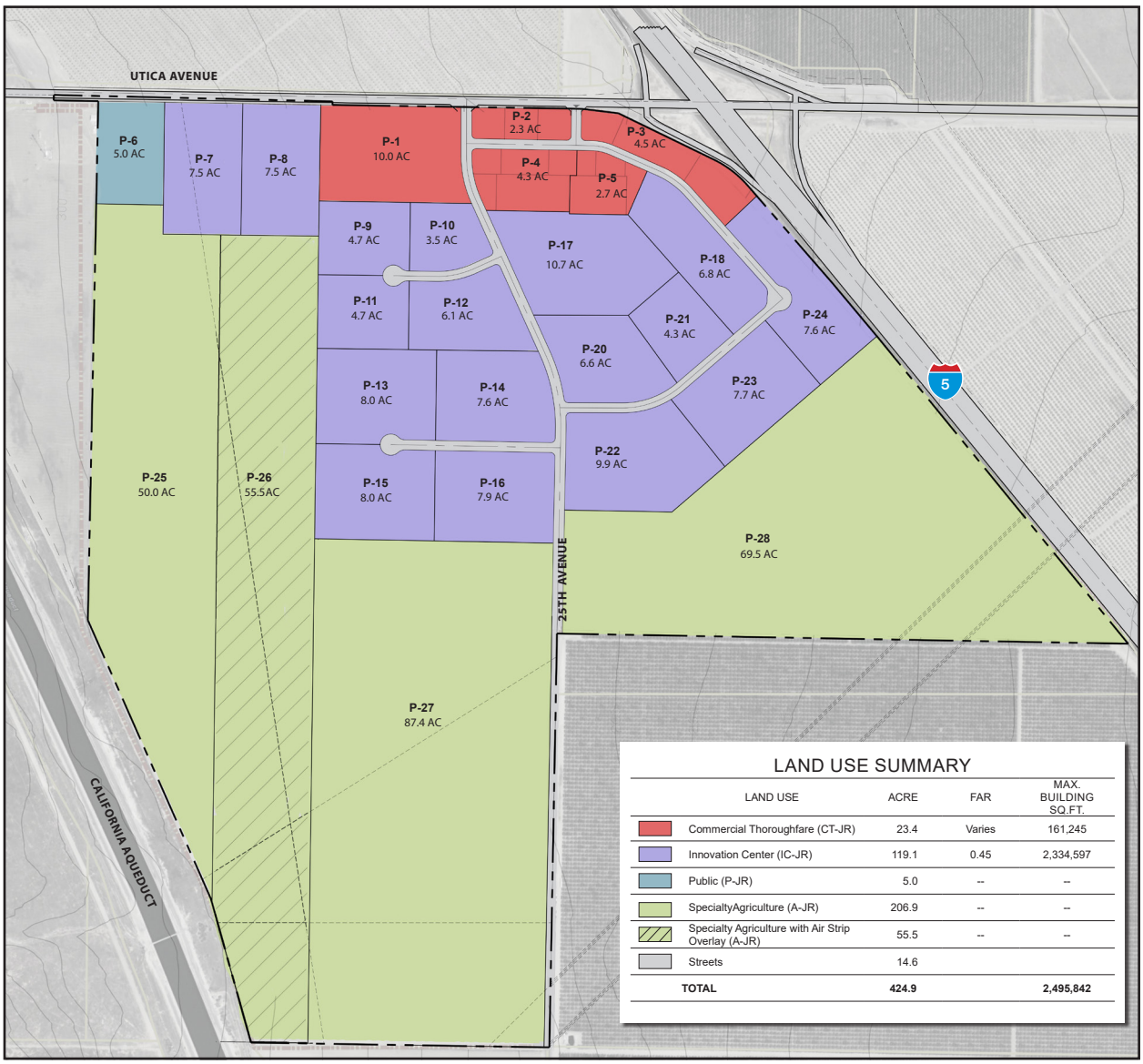

Plan Area Boundary

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Scale (Feet)

Source: ESRI, 2019

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Phases Three and Four

Combined, Phases Three and Four consists of approximately 89 acres and 1,755,000 square feet of commercial space in the Innovation Center designated area of the Specific Plan (see Figure 4). Phase Three consists of approximately 50 acres and 990,000 square feet of commercial space. Phase 4 consists of approximately 39 acres and 765,000 square feet of commercial space. The Innovation Center designation allows for a range of uses, including light industrial, research and development, medical offices, hospitals, office, hospitality, retail, and entertainment. Access to Phases Three and Four would primarily be from local streets connected to 25th Avenue.

1.4.3 Infrastructure Plan

Jackson Ranch includes on- and offsite infrastructure plans that are necessary to accommodate development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan, including plans for mobility, stormwater management, potable water, wastewater management, utilities (electricity, natural gas, and telecommunication services), and solid waste disposal.

Mobility Plan

The mobility plan for Jackson Ranch addresses all aspects of the public realm within street rights-of-way, including landscaping, sidewalks, and travel lanes. The Mobility Plan includes three street classifications—arterial streets, collector streets, and local streets—that include 15 acres of the Plan Area. Following is a description of each classification:

- **Arterial Street.** Utica Avenue serves as an arterial street, connecting the Plan Area to I-5. Utica Avenue includes four travel lanes within a 74-foot right-of-way. A 10-foot-wide landscape area and 5-foot-wide sidewalk are included in the southern parkway, adjacent to the project boundary. The northern parkway of this street is not included in the boundaries of the Plan Area.

- **Collector Street.** The collector street of the Plan Area is 25th Avenue, and a realignment is planned to create more stacking distance for vehicles traveling toward the Utica Avenue off-ramp. Within the developed area, a 62-foot right-of-way is proposed, including a 6-foot-wide, curb-adjacent landscape area and a 5-foot-wide sidewalk on both sides. Within the agricultural area, the 25th Avenue right-of-way remains at the existing width of 60 feet.

- **Local Streets.** Local streets provide access to individual planning areas. These streets feature a 56-foot right-of-way, with a 32-foot curb-to-curb distance. A 6-foot-wide parkway and 5-foot-wide sidewalk would be included on both sides.

Stormwater Management Plan

The stormwater management and collection system include on- and offsite watersheds, primate stormwater facilities, secondary stormwater facilities, BMP (best management practice) treatments. All stormwater, flood protection, and terminal discharge improvements necessary to accommodate the Specific Plan's development phases would be approved by Kettleman City Community Services District (KCCSD), Kings County Public

1. Introduction

Works, Kings County Flood Control, and any other state or federal Agency having jurisdiction over the improvements.

Potable Water Plan

Two alternatives are being studied for the provision of water to the Plan Area. The first alternative involves the installation of an onsite water treatment plant to treat the water supplied from the aqueduct to potable standards. A second alternative proposes a connection to the Kettleman Water Treatment Plant located five miles north of the Plan Area; the plant is owned and operate by KCCSD. The second alternative would require coordination with KCCSD. It would also require approval from the Local Agency Formation Commission of Kings County for any KCCSD boundary or service expansion that may be needed to serve the Specific Plan's potable water needs. The raw water supply for Jackson Ranch would be the State Water Project and Kern River Water Bank. The potential water demand will be assessed in the Water Supply Assessment to be prepared as a part of the EIR.

Wastewater Management Plan

Wastewater from Jackson Ranch would flow through the proposed gravity sewer system from the individual development sites to a proposed pump station in the northwestern portion of the Plan Area, within the 5 acres that make up the Public land use designation. From there, wastewater would be pumped approximately 2,000 feet through a force main to the proposed wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) in the northwestern portion of the Plan Area. A packaged extended aeration system is planned for treating the wastewater. This system involves sending the wastewater through an influent screen, equalization of flow, anoxic-aerobic treatment, clarification, and sludge storage.

The influent wastewater would enter the screening unit and exit the plant through the effluent weir of the clarifier. The effluent wastewater would be disposed to one of two of the proposed percolation ponds. Sludge would be periodically pumped from the sludge holding tank and hauled away by a septic hauling truck. An emergency wastewater storage pond would store influent wastewater in the event of a major malfunction at the WWTP.

Electric Service

Jackson Ranch is within the service area of Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) and would be served by the existing electrical transmission lines onsite and abutting the northern Plan Area boundary. New electrical transformers and switch stations would be located in key areas of the Plan Area to provide the necessary electric distribution infrastructure to serve Jackson Ranch.

Natural Gas

As with electricity, PG&E would provide natural gas service to the Plan Area through new regulator stations onsite that would connect to existing transmission pipelines offsite. Gas regulator stations would be located in areas that allow for ease of maintenance by utility crews. New subgrade gas mains would be located within roadways and easements as appropriate and typical for new development.

Communication Facilities

A telecommunications network serving high speed data, voice, and video services would be provided for Jackson Ranch. This state-of-the art system would work with Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers and Competitive Local Exchange Carriers to provide Jackson Ranch with an advanced communication network. Local communications transmission and distribution facilities may be located in any land use designation of the Specific Plan, and where feasible, lines would be located in underground easements or rights-of-way that permit access for maintenance with minimal disruption of surrounding properties.

Solid Waste

Solid waste generated in the Plan Area would be collected by Kings Waste and Recycling Authority (KWRA) and transferred to KWRA's Material Recovery Facility and Transfer Station at 7803 Hanford Armona Road in the City of Hanford. Some waste would be recycled at KWRA's facility prior to the remainder of the waste being disposed of at a state-licensed landfill in the region. Hazardous waste would be disposed of at Kettleman Hills Hazardous Waste Facility approximately four miles northwest of the Plan Area; the facility is managed and operated by Waste Management. Green waste would be disposed at the Kochergen Farms Composting Facility; the facility is managed and operated by Kochergen Farms Composting, Inc.

1.5 COUNTY ACTION REQUESTED

1.5.1 Lead Agency

To implement the Specific Plan, the following discretionary actions and approvals are required by the County's approval body:

- Adoption of a General Plan Amendment: General Plan Land Use Designation Change from General Agriculture-40 Acre to Jackson Ranch Specific Plan
- Adoption of a Development Code and Zoning District Map Amendment: Development Code Amendment to add the Jackson Ranch Specific Plan by reference and Zone District Map Amendment to change the zoning district from AG-40 to Jackson Ranch Specific Plan
- Adoption of the Jackson Ranch Specific Plan
- Certification of the Environmental Impact Report

1.5.2 Responsible Agency

A responsible agency is a public agency other than the lead agency that has responsibility for carrying out or approving a project (CEQA Guidelines § 15381 and Public Resources Code § 21069). As part of the Specific Plan, the following approvals from responsible agencies are required:

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- **California Department of Transportation.** Coordination and approval for necessary roadway improvements to Caltrans facilities. Issuance of encroachment permits for any improvements within Caltrans right-of-way.

- **Local Agency Formation Commission of Kings County.** Approval of any Kettleman City Community Services District boundary or service expansion that may be needed to serve the Specific Plan's potable water needs.

2. Environmental Checklist

2.1 PROJECT INFORMATION

1. **Project Title:** Jackson Ranch Specific Plan

2. **Lead Agency Name and Address**:
   Kings County Community Development Agency
   1400 West Lacey Boulevard, Building #6
   Hanford, CA 93230

3. **Contact Person and Phone Number:**
   Chuck Kinney, Deputy Director of Planning
   559.852.2670

4. **Project Location:** The Specific Plan is in an unincorporated area of Kings County, adjacent to Interstate 5 (I-5) at the Utica Avenue off-ramp. The Plan Area is approximately 70 miles northwest of the City of Bakersfield and 70 miles southwest of the City of Fresno. The southbound I-5 on-ramp forms the northeast boundary of the site, and the I-5 right-of way is adjacent to the eastern boundary. A portion of the southwestern boundary is adjacent to the California Aqueduct, and 25th Avenue bisects the Plan Area from north to south.

5. **Project Sponsor's Name and Address:**
   Utica J.L.J. LLC
   6 Rue Chantilly
   Newport Beach, CA 92660

6. **General Plan Designation:** General Agriculture-40 Acre

7. **Zoning:** General Agricultural-40 District (AG-40)

8. **Description of Project:** Consisting of approximately 425 acres along I-5 at the Utica Avenue off-ramp, Jackson Ranch is envisioned as an innovative service and commercial center that will encourage economic growth while honoring the agricultural heritage of the region. A total of just under 2.5 million square feet of commercial space is planned for 142 acres of the Plan Area. Approximately 207 acres is proposed to be designated for agriculture. Additionally, approximately 56 acres are designated for agricultural use with an air strip overlay, and 15 acres are designated for public streets. A 5-acre area has been set aside for public utility uses, including a wastewater treatment plant.

2. Environmental Checklist

9. **Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:** Surrounding land uses include agricultural land on all sides. Major infrastructure surrounding the Plan Area includes I-5 to the east and the California Aqueduct to the west.

10. **Other Public Agencies Whose Approval Is Required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participating agreement:**
    - California Department of Transportation
    - Local Agency Formation Commission of Kings County

11. **Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?**

    Note: Conducting consultation early in the CEQA process allows tribal governments, lead agencies, and project proponents to discuss the level of environmental review, identify and address potential adverse impacts to tribal cultural resources, and reduce the potential for delay and conflict in the environmental review process. (See Public Resources Code section 21080.3.2.) Information may also be available from the California Native American Heritage Commission's Sacred Lands File per Public Resources Code section 5097.94 and the California Historical Resources Information System administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation. Please also note that Public Resources Code section 21082.3(c) contains provisions specific to confidentiality.

    Tribal consultation will be completed in accordance with Senate Bill 18 and Assumedly Bill 52.

2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact," as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

☐ Aesthetics	☒ Agriculture / Forestry Resources	☒ Air Quality
☒ Biological Resources	☒ Cultural Resources	☐ Energy
☒ Geology/Soils	☒ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐ Hazards and Hazardous Materials
☒ Hydrology/Water Quality	☒ Land Use / Planning	☐ Mineral Resources
☒ Noise	☐ Population / Housing	☒ Public Services
☐ Recreation	☒ Transportation	☒ Tribal Cultural Resources
☒ Utilities / Service Systems	☐ Wildfire	☒ Mandatory Findings of Significance

2.3 DETERMINATION (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE LEAD AGENCY)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Chuck Kinney — *Signature*

8-23-19 — *Date*

Chuck Kinney, Deputy Director - Planning — *Printed Name*

Kings County Community Development Agency — *For*

2.4 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors, as well as general standards (e.g., the project would not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).

2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.

3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.

4. "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level.

5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:

    a) **Earlier Analyses Used.** Identify and state where they are available for review.

    b) I**mpacts Adequately Addressed.** Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.

    c) **Mitigation Measures.** For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.

6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated. A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.

7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.

8. This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.

9. The explanation of each issue should identify:

   a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and

   b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significant.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
I. AESTHETICS. Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?			X	
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?				X
c) In nonurbanized 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 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?			X	
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?			X	
II. 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 Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	X			
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?			X	
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?				X
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				X

2. Environmental Checklist

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?			X	
III. AIR QUALITY. Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	X			
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?	X			
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	X			
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?			X	
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	X			
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?				X
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?				X
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?	X			
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				X
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?				X
V. CULTURAL RESOURCES. Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?				X
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	X			
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?			X	

2. Environmental Checklist

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VI. ENERGY. Would the project:				
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?			X	
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?			X	
VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS. Would the project:				
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map, issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.				X
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?			X	
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?			X	
iv) Landslides?				X
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?			X	
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?			X	
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?			X	
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?				X
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	X			
VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS. Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	X			
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	X			
IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS. Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?			X	
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?			X	

2. Environmental Checklist

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	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?				X
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				X
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?				X
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				X
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?				X
X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY. Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	X			
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	X			
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 a substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	X			
ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;	X			
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	X			
iv) impede or redirect flood flows?				X
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?				X
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	X			
XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING. Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?				X
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?	X			

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XII. MINERAL RESOURCES. Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a value to the region and the residents of the state?				X
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?				X
XIII. NOISE. Would the project result in:				
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	X			
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?				X
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?				X
XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING. Would the project:				
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)?			X	
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X
XV. PUBLIC SERVICES. Would the project:				
a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the 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?	X			
Police protection?	X			
Schools?				X
Parks?				X
Other public facilities?				X
XVI. 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?			X	

2. Environmental Checklist

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	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?				X
XVII. TRANSPORTATION. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	X			
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	X			
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?				X
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?				X
XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES.				
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or				X
ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	X			
XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS. Would the project:				
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	X			
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	X			
c) Result in a determination by the waste water 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?	X			

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	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?	**X**			
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?			**X**	
XX. WILDFIRE. If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:				
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				**X**
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?				**X**
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?				**X**
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?				**X**
XXI. 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?	**X**			
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.)	**X**			
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	**X**			

2. Environmental Checklist

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3. Environmental Analysis

Section 2.4 provided a checklist of environmental impacts. This section provides an evaluation of the impact categories and questions contained in the checklist and identifies mitigation measures, if applicable. Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

3.1 AESTHETICS

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

Less Than Significant Impact. For purposes of determining significance under CEQA, a scenic vista, is a viewpoint that provides expansive views of a highly valued landscape for the benefit of the general public. In addition, some scenic vistas are officially designated by public agencies, or informally designated by tourist guides. A substantial adverse effect to such a scenic vista is one that degrades the view from such a designated view spot.

The Open Space Element of the Kings County General Plan addresses scenic resources in the County. The Open Space Element identifies the Kings River and Cross Creek in the northern half of the County as scenic natural assets, and the mountain terrain of the County's southwest edges (including Kettleman Hills) as providing a distinctive visual backdrop. The Coast Ranges in the southwestern portion of the County have also been identified as a scenic resource. The Plan Area is approximately 22 miles southwest of the portion of the Kings River that is designated as scenic, approximately 0.75 miles east from the toe of the Kettleman Hills eastern slope, and approximately 15.5 miles northeast of the Coast Ranges.

The Kettleman Hills to the west of the Plan Area are the closest scenic feature to the Plan Area; they provide a backdrop to this area of the County. However, limited views of these hills are provided from the Plan Area and surrounding roadways. For example, views of these hills afforded to motorists traveling on I-5 (which forms a portion of the eastern site boundary of the Planning Area) are limited to a small portion of the freeway that abuts the northeastern Plan Area boundary. Views of the hills afforded to I-5 motorists along the majority of the Plan Area frontage is very limited to none at all due to the dense planting of trees in the existing almond orchard onsite. Under the Specific Plan, the majority of the orchard (generally west of I-5 and east of 25th Avenue) would remain and continue to block views of the hills to I-5 motorists. Additionally, more complete public vistas of Kettleman Hills from the east-west-oriented Utica Avenue — which forms the northern Plan Area boundary — would not be affected as a result of development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan. The Specific Plan would not introduce visual obstructions that would affect motorists or passerby traveling west on this roadway, as the Plan Area is on the south side of Utica Avenue and views of the hills from this roadway are to the west.

Additionally, the Plan Area and its surroundings primarily consist of active and fallow agricultural land or rangeland, as shown in Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*. The Plan Area has historically been used for farming, and

portions of it presently contain an almond tree orchard. As stated in the Open Space Element of the Kings County General Plan, "In addition to their economic value and commodity production, the vast stretches of green field crops, orchards and vineyards are also valued for their scenic beauty and representation of Kings County's identity." As shown in Figure 4, just under half (207 acres) of the Plan Area would be designated as Specialty Agriculture, which allows for the continued operation of the almond tree orchard.

Furthermore, as shown in Figure 4, implementation of the Specific Plan would result in development in the Innovation Center and Commercial Thoroughfare designated areas of the Specific .Development of these areas would occur on active and fallow agricultural lands of the Plan Area (see Figured 3 and 4). The active agricultural land currently consists of an almond orchard, south of Utica Avenue and west of 25th Avenue. The almond orchard, which is visible to motorists traveling along Utica Avenue, would be removed to allow for development under the Specific Plan. However, its removal would not result in a significant impact on a scenic vista. As noted above, the orchard generally west of I-5 and east of 25th Avenue of would remain and continue to provide a scenic vista for motorists traveling along I-5.

Based on the preceding, impacts to scenic vistas as a result of the Specific Plan would be less than significant. Therefore, this impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

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

No Impact. According to the California Scenic Highway Mapping System of the California Department of Transportation, the Plan Area is not on or near a major state-designated scenic highway (Caltrans 2019a). In fact, no designated scenic highways are located in the County. California State Route 41 (SR-41) is the nearest eligible state scenic highway, about 7.3 miles northwest of the Plan Area. Specifically, a portion of SR 41, from its intersection with SR 33 and proceeding to the San Luis Obispo County line, is designated by Caltrans as an eligible state scenic highway. However, due to the distance, little to no visibility of the Plan Are is afforded from SR-41. Additionally, there are no rock outcroppings or historic buildings in the Plan Area. Therefore, development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would not damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway. No impact would occur and this impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

c) In nonurbanized 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 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. The assessment of aesthetic impacts is subjective by nature. Aesthetics generally refers to the identification of visual resources and their quality, as well as an overall visual perception of the environment. A project is generally considered to have a significant aesthetic impact if it substantially changes the character or quality of the project site such that the site becomes visually incompatible with or visually unexpected in its surroundings.

Following is a discussion of the potential aesthetic and visual effects resulting from implementation of the Specific Plan's construction and operational phases.

Project Construction Phase

Future development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would result in construction activities that would temporarily change the visual character of the Plan Area and its surroundings. Construction activities would involve demolition, site clearing, grading, building, and site improvements. Construction staging areas, including earth stockpiling, storage of equipment and supplies, and related activities would contribute to a generally "disturbed site," which may be perceived by some as a visual impact.

However, these effects would be typical of any development site in the County that undergoes development or redevelopment. These activities may be unsightly during the site preparation and construction phases, but they are not considered significant because they are temporary. Construction fencing would be erected to help shield the construction areas and would also be temporary. Therefore, project-related construction activities would not have a significant effect on the existing visual character or quality of the Plan Area and its surroundings. Impacts would be less than significant and this impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

Project Operation Phase

Land uses in the Plan Area and its surroundings primarily consist of active and fallow agricultural land or rangeland, as shown in Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*. The Plan Area has historically been used for farming, and portions of the Plan Area presently contain an orchard of almond trees near the end of their productive life expectancy.

Implementation of the Specific Plan would transform the Plan Area from primarily agricultural land to an innovative service and commercial center. Under the Specific Plan, a total of just under 2.5 million square feet of commercial space is planned for approximately 142 acres of the Plan Area. Approximately 207 acres is to be designated for agricultural use, and an additional 56 acres is to be designated as agricultural use with an overlay for a potential future air strip. Approximately 15 acres are designated for public streets, and 5 acres has been set aside for public utility uses, including a wastewater treatment plant. Accordingly, development that would be accommodate by the Specific Plan has the potential to impact the overall visual character of the Plan Area and its surroundings. Implementation of the Specific Plan would create a noticeable environment with new development surrounded by agricultural land and rangeland. It would introduce many new features to the aesthetic landscape, including but not limited to large buildings, signage, a variety of lighting features, parking areas and other hardscapes, pedestrian facilities, loading bays, and vehicles and delivery trucks. The conversion of the Plan Area from its current agricultural condition to urban uses would alter the existing visual character of the Plan Area and its surroundings.

Sensitive viewers of the Plan Area would primarily be highway travelers along I-5. No residential viewers (which are considered sensitive a land use) would be impacted development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan. The nearest residential community is Kettleman City approximately 5.5 miles to the northwest. Although there are no sensitive land uses in, adjacent to or within proximity of the Plan Area, development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would be visible to motorists traveling on I-5 and Utica Avenue to a much lesser extent, which form the eastern and northern Plan Area boundaries, respectively.

3. Environmental Analysis

To help soften the change in visual character to the Plan Area and surrounding vicinity, the Specific Plan provides development standards (e.g., building height limitations and setback requirements) and design guidelines (e.g., architectural, landscape, signage) that future development would be required to adhere to. The Specific Plan would ensure high quality and context-sensitive design within the Plan Area through implementation of the design guidelines and development standards. For example, future development within the Plan Area would be required to comply with the Specific Plan's design guidelines, which establish parameters for building design and massing, facades and street walls, circulation and parking, landscaping, signage, and utility areas. These design guidelines would help create a uniform architectural theme for the Plan Area. Compliance with the design guideline and development standards would be ensured through the County's development review process.

In addition, compliance with the development standards of the Specific Plan related to permitted uses, development intensity, building placement (i.e., setbacks and fronting), building heights, and parking requirements would ensure that all new development projects that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan are built to share similar character and style to unify the Plan Area. For example, minimum and maximum setbacks and building heights have been established in the Specific Plan to create a consistent street scene, provide attractive landscaping, and provide visual buffers.

The Specific Plan's landscape plan also includes a variety of new trees, shrubs, and groundcover around the proposed buildings and structure; along the street and freeways frontages; and within the parking areas and common areas. Pursuant to the landscape design guidelines of the Specific Plan, landscaping with variations in height, type and color would be introduced along the Plan Ara edges and internally to soften the "hardness" of the buildings and structures of development projects that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan. Overall, the landscape elements proposed for the Plan Area would help to visually soften the height and massing of the proposed buildings when viewed from surrounding roadways, as well as help provide visual interest and relief. Also, pursuant to County requirements, the project proponent(s) would be required to submit a landscaping plan for review and approval by Kings County.

Furthermore, the Specific Plan would preserve approximately 207 acres of existing agricultural land use. A good part of the 207 acres consists of almond orchards, which includes dense planting of trees. Under the Specific Plan, the majority of the orchard (generally west of I-5 and east of 25th Avenue) would remain and continue to provide a visual buffer. Specifically, the orchard would provide a buffer between future development that would be accommodated in the Plan Area by the Specific Plan and motorists traveling on I-5.

Site grading under the Specific Plan would also involve removal of vegetation from the Plan Area and alter the natural topography. However, alteration of the natural topography would be minimal as the Plan Area is generally flat with no significant topographical features.

Based on the preceding, impacts related to aesthetic and visual character would less than significant. This impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Less Than Significant Impact. Nighttime illumination and glare impacts are the effects of a project's exterior lighting upon adjoining uses and areas. Glare can also be generated by light reflecting off passing cars and large expanses of glazing (i.e., glass windows) or other reflective surfaces. Excessive light and/or glare can impair vision, cause annoyance, affect sleep patterns, and generate safety hazards when experienced by drivers. Following is a discussion of the potential day and nighttime light and glare impacts in the project area as a result of development that would be accommodated under the Specific Plan.

As shown in Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*, the Plan Area and its surroundings are developed with agricultural land and rangeland and are void of daytime glare and nighttime light sources. The only sources of nighttime light and glare in the project area are a few streetlights along I-5 and from headlights of vehicles traveling on I-5 and the portion of Utica Avenue that intersects with I-5.

Daytime Glare

Glare is largely a daytime phenomenon occurring when sunlight is reflected off the surfaces of buildings or objects. Excessive glare not only impedes visibility, but also increases the ambient heat reflectivity in a given area. Development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan includes building materials and architectural treatments that could cause daytime glare on abutting roadways, but not to such an extent that they would result in a significant impact on motorist traveling on I-5 or Utica Avenue. For example, the architectural treatments of the future buildings would include style-appropriate architectural building materials, such as stucco; concrete masonry; stone veneers; wood and metal siding exteriors; and glass windows and doors. However, aside from the glass windows and doors, the building materials and architectural treatments would not be reflective in nature and would therefore not create substantial day or nighttime glare. Future buildings would also not include large expanses of glazing (i.e., glass windows and doors). Therefore, daytime glare impacts from project-related architectural treatments and building materials would be less than significant. This impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

Nighttime Lighting

As noted above, the only sources of nighttime light and glare in the project area are a few streetlights along I-5 and from headlights of vehicles traveling on I-5 and to a much lesser extent, the portion of Utica Avenue that intersects with I-5. I-5 introduces typical vehicle created nighttime lighting to the area that is visible from quite a distance on the valley floor.

Improvements and future developments in the Plan Area under the Specific Plan would generate new sources of light and glare that could substantially affect nighttime views in the Plan Area and its surroundings. Sources of light and glare from new development accommodated by the Specific Plan would include lighting needed to provide nighttime street and building illumination, security lighting, nighttime traffic, sign illumination, and potentially lighting associated with construction activities (e.g., lit construction trailers, site lighting). New light sources would also result in a greater overall level of nighttime lighting in the area; therefore, reducing night sky visibility and affecting the general character of the area.

3. Environmental Analysis

However, there are no light-sensitive uses (e.g., residences, convalescent homes, hospitals) in, adjacent to or in proximity of the Plan Area. As shown in Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*, surrounding land uses primarily consist of active and fallow agricultural land or grazing lands. Therefore, nighttime light and glare impacts on sensitive uses would not occur.

Additionally, Section 4.8 (Outdoor Lighting) of the Specific Plan outlines requirements for outdoor lighting. Future development projects accommodated by the Specific Plan would be required to adhere to these lighting requirements, which include but are not limited to:

- All exterior lighting shall be designed and located to minimize power consumption and to confine direct rays to the premises.
- The use of "Night Sky Friendly" lighting fixtures and equipment is required for all public and private outdoor spaces wherever feasible. All lighting shall comply with standards established by the International Dark Sky Association.

All proposed exterior lighting would be designed, arranged, installed, directed, shielded, operated, and maintained in such a manner as to contain direct illumination onsite and prevent light and glare impacts offsite in accordance with the provisions of the Specific Plan — as well as any other applicable County lighting standards — thereby preventing excess illumination and light spillover onto adjoining land uses and/or roadways. For example, nighttime lighting used for signage would be used to advertise the business and provide directional information but would not affect the overall nighttime view in the project area.

Compliance with the lighting provisions of the Specific Plan and County would also help ensure preservation of the regions night skies and help prevent excessive nighttime light pollution. Also, pursuant to County requirements, the project proponent(s) would be required to submit a lighting plan for review and approval by Kings County.

Furthermore, development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would be required to comply with California's Building Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings, Title 24, Part 6, of the California Code of Regulations, which outlines mandatory provisions for lighting control devices and luminaires. For example, the lighting sources of development projects would be required to be installed in accordance with the provisions of Section 110.9 (Mandatory Requirements for Lighting Control Devices and Systems, Ballasts, and Luminaires).

Furthermore, a good part of the 207 acres that would be preserved for agricultural land use consists of almond orchards, which includes dense planting of trees. Under the Specific Plan, the majority of the orchard (generally west of I-5 and east of 25th Avenue) would remain and help shield some of the lighting that would emanate from various development areas of the Plan Area onto I-5.

Based on the preceding, nighttime light and glare impacts as a result of development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would be less than significant. This impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

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

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

Potentially Significant Impact. Onsite land uses primarily consist of active and fallow agricultural land or rangeland, as shown in Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*. The agricultural production in the area consists mainly of irrigated crops such as almonds, pistachios, and stone fruits (apricots and plums); dry land grazing also occurs onsite. The Plan Area has historically been used for farming and portions of the Project Area presently contain an orchard of almond trees near the end of their productive life expectancy. Much of the Plan Area has been in agricultural use since at least 2005, as shown on historical aerial photographs, and land next to the southeast site boundary has been in agricultural use since at least 1994 (NETR 2019). The southern part of the Plan Area is shown in agricultural use on topographic maps dated 1956 and 1976 (NETR 2019).

The Plan Area includes about 210 acres of Prime Farmland and about 205 acres of Grazing Land, as mapped by the Division of Land Resource Protection (DLRP 2016). Prime farmland has the highest value of three categories of mapped important farmland analyzed under CEQA. Development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would convert part of the Prime Farmland onsite to nonagricultural uses. This impact is potentially significant and will be analyzed in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. Williamson Act contracts restrict the use of privately-owned land to agriculture and compatible open-space uses under contract with local governments; in exchange, the land is taxed based on actual use rather than potential market value. The Plan Area is not subject to a Williamson Act contract (DLRP 2015).

The Plan Area is currently zoned General Agriculture-40 District (AG-40) with a minimum parcel size of 40 acres. The properties surrounding the Plan Area are also zoned similarly. Project approval would involve a zone change to change the Plan Area's zoning designation of AG-40 to Specific Plan. Upon approval of the proposed zone change, the proposed land uses would conform with the revised zone designation. Additionally, as shown in Figure 4, *Specific Plan Land Use Plan*, just under half (207 acres) of the Plan Area would be designated as Specialty Agriculture, which allows for the continued operation of the almond tree orchard. The Specialty Agriculture land use designation would establish an agricultural buffer between the commercial uses proposed

in the northern portion of the Plan Area and continued intensive agricultural production to the south, both within the Plan Area boundary and beyond. Additionally, the California Aqueduct along the west and transportation corridors of I-5 and Utica Avenue along the east and north, respectively, would provide buffer boundaries from surrounding agricultural operations.

Based on the preceding, impacts would be less than significant and this impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?

No Impact. Forest land is defined as "land that can support 10-percent native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits" (California Public Resources Code § 12220[g]). Timberland is defined as "land…which is available for, and capable of, growing a crop of trees of any commercial species used to produce lumber and other forest products, including Christmas trees" (California Public Resources Code § 4526).

Onsite land uses primarily consist of active and fallow agricultural land or rangeland, as shown in Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*. Part of the Plan Area is cultivated as orchards—consisting of almond, pistachio, apricot, and plum orchards—and the balance of the site is fallow agricultural land. However, all trees onsite are nonnative trees that have been planted for farming purposes over time and are not cultivated for forest or timberland resources. Orchard use is not considered forest land or timberland.

Additionally, the Plan Area is not zoned for forest land, timberland, or timberland production. As stated above, the Plan Area is zoned General Agriculture-40 District (AG-40) and would be rezoned to Specific Plan. Therefore, development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would not conflict with any such zoning and no impact would occur. This impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact. See response to Section 3.2.c, above. As substantiated in that section, no impact would occur. This impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact. See responses to Sections 3.2.a, b, and c, above.

Additionally, development of nonagricultural land uses next to agricultural land can reduce the agricultural value of the latter area through factors that include:

- Restrictions on the use of pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides
- Restrictions on noise, burning, and dust

- Vehicular emissions from new development that may impact the health of crops
- Competition for water supply
- Land's market value surpassing the land's value for agricultural production
- Increased congestion that may cause hazards related to moving crops and machinery
- Increased traffic congestion leading to longer transport time of products
- Loss of any habitat value
- Vandalism from trespass, crop pilferage, and damage to equipment. (Michael Brandman 2008)

The Kings County Right to Farm Ordinance (Kings County Code of Ordinances Section 14-38) determined that agricultural activities are a high priority and favored use of rural land, and farming activities will not be considered a nuisance for those inconveniences or discomforts arising from normal, usual, and customary agricultural operations (Michael Brandman 2008). The Plan Area is in a rural area, and thus the Right to Farm Ordinance applies to the Plan Area. The Plan Area does not propose any sensitive types of land uses (such as residential, school, day care, hospital, and nursing home uses) and would not discourage on-going agricultural uses adjacent to the Plan Area. As shown in Figure 4, just under half (207 acres) of the Plan Area would be designated as Specialty Agriculture (A-JR), which allows for the continued operation of the almond tree orchard.

Therefore, impacts would be less than significant and this impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

3.3 AIR QUALITY

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

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

Potentially Significant Impact. The Plan Area is in the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB) and is subject to the air quality management plans prepared by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD). Construction activities in the Plan Area would generate exhaust from construction equipment and vehicle trips, fugitive dust from ground-disturbing activities, and off-gas emissions from architectural coatings and paving. Additionally, implementation of the Specific Plan would result in new development intensity and associated increase in criteria air pollutants as a result of long-term operational activities. This impact is potentially significant and will be analyzed in the EIR. The EIR will evaluate the Specific Plan's consistency with regional growth forecasts and the impacts it would have on the attainment of regional air quality objectives. Mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard? (Left off here)

Potentially Significant Impact. The SJVAB is designated nonattainment for ozone (O_3) and fine inhalable particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) under the California and National Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS) and

nonattainment for coarse inhalable particulate matter (PM_{10}) under the California AAQS. In accordance with SJVAPCD's methodology, any project that produces a significant project-level regional air quality impact in an area that is in nonattainment contributes to the cumulative impact. Air pollutant emissions associated with the Specific Plan could occur over the short term for site preparation and construction activities. In addition, emissions could result during long-term operation of proposed facilities. An air quality analysis will be prepared to determine if the Specific Plan would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase in any criteria air pollutant. This impact is potentially significant and will be evaluated in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Potentially Significant Impact. An air quality analysis is required to determine if the potential mobile and stationary air emissions associated with implementation of the Specific Plan could result in exposure of offsite sensitive receptors to significant concentrations of air pollutants. An air quality analysis will be prepared to address potential impacts to sensitive receptors that would be exposed on a recurring basis to substantial air emissions associated with the Specific Plan. Further evaluation in the EIR is required to determine the level of significance and to identify mitigation measures (if necessary) that reduce impacts to below a level of significance, if required. This impact is potentially significant and will be evaluated in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The Plan Area would not generate substantial odors. The threshold for odor is if a project creates an odor nuisance pursuant to SJVAPCD Rule 4102, Nuisance, which states:

> A person shall not discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other material which cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public, or which endanger the comfort, repose, health or safety of any such persons or the public, or which cause, or have a natural tendency to cause, injury or damage to business or property. The provisions of this rule shall not apply to odors emanating from agricultural operations necessary for the growing of crops or the raising of fowl or animals.

The type of facilities that are considered to have objectionable odors include wastewater treatments plants, compost facilities, landfills, solid waste transfer stations, fiberglass manufacturing facilities, paint/coating operations (e.g., auto body shops), dairy farms, petroleum refineries, asphalt batch plants, chemical manufacturing, and food manufacturing facilities. The land use that would be accommodate by the Specific Plan do not fall within the aforementioned land uses although the proposed restaurants could generate odors from cooking. Odors from cooking are not substantial enough to be considered nuisance odors that would affect a substantial number of people. Emissions from construction equipment, such as diesel exhaust and VOCs from architectural coatings, may generate odors. However, these odors would be low in concentration, temporary, and are not expected to affect a substantial number of people within a five-mile distance from the planned area. Therefore, implementation of the Specific Plan would result in less than significant odor impacts. This impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Potentially Significant Impact. Sensitive and/or special status animal species may use the Plan Area as a movement corridor or for shelter, foraging, or feeding. For example, the burrowing owl and San Joaquin kit fox have a high potential to occur in the Plan Area due to the presence of suitable habitat (including soils and elevation factors). Other species (San Joaquin (Nelson's) Antelope Squirrel, Loggerhead shrike and American bagger) have a moderate potential to occur in the Plan Area (Ecorp 2019a). Additionally, sensitive and/or special status plant species could inhabit fallow agricultural land in the Plan Area. Therefore, this impact is potentially significant. A biological resource's technical report (BRTR) will be prepared for the Plan Area to analyze potential impacts to sensitive and/or special status specifies as a result of development that would be accommodate by the Specific Plan. This impact will be analyzed in the EIR and the findings and conclusions of the BRTR will be discussed in the EIR. Mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

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. Riparian habitats are those occurring along the banks of rivers and streams and are jurisdictional to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Sensitive natural communities are those that are listed on the CDFW California Natural Diversity Database due to the rarity of the community in the state or throughout its entire range (globally). There are no riparian habitats or other sensitive natural communities occurring in the Plan Area or surrounding areas (Ecorp 2019a). Therefore, implementation of the Specific Plan would not have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community. No impact would occur and this impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

No Impact. Wetlands are defined under the federal Clean Water Act as land that is flooded or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that normally does support, a prevalence of vegetation adapted to life in saturated soils. Wetlands include areas such as swamps, marshes, and bogs. No state or federally protected wetlands or Waters of the United States were identified on the Plan Area (Ecorp 2019a). The California Aqueduct, which passes along a portion of the western Plan Area boundary (see Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*), is mapped on the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) National Wetlands Mapper as a riverine (USFWS 2019).[1] However, the aqueduct consists of concrete bed and banks and

[1] Per the USFWS, riverine systems include all wetlands and deepwater habitats contained within a channel (USFWS 2019).

therefore, does not support wetland resources such as saturated soil or wetland vegetation. Implementation of the Specific Plan would not impact wetlands directly or indirectly. Therefore, no impact would occur and this impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

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?

Potentially Significant Impact. The concept of habitat corridors addresses the linkage between large blocks of habitat that allow the safe movement of mammals and other wildlife species from one habitat area to another. The Plan Area, which is highly disturbed with active and fallow agriculture, was assessed for its ability to function as a wildlife corridor. No migratory wildlife corridors or native wildlife nursery sites were identified in the Plan Area Additionally, the areas of fallow agriculture were devoid of vegetative cover, very exposed, and do not contain any features that typically are associated with facilitating wildlife movement, (i.e., drainages, riverbeds). The Plan Area is not considered a linkage or corridor between conserved natural habitat areas (Ecorp 2019a). Therefore, no impacts to wildlife corridors or nursery sites are expected to occur during as a result of development that would be accommodate by the Specific Plan.

However, wildlife could use both orchards and fallow agricultural fields for nesting. Potential nesting habitat for migratory birds and raptors protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code is present in the orchards and vegetation suitable for nesting birds was observed immediately adjacent to the Plan Area (Ecorp 2019a). Therefore, project-related construction activities could directly and indirectly affect nesting birds. The BRTR will assess the suitability of nesting to occur in the Plan Area and the potential impacts resulting from implementation of the Specific Plan. This impact is potentially significant and will be addressed in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

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

No Impact. Onsite land uses primarily consist of active and fallow agricultural land or rangeland, as shown in Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*. Part of the Plan Area is cultivated as orchards—consisting of almond, pistachio, apricot, and plum orchards—and the balance of the site is fallow agricultural land. Development that would be accommodated by the Specific plan would require removal a good number of trees from the orchards. However, all trees onsite are nonnative trees that have been planted for farming purposes over time. Additionally, Kings County does not have a tree preservation ordinance and does not contain any locally protected trees. Therefore, no impact would occur and this impact will not be addressed in the EIR.

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. The Plan Area is not in a Habitat Conservation Plan or Natural Community Conservation Plan (Ecorp 2019a). Therefore, development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would not conflict with any such plan. No impact would occur and this impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?

No Impact. Section 15064.5 defines historic resources as resources listed or determined to be eligible for listing by the State Historical Resources Commission, a local register of historical resources, or the lead agency. Generally, a resource is considered "historically significant" if it meets one of the following criteria:

i) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;

ii) Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;

iii) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values;

iv) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

No buildings or structures were observed onsite during a field visit by staff of Ecorp Consulting, Inc. (Ecorp 2019b). As shown in Figures 3, *Aerial Photograph*, onsite land uses primarily consist of active and fallow agricultural land or rangeland. Approximately 153 acres of the Plan Area is in agricultural use. The balance of the Plan Area is fallow but has been use for agricultural purposes in the past. Much of the Plan Area has been in agricultural use since at least 2005, as shown on historical aerial photographs, and land next to the southeast site boundary has been in agricultural use since at least 1994 (NETR 2019). Additionally, the Plan Area is not identified on these historic resource lists/databases—the National Register of Historic Places and the California State Historical Landmarks, Points of Historical Interest, and Register of Historic Places. Therefore, no impact to historical resources would occur and this impact will not be addressed in the EIR.

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?

Potentially Significant Impact. Given the highly-disturbed condition of the Plan Area and its surroundings, the potential for implementation of the Specific Plan to impact unidentified archeological resources is considered low. However, while unlikely, the presence of subsurface archaeological resources in the Plan Area remains possible, and these could be affected by ground-disturbing activities associated with grading and construction activities of development that would be accommodate by the Specific Plan. It is possible that subsurface disturbance might occur at levels not previously disturbed (e.g., deeper excavation than previously performed) or may uncover undiscovered archeological resources in the Plan Area. Therefore, potential impacts to archeological resources could occur as a result of project-related construction activities. An archeological records search will be conducted as part of the cultural resource's assessment for the Plan Area. This impact is potentially significant and will be addressed in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. There are no known human remains or cemeteries on or near the Plan Area. The Plan Area is in a highly-disturbed area of the County and is surrounded by similar disturbed areas. Onsite and surrounding land uses primarily consist of active and fallow agricultural land, as shown in Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*. Therefore, the likelihood that human remains (including those interred outside of formal cemeteries) may be discovered during site clearing and grading activities is considered extremely low. However, development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would involve ground-disturbing activities that could have the potential to disturb previously undiscovered subsurface human remains, if any exist. For example, individual development projects would involve deeper excavation than previously performed in the Plan Area.

In the unlikely event of discovery of human remains onsite, the project applicant would be responsible for compliance with California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5. California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that in the event that human remains are discovered in the Plan Area, disturbance of the development site shall halt and remain halted until the coroner has conducted an investigation into the circumstances, manner, and cause of any death, and the recommendations concerning the treatment and disposition of the human remains have been made to the person responsible for the excavation, or to his or her authorized representative. If the coroner determines that the remains are not subject to his or her authority and if the coroner recognizes or has reason to believe the human remains to be those of a Native American, he or she shall contact, by telephone within 24 hours, the Native American Heritage Commission.

Compliance with existing law regarding the discovery of human remains would reduce potential impacts to human remains to less than significant levels. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant and this impact will not be addressed in the EIR.

3.6 ENERGY

Would the project:

a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?

Less Than Significant Impact. Following is a discussion of the potential impacts related to the consumption of energy sources resulting from the construction and operational phases of development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan.

Construction

The construction phase of development projects that would be accommodate by the Specific Plan would consume energy in the short-term through electricity use, construction vehicles and equipment fuel consumption, and bound energy in construction materials (e.g., such as asphalt, steel, concrete, pipes, and manufactured or processed materials such as lumber and glass).

Electricity

Construction would require the use of construction equipment for grading, hauling, and building activities. Electricity use during construction would vary during different phases of construction—most of the construction equipment during grading would be gas or diesel powered, and the later construction phases, such as interior construction and architectural coatings, would require electricity-powered equipment. The use of electricity would be temporary and would fluctuate according to the phase of construction. The Specific Plan's construction phases would not result in wasteful or unnecessary electricity demands. Therefore, the Specific Plan would not result in a significant impact related to electricity use during the construction phase.

Transportation

Transportation energy use depends on the type and number of trips, vehicle miles traveled, fuel efficiency of vehicles, and travel mode. Transportation energy use during construction would come from the transport and use of construction equipment (off-road), delivery and haul trucks (on-road), and construction employee passenger vehicles (on-road). The majority of construction equipment during grading would be diesel powered.

Construction contractors in California are anticipated to minimize idling of construction equipment during construction in accordance with the provisions of California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 2485. This code requires that non-essential idling for all diesel-fueled commercial motor vehicles must not exceed 5 consecutive minutes at any location. Such required practices would limit wasteful and unnecessary energy consumption. Furthermore, the use of fuel by on- and off-road vehicles would be temporary and would fluctuate according to the phase of construction. Construction fuel use for the Plan Area would cease upon completion of each project construction phase. No unusual project characteristics would necessitate the use of construction equipment that would be less energy efficient than at comparable construction sites in the region or state. Therefore, it is expected that construction fuel consumption associated with the Specific Plan would not be any more inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary than similar development projects.

Therefore, the Specific Plan would not result in a significant impact related to transportation energy use during the construction phase.

Construction Materials

Construction materials may include recycled materials and products originating from nearby sources in order to reduce the costs of transportation. With increasing transportation costs and fuel prices, contractors and owners have a strong financial incentive to avoid wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy during construction. The type of construction proposed under the Specific Plan is conventional and would be similar to other commercial developments in the County.

Substantial reductions in energy inputs for construction materials can be achieved by building with recycled materials, which require substantially less energy to produce than nonrecycled materials. For example, construction contractors in California are required to reduce construction and demolition waste by recycling/salvaging at least 50 percent of nonhazardous construction and demolition waste, pursuant to the provisions of Section 5.408, Construction Waste Reduction, Disposal, and Recycling, of the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen [Title 24, Part 11 of the California Code of Regulations]).

3. Environmental Analysis

The incremental increase in the use of energy bound in construction materials such as asphalt, steel, concrete, pipes, and manufactured or processed materials (e.g., lumber and gas) would not substantially increase demand for energy compared to overall local and regional demand for construction materials. It is reasonable to assume that production of building materials such as concrete, steel, etc., would employ reasonable energy conservation practices in the interest of minimizing the cost of doing business. Therefore, the Specific Plan would not result in a significant impact related to construction materials during the construction phase.

Operation

Operation of uses that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would create additional demands for building electricity and natural gas compared to existing conditions and would result in increased transportation energy use.

Transportation

During the operational phase, it is anticipated that the Specific Plan would result in an increase in project-related vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and transportation energy consumption from the use of motor vehicles could potentially increase. Project-related VMT would come from employee and visitor vehicle trips, delivery and supply trucks, and trips by maintenance and repair crews.

Fuel consumption in passenger vehicles and trucks is regulated by federal and state laws regarding average corporate fuel economy of vehicles. As vehicle fleets turn over, the overall fuel economy of California's vehicles is improved. Additionally, one of the primary goals of the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) 2017 Scoping Plan is to provide clean transportation options for California residents. California is home to nearly half of the country's zero-emission vehicles. Alternative fuel producers and oil companies are bringing more low carbon fuels to the market than required by the Low Carbon Fuel Standard. And the state has invested in zero-emission vehicles and infrastructure, land use planning, and active transportation options such as walking and biking (CARB 2017). In January 2012, CARB approved the Advanced Clean Cars program for model years 2017 through 2025. The program combines the control of smog, soot, and global warming gases with requirements for greater numbers of zero electric vehicles into a single package of standards. Under California's Advanced Clean Car program, by 2025 new automobiles will emit 34 percent less global warming gases and 75 percent less smog-forming emissions (CARB 2011).

Development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would operate consistent with the requirements of these energy-related regulations and would not result in wasteful or unnecessary fuel demands. Therefore, the Specific Plan would not result in a significant impact related to transportation energy use during the operational phase.

Building Energy Use

Proposed buildings and uses of development projects that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would result in an increase in electricity and natural gas consumption during the operational phase. Energy would be used for but not limited to heating, cooling, and ventilation of the building; water heating; equipment; appliances; indoor, outdoor, perimeter, and parking lot lighting; and security systems.

All new buildings and structures developed under the Specific Plan would be required to be designed and constructed using the most current adopted green building practices. For example, California's Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24, Part 6 of the California Code of Regulations) are updated on an approximately three-year cycle to incorporate new energy efficiency technologies.[2] The 2019 Building Energy Efficiency Standards were adopted on May 9, 2018, and go into effect for new construction starting January 1, 2020. The 2019 standards focus on four key areas: 1) smart residential photovoltaic systems; 2) updated thermal envelope standards—preventing heat transfer from the interior to exterior and vice versa; 3) residential and nonresidential ventilation requirements; and 4) nonresidential lighting requirements (CEC 2018a). Under the 2019 standards, nonresidential buildings will be 30 percent more energy efficient compared to the 2016 standards (CEC 2018b). All new buildings and structures would also be required to be in compliance with the most current CALGreen standards, and all appliances would comply with the 2012 Appliance Efficiency Regulations.

Furthermore, solid waste from the operational phase will be managed in accordance with the Kings Waste and Recycling Authority's Integrated Waste Management Plan in order to reach the diversion and other goals mandated by the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (AB 939). AB 939 required all California cities to divert 50 percent of their waste stream from landfills by the year 2000. AB 341 established a new recycling goal of 75 percent by 2020.

Therefore, energy consumption associated with the operational phase of the Specific Plan would not be considered inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary. The Specific Plan would not result in a significant impact related to building energy use during the operational phase.

Conclusion

Based on the preceding, impacts associated with wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy during the Specific Plan's construction or operation phases would be less than significant. Therefore, this impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

Less Than Significant Impact. The California Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS) was established in 2002 under SB 1078 and was amended in 2006 and 2011. The RPS program requires investor-owned utilities, electric service providers, and community choice aggregators to increase the use of eligible renewable energy resources. Renewable energy sources include wind, small hydropower, solar, geothermal, biomass, and biogas. Electricity production from renewable sources is generally considered carbon neutral. Executive Order S-14-08, signed in November 2008, expanded the RPS to 33 percent renewable power by 2020. This standard was adopted by the legislature in 2011 (SB X1-2). Senate Bill 350 (de Leon) was signed into law September 2015 and establishes tiered increases to the RPS—40 percent by 2024, 45 percent by 2027, and 50 percent by 2030. Senate Bill 350 also set a new goal to double the energy-efficiency savings in electricity and natural gas through energy efficiency and conservation measures. On September 10, 2018, Governor Brown signed Senate Bill 100 (SB 100), which raises California's RPS requirements to 60 percent by 2030, with interim targets, and 100 percent by 2045. The

[2] The California Energy Code, part 6 of the California Building Standards Code which is title 24 of the California Code of Regulations, also titled The Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings.

bill also establishes a state policy that eligible renewable energy resources and zero-carbon resources supply 100 percent of all retail sales of electricity to California end-use customers and 100 percent of electricity procured to serve all state agencies by December 31, 2045. Under SB 100, the state cannot increase carbon emissions elsewhere in the western grid or allow resource shuffling to achieve the 100 percent carbon-free electricity target.

The Plan Area would be serviced by Pacific Gas and Electric. PG&E has reached California's 2020 renewable energy goal three years ahead of schedule, and delivered 33 percent of its electricity from renewable resources in 2017 (PG&E 2018). The net increase in power demand associated with the Specific Plan is anticipated to be within the service capabilities of PG&E and would not impede PG&E's ability to implement California's renewable energy goals. Therefore, the Specific Plan would not obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy.

Additionally, and with reference to Section 3.6.a above, the Specific Plan would not obstruct a state or local plan for energy efficiency. Impacts would remain less than significant and this impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

3.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:

a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning map, issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.

No Impact. The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act was passed in 1972 to mitigate the hazard of surface faulting to structures for human occupancy. Surface rupture is the most easily avoided seismic hazard. Fault rupture generally occurs within 50 feet of an active fault line and is limited to the immediate area of the fault zone where the fault breaks along the surface. The main purpose of the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act is to prevent construction of buildings used for human occupancy on the surface of active faults, in order to minimize the hazard of surface rupture of a fault to people and habitable buildings. Before cities and counties can permit development within Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones, geologic investigations are required to show that the proposed development site is not threatened by surface rupture from future earthquakes.

No active earthquake fault — that is, a fault that has ruptured during Holocene time (the last 11,700 years) — or Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone is mapped on or near the Plan Area on the California Geological Survey Data Viewer. The nearest mapped known fault to the Plan Area is about two miles to the south; however, no age estimate is provided for that fault. The nearest mapped active fault to the Plan Area is the San Andreas Fault about 24 miles to the southwest. The nearest Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault

Zone to the Plan Area is also about 24 miles to the southwest along the San Andreas Fault (CGS 2019a). Due to the distance to the active faults, the potential for surface rupture of a fault in the Plan Area is considered extremely low.

Therefore, implementation of the Specific Plan would not subject people or structures to hazards arising from surface rupture of a known active fault. No impact would occur and this impact will not be addressed in the EIR.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less Than Significant Impact. The most significant geologic hazard to the design life of Jackson Ranch is the potential for moderate to strong ground shaking resulting from earthquakes generated on the faults in seismically active southern California. As with other areas in southern California, it is anticipated that the Plan Area will likely be subject to strong ground shaking due to earthquake faults in the region. The earthquake faults in the region are considered capable of producing strong shaking in the Plan Area, thereby exposing people or structures on the site to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death. The intensity of ground shaking on individual development sites of the Plan Area would depend on the magnitude of the earthquake, distance to the epicenter, and the geology of the area between the epicenter and the project site.

However, the Plan Area is not at a greater risk of seismic activity or impacts than other sites in central California. Seismic shaking is a risk throughout most of California. The peak ground acceleration estimated to occur in the Plan Area with a 2 percent chance of exceedance in 50 years—that is, an average return interval of 2,475 years—is 0.592g, where g is the acceleration of gravity (CGS 2019b). Ground acceleration of 0.592g correlates with intensity VIII on the Modified Mercalli Intensity (MMI) Scale (Wald et. al. 1999), a subjective scale of how earthquakes are felt by people and the effects of earthquakes on buildings. The MMI Scale is a 12-point scale where Intensity I earthquakes are generally not felt by people; in Intensity XII earthquakes damage is total, and objects are thrown into the air (USGS 2019a). In an intensity VIII earthquake, damage is slight in specially-designed structures; considerable damage occurs in ordinary-substantial buildings with partial collapse; and damage is great in poorly-built structures. Chimneys, factory stacks, columns, monuments, and walls fall, and heavy furniture is overturned.

California regulates development in the state through a variety of tools that reduce hazards from earthquakes and other geologic hazards. The buildings and structures that would be built and occupied in the Plan Area would be designed and constructed in accordance with California regulations. For example, structures for human occupancy would be required to be designed to meet or exceed the most current (2019) California Building Code (CBC; California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 2) standards for earthquake resistance; the CBC is adopted by reference in Article II (Building Code) of Chapter 5 (Buildings and Structures) of the Kings County Code of Ordinances. The CBC contains provisions to safeguard against major structural failures or loss of life caused by earthquakes or other geologic hazards; it contains provisions for earthquake safety based on factors including occupancy type, the types of soil and rock onsite, and the strength of ground motion with a specified probability of occurring in the Plan Area. Development projects that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would be required to adhere

to the provisions of the CBC, which are enforced by the County during the development review and building plan check process. Compliance with the requirements of the CBC for structural safety during a seismic event would reduce hazards from strong seismic ground shaking.

Furthermore, requirements for geotechnical investigations are included in CBC Appendix J (Grading), Section J104.3 (Geotechnical reports). The preparation of geotechnical reports would be required for individual development projects accommodated by the Specific Plan pursuant to the CBC. The geotechnical reports would include calculations of seismic design parameters, pursuant to CBC requirements, that must be used in the design of proposed buildings and structures. For example, testing of samples from subsurface investigations (such as from borings or test pits) would be undertaken as a part of the geotechnical reports. The soil samples would be analyzed to among other factors evaluate slope stability, soil strength, position and adequacy of load-bearing soils, the effect of moisture variation on load-bearing capacity, compressibility, liquefaction, differential settlement, and expansiveness. Also, CBC Section 1705.6 sets forth requirements for inspection and observation during and after grading. Compliance with the provisions of the CBC and design recommendations outlined in the geotechnical reports would be ensured through the County's development review and building plan check process.

In summary, compliance with the provisions of the CBC and implementation of the recommended design recommendations outlined in the individual geotechnical reports would reduce hazards arising from strong seismic ground shaking. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant and this impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Less Than Significant Impact. Liquefaction refers to loose, saturated sand or silt deposits that behave as a liquid and lose their load-supporting capability when strongly shaken. Loose granular soils and silts that are saturated by relatively shallow groundwater are susceptible to liquefaction. Liquefaction occurs when three general conditions coexist: 1) shallow groundwater; 2) low density non-cohesive (granular) soils; and 3) high-intensity ground motion. Lateral spreading is the downslope movement of surface sediment due to liquefaction in a subsurface layer.

Part of the Plan Area is in a zone of liquefaction potential mapped in the Kings County General Plan (Kings County 2010). Development in these areas could expose people and structures to seismic related ground failure from liquefaction. However, future development projects that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would be required to have site-specific geotechnical reports prepared by the project applicant's/developer's geotechnical consultant, in accordance with CBC Appendix J (Grading) Section J104.3 (Geotechnical Reports). The geotechnical reports would include an assessment of liquefaction potential for individual project sites and provide any needed design recommendations for minimizing hazards from liquefaction. Compliance with design recommendations in the individual geotechnical reports would be ensured by County staff during the development review and building plan check process.

Therefore, implementation of the Specific Plan would not cause substantial hazards arising from liquefaction (including lateral spreading), and impacts would be less than significant. This impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

iv) Landslides?

No Impact. Landslides are the downslope movement of geologic materials. Slope failures in the form of landslides are common during strong seismic shaking in areas of steep hills. The Plan Area and surrounding area are generally flat with no significant slopes; they have an east slope of about 1.2 percent. Landslide incidence for the Plan Area is mapped as low, that is, below 1.5 percent of the area involved throughout Kings County (Kings County 2007). Also, no major slopes or bluffs are on or adjacent to the Plan Area. Therefore, implementation of the Specific Plan would not cause risks related to landslides. No impact would occur and this impact will not be addressed in the EIR.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. Erosion is the movement of rock and soil from place to place. Erosion occurs naturally by agents such as wind and flowing water; however, grading and construction activities can greatly increase erosion if effective erosion control measures are not used. Common means of soil erosion from construction sites include water, wind, and being tracked offsite by vehicles.

Following is a discussion of the potential erosion impacts resulting from the construction and operational phases of development pursuant to the Specific Plan.

Construction Phase

Development projects that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would involve excavation, grading, and construction activities that would disturb soil and leave exposed soil on the ground surface. Common means of soil erosion from construction sites include water, wind, and being tracked offsite by vehicles. These activities could result in soil erosion. However, development in the Plan Area is subject to local and state codes and requirements for erosion control and grading during construction. For example, development projects are required to comply with standard regulations, including South Coast Air Quality Management District Rules 402 and 403, which would reduce construction erosion impacts. Rule 403 requires that fugitive dust be controlled with best available control measures so that the presence of such dust does not remain visible in the atmosphere beyond the property line of the emissions source. Rule 402 requires dust suppression techniques be implemented to prevent dust and soil erosion from creating a nuisance offsite. For example, as outlined in Table 1 of Rule 403 (Best Available Control Measures), control measures to reduce erosion during grading and construction activities include stabilizing backfilling materials when not actively handling, stabilizing soils during clearing and grubbing activities, and stabilizing soils during and after cut-and-fill activities.

Additionally, the State Water Resources Control Board Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ (Construction General Permit, or CGP) contains water quality standards and stormwater discharge requirements applying to construction projects of one acre or more. The CGP was issued pursuant to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) regulations for implementing part of the federal Clean Water Act. The CGP requires preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that identifies the sources of pollution that may affect the quality of stormwater discharges and describes and ensures the implementation of best management practices (BMP) to reduce the pollutants, including silt and soil, in construction stormwater discharges. Examples of BMPs that are commonly included in SWPPPs are shown in Table 4.

3. Environmental Analysis

Table 4 Examples of Construction-Phase Stormwater Pollution Prevention BMPs

Category	Goal	Sample Measures
Erosion Controls	Prevent soil particles from being detached from the ground surface and transported in runoff	Preserving existing vegetation; soil binders; geotextiles and mats
Sediment controls	Filter out soil particles that have entered runoff	Barriers such as slit fences and gravel bag berms; and street sweeping
Tracking Controls	Prevent soil from being tracked offsite by vehicles	Stabilized construction roadways and entrances/exits
Wind Erosion Control	Prevent soil from being transported offsite by wind	Similar to erosion controls above
Non-stormwater Management	Prevent discharges of soil from site by means other than runoff and wind	BMPs regulating various construction practices; water conservation
Waste and Materials Management	Prevent release of waste materials into storm discharges	BMPs regulating storage and handling of materials and wastes

Future development within the Plan Area would be required to comply with the NPDES permit by preparing and implementing a SWPPP specifying BMPs for minimizing pollution of stormwater with soil and sediment during project construction. Adherence to the BMPs in the SWPPP would reduce, prevent, or minimize soil erosion from project-related grading and construction activities.

Therefore, impacts related to substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil associated with project-related grading and construction activities would be less than significant. This impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

Operational Phase

The Plan Area is generally flat; no major slopes or bluffs are on or adjacent to the Plan Area. After completion of development projects that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan, the developed portions of the Plan Area would be developed with buildings and structures, access and circulation improvements, and landscape improvements and would not contain exposed or bare soil. Upon completion of development projects, the potential for soil erosion or the loss of topsoil would be expected to be extremely low.

Additionally, preparation of a Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) or Low Impact Development (LID) report would be required for individual development projects. The WQMP or LID report would specify operational BMPs that would help ensure that soil erosion would not occur under the operation phase of development projects. Compliance with the BMPs in the individual WQMP or LID report would be ensured through the County's development review and building plan check process.

Therefore, soil erosion impacts from the Specific Plan's operation phase would be less than significant. This impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. Impacts arising from liquefaction (including lateral spreading) and landslides are addressed above in Sections 3.7.a.iii and 3.7.a.iv, respectively. As concluded in these sections, impacts would be less than significant and these topics will not be addressed in the EIR.

Subsidence

The major cause of ground subsidence is the excessive withdrawal of groundwater. Soils with high silt or clay content are particularly susceptible to subsidence. The Plan Area is not mapped in an area of subsidence by the US Geological Survey (USGS 2019b). Therefore, implementation of the Specific Plan would not cause substantial hazards due to subsidence and impacts would be less than significant. This impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

Collapsible Soils

Collapsible soils shrink upon being wetted and/or being subject to a load. Collapsible soils could be present within the Plan Area. Site-specific geotechnical reports would be required for each development project that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan. The geotechnical reports would include an assessment of the suitability of site soils for supporting the proposed structures and other improvements and provide needed design recommendations for remedial grading and for foundation design to minimize hazards from unsuitable soils. Site grading, design, and construction of development projects would conform with the design recommendations of the geotechnical reports. Implementation of the design recommendations would be ensured through the County's development review and building plan check process. Therefore, Specific Plan implementation would not cause substantial hazards arising from collapsible soils, and impacts would be less than significant. The impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

Less Than Significant Impact. Expansive soils contain substantial amounts of clay that swells when wetted and shrinks when dried; the swelling or shrinking can shift, crack, or break structures built on such soils. Expansive soils could be present in the Plan Area. Site-specific geotechnical reports would be required for each development project that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan. The geotechnical reports would include an assessment of the suitability of site soils for supporting the proposed structures and other improvements and provide needed design recommendations for remedial grading and for foundation design to minimize hazards from expansive soils, if encountered. Site grading, design, and construction of development projects would conform with the design recommendations of the soil investigation report. Implementation of the design recommendations would be ensured through the County's development review and building plan check process. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant. This impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

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. Development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would involve construction of sewer lines and an onsite wastewater treatment facility. Implementation of the Specific Plan would not involve use of septic tanks or other alternative wastewater disposal systems, and no impact would occur. This impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

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

Potentially Significant Impact. The Plan Area is in a highly-disturbed area of the County and is surrounded by similar disturbed areas. Given the disturbed condition of the Plan Area and its surroundings, the potential for implementation of the Specific Plan to impact an unidentified paleontological resource is considered low. Additionally, the Plan Area is nearly flat, with a northeast grade of about one percent; there are also no unique geological features on or adjacent to the Plan Area.

While unlikely, the presence of subsurface paleontological resources in the Plan Area remains possible, and these could be affected by ground-disturbing activities associated with grading activities of development that would be accommodate by the Specific Plan. Additionally, one notable fossil locality, the Kettleman Hills fossil beds, is mentioned in the Kings County General Plan (Kings County 2010). The Kettleman Hills fossil beds have yielded abundant fossils of mollusks and echinoderms (sand dollars) (SJVG 2015). The Kettleman Hills are west of the Plan Area. Therefore, this impact is potentially significant. A paleontological records search will be conducted as part of the cultural resource assessment for the Plan Area. This impact is potentially significant and will be analyzed in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

3.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

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

Potentially Significant Impact. Global climate change is not confined to a particular project area and is generally accepted as the consequence of global industrialization over the last 200 years. A typical project, even a very large one, does not generate enough greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions on its own to influence global climate change significantly; hence, the issue of global climate change is, by definition, a cumulative environmental impact. The State of California, through its governor and legislature, has established a comprehensive framework for the substantial reduction of GHG emissions over the next 40-plus years. This will occur primarily through the implementation of Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), Senate Bill 32 (SB 32), and Senate Bill 375 (SB 375), which address GHG emissions on a statewide, cumulative basis. The construction activities, operation, and increase in vehicle traffic associated with development pursuant to the Specific Plan have the potential to generate GHG emissions that could significantly impact the environment. The EIR will evaluate the potential for the Specific Plan to generate a substantial increase in GHG emissions. This impact is potentially significant and will be evaluated in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

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

Potentially Significant Impact. The California Air Resources Board's Scoping Plan is California's GHG reduction strategy to achieve the state's GHG emissions reduction target, established by AB 32, of 1990 emission levels by year 2020. In addition, SB 375, the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008, was adopted by the legislature to reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled and associated GHG emissions from passenger vehicles. The Kings County Association of Governments' 2018 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) identifies per capita GHG reduction from passenger vehicles and light duty trucks in the region from 2018 to 2042. Development under the Specific Plan, including construction and operational activities, would generate a net increase of GHG emissions within the region. As a result, the Specific Plan has the potential to conflict with GHG reduction targets of CARB's Scoping Plan, and impacts are potentially significant. The EIR will evaluate consistency with applicable plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. This impact is potentially significant and will be evaluated in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

3.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The term "hazardous material" is defined in different ways by different regulatory programs. For purposes of this environmental document, the definition of "hazardous material" is the same as that outlined in the California Health and Safety Code, Section 25501:

> Hazardous materials that, because of their quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, pose a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment. Hazardous materials include, but are not limited to, hazardous substances, hazardous waste, and any material that a handler or the unified program agency has a reasonable basis for believing that it would be injurious to the health and safety of persons or harmful to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment.

"Hazardous waste" is a subset of hazardous materials, and the definition is essentially the same as that in the California Health and Safety Code, Section 25117, and in the California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Section 66261.2:

> Hazardous wastes are those that, because of their quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical, or infectious characteristics, may either cause, or significantly contribute to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious illness, or pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported, disposed of, or otherwise managed.

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Hazardous materials can be categorized as hazardous nonradioactive chemical materials, radioactive materials, and biohazardous materials (infectious agents such as microorganisms, bacteria, molds, parasites, viruses, and medical waste).

Exposure of the public or environment to hazardous materials could occur through but not limited to the following means: improper handling or use of hazardous materials or waste, particularly by untrained personnel; transportation accident; environmentally unsound disposal methods; and/or fire, explosion, or other emergencies. The severity of potential effects varies with the activity conducted, the concentration and type of hazardous material or wastes present, and the proximity of sensitive receptors.

Following is a discussion of the Specific Plan's potential to create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine use, storage, transport, or disposal of hazardous materials during the construction and operational phases.

Construction Phase

Project-related construction activities would involve the use of larger amounts of hazardous materials than would project operation. Construction of development projects pursuant to the Specific Plan would involve use of hazardous materials such as fuels, lubricants, degreasers, paints and other architectural coatings, fertilizers, and pesticides. Such use could pose risks to construction workers or lead to soil and groundwater contamination if these materials are not properly stored, used, or disposed. However, the materials used would not be in such quantities or stored in such a manner as to pose a significant safety hazard. These activities would also be short term or one time in nature and would cease upon completion of the construction phase. Project construction workers would also be trained in safe handling and hazardous materials use.

Additionally, the use, storage, transport, and disposal of construction-related hazardous materials and waste would be required to conform to existing laws and regulations. These include the Hazardous Material Transportation Act; Resource Conservation and Recovery Act; California Hazardous Waste Control Act, Unified Program; and California Accidental Release Prevention Program. Kings County Environmental Health (KCEH) is the Certified Unified Program Agency for Kings County; the Unified Program coordinates and makes consistent enforcement of several state and federal regulations governing hazardous materials. For example, KCEH administers the Accidental Reporting Program, Hazardous Materials Business Plans, Above Ground Storage Tank Program, and Underground Storage Tank Program (KCEH 2019).

Compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing the use, storage, and transportation of hazardous materials would ensure that all potentially hazardous materials are used and handled in an appropriate manner and would minimize the potential for safety impacts to occur. For example, all spills or leakage of petroleum products during construction activities are required to be immediately contained, the hazardous material identified, and the material remediated in compliance with applicable state and local regulations for the cleanup and disposal of that contaminant. All contaminated waste encountered would be required to be collected and disposed of at an appropriately licensed disposal or treatment facility. Also, coordination with the owners/operators of high-priority underground utility lines prior to excavation would avoid damage to high-pressure pipelines or natural gas/petroleum pipelines in the Plan Area.

Based on the preceding, hazards to the public or the environment arising from the routine use of hazardous materials during the Specific Plan's construction phases would be less than significant. Therefore, this impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

Operation Phase

The Specific Plan proposes a range of commercial and industrial uses such as restaurants, gas stations, a truck stop, hotels, distribution centers, and light industrial uses. Such uses would involve the use varying amounts and types of hazardous materials. However, it is not anticipated that the activities of individual development projects would involve the use of unusually-hazardous materials that could impact surrounding agricultural land uses. As shown in Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*, there are no sensitive land uses adjacent to or in proximity of the Plan Area. With the exception of gasoline stations permitted by the Specific Plan (which would include storage of large amounts of gasoline and diesel fuels), operation of individual development projects would involve the use of small amounts of hazardous materials, such as cleansers, cooking grease, fuels, paints, degreasers, adhesive, sealers, fertilizers, and pesticides for cleaning and maintenance purposes. Also, the land uses that are permitted by and would be accommodated by the Specific Plan are not associated with uses that use, generate, store, or transport large quantities of hazardous materials; such uses generally include manufacturing, heavy industrial, medical (e.g., hospital), and other similar uses.

Additionally, the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials during the operation phase of individual development projects would be subject to existing regulations of the same agencies that would regulate such use during project construction phases. For example, pursuant to Sections 25117 and 25411 of the California Health and Safety Code, if reportable quantities of hazardous materials or waste will be handled or generated in the Plan Area, a hazardous materials business plan is required to be filed with Kings County. A reportable quantity consists of any hazardous material or mixture containing a hazardous material in amounts greater than or equal to 500 pounds, 55 gallons, or 200 cubic feet of gases measured at standard temperature and pressure. Compliance with Sections 25117 and 25411 of the California Health and Safety Code would be required as applicable for development projects of the Plan Area. Also, the transportation of hazardous material or mixture containing a hazardous material is regulated through licensing requirements by the California Department of Motor Vehicles and through the vehicle code enforced by the California Highway Patrol.

Compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing the use, storage, transportation, and disposal of hazardous materials would ensure that all potentially hazardous materials are used and handled in an appropriate manner and would minimize the potential for safety impacts. Jackson Ranch would also be operated with strict adherence to all emergency response plan requirements set forth by County.

Furthermore, solid waste would be generated by the construction and operational phases of individual development projects. Any construction-related hazardous waste and materials would be disposed of at the Kettleman Hills Hazardous Waste Facility approximately four miles northwest of the Plan Area; the facility is which is managed and operated by Waste Management. The facility is a fully permitted, 1,600-acre hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal facility that is permitted by Kings County and inspected monthly by the

Kings County Health Department, Environmental Health Services. Any hazardous materials and wastes would be recycled, treated, and disposed of in accordance with federal, state, and local laws.

Based on the preceding, hazards to the public or environment arising from the routine use of hazardous materials during the Specific Plan's operational phases would be less than significant. Therefore, this impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact. Following is a discussion of the potential hazards impacts that could arise through the accidental release of hazardous materials from the Specific Plan's construction and operational phases, as well from existing site materials contained onsite.

Hazardous Materials Associated with Construction and Operation Phases

See response to Section 3.9.a., above. As concluded in this section, hazards to the public or environment arising from the routine use of hazardous materials during project operation and construction phases would less than significant. Additionally, the land uses that would be accommodated by the Specific plan would not involve uses that generate air toxics requiring an SCAMQD permit. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant and this impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

Hazardous Materials Associated with Project Site Conditions

Onsite land uses primarily consist of active and fallow agricultural land or rangeland, as shown in Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*. The agricultural production in the area consists mainly of irrigated crops such as almonds, pistachios, and stone fruits (apricots and plums); dry land grazing also occurs onsite. The Plan Area has historically been used for farming and portions of the Plan Area presently contain an orchard of almond trees near the end of their productive life expectancy. Power lines on wooden poles line the northern site boundary, abutting Utica Avenue; they also traverse the entire stretch of the central portion of the Plan Area from the northern to southern boundary.

Development that would be accommodate by the Specific Plan would require grading activities that would involve soil disturbance throughout the Plan Area and where necessary, hauled offsite. Because of the historic and present agricultural use of the Plan Area, there is a high potential for agricultural chemicals (pesticides and/or herbicides) to be present in soils throughout the Plan Area. However, application of these materials is highly controlled by state regulations including precautious to avoid "drift" of spray applications. Additionally, any contaminated soil encountered during grading activities would be hauled offsite to the appropriate disposal facility and in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations associated with the transport and disposal of hazardous and nonhazardous materials. As also shown in Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*, there are no sensitive land uses adjacent to or in proximity of the Plan Area that could be affected by future grading activities.

Furthermore, development activity under the Specific Plan would involve removal of the wooden poles and electrical and telecommunication lines throughout the Plan Area; where feasible, electrical lines would be undergrounded. The electrical infrastructure to be removed is not associated with or contains hazardous

materials. All electrical infrastructure to be removed would be hauled offsite to the appropriate disposal or recycling facility and in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations associated with the transport and disposal of hazardous and nonhazardous materials.

Based on the preceding, it is highly unlikely that development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would cause the release of hazardous materials into the environment. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant and this impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

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. There are no schools within one-quarter mile of the Plan Area. The nearest school is the Kettleman City Elementary school approximately 5.6 miles to the northwest. Therefore, Specific Plan development would not expose people at a school to hazards through hazardous emissions or handling hazardous materials. No impact would occur and this impact will not be addressed in the EIR.

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. California Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the compiling of lists of the following types of hazardous materials sites: hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action; hazardous waste discharges for which the State Water Quality Control Board has issued certain types of orders; public drinking water wells containing detectable levels of organic contaminants; underground storage tanks with reported unauthorized releases; and solid waste disposal facilities from which hazardous waste has migrated. The following regulatory agency databases were searched on January 24, 2019:

- GeoTracker, State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB 2019)
- EnviroStor, Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC 2019)
- EnviroMapper, US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA 2019a)
- EJScreen, US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA 2019b)
- Solid Waste Information System (SWIS), California Department of Resource Recovery and Recycling (CalRecycle 2019)

The search radius used was one mile from the Plan Area. Based on the search of these databases, there are no hazardous materials sites of the types specified in California Government Code Section 65962.5 associated with the Plan Area. Kettleman Pistachio Growers, at 39005 25th Avenue in Kettleman City at approximately 0.25 mile south of the Plan Area, is listed on EnviroMapper as a hazardous waste transporter (USEPA 2019a). However, the hazardous waste transporter listing of this business is not an environmental concern for the Plan Area. Therefore, no impact would occur and this impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

3. Environmental Analysis

e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles or 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. The nearest public-use airport to the Plan Area is Corcoran Airport about 21 miles to the northeast (Caltrans 2019b); the Plan Area is nowhere near the area covered in the airport land use compatibility plan of this public-use airport. Therefore, Specific Plan buildout would not cause a hazard or excessive noise for people onsite and no impact would occur. This impact will not be addressed in the EIR.

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

No Impact. The Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), California Code of Regulations, Title 19, Division 2, Section 2443, requires compliance with the SEMS to "be documented in the areas of planning, training, exercise, and performance." The Kings County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) was approved by the County Board of Supervisors in November 2015. The EOP, which is overseen and managed by the Kings County Office of Emergency Management (OEM), meets the SEMS requirements of state law. The EOP addresses the County's planned response to extraordinary emergency situations associated with natural disasters, technological incidents, and national security emergencies in or affecting Kings County. The purpose of the EOP is to provide the basis for a coordinated response before, during and after a disaster incident (OEM 2015). Under the EOP, OEM provides dedicated staff responsible for managing the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which include personnel from County departments (e.g., Kings County Fire Department and Kings County Sheriff's Office), supporting allied agencies and community organizations that have been assigned primary functions or responsibilities within the EOP.

Implementation of the Specific Plan would have no adverse impact on OEM's continued implementation of the EOP or operation of the EOC. During the construction and operation phases, development projects that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would not interfere with any of the daily operations of OEM or its support system, including those of the Kings County Fire Department (KCFD) and Kings County Sheriff's Office (Sherriff). For example, to address fire and emergency access needs of KCFD and the Sherriff, the traffic and circulation components of individual development projects would be designed and constructed in accordance with all applicable design standards for emergency access (e.g., minimum lane width and turning radius). For example, new streets and drives aisles would be designed to meet the minimum width requirements of KCFD to allow the passing of emergency vehicles. Future development projects under the Specific Plan would also be required to incorporate all applicable design and safety requirements in the most current adopted fire codes, building codes, and nationally recognized fire and life safety standards of the County and KCFD. Compliance with these codes and standards is ensured through the County's and KCFD's development review and building permit process.

Additionally, during the County's building plan check and development review process, County staff would coordinate with KCFD and the Sheriff to ensure that the necessary fire prevention and emergency response features are incorporated into development projects and that the necessary circulation and access improvements

(e.g., adequate turning radii for fire trucks) are provided in the traffic and circulation components of individual projects under the Specific Plan.

Furthermore, none of the buildings or land uses that would be developed in Jackson Ranch are considered a critical facility as defined by the Essential Services Building Seismic Safety Act for buildings that provide essential services after a disaster.

Therefore, no impact would occur and this impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

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

No Impact. A wildland fire hazard area is typically characterized by areas with limited access, rugged terrain, limited water supply, and combustible vegetation. There would be no impact for wildland fire risks due to implementation of the Specific Plan, as substantiated in Section 3.20, *Wildfire*. As noted in Section 3.20, the Plan Area is not in or near a state responsibility area or land classified as very high fire hazard severity zone. Therefore, implementation of the Specific Plan would not introduce people or structures to substantial hazards from wildland fires. No impact would occur and this impact will not be addressed in the EIR.

3.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

Potentially Significant Impact. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) establishes national water quality standards. Pursuant to Section 402 of the Clean Water Act, EPA has also established regulations under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program to control direct stormwater discharges. In Kings County, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) administers the NPDES permitting programs and is responsible for developing waste discharge requirements. Construction and operation of future projects developed pursuant to the Specific Plan have the potential to discharge sediment and pollutants to storm drains and receiving waters, thereby leading to a potential water quality impact. This impact is potentially significant and will be evaluated in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

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

Potentially Significant Impact. Implementation of the Specific Plan would increase the number of visitors and workers in the area, and total domestic water demand could rise. The Plan Area is served by the Dudley Ridge Water District (DRWD). DRDW does not use local groundwater due to its low yields and poor quality (DRWD 2012). Since no groundwater is not used to meet the Plan Area's water demand, implementation of the Specific Plan would not impact groundwater supplies.

3. Environmental Analysis

The Plan Area is in the San Joaquin Valley Groundwater Basin, which is surrounded on the west by the Coast Ranges, on the south by the San Emigdio and Tehachapi Mountains, on the east by the Sierra Nevada and on the north by the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Sacramento Valley (CDWR 2006). The Plan Area is in a rural area with a high percentage of pervious surfaces. Implementation of the Specific Plan would increase development intensity and increase impervious surfaces in the plan area, thus decreasing groundwater recharge. Impacts to groundwater recharge due to implementation of the Specific Plan are potentially significant and will be evaluated in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

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 a substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

Potentially Significant Impact. No streams or rivers traverse the Plan Area. The nearest drainage channel is the California Aqueduct, which is approximately 250 feet east of the Plan Area (see Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*). Development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would not involve alteration of the aqueduct's course. However, impacts relating to erosion and siltation may occur as a result of grading and construction activities of future development projects. Therefore, this impact is potentially significant and will be evaluated in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

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

Potentially Significant Impact. As noted above, implementation of the Specific Plan would not alter the California Aqueduct or any other water course. However, implementation of the Specific Plan would convert pervious farmland to impervious surfaces, thus potentially increasing the amount and/or rate of surface runoff. This impact is potentially significant and will be evaluated in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

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?

Potentially Significant Impact. Development in accordance with the Specific Plan would involve alteration of land uses in the Plan Area. Increased impervious surfaces may increase the amount of runoff and discharge of sediments and pollutants to stormwater drainage systems. An infrastructure technical report will be prepared as part of the Specific Plan and EIR to determine whether existing storm drain facilities are adequate to collect and convey runoff generated by new development in the Plan Area, or if new facilities would be needed. This impact is potentially significant. The EIR will evaluate potential impacts to stormwater systems and water quality, and mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?

No Impact. According to the Health and Safety Element of the Kings County General Plan, the Plan Area is not in a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zone or a Department of Water

Resources floodplain. The Plan Area is also not in a dam inundation area (Kings County 2010). Therefore, the Specific Plan would not impede or redirect flood flows. No impact would occur and this impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

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

No Impact. The following describes potential pollutant impacts related to flood hazard, seiche, and tsunami zones.

Flood Hazard

As noted in Section 3.10.a.iv, above, the Plan Area is not in a FEMA flood zone or a Department of Water Resources floodplain. Therefore, there is no risk of pollutant release due to inundation from a flooding event. No impact would occur and this impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

Seiche

A seiche is a surface wave created when a body of water is shaken, usually by earthquake activity. Seiches are of concern relative to water storage facilities because inundation from a seiche can occur if the wave overflows a containment wall, such as the wall of a reservoir, water storage tank, dam, or other artificial body of water. Although there are no large water tanks in the area that could impact the Plan Area, there are dams in the region that could create flooding impacts. However, as noted in Section 3.10.a.iv, above, the Plan Area is not in a dam inundation area (Kings County 2010). Therefore, there is no risk of pollutant release due to inundation from a seiche. No impact would occur and this impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

Tsunami

A tsunami is a series of ocean waves caused by a sudden displacement of the ocean floor, most often due to earthquakes. The Plan Area is approximately 65 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean, outside of the tsunami hazard zone identified by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES 2014). Therefore, there is no possibility of the Plan Area being affected by a tsunami; there is no risk of pollutant release due to inundation from a tsunami. No impact would occur and this impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

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

Potentially Significant Impact. The quality of surface and groundwater is affected by land uses in the watershed and the composition of subsurface geologic materials. Water quality in surface and groundwater bodies is regulated by the State Water Resources Control Board and RWQCB. Kings County is under the jurisdiction of the Central Valley RWQCB, which is responsible for implementation of state and federal water quality protection guidelines in the vicinity of the Specific Plan. RWQCB implements the Water Quality Control Plan for the Tulare Lake Basin (Basin Plan), a master policy document for managing water quality issues in the region. Although the Plan Area is in the San Joaquin Valley Groundwater Basin, it is not within an established sustainable groundwater management plan (CDWR 2006) and would not obstruct the implementation of a sustainable groundwater management plan.

However, as indicated in the response to Section 3.6 (a), construction and operation of future projects developed pursuant to the Specific Plan have the potential to discharge sediment and pollutants to receiving waters and may obstruct the implementation of the water quality control plan. This impact is potentially significant and will be evaluated in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

3.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

a) Physically divide an established community?

No Impact. As shown in Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*, there are no established communities surrounding or in proximity of the Plan Area. The Plan Area is surrounded by agricultural uses on all sides and is in a rural, unincorporated area of Kings County. Development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would occur within the confines of the Plan Area and would not introduce roadways or other infrastructure improvements that would bisect or transect surrounding agricultural land. Implementation of the Specific Plan would not prevent or interrupt access to and between surrounding agricultural land uses in the area. Therefore, the Specific Plan would not create any land use barriers or otherwise divide or disrupt the physical arrangement of the existing agricultural lands surrounding the Plan Area. No impact would occur and this impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

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?

Potentially Significant Impact. The Plan Area is designated by the Kings County General Plan as General Agriculture-40 Acre. This designation is applied to rural areas of the County generally characterized by extensive and intensive agricultural uses. This designation allows intensive agricultural uses that by their nature may be incompatible with urban uses. The County zoning district of the Plan Area is General Agriculture-40 District (AG-40). This district is intended primarily for application to rural areas of the County, which are generally characterized by extensive and intensive agricultural uses of land.

Implementation of the Specific Plan would require a General Plan Amendment to change the General Plan Land Use Designation of the Plan Area from General Agriculture-40 Acre to Jackson Ranch Specific Plan. Under the Specific Plan, approximately 175 acres, or 41 percent of the Plan Area, would be changed from General Agriculture-40 Acre to Innovation Center (IC-JR), Commercial Thoroughfare (CT-JR) and Public (P-JR), which would allow commercial and public facility uses. Also, approximately 249 acres, or 59 percent of the Plan Area, is proposed to be changed from General Agriculture-40 Acre to Specialty Agriculture (A-JR). Approximately 56 acres of the 249 acres to be designated Specialty Agriculture would include an Air Strip Overlay, which would allow for the development of a potential future private air strip in the Plan Area.

Implementation of the Specific Plan would also require an amendment to the Kings County Development Code and Zoning District Map. Specifically, the Development Code Amendment is needed to add the Jackson Ranch Specific Plan by reference and the Zoning District Map Amendment is needed to change the zoning district from AG-40 to Jackson Ranch Specific Plan. The Development Code Amendment would state that the

regulating code contained in the Specific Plan would serve as the regulatory plan (zoning, development, and design standards and guidelines) for all development projects in the Plan Area.

The California Government Code (Title 7, Division 1, Chapter 3, Article 8, Sections 65450–65457 [Specific Plans]) provides authority for a city/county to adopt a specific plan by ordinance (as a regulatory plan) or resolution (as a policy plan). When a specific plan is adopted by ordinance, the specific plan effectively replaces portions or all of the current zoning regulations for specified parcels and becomes an independent set of zoning regulations that provide specific direction to the type and intensity of uses permitted or define other types of design and permitting criteria. The Specific Plan would be adopted by the Kings County Board of Supervisors as ordinance and function as the regulatory plan that serves as the implementing zoning for the Plan Area, thereby ensuring the orderly and systematic implementation of the Kings County General Plan.

Therefore, further evaluation in the EIR is required to address potential land use impacts due to implementation of the Specific Plan and accompanying General Plan, Development Code and Zoning District Map Amendments. This impact is potentially significant and will be evaluated in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary

3.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a value to the region and the residents of the state?

No Impact. The Plan Area is not mapped on a mineral land classification map by the California Geological Survey. Thus, there are no significant mineral resources known to exist or considered likely to exist in the Plan Area (CGS 2019c). Also, no active mines in Kings County are mapped by the California Office of Mine Reclamation (OMR 2019). The portion of the Plan Area east of 25th Avenue is in the Dudley Ridge Gas Field, which is mapped as abandoned. There are no active oil or gas wells on, adjacent to or in proximity of the Plan Area; the nearest active well to the Plan Area is about 2.1 miles to the southwest (DOGGR 2019). Therefore, no impact would occur and this impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

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. The only mining sites in Kings County identified in the Kings County General Plan are one inactive gravel mine and two agricultural-designated mining reclamation sites that were fully reclaimed (Kings County 2010). Development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan would not cause a loss of availability of a mining site identified in the Kings County General Plan. Therefore, no impact would occur and this impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

3.13 NOISE

Would the project result in:

a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

Potentially Significant Impact. Implementation of the Specific Plan would involve construction and operational activities that would generate noise levels that may expose sensitive land uses to noise levels in excess of the noise standards, although none are located within or adjacent to the Plan Area (see Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*). Short-term construction activities could elevate ambient noise levels within noise-sensitive land uses. Long-term operation of new development under the Specific Plan could potentially result in two types of long-term noise impacts. The first may occur if project-related noise sources substantially increase noise levels in the vicinity of the Plan Area. Project-related noise sources include stationary sources such as heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) units and mobile sources such as project-generated vehicle traffic. The second type of long-term noise impact may occur if the Plan Area's noise-sensitive uses are in an area of high noise exposure. Future development under the Specific Plan has the potential to increase stationary and mobile source noise levels in the project areas. In addition, the Plan Area is in close proximity to major arterial roadways that have the potential to generate substantial traffic noise levels. Further evaluation in the EIR is required to determine potential on- and offsite noise impacts of the Specific Plan.

The Specific Plan would result in an increase in traffic levels in the project vicinity, which could result in a permanent increase in the ambient noise environment. Further evaluation is required to determine potential on- and offsite impacts of the Specific Plan on sensitive receptors. The EIR will evaluate the change in noise levels at noise-sensitive receptors and determine if those receptors would be exposed to noise levels that exceed the noise compatibility criteria of Kings County.

This impact is potentially significant and will be analyzed in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

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

No Impact. The potential construction- and operational-related groundborne vibration and noise impacts resulting from implementation of the Specific Plan are addressed below.

Construction Impacts

Construction operations can generate varying degrees of groundborne vibration and noise, depending on the procedures and equipment (mobile and nonmobile) used. Operation of construction equipment generates vibrations that spread through the ground and diminish with distance from the source. The effect on buildings and sensitive land uses in the vicinity of the construction site varies depending on soil type, ground strata, and receptor-building construction. The results from vibration can range from no perceptible effects at the lowest

vibration levels, to low rumbling sounds and perceptible vibrations at moderate levels, to slight structural damage at the highest levels.

As shown in Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*, there are no buildings/structures or sensitive land use adjacent to or in proximity of the Plan Area that could be affected by any construction-related groundborne vibration or noise generated in the Plan Area. Therefore, no impact resulting from construction-related groundborne vibration and noise would occur and this impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

Operations Impacts

The operation of future development in the Plan Area would not generate substantial levels of groundborne vibration and noise. Commercial and light industrial operations that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan could possibly generate varying degrees of ground vibration, depending on the operational procedures and equipment. Such equipment-generated vibrations would spread through the ground and diminish with distance from the source. As noted above, the effect on buildings and sensitive land uses in the vicinity of the construction site varies depending on soil type, ground strata, and receptor-building construction.

As shown in Figure 3, there are no buildings/structures or sensitive land use adjacent to or in proximity of the Plan Area that could be affected by any operational-related groundborne vibration or noise generated in the Plan Area. Surrounding land uses primarily consist of active and fallow agricultural land or grazing land. Therefore, no impact resulting from operational-related groundborne vibration and noise would occur and this impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

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. The nearest public-use airport to the Plan Area is Corcoran Airport about 21 miles to the northeast (Caltrans 2019b); the Plan Area is nowhere near the area covered in the airport land use compatibility plan of this public-use airport. There are also no private airstrips or airports within two miles of the Plan Area. The Specific Plan does, however, include an Air Strip Overlay land use designation, which would allow development of a potential future private air strip. However, development of a private air strip in the Air Strip Overlay is a potential future use and is not a part of the project scope at this time; no such use is being proposed at this time. If the Air Strip Overlay is implemented in the future, additional CEQA review would be required to address the potential environmental impacts of developing an air strip. Therefore, no impact would occur and this impact will not be addressed in the EIR.

3.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

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)?

Less Than Significant Impact. The population of Kings County was estimated at 151,662 in 2018 (CDF 2018). The County's population is forecast to increase from 157,400 to 189,745 between 2020 and 2050, an increase of 32,345 or about 17 percent (FCOG 2017). There were an estimated 135,885 households in Kings County in 2018 (CDF 2018). Employment in Kings County was estimated at 49,300 in 2018 (EDD 2019a). Employment in the County is forecast to increase from 63,376 in 2020 to 83,969 in 2050, an increase of 20,593 or about 24 percent (FCOG 2017). The unemployment rate in Kings County in December 2018 was 8.2 percent, consisting of 4,700 unemployed persons (EDD 2019b).

The Plan Area is in the Avenal Census County Division (CCD), comprising the part of the County west of I-5 and the California Aqueduct; the 2017 US Census Bureau American Community Survey population estimate of the Avenal CCD is 13,149 (USCB 2019a). The Avenal CCD is rural except for the City of Avenal; the Plan Area is in the rural area of the CCD. The nearest urban area to the Plan Area is the City of Avenal about 13 miles to the northwest; the population of Avenal in 2018 was estimated at 13,053 (CDF 2018).[3]

There are no housing units or residents in the Plan Area, and none are planned or permitted under the Specific Plan. Therefore, no direct housing or population growth would occur as a result of implementation of the Specific Plan. No direct impact would occur; indirect impacts of the Specific Plan are discussed below.

At buildout, operation of Jackson Ranch is estimated to generate about 1,529 jobs. Continued agricultural operations in the Plan Area are estimated to generate additional employment of about 50 jobs.[4] Project employment growth is within estimated employment growth in Kings County, and thus would not be an adverse impact. The nearest existing communities to the Plan Area are the unincorporated community of Kettleman City and the City of Avenal, both of which are in Kings County. The nearest city or census-designated place outside of Kings County is the City of Huron in Fresno County, 21 miles to the northwest (ESRI 2019). Therefore, this analysis assumes that most workers in the Plan Area will live in Kings County. Some of those workers are expected to be absorbed from the regional labor force.

Regarding indirect project impacts on population growth in Kings County, no estimate is made here of the fraction of project employment that might be absorbed from the regional labor force. Therefore, this analysis assumes that all workers would move in from outside of Kings County and is conservative. The existing jobs-housing ratio (or jobs per household) in Kings County is about 0.36 (49,300 jobs and 135,885 households). Thus, 1,529 workers moving into the region would be expected to occupy about 1,560 households (1,529 jobs

[3] The distance is to the center of the County, not the County boundary. Urban areas contain at least 2,500 people (USCB 2019b).

[4] This estimate is conservative. It assumes that the entire Plan Area is in agricultural production. In fact, the west and northeast parts of the Plan Area—about 170 acres, or approximately 40 percent—were fallow from at least 2013 through 2017 based on Google Earth Pro satellite photographs.

x 1 household per 0.98 job). The estimated average household size in Kings County in 2018 was 3.1 persons (CDF 2018). Thus, 1,560 additional households in the region would be expected to increase the population in Kings County by approximately 4,836 (1,560 households x 3.1 persons per household). This estimate is conservative on two counts: first, some project workers are expected to be absorbed from the regional labor force, and second, some fraction of workers may live outside of Kings County.

The indirect growth in households and population that could result from project workers moving into the region is within the estimated growth in households and in population, respectively. Therefore, indirect project impacts on households and population in Kings County would not result in a significant adverse impact.

Based on the preceding, impacts would be less than significant and this impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

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

No Impact. There are no houses or residents in the Plan Area (see Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*), and implementation of the Specific Plan would not require construction of replacement housing. Therefore, no impact would occur and this impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

3.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

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:

a) Fire protection?

Potentially Significant Impact. Fire and emergency services for the Plan Area would be provided by the Kings County Fire Department (KCFD), which operates out of their headquarters location in the City of Hanford and has 12 fire stations in strategic areas of the County. Primary fire and emergency services to the Plan Area would be provided from Station 9 out of Kettleman City, with assistance from other KCFD stations as needed. Land uses accommodated by the Specific Plan, including an innovation center and commercial uses, would result in an increase in the need of fire protection and emergency services. This impact is potentially significant and will be addressed in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

b) Police protection?

Potentially Significant Impact. The Kings County Sheriff's Office would provide municipal police services for the Plan Area, including duties that are normally associated with a city police department under state statutes. Land uses accommodated by the Specific Plan, including an innovation center and commercial uses, would result in an increase in the need for police protection services. This impact is potentially significant and will be addressed in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

c) Schools?

No Impact. The increase in the student generation and the need for new or the expansion of existing school facilities is tied to population growth. No residential land uses are proposed and no students would be generated by development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan. Therefore, no impact to schools would occur and this impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

d) Parks?

No Impact. See response to Section 3.16.a, below. As substantiated in that section, impacts to parks would be less than significant and this impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

e) Other public facilities?

No Impact. The need for new or the expansion of existing library services and facilities is tied to population growth. No residential land uses are proposed and no additional residents would be generated by the development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan. Therefore, no impact to libraries would occur and this impact will not be addressed in the EIR.

3.16 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Plan Area is in a rural area of the County and there are no parks nearby. The nearest park to the Plan Area is in Kettleman City, about 5.5 miles to the north. There is fishing access to the California Aqueduct one mile west of Kettleman City, about 6 miles northwest of the Plan Area. The State Route 41 corridor between I-5 and Utica Avenue, which passes about 3.5 miles northwest of the Plan Area, is designated as Open Space in the Kings County General Plan (Kings County 2010). Additionally, various cities and unincorporated communities in Kings County offer parks and recreational facilities.

The increase in the use of existing parks and recreational facilities and the need for new or the construction or expansion of existing parks and recreational facilities is directly tied to population growth. The Specific Plan does not include or provide for any residential development, which would lead to a direct population growth. Development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan, however, would add about 1,529 jobs to the Plan Area and overall County; if all those workers moved into Kings County from outside of the region, development could indirectly cause population growth of about 4,836 persons in the County. Growth indirectly resulting from buildout of the Specific Plan would generate demands for parks in Kings County.

The Quimby Act, California Government Code Section 66477, authorizes cities and counties to require developers to dedicate land as parkland, pay in-lieu fees, or both, as a condition of approval for a final subdivision map or parcel map. Dedication and/or payment is based on the number of proposed residential units and the average number of persons per household. While development pursuant to the Specific Plan could indirectly generate population growth in Kings County, it would not result in a requirement for parkland

as set forth in the Quimby Act. No residential development is proposed as a part of the Specific Plan; therefore, no population growth or increase in the use of existing parks or other recreational facilities would occur and no estimate of an indirect impact on demand for parkland is made here.

Based on the preceding, impacts to parks and recreational facilities would be less than significant. This impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

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. The Specific Plan does not include or call for the development of any recreational facilities. Also, as substantiated in Section 3.16.a, above, implementation of the Specific Plan would not lead to or require the expansion of any existing recreational facilities anywhere in the County. Therefore, no impact would occur and this impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

3.17 TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:

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

Potentially Significant Impact. Development pursuant to the Specific Plan would result in the generation of additional vehicular traffic in the area and region. A traffic impact analysis will be prepared to determine the Specific Plan's traffic impacts and will help form the basis for the impact analysis to be provided in the EIR. The traffic impact analysis and EIR will address consistency with existing programs, plans, ordinances, or policies addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. This impact is potentially significant and will be evaluated in the EIR. Mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

Potentially Significant Impact. As noted above, development pursuant to the Specific Plan would result in the generate generation of additional vehicular traffic in the area and region. The EIR will address consistency with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b), relating to vehicle miles travelled. This impact is potentially significant and will be evaluated in the EIR. Mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

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. The Specific Plan does not propose substantial changes to the Plan Area's circulation patterns or network—such as the redesign or closure of major streets—nor would it increase hazards or impact emergency access due to design features. Instead, the existing circulation system would be maintained (and upgraded where necessary), and no substantial changes or significant congestion would occur that would affect the ability of emergency vehicles to continue to serve all parts of the Plan Area and its surroundings.

Additionally, the County and Kings County Fire Department (KCFD) have adopted roadway design standards that preclude the construction of any unsafe design features. Standards for provision of safe road and circulation improvements are also outlined in the Specific Plan. All proposed roadway and circulation improvements would be required to adhere to the County's and KCFD's design standards, as well as those outlined in the Specific Plan, which would be imposed on individual development projects by the County and KCFD during the development review and building plan check process.

Furthermore, construction activities associated with future development projects would also be required to be performed per the County and KCFD standards and codes, thereby avoiding any interference with emergency access during construction. The Specific Plan would also be consistent with the circulation element of the 2035 Kings County General Plan. Implementation of the Specific Plan would also not introduce incompatible land uses to the Plan Are or its surroundings.

Therefore, implementation of the Specific Plan would not result in conflicting land uses, create hazardous conditions, or impact emergency access. No impact would occur and this impact will not be analyzed in the EIR.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

No Impact. See response to Section 3.17.a, above.

Additionally, to address fire and emergency access needs, the traffic and circulation components of the Plan Area would be designed and constructed in accordance with all applicable KCFD design standards for emergency access (e.g., minimum lane width and turning radius). For example, new streets and drives aisles would be designed to meet the minimum width requirements of KCFD to allow the passing of emergency vehicles. Future development projects under the Specific Plan would also be required to incorporate all applicable design and safety requirements as set forth in the most current adopted fire codes, building codes, and nationally recognized fire and life safety standards of the County and KCFD. Compliance with these codes and standards is ensured through the County's and KCFD's development review and building permit process.

Furthermore, during the building plan check and development review process, the County would coordinate with KCFD and King's County Sheriff's Office to ensure that the necessary fire prevention and emergency response features are incorporated into the individual development projects pursuant to the Specific and that adequate circulation and access (e.g., adequate turning radii for fire trucks) is provided within the traffic and circulation components.

Therefore, no impact would occur and this impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

3.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

a) 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:

i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or

No Impact. As shown in Figures 3, *Aerial Photograph*, onsite land uses primarily consist of active and fallow agricultural land or rangeland. The site Plan Area has historically been used for farming, and portions of the Project Area presently contain an orchard of almond trees. No structures were observed onsite during a field visit by staff of Ecorp Consulting, Inc. (Ecorp 2019b). Furthermore, the Plan Area is not identified on any federal, state, or local historic registers—National Register of Historic Places or California State Historical Landmarks and Points of Historical Interest. Therefore, no impact would occur and this impact will not be addressed in the EIR.

ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Potentially Significant Impact. This impact is potentially significant and will be evaluated in the EIR. A cultural resource's assessment will be conducted for the Plan Area and tribal consultation will be conducted. The results and conclusions of the assessment and consultation will be included in the EIR. Mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

3.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

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

Potentially Significant Impact. An infrastructure and dry utilities plan will be prepared for the Specific Plan to determine whether buildout of Jackson Ranch would result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater, storm drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities. This impact is potentially significant and will be evaluated in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

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

Potentially Significant Impact. Agricultural water supplies for the Plan Area are provided by the Dudley Ridge Water District (DRWD) through an existing turnout from the California Aqueduct. DRWD supplies water to the Kettleman Water Treatment Plant located five miles north of the Plan Area; the plant is owned and operate by Kettleman City Community Services District (KCCSD). The major source of water for DRWD is imported surface water supplies from the State Water Project (DRWD 2012).

The raw water supply for Jackson Ranch would be the State Water Project and the Kern River Water Bank. Two alternatives are being studied for the provision of potable water for the Specific Plan. The first alternative includes installing an onsite water treatment plant to treat the water supplied from the California Aqueduct to potable standards. A second alternative involves connecting to the Kettleman Water Treatment Plant. The second alternative would require coordination with KCCSD. It would also require approval from the Local Agency Formation Commission of Kings County for any KCCSD boundary or service expansion that may be needed to serve the Specific Plan's potable water needs.

Implementation of the Specific Plan would generate a potential increase in demand for water for domestic and agricultural purposes. The potential volume of this demand will be assessed in a water supply assessment that will be prepared as part of the Specific Plan and EIR. The water demand will be compared to existing and planned water supplies to determine whether implementation of the Specific Plan would result in significant impacts on local or regional water supplies. Communication with the County's Public Works Department is needed to discuss the Specific Plan's impact on that agency's water supplies and to determine whether sufficient water supplies are available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years. This impact is potentially significant and will be evaluated in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

c) Result in a determination by the waste water 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?

Potentially Significant Impact. An infrastructure plan will be prepared as part of the Specific Plan and EIR to determine whether facilities are adequate to treat wastewater generated by the development pursuant to the Specific Plan or if new or expanded facilities would be needed. This impact is potentially significant and will be evaluated in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

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?

Potentially Significant Impact. The Kings Waste and Recycling Authority (KWRA) receives solid waste, including recyclable materials, from all unincorporated areas in the County. Solid waste would be generated during construction and operational phases of the Specific Plan; it would be collected by KWRA and transferred to KWRA's Material Recovery Facility and Transfer Station at 7803 Hanford Armona Road in the City of Hanford. Some waste would be recycled at the Material Recovery Facility and Transfer Station prior to

the remainder of the waste being disposed of at a state-licensed landfill in the region. Hazardous waste would be disposed of at the Kettleman Hills Facility approximately four miles northwest of the Plan Area; the facility is managed and operated by Waste Management. Green waste will be disposed of at the Kochergen Farms Composting Facility; the facility is managed and operated by Kochergen Farms Composting, Inc (Kings County 2019). Existing and planned capacity of the solid waste facilities serving the Plan Area and estimated solid waste generation resulting from the construction and operational phases of the Specific Plan will be discussed in the EIR. This impact is potentially significant and will be addressed in the EIR; mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. Additionally, the following federal, state, and local laws and regulations govern solid waste disposal, including:

- **AB 939 (Chapter 1095, Statutes of 1989)**, the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 required each city, county, and regional agency to develop a source reduction and recycling element of an integrated waste management plan that contained specified components, including a source reduction component, a recycling component, and a composting component. With certain exceptions, the source reduction and recycling components were required to divert 50 percent of all solid waste from landfill disposal or transformation by January 1, 2000, through source reduction, recycling, and composting activities.

- **AB 32 (Chapter 488, Statutes of 2006)**, the California Global Warming Solutions Act, established mandatory recycling as one of the measures to reduce GHG emissions adopted in the Scoping Plan by the California Air Resources Board.

- **AB 341 (Chapter 476, Statutes of 2011)** requires that all "commercial" generators of solid waste (businesses, institutions, and multifamily dwellings) establish recycling and/or composting programs. AB 341 goes beyond AB 939 and establishes the new recycling goal of 75 percent by 2020.

Future development pursuant to the Specific Plan (under both the construction and operational phases) would be required to comply with all applicable laws and regulations governing solid waste, including those listed above, and in doing so, not affect the Count's ability to continue to meet the required AB 939 waste diversion requirements.

Additionally, the KWRA—which would collect and dispose of all solid waste, including recyclable materials, generated in the Plan Area—has adopted an Integrated Waste Management Plan that contains the mandatory elements of a Source Reduction and Recycling Element and a Household Hazardous Waste Element. Almost all waste collected by commercial haulers in the unincorporated portion of the County is taken to KWRA's Materials Recovery and Recycling Facility. All unrecyclable material is taken to a state-licensed landfill in the region.

Therefore, no impact would occur and this impact will not be evaluated in the EIR.

3.20 WILDFIRE

Wildland fire protection in California is the responsibility of either the local government, state, or the federal government. State Responsibility Areas (SRA) are the areas in the state where the State of California has the primary financial responsibility for the prevention and suppression of wildland fires. The SRA forms one large area over 31 million acres to which the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) provides a basic level of wildland fire prevention and protection services.

Local responsibility areas (LRA) include incorporated cities, cultivated agriculture lands, and portions of the desert. LRA fire protection is typically provided by city fire departments, fire protection districts, counties, and by CAL FIRE under contract to local government (CAL FIRE 2019a). KCFD provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the County. CAL FIRE uses an extension of the SRA Fire Hazard Severity Zone model as the basis for evaluating fire hazard in LRAs. The local responsibility area hazard rating reflects flame and ember intrusion from adjacent wildlands and from flammable vegetation in the urban area. Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) are identified by Moderate, High and Very High in an SRA, and Very High in an LRA.

The Plan Area is not in or near an SRA or LRA or lands classified as high fire hazard severity zones. Land opposite the California Aqueduct west of the Plan Area is mapped as a moderate FHSZ, as designated by CAL FIRE (CAL FIRE 2019).

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

a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

No Impact. As demonstrated above, the Plan Area is not in or near an SRA or LRA or lands classified as high fire hazard severity zones. Additionally, the Kings County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) was approved by the County Board of Supervisors in November 2015. Implementation of the Specific Plan would not have a significant impact on implementation of the EOP, as substantiated in Section 3.9.f, above. Therefore, no impact would occur and this impact will not be assessed in the EIR.

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. As demonstrated above, the Plan Area is not in or near an SRA or LRA or lands classified as high fire hazard severity zones.

Wildfire Hazards

Wildfires are unplanned ignitions of wildland fires and escaped prescribed fires (NPS 2019). Land opposite the California Aqueduct west of the Plan Area is mapped as a moderate FHSZ, as designated by CAL FIRE (CAL FIRE 2019). Fire hazard severity zones in wildlands are determined based on the probability of burning; estimated flame sizes expected based on fuels, slope, and expected fire weather; and the amount of firebrands (embers) expected to land on the area. The moderate FHSZ is the least severe of three FHSZ ranks: moderate,

high, and very high (CAL FIRE 2007). The moderate FHSZ west of the Plan Area is in an LRA, meaning that the County is responsible for the cost of fire protection in the area (CAL FIRE 2019). Fire protection and emergency medical services to the LRA is provided by KCFD.

The wildfire environment consists of three components: fuel, topography, and weather (LACCEO 2014). There is no wildland vegetation in, adjacent to or in proximity of the Plan Area. Landforms such as slopes and canyons speed wildfire spread (LACCEO 2014); there are no such landforms in the Plan Area. The weather most conducive to wildfire is hot and dry, with strong winds and low vegetation moisture (GEOS 2018). The climate of the San Joaquin Valley is characterized by hot summers and a long dry season lasting from late spring through autumn (SJVAPCD 2003).

Note that while debris burning (including burning of agricultural waste) is a major cause of wildfires, intentional burning of agricultural waste on farmland would only become a wildfire if the fire escaped onto wildland vegetation.

Wildfire Risks

Wildfire risk is the damage a fire can do to values at risk in the area—such as people, structures, and natural resources such as habitat or timber—under existing and future conditions (CAL FIRE 2007). There are no residents or structures in the Plan Area (see Figure 3, *Aerial Photograph*). Agriculture onsite could be damaged by a wildfire.

Development pursuant to the Specific Plan would not add wildland vegetation to the Plan Area. Development would also not change site topography (such as adding large slopes) so as to exacerbate wildfire spread. Development would also not result in a change to the weather of the Plan Area or surrounding area.

Therefore, development would not exacerbate wildfire hazards in the Plan Area. While development pursuant to the Specific Plan would add people and structures that could be at risk from a wildfire, development would not exacerbate wildfire risks onsite. Thus, implementation of the Specific Plan would not expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or uncontrolled spread of wildfire. No impact would occur and this impact will not be assessed in the EIR.

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. As demonstrated above, the Plan Area is not in or near an SRA or LRA or lands classified as high fire hazard severity zones. Additionally, Specific Plan development would involve installation and maintenance of infrastructure including roads and power lines. Installation of such infrastructure would not exacerbate wildfire risks; see the analysis of impacts to wildfire risks above in Section 3.20.b. Therefore, no impact would occur and this impact will not be assessed in the EIR.

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. As demonstrated above, the Plan Area is not in or near an SRA or LRA or lands classified as high fire hazard severity zones. Development accommodated by the Specific Plan would not exacerbate wildfire hazards onsite, as substantiated above in Section 3.20.b. Therefore, development would not expose people or structures downslope or downstream from the Plan Area to substantial risks resulting from wildfires, such as flooding or landslides. No impact would occur and this impact will not be assessed in the EIR.

3.21 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?

Potentially Significant Impact. Implementation of the Specific Plan has the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, reduce the habitat of a plant or wildlife species, cause a plant or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of California history or prehistory. The EIR will analyze these topics in greater detail to determine whether the Specific Plan would generate any significant impacts.

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.)

Potentially Significant Impact. The Specific Plan would involve the development of the Plan Area. As detailed in this Initial Study, several topical areas would have potentially significant environmental impacts pursuant to development that would be accommodated by the Specific Plan. Due to the amount and type of development would be accommodated by the Specific Plan, it also has the potential to result in cumulative impacts (e.g., air quality, GHG) that would affect the human environment. Further analysis is needed in the EIR to evaluate the Specific Plan's cumulative impacts in association with other current and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

c) Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Potentially Significant Impact. Development pursuant to the Specific Plan could create direct and indirect adverse effects on humans. The Specific Plan has the potential to affect humans through impacts related to air quality, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hydrology and water quality, and noise.

The significance of these potential impacts will be analyzed in the EIR.

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