7th Standard Road Roundabout Project

At the intersection of State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road
near Shafter in Kern County
06-KER-43-12.19

EA 06-1C280 Project ID: 0621000069

Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration

Volume 1 of 2

Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation

September 21, 2023

General Information About This Document

What's in this document:

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

What you should do:

- Please read the document. Additional copies of the document and the related technical studies are available for review at the Caltrans district office at 1352 West Olive Avenue, Fresno, California 93728, weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; the Beale Memorial Library at 701 Truxton Avenue, Bakersfield, California 93301, Monday-Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; and at the Shafter Branch Library at 236 James Street, Shafter, California, 93263, Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and at the Caltrans website, https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-6.

- Tell us what you think. If you have any comments regarding the proposed project, please send your written comments to Caltrans by the deadline. Submit comments via U.S. mail to: Javier Almaguer, District 6 Environmental, California Department of Transportation, 2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100, Fresno, California 93726. Submit comments via email to javier.almaguer@dot.ca.gov.

- Submit comments by the deadline: December 22, 2023

What happens next:

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

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06-KER-43-12.19
Project ID 0621000069

Construct a roundabout at the intersection of
State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road near Shafter in Kern County

INITIAL STUDY
with Proposed Negative Declaration

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

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation

Responsible Agency: California Transportation Commission

Jennifer Lugo
Office Chief, Environmental
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

10/05/2023
Date

The following individual can be contacted for more information about this document:

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DRAFT
Proposed Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

State Clearinghouse Number: pending

District-County-Route-Post Mile: 06-KER-43-12.19

EA/Project Number: EA 06-1C280 and Project ID 0621000069

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to construct a roundabout at the intersection of State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road near Shafter in Kern County.

Determination

An Initial Study has been prepared by Caltrans District 6. On the basis of this study, it is determined that the proposed action with the incorporation of the identified mitigation measures will not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

The project would have no effect on aesthetics, air quality, agricultural and forestry resources, mineral resources, energy, hydrology and floodplains, cultural resources, geology and soils, population and housing, recreation, paleontological resources, tribal cultural resources, and wildfire.

The project would have less than significant effect on biological resources, water quality, noise, utilities and public services, traffic and transportation, hazardous waste, cumulative impacts and greenhouse gas emissions.

_____

Jennifer Lugo
Office Chief, Environmental
California Department of Transportation

_____

Date

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Chapter 1 Proposed Project

1.1 Introduction

The project proposes to construct a roundabout at the intersection of State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road near Shafter in Kern County (see Figure 1-1 and Figure 1-2 for vicinity and location maps). Caltrans is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

State Route 43, within the project limits, is a two-lane rural conventional highway oriented in a north-south direction. State Route 43 is intersected by 7th Standard Road to form a four-legged intersection. It is currently an all-way stop-controlled intersection. The northbound approach to the intersection has an existing through-left lane and a flared outside shoulder for right turns. The southbound approach to the intersection has an existing through-left lane and a short right-turn lane of approximately 25 feet for right turns. There are 12-foot lanes, 4-foot paved shoulders, and stop signs controlling the northbound and southbound traffic approaching the intersection. The posted speed limit on State Route 43 in the project limits in both directions is 55 miles per hour.

Within the project limits, 7th Standard Road is a local two-lane road, oriented in an east-west direction. The eastbound and westbound approaches to the intersection have an existing through-left lane and a short right-turn lane of about 25 feet for right turns. Lane widths appear to be standard, and shoulder widths vary in size. Stop signs control the eastbound and westbound traffic approaching the intersection.

The existing at-grade intersection of State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road is adjacent to roadside commercial buildings, light industrial complexes, and undeveloped parcels. More than 90 percent of the land adjacent to the 7th Standard Road Roundabout project is in industrial use.

This project is funded with state Minor A funding for Project Approval and Environmental Document. In addition, it has been nominated for Federal Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) funding for subsequent phases. Once the federal funding has been authorized the project will be added to the 2023 Federal Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (FSTIP).

1.2 Purpose and Need

The purpose of the project is to improve the operational performance at the existing all-way stop-controlled intersection of State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road due to recurring traffic congestion. A roundabout is needed at

the intersection to provide better operational performance and lower overall delays for traffic moving through the intersection.

1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this project is to improve the operational performance at the existing all-way stop-controlled intersection of State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road.

1.2.2 Need

The quality of traffic flow identified as Level of Service, is used to evaluate highway operational performance. Traffic flow ratings ranges from A to F, with Level of Service “A” representing free-flowing traffic, and Level of Service “F” representing gridlock and stop-and-go conditions. The results for existing traffic conditions (2018), opening year (2025) and design year (2045) are detailed below.

The 2018-year (existing conditions) morning delay time is 16 seconds with a Level of Service C, while the evening delay time is 21 seconds and a Level of Service C.

The 2025 opening year morning delay time would be 22 seconds with a Level of Service C, while the evening delay time would be 42 seconds with a Level of Service C under the no-build alternative.

The 2045 opening year morning delay time would be 122 seconds with a Level of Service of F, while the evening delay time would be 209 seconds with a Level of Service F under the no-build alternative.

The 2025 opening year morning delay time would be 6 seconds with a Level of Service A, while the evening delay time would be 7 seconds with a Level of Service A under the build alternative. The morning delay time would improve by 16 seconds, and the evening delay time would improve by 35 seconds under the 2025 build alternative.

The 2045 opening year morning delay time would be 7 seconds with a Level of Service of A, while the evening delay time would be 8 seconds with a Level of Service A under the build alternative. The morning delay time would improve by 115 seconds, and the evening delay time would improve by 201 seconds.

Traffic delay times would improve over time with the roundabout project.

1.3 Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes improvements to the intersection of State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road in the City of Shafter in Kern County. The project would replace the existing four-way stop with a roundabout. The roundabout would have an approximately 200-foot diameter with a 10-foot truck apron. The circulatory path surrounding the center of the roundabout would have a concrete pavement with contrasted surface treatment for the truck apron, along with minor raised slopes to accommodate oversized, large load trucks. The roadways would have concrete splitter islands separating the direction of travel within the roundabout approaches and departures. The roundabout would include sidewalks, curbs, and bike ramps for pedestrian traffic. The intersection project would include lighting, flashing beacons, and utility relocation. Trenching would be required for the lighting, flashing beacons and drainage alterations.

Acquisition of right-of-way is required for construction of the project. Acquired property currently zoned as industrial, commercial, and agricultural would be converted to transportation use. Assessor parcel number 090-310-63-00-0 is a full acquisition, and the vacant, abandoned structures on the property would be demolished. Assessor parcel number 104-011-40-00-3, zoned as agricultural, is currently vacant and requires acquisition and a temporary construction easement. Assessor parcel numbers 090-310-64-00-3, 104-011-40-00-3, 104-012-36-00-9, and 104-012-38-00-5 are partial property acquisitions adjacent to State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road. Total acreage acquisition from the six parcels needed for this project is approximately 12.5 acres. Estimated total project cost is $16 million.

See Figures 1-1 and 1-2 for the project vicinity map and project location map showing where the project would occur. See additional project mapping in Appendix B.

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map

Figure 1-2 Project Location Map

1.4 Project Alternatives

A build alternative and a no-build alternative are being considered for this project.

1.4.1 Build Alternative

This project contains standardized project measures that are used on most, if not all, Caltrans projects and were not developed in response to any specific environmental impact resulting from the proposed project. These measures are listed later in this chapter under “Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Build Alternatives.”

1.4.2 No-Build (No-Action) Alternative

Under the no-build alternative, the State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road intersection would remain as it currently exists. There would be no improvements to State Route 43, 7th Standard Road or the intersection. This alternative would not meet the purpose and need of the project

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

14-1.02 Environmentally Sensitive Area: Pertains to environmentally sensitive areas marked on the ground. Do not enter an environmentally sensitive area unless authorized. If breached, immediately stop all work within 60 feet of the boundary, secure the area, and notify the engineer.

14-2.03 Unanticipated Discovery of Archaeological Resources: Pertains to archaeological resources discovered within or near construction limits. Do not disturb the resources and immediately stop all work within a 60-foot radius of discovery, secure the area, and notify the engineer. Do not move archaeological resources or take them from the job site. Do not resume work within the radius of discovery until authorized. Archaeological mitigation may include monitoring.

14-6.03 Species Protection: Pertains to protecting regulated species and their habitat that occur within or near the job site. Upon discovery of a regulated species, immediately stop all work within a 100-foot radius of the discovery and notify the engineer.

14-6.03B Bird Protection: Pertains to protecting migratory and nongame birds, their occupied nests, and their eggs. Upon discovery of an injured or dead bird or migratory or nongame bird nests that may be adversely affected by construction activities, immediately stop all work within a 100-foot radius of the discovery and notify the engineer. Exclusion devices, nesting-prevention measures, and removing constructed and unoccupied nests may be applied.

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

14-8.02 Noise Control: Pertains to controlling and monitoring noise resulting from work activities. Noise levels are not to exceed 86 decibels at 50 feet from the job site from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

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

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

14-11.18 Removal of Asbestos in Structure: Upon discovery of unanticipated asbestos or a hazardous substance, immediately stop work and notify the engineer.

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

14-11.12 Removal of Yellow Traffic Stripe and Pavement Marking with Hazardous Waste Residue: Includes specifications for removing, handling, and disposing of yellow thermoplastic and yellow-painted traffic stripe and pavement marking. The residue from the removal of this material is a generated hazardous waste (lead chromate). Removal of existing yellow thermoplastic and yellow-painted traffic stripe and pavement marking exposes workers to health hazards that must be addressed in a lead compliance plan.

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

7-1.02K(6)(j)(iii) Earth Material Containing Lead.

36-4 and/or 84-9.03B Remove Traffic Stripes and Pavement Markings Containing Lead: Includes specifications for work involving residue from grinding and cold-planing that contains lead from paint and thermoplastic, which addresses the need for a lead compliance plan and appropriate handling of lead-containing road materials.

1.6 Discussion of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion

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

1.7 Permits and Approvals Needed

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

Agency	Permit/Approval	Status
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Letter of Concurrence	To be obtained before the final environmental document

Chapter 2 CEQA Evaluation

2.1 CEQA Environmental Checklist

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

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

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

2.1.1 Aesthetics

Considering the information in the Visual Impact Assessment dated March 13, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099:

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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	**No Impact**
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	**No Impact**

2.1.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

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

Considering the information in the Community Impact Assessment dated August 24, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	**No Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	**No Impact**
c) Conflict with existing zoning, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?	**No Impact**
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	**No Impact**
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	**No Impact**

2.1.3 Air Quality

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

Considering the information in the Air Quality Memo dated August 8, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	**No Impact**
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	**No Impact**
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	**No Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	**No Impact**

2.1.4 Biological Resources

Considering the information in the 7th Standard Road Roundabout Natural Environment Study, Minimal Impacts dated June 29, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	**No Impact**
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	**No Impact**
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	**No Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources
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**

a,b) Affected Environment

Build Alternative

Plants

Vegetation within the project area includes non-native, native, ruderal and ornamental plant species, which are commonly found in commercial and agricultural land uses and vacant land.

Non-native and native plant species found in the area include the following: Menzies fiddleneck *(Amsinckia menziesii)*, Fourwing saltbush *(Atriplex canescens)*, Black Mustard *(Brassica nigra)*, Shepherd's purse *(Capselal bursa-pastoris)*, Short style owl's clover (Castilleja brevistyla), tocalote *(Centaurea melitensis)*, Flix weed *(Descurainia sophia)*, Parry's mallow *(Eremalche parryi ssp. parryi)*, Blue dicks *(Dichelostemma capitatum)*, Redstem stork's bill *(Erodium cicutarium)*, Bird's-eye gilia *(Gilia tricolor)*, Hare barley *(Hordeum murinum)*, California goldfields *(Lasthenia californica)*, Shining pepperweed (*Lepidium nitidum*), Pineapple weed *(Matricaria discoidea)*, California Burclover *(Medicago polymorpha)*, Black medick *(Medicago lupulina)*, Bracted popcornflower *(Plagiobothrys bacteatus)*, Common Groundsel *(Senecio vulgaris)*, London rocket *(Sisymbrium irio)*, Silverleaf nightshade *(Solanum elaeagnifolium)*, White clover *(Trifolium repens)*, Common dandelion *(Taraxacum officinale F.H. Wigg.)*, Bird's eye speedwell *(Veronica persica)*, and Six-weeks fescue *(Vulpia octoflora)*.

Kern Mallow

Kern Mallow *(Eremalche parryi ssp. kernensis)* is an annual herb that is native and endemic to California. The known range distribution of this species is limited to midwestern Kern County. This species typically occurs in shadescale scrub and valley grassland on dry, open sandy to clay soils and contains flowers that are white to light purple to pink when blooming from January to May.

Kern Mallow is federally listed as endangered as well as ranked 1B.2 by the California Native Plant Society rare and endangered plant inventory. This species is threatened by agriculture, grazing, road construction, vehicles, and oil development.

Potential habitat for Kern mallow *(Eremalche parryi ssp. kernensis)* does exist within the project area. Five observations have been reported within 10-miles of the project footprint. The non-native grassland is suboptimal due to ruderal non-native grasses present that compete with native vegetation. Habitat onsite is also exposed to routine maintenance. Large portions of the project areas are routinely mowed to allow for a fire break. Daily traffic and adjacent agricultural activities also contribute to the habitat disturbance onsite.

San Joaquin Bluecurls

San Joaquin bluecurls *(Trichostema ovatum)* is an annual herb that is native and endemic to California. The known range distribution of this species is limited to midwestern Kern County. This species typically occurs in chenopod scrub and valley and foothill grasslands. This species flowers are lavender in color with 2-3 corolla tubes curved upwards when blooming from April to June and July to October. San Joaquin bluecurls is ranked 4.2 by the California Native Plant Society rare and endangered plant inventory.

No observations have been reported within 10-miles of the project footprint. The non-native grassland is suboptimal due to ruderal non-native grasses present that compete with the native vegetation. Habitat onsite is also exposed to routine maintenance. Large portions of the project area are routinely mowed to allow for a fire break. Daily traffic and adjacent agricultural activities also contribute to the habitat disturbance onsite.

Invasive Species

On February 3, 1999, President William J. Clinton signed Executive Order 13112 requiring federal agencies to combat the introduction or spread of invasive species in the United States. The order defines invasive species as "any species, including its seeds, eggs, spores, or other biological material capable of propagating that species, that is not native to that ecosystem whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health."

The following invasive species were observed within the project area: Black mustard *(Brassica nigra)*, Tocalote *(Centaurea melitensis)*, Flix weed *(Descurainia sophia)*, Redstem stork's bill *(Erodium cicutarium)*, Hare barely *(Hordeum murinum)*, California burclover *(Medicago polymorpha)*, and London rocket *(Sisymbrium irio)*.

Animals

The vegetation within the project area supports a variety of common animal species such as the house sparrow *(Passer domesticus)*, American crow *(Corvus brachyrhynchos)*, lesser goldfinch *(Spinus psaltria)*, mourning dove *(Zenaida macroura)*, and northern mockingbird *(Mimus polyglottos)*. This community also provides suitable habitat for small mammals such as the

California ground squirrel *(Spermophilus beecheyi),* deer mouse *(Peromyscus maniculatus)*, and other burrowing mammals.

Nesting bird species are addressed as migratory birds because they have similar habitat requirements, project-related impacts, and avoidance and minimization measures. There is very low potential for them to nest in trees within the project area, or on utility poles.

Special-Status Species

Special status animal species that have the potential to occur in the project are the burrowing owl, Swainson's hawk and San Joaquin kit fox.

Burrowing Owl

The burrowing owl *(Athene cunicularia)* is a small owl, ranging from 7.5 to 10 inches in height, with a wingspan of 21 to 24 inches, long legs, and a short tail. This owl has yellow eyes, white eyebrows, and lacks the ear-tufts seen on other owls. Adult burrowing owls are brown with white or buff, brown-flecked chests, a white chin, and spotted back. Young burrowing owls have fewer spots and no chest stripes.

Burrowing owls in California are found in dry, open grasslands, range agricultural lands, and desert habitat. They may also be found in urban vacant lots, airports, golf courses, and fairgrounds within urban areas; they will adopt the burrows of other burrowing animals in addition to digging their own burrows. Burrowing owls eat mostly insects, but occasionally eat small mammals, such as mice and ground squirrels, bats, small birds, lizards, or snakes. Burrowing owls breed annually between February and May, depending on location, and typically have one clutch between 2 and 12 young.

Swainson's Hawk

The Swainson's hawk *(Buteo swainsoni)* favors open habitats for foraging, such as fallow fields and rangeland habitat. Though much of its native grassland habitat has been converted to agriculture, this species has adapted to agricultural environments. This species will use scattered stands of trees near suitable foraging areas as nesting sites. Most Swainson's hawks in California are found in the Central Valley. During the summer months, Swainson's hawks eat mostly insects, birds, and small mammals, and occasionally reptiles, amphibians, and other invertebrates.

Within California, nesting usually begins in late March, and the young usually leave the nest by July. Nests are typically made of sticks, bark, and fresh leaves and are usually placed near the top of a solitary tree or in a small grove of trees along a stream. This species occasionally nests on a power pole or transmission tower if other suitable nesting areas are unavailable, as well as in orchards.

San Joaquin Kit Fox

The San Joaquin kit fox *(Vulpes macrotis mutica)* is designated a federal endangered species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and a state threatened species by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. San Joaquin kit foxes occupy valley and foothill grasslands, or grassy open-stage habitats with scattered shrubs, in areas of loose-textured soils, with suitable prey base. San Joaquin kit foxes have also adapted to different conditions, such as urban environments. They may live near and forage in tilled and fallow fields but have been displaced by lands that are intensively irrigated.

San Joaquin kit foxes have been impacted from the loss and fragmentation of their habitat from development (urban, agricultural, petroleum fields, wind farms, roads, powerlines, canals, etc.), vehicle mortalities, rodenticides, pesticides, shootings, and predation.

These kit foxes are mostly nocturnal (active at night) and stay active throughout the year. They use dens for shelter, reproduction, protection from predators, and temperature regulation, and their dens typically have a distinct keyhole-shaped entrance. They occupy new dens frequently (for predator avoidance). The San Joaquin kit fox's diet changes seasonally, but the species eats mostly kangaroo rats, black-tailed jackrabbits, and cottontail rabbits.

Though no sign of this species was found in the project area, a potential prey base exists in the area and San Joaquin kit foxes could travel through the area while dispersing to more suitable habitat.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternative

Plants

Kern Mallow

Protocol surveys conducted in 2023 yielded no observation after an optimal rainy season. Parry's mallow was observed onsite during surveys, but no Kern mallow were identified within the project area.

San Joaquin Bluecurls

Protocol surveys conducted in 2023 yielded no observations of San Joaquin bluecurls.

Invasive Species

Invasive plant species were observed in the project area during field surveys. Though the project would impact vegetation, both permanent and temporary impacts are relatively minimal due to the scope of work proposed. Areas temporarily impacted would be available again after construction.

Special-Status Species

Burrowing Owl

Burrowing owls were not detected during migratory bird surveys or general wildlife surveys, but potential habitat is present within the area and ground squirrels, which can be a suitable food source, are present. Although there are ground squirrel burrows that may provide suitable nesting habitat for this species, no sign of burrowing owls was found during field surveys.

In addition, the non-native grassland habitat present onsite is isolated, surrounded by agricultural and urban development. There is low potential for any dispersing owls to migrate into these areas because there are no habitat corridors that connect with this isolated habitat.

Swainson's Hawk

One adult Swainson's hawk was seen during the protocol-level botanical survey conducted on March 22, 2023. The hawk was foraging in the adjacent agricultural field; however, no nesting Swainson's hawks were observed within the project area. In addition, no nesting Swainson's hawks were found nesting within half a mile of the project footprint. However, Swainson's hawks could still forage in the area because of the many ground squirrels in the area.

Though the project would impact potential foraging habitat, both permanent and temporary impacts are relatively minimal due to the scope of work proposed. Areas temporarily impacted would be available again after construction for potential foraging habitat.

Tree removal is anticipated for this project. The trees planned for removal do not have active nests residing in them. Tree removal would occur outside the nesting bird season.

San Joaquin Kit Fox

Though no sign of this species was found in the project area, a potential prey base exists.

Both temporary and permanent impacts to potential habitat are relatively minimal due to the scope of work proposed. The project area is heavily disturbed by commercial and agricultural development, and the existing potential habitat is overrun with non-native grasses and invasive species. No San Joaquin kit fox or any sign of the species was found during general wildlife surveys. Based on surveys, habitat condition, and proximity to heavy trafficked areas, Caltrans has determined that the project is not likely to adversely affect the San Joaquin kit fox.

No-Build Alternative

No impacts to biological resources are anticipated under the no-build alternative.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Build Alternative

Invasive Species

To prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species, Caltrans has issued policy guidelines that provide a framework for addressing roadside vegetation management issues for construction activities and maintenance programs. These measures may include the inspection and cleaning of project equipment, commitments to ensure the use of native or invasive-free mulches, and seed mixes, as well as eradication strategies for the removal and proper disposal of existing populations or those that could occur in the future.

Plants

Pre-construction surveys for botanical species would be conducted the blooming season prior to the start of construction. No compensatory mitigation is proposed at this time.

Special-Status Species

Burrowing Owls

Pre-construction surveys with reference to the *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* dated March 2012 would be conducted no more than 30 days prior to the beginning of ground disturbance and/or construction activities. If burrowing owls are found to be present onsite, an appropriate no-disturbance buffer will be implemented. No compensatory mitigation is proposed at this time.

Swainson's Hawk

Pre-construction surveys would be conducted within half a mile of the action area no more than 30 days prior to the beginning of ground disturbance and/or construction activities. If a nesting raptor is found, an appropriate no-disturbance buffer will be established around the nesting raptors.

Tree removal should occur outside nesting bird season (September 1 to January 31). No compensatory mitigation is proposed at this time.

San Joaquin Kit Fox

The following measures specific to the San Joaquin kit fox are consistent with the *Standardized Recommendations for Protection of the Endangered San Joaquin Kit Fox Prior to or During Ground Disturbance* (USFWS 2011). Implementing these measures would ensure that the project will not directly or indirectly increase the threat to individual kit foxes over the baseline threat presented by State Route 43.

Project-related vehicles should observe a 20-mile-per-hour speed limit in all project areas, except on county roads and state and federal highways; this is particularly important at night when kit foxes are most active. To the extent

possible, night-time construction should be minimized. Off-road traffic outside of designated project areas should be prohibited.

To prevent inadvertent entrapment of kit foxes or other animals during the construction phase of a project, all excavated, steep-walled holes or trenches more than 2 feet deep should be covered at the close of each working day by plywood or similar materials or provided with one or more escape ramps constructed of earth fill or wooden planks. Before such holes or trenches are filled, they should be thoroughly inspected for trapped animals.

Pre-construction/pre-activity surveys would be conducted no less than 14 days and no more than 30 days prior to the beginning of ground disturbance and/or construction activities or any project activity likely to impact the San Joaquin kit fox.

Firearms (except by qualified and permitted public safety agents) and pets would not be permitted on the work site.

A Worker Environmental Awareness Training for San Joaquin kit fox will be provided to the construction workers before the start of construction.

The Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office and California Department of Fish and Wildlife will be notified in writing within three working days of the accidental death or injury to a San Joaquin kit fox during project related activities.

Food trash and other garbage that may attract wildlife to the work area would be disposed of in closed containers and removed at the end of each workday. Feeding of any wildlife would be prohibited.

No compensatory mitigation is proposed at this time.

No-Build Alternative

Avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures are not anticipated under the no-build alternative.

2.1.5 Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Historic Resources Evaluation Report dated May 15, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

2.1.6 Energy

Considering the information in the Energy section of the Caltrans Standard Environmental Reference dated June 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

2.1.7 Geology and Soils

Considering the information in the California Department of Conservation Earthquake Zone Map, accessed June 23, 2023, the California Department of Conservation Landslide Map, accessed June 23, 2023, and the Paleontological Identification Report, dated March 8, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	**No Impact**
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	**No Impact**
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	**No Impact**
iv) Landslides?	**No Impact**
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	**No Impact**
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in onsite or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	**No Impact**
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	**No Impact**
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	**No Impact**
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	**No Impact**

2.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Considering the information in the Greenhouse Gas memo dated August 28, 2023, and Air Quality memo dated August 8, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Greenhouse Gas Emissions
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	**No Impact**

a) Affected Environment

Land use adjacent to the State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road intersection is a mix of commercial, industrial, agricultural, and residential uses and vacant lots. Service stations, businesses supporting the oil and agricultural sectors, restaurants and retail stores are in the study area. More than 90 percent of the land adjacent to the 7th Standard Road Roundabout project is in industrial use. Beyond the intersection, the area is mostly cultivated agricultural fields. There are no residential land uses adjacent to the 7th Standard Road Roundabout project.

The 2022 Kern County Regional Transportation Plan by the Kern Council of Governments guides transportation and housing development in the project area. Chapter 4 of the plan (Sustainable Communities Strategy) discusses the emission reduction strategy for the region. The Sustainable Communities Strategy strives to reduce air emissions from passenger vehicle and light-duty truck travel by better coordinating transportation expenditures with forecasted development patterns and help to meet greenhouse gas targets for the region.

Environmental Consequences

The minor changes to traffic flow would not have any measurable impact on carbon dioxide greenhouse gas emissions when comparing the build alternative to the no-build alternative. However, based on vehicle trends with additional electric cars and cleaner fuels on the roadway, carbon dioxide emissions would inevitably lessen as years progress.

Construction greenhouse gas emissions would result from material processing, onsite construction equipment, and traffic delays due to construction. These emissions would be produced at different levels throughout the construction phase.

Construction of the project is expected to generate approximately 168 tons of carbon dioxide during the 110 working days (less than the 264 working days per 1 year) duration.

Operational climate change emissions do not need to be estimated because the project would not increase capacity of the roadway.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Build Alternative

The following measures listed in the Greenhouse Gas memo dated August 28, 2023, and Air Quality memo dated August 8, 2023, would also be implemented to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and potential climate change impacts from the project:

- To the extent feasible, limit idling to 5 minutes for delivery and dump trucks and other diesel-powered equipment (with some exceptions).
- To the extent feasible, schedule longer-duration lane closures to reduce the number of equipment mobilization efforts (combine with public information efforts for congested areas).
- To the extent feasible, reduce the need for transport of earthen materials by balancing cut and fill quantities.
- To the extent feasible, supplement existing construction environmental training with information on methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to construction.
- To the extent feasible, reduce construction waste by reusing or recycling construction and demolition waste.
- To the extent feasible, use recycled water and reduce consumption of potable water for construction.
- To the extent feasible, include mulch and compost applications and reduce organic waste.
- To the extent feasible, include mulch around new and existing plants to retain moisture.
- To the extent feasible, schedule truck trips outside of peak morning and evening commute hours.
- To the extent feasible, specify long-life pavement and cold in-place recycling.
- To the extent feasible, replace lighting with ultra-reflective sign materials that are illuminated by headlights to reduce energy used by electric lighting.

The removal of stop-controlled signals and their replacement with a roundabout would reduce or eliminate the need for vehicles to come to a complete stop at the intersection. Vehicles are channelized upon entering the roundabout and need to slow down to navigate. The steady movement through the roundabout would reduce emissions from deceleration, idling, and reacceleration from a complete stop (the scenario under a stop-controlled intersection).

No-Build Alternative

Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures are not required under the no-build alternative.

2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Considering the information in the Initial Site Assessment, PA and ED (Project Approval and Environmental Document phase) Compliance Study dated April 14, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	**No Impact**
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	**No Impact**
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	**No Impact**
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	**No Impact**
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	**No Impact**

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

d) Affected Environment

The Initial Site Assessment included a site visit and review of historic topographic maps, aerial photographs, regulatory databases, facility-related documents, and other site-related record sources. Commercial, and agricultural land uses are found within the project limits. The project area also includes some vacant and undeveloped land. The Initial Site Assessment identified the following facilities at or adjacent to the project area:

- A permitted underground storage tank at the Shell Service Station on the northeast corner State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road.
- A permitted underground storage tank at the Chevron Service Station on the southeast corner of State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road.
- A plugged oil well on the Chevron Service Station property.
- A hydrogen sulfide pipeline that runs east to west along 7th Standard Road.

The project area lies within the Rio Bravo Oil and Gas Field. An idle/capped oil well, which includes a concrete oil derrick foundation, sits on the property (Assessor Parcel Number 104-011-40-00-3).

Assessor Parcel Number 090-310-63-00-0 contains a vacant residential building and a burned-down workshop/shed.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternative

The project requires right-of-way acquisition from the Chevron Service Station property; the portion of the property to be acquired is undeveloped and is approximately 100 feet from the underground storage tanks and other fueling infrastructure. No known or suspected leaks or releases have been reported. As a result, hazardous waste impacts from this property are not anticipated.

Assessor Parcel Number 104-011-40-003 has an idle/capped oil well that includes a concrete oil derrick. A temporary construction easement will be obtained from this property.

Assessor Parcel Number 090-310-63-00-0 contains a vacant residential building and a burned-down workshop/shed, which would be demolished when the property is acquired as right-of-way. The structures appear to have been built sometime during the 1950s/1960s and may contain asbestos-containing materials and/or lead-based paints.

No-Build Alternative

There are no hazardous waste/material concerns with the no-build alternative.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Build Alternative

- Construction activities involving ground disturbance could expose workers and/or the public to lead. A lead compliance plan developed by a certified industrial hygienist is required.
- Include Standard Special Provision 7-1.02K(6)(j)(iii) Earth Material Containing Lead in the bid package.
- An asbestos-containing materials/lead-based paint survey is required and must be conducted once acquisition of the property has been completed.
- All oil field infrastructure (wells and pipelines) must be avoided, and excess soils requiring offsite disposal and/or relinquishment to the contractor are not permitted. If the project description is modified to include excess soils, a preliminary site investigation will be required to identify contamination prior to construction.
- If yellow striping will be removed separately, Special Standard Provision 14-11.12 is required for proper management of hazardous waste residue. Include Special Standard Provision 36-4 and/or 84-9.03B for work involving residue from grinding and cold-planing that contains lead from paint and thermoplastic, which addresses the need for a lead compliance plan and appropriate handling of lead-containing road materials.

No-Build Alternative

Avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures are not required under the no-build alternative.

2.1.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Considering the information included in the Water Compliance Memorandum for the 7th Standard Road Roundabout Project dated May 30, 2023 and the Location Hydraulic Study dated August 1, 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface water or groundwater quality?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	**No Impact**
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would: (i) result in substantial erosion or siltation onsite or offsite;	**No Impact**
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding onsite or offsite;	**No Impact**
(iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	**No Impact**
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	**No Impact**
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	**No Impact**
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	**No Impact**

a) Affected Environment

The project sits within the Kern Delta Hydrologic Area. Major waterways are approximately 5 miles away. Topography within the project area is flat, with a maximum elevation change of 52 feet and an average elevation above sea level of 347 feet.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternative

Drainage alterations within the project area are not expected to cause long-term water quality impacts on surface waters. Short-term potential impacts to nearby surface water and groundwater could occur due to accidental spills or poor management in handling hazardous materials, fuels, and other potential chemicals used during construction operations.

Since most of the project work is proposed on the existing pavement (impervious area) and runoff would be contained at the proposed ditches, construction of the roundabout and associated drainage work would have a minimal impact on the floodplain and existing condition.

The construction work would not cause an increase in roadway elevation or alter the natural flow of the floodplain. The project does not consist of a longitudinal encroachment or a significant encroachment on the base floodplain.

No-Build Alternative

No short-term or long-term impacts on water quality are associated with the no-build alternative. The natural flow of the floodplain would not be affected under the no-build alternative. There would be no encroachment to the base floodplain.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Build Alternative

The project will disturb 1 or more acres of soil, the following would be required:

- A Notification of Intent is to be submitted to the appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board at least 30 days prior to the start of construction.
- A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan is to be prepared and implemented during construction to the satisfaction of the resident engineer.
- A Notice of Termination is to be submitted to the Regional Water Quality Control Board upon completion of construction and site stabilization. A project will be considered complete when the criteria for final stabilization in the Construction General Permit are met.

If the project disturbs less than 1 acre of soil, a Water Pollution Control Plan is required to be prepared by the contractor per the Caltrans 2022 Standard Specification Section 13-1 – Water Pollution.

By incorporating proper and accepted engineering practices and Best Management Practices, the project would minimize erosion or siltation onsite or offsite during construction or its operation.

No-Build Alternative

Avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are not required for the no-build alternative.

2.1.11 Land Use and Planning

Considering the information in the Community Impact Assessment Memo dated July 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Land Use and Planning
a) Physically divide an established community?	**No Impact**
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	**No Impact**

2.1.12 Mineral Resources

Considering the information in the Mineral Resource Zones for Kern County (https://databasin.org/maps/new/#datasets=26c92d3ecbe541ec81451f9de4e1e0e4) accessed on July 31, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Mineral Resources
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	**No Impact**
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	**No Impact**

2.1.13 Noise

Considering the information in the 7th Standard Road Roundabout Compliance Memo dated April 6, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project result in:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	**No Impact**
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	**No Impact**

a,b) Affected Environment

The general project area is mostly rural, with vacant acreage on the east and west sides of State Route 43 and to the north and south sides of 7th Standard Road. There are two gas stations: one on the northwest corner and one on the southwest corner of the intersection. A vacant residential unit is just north of State Route 43 and west of 7th Standard Road, about 180 feet away from the intersection.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternative

Construction noise varies greatly depending on the construction process, type and condition of equipment used, as well as layout of the construction site. Temporary construction noise impacts would be unavoidable in areas right next to the proposed project alignment. Construction equipment noise is rated as A-weighted sound levels. Construction equipment is expected to generate noise levels ranging from 76 to 88 A-rated decibels at 50 feet from the source. Noise produced by construction equipment would be reduced at a rate of about 6 decibels per doubling of distance.

No long-term impacts are anticipated due to the temporary nature of the proposed work.

No-Build Alternative

Noise impacts are not expected for the no-build alternative.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Noise Abatement Measures

Build Alternative

Construction noise control would conform to the provisions in Section 14-8.02 "Noise Control" of the Caltrans Standard Specifications. The noise level from the contractor's operations, between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., shall not exceed 86 decibels at 50 feet from the job site. All equipment must be fitted with adequate mufflers and operated according to the manufacturers' specifications.

No-Build Alternative

Avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures are not expected for the no-build alternative.

2.1.14 Population and Housing

Considering the information in the Community Impact Assessment dated August 24, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

2.1.15 Public Services

Considering the information in the Community Impact Assessment dated August 24, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Public Services
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services: Fire protection?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
Police protection?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
Schools?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
Parks?	**No Impact**
Other public facilities?	**No Impact**

a) Affected Environment

Emergency Services

Law enforcement services for the City of Shafter are provided by the Shafter Police Department. The department is responsible for all municipal law enforcement functions as well as traffic safety and animal control services within the incorporated area of the City of Shafter. The Kern County Sheriff's Department is responsible for law enforcement in the unincorporated areas of Kern County. The County Sheriff's office closest to the project area is on F Street in Wasco. The California Highway Patrol provides traffic safety and management as well as law enforcement in the unincorporated areas of Kern County. The California Highway Patrol office closest to the project area is on Stockdale Highway in Bakersfield.

The Kern County Fire Department Station 32 in Shafter provides fire protection and emergency response services to the Shafter community. The fire department's mission is to prevent the loss of life and property. In addition to responding to fires, the Kern County Fire Department Station 32 - Shafter also responds to medical emergencies, motor vehicle accidents, rescue calls, and incidents involving hazardous materials.

The Rio Bravo Elementary School at 22725 Elementary Lane in Bakersfield is 5 miles south the intersection of State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road. The

Rio Bravo-Greeley Union Elementary School District boundaries are within the project area. Three school bus stops sit along 7th Standard Road in the study area; the stops are at Bussel Road and 7th Standard Road, Bussel Road and south of 7th Standard Road, and 7th Standard Road just west of Mayer Road. The district boundaries are within the project area, however the Rio Bravo Elementary School is outside of the project area.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternative

Impacts on response times for emergency services would be negligible with the implementation of the Caltrans Traffic Incident Management Plan described in the avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures section.

No-Build Alternative

Emergency services would not be affected under the no-build alternative.

Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Measures

Build Alternative

Night work during construction is expected for this project due to existing traffic conditions and potential lane closures. Typically, a flagger on either side of the construction work zone will control the flow of traffic intermittently with one direction closed and the other direction open to traffic.

A detailed traffic management plan would be developed during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase of the project to minimize delays and maximize safety for the traveling public and emergency service providers during construction. The traffic management plan may include the following:

- Information from brochures and mailers, press releases and media alerts, and planned lane closure notices from the Caltrans website.
- Use of portable changeable message signs.
- Use of California Highway Patrol officers for traffic control.

Caltrans coordinates and manages road user information and highway advisory radio on the state highway system that would be used during construction.

No-Build Alternative

Avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are not required for the no-build alternative.

2.1.16 Recreation

Considering the information provided in the project mapping dated February 10, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Recreation
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	**No Impact**
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	**No Impact**

2.1.17 Transportation

Considering the information in the Community Impact Assessment dated August 24, 2023, the Air Quality memo dated August 8, 2023, and the Traffic Analysis dated April 20, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

a) Affected Environment

State Route 43 within the project limits is a two-lane rural conventional highway oriented in a north-south direction. The northbound approach to the intersection has an existing through-left lane and a flared outside shoulder for right turns. The southbound approach to the intersection has an existing through-left lane and a short right-turn lane approximately 25 feet wide for right turns. Twelve-foot lanes with 4-foot paved shoulders, and stop signs control the

northbound and southbound traffic approaching the intersection. The posted speed limit along this segment of State Route 43 is 55 miles per hour.

State Route 43 intersects with 7th Standard Road to form a four-legged intersection. Within the project limits, 7th Standard Road is a local two-lane road, oriented in an east-west direction. The eastbound and westbound approaches to the intersection have existing through-left turn lanes and short right-turn lanes approximately 25 feet wide for right turns. Lane widths appear standard, while shoulder widths vary. Stop signs control the eastbound and westbound traffic approaching the intersection.

The Rio Bravo-Greeley Union Elementary School District boundaries are within the project area. Three school bus stops sit along 7th Standard Road in the study area, at Bussel Road and 7th Standard Road, Bussel Road and south of 7th Standard Road, and 7th Standard Road just west of Mayer Road.

There are no bike lanes or public transit stops within the project limits. The City of Shafter provides a dial-a-ride service weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m.to 3:30 p.m.

Traffic

A traffic analysis was performed for the project and is discussed in the air quality memo completed in August 8, 2023. Traffic volumes and quality of traffic flow were used to evaluate highway operations.

Traffic volume is identified as the annual average daily traffic count, which is the average number of vehicles that pass a given point within a 24-hour period. The quality of traffic flow is identified as Level of Service, which ranges from A to F, with Level of Service “A” representing free-flowing traffic, and Level of Service “F” representing gridlock and stop-and-go conditions. The results for existing traffic conditions (2018), opening year (2025) and design year (2045) are detailed below.

- For State Route 43 existing year 2018, the average annual traffic volume is 8,600 vehicles, and the truck average annual daily traffic volume is 1,376. Trucks make up 6 percent of the traffic volume.

- For State Route 43 opening year 2025 for the build and no-build alternatives, the average annual traffic volume is 10,000 vehicles, and the truck average annual daily traffic volume is 1,600. Trucks make up 6 percent of the traffic volume.

- For State Route 43 design year 2045 for the build and no-build alternatives, the average annual traffic volume is 14,800 vehicles, and the truck average annual daily traffic volume is 2,368. Trucks make up 6 percent of the traffic volume.

Roundabout features include the forced reduction in speeds and lessened points of conflict for collisions to occur. Pedestrians and cyclists also benefit from these features because the slower speed and inability to pass force motorists to focus on obstacles in their line of sight.

Environmental Consequences

Build and No-Build Alternatives

Traffic conditions and Level of Service for the opening year (2025) and future year (2045) are shown in Tables 2.1 and 2.2. Traffic volumes are defined as number of vehicles.

Table 2.1 Traffic Volumes for the Build and No-Build Alternatives

Location Build and No-Build	Open Year 2025 Vehicle Traffic Volumes	Open Year 2025 Truck Traffic Volumes	Design Year 2045 Morning Traffic Volumes	Design Year 2045 Truck Traffic Volumes
State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road	10,000	1,600	14,800	2,368

Source: Air Quality Memo August 8, 2023

Table 2.2 Delay and Level of Service for the Build and No-Build Alternatives

Alternative	Morning Peak Delay in Seconds	Morning Peak Level of Service	Evening Peak Delay in Seconds	Evening Peak Level of Service
2018 Existing	**16**	**C**	**21**	**C**
2025 No-Build Alternative	**22**	**C**	**42**	**C**
2025 Build Alternative	**6**	**A**	**7**	**A**
2045 No-Build Alternative	**122**	**F**	**209**	**F**
2045 Build Alternative	**7**	**A**	**8**	**A**

Source: Air Quality Memo August 8, 2023

The average annual traffic volume and truck average annual traffic volume remain the same for both the no-build and build alternatives for existing year 2018, opening year 2025, and design year 2045 (as shown in Table 2.1).

The 2025 opening year morning delay time would be 22 seconds with a Service C, while the evening delay time would be 42 seconds with a Level of Service C under the no-build alternative (as shown in Table 2.2).

The 2025 opening year morning delay time would be 6 seconds with a Level of Service A, while the evening delay time would be 7 seconds with a Level of Service A under the build alternative. The morning delay time would improve by 16 seconds, and the evening delay time would improve by 35 seconds under the 2025 build alternative (as shown in Table 2.2).

The 2045 opening year morning delay time would be 122 seconds with a Level of Service of F, while the evening delay time would be 209 seconds with a Level of Service F under the no-build alternative (as shown in Table 2.2).

The 2045 opening year morning delay time would be 7 seconds with a Level of Service of A, while the evening delay time would be 8 seconds with a Level of Service A under the build alternative (as shown in Table 2.2). The morning delay time would improve by 115 seconds, and the evening delay time would improve by 201 seconds.

A detour would be implemented during construction of the roundabout. The detour is anticipated for northbound and southbound State Route 43.

The proposed northbound detour would follow this route:

- Travel north on State Route 43, to Kratzmeyer Road, and go east on Kratzmeyer Road to Santa Fe Way.
- Travel north on Santa Fe Way, to Burbank Street, then go west on Burbank Street until rerouted back on to northbound State Route 43.

The proposed southbound detour would follow this route:

- Travel south on State Route 43 from Riverside Street to the intersection of Orange Avenue and State Route 43.
- Travel west on Orange Avenue to the Shafter Avenue. Travel south on Shafter Avenue to 7th Standard Road
- Travel west on 7th Standard Road, to Mayer Avenue then south on Mayer Avenue, to State Route 58.
- Travel east on State Route 58, until rerouted back onto State Route 43.

Night work during construction is expected for this project due to existing traffic conditions. Temporary lane closures may be necessary for small sections of the project. The detours may cause out of direction travel for those needing to access State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road during construction.

No-Build Alternative

The State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road intersection would remain as it currently exists under the no-build alternative. No changes would be made.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Build Alternative

A traffic management plan would be developed to minimize delays and maximize safety for motorists. The traffic management plan may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Release of information through brochures and mailers, press releases, and advertisements managed by the public information office.
- Use of fixed and portable changeable message signs.
- Incident management through the Construction Zone Enhancement Enforcement Program and the transportation management center.

During construction, a flagger would be present on either side of the construction work zone to control the flow of traffic, intermittently with one direction closed and the other direction open to traffic. When construction work is being done along the eastbound section of the roadway, the traffic flow would be in the westbound direction and vice versa.

The roundabout would include sidewalks, curb and bike ramps for pedestrian traffic.

No-Build Alternative

Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures are not required for the no-build alternative.

2.1.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Historic Property Survey Report dated May 2023 and initial consultation with Native American tribes, groups and individuals from July to August 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

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

2.1.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Considering the information in the Community Impact Assessment dated August 24, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	**No Impact**
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	**No Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems
d) Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	**No Impact**
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	**No Impact**

a) Affected Environment

The following utilities (water, power, communication, natural gas, and petroleum) have been identified within the project area:

- Crimson Midstream (Petroleum)
- Chevron Pipeline (Petroleum and Natural Gas)
- Southern California Gas Transmissions (Natural Gas)
- Southern California Gas Distribution (Natural Gas)
- North of the River Sanitary District (Sanitary Sewer)
- Charter-Spectrum (Fiber Optics)
- Pacific Gas and Electric Distribution (Electric)
- American Telephone and Telegraph Corporation (Telecommunications)
- Charter-Spectrum (Fiber Optics)

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternative

The following utilities will be impacted by the proposed project under the build alternative and will require utility relocation:

- Charter-Spectrum (Fiber Optics)
- Pacific Gas and Electric Transmission (Electric)
- Pacific Gas and Electric Distribution (Electric)
- American Telephone and Telegraph Corporation (Telecommunications)

The following utility owners may have potential conflicts with the project and require potential relocation or protection in place, pending more design and utility information to determine its full impacts:

- Crimson Midstream (Petroleum)
- Chevron Pipeline (Petroleum and Natural Gas)
- Southern California Gas Transmissions (Natural Gas)
- Southern California Gas Distribution (Natural Gas)
- North of the River Sanitary District (Sanitary Sewer)

Work may include but is not limited to pole relocation and undergrounding of existing overhead lines, vault and pedestal relocations and modifications, and underground line reconfiguration. Potholing is anticipated to positively locate existing underground utilities. Excavation and ground disturbance activities would be required for potential utility relocations.

No-Build Alternative

Utility relocation is not required under the no-build alternative.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Build Alternative

The utility companies would do all utility relocation work. Utility users would be informed of the date and time in advance of any service disruptions.

No-Build Alternative

Avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are not required for utilities under the no-build alternative.

2.1.20 Wildfire

Considering the information in the Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps accessed June 30,2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Wildfire
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	**No Impact**

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

2.1.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Mandatory Findings of Significance
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	**Less Than Significant Impact**

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

More detailed information for Question a) in the above table is found in Section 2.1.4 Biological Resources in this document.

a) Affected Environment

The burrowing owl, Swainson's hawk, San Joaquin kit fox, Kern mallow and San Joaquin bluecurls have the potential to occur in the project area. Nesting bird species are addressed as migratory birds because they have similar habitat requirements and have the potential to nest in trees within the project area or on utility poles.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternative

The project would impact potential foraging habitat and prey of special-status animal species; however, both permanent and temporary impacts are relatively minimal due to the scope of work proposed. Areas that are temporarily impacted would be available after construction for potential foraging habitat in the future. Tree removal is anticipated for this project, which could conflict with nesting birds.

Other potential impacts to special-status wildlife species may include direct mortality to individuals from vehicle strikes, and ground disturbance activities.

The non-native grassland is suboptimal due to ruderal non-native grasses present that compete with Kern mallow and San Joaquin bluecurls. Habitat onsite is also exposed to routine maintenance. Large portions of the project areas are routinely mowed to allow for a fire break. Daily traffic and adjacent agricultural activities also contribute to the habitat disturbance onsite.

No-Build Alternative

Impacts are not expected under the no-build alternative.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Build Alternative

Pre-construction field surveys would be conducted based on specific species protocols. Measures specific to species are based on guidelines from regulatory and resource agencies would be implemented during construction. These include the following:

Invasive Species

To prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species, Caltrans has issued policy guidelines that provide a framework for addressing roadside vegetation management issues for construction activities and maintenance programs. These measures may include the inspection and cleaning of project equipment, commitments to ensure the use of native or invasive-free mulches, and seed mixes, as well as eradication strategies for the removal and proper disposal of existing populations or those that could occur in the future.

Plants

Pre-construction surveys for botanical species would be conducted the blooming season prior to the start of construction. No compensatory mitigation is proposed at this time.

Special-Status Species

Burrowing Owls

Pre-construction surveys with reference to the Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation dated March 2012 would be conducted no more than 30 days prior to the beginning of ground disturbance and/or construction activities. If burrowing owls are found to be present onsite, an appropriate no-disturbance buffer will be implemented. No compensatory mitigation is proposed at this time.

Swainson's Hawk

Pre-construction surveys would be conducted within half a mile of the action area no more than 30 days prior to the beginning of ground disturbance and/or construction activities. If a nesting raptor is found, an appropriate no-disturbance buffer will be established around the nesting raptors.

Tree removal should occur outside nesting bird season (September 1 to January 31). No compensatory mitigation is proposed at this time.

San Joaquin Kit Fox

The following measures specific to the San Joaquin kit fox are consistent with the *Standardized Recommendations for Protection of the Endangered San Joaquin Kit Fox Prior to or During Ground Disturbance* (USFWS 2011). Implementing these measures would ensure that the project will not directly or indirectly increase the threat to individual kit foxes over the baseline threat presented by State Route 43.

Project-related vehicles should observe a 20-mile-per-hour speed limit in all project areas, except on county roads and state and federal highways; this is particularly important at night when kit foxes are most active. To the extent possible, night-time construction should be minimized. Off-road traffic outside of designated project areas should be prohibited.

To prevent inadvertent entrapment of kit foxes or other animals during the construction phase of a project, all excavated, steep-walled holes or trenches more than 2 feet deep should be covered at the close of each working day by plywood or similar materials or provided with one or more escape ramps constructed of earth fill or wooden planks. Before such holes or trenches are filled, they should be thoroughly inspected for trapped animals.

Pre-construction/pre-activity surveys would be conducted no less than 14 days and no more than 30 days prior to the beginning of ground disturbance and/or construction activities or any project activity likely to impact the San Joaquin kit fox.

Firearms (except by qualified and permitted public safety agents) and pets would not be permitted on the work site.

A WEAT for San Joaquin kit fox will be provided to the construction workers before the start of construction.

The Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office and California Department of Fish and Wildlife will be notified in writing within three working days of the accidental death or injury to a San Joaquin kit fox during project related activities.

Food trash and other garbage that may attract wildlife to the work area would be disposed of in closed containers and removed at the end of each workday. Feeding of any wildlife would be prohibited.

No-Build Alternative

Avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures are not anticipated under the no-build alternative.

b) Affected Environment

Build Alternative

Cumulative impacts identified for the project are those impacts that result from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions occurring in the project area. This section includes a discussion of past, current, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, including highway projects and approved development, considered for cumulative impact analysis.

Existing and Future Land Development

Businesses associated with agriculture, construction, oil, manufacturing, and transportation industries are found within the project area. Retail establishments include restaurants, grocery stores and hardware stores.

Much of the planned development for 7th Standard Road is farther east of the project area near State Route 99. Plans are coming together for a new shopping center expected to open in phases starting in early 2024 at the southwest corner of 7th Standard Road and Calloway Drive. Few details have been released while the 20-acre shopping center is being marketed to restaurants, grocers, service-suppliers and other potential tenants of property owned locally by the Etcheverry family, which is also developing housing to the east and west of the proposed retail center.

Lennar's Gossamer Grove housing development, with the potential for a 3,000-home community plus schools and parks, sits north of 7th Standard Road between Gossamer Grove Boulevard. and Community Drive. The Gossamer Grove development will ultimately consist of more than 3,000 homes, two planned schools and nine parks. So far, about 400 homes plus a park have been approved by the Shafter City Council. Full build-out of the development is not expected for another 10 to 15 years.

In addition, Wonderful Real Estate has broken ground on a 1.1 million-square-foot speculative development at the Wonderful Industrial Park in Shafter. The facility will be at 5401 Express Avenue, east of 7th Standard Road and Santa Fe Way, outside of the project area. Wonderful Real Estate is also in the final stages of design on a 415,000-square-foot speculative building in the park, scheduled for delivery in the first half of 2024.

Transportation Projects

The following transportation projects are planned for Shafter and identified in the Kern County Council of Governments Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategies document:

- A Class II bike lane is planned for Beech Avenue (State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road) in Shafter.

- A roadway widening to 4 lanes project on State Route 43 from 7th Standard Road to Euclid Avenue has been identified as a beyond-2046 major highway improvement project.

The following Caltrans projects are in the planning and pre-construction stages:

- A roadway rehabilitation project for State Route 43 from post mile 9.0 to post mile 15.7.

- A culvert replacement project on State Route 43 from post mile 15.9 to post mile 38.0.

The City of Shafter has plans for an inland port hub with the ability to gain advantages from the combining of import loads destined for distribution centers in Shafter and Kern County with the export agricultural needs of the Southern San Joaquin Valley. Early efforts are focused on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe line near the Wonderful Industrial Park.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternative

Multiple plans and policies govern land use decisions in the project area. The project area is expected to grow and develop, with or without the 7th Standard Road Roundabout project.

Acquired property currently zoned as industrial, commercial, and agricultural would be converted to transportation use under the build alternative. Assessor parcel number 090-310-63-00-0 would be a full acquisition, and the vacant, abandoned structures on the property would be demolished. Assessor parcel number 104-011-40-00-3, zoned as agricultural, is currently vacant and requires acquisition and a temporary construction easement. Total acreage acquisition for this project is approximately 12.46 acres from six parcels adjacent to State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road within the project limits. The acquisitions would not displace any people.

The project aims to improve operations at the 7th Standard Road and State Route 43 intersection. It would not influence growth in the study area. Cumulative impacts are considered negligible under the 7th Standard Road Roundabout project.

No-Build Alternative

Cumulative impacts are not expected under the no-build alternative.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Build Alternative

Caltrans projects include minimization measures for land use conversions, by incorporating a design that would require the smallest possible project footprint necessary to improve safety and operations.

Development is planned for the area with or without the 7th Standard Road Roundabout project. The roundabout project aims to improve traffic operations at the intersection of State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road.

No-Build Alternative

Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures are not required under the no-build alternative.

Chapter 3 Coordination

AB 52 Consultation with Native American Representatives

Initial consultation with the following on July 1, 2022:

- California Indian Basketweavers Association
- Chalon Indian Council of Bakersfield
- Chumash Council of Bakersfield
- Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation
- Dumna Wo-Wah Tribal Government
- Dunlap Band of Mono Indians
- Eshom Valley Band of Indians/ Wuksache Indian Community
- Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians
- Kawaiisu Tribe of Tejon Reservations
- Kern Valley Indian Community
- Salinan Chumash Nation
- Salinan Nation Cultural Preservation Association
- Salinan Tribe of Monterey
- San Fernando Band of Mission Indians
- San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
- Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi-Yokut Tribe
- Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians
- Table Mountain Rancheria
- Tejon Indian Tribe
- Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians
- Tubatulabals of Kern Valley
- Tule River Indian Tribe
- Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians
- Xolon-Salinan Tribe

Initial consultation with the following on August 12, 2022:

- Big Pine Paiute Tribe of Owens Valley

Interagency Consultation for Air Quality

The project was submitted to Interagency Consultation Partners on June 26, 2023. Concurrence that the project is not a Project of Air Quality Concern was received from the Environmental Protection Agency on August 4, 2023, and from Caltrans on August 2, 2023. Therefore, the project will not require a formal Hot Spot analysis.

The project is exempt from regional emissions analysis under Section 93.127 – Intersection channelization projects.

Coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Early coordination has been initiated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine the potential impacts this project may pose to listed species such as the San Joaquin kit fox and Kern mallow. A TEAMS meeting was held on May 18, 2023, with Caltrans biologist Isidro Blanco, Senior Environmental Scientist Dena Gonzalez, and U.S. Fish Wildlife Service liaison Jennifer Schofield. Mrs. Schofield generally agreed with the “May effect, Not likely to adversely affect” determination that Caltrans proposes for the San Joaquin kit fox and a “No effect” for the Kern mallow.

Appendix A Title VI Policy Statement

CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR

California Department of Transportation

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
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September 2022

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

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

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

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

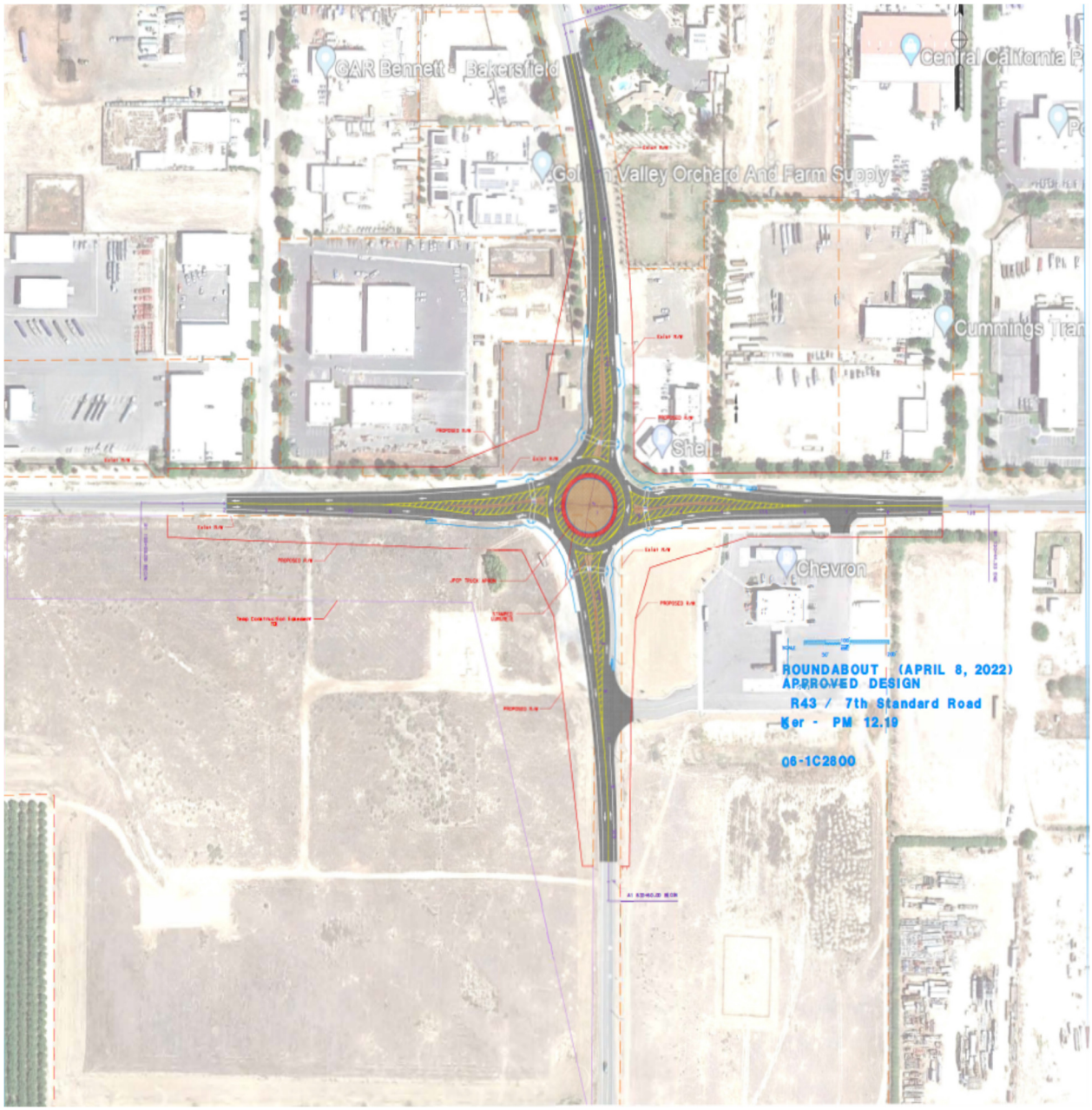
For information or guidance on how to file a complaint, or obtain more information regarding Title VI, please contact the Title VI Branch Manager at (916) 639-6392 or visit the following web page: https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/title-vi.

To obtain this information in an alternate format such as Braille or in a language other than English, please contact the California Department of Transportation, Office of Civil Rights, at PO Box 942874, MS-79, Sacramento, CA 94274-0001; (916) 879-6768 (TTY 711); or at Title.VI@dot.ca.gov.

TONY TAVARES
Director

"Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment"

Appendix B Project Mapping



List of Technical Studies Bound Separately (Volume 2)

Air Quality Report

Community Impact and Cumulative Impact Assessment

Climate Change Memo

Noise Compliance Study Report

Water Quality Report

Natural Environment Study

Location Hydraulic Study

Hazardous Waste Report

- Initial Site Assessment

Historic Resource Evaluation Report

Visual Impact Assessment

Paleontology Identification Report

District 6 Traffic Operations Intersection Control Evaluation

To obtain a copy of one or more of these technical studies/reports or the Initial Study, write to:

Javier Almaguer
District 6 Environmental Division
California Department of Transportation
2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100, Fresno, CA 93726

Or send your request via email to: Javier.almaguer@dot.ca.gov

Or call: 559-287-9320

Please provide the following information in your request:

Project title: 7th Standard Road Roundabout Project

General location information: At the intersection of State Route 43 and 7th Standard Road in Shafter in Kern County

District number-county code-route-post mile: 06-KER-43-12.19

EA/Project ID number: 06-1C280/0621000069