



County of Fresno

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND PLANNING
STEVEN E. WHITE, DIRECTOR

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

- APPLICANT: Fresno County Sheriff's Office
- APPLICATION NOS.: Unclassified Conditional Use Permit Application No. 3772 and Initial Study No. 8459
- DESCRIPTION: Allow the construction and operation of a multipurpose law enforcement training facility on an approximately 317.12-acre parcel in the AE-40 (Exclusive Agricultural, 40-acre minimum parcel size) Zone District.
- LOCATION: The subject property is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of State Route 41 and E. Elkhorn Avenue, approximately three and one half-mile southeast of the unincorporated community of Caruthers (042-043-51 ST)(500 E. Elkhorn Ave)(SUP. DIST. 4).

I. AESTHETICS

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

- A. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista; or
- B. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

No scenic vistas were identified that may be impacted by the proposed project. According to Figure OS-2 (Scenic Roadways) of the Fresno County General Plan, the site is located adjacent to State Route 41; however, this segment of SR 41 is not designated as a state scenic highway.

- 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 publicly accessible vantage points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The site is currently occupied by the former County correctional facility which has been vacant since 2009. The proposed training facility is characteristic of the existing use and structures, which will be preserved in place and repurposed for scenario-based training. The project will construct approximately eight new 3,500 square-foot single-story portable buildings in addition to repurposing some or all of the existing buildings, however, the project site will be fenced and landscaped along its perimeter, and it is not anticipated to significantly change or degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site or the surrounding area.

- D. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The site is in an agricultural area with sparse residential and limited commercial development. The proposed facility will involve the installation of new outdoor lighting fixtures of various types and distributed as needed for safety and security. The proposed lighting is not anticipated to result in significant environmental effects; however, the project will be subject to Zoning Ordinance Chapter 820.3.080.A, which provides in part that; Exterior lighting shall be directed downward and shielded so that all direct light and glare is confined within the boundaries of the subject parcel, thereby minimizing off-site glare; lighting shall be installed so that lights do not blink, flash, or be of unusually high intensity or brightness; and lighting shall be of appropriate height, intensity, and scale to the structures and uses they are serving.

II. AGRICULTURAL 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 forest carbon measurement methodology in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:

- A. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use; or
- B. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

According to the 2016 Fresno County Important Farmlands Map, the 317.12-acre subject parcel contains land classified as both Prime Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance. Additionally, there is a portion of land classified as urban and built-up land due to the inactive former County correctional facility. The balance of the property is currently undeveloped. The proposed project would entail the construction of approximately eight new portable type classroom buildings and facilities which would result in the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural uses. Review of web based aerial imagery suggests that the subject property has also been utilized for row crop agriculture intermittently over the last few decades, however, it does not appear to be currently engaged in any agricultural production. The project would entail development of the majority of the 317 acres (approximately 193 acres), approximately 124 acres would be dedicated to two separate storm water detention basins plus two also used for groundwater recharge.

- C. Conflict with existing zoning for forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production; or
- D. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The subject parcel is not zoned as forest land, timberland or for timberland production, therefore the project will not result in the loss of any forest or timber land.

- 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 forestland to non-forest use?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The parcel on which the proposed project will be located is within an agricultural area and zoned for agricultural uses. The past use of an approximately 14-acre portion of the property as a correctional-facility did not preclude concurrent agricultural uses. However, the currently proposed use would develop the majority of the property, and dedicate the balance to non-agricultural uses, and as such would result in the conversion of approximately, 300 acres of Farmland to non-agricultural use, of which approximately 124-acres will be used for ponding and recharge basins.

According to available County records, the subject parcel is not enrolled under contract in the Williamson Act Program.

III. AIR QUALITY

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

A. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable Air Quality Plan?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The air quality analysis prepared for the project did not identify any conflicts with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District adopted Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) or the Fresno COG adopted 2022 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS).

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?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The project was reviewed by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District which determined that annual criteria pollutant emissions from construction and operation of the project are not expected to exceed any of the significance thresholds as identified in the District's Guidance for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts (GAMAQI). The Air District recommended that the project utilize the cleanest available off-road construction equipment, and that the County should evaluate the risk associated with the project for sensitive receptors in the area and mitigate any potentially significant risk to help limit exposure of sensitive receptors to emissions.

An air quality and greenhouse gas assessment and health risk screening analysis was prepared for the project by LSA, dated May 23, 2024. The Air Quality and GHG analysis evaluated both construction emissions and operational emissions. The analysis relied in part on the CalEEMod, emissions modeling software. The evaluation also considered Greenhouse Gas emissions from short term construction activities and long-term operation of the project.

The Air Quality Analysis determined that short-term regional construction emissions would not exceed any established thresholds of significance for criteria pollutants such as Reactive Organic Gases, Nitrates of Oxygen, Carbon Monoxide, Oxides of Sulfur, Particulate Matter (PM) 10 and PM 2.5 microns.

Long term operational emissions would come from area source, energy source, mobile stationary source emissions. Mobile source emissions would be generated by vehicle trips and stationary source emissions. The analysis also determined that project operational emissions would not exceed any Air District established thresholds of significance.

C. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Based on the results and determinations of the air quality and greenhouse gas analysis, the project would not result in exceedance of any criteria pollutant thresholds of

significance or result in adverse impacts on surrounding receptors, therefore the project would not expose receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. The Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas analysis evaluated the existing sensitive receptors in proximity to the project site, typically single-family residences. In the case of this project, construction may expose surrounding sensitive receptors to airborne particulates from dust and diesel emissions. However, adherence to Air District Regulation VIII and the Fresno County Programmatic EIR Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program Air Quality measures 1 and 2, project construction emissions would fall below the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's significance thresholds, and not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

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

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (Air District) reviewed the proposed project and expressed no concerns with the proposal resulting in adverse impacts.

The project does not conflict with the Air Quality Plan, and does not violate any air quality standard, will not result in a cumulative net increase of any criteria pollutant, nor does it expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations or create objectionable odors.

The project will be subject to District Rule 9510 - Indirect Source Review (ISR) based on the square footage of proposed buildings in excess of 10,000 square feet. Compliance with Rule 9510 will require the applicant to apply for an Air Impact Assessment (AIA) to the Air District prior to the project being considered for discretionary approval by the County. According to the Air District, the purpose of the ISR program is to encourage developers to incorporate clean air measures and reduce emissions of Oxides of Nitrogen (NOx) and PM10 (particulate matter of 10 microns) from new development projects.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

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

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED:

The proposed project was referred to the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for review and comments; neither agency returned comments on the project.

Review of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) BIOS indicates that the project site is located near reported occurrence areas of special status species, including the endangered San Joaquin Kit Fox, and the state threatened Swainson's Hawk. The project site is within the range and predicted habitat of the San Joaquin Kit Fox, Burrowing Owl, Tri-Colored Black Bird, Swainson's Hawk, and Fresno Kangaroo Rat. The subject parcel is also within the predicted Range of the California Tiger Salamander, but not the predicted habitat area. According to information available on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Species Information web page, the Tiger Salamander requires access to aquatic and upland habitat as well as standing bodies of fresh water such as ponds and vernal pools. Available data does not indicate the presence of such aquatic features on the project site.

County General Plan Policy LU-B.13 requires that in conjunction with environmental reviews under CEQA, the applicant is required to identify biological resources to determine if there are sensitive and/or important flora and fauna that require special protection measures.

County General Plan Policy OS-E.9 requires that, prior to approval of discretionary development permits, the County shall require, as part of any required environmental review process, a biological resources evaluation of the project site by a qualified biologist. The evaluation shall be based on field reconnaissance performed at the appropriate time of year to determine the presence or absence of significant resources and/or special-status plants or animals. Such evaluation will consider the potential for significant impact on these resources and will either identify feasible mitigation measures or indicate why mitigation is not feasible.

* **Mitigation Measure(s)**

- 1. Preconstruction surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist for the presence of San Joaquin kit fox dens within 14 days before the start of construction activities. The surveys shall be conducted in areas of suitable habitat for San Joaquin kit fox. Surveys need not be conducted for all areas of suitable habitat at one time; they may be phased so that surveys occur within 14 days before that portion of the site is disturbed. If no potential San Joaquin kit fox dens are present, no further mitigation is required. If the qualified biologist observes potential dens and determines, in consultation with the Project owner and the County, that avoidance is feasible (as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15364 consistent with the USFWS [1999] Standardized Recommendations for Protection of the San Joaquin Kit Fox), buffer distances shall be established before each phase of construction activities.*
- 2. If construction is scheduled to commence outside of nesting season (September 1 to January 31), no preconstruction surveys or additional measures are required for nesting birds, including raptors. During the nesting bird breeding season (February 1 to August 31), to avoid impacts on nesting birds in the Project site and immediate vicinity, a qualified biologist shall conduct preconstruction surveys of all potential nesting habitat within the Project site where vegetation removal or ground disturbance is planned. The*

survey shall be performed within the site and shall also include potential nest sites within a 0.5-mile buffer around the site in areas where access to neighboring properties is available or visible using a spotting scope. Surveys shall be conducted no more than 14 days prior to each phase of construction activities. If construction is halted for 14 days or more, the area shall be re-surveyed prior to resuming work. Surveys need not be conducted for the entire project site at one time; they may be phased so that surveys may be completed, shortly before a portion of the project site is disturbed. The surveying biologist must be qualified to determine the status and stage of nesting by migratory birds and all locally breeding raptor species without causing intrusive disturbance. If active nests are found, a suitable buffer around active nests (e.g., 300 feet for common raptors; 0.25 mile for Swainson's hawk; 100 feet for passerines) shall be established and no construction within the buffer shall be allowed until a qualified biologist has determined that the nest is no longer active (e.g., the nestlings have fledged and are no longer reliant on the nest). Encroachment into the buffer may occur at the discretion of the qualified biologist in coordination with CDFW.

- 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?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

According to review of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) Mapper, there was no riparian habitat or sensitive natural community identified.

- 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?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

No wetlands, either state or federally protected, were identified in the analysis. Review of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, National Wetlands Inventory (NWS) mapping tool, did not identify and wetlands, including federally protected wetlands.

- 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?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The project does not have any features which would interfere substantially with the movement of any migratory wildlife species. Mitigation Measures have been included under Section IV.A above requiring that preconstruction surveys be done if construction falls within the migratory bird nesting season. No native wildlife nursery sites or migratory wildlife corridors were identified on or in the vicinity of the project site.

- E. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. General Plan Policy LU-B.13 Biological Resources requires applicants to identify biological resources to determine if there are sensitive and or important flora and fauna that require special protection measures. And, General Plan Policy OS-E.9 requires that a biological resources evaluation be undertaken. The included Mitigation Measures require that species appropriate pre-construction surveys be conducted by a qualified biologist, consistent with General Plan Policy.

- 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?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The proposed project will neither conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, nor will it conflict with the provisions of any identified adopted habitat conservation plan.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- A. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5; or
- B. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5; or
- C. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION
INCORPORATED:

The parcel on which the proposed project will be sited is not located within proximity of an area designated a moderately or highly sensitive for archeological resources. No historical or paleontological resources, unique geological features, or evidence of possible human remains were identified in this analysis. As such, no impact on historical, archeological, or paleontological resources are likely to result from this proposal. However, the following mitigation measure has been included to address cultural resources in the unlikely event that they are unearthed during ground-disturbing activities related to the project.

* **Mitigation Measure(s)**

1. *In the event that cultural resources are unearthed during ground-disturbing activities, all work shall be halted in the area of the find. An Archeologist shall be called to evaluate the findings and make any necessary mitigation recommendations. If human remains are unearthed during ground disturbing activities, no further disturbance is to occur until the Fresno County Sheriff-Coroner has made the necessary findings as to origin and disposition. All normal evidence procedures shall be followed by photos, reports, video, and etc. If such remains are determined to be Native American, the Sheriff-Coroner must notify the Native American Commission within 24 hours.*

VI. ENERGY

Would the project:

- A. Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation; or
- B. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project will include repurposing some of the existing buildings and construction of new buildings which are subject to local and state standards for building and energy efficiency. The project is expected to have a less than significant impact on energy resources. The project will not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. New buildings and structures will be subject to the energy efficiency provisions of the green building standards code.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:

- A. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:
 1. 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?
 2. Strong seismic ground shaking?
 3. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?
 4. Landslides?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

According to Figures 9-4 & 9-5 of the Fresno County General Plan Background Report (FCGPBR) and the California Department of Conservation, Earthquake Hazard Zone Application (EQ Zapp), the subject parcel is not located on or near an identified earthquake hazard zone area. Construction of the proposed project will be subject to seismic design standards of the California Building Code.

B. Result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil; or

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

No geologic unit or unstable soil was identified on the project site. According to Figure 7-4 (Erosion Hazards in Western Fresno County), the subject parcel is not in an area of generalized erosion hazard, while grading and other ground disturbing activities on the site have the potential to result in some limited on-site erosion of topsoil, no substantial impacts were identified in the analysis, based on the project description, therefore, the project will not result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil.

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

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Landslides and other forms of slope failure form in response to long-term uplift, mass wasting, and disturbance of slopes. The project site contains naturally flat relief (slopes of no more than three percent), which precludes the possibility of land sliding on-site.

The potential for seismic-related ground failure (lateral spreading and liquefaction) occurring on the project site is minimal because of the absence of high groundwater levels and saturated loose granular soil. According to Figure 9-6 (Landslide Hazards and Areas of Subsidence) of the Fresno County General Plan Background Report (FCGPBR), the project site is not in an area identified as being susceptible to liquefaction, subsidence, landslide, lateral spreading or collapse. In addition, the intensity of ground shaking from a large, distant earthquake is expected to be relatively low on the project site and, therefore, would not be severe enough to induce liquefaction on-site.

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

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Per Figure 7-1 of the FCGPBR, Fresno County General Plan Background Report, the project site is not located within an area of known risk of expansive soils.

- E. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater; or

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project will utilize an on-site sewage disposal system. No concerns related to soil capabilities and the septic systems were expressed by the Fresno County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division.

- F. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION
INCORPORATED:

The parcel on which the proposed project will be sited is not located within proximity of any area designated to be moderately or highly sensitive for archeological resources. No historical or paleontological resources, unique geological features, or evidence of possible human remains were identified in this analysis. As such, no impact on historical, archeological, or paleontological resources would result from this proposal. However, a mitigation measure will be implemented to address cultural resources in the unlikely event that they are unearthed during ground-disturbing activities related to the project.

* **Mitigation Measure(s)**

1. *See Mitigation Measure under Section V above.*

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

- A. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment; or
- B. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Based on Emissions Modeling, the conclusions of the Air Quality and GHG analysis were that construction GHG emissions would generate approximately 885.2 metric tons of CO₂e (CO₂ equivalent), which is a measurement that compares the global warming potential of a given greenhouse gas to carbon dioxide. The anticipated GHG emissions, if amortized over 30 years (the presumed project operational life) show that the actual construction emissions would be approximately 29 Metric Tons of CO₂e per year. Long Term Operational GHG emissions were estimated to be approximately 694.5 metric

tons of CO₂e, based on use of the California Emissions Estimator Modeler or CalEEMod.

In 2010, US EPA issued reporting rules for air emission sources that emit at least 25,000 metric tons of Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) per year. GHGs are emitted from fuel combustion processes. Operation of the proposed facility is anticipated to result in emissions of approximately 1,129.9 metric tons of CO₂e per year. Therefore, project related greenhouse gas emissions have been determined to be less than significant. The proposed operation will not conflict with an applicable plan, policy developed for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

No potential conflicts with any adopted Greenhouse emissions reduction plans were identified by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District or any review agencies or departments.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

- A. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials; or
- 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; or

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The Fresno County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division review of the proposal requires that prior to the issuance of building permits, the applicant shall comply with the following:

Facilities proposing to use and/or store hazardous materials and/or hazardous wastes shall meet the requirements set forth in the California Health and Safety Code (HSC), Division 20, Chapter 6.95, and the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 22, Division 4.5. Any business that handles a hazardous material or hazardous waste may be required to submit a Hazardous Materials Business Plan electronically pursuant to the HSC, Division 20, Chapter 6.95 (<http://cers.calepa.ca.gov/>). The default State reporting thresholds that apply are: >55 gallons (liquids), >500 pounds (solids), >200 cubic feet (gases), or at the threshold planning quantity for extremely hazardous substances.

All hazardous waste shall be handled in accordance with requirements set forth in the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 22, Division 4.5. This Division discusses proper labeling, storage, and handling of hazardous wastes.

The operation must have less than 10% residual materials by weight and less than 1% putrescible materials by weight for all incoming loads. If the operation exceeds the 10%

or 1% threshold for residual materials the applicant will need to file an application with the Fresno County Public Health Department, Environmental Health Division for a Solid Waste Facilities Permit at least one-hundred and eighty (180) days in advance of the date on which it is desired to commence operation.

- C. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

The project is not anticipated to result in any hazardous emissions, or involve the handling of any acutely hazardous materials, substances or waste, and is not located within one quarter-mile of an existing school. The nearest school, Caruthers Elementary School, is located approximately 3.6 miles northwest of the project site.

- 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; or

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The subject parcel is not located within one-quarter mile of a school. The proposed project site is not listed on the Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List (Cortese List) which is maintained by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control. There is one listed site located approximately 350 feet west of the proposed project site, identified as the Southwest Transportation Agency.

- 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, result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The Fresno County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division review of the proposal states: The proposed project site is not located near a public use airport.

- F. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan; or

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The Fresno County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division which administers the Office of Emergency Services to coordinate planning and preparedness, response and recovery efforts for disasters did not express any concerns regarding emergency response or evacuation plans.

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

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project site is not located in a wildland fire area, precluding the site from impacts caused by wildland fires.

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

- A. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project is not anticipated to result in violation of any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, or degrade surface or groundwater quality. The project will be required to file a Notice of Intent (NOI) and Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) prior to commencement of any construction, grading or ground disturbance activity.

- B. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin; or

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project site is not located in an area of the County identified as being water short. The project was reviewed by the Water and Natural Resources Division, which did not express any concerns related to water supply, and determined that the project would have a less than significant impact on existing water levels in the area. Additionally, approximately 124-acres of the subject parcel will be dedicated to several retention-recharge basins. General Plan Policy PF-E.14 directs that the County shall encourage the use of retention-recharge basins for the conservation of groundwater and the recharging of the groundwater supply.

- 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:

1. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off site?
2. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on or off site?

3. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or
 4. Impede or redirect flood flows?
- D. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project is not located in an area at risk of seiche or tsunami, or in an identified flood hazard area.

- E. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project site is located within the Kings Groundwater Subbasin, and which is managed by the North Fork Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA). The GSA adopted its Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP), in accordance with the Groundwater Sustainability Act. The project will be subject to monitoring of groundwater extraction by the GSA in accordance with the Groundwater Sustainability Plan. No conflicts with the Plan's implementation were identified during the review of this proposal.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

- A. Physically divide an established community; or
- 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?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The proposed project will not physically divide an established community nor cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation. The project site is not located within an established community. No conflicts with any land use plan, policy or regulation were identified that would result in a significant environmental impact.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- 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; or
- 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?
FINDING: NO IMPACT:

No impacts to known mineral resources were identified in the analysis. The site is not located in a designated mineral resource area as identified in Policy OS-C.2 of the General Plan or by Figures 7-12 (Mineral Resource Zones) and Figure 7-13 (Mineral Resources and Producers in Fresno County) of the Fresno County General Plan Background Report (FCGPBR).

XIII. NOISE

Would the project result in:

- A. Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies; or
- B. Generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION
INCORPORATED:

Project construction is expected to generate temporary, intermittent increases in ambient noise levels in the area, however, according to Chapter 8.40 of the Fresno County Ordinance Code (Noise Control), construction activities are generally exempt from the Noise Ordinance. The noise ordinance defines ambient noise level as the composite of noise from all sources, representing the normal or existing level of environmental noise at a given location for a specified time of the day or night. Daytime for noise measurement purposes is considered as between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., and nighttime from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. The maximum allowable daytime noise level is 70 decibels and the maximum nighttime noise level is 65 decibels. The project was reviewed by the County Department of Public Health, which did not express concerns with the proposed facility creating adverse noise impacts on surrounding property.

The nearest identifiable sensitive (residential) receptor is located approximately 600 feet (200 yards) north of the subject parcel's northern boundary, however the distance from the nearest firearms range to the receptor is approximately 1,600 feet; there is also a public transportation agency with offices located approximately 725 feet west of the subject parcel's western boundary, however, the distance between the nearest firearms range and the public transportation agency offices is approximately 3,400 feet. Based on review of available aerial imagery, most of the identifiable surrounding receptors are located generally between one quarter-mile and one half-mile from the subject parcel boundaries.

Operation of the project is anticipated to generate temporary increases in daytime ambient noise during use of the fire arms training ranges and other facilities; however, the proposed training facility will be subject to the applicable provisions of the County noise ordinance. Additionally, outdoor shooting range design features will include earthen berms around each of the proposed ranges of between 16 and 26 feet in height, which will serve to further lessen noise impacts on surrounding receptors. However, as the potential remains for project related operational noise to adversely impact adjacent properties, the following Mitigation Measures have been included to minimize any adverse impacts related to operational noise.

* **Mitigation Measure(s)**

1. *The facility shall be required to have access to a sound level meter and calibrator. The sound level meter shall be of Type 1 or Type 2, meeting American National Standard Institute's Standard 51.4-1971, or equivalent equipment, capable of measuring the statistical noise metrics used in the Fresno County Noise Ordinance in real time. The County Sheriff's Office shall maintain staff trained by a qualified acoustical consultant in the proper use of the sound measurement equipment or contract with an acoustical consultant. In the event of a verified complaint of excess noise from the facility the County shall measure noise levels of the operations of the facility upon adjacent sensitive receptors and make operational or site modifications so that noise levels comply with the Fresno County Noise Ordinance.*
 2. *During all hours of operation of the firing range or any other significant noise generating activities, staff trained by a qualified acoustical consultant in the proper use of the sound meter shall be present. The staff person trained in use of the noise measurement equipment shall periodically conduct noise level measurement surveys during operations in particular when there is significant activities that have the potential to generate noise and keep records of all data and readings which will be available on request.*
 3. *If noise level measurement surveys during these operations indicate that noise levels exceed the standards of the Fresno County Noise Ordinance, operational or site modifications shall be made so that noise levels comply with the standards. If noise level measurement surveys during these operations indicate that noise levels exceed the standards of the Fresno County Noise Ordinance, operational or site modifications shall be made so that noise levels comply with the standards.*
- 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?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The project site is not located near a public airport or public use airport. The nearest public use airport to the project site is the Selma airport, located approximately eight and one half-miles northeast. There is a small private airstrip located northerly adjacent to the subject parcel, however, the private airstrip is not anticipated to result in excessive noise levels.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

- A. Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?; or
- B. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The proposed project will not induce population growth, nor will it displace housing or people. The project consists of developing an existing County facility into a multi-purpose County law enforcement training facility. The project is not anticipated to induce substantial unplanned population growth in the area directly or indirectly.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project:

- A. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically-altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically-altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the following public services:
 - 1. Fire protection;
 - 2. Police protection;
 - 3. Schools;
 - 4. Parks; or
 - 5. Other public facilities?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The subject parcel is zoned AE-40, Exclusive Agricultural, however, the use of the site has been as a County correctional facility for the past five to six decades. The proposed

use is a County Sheriff's Department multi-purpose training facility. The existing buildings would be repurposed and the facility expanded with the addition of several new buildings and various training facilities and supporting infrastructure. None of the reviewing agencies or County departments identified any substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the proposed project.

XVI. RECREATION

Would the project:

- A. 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; or
- B. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project is not located near any neighborhood or regional parks or recreational centers and does not propose any new recreational facilities or require the construction of such facilities, therefore no impacts to recreational facilities will occur.

XVII. TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:

- A. Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities; or
- B. Be in conflict or be inconsistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The County's General Plan utilizes Level of Service (LOS) as one criterion for evaluating the functional efficiency of County roadways. General Plan Policy TR-A.3 directs that the County plan its roadway system in a manner that strives to meet LOS C on rural roadways.

Another methodology for evaluating transportation impacts is Vehicle Miles Travelled or VMT. General Plan Policy TR-A.2 directs that the County shall require evaluation of discretionary development projects for their individual and cumulative transportation impacts based on VMT, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act guidelines Section 15604.3. The aforementioned CEQA Guidelines subdivision was developed following the passage of Senate Bill 743 in 2013, which codified the change in Public Resources Code. General Plan Policy TR-A.25 provides that project which generate or attract fewer than 110 daily vehicle trips shall be evaluated for VMT impacts

on an individual (rather than cumulative basis). The threshold of significance is 87 percent of the countywide average rate of VMT, thus, any individual project resulting in VMT that exceeds this threshold would be required to implement project-specific mitigation measures to reduce project VMT. Additionally, the CEQA guidelines provides that a lead agency has discretion to choose the most appropriate methodology to evaluate a project's VMT.

A Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) analysis was completed along with the traffic impact analysis by JLB Traffic Engineering, Inc., dated August 6, 2024. The VMT analysis concluded that because the proposed facility can be classified as an institutional or government service that supports community health, safety and welfare, no quantitative VMT analysis is necessary.

The project was routed to the California Department of Transportation and, upon completing their review, they responded by stating that they had no comments.

The Road Maintenance and Operations Division reviewed the proposal, and commented that Elkhorn Avenue is classified as an Arterial in the County's General Plan, with ultimate right-of-way of 106 feet as per Official Plan Line (Serial #55), and that setbacks for new structures should be based upon the ultimate right-of-way.

Based on comments and recommendations received from the County Transportation Planning Unit, a traffic impact and VMT analysis was prepared for the project by JLB Traffic Engineering, Inc., in consultation with Caltrans, dated August 6, 2024. The traffic impact analysis studied the intersections and road segments identified as most likely to be impacted by the project. The stated purpose of the Traffic analysis was to evaluate potential on and off-site traffic impacts, identify short-term and long-term roadway and circulation needs, determine potential road improvement measures, and identify any critical traffic issues that should be addressed in the planning process.

The Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) determined that at full buildout, the project would generate approximately 436 daily traffic trips, including 77 a.m. (5:30-7:30) peak hour trips and 55 p.m. (3:00-5:00) peak hour trips. Based on this analysis, study intersection of Elkhorn Avenue and SR43 is expected to exceed LOS C, whereas the study intersection of Elkhorn and SR41 adjacent to the project site is expected to operate at an acceptable Level of Service.

While the Traffic Impact Analysis did identify some intersections that may benefit from modifications such as signalization, stop control, and lengthening of turn lanes in the near term, by the year 2046, such improvements would necessitate further evaluation by Caltrans where State roadway facilities are concerned. No immediate detrimental impacts to County facilities, requiring modifications to the roadway were identified.

- C. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The design features of the project would not substantially increase transportation hazards. The project proposes to take primary access via an existing driveway located along the north side of Elkhorn Avenue, approximately 2,100 feet (0.4) mile east of State Route 41. The project was reviewed by the California Department of Transportation which did not express any concerns with the projects impacts to State facilities. County reviewing departments requested that a traffic impact analysis be completed for the project. The traffic impact analysis as discussed in subsection A above did not identify any transportation hazards that would be created by the project's design features or operation of the project.

D. Result in inadequate emergency access?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The Fresno County Design Division and the Fresno County Road Maintenance and Operations Division expressed no concerns as the proposed project meets all set back requirements and does not have any major construction that would affect emergency access.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- A. 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:
1. 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
 2. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1? (In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.)

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION
INCORPORATED:

The subject site has been previously used as a County correctional facility, and is in an area zoned for agricultural use, suggesting minimal chance of a cultural resources occurring on the project site. Under the provisions of Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52), participating California Native American Tribes were notified of the project proposal and given the opportunity to enter into consultation with the County on addressing potential

tribal cultural resources. No concerns were expressed by notified California Native American Tribes and no consultation request was received. Therefore, mitigation will be implemented to address tribal cultural resources in the unlikely event they are unearthed during ground-disturbing activities related to the project.

* **Mitigation Measure(s)**

1. See Mitigation Measure under Section V above.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

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

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project will require the construction of a new expanded onsite wastewater treatment facility to serve the project. The project proposal was reviewed by the County Department of Public Works and Planning which determined that the project site is adequate to accommodate the proposed new wastewater treatment facility.

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

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The project was reviewed by the County Water and Natural Resources Division which determined that the project would not result in a significant impact to groundwater supplies in the area. Additionally, the subject parcel is not located in an area of the County identified as being water short.

- 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?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project will utilize an onsite wastewater treatment system, and will be required to comply with applicable state requirements and County Ordinance. No concerns were raised by reviewing agencies or departments related to the construction of a new septic system to serve the proposed development.

- 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; or
- E. Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project will be required to comply with all applicable federal, state and local regulation related to solid waste.

XX. WILDFIRE

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

- A. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects; or
- 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; or
- 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; or
- 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?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project site is not located in a state responsibility area (SRA) or moderate, high, or very high fire hazard severity zone, according to the September 29, 2023 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) State Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zones map.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Would the project:

- A. 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?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION MEASURES INCORPORATED:

- B. 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)?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

No cumulatively considerable impacts were identified in the analysis.

- C. Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings either directly or indirectly?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED:

The project will not substantially degrade the quality of the environment. Responsible agencies and departments concurred with the findings and conclusions of the prepared technical studies and determined that no substantial adverse impacts on human beings would occur, with adherence to the included mitigation measures.

* **Mitigation Measure(s)**

1. See *Mitigation Measures under Section IV, V (Cultural Resources), VII (Geology and Soils), and XVII (Tribal Cultural Resources)*.

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

Based upon the Initial Study prepared for Unclassified Conditional Use Permit Application No. 3772, staff has concluded that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

It has been determined that there would be no impacts to, Energy, Hazardous and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Recreation and Wildfire.

Potential impacts related to Aesthetics, Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Public Services, Transportation and Utilities and Service Systems have been determined to be less than significant.

Potential impacts relating to Biological Resources, Cultural/Tribal Cultural Resources, Geology, and Noise have determined to be less than significant with compliance with adherence to the included mitigation.

A Mitigated Negative Declaration is recommended and is subject to approval by the decision-making body. The Initial Study is available for review at 2220 Tulare Street, Suite A, street level, located on the southwest corner of Tulare and “M” Street, Fresno, California.

JS

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