

NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Project Title: Annexation No. 2024-04 and General Plan Amendment No. 2024-05

Project Description: Annexation No. 2024-04 is a request by the City of Visalia to annex two parcels totaling approximately 10.4 acres into the city limits of Visalia. Upon annexation, the site area would be zoned QP (Quasi-Public), which is consistent with the General Plan Land Use Design. The project area is not within an Agricultural Preserve or Williamson Act contract.

General Plan Amendment No. 2024-05 is a request by the City of Visalia to expand the Urban Growth Boundary by annexing two parcels into the City limits, and to change approximately one acre on the site from Residential Very Low Density land use designation to Parks/Recreation land use designation.

The Annexation and the General Plan would facilitate the development of a city dog park and associated parking lot within the project site.

Project Location: The site is located on the northwest corner of North Dinuba Boulevard and West Riverway Court (APNs: 078-110-021 & 078-110-006).

Project Facts: Refer to Initial Study for project facts, plans and policies, and discussion of environmental effects.

Attachments:

Initial Study	(X)
Environmental Checklist	(X)
Maps	(X)
Mitigation Measures	()
Traffic Impact Statement	()

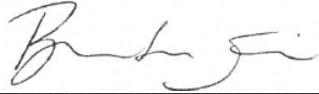
DECLARATION OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECT:

This project will not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

- (a) The project does not have the potential to 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, 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.
- (b) The project does not have the potential to achieve short-term environmental goals to the disadvantage of long-term environmental goals.
- (c) The project does not have environmental effects which are individually limited but cumulatively considerable. Cumulatively considerable means that the incremental effects of an individual 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.
- (d) The environmental effects of the project will not cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.

This Negative Declaration has been prepared by the City of Visalia Planning Division in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended. A copy may be obtained from the City of Visalia Planning Division Staff during normal business hours.

APPROVED
Brandon Smith, AICP
Environmental Coordinator

By:  _____

Date Approved: February 11, 2025

Review Period: 30 days

INITIAL STUDY

I. GENERAL

A. Annexation No. 2024-04 is a request by the City of Visalia to annex two parcels totaling approximately 10.4 acres into the city limits of Visalia. Upon annexation, the site area would be zoned QP (Quasi-Public), which is consistent with the General Plan Land Use Design. The project area is not within an Agricultural Preserve or Williamson Act contract.

General Plan Amendment No. 2024-05 is a request by the City of Visalia to expand the Urban Growth Boundary by annexing two parcels into the City limits, and to change approximately one acre on the site from Residential Very Low Density land use designation to Parks/Recreation land use designation.

The Annexation and the General Plan would facilitate the development of a city dog park and associated parking lot within the project site.

B. Identification of the Environmental Setting:

The parcels are currently vacant and undeveloped and are located to the north of the existing Riverway Sports Park Complex. The proposed development would enhance the existing park by providing additional amenities to the community. The site is located on the northwest corner of North Dinuba Boulevard and West Riverway Court (APNs: 078-110-021 & 078-110-006). The entire project area is primarily surrounded by open space with the exception of Riverway Sports Park to the south and the River Island Ranch subdivision to the southeast. The project is supported by a General Plan Amendment to bring the property inside of the City's Urban Growth Boundary, as the project site is currently outside of the Urban Growth Boundary.

The surrounding uses, Zoning, and General Plan for the 10.4-acre parcels are as follows:

	General Plan	Zoning	Existing uses
North:	Agriculture/ Conservation	X (area outside of the City of Visalia limits)	Vacant, St. John's River
South:	Parks & Recreation	QP (Quasi-Public)	Riverway Sports Park
East:	Conservation / Residential Low Density	OS (Open Space), R- 1-5 (Single-family Residential)	Dinuba Boulevard, single-family residential subdivision
West:	Conservation / Very Low Residential Density	X (area outside of the City of Visalia limits)	Vacant land; proposed parking lot

Fire and police protection services, street maintenance of public streets, refuse collection, and wastewater treatment will be provided by the City of Visalia upon annexation and the development of the project area.

C. Plans and Policies: The General Plan Land Use Diagram designates the site as Residential Very Low Density and Conservation. Per the General Plan Amendment and upon annexation the entire site would be designated Parks/Recreation land use designation and, upon annexation, zoned Quasi-Public, which is consistent with Land Use Element of the General Plan, and consistent with the standards for Quasi-Public development pursuant to the Visalia Municipal Code Title 17 (Zoning Ordinance) Chapter 17.52.

II. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

No significant adverse environmental impacts have been identified for this project. The City of Visalia Land Use Element and Zoning Ordinance contain policies and regulations that are designed to mitigate impacts to a level of non-significance.

III. MITIGATION MEASURES

There are no mitigation measures for this project. The City of Visalia Zoning Ordinance contains guidelines, criteria, and requirements for the mitigation of potential impacts related to light/glare, visibility screening, noise, and traffic/parking to eliminate and/or reduce potential impacts to a level of non-significance.

IV. PROJECT COMPATIBILITY WITH EXISTING ZONES AND PLANS

The project is compatible with the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance as the project relates to surrounding properties.

V. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

The following documents are hereby incorporated into this Negative Declaration and Initial Study by reference:

- Visalia General Plan Update. Dyett & Bhatia, October 2014.
- Visalia City Council Resolution No. 2014-38 (Certifying the Visalia General Plan Update) passed and adopted October 14, 2014.
- Visalia General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 2010041078). Dyett & Bhatia, June 2014.
- Visalia General Plan Update Draft Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 2010041078). Dyett & Bhatia, March 2014.
- Visalia City Council Resolution No. 2014-37 (Certifying the EIR for the Visalia General Plan Update) passed and adopted October 14, 2014.
- Visalia Municipal Code, including Title 17 (Zoning Ordinance).
- California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines.
- City of Visalia, California, Climate Action Plan, Draft Final. Strategic Energy Innovations, December 2013.
- Visalia City Council Resolution No. 2014-36 (Certifying the Visalia Climate Action Plan) passed and adopted October 14, 2014.
- City of Visalia Storm Water Master Plan. Boyle Engineering Corporation, September 1994.
- City of Visalia Sanitary Sewer Master Plan. City of Visalia, 1994.
- City of Visalia Zoning Ordinance Update. City of Visalia, March 2017.

VI. NAME OF PERSON WHO PREPARED INITIAL STUDY



Colleen A. Moreno
Assistant Planner



Brandon Smith, AICP
Environmental Coordinator

- 1 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?

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- 1 a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Public Resources Code Section 15064.5?
- 1 b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 15064.5?
- 1 c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

VI. ENERGY

Would the project:

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

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 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.
- 1 ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?
- 1 iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?
- 1 iv) Landslides?
- 2 b) Result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil?
- 1 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?
- 1 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?
- 1 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?
- 1 f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

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

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

- 1 a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?
- 1 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?
- 2 c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?
- 1 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?
- 1 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?
- 1 f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?
- 1 g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

- 1 a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?
- 1 b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?
- 1 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 i) result in a substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;
- 1 ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;
- 1 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;
- 1 iv) impede or redirect flood flows?
- 1 d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?
- 1 e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

- 1 a) Physically divide an established community?
- 1 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?

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- 1 a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a value to the region and the residents of the state?
- 1 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?

XIII. NOISE

Would the project:

- 2 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?
- 2 b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?
- 1 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?

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

- 1 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)?
- 1 b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project:

- 1 a) 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:
 - 1 i) Fire protection?
 - 1 ii) Police protection?
 - 1 iii) Schools?
 - 1 iv) Parks?
 - 1 v) Other public facilities?

XVI. RECREATION

- 2 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?
- 2 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?

XVII. TRANSPORTATION / TRAFFIC

Would the project:

- 1 a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?
- 1 b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?
- 1 c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?
- 1 d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

- 1 a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:
 - 1 i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or
 - 1 ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

- 1 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?
- 1 b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?
- 1 c) Result in a determination by the waste water treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?
- 1 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?
- 1 e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations 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:

- 1 a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?
- 1 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?

- 1 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?
- 2 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?

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 2 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?
- 2 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)?
- 2 c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Note: Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21083.05, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 65088.4, Gov. Code; Sections 21080(c), 21080.1, 21080.3, 21083, 21083.05, 21083.3, 21093, 21094, 21095, and 21151, Public Resources Code; *Sundstrom v. County of Mendocino*, (1988) 202 Cal.App.3d 296; *Leonoff v. Monterey Board of Supervisors*, (1990) 222 Cal.App.3d 1337; *Eureka Citizens for Responsible Govt. v. City of Eureka* (2007) 147 Cal.App.4th 357; *Protect the Historic Amador Waterways v. Amador Water Agency* (2004) 116 Cal.App.4th at 1109; *San Franciscans Upholding the Downtown Plan v. City and County of San Francisco* (2002) 102 Cal.App.4th 656.

Revised 2019

Authority: Public Resources Code sections 21083 and 21083.09

Reference: Public Resources Code sections 21073, 21074, 21080.3.1, 21080.3.2, 21082.3/21084.2 and 21084.3

DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

I. AESTHETICS

- a. This project will not adversely affect the view of any scenic vistas. The Saint John's River and trail may be considered a scenic vista; however, the view will not be adversely impacted by the project.
- b. There are no scenic resources on the site.
- c. The City has development standards related to landscaping and other amenities that will ensure that the visual character of the area is enhanced and not degraded upon any future development. Thus, the project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character of the site and its surroundings.
- d. The project will facilitate the construction of an overflow parking lot and dog park, creating new sources of light that are typical of that use. The City has development standards that require light to be directed and/or shielded so it does not fall upon adjacent properties.

II. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

- a. The project is not located on property that is identified as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance.
- b. The project is not located on property that is party to a Williamson Act contract. Existing Tulare County zoning for the area is AE-20 (Exclusive Agriculture Zone 20 Acre Minimum). Although the site is zoned for agriculture no nearby agriculture would be hindered due to the site's separation from agriculture uses by the Saint John's River.
- c. The City of Visalia does not have a zoning classification for forest land, additionally the site is not considered forest land and is currently vacant. Therefore, the site will not conflict with any forest land.
- d. There is no forest land currently located on the site.
- e. The annexation area is located directly south of the Saint John's River and is bounded by properties within City Limits on the south, east and west of the site. The surrounding area is primarily developed with Parks/Recreation and urban uses. The project will not result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use or the conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

III. AIR QUALITY

- a. The project site is located in an area that is under the jurisdiction of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD). The project itself does not disrupt implementation of the San Joaquin Regional Air Quality Management Plan, and will therefore not be a significant impact.
- b. Future development of the site under the Visalia General Plan may result in emissions that exceed thresholds established by the SJVAPCD for PM10 and PM2.5. However, the project being considered is a request to annex 10.4 acres of County area into the City Limits. The annexation itself will not result in emissions that violate air

quality standards or contribute substantially to existing or projected air quality violations.

Future development of the project area is required to adhere to requirements administered by the SJVAPCD to reduce emissions to a level of compliance consistent with the District's regulations. Compliance with the SJVAPCD's rules and regulations will reduce potential impacts associated with air quality standard violations to a less than significant level.

In addition, future development of the project will be subject to the SJVAPCD Indirect Source Review (Rule 9510) procedures that became effective on March 1, 2006. The Applicant will be required to obtain permits demonstrating compliance with Rule 9510, or payment of mitigation fees to the SJVAPCD.

Tulare County is designated non-attainment for certain federal ozone and state ozone levels. Future development of the project site, which is not being considered at this time, may result in a net increase of criteria pollutants. However, as the proposal is solely for an annexation and general plan amendment affecting one acre of land use designation, it will not result in increases of pollutants.

Future development of the project site may be required to adhere to requirements administered by the SJVAPCD to reduce emissions to a level of compliance consistent with the District's regulations. Compliance with the SJVAPCD's rules and regulations will reduce potential impacts associated with air quality standard violations to a less than significant level.

- c. Uses located near the project area may be exposed to pollutant concentrations as a result of future construction activities. However at this time, the project being considered is an annexation which will bring two County parcels into the City Limits. The elimination of a jurisdictional boundary and a general plan amendment affecting one acre of land use designation will not result in the generation of substantial pollutant concentrations.
- d. The project involves the change of a jurisdictional boundary and a general plan amendment affecting one acre of land use designation and would not involve the generation of objectionable odors.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- a. City-wide biological resources were evaluated in the Visalia General Plan Update Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for conversion to urban use. Staff also conducted a site visit in January 2025 to observe biological conditions, and did not observe any evidence or symptoms that would suggest the presence of a candidate, sensitive, or special species.

Based on the above, the site has no known 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 Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The project would therefore not

have a substantial adverse effect on a sensitive, candidate, or special species.

- b. The project is located adjacent to Saint John's River and is considered a sensitive riparian habitat or other natural community. The City has a General Plan Policy in place pertaining to riparian habitats and development standards. Any development within the riparian habitat is subject to the standards and requirements outlined.
- c. The project is not located within or adjacent to federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.
- d. This development would not interfere 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 as it would only involve the elimination of a jurisdictional boundary and affect one acre of land use designation. This site was evaluated in the Visalia General Plan Update EIR for conversion to urban use.
- e. The City has a municipal ordinance in place to protect valley oak trees. All existing valley oak trees on the project site will be under the jurisdiction of this ordinance. Any oak trees to be removed from the site are subject to the jurisdiction of the municipal ordinance.
- f. There are no local, regional or state habitat conservation plans for the area.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

- a. There are no known historical resources located within the project area. If some potentially historical or cultural resource is unearthed during development all work should cease until a qualified professional archaeologist can evaluate the finding and make necessary mitigation recommendations.
- b. There are no known archaeological resources located within the project area. If some archaeological resource is unearthed during development all work should cease until a qualified professional archaeologist can evaluate the finding and make necessary mitigation recommendations.
- c. There are no known human remains buried in the project vicinity. If human remains are unearthed during development all work should cease until the proper authorities are notified and a qualified professional archaeologist can evaluate the finding and make any necessary mitigation recommendations.

VI. ENERGY

- a. The project only involves the elimination of a jurisdictional boundary and a general plan amendment affecting one acre of land use designation, however future development of the site includes construction of a dog park and overflow parking lot which could increase the energy consumption related to worker trips and operation of construction equipment. This increase would be temporary and limited through the compliance with local, state, and federal regulations.
- b. The project will not conflict with or obstruct any state or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency. The proposed project will comply with all state and local polices related to energy efficiency.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

- a. The State Geologist has not issued an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Map for Tulare County. The project area is not located on or near any known earthquake fault lines or areas prone to seismic activity or landslides. Therefore, the project will not expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse impacts involving earthquakes.
- b. The proposal involves the elimination of a jurisdictional boundary and a general plan amendment affecting one acre of land use designation that will not itself affect topsoil. Future development of this site will require movement of topsoil. Existing City Engineering Division standards require that a grading and drainage plan be submitted for review to the City to ensure that on- and off-site improvements will be designed to meet City standards.
- c. The project area is relatively flat and the underlying soil is not known to be unstable and have a low capacity for landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse. Soils in the Visalia area have few limitations with regard to development. Due to low clay content and limited topographic relief, soils in the Visalia area have low expansion characteristics.
- d. Due to low clay content, soils in the Visalia area have an expansion index of 0-20, which is defined as very low potential expansion.
- e. The project site area is currently vacant and future development will not include any development that would utilize the need of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems.
- f. There are no unique geological features and no known paleontological resources located within the project area. If some potentially unique paleontological or unique geological resources are unearthed during development all work should cease until a qualified professional paleontologist can evaluate the finding and make necessary mitigation recommendations.

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

- a. The project is not expected to generate Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions as the proposal involves only the elimination of a jurisdictional boundary and a general plan amendment affecting one acre of land use designation. Future development of the overflow parking lot and dog park may result in the release of greenhouse gas emissions in the short term due to construction activity and long-term due to day-to-day operation of the park.

The City has prepared and adopted a Climate Action Plan (CAP), which includes a baseline GHG emissions inventories, reduction measures, and reduction targets consistent with local and State goals. The CAP was prepared concurrently with the proposed General Plan and its impacts are also evaluated in the Visalia General Plan Update EIR.

The Visalia General Plan and the CAP both include policies that aim to reduce the level of GHG emissions emitted in association with buildout conditions under the General Plan. Although emissions will be generated as a result of the project, implementation of the General Plan and CAP policies will result in fewer emissions than would be associated with a continuation of baseline conditions.

Thus, the impact to GHG emissions will be less than significant.

- b. The State of California has enacted the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32), which included provisions for reducing the GHG emission levels to 1990 “baseline” levels by 2020 and to a level 80% below 1990 baseline levels by 2050. In addition, the State has enacted SB 32 which included provisions for reducing the GHG emission levels to a level 40% below 1990 baseline levels by 2030.

The proposed project will solely eliminate a jurisdictional boundary and will amend the land use designation on one acre of land use designation and will not impede the State’s ability to meet the GHG emission reduction targets under AB 32 and SB 32. Current and probable future state and local GHG reduction measures will continue to reduce the project’s contribution to climate change. As a result, the project will not contribute significantly, either individually or cumulatively, to GHG emissions.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

- a. No hazardous materials are anticipated with the elimination of a jurisdictional boundary and general plan amendment.
- b. As the proposal involves only the elimination of a jurisdictional boundary and a general plan amendment affecting one acre of land use designation, no significant hazards are foreseen as a result of accidents. Future construction activities associated with development of parking lot and dog park may include maintenance of on-site construction equipment, which could lead to minor fuel and oil spills. The use and handling of any hazardous materials during construction activities would occur in accordance with applicable federal, state, regional, and local laws. Therefore, impacts are considered to be less than significant.
- c. There is one school located 0.22 miles southwest of the project area (Riverway Elementary School). However, there is no reasonably foreseeable condition or incident involving the project that could affect existing or proposed school sites or areas within one-quarter mile of school sites.
- d. The project area does not include any sites listed as hazardous materials sites pursuant to Government Code Section 65692.5.
- e. The Tulare County Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan shows the project area is located outside the Airport Influence Area and the Airport Safety Zones. Therefore the project will not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area.
- f. The project will not interfere with the implementation of any adopted emergency response plan or evacuation plan.
- g. There are no wildlands within or near the project area.

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

- a. The project will not violate any water quality standards of waste discharge requirements as it involves only the elimination of a jurisdictional boundary and a general plan amendment affecting one acre of land use designation. Any future development of the project site would be required to meet the City’s improvement standards for

directing storm water runoff to the existing City storm water drainage system; consistent with the City’s adopted City Storm Drain Master Plan.

- b. The project will not substantially deplete groundwater supplies in the project vicinity as it involves only the elimination of a jurisdictional boundary and a general plan amendment affecting one acre of land use designation.

The project area overlies the southern portion of the San Joaquin unit of the Central Valley groundwater aquifer. Future development within the project area will result in an increase of impervious surfaces, which might affect the amount of precipitation that is recharged to the aquifer. As the City of Visalia is already largely developed and covered by impervious surfaces, the increase of impervious surfaces through this project will be small by comparison. The project therefore might affect the amount of precipitation that is recharged to the aquifer. The City of Visalia’s water conservation measures and explorations for surface water use over groundwater extraction will assist in offsetting the loss in groundwater recharge.

- c. The project will not result in substantial erosion on- or off-site. The proposal involves only the elimination of a jurisdictional boundary and a general plan amendment affecting one acre of land use designation. Future development of the site will adhere to a 100-foot riparian setback along Saint John’s River which lies north of the project site. Development of the site will not alter the course of the river and no streams are located near the site.

Future development of the site has the potential to affect drainage patterns in the short term due to erosion and sedimentation during construction activities and in the long term through the expansion of impervious surfaces. The City’s existing standards may require the preparation and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) in accordance with the SWRCB’s General Construction Permit process, which would address erosion control measures.

The project will not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site. Future development of the site will also not impede or redirect flood flows. The proposal involves only the elimination of a jurisdictional boundary and a general plan amendment affecting one acre of land use designation.

Development of the site will create additional impervious surfaces. However, existing and planned improvements to storm water drainage facilities as required through the Visalia General Plan policies will reduce any potential impacts to a less than significant level.

The project will not 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. The proposal involves only the elimination of a jurisdictional boundary and a general plan amendment affecting one acre of land use designation. Future development will be required to meet the City’s improvement standards for directing storm water runoff to the existing City storm water drainage system; consistent with the City’s adopted City Storm Drain Master Plan.

- d. The project area is located within Zone AE, which indicates an area that is within a high-risk flood hazard area. This is due to the proximity to Saint John's River. The project area is located along Saint John's River; however, it is outside potentially hazardous areas for seiches and tsunamis. Due to the site's proximity to Saint John's River there is the potential for mudflow occurrence, however these impacts are less than significant.
- e. As the proposal is only for the elimination of a jurisdictional boundary and a general plan amendment affecting one acre of land use designation, future development of site would not expose people or structures to risks from failure of levee or dam.

However, the project area along with the entirety of the City of Visalia lies within the dam inundation area of Terminus Dam, located approximately 35 miles to the east from the project site. In the case of dam failure, people and structures would be exposed to flooding risk. This impact is considered significant and unavoidable.

The Visalia General Plan Update Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has already considered the environmental impacts of the placement of people and structures to an area at risk of dam failure. The General Plan contains multiple polices that address the issue, and the County of Tulare maintains the Tulare County Hazard Mitigation Plan and a Mass Evacuation Plan that will help to reduce the impact.

Because there is still a significant impact, a Statement of Overriding Considerations was previously adopted with the Visalia General Plan Update EIR.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

- a. The project will not physically divide an established community. Upon annexation, the project is supported by a General Plan Amendment to change approximately one acre on the site from Residential Very Low-Density land use designation to Parks/Recreation land use designation, which is consistent with the surrounding land use designations and future use of the site. The project site is located directly north of the existing Riverway Sports Park and is bordered by a Minor Arterial status roadway, Dinuba Boulevard (State Highway 63) to the east.
- b. The project as a whole does not conflict with any land use plan, policy or regulation of the City of Visalia, as it only involves elimination of a jurisdictional boundary and a general plan amendment affecting one acre of land use designation. The proposed project is to be developed on land designated for Parks/Recreation which is consistent with the surrounding land use designations as identified in Table 9-1 "*Consistency between the Plan and Zoning*" of the General Plan.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

- a. No mineral areas of regional or statewide importance exist within the Visalia area.
- b. There are no mineral resource recovery sites delineated in the Visalia area.

XIII. NOISE

- a. The project will not result in noise generation typical of urban development, as it will only eliminate a jurisdictional boundary and a general plan amendment affecting one

acre of land use designation. Future development of overflow parking lot and dog park will result in noise generation typical of urban development, but not in excess of standards established in the City of Visalia's General Plan or Noise Ordinance. Noise levels will increase temporarily during the construction of these facilities but shall remain within noise limits and will be restricted to the allowed hours of construction defined by the City of Visalia Noise Ordinance. Temporary increase in ambient noise levels is considered to be less than significant.

Furthermore, the Visalia General Plan contains multiple policies, identified under Impact N-P-3 through N-P-5, that work to reduce the potential for noise impacts to sensitive land uses. With implementation of Noise Impact Policies and existing City Standards, noise impacts to new noise sensitive land uses would be less than significant.

- b. The annexation and general plan amendment itself will not result in impacts from ground-borne vibration or noise. However, ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels may occur as a result of future construction activities associated with development of the parking lot and dog park. Any construction activities will be temporary and will not expose persons to such vibration or noise levels for an extended period of time; thus the impacts will be less than significant. There are no existing uses near the project area that create ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels.
- c. The project site is not located within the Airport Influence Area nor within the Airport Safety Zones nor near a private airstrip and therefore will not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

- a. The project will not directly induce substantial population growth that is in excess of that planned in the General Plan. The proposal itself will have no effect as it will only remove a jurisdictional boundary and will amend the land use designation on one acre of land use designation.
- b. The proposal itself will have no effect as it will only remove a jurisdictional boundary and will amend the land use designation on one acre of land use designation. Future development of the parking lot and dog park will not displace any housing or people as the proposed site is currently vacant.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

- a.
 - i. Current fire protection facilities are located at Visalia Station 54 and can adequately serve the site without a need for alteration. Impact fees will be paid to mitigate the project's proportionate impact on these facilities.
 - ii. Current police protection facilities can adequately serve the site without a need for alteration. Impact fees will be paid to mitigate the project's proportionate impact on these facilities.
 - iii. Neither the annexation project nor the parking lot and dog park proposal will generate new students for which existing schools in the area may accommodate.
 - iv. Current Park facilities can adequately serve the site without a need for alteration as the project as proposed is a request to expand the existing Riverway Sports

Park. Impact fees will be paid upon development to mitigate the project's proportionate impact on these facilities.

- v. Other public facilities can adequately serve the site without a need for alteration.

XVI. RECREATION

- a. The proposed project may affect the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities as the future development of the dog park will be the third in the city providing an amenity not available at all city parks. This in turn can result in the increase of use at the park, however it is considered less than significant.
- b. The proposed project includes the expansion of Riverway Sports Park with the future development of the overflow parking lot and dog park. The construction of the parking lot and dog park will not have an adverse physical effect on the environment as currently the area is a vacant dirt lot, and the development will provide improvements from landscaping to park amenities.

XVII. TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

- a. The project will not conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities. Future development will result in an increase to traffic levels on arterial and collector roadways, although the City of Visalia's Circulation Element has been prepared to address this increase in traffic.
- b. As the proposal will only result in elimination of a jurisdictional boundary and will amend the land use designation on one acre of land use designation, the project will not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision(b).
- c. The project will only result in the elimination of a jurisdictional boundary and will amend the land use designation on one acre of land use designation. Future development of the site will not increase any hazards due to geometric design feature or incompatible uses. There are no planned designs that are considered hazardous.
- e. The project will not result in inadequate emergency access.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Tribal notification was circulated in accordance with Senate Bill 18. No response was received pertaining to the project. The proposed project would not 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.

- a. The site is not 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).
- b. The site has been determined to not 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, because it is an isolated infill site surrounded by existing urban development.

Further, the EIR (SCH 2010041078) for the 2014 General Plan update included a thorough review of sacred lands files through the California Native American Heritage Commission. The sacred lands file did not contain any known cultural resources information for the Visalia Planning Area.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

- a. The project is proposing to only eliminate a jurisdictional boundary and amend the land use designation on one acre of land use designation. Future development of the site will not include any development that will require connection to the existing City sanitary sewer lines.

The project will not result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects. The proposal would only eliminate a jurisdictional boundary amend the land use designation on one acre of land use designation and will thus not require construction or expansion of storm water facilities. Future development will be adequately served by existing facilities.

Future development onsite will be accommodated by existing City storm water drainage lines that handle on-site and street runoff. Usage of these lines is consistent with the City Storm Drain Master Plan. These improvements will not cause significant environmental impacts. The project also does not require the relocation or construction of new or expanded electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications.

- b. California Water Service Company has determined that there are sufficient water supplies to support the site, and that service can be extended to the site.
- c. The project will solely eliminate a jurisdictional boundary amend the land use designation on one acre of land use designation and will not require wastewater services. The City has determined that there is adequate capacity existing to serve the site's projected wastewater treatment demands at the City wastewater treatment plant upon future development.
- d. Current solid waste disposal facilities can adequately serve the site without a need for alteration.
- e. The project will be able to meet the applicable regulations for solid waste. Removal of debris from future construction will be subject to the City's waste disposal requirements.

XX. WILDFIRE

- a. The project will not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. The proposal will only eliminate a jurisdictional boundary amend the land use designation on one acre of land use designation.
- b. The proposal will only eliminate a jurisdictional boundary amend the land use designation on one acre of land use designation and therefore will not expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire. Additionally, the site is located on a flat area of open space land and is considered to be at little risk of fire.

- c. The proposal will only eliminate a jurisdictional boundary amend the land use designation on one acre of land use designation. Future development of the site will include the development of infrastructure such as a road, however all improvements would be subject to City standards and Fiore Marshal approval. The proposed project would not exacerbate fire risk.
- d. The proposal will only eliminate a jurisdictional boundary amend the land use designation on one acre of land use designation. Future development of the dog park and overflow parking lot will not expose people or structures to significant risks as the site is relatively flat.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

- a. The project will not affect the habitat of a fish or wildlife species or a plant or animal community. This site was evaluated in the Program EIR (SCH No. 2010041078) for the City of Visalia's General Plan Update for conversion to

urban use. The City adopted mitigation measures for conversion to urban development. Where effects were still determined to be significant a statement of overriding considerations was made.

- b. This site was evaluated in the Program EIR (SCH No. 2010041078) for the City of Visalia General Plan Update for the area's conversion to urban use. The City adopted mitigation measures for conversion to urban development. Where effects were still determined to be significant a statement of overriding considerations was made.
- c. This site was evaluated in the Program EIR (SCH No. 2010041078) for the City of Visalia General Plan Update for conversion to urban use. The City adopted mitigation measures for conversion to urban development. Where effects were still determined to be significant a statement of overriding considerations was made.

DETERMINATION OF REQUIRED ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project **COULD NOT** have a significant effect on the environment. **A NEGATIVE DECLARATION WILL BE PREPARED.**
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measures described on the attached sheet have been added to the project. **A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION WILL BE PREPARED.**
- I find the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment, and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required.
- I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that as a result of the proposed project no new effects could occur, or new mitigation measures would be required that have not been addressed within the scope of the Program Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 2010041078). The Environmental Impact Report prepared for the City of Visalia General Plan was certified by Resolution No. 2014-37 adopted on October 14, 2014. **THE PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT WILL BE UTILIZED.**



Brandon Smith, AICP
Environmental Coordinator

February 11, 2025
Date