

1 **3.15 Recreation**

2 **3.15.1 Introduction**

3 This section describes the regulatory and environmental setting for recreational resources near the
4 Proposed Project and the Atwater Station Alternative. It also describes the impacts on recreational
5 resources that would result from implementation of the Proposed Project and the Atwater Station
6 Alternative, and the mitigation measures that would reduce significant impacts, where feasible and
7 appropriate.

8 The term *recreational resources* is defined in this section as publicly-owned properties used for
9 recreation and include one or more of the following: public parks and open spaces, including
10 greenbelts, pedestrian and bicycle trails, playfields, waterways that support water-oriented
11 recreational activities, and school district play areas available for public use during non-school
12 hours. On-street bicycle routes are considered transportation facilities and are, therefore, not
13 considered a recreational route. Section 3.17, *Transportation*, describes impacts on these facilities.
14 Cumulative impacts on recreational resources, in combination with planned, approved, and
15 reasonably foreseeable projects, are discussed in Chapter 4, *Other CEQA-Required Analysis*.

16 **3.15.2 Regulatory Setting**

17 This section summarizes federal, state, regional, and local regulations related to recreational
18 resources and applicable to the Proposed Project and the Atwater Station Alternative.

19 **3.15.2.1 Federal**

20 **National Trails System Act**

21 The National Trails System was created in 1968 by the National Trails System Act (Public Law 90-
22 543). The National Trails System Act authorized a national system of interstate riding and hiking
23 trails to provide additional outdoor recreation opportunities and to promote the preservation of
24 access to the outdoor areas and historic resources. The National Trails System includes four classes
25 of trails: National Historic Scenic Trails, National Historic Trails, National Recreation Trails, and
26 Connecting or Side Trails. To support this legislation, to protect existing trails, and to provide new
27 trails, the California Department of Parks and Recreation prepared the *California Recreational Trails*
28 *Plan* as a guide for all state agencies that provide and manage recreational trails, last updated in June
29 2002. There are no trails in the study area (as defined in Section 3.15.3, *Environmental Setting*) for
30 the Proposed Project or the Atwater Station Alternative that are part of the National Trails System.

31 **National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act**

32 The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Public Law 90-542; 16 United States Code [U.S.C.] 1271 et
33 seq.) preserves certain designated rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values
34 in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations and is administered
35 by either a federal or state agency. These rivers must possess extraordinary scenic, recreational,
36 fishery, or wildlife values. No rivers or portions of rivers in the study area for the Proposed Project
37 or the Atwater Station Alternative are designated as “wild, scenic, and recreational” under this act.

1 **3.15.2.2 State**

2 **California Public Park Preservation Act**

3 The primary instrument for protecting and preserving parkland in the state is California’s Public
4 Park Preservation Act of 1971. Under the California Public Resources Code (Public Res. Code)
5 Sections 5400–5409, a public agency that acquires public parkland for non-park use, must either
6 pay compensation that is sufficient to acquire substantially equivalent substitute parkland or
7 provide substitute parkland of comparable characteristics. If less than 10 percent of the parkland,
8 but not more than 1 acre is acquired, the operating entity may improve the portion of the parkland
9 and facilities not acquired.

10 **California Recreational Trails Act**

11 The California Recreational Trails Plan is a guide produced by California State Parks for all state
12 agencies and recreation providers that manage recreational trails. Preparation of a recreational
13 trails plan was authorized by the California Legislature in 1978 as an element of the California
14 Recreational Trails Act (Public Res. Code 2070–5077.8). The plan identifies Trail Corridors that form
15 a statewide trail system that links mountain, valley, and coastal communities to recreational,
16 cultural, and natural resources throughout the state. There are no trails in the study area for the
17 Proposed Project or the Atwater Station Alternative that are part of the California Recreational
18 Trails Plan.

19 **California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act**

20 Following the passage of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, California’s Legislature passed the
21 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in 1972 (Public Res. Code 5093.50–5093.70). Under California law,
22 “certain rivers which possess extraordinary scenic, recreational, fishery, or wildlife values will be
23 preserved in their free-flowing state, together with their immediate environments, for the benefit
24 and enjoyment of the people of the state.” The Natural Resources Agency is responsible for
25 coordinating activities of state agencies that may affect the designated rivers. No rivers or portions
26 of rivers in the study area for the Proposed Project or the Atwater Station Alternative are designed
27 as “wild, scenic, and recreational” under this act.

28 **3.15.2.3 Regional and Local**

29 The San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRRC), a state joint powers agency, proposes facilities
30 located inside and outside of the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) right-of-way (ROW). The Interstate
31 Commerce Commission Termination Act (ICCTA) affords railroads engaged in interstate commerce
32 considerable flexibility in making necessary improvements and modifications to rail infrastructure,¹
33 subject to the requirements of the Surface Transportation Board. ICCTA broadly preempts state and
34 local regulation of railroads and this preemption extends to the construction and operation of rail
35 lines. As such, activities within the UPRR ROW are clearly exempt from local building and zoning
36 codes and other land use ordinances. However, facilities located outside of the UPRR ROW, including
37 proposed stations, the proposed Merced Layover & Maintenance Facility, and the Atwater Station
38 Alternative would be subject to regional and local plans and regulations. Though ICCTA does broadly

¹ Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) operates within a right-of-way (ROW) and on tracks owned by the UPRR, which operates interstate freight rail service in the same ROW and on the same tracks.

1 preempt state and local regulation of railroads, SJRRC intends to obtain local agency permits for
2 construction of facilities that fall outside of the UPRR ROW even though SJRRC has not determined
3 that such permits are legally necessary, and such permits may not be required.

4 Appendix G of this EIR, *Regional Plans and Local General Plans*, provides a list of applicable goals,
5 policies, and objectives from regional and local plans of the jurisdictions in which the Proposed
6 Project and the Atwater Station Alternative would be located. Section 15125(d) of the CEQA
7 Guidelines requires an environmental impact report to discuss “any inconsistencies between the
8 proposed project and applicable general plans, specific plans, and regional plans.” These plans were
9 considered during the preparation of this analysis and were reviewed to assess whether the
10 Proposed Project and the Atwater Station Alternative would be consistent with the plans of relevant
11 jurisdictions.² The Proposed Project and the Atwater Station Alternative would be generally
12 consistent with the applicable goals, policies, and objectives related to recreational resources
13 identified in Appendix G.

14 **3.15.3 Environmental Setting**

15 This section discusses the environmental setting related to recreational resources for facilities
16 associated with the Proposed Project and the Atwater Station Alternative. For the purposes of this
17 analysis, the study area for recreational resources is defined as follows.

- 18 • Direct impacts would occur in the environmental footprint (i.e., anticipated area of direct
19 disturbance).
- 20 • Indirect impacts would occur in areas within 1,000 feet of the environmental footprint.

21 Figures 3.15-1 through 3.15-7 depict the study area for recreational resources in the study area of
22 the Proposed Project and the Atwater Station Alternative. Recreational resources are generally
23 overseen by the parks and recreation departments of the cities and counties where facilities would
24 be located. These municipalities generally use planning documents, such as master plans, to guide
25 the acquisition, preservation, improvement, maintenance, and expansion of local parklands and trail
26 networks. Additionally, the general plans of each jurisdiction typically include goals and policies that
27 address recreational resources. Other agencies, such as the U.S. National Park Service or U.S. Forest
28 Service, oversee parks, recreation, open space, and refuge lands on a state and regional level and
29 provide guidance on issues that transcend the authority of local jurisdictions.

30 Information presented in this section regarding existing recreational resources was obtained from
31 local land use general plans, local and regional parks master plans, bicycle plans, and reviews of
32 aerial maps and geographic information system (GIS) data.

33 As shown in Figures 3.15-1 through 3.15-7, there are 11 recreational resources located in the study
34 area for the Proposed Project and the Atwater Station Alternative. Table 3.15-1 lists the size,
35 recreational amenities provided, and distance of the resources to the Proposed Project or the
36 Atwater Station Alternative facilities.
37

² An inconsistency with regional or local plans is not necessarily considered a significant impact under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), unless it is related to a physical impact on the environment that is significant in its own right.



- Direct Impacts Study Area
- Indirect Impacts Study Area
- Recreational Facilities

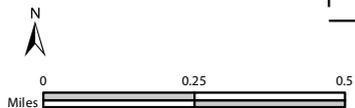
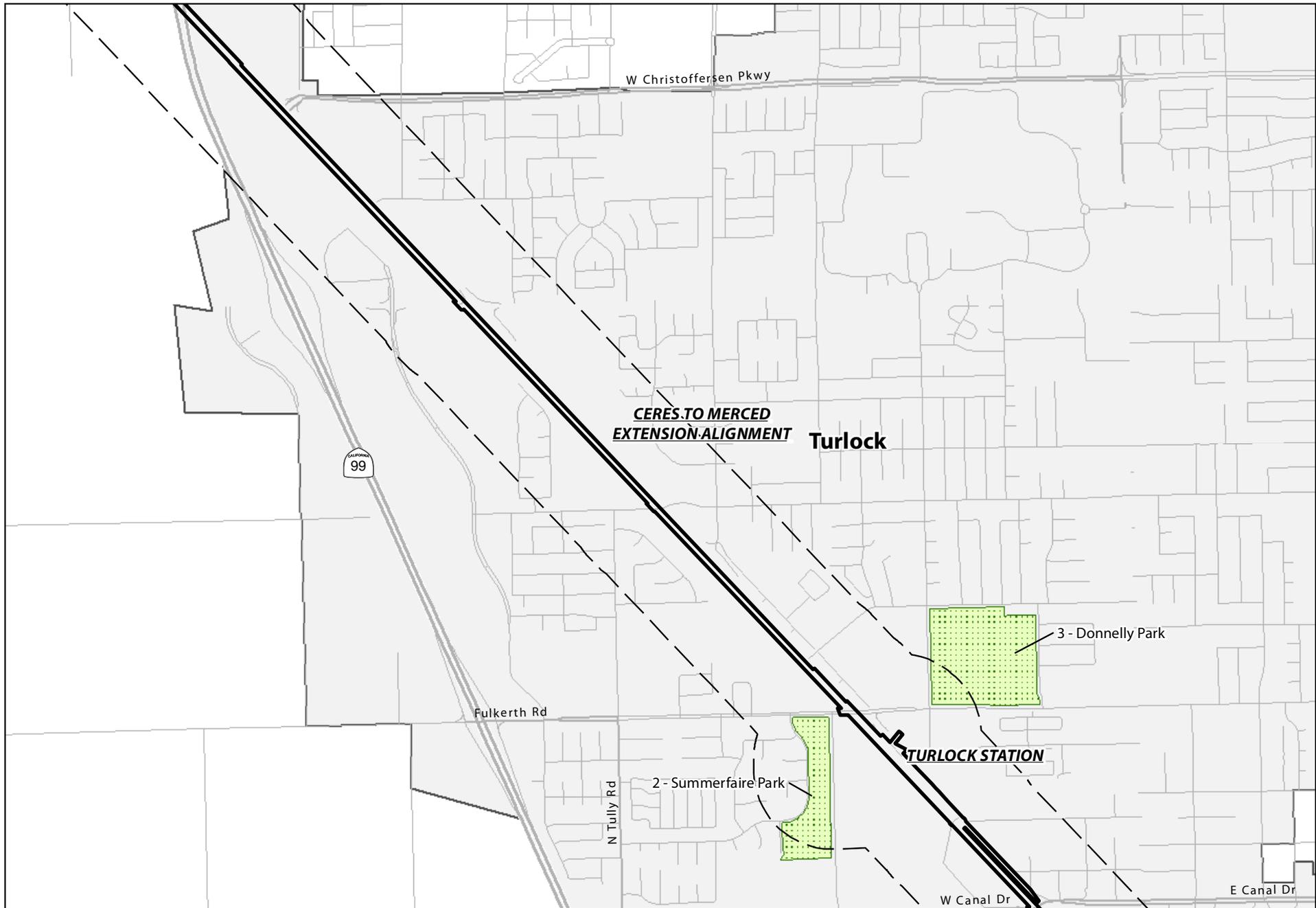


Figure 3.15-1
Parks and Recreation Facilities
ACE Ceres-Merced Extension Project



- Direct Impacts Study Area
- Indirect Impacts Study Area
- Recreational Facilities

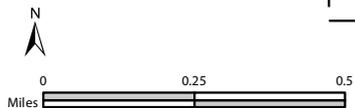
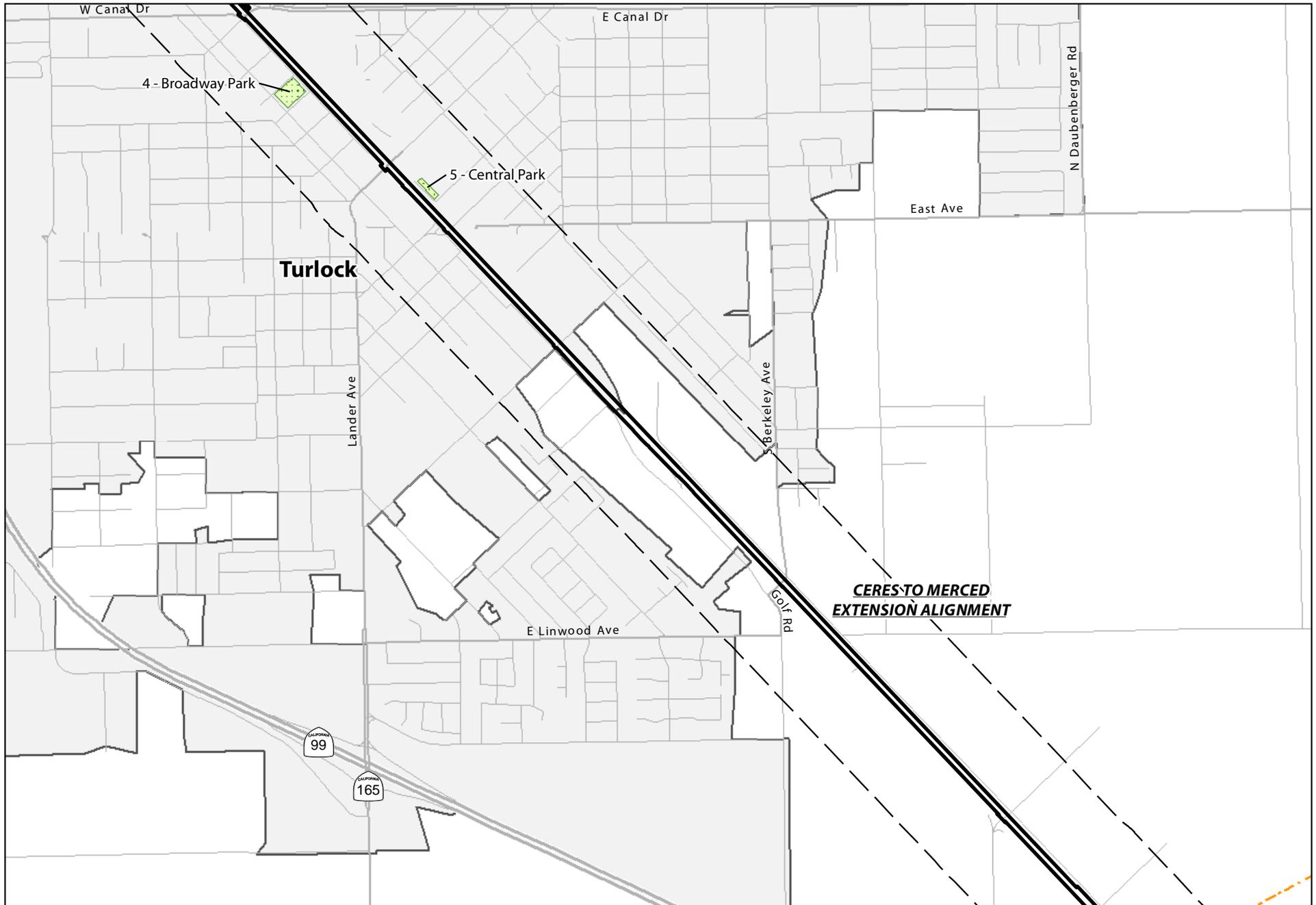


Figure 3.15-2
Parks and Recreation Facilities
ACE Ceres-Merced Extension Project



- Direct Impacts Study Area
- Indirect Impacts Study Area
- Recreational Facilities

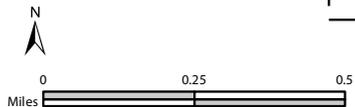


Figure 3.15-3
Parks and Recreation Facilities
ACE Ceres-Merced Extension Project



- Direct Impacts Study Area
- Indirect Impacts Study Area
- Recreational Facilities

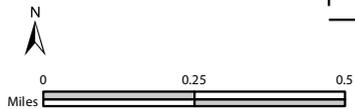
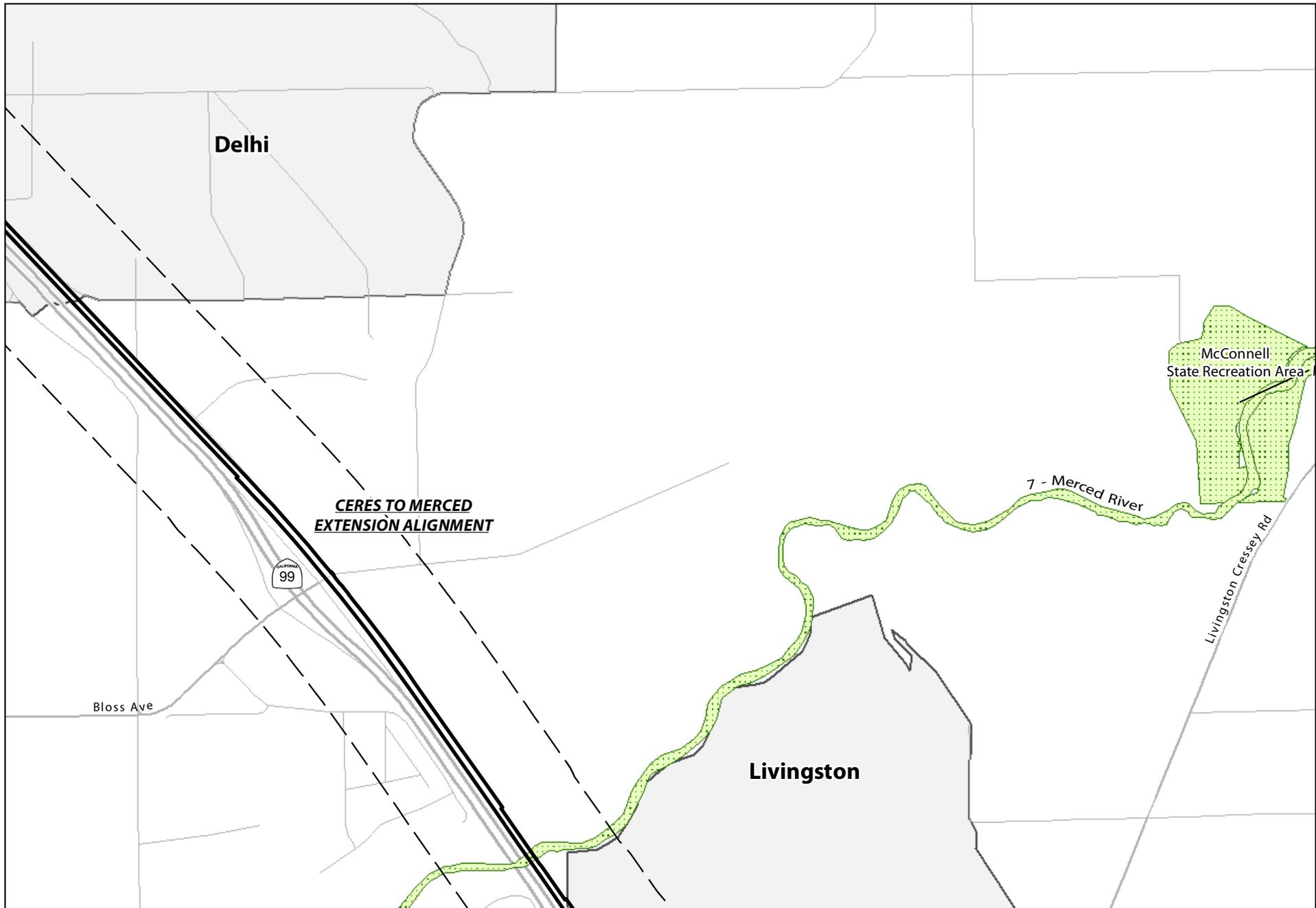


Figure 3.15-4
Parks and Recreation Facilities
ACE Ceres-Merced Extension Project



- Direct Impacts Study Area
- Indirect Impacts Study Area
- Recreational Facilities

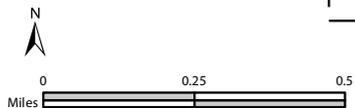


Figure 3.15-5
Parks and Recreation Facilities
ACE Ceres-Merced Extension Project



- Direct Impacts Study Area
- Indirect Impacts Study Area
- Recreational Facilities

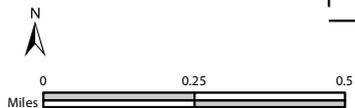


Figure 3.15-6
Parks and Recreation Facilities
ACE Ceres-Merced Extension Project



- Direct Impacts Study Area
- Indirect Impacts Study Area
- Recreational Facilities

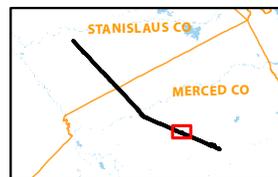
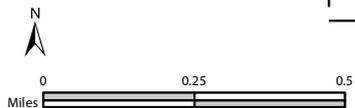


Figure 3.15-7
Parks and Recreation Facilities
ACE Ceres-Merced Extension Project

1 As shown in Table 3.15-1, one recreational resource is located in the study area for direct impacts
 2 (the Merced River). The existing UPRR Fresno Subdivision crosses the Merced River northeast of
 3 Livingston. In the study area, this resource is located in Merced County. For federal lands upstream
 4 of Merced, the Merced River is overseen by the Bureau of Land Management, Mother Lode Field
 5 Office; National Park Service, Yosemite National Park; and U.S. Forest Service, Sierra National Forest
 6 (National Wild and Scenic Rivers System 2020) but these agencies do not have jurisdiction over the
 7 Merced River where it is crossed by the UPRR Fresno Subdivision. Access to this portion of the
 8 Merced River crossed by the UPRR Fresno Subdivision is through Campground Road in Delhi. The
 9 nearest public boat launch is at McConnell State Recreational Area, which is approximately 2.8 river
 10 miles upstream of the UPRR Fresno Subdivision crossing of the Merced River.

11 **Table 3.15-1. Recreational Resources in the Study Area**

Map ID ^a	Resource Name	Amenities	Total Resource Size	Nearest Facility	Distance from Nearest Facility
In study area for direct impacts					
7	Merced River	Boating, kayaking, fishing	123 miles	Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment	0 feet
In study area for indirect impacts					
1	Ceres-Whitmore Park	Play area, picnic area, barbeque area	1.5 acres	Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment	700 feet
2	Summerfaire Park	Play area, barbeque area, picnic area	16 acres	Turlock Station Merced Extension Alignment	400 feet 200 feet
3	Donnelly Park	Play area, basketball court	40 acres	Turlock Station Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment	550 feet 750 feet
4	Broadway Park	Play area, basketball court	2 acres	Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment	60 feet
5	Central Park	Benches, shade structure	0.5 acre	Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment	100 feet
6	Shattuck Educational Park	Play area, basketball court	2.0 acres	Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment	600 feet
8	Selma Herndon Elementary School	Play area, basketball court	0.2 acre	Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment	900 feet

Map ID ^a	Resource Name	Amenities	Total Resource Size	Nearest Facility	Distance from Nearest Facility
9	Aileen Colburn Elementary School	Basketball courts	9.2 acres	Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment	900 feet
10	Bloss Grounds (Bloss Mansion and Park)	Open space	1.7 acre	Atwater Station Alternative	170 feet
				Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment	750 feet
11	Atwater Memorial Ball Park	Baseball field	2.5 acres	Atwater Station Alternative	600 feet
				Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment	750 feet

1 Sources: City of Turlock 2020; City of Atwater 2020.

2 ^a Map ID for recreational resources in this table correspond to the resources depicted in Figures 3.15-1 through 3.15-7.

3 3.15.4 Impact Analysis

4 3.15.4.1 Methods for Analysis

5 This analysis evaluates potential impacts on existing recreational resources that would result from
6 implementation of the Proposed Project or the Atwater Station Alternative. The analysis of impacts
7 on recreational resources was conducted using a review of local recreation planning documents,
8 specifically the general plans corresponding to each city and county in the study area, and review of
9 GIS databases.

10 Construction activities near recreational resources could result in temporary increases in noise and
11 dust and visual degradation experienced by users of these recreational resources. Temporary
12 construction impacts within 300 feet of a recreational resource would have the greatest impact due
13 to proximity to these activities. Recreational resources located farther than 300 feet from
14 construction areas are sufficiently remote to remain comparatively unaffected. Construction
15 activities could also require temporary construction easements within a recreational resource or the
16 temporary closure or disruption to the use of a recreational resource. A construction-period impact
17 on recreational resources is considered significant if these activities prevent the function of a
18 recreational resource from continuing or would diminish the ability of user to use or access the
19 recreational resource, leading to the increased use of other park areas, such that substantial physical
20 deterioration of those facilities could occur or be accelerated or require the construction or
21 expansion of recreation resources that would result in a significant effect on the environment.

22 Operation impacts on recreational resources could result from increased noise levels experienced
23 by users of nearby recreational resources, substantial population growth from the Proposed Project
24 or the Atwater Station Alternative and the resultant demand for recreational resources, or if

1 facilities require the permanent acquisition of recreational areas. An operation-period impact on
 2 recreational resources is considered significant if operation of the Proposed Project or the Atwater
 3 Station Alternative affects the character of the existing recreational resource, leading to the
 4 increased use of other park areas, such that substantial physical deterioration of those facilities
 5 could occur or be accelerated or require the construction or expansion of recreation resources that
 6 would result in a significant effect on the environment.

7 **3.15.4.2 Thresholds of Significance**

8 The CEQA Guidelines Appendix G (14 California Code of Regulations 15000 et seq.) has identified
 9 significance criteria for determining whether a project could have significant impacts on
 10 recreational resources. An impact would be considered significant if construction or operation of the
 11 Proposed Project or the Atwater Station Alternative would have any of the following consequences.

- 12 • Impair access to or quality of existing recreational facilities.
- 13 • Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational resources
 14 such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.
- 15 • Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational resources
 16 that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

17 **3.15.4.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

Impact REC-1	Construction of the Proposed Project could impair access to or quality of existing recreational facilities.
Level of Impact	<p>Potentially significant impact <u>Proposed Project</u> Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment <u>Alternative Analyzed at an Equal Level of Detail</u> Atwater Station Alternative</p> <p>Less than significant impact <u>Proposed Project</u> Turlock Station</p> <p>No impact <u>Proposed Project</u> Livingston Station Merced Layover & Maintenance Facility Merced Station</p>
Mitigation Measures	<p>AES-1.1: Install visual barriers between construction work areas and sensitive receptors</p> <p>AQ-2.1: Implement advanced emissions controls for off-road equipment</p> <p>AQ-2.2: Implement advanced emissions controls for locomotives used for construction</p> <p>NOI-1.1: Implement a construction noise control plan</p>

Impact REC-1	Construction of the Proposed Project could impair access to or quality of existing recreational facilities. REC-1.1: Coordinate with Merced County and California Department of Parks and Recreation to provide advance notice of and maintain a safe open channel in the Merced River during construction activities
Level of Impact after Mitigation	Less than significant impact

1 **Impact Characterization**

2 As shown in Table 3.15-1, there are 11 parks and waterways that support recreational activities in
3 the study area. Users of parks and other recreational resources in the study area could experience
4 impacts during the construction period, which could impair access to or the quality of existing
5 recreational facilities. Construction impacts on recreational resources could include increased noise
6 and dust caused by use of equipment and visual changes caused by construction activities, exposed
7 earth, and stockpiled materials. In addition, the Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment would require
8 construction activities in recreational resources areas. Construction may affect use and accessibility
9 of these recreation resources and detract from the use of nearby recreational resources. The
10 analysis presented in this section identifies the name and corresponding Map ID of the resource in
11 brackets from Table 3.15-1.

12 **Proposed Project**

13 There are no recreational resources in the study area of the Livingston Station, Merced Layover &
14 Maintenance Facility, or Merced Station. Construction of the Livingston Station, Merced Layover &
15 Maintenance Facility, or Merced Station would result in no impact on access to and quality of
16 existing recreational facilities.

17 ***Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment***

18 There are 11 recreational resources located in the study area of the Ceres to Merced Extension
19 Alignment. Of these resources, seven recreational resources are located more than 300 feet from the
20 Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment. These recreational resources are located primarily in city
21 centers and are separated from the Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment by intervening roadways
22 and residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Due to the distance between the Ceres to Merced
23 Extension Alignment and these parks, construction of the Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment
24 would not disrupt use of or result in construction-period impacts on these parks.

25 The remaining four recreational resources are located within 300 feet of the Ceres to Merced
26 Extension Alignment, with one of these resources (Merced River [7] in Livingston) located in the
27 construction area for the Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment and one of these resources
28 (Broadway Park [4]) located directly adjacent to the facility within the UPRR ROW. Users of
29 recreational resources located within 300 feet of the Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment,
30 especially the resources located directly adjacent to the construction areas within the UPRR ROW,
31 would experience impacts involving visual degradation and increased noise and dust during the
32 construction period. However, construction of a new main track within the UPRR ROW would occur
33 in segments; once the subgrade, ballast, and main track are installed for one segment, construction
34 would continue down the alignment. Construction-related impacts on recreational resources
35 directly adjacent to the construction area for the Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment would be
36 temporary, lasting approximately a few days to a week for a segment. Although construction would

1 be temporary, construction-related impacts, including visual degradation and increased noise and
2 dust would result in a potentially significant impact on access to and quality of existing recreational
3 facilities.

4 Portions of the Merced River are located in the construction area for the Ceres to Merced Extension
5 Alignment. With the Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment, a new bridge structure would be
6 constructed adjacent to the existing bridges to support the new main track crossing the Merced
7 River. The new railroad bridge would be located directly east of the existing bridge structures
8 supporting the existing main track. Construction of the railroad bridge would require placement of
9 new piers in the Merced River, which would temporarily disrupt use of the river and adjacent park
10 for water-oriented recreational activities. Construction of a railroad bridge crossing water features
11 could last approximately 36 months, depending on the access and in-water work windows. In
12 addition, users of nearby portions of the river would experience impacts involving visual
13 degradation, and increased noise and dust during the construction period. Impacts on access to and
14 quality of existing recreational facilities would be potentially significant.

15 ***Turlock Station***

16 There are two recreational resources in the study area of the Turlock Station. Donnelly Park [3] is
17 located 550 feet northeast of the Turlock Station and is visually and physically separated from the
18 station by intervening roadways and the existing transit center. Due to the distance between the
19 Turlock Station and Donnelly Park, construction of the Turlock Station is not anticipated to disrupt
20 use of or result in construction-period impacts on this park. Summerfaire Park [2] is located 400 feet
21 west of the Turlock Station, with the railroad, a parking area for the Stanislaus County Fair,
22 buildings, and North Soderquist Road located between the station and recreational areas. Due to the
23 distance between the Turlock Station and Summerfaire Park, construction of the Turlock Station is
24 not anticipated to disrupt use of or result in construction-period impacts on this park. As such, the
25 Turlock Station would result in a less than significant impact on access to and quality of existing
26 recreational facilities.

27 **Atwater Station Alternatives**

28 There are two recreational resources located in the study area of the Atwater Station Alternative.
29 The Bloss Grounds [10] is located 170 feet from the Atwater Station Alternative. Atwater Memorial
30 Ball Park [11] is located 600 feet from Atwater Station Alternative.

31 Due to the distance between the Atwater Station Alternative and Atwater Memorial Ball Park (600
32 feet), construction of the Atwater Station Alternative is not anticipated to disrupt use or result in
33 construction-period impacts on this park, and the impact would be less than significant.
34 Nonetheless, due to the distance between the Atwater Station Alternative and the Bloss Grounds,
35 construction could result in visual degradation and increased noise and dust. Users of recreational
36 resources in the study area of the Atwater Station Alternative would experience impacts involving
37 visual degradation, and increased noise and dust during the construction period. Construction
38 activities associated with the Atwater Station Alternative would last approximately 12 months.
39 Although construction would be temporary, the duration of construction activities could impair
40 access to or the quality of existing recreational facilities, and impacts would be potentially
41 significant.

1 **Mitigation Measures**

2 Construction of the Proposed Project (due to the Ceres to Merced Extension Alignment) would result
3 in a potentially significant impact. The following mitigation measures would apply to the Ceres to
4 Merced Extension Alignment. Likewise, the following mitigation measures would apply to the
5 Atwater Station Alternative. The text of these mitigation measures is presented in Sections 3.1, 3.3,
6 and 3.12.

7 **Mitigation Measure AES-1.1: Install visual barriers between construction work areas and** 8 **sensitive receptors**

9 Refer to measure description in Section 3.1, *Aesthetics*.

10 **Mitigation Measure AQ-2.1: Implement advanced emissions controls for off-road** 11 **equipment**

12 Refer to measure description in Section 3.3, *Air Quality*.

13 **Mitigation Measure AQ-2.2: Implement advanced emissions controls for locomotives used** 14 **for construction**

15 Refer to measure description in Section 3.3, *Air Quality*.

16 **Mitigation Measure NOI-1.1: Implement a construction noise control plan**

17 Refer to measure description in Section 3.12, *Noise and Vibration*.

18 Mitigation Measure REC-1.1 would apply to the construction of the Ceres to Merced Extension
19 Alignment for construction-period impacts to the Merced River.

20 **Mitigation Measure REC-1.1: Coordinate with Merced County and California Department** 21 **of Parks and Recreation to provide advance notice of and maintain a safe open channel in** 22 **the Merced River during construction activities**

23 SJRRRC will coordinate construction activities associated with the new railroad bridge crossing
24 the Merced River with Merced County so they can inform users of the river regarding any
25 potential disruption of use and with the California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR)
26 so they can inform users of the public boat launch at the McConnell State Recreation Area. An
27 open channel for water-oriented recreational traffic will be maintained under the bridge at all
28 times. Construction equipment in the river and other potential impediments to recreation will
29 be equipped with required safety markings (e.g., upstream/downstream signage, exclusion
30 methods, lights, etc.). In the event a temporary closure is required, SJRRRC will coordinate with
31 the County and CDPR on timing and provide at least a 30-day advance notice.

32 **Significance with Application of Mitigation**

33 Potential visual degradation and increased noise and dust impacts experienced by users of nearby
34 recreational resources during the construction period would be minimized by Mitigation Measures
35 AES-1.1, AQ-2.1 through AQ-2.2, and NOI-1.1. Mitigation Measure AES-1.1 would require the
36 installation of visual barriers between stationary construction work areas and sensitive receptors,
37 including recreational areas, thus limiting the visual exposure of construction activities to users of

1 nearby recreational resources. Mitigation Measures AQ-2.1 through AQ-2.2 require advanced
2 emissions controls for construction equipment to minimize potential construction air quality and
3 dust impacts on users of nearby recreational resources. In addition, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution
4 Control District Regulation VIII would require implementation of fugitive dust controls, which
5 would minimize potential dust impacts on users of nearby recreational resources. Mitigation
6 Measure NOI-1.1 would require the preparation of a construction noise plan, thus limiting the noise
7 of construction activities for users of nearby recreational resources. In addition, Mitigation
8 Measures REC-1.1 requires SJRRC to coordinate with agencies with jurisdiction over the affected
9 recreational resource to ensure that advanced notification of construction activities and safe access
10 is provided for users of the Merced River.

11 Thus, construction associated with the Proposed Project due to the Ceres to Merced Extension
12 Alignment would not disrupt use of and accessibility to these resources. With implementation of
13 these mitigation measures, construction-period impacts resulting from the Proposed Project on
14 access and quality of nearby recreational resources would be less than significant.

15 Likewise, with implementation of these mitigation measures, construction-period impacts resulting
16 from the Atwater Station Alternative on access and quality of nearby recreational resources would
17 be less than significant.

18 **Comparison of the Proposed Livingston Station and Atwater Station Alternative**

19 Implementation of the Atwater Station Alternative instead of the proposed Livingston Station
20 Alternative would result in a greater construction-related impact on recreational resources because
21 two recreational resources are located near the Atwater Station Alternative and no recreational
22 resources are located near the Livingston Station. The Atwater Station Alternative would result in a
23 less-than-significant impact on recreational resources after implementation of mitigation, and the
24 Livingston Station would result in no impact on recreational resources.

Impact REC-2	Operation of the Proposed Project would not increase the use of existing recreational resources such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.
Level of Impact	Less than significant impact

25 **Impact Characterization and Significance Conclusion**

26 Operation of the Proposed Project would entail the extension of Altamont Corridor Express (ACE)
27 passenger rail service to Merced. With the extension to Merced, ACE trains would operate on new or
28 upgraded tracks within the existing UPRR ROW. Nearby recreational resources are already exposed
29 to rail traffic, and the additional weekday passenger trains would not likely detract users from
30 nearby recreational resources. Train operations with the extension to Merced would not
31 substantially change the character of nearby recreational resources, leading to the increased use of
32 other park areas, such that substantial physical deterioration of those facilities could occur or be
33 accelerated.

34 While operation of the Proposed Project would introduce passenger rail service to new areas
35 through the extension from Ceres to Merced, substantial localized growth is not anticipated around
36 existing and proposed station locations. As described in Impact POP-1 in Section 3.13, *Population
37 and Housing*, Proposed Project facilities are not anticipated to induce unplanned population growth
38 near new stations. Thus, the resultant demand for existing recreational resources is expected to be

1 minor and substantial physical deterioration is not anticipated to occur necessitating the
2 construction for new facilities. Thus, operation impacts on existing nearby recreational resources
3 would be less than significant due to the Proposed Project.

4 Likewise, operation of the Atwater Station Alternative, instead of the proposed Livingston Station,
5 would have a similar less-than-significant impact on existing nearby recreational resources.

Impact REC-3	The Proposed Project would not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.
Level of Impact	No impact

6 **Impact Characterization and Significance Conclusion**

7 The Proposed Project would not involve the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. As
8 discussed in Impact REC-1 and REC-2, construction and operation of the Proposed Project would not
9 result in the physical degradation of park or recreational facilities that would displace recreational
10 use or might result in the demand for new recreational facilities, such that construction or
11 expansion of recreational facilities would be required. Thus, the Proposed Project would have no
12 impact on the physical environment as result of new recreational facilities.

13 Likewise, the Atwater Station Alternative would have no impact on the physical environment as
14 result of new recreational facilities.

15 **3.15.4.4 Overall Comparison of the Proposed Livingston Station and** 16 **Atwater Station Alternative**

17 Overall, implementation of the Atwater Station Alternative instead of the proposed Livingston
18 Station is expected to result in grater impacts on recreational resources. This is because two
19 recreational resources are located near the Atwater Station Alternative and no recreational
20 resources are located near the proposed Livingston Station. The Atwater Station Alternative would
21 result in a less-than-significant impact on recreational resources after implementation of mitigation,
22 and the Livingston Station would result in no impact on recreational resources.