



Initial Study / Negative Declaration for the

Kings County Regional Active Transportation Plan

Kings County Association of Governments

March 2019

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Introduction

This document presents the Initial Study checklist and Negative Declaration for the Kings County Regional Active Transportation Plan (RATP). The RATP updates the 2011 Kings County Regional Bicycle Plan and expands it by addressing walking. The plan's primary objective is to identify projects that will make walking and biking throughout Kings County safer and more convenient, more pleasant and more popular. Toward that end, the plan incorporates a wide range of pedestrian and bicycle projects previously proposed by the County of Kings and by the four incorporated cities in the county: Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford and Lemoore. The RATP has been prepared in recognition of the benefits of walking and bicycling and their contribution to a more balanced transportation system for the county.

A comprehensive, long-range planning effort such as the RATP is considered a "project" under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). For this reason, an evaluation of potential environmental impacts stemming from the RATP is required by state law. The Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG) is the CEQA lead agency for the project. KCAG, with consultant help, has prepared this Initial Study to provide other agencies and the public with information about potential environmental impacts and measures to mitigate any impacts. This document has been prepared in compliance with the State CEQA Guidelines, found in Title 14 of the California Administrative Code, under Division 6, Chapter 3.

Declaration

Project Name

Kings County Regional Active Transportation Plan (RATP).

Project Location

The project covers all of Kings County. Kings County is located in the south-central San Joaquin Valley, a subset of California's Central Valley. It is bordered on the west and north by Fresno County; on the east by Tulare County; on the south by Kern County (and on one corner by San Luis Obispo County); and on its southwest corner by Monterey County.

Summary description of project

The RATP updates the 2011 Kings County Regional Bicycle Plan and expands it by addressing walking. The plan's primary objective is to identify projects that will make walking and biking throughout Kings County safer and more convenient, more pleasant and more popular. Toward that end, the plan incorporates a wide range of pedestrian and bicycle projects previously proposed by the County of Kings and by the four incorporated cities in the county: Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford and Lemoore. The RATP has been prepared in recognition of the benefits of walking and bicycling and their contribution to a more balanced transportation system for the county.

Findings

It is hereby determined that, based on the information contained in the attached Initial Study, the project will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment and, therefore, no mitigation measures are needed.

Date

March 8, 2019



Terri King, Executive Director
Kings County Association of Governments

Background

1. Project name

Kings County Regional Active Transportation Plan (RATP).

2. Lead agency name and address

Kings County Association of Governments
339 W. D Street, Suite B
Lemoore, CA 93245

3. Project sponsor's name and address

Same as the lead agency.

4. Contact person and phone number

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Kings County Association of Governments
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5. Project location

The project covers all of Kings County. Kings County is located in the south-central San Joaquin Valley, a subset of California's Central Valley. It is bordered on the west and north by Fresno County; on the east by Tulare County; on the south by Kern County (and on one corner by San Luis Obispo County); and on its southwest corner by Monterey County.

6. General Plan designation

Because the project covers the entire county, it encompasses all land use designations found in the General Plans of the County of Kings and in the cities of Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford and Lemoore.

7. Zoning

Because the project covers the entire county, it encompasses all zoning designations found in the County of Kings and in the cities of Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford and Lemoore.

8. Summary description of project

The RATP updates the 2011 Kings County Regional Bicycle Plan and expands it by addressing walking. The plan's primary objective is to identify high-priority projects that will make walking and biking throughout Kings County safer and more convenient, more pleasant and more popular. Toward that end, the plan incorporates and prioritizes a wide range of pedestrian and bicycle projects previously proposed by the County of Kings and by the four incorporated cities in the county: Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford and Lemoore. The RATP has been prepared in recognition of the benefits of walking and bicycling and their contribution to a more balanced transportation system for the county.

9. Surrounding land uses and setting

Kings County is located in the south-central San Joaquin Valley, a subset of California's Central Valley. It is bordered on the west and north by Fresno County; on the east by Tulare County; on the south by Kern County

(and on one corner by San Luis Obispo County); and on its southwest corner by Monterey County. The county has an area of 1,392 square miles, making it the 34th largest of California's 58 counties. Its topography and weather make it well suited for walking and biking. With a few minor exceptions, the landscape is flat. The weather is typical of the Central Valley: mild in spring and fall, hot and dry during the summer, and cool and damp—as well as foggy—in winter.

Kings County is largely rural and undeveloped, with two-thirds of the land area consisting of irrigated farmland. There are four incorporated cities in the county: Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford (the county seat) and Lemoore. Other communities include Armona, Grangeville, Hardwick, Home Garden, Kettleman City, Lemoore Naval Air Station, Santa Rosa Rancheria (a tribal reservation) and Stratford. The county has a population of 151,000 people, making it the state's 33rd most populous county. The civilian population (in other words, excluding Avenal and Corcoran State Prisons) is 135,700. This includes 29,500 school-age children and teenagers (ages 5–17), representing 22% of the population; and 13,200 seniors (ages 65 and over), or 10% of the population.

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required

None

Project Description

Context

Active transportation means getting around by walking or bicycling—and also by rolling, as in a wheelchair or on a push scooter, for example. Walking and biking improve the environment and neighborhood livability by reducing traffic, air pollution, noise and energy consumption. They also improve public health by promoting physical activity; and by offering different and inexpensive ways of getting around, they contribute to a more balanced transportation system. As people have become more aware of these and other benefits, interest in walking and biking has increased in many communities, including throughout Kings County, and there have been growing calls by both decision-makers and the broader public to promote and encourage these forms of transportation.

For people to choose active transportation as a way of getting around, communities must provide a network of sidewalks, bike lanes, paths and trails, safe crossings, traffic-calmed streets and other pedestrian and bicycle facilities that connect the places where people live, work, study, shop, play and visit. KCAG has played an important role in promoting active transportation in the county by providing funding and logistical support to its member agencies for the implementation of pedestrian and bicycle projects and programs. The RATP further demonstrates KCAG's commitment to active transportation. The plan has been prepared in recognition of the benefits of active transportation and its contribution to a more balanced transportation system for the county that gives its residents more options for getting around.

The RATP has three main objectives:

- Identify projects that will make walking and biking throughout Kings County safer and more convenient, more pleasant and more popular.
- Support the goals under the Kings County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS) of a more balanced transportation system, and serve as the foundation for the non-motorized transportation chapter of the 2018 update of the RTP/SCS. (The RTP/SCS is the long-range plan that guides the development of the transportation system in the county. The plan, which is updated every four years, lists projects and programs to manage, operate and maintain the transportation system better and also to expand it.)
- Position the projects, and equip the jurisdictions in Kings County, to better compete for federal, state and regional grant funds. That is particularly true for the California Transportation Commission's Active Transportation Program, which is the main statewide source of funding for pedestrian and bicycle projects.

Summary of project

The RATP updates the 2011 Kings County Regional Bicycle Plan and expands it by addressing walking. The plan's primary objective is to identify projects that will make walking and biking throughout Kings County safer and more convenient, more pleasant and more popular. Toward that end, the plan incorporates a wide range of pedestrian and bicycle projects previously proposed by the County of Kings and by the four incorporated cities in the county: Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford and Lemoore. The RATP has been prepared in recognition of the benefits of walking and bicycling and their contribution to a more balanced transportation system for the county.

Beyond an introductory chapter, the RATP consists of the following main sections:

- **Chapter 2: Benefits of active transportation.** Chapter 2 makes the case for promoting walking and biking by outlining the numerous benefits of active transportation. These benefit are grouped under five themes: (i) individual and public health; (ii) access and mobility; (iii) neighborhood livability; (iv) economic vitality; and (v) environmental quality of life.
- **Chapter 3: Equity and public health analyses.** This chapter analyzes and summarizes data from around the county on a range of key indicators related to socioeconomic conditions and public health. By documenting the presence

of disadvantaged communities and vulnerable populations, Chapter 3 strengthens the case for implementing active transportation projects in Kings County. An appendix to the plan presents the data that was collected and analyzed for this chapter.

- **Chapter 4: Community needs assessment.** As part of the planning process, KCAG gathered input from the public on the barriers, obstacles and challenges to walking and biking in the county; the needs and concerns of pedestrians and cyclists; problem areas and locations; and ideas and suggestions for improving conditions. Chapter 4 presents the results of the community needs assessment conducted for the Walk and Bike Plan.
- **Chapter 5: Existing conditions.** This chapter establishes the planning context surrounding active transportation in Kings County. It analyzes data on trip-making and traffic collisions, and presents information gathered from the County and the four cities about pedestrian and bicycle issues and conditions at the local level. The chapter is divided into separate sections for each of the four cities, for the unincorporated areas of the county and for countywide issues as a whole.
- **Chapter 6: Proposed improvements.** This chapter compiles the many pedestrian and bicycle projects that have been previously proposed—under local plans or earlier regional plans—around Kings County. Like Chapter 5 (and also like Chapter 7, below), this chapter is subdivided into separate sections for each of the four cities and for the unincorporated areas.
- **Chapter 7: Strategic implementation.** This chapter may be thought of as the heart of the plan, given that it directly informed the pedestrian and bicycle projects included in the 2018 RTP update. From the longer project lists in Chapter 6, this chapter selects the higher-priority projects for each jurisdiction. Since walking and biking present safety and access issues of particular concern for children, this chapter also highlights the projects that would improve access to schools.
- **Chapter 8: Potential funding sources.** Chapter 8 provides a summary of the most promising federal, state, regional and local funding sources for implementing pedestrian and bicycle projects, particularly the most common types of projects outlined in the Walk and Bike Plan

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project. None of these impacts have been determined to be either "potentially significant" or "potentially significant impact unless mitigation is incorporated" as indicated by the checklist on the pages that follow.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural and forestry resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Population and housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geology and soils | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation and traffic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse gas emissions | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards and hazardous materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities and service systems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology and water quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory findings of significance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land use and planning | |

Determination

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Date

March 8, 2019



Terri King, Executive Director
Kings County Association of Governments

Environmental Checklist

The Environmental Checklist and discussion that follows is based on questions provided in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. The questions focus on individual concerns within 18 different broad environmental categories such as air quality, cultural resources, land use, and traffic. The CEQA guidelines provide direction for preparing checklist responses. Each question in the checklist requires a “yes” or “no” reply indicating whether or not the project will have a potentially significant environmental impact of a certain type.

The checklist table provides other possible replies to the questions, including one which indicates the project would have a “less than significant” impact, and another which indicates that the project *could* have a significant impact but that the impact can be avoided if mitigation measures are applied. The “less than significant” impacts correspond to those where relevant information, reports or studies demonstrate that the impacts would not exceed a threshold of significance established by the lead agency. Impacts that are “less than significant with mitigation” include those where it can be demonstrated that the incorporation of clearly defined mitigation measures into the project would avoid impacts or reduce them to less than significant levels.

I. Aesthetics

Would the project...	Potentially significant impact	Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated	Less than significant impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

The visual character within Kings County continues to be characterized by a mix of rural and built environments which are comprised of land use patterns that are semi-rural to suburban. With its location in the south-central portion of the fertile San Joaquin Valley, the county is known for its agricultural landscapes which provide long-range vistas of open grazing lands, orchards, vineyards and agricultural fields. Natural features such as hills, rivers, and other open spaces are interspersed among the working landscapes. The county also contains multiple prominent natural features such as the Kings River, the Coast Ranges, the Kreyenhagen Hills, the Pyramid Hills, Cottonwood Pass, Sunflower Valley, and Cross Creek. The 2035 Kings County General Plan identifies the Coast Ranges to the southwest, the Chalk Buttes-Reef portion of the Kreyenhagen Hills, the Pyramid Hills, Cottonwood Pass and Sunflower Valley as scenic resources. The plan also considers oak trees as valued visual resources which tend to exist in small clusters or intermittently near the Kings River channel adding to the visual character of the river corridor.

Urban development is occurring in the unincorporated communities of Armona, Home Garden, Kettleman City and Stratford and the incorporated cities of Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford, and Lemoore. The unincorporated areas largely serve as bedroom communities to the nearby cities and still maintain rural town atmospheres characterized by residential uses, parkland, government facilities, various commercial services and industrial uses. Higher residential density (24+ units per acre) and a greater mix of commercial and industrial land uses and services are found in the incorporated cities.

While the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has not officially designated any routes within Kings County as scenic highways, a portion of SR 41 (from SR 33 to the Kern County line) is eligible and has been selected as a scenic corridor in the 2035 Kings County General Plan.

At night, light pollution is largely confined to the county’s urban community plan areas, which comprise less than ten percent of the county. The sources of nighttime illumination include street and vehicular lights which are associated with roadways and commercial and residential development. In addition, the prison facilities located in Corcoran and Avenal are the largest light emitters in the county.

Discussion

- a) *Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?*
- b) *Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway?*
- c) *Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?*

The RATP incorporates proposed physical improvements such as sidewalks, bike lanes, traffic signs and pavement markings. These improvements are minor in size and scale, and are similar in nature to other roadway elements and devices used throughout the county. As such, they would not be expected to:

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
 - b) Substantially damage scenic resources; or
 - c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of communities in Kings County.
- d) *Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?*

The RATP incorporates proposed improvements that could result in new sources of light, such as flashing pedestrian-crossing lights at some crosswalks. These light sources are sufficiently minor and similar in nature to other traffic-control devices throughout the county and they would not be expected to have a substantial adverse effect on day or nighttime views.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

II. Agricultural and Forestry Resources

Would the project...	Potentially significant impact	Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated	Less than significant impact	No Impact
a) Convert prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of statewide importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to a non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of prime or unique farmland or farmland of statewide importance to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Kings County has a rich farming heritage and continues to be a large agricultural producing area due to its fertile alluvial soils and compatible climate. The county supports extensive farmland practices with over 1,278 square miles designated for agriculture uses, spanning northeast from the Coastal Range to the borders of Fresno and Tulare Counties, accounting for approximately 92 percent of the county’s area. While the county has made a concerted effort to preserve its agricultural heritage through innovative policies, it still faces pressure from urban growth. The county’s agricultural areas are level irrigated farmland that average well over \$1 billion per year in commercial crop production and account for 15.6% of the county’s employment. The county’s economy is dominated by agricultural production and was ranked 9th by agricultural value in California. With over 280,000 Farmland Security Zone (FSZ) acres, the county has the highest percentage (42%) of land enrolled in California’s protected farm lands programs. The county’s leading commodities (in order) are milk, cotton, cattle and calves, pistachios, almonds, tomatoes, walnuts, corn/silage, grapes and peaches. The leading commodity, milk, represented 10 percent of the statewide total in 2016.

Discussion

- a) *Convert prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of statewide importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to a non-agricultural use?*
- b) *Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?*
- c) *Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?*
- d) *Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?*
- e) *Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of prime or unique farmland or farmland of statewide importance to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?*

The proposed projects incorporated in the RATP are not land use developments but rather minor circulation improvements, occurring almost entirely in the public right-of-way. As such, it is not expected that the RATP would result in the conversion or loss of farmland or forest land (items a, d and e above) or conflict with existing zoning (items b and c).

Mitigation Measures

None required.

III. Air Quality

Would the project...	Potentially significant impact	Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated	Less than significant impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Kings County is part of the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB) which is defined by the Sierra Nevada to the east, the Coast Ranges to the west and the Tehachapi mountains to the south. These topographic features restrict air movement through and out of the basin causing it to be highly susceptible to pollution accumulation over time. Inversion layers (when a mass of warm dry air sits over cooler air near the ground) are common during the winter and summer months which add to pollution potential by preventing the dispersion of pollutants from the air mass below.

Air quality is a critical issue in the San Joaquin Valley as it ranks among the worst in the country for ozone and particulate matter, exposing residents to unacceptable levels of air pollution. Primary criteria pollutants are emitted directly from a source (e.g. vehicle tailpipe) and include carbon monoxide, reactive organic gases, nitric oxide, fine particulate matter, sulfur dioxide and lead. Secondary criteria pollutants are created by atmospheric chemical and photochemical reactions and include oxidants, ozone and smog. Air quality impacts are regional problems in the case of ozone and secondary fine particulate matter.

The county generates its own pollutant emissions, but is also impacted by the transport of pollutants from areas of the Valley and Bay Area that are upwind. Also, during periods of stagnation, localized pollution recirculates throughout the Valley. Research studies indicate that pollution generated from the Bay Area is only a minor component of the local problem and that the Valley generates enough pollution to exceed air quality standards. In California, the task of air quality management and regulation has been legislatively granted to the California Air Resources Board. The Board has delegated local pollution control authority to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

Discussion

- a) *Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?*
- b) *Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?*
- c) *Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?*
- d) *Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?*

The RATP does not incorporate elements or components that would result in substantial air quality impacts (as might happen, for example, from new industrial development or from large increases in driving as a result of new large-scale residential development). As such, it is not expected that the RATP would:

- a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan;
- b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation;
- c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant; or
- d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

In fact, to the extent that the improvements incorporated in the RATP encourage some people to walk and bike rather than drive, the plan would have a beneficial effect on air quality by reducing overall air emissions from motor vehicles.

- e) *Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?*

The RATP does not incorporate elements or components that would create objectionable odors (as might happen, for example, from new industrial development).

Mitigation Measures

None required.

IV. Biological Resources

Would the project...	Potentially significant impact	Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated	Less than significant impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modification, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or the US Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Kings County contains a wide range of tree, shrub, herbaceous, aquatic and developed habitat types. Kings County is home to a variety of hardwood and mixed woodland. According to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CWHR), which has mapped and classified biological habitats, the county contains the following tree-dominated woodlands: Blue Oak-foothill Pine, Blue Oak, Juniper, Valley Oak, Valley foothill and Eucalyptus. These habitats are clustered in the southwestern part of the county near the boarder with San Luis Obispo County and follow the Coastal Range.

The county contains multiple shrub dominated habitats which are comprised of woody, evergreen shrubs and occur predominately in the southern portion of the county, however, small isolated remnant patches of shrublands occur throughout the entire county. According to the CWHR, the county contains the following shrub dominant habitats: Alkali Desert Scrub, Coastal Scrub, Chamise-Redshank Chaparral and Mixed Chaparral.

The county also contains a variety of herbaceous dominated habitats which are generally comprised of areas dominated by grasses and other non-woody species, many of which are non-native to the region. According to the CWHR, the county contains the following herbaceous dominated habitats: annual grasslands, perennial grassland and

pasture. Native perennial grasslands, dominated by grasses such as purple needlegrass, were historically abundant, but are now patchy in distribution.

Developed and sparsely/non-vegetated habitats occur throughout the county given its extensive agricultural heritage and contain species that are typically adapted to human disturbance and/or comprised of ornamental species. The following developed habitats occur in the county: rice, cropland (dryland grain, irrigated hayfield, irrigated row and field, irrigated grain), orchard vineyard, deciduous orchard, evergreen orchard and vineyard.

The county contains one major river, the King River, which drains an area of the high western Sierra Nevada and the Central Valley. Several creeks also associated with the county include the Cross Creek and Avenal Creek. These drainages are of biological significance because they provide valuable foraging, breeding and movement habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. The county also supports different types of wetlands including freshwater marshes, vernal pools and riparian habitats, which are important habitats because of their rarity and the ecosystem services they provide. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service has also mapped the following wetland types throughout the county: freshwater emergent, freshwater forested/shrub, freshwater ponds, lakes and riverine. With its vast array of agricultural lands, the county also has a man-made network of canals used for irrigation and flood control.

The county contains three natural communities considered sensitive by the CDFW: Valley Sacaton Grassland, Valley Saltbush Scrub and Valley Sink Scrub and contains four habitats designated as critical by the California Natural Diversity Database: Buena Vista Lake Ornate Shrew, California tiger salamander, Vernal pool fairy shrimp and Vernal pool tadpole shrimp. These habitats are extremely small and largely distributed in the northeastern area of the county. A full listing of special status species known to occur or have the potential to occur within Kings County can be found on pg. 137-143 of the County's General Plan

Discussion

- a) *Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modification, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?*
- b) *Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or the US Fish and Wildlife Service?*
- c) *Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?*

The proposed improvements incorporated in the RATP would occur almost entirely in the public right-of-way. The plan does incorporate a number of off-street trail projects, but these are proposed either along railroad rights-of-way or in areas not known to contain sensitive habitats or species of concern. If the agencies in charge of implementing the projects in the RATP (mostly the County and the four cities) suspect the presence of sensitive habitats or species of concern in the area of a proposed project, they will need to conduct additional environmental review prior to implementing their project. For these reasons, it is not expected that the RATP would:

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect on any special-status species;
 - b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community;
 - c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands; or
- d) *Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?*

As mentioned above, the RATP incorporates a number of trail projects. However, walking and bicycling trails are narrow enough and have minor-enough impacts on their surroundings that they do not interfere substantially with the movement of wildlife or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites.

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

Because of the nature of the projects proposed in the RATP, it is not expected that the plan would conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources (item e above) or with any habitat conservation plans (item f).

Mitigation Measures

None required.

V. Cultural Resources

Would the project...	Potentially significant impact	Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated	Less than significant impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Sec 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Sec 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Kings County is in the southern San Joaquin Valley in an area known to have been inhabited by the Native Southern Valley Yokuts, where they predominantly lived north of Tulare Lake and west in the hills near Coalinga, in Fresno County. The Yokut population ranged from 11,000 to 31,000 at European contact and they resided along waterways and on the east side of the San Joaquin River. The Yokut lived in settlements typically composed of single-family dwellings, sweathouses and ceremonial structures and had technology including coiled basketry, stone and bone tools and tule rafts.

The first Europeans to enter the San Joaquin Valley were led by Spanish explorer, Pedro Fages in 1772. In the early 1800s, numerous Spanish expeditions entered the Valley; however, the Spanish never succeeded in taking control of the region and thus no missions were established. In 1882, Mexico won independence from Spain and began offering land grants until 1848 when the American Period began. The discovery of gold in California in 1848 caused thousands of settlers and immigrants to move to the state, especially after the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869.

The first European settlement in the county was named Kingston, which was founded in 1856 on the south bank of the Kings River. After the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1877, other towns and farming communities, including Lemoore and Hanford, were established throughout the area. In the early 1900s, oil was discovered leading to the founding of the town of Avenal. In the 1930s, the region became one of the most productive oil fields in the country. In 1961, the Naval Air Station Lemoore was developed and still operates today. Numerous paleontological resources from different geological periods have been recorded throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

In the county, there are four National Register listings (Hanford Carnegie Library, Kings County Courthouse, Taoist Temple and the Witt Site), three California Historical Landmarks (Location of the Famous Mussel Slough Tragedy, Kingston and the El Adobe De Los Robles Rancho) as well as 13 locally significant resources designated by the county.

Discussion

- a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Sec 15064.5?
- b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Sec 15064.5?
- c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

d) *Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?*

The RATP incorporates only minor proposed physical projects occurring almost entirely in the public right-of-way. The plan does incorporate a number of off-street trail projects, but these are proposed either along railroad rights-of-way or in areas not known to contain sensitive cultural resources. If the agencies in charge of implementing the projects in the RATP suspect the presence of sensitive cultural resources in the area of a proposed project, they will need to conduct additional environmental review prior to implementing their project. As such, it is not expected that the RATP would:

- a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource;
- b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource;
- c) Destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature; or
- d) Disturb any human remains.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

VI. Geology and Soils

Would the project...	Potentially significant impact	Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated	Less than significant impact	No Impact
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Kings County is in the southern section of the Great Valley Geomorphic Province of California, which is a large, asymmetrical, northwestwardly-trending structural trough formed between the uplands of the California Coast Ranges to the west and the Sierra Nevada mountain range to the east. The area of the province that contains the county (southern San Joaquin Valley) is internally draining with the distributaries of the Kings and Tule rivers and Cross Creek flowing into the Tulare Lake Bed. During the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, many of the area lakes and seasonal lakes were drained and put into agricultural production. North of the Kings River, runoff is directed into the San Joaquin River, which flows northward. The southern San Joaquin Valley is bounded by the low mountains of the Coast Ranges to the west, the San Emigdio and Tehachapi Ranges to the south, and the foothills of the Sierra Nevada to the east. The presence of significant petroleum source rocks and suitable reservoir rocks has resulted in the development of numerous oil and gas fields, including in the Kettleman Hills.

The topography of most of the county is relatively flat and has elevations ranging from 175 feet above sea level in the Tulare Lake lakebed to 3,500 feet in Coast Range. The most prominent topographic feature in the county is the Tulare Lake lakebed, which features a broad, shallow, depression covering the central and southern portions of the county. The Kettleman Hills region, located in the southwest, form a distinct geomorphic setting and is characterized by northwest-southeast trending ridges. This section of the county contains some of the only areas with high landslide susceptibility (Class VIII, IX or X).

The county has no known major fault systems within its boundaries but is located approximately four miles west of the San Andreas Fault. Over the past 200 years, the county has not experienced any damaging earthquakes equal to or greater than 6.0 magnitude, but several significant earthquakes have occurred near the county's boundaries. The primary hazard due to seismic activity in the county comes from ground shaking and subsequent soil liquefaction, but once again, is considered minimal since the county does not contain a major fault system. Soil liquefaction occurs when valley sediments are saturated with water causing soil to lose its supporting capacity which can result in the minor displacement to total collapse of structures. Most of the county east of Interstate 5 and west of SR 43 is mapped as having liquefaction potential according to the Five County Seismic Safety Element.

Discussion

- a) *Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.); ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?; iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?; iv) Landslides?*
- b) *Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?*
- c) *Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?*
- 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?*

The RATP incorporates only minor physical projects—rather than, for example, an increase in development intensity, or re-designation of open space or natural areas for development. Also, the proposed projects would occur almost entirely in the public right-of-way. For these reasons, it is not expected that the RATP would:

- a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects from fault rupture, ground shaking, ground failure and liquefaction or landslides;
 - b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil;
 - c) Result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse from being located on a geologic unit or on unstable soil; or
 - d) Create substantial risks to life or property from location on expansive soil.
- 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?*

This item does not apply, as the improvements incorporated in the RATP would not necessitate septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

VII. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Would the project...	Potentially significant impact	Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated	Less than significant impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation of any agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emission of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Greenhouse gases (GHGs) absorb and re-emit infrared radiation in the atmosphere and are widely considered the principal contributors to human-induced climate change. The gases that are of most concern are carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxides (N₂O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs) and sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆). Concentrations of CO₂ in the atmosphere have risen approximately 40% since the industrial revolution and are on the rise globally. Total emissions in the U.S. have increased 3.5 percent since 1990 at an average annual rate of 0.2 percent.

In California, it is estimated that the state produced 440.4 MMT CO₂e (million metric tons of carbon dioxide/carbon dioxide equivalent) with 39 percent associated with transportation and 23 percent associated with industry. California’s emissions are due in part to its large size and large population in comparison to other states but is lower per capita because of its mild climate. If left unregulated, the state is expected to emit 509.4 MMT CO₂e in 2020.

California has the potential to be vastly affected by a warming climate which could significantly impair social, ecological and economic resources. Potential impacts may include loss in snowpack, sea level rise, more extreme heat days per year, more high-ozone days, more large forest fires and more drought years. California could experience multiple negative effects to its air quality, water supply, hydrology, agriculture and ecosystems and wildlife.

With its vast agricultural resources, the effect of climate change on agriculture is of significant interest to Kings County. California has a \$30 billion annual agricultural industry that produces approximately half of the country’s fruits and vegetables. If temperatures rise and drier conditions prevail, water demand could increase, crop-yield could be threatened by a less reliable water supply, and greater air pollution could render plants more susceptible to pest and disease outbreaks. Temperature increases could change the time of year certain crops, such as wine grapes, bloom or ripen, and thereby affect their quality.

Two Kings County Association of Governments member jurisdictions, Avenal and Hanford, coordinated to prepare a Regional Climate Plan which was accepted in May 2014. The plan established the 2005 baseline emissions for the Kings County region as approximately 1,139,135 MT CO₂e and a target of 889,783 MT CO₂e for the year 2020. The plan contains a suite of GHG reduction measures related to energy, transportation and land use, solid waste, vegetation, and community education and outreach. The cities of Corcoran and Lemoore also incorporate a variety of GHG reduction measures in their General Plans such as policies to reduce emissions from new development and promote energy efficiency.

Discussion

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

The RATP does not incorporate elements or components (such as a new large-scale residential development that would result in large increases in driving, for example) of a size, scale or nature that would generate greenhouse gas emissions with a significant impact on the environment (item a above) or that would conflict with a plan, policy or regulation designed to reduce emission of greenhouse gases (item b). In fact, the projects incorporated in the RATP would be expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging some people to walk or bike instead of drive.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

VIII. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Would the project...	Potentially significant impact	Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated	Less than significant impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area? (For a project 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.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area? (For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Kings County contains five active waste disposal sites, including hazardous, municipal and green waste. Efforts to decrease hazardous waste production have helped lessen the demand on the county’s hazardous waste facility, located next to the municipal waste landfill, approximately four miles from Kettleman City and less than three miles west of Interstate 5. The 1,600-acre facility is a chemical waste disposal and treatment site with a capacity of 5,700,000 cubic yards. The facility employs 120 people and is one of less than 30 commercial waste sites in the country and one of less than 10 sites licensed to accept polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Chemical Waste Management, Inc. operates the facility and accepts hazardous waste from most counties in California and surrounding states.

The county has established policies for specific sites and siting criteria for hazardous waste facilities in the Kings County Hazardous Waste Management Plan and a map highlighting the locations of all active, permitted, inactive and closed sites can be found on pg. LU-10 of the Kings County General Plan.

The county has also developed emergency response procedures which are detailed in the Kings County Area Plan for Hazardous Materials Emergency Response. The document identifies specific agencies and their responsibilities during an emergency caused by accidental transportation, pipeline and industrial releases of hazardous material. The plan establishes that funding for cleanup activities is the responsibility of the party which released the hazardous materials.

Discussion

- a) *Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?*
- 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?*
- c) *Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?*
- e) *Result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area? (For a project 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.)*
- f) *Result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area? (For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip.)*
- h) *Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?*

The RATP does not incorporate elements or components of a nature associated with hazardous materials. As such, it is not expected that the plan would:

- a) Create a significant hazard through the routine transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials;
 - b) Create a significant hazard through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials;
 - c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school;
 - e) and f) Result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area.
 - h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.
- 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?*

The proposed improvements incorporated in the RATP would occur in the public right-of-way. The plan does incorporate a number of off-street trail projects but these are proposed either along railroad rights-of-way or in areas not known to contain hazardous materials sites. If the agencies in charge of implementing the projects in the RATP suspect the presence of such sites in the area of a proposed project, they will need to conduct additional environmental review prior to implementing their project. For these reasons, it is not expected that the RATP would create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.

- g) *Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?*

The RATP incorporates a number of projects that could change the design of certain street intersections, for example through the addition of sidewalk bulbouts (curb extensions). Such changes are minor, and implementing agencies routinely design these enhancements with input from local fire and police departments so as not to impair emergency responders. For these reasons, it is not expected that RATP would impair implementation of or interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

IX. Hydrology and Water Quality

Would the project...	Potentially significant impact	Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated	Less than significant impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
j) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving inundation by seiche, tsunami or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Kings County is part of a hydrologic system referred to as the Tulare Lake Basin which is divided into three subareas: the northern alluvial fan and base (near the Kings, Kaweah and Tule rivers and distributaries), the Tulare Lake Zone, and the southwestern uplands (includes the areas west of the California Aqueduct and I-5). The alluvial fan and base is characterized by southwest to south flowing rivers, creeks and irrigation canal systems that convey surface water

from the Sierra Nevada to the west toward the Tulare Lake Bed. The Pine Flat Dam (which regulates the Kings River), located east of Fresno, is the primary source of irrigation water for the region providing water for over one million acres of agricultural land across three counties. The southwestern upland area represents the eastern extension of the Coast Ranges and is characterized by northwest to southeast trending valleys and ridges.

Similar to the surface water hydrologic areas, the county is divided into three groundwater sub-basins and are comprised of the northern alluvial fan and basin deposits, the central and southeast lacustrine and marsh deposits (Tulare Lake Bed) and the southwestern uplands.

The quality of the surface and ground water within the county continues to be affected urbanization and agricultural uses within the watershed. The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) regulate water quality in both surface and ground water bodies. The county faces water quality issues associated with non-point sources due to urbanization and stormwater runoff which has led to the Cross Creek, Kings River and Tule River as being listed as impaired.

Water delivery in the Tulare Lake Basin is provided by several agencies and projects including federal, state regional and local water projects; special districts and private water systems. Irrigation and domestic water systems within the county are operated by irrigation districts, water districts and water conservation districts. The Basin's main surface water resources are listed on page 250 of the County's General Plan. A major portion of the county has been identified by the California Department of Water Resources as having a critical groundwater overdraft condition, since a significant portion of the county is underlain by the Corcoran Clay layer which limits and prevents the efficient recharge of groundwater. As a result, the county relies on outlying areas to the north and east for recharge of the lower aquifers.

The county's flood hazards were updated in 2009 by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the associated map can be found on page 253 of the County's General Plan. The county is also at risk of inundation from both the Pine Flat and Terminus Dams, which would cause substantial flooding to local inhabited areas in the event of a dam failure. However, infrastructure improvements to these facilities and others upstream have significantly reduced natural flood hazards.

Discussion

- a) *Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?*
- b) *Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?*
- c) *Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?*
- d) *Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?*
- e) *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?*
- f) *Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?*
- i) *Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?*

- j) *Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?*

The RATP does not incorporate elements or components of a nature that would create risks to water quality or associated with hydrology. For this reason, it is not expected that the plan would:

- a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements;
 - b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge;
 - c) and d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of a site or area or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff;
 - e) 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;
 - f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality; or
 - i) and j) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding.
- g) *Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?*
- h) *Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?*

Items g and h do not apply, as the RATP does not propose housing or structures with the potential to impede or redirect flood flows.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

X. Land Use and Planning

Would the project...	Potentially significant impact	Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated	Less than significant impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Located south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta in the Central Valley of California, Kings County is comprised of 1,391 square miles. As a predominately rural county, the built environment is predominately focused within the four incorporated cities within the county (Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford and Lemoore) and two Federal territories (Naval Air Station Lemoore and Santa Rosa Rancheria Tribal Trust Land). Hanford, with an estimated population of 55,645, is the county’s largest city, followed by Lemoore, estimated population 26,339, followed by Corcoran, estimated population of 21,786, and Avenal, with an estimated population of 12,491, is the smallest city.

While the county is primarily agricultural (over 90 percent of land is dedicated to farm and grazing), residential, commercial and industrial land uses are mostly located within the four cities and in the unincorporated areas of Armona, Home Garden, Kettleman City and Stratford. The mix of land uses include residential, commercial, open space/park/recreational, industrial, manufacturing and institutional. The county is also known for its diversity of landscapes including wilderness, wetlands, rivers, mountain ranges, monuments and parks. Many of these spaces are located in the mountain ranges in the southern portion of the county (Avenal Ridge and La Cima areas) while a few community parks and recreation areas are in the northern portion of the county (Burris, Hickey and Kingston).

Discussion

a) *Physically divide an established community?*

The RATP does not incorporate elements or components of a size, scale or nature that would physically divide a community.

b) *Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?*

c) *Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?*

Because of the minor nature of the projects incorporated in the RATP, it is not expected that the plan would conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy or regulation (item b above) or with any habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan (item c).

Mitigation Measures

None required.

XI. Mineral Resources

Would the project result in the loss of availability of a...	Potentially significant impact	Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated	Less than significant impact	No Impact
a) Known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Aside from oil and gas extraction, few commercial mining and mineral extraction activities occur in Kings County. Currently only limited excavation of soil, sand and some gravel is excavated for commercial use. In 2009, the County only had one surface mining permit for a non-active gravel operation and two agricultural reclamation sites that were fully reclaimed. Historical local mines that are now closed include an open pit gypsum mine and a mercury mine in the southwestern area of the county.

Most of the oil and gas fields in Kings County are located in the southwestern corner along Interstate 5. The largest among them is the Kettleman North Dome Oil Field, which lies between Avenal and Interstate 5, which produced approximately 108,000 barrels of oil and 92,000 thousand cubic feet of natural gas in 2016. Other fields in the county, include Kettleman City, Kettleman Middle Dome, Pyramid Hills, Dudley Ridge Gas, Tulare Lake, Harvester Gas, Hanford, Kreyenhagen, Trico Gas, and Trico Northwest Gas. In 2017, the county had 396 active wells that produced approximately 118,000 barrels of gas and 107,000 thousand cubic feet of natural gas. Oil production data for the county shows a general decline in overall production since California’s oil and gas peak in 1985.

Discussion

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

The RATP does not incorporate projects of a size, scale or nature that could result in the loss of mineral resources of value (item a above) or of mineral resource recovery sites (item b).

Mitigation Measures

None required.

XII. Noise

Would the project...	Potentially significant impact	Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated	Less than significant impact	No Impact
a) Result in the exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the exposure of persons to or generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? (For a project 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.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? (For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

With I-5 and six state routes, Kings County’s streets and highways are the most extensive source of mobile noise in the county. The noise generated from vehicles using roads within the county is governed primarily by the number of vehicles, type of vehicles, and speed at which they are traveling. Noise sensitive-land uses (residential, senior facilities, schools, hospitals, etc.) in the vicinity of these roadway corridors have the potential to be exposed to noise in excess of what the county considers acceptable.

The county contains multiple public, private and military airports including the Hanford Municipal Airport, the Lemoore Naval Air Station, two private airports in Avenal and Corcoran and several private airstrips and agricultural crop duster airstrips. The Hanford Municipal Airport is the only city-owned airport facility in the county and serves most of the aviation demand and expected to experience growth. The Lemoore Naval Air Station (LNAS) is the Navy’s largest master jet base and the only one on the west coast. LNAS is the home port for all active-duty, light-attack aircraft squadrons assigned to the Pacific Fleet and averages approximately 210,000 flight operations per year.

Railroad lines throughout the county primarily travel through agricultural lands and the cities of Corcoran, Hanford, Lemoore and Armona and these operations generate high, relatively brief, intermittent noise events. Railroad operations within the county consist of the San Joaquin Valley Railroad, which operates along the east-west railroad line and runs trains one to two times a week, and the BNSF Railway and Amtrak, which operates along the north-south railroad line and runs passenger and freight trains daily.

The county also contains several different industrial operations that produce noise, including food processing plants, agricultural warehouses and waste management facilities, which are regulated by local governments. In general, these

facilities are located away from sensitive land uses. However, construction sites located throughout the county are often within or adjacent to residential areas.

Discussion

- a) *Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?*
- b) *Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels?*
- c) *A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?*
- d) *A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?*
- e) *Expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? (For a project 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.)*
- f) *Expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? (For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip.)*

The RATP does not incorporate projects that would permanently increase noise levels (such as new industrial uses, for example) or expose people to noise sources (such as new residential developments). The plan does propose physical improvements, such as sidewalks, that would generate temporary increases in noise and vibration during their construction. These increases would be minor and similar in nature to frequent roadway projects throughout the county, and would be regulated as a matter of course by the implementing agencies. For these reasons, it is not expected that the RATP would:

- a) Expose people to noise levels that exceed the standards established in the General Plan or Municipal Code;
- b) Generate or expose people to excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels;
- c) Result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels;
- d) Result in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels; or
- e) and f) Expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels;

Mitigation Measures

None required.

XIII. Population and Housing

Would the project...	Potentially significant impact	Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated	Less than significant impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial 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)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

In 2017, Kings County had a population of 149,537 with 78% of inhabitants living within the county’s four incorporated cities of Hanford, Lemoore, Corcoran and Avenal. Hanford, with an estimated population of 55,645, is the county’s largest city, followed by Lemoore, estimated population 26,339, followed by Corcoran, estimated population of 21,786, and Avenal, with an estimated population of 12,491. The remainder of the population is primarily located within the four unincorporated communities of Armona, Home Garden, Kettleman City and Stratford.

The county is predominately low-income due to the large farm worker population and the lack of large industries. Per capita personal income in 2015 was \$33,126 which is consistently lower than the state average of \$53,741. In 2016, the county had a poverty rate of 21.6 percent and 11.7 percent of the population was unemployed. In terms of demographics, the county is 33.6 percent white and 66.4 percent minority, with the largest minority group identifying as Hispanic (53.1 percent) followed by black (5.9 percent).

The county’s rural nature is reflected in its settlement patterns. While residential uses range from very low (one unit per acre) to very high (24+ units per acre), the majority of housing development falls within low to medium densities. In 2009, the San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Agencies Policy Council, adopted a preferred growth scenario which calls for increasing residential densities to 6.8 units per acre on average in all jurisdictions included throughout the eight valley counties, including Kings County.

Discussion

- a) *Induce substantial 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)?*
- b) *Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*
- c) *Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*

The RATP incorporates only minor physical projects— rather than, for example, an increase in development intensity, or re-designation of land uses. As such, it is not expected that the plan would induce substantial population growth (item a above) or displace existing housing or people (items b and c).

Mitigation Measures

None required.

XIV. Public Services

	Potentially significant impact	Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated	Less than significant impact	No Impact
Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of these public services:				
a) Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

The Kings County Fire Department serves the unincorporated areas of the county including Armona, Home Garden, Kettleman City and Stratford and provides contracted services to Avenal and Corcoran. The department operates ten fire stations and one headquarters and has a professional staff of 61 who are assisted by approximately 100 volunteer firefighters. Each station conducts assessments of proposed industrial and business facilities and design capacity requirements for new development within its jurisdiction. A map on HS-31 of the Kings County General Plan shows the location and generalized 5-mile coverage radius of each station.

In Kings County’s community areas, crime has been one of the most frequently identified issues and residents have voiced concerns over safety issues they experience in the rural unincorporated areas. Overall, there is an existing desire for a greater law enforcement presence to make the county a safer place by reducing gang and drug related activity. The Kings County Sheriff’s Office provides law enforcement to the unincorporated territories of the county and is divided into six districts with five substations. Each district has always at least one deputy sheriff on duty. Residents have voiced concern over the lack of visibility of law enforcement which has been an ongoing challenge due to geographic scale and increasing population of the county. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) also plays an important safety role in the county by working with agricultural related businesses on traffic safety education and enforcement. The CHP employs fixed wing aircraft, RADAR and LIDAR to police commercial vehicles and passengers operating unsafely on Interstate 5.

Kings County Office of Education has thirteen school districts containing 52 schools which served a total of 29,203 students in the 2017-2018 school year. The demographic composition of the student population is 69.5% Hispanic or Latino, 20% white, 3.8% African American, 1.6% Filipino, 1.2% American Indian or Alaska Native and 1.1%. The largest district, Hanford Elementary District, served a total of 5,973 students. The county has a young student population, with the most students in Kindergarten than any other grade, 8.9%, and 47.2% were enrolled in K-5th grade (2017-2018 school year). The county owns and maintains three parks (Burriss, Hickey and Kingston) which are located in the northern portion of the county. More information about these facilities can be found in the following section.

Kings County is served by multiple healthcare facilities which cater to both the rural and urban needs of the county. In Hanford, there are three major medical facilities: The Hanford Community Medical Center, which provides general medical and surgical services with 121 beds, The Central Valley General Hospital, with 49 acute beds, and the recently constructed Adventist Health Medical Center, with 142 beds (120 medical surgical/beds and 22 intensive care unit beds). The Central Valley Health Clinic, Home Garden, supports the public health services of needs of residents located in the rural parts of the county. American Ambulance and SkyLife Helicopter provide transport services to local emergency facilities with a total of five ambulance staging areas: two in Hanford, one in Armona, Lemoore and Corcoran.

Discussion

a-e) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of or need for new or physically altered governmental facilities in order to maintain acceptable performance objectives for any of these public services: fire protection, police protection, schools, parks and other public facilities?

The RATP does not incorporate elements or components—such as new residential development, for example—that would create the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities in order to maintain acceptable performance objectives for fire protection, police protection, schools, parks and other public facilities.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

XV. Recreation

Would the project...	Potentially significant impact	Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated	Less than significant impact	No Impact
a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Kings County contains multiple parks, open spaces and fishing areas which provide recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. The county owns and maintains three parks (Burris, Hickey and Kingston) which are located in the northern portion of the county. Burris and Hickey Parks are primarily open space with grass and trees while Burris Park contains more recreational amenities and the Kings County Museum, which includes a museum, wagon barn, picnic area and educational facilities. These facilities are mostly surrounded by agricultural land. The county also has two community parks which are supported and maintained by the Community Services Districts of Kettleman City and Armona. The City of Hanford hosts the privately owned and operated Clark Center for Japanese Art and Culture which is known for its large bonsai garden with over 100 sculpted trees. A map highlighting the county’s recreational resources can be found on OS-9 of the Kings County 2035 General Plan.

The City of Hanford contains 21 parks and 5 city-operated indoor facilities, with most located north of Lacey Blvd. Of the 21 parks, 9 are classified as mini-parks, 3 as neighborhood parks, 5 as community parks and 4 as special use parks. Figure 5-5 on 5-28 of the City of Hanford General Plan Background Report show the locations of city park facilities and their service areas.

Multiple local commercial recreational activities also are available throughout the county including golf courses, exercise clubs, gun clubs, various forms of racing and airplane flying. With numerous natural features such as the Kettleman Hills, Kings River and Coastal Range, outdoor recreation is also an important aspect of recreation in the county. For instance, there are private, public and commercial opportunities to enjoy the Kings River through boating, fishing, swimming and picnicking.

Discussion

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?*

The RATP does not incorporate elements or components—such as new residential development, for example—that would substantially increase the use of existing recreational facilities. Some improvements incorporated in the plan might encourage some people to visit parks and other recreational facilities by making it easier to walk or bike to them. However, any such increase in visitors would be minor enough so as not to result in substantial physical deterioration of the facilities. The RATP does incorporate a number of proposed off-street trail projects that would be used in part for recreational purposes. However, these would be newly built improvements. For these reasons, it is not expected that the RATP would contribute to the substantial physical deterioration of a recreational facility.

- 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?*

The RATP incorporates a number of proposed facilities to increase walking or biking, including for recreational purposes. These facilities would occur almost entirely in the public right-of-way. The plan does incorporate a number of off-street trail projects. However, these projects are sufficiently minor (compared to, for example, the construction of a new recreation center) that they would not be expected to have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

XVI. Transportation and Traffic

Would the project...	Potentially significant impact	Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated	Less than significant impact	No Impact
a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Within Kings County the private automobile is the dominant mode of travel for residents due to the low average density/intensity of land uses. The county contains over 1,000 miles of roadway types that serve regional transportation demands and include 27 miles of interstate freeway, 130 miles of state highways, 956 miles of county roads and 337 miles of city streets. Interstate 5 is the main freeway facility in the county and is the primary north-south corridor. The county contains six state highways which provide cross-directional vehicular access throughout the county. In 2015, the county had 3,992,787 vehicle miles traveled (VMT), 3,465 VMT on congested roadway links and an average commute trip travel time per capita of 9.3 minutes.

The county is served by the Kings Area Rural Transit (KART) and the Corcoran Area Transit (CAT). Kings County Area Public Transit Agency consists of King County and Avenal, Hanford and Lemoore officials that oversee the operations of the local transit providers. KART provides regular fixed-route service from Hanford to most other communities in the county.

Kings County offers a relatively level topography which is ideal for bicycle facilities. Kings County Association of Governments adopted the 2011 Kings County Regional Bicycle Plan and is preparing to update the plan in 2018 as the Kings County Regional Walk and Bike Plan. The county also contains pedestrian facilities in the form of sidewalks, paths, and over-crossings. The system includes neighborhood and park path systems, and dedicated trail facilities that are shared with bicycles and other users.

Discussion

a) *Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?*

b) *Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?*

The RATP does not incorporate elements or components—such as a large new commercial development, for example—that would cause a substantial increase in motor-vehicle traffic or cause any level-of-service standards to be exceeded. In fact, the RATP is designed to reduce traffic by encouraging some people to walk or bike rather than drive for certain trips.

c) *Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?*

The RATP does not incorporate any projects that would result in a change in air-traffic patterns.

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

The RATP incorporates a number of projects that could change the design of certain streets and intersections, for example through the addition of bike lanes or of sidewalk bulbouts (curb extensions). These projects are not expected to substantially increase traffic-related hazards, since they are common design measures and techniques that meet industry standards and best practices in pedestrian and bicycle planning. In fact, these projects have been incorporated in the RATP with the objective of improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

e) *Result in inadequate emergency access?*

The RATP incorporates a number of projects that could change the design of certain street intersections, for example through the addition of sidewalk bulbouts. Such changes are minor, and implementing agencies routinely design these enhancements with input from local fire and police departments so as not to impair emergency access. For these reasons, it is not expected that the RATP would result in inadequate emergency access.

f) *Result in inadequate parking capacity?*

The RATP does not involve any elements or components such as a large commercial development, for example, that would substantially increase the need for parking or reduce its supply. In fact, the projects in the RATP would be expected to free up some parking capacity by encouraging people to walk or bike instead of drive for certain trips.

g) *Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?*

The RATP would not conflict with any such policies, plans or programs. In fact, the RATP was conceived to support alternative transportation by making it easier and safer for people to walk or bike (and, by extension, to use transit, since these forms of transportation complement each other).

Mitigation Measures

None required.

XVII. Tribal Cultural Resources

	Potentially significant impact	Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated	Less than significant impact	No Impact
Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k); or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

Native American Tribes have existed throughout the southern San Joaquin Valley for at least a thousand years before western expansion. The area was inhabited by the Native Southern Valley Yokuts, where they predominantly lived north of Tulare Lake and west in the hills near Coalinga, in Fresno County. The Yokut population ranged from 11,000 to 31,000 at European contact and they resided along waterways and on the east side of the San Joaquin River. The Yokut lived in settlements typically composed of single-family dwellings, sweathouses and ceremonial structures and had technology including coiled basketry, stone and bone tools and tule rafts.

The Tachi Yokut Tribe of the Santa Rosa Rancheria is an active tribe in the region and provided policy recommendations for the Kings County General Plan. A full map of designated tribal lands in the county can be found in the Resources Conservation Element of the General Plan.

Discussion

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

- a) *Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k); or*
- b) *A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?*

The proposed improvements incorporated in the RATP would occur almost entirely in the public right-of-way. The plan does incorporate a number of off-street trail projects but these are proposed either along railroad rights-of-way or in areas not known to contain tribal cultural resources. If the agencies in charge of implementing the projects in the RATP suspect the presence of sensitive tribal cultural resources in the area of a proposed project, they will need to conduct additional environmental review prior to implementing their project. For these reasons, it is not expected that the RATP would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of any tribal cultural resources.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

XVIII. Utilities and Service Systems

Would the project...	Potentially significant impact	Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated	Less than significant impact	No Impact
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Require or 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Setting

With its reliance on agricultural productivity, the availability, beneficial use and efficient use of water are the most important factors in assuring the continued viability and economic wellbeing of Kings County. Surface water is provided by a network of rivers, creeks, canals, reservoirs and aqueducts; principally, the Kings River, Cross Creek and the California Aqueduct. Natural water comes from snow and watershed runoff in the Sierra Nevada and is controlled via a system of dams. Some water is conveyed to the western part of the county through the California Aqueduct and within the valley, water is diverted from the aqueduct to various water and irrigation districts. A major portion of the county has been identified by the California Department of Water Resources as having a critical groundwater overdraft condition.

The county has re-established its water commission in order to align itself with larger regional water efforts, such as the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley, California Water Institute, and the Upper Kings Basin Forum. These alliances will serve to better position the county in accessing state and federal funding sources such as bonds and grants to identify and purchase water, improve water conveyance systems, and implement various infrastructure improvements. A map showing all the county's water districts and irrigation and water storage districts can be found on pgs. RC-6 and RC-7 of the 2035 Kings County General Plan.

The county established the Kings Waste and Recycle Authority which maintains a permanent household hazardous waste facility located adjacent to the materials recovery facility in Hanford. Many types of businesses generate

hazardous waste in the county including dry cleaners, automobile repair shops, hospitals, exterminators and photo processing centers. The county evaluates the potential for hazardous waste generation and weighs its impact on the residents on a project by project basis.

Discussion

- a) *Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?*
- b) *Require or 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?*
- c) *Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?*
- d) *Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?*
- e) *Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?*
- f) *Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?*
- g) *Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?*

The RATP does not incorporate elements or components of a nature—such as new residential development, for example—that would:

- a) Cause wastewater treatment requirements to be exceeded;
- b) Require or result in the construction or expansion of water or wastewater treatment facilities;
- c) Require or result in the construction or expansion of storm water drainage facilities;
- d) Require new or expanded entitlements of water supplies;
- e) Require additional wastewater treatment capacity;
- f) Require additional landfill capacity; or
- g) Bring into question compliance with federal, state or local statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

XIX. Mandatory Findings of Significance

Does the project...	Potentially significant impact	Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated	Less than significant impact	No Impact
a) 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Have impacts that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

- a) *Does the project 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?*

As discussed elsewhere throughout this document, because of the nature of the projects incorporated in the RATP, it is not expected that the plan would cause any of the impacts listed under item a.

- 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)?*

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

The RATP is not expected to result in any cumulatively considerable impacts (item b above) or to cause substantial adverse effects on human beings (item c). In fact, cumulatively, the proposed improvements incorporated in the RATP would have the effect of improving quality of life and decreasing the negative impacts associated with motor-vehicle traffic by making it easier for people to walk and bike. This would increase physical activity and improve public health, and decrease congestion, noise, emissions of pollutants and other negative impacts associated with motor-vehicle traffic.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

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