



County of Fresno

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

INITIAL STUDY ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM

1. Project title:

Initial Study No. 7218 Delta Mendota Canal Bridge Replacement Project (Nees Avenue)

2. Lead agency name and address:

*The County of Fresno
Department of Public Works and Planning
2220 Tulare Street, Suite A
Fresno, CA 93721*

3. Contact person and phone number:

Chrissy Monfette (559) 600-4245

4. Project location:

Nees Avenue in Fresno County, at its intersection with the Delta Mendota Canal, adjacent to APN 006-190-11ST. The area of potential impacts includes a 960-foot long by 90-foot wide section of the Nees Avenue right-of-way, a short portion of the Douglas Avenue right-of-way, and a 250-foot long segment of the Delta Mendota Canal.

5. Project Applicant's name and address:

*Fresno County Design Division
2220 Tulare Street, 6th Floor
Fresno, CA 93721-2104*

6. General Plan designation:

Agriculture

7. Zoning:

AE-20 (Exclusive Agricultural, 20-acre minimum parcel size)

8. Description of project: (Describe the whole action involved, including, but not limited to, later phases of the project, and any secondary, support, or off-site features necessary for its implementation. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)

The proposed project consists of replacing the Delta Mendota Canal Bridge on Nees Avenue, east of Douglas Avenue, near City of Firebaugh. The existing functionally obsolete, two-lane bridge would be replaced with a new two-lane bridge that meets current standards. A detour could be constructed on-site, or an on off-site detour could be used to move traffic around the construction project. If an off-site detour is used by way of N. Fairfax Avenue, W. Bullard Avenue and N. Washoe Avenue, the detour route could require an asphalt concrete overlay or asphalt patching with placement of either shoulder backing or a shoulder treatment.

9. Surrounding land uses and setting: Briefly describe the project's surroundings:

The land surrounding the project limits includes agricultural land, aquatic habitat (Delta Mendota Canal), ruderal habitat, and rural/developed areas/roadways. The surrounding agricultural land in the region includes irrigated pastures, alfalfa, vineyards, orchards, and row crops.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.


- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forestry Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards and Hazardous Materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use/Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population/Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Traffic | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Service Systems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions |

DETERMINATION OF REQUIRED ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT:

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☐ I find that the proposed project **COULD NOT** have a significant effect on the environment. **A NEGATIVE DECLARATION WILL BE PREPARED.**
- ☒ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the Mitigation Measures described on the attached sheet have been added to the project. **A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION WILL BE PREPARED.**
- ☐ I find the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment, and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required
- ☐ I find that as a result of the proposed project, no new effects could occur, or new Mitigation Measures would be required that have not been addressed within the scope of a previous Environmental Impact Report.

PERFORMED BY:**REVIEWED BY:**


 Chrissy Monfette, Planner

Date: 12/6/18


 Marianne Mollring, Senior Planner

Date: 12-7-18

INITIAL STUDY ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM (Initial Study Application No. 7218)

The following checklist is used to determine if the proposed project could potentially have a significant effect on the environment. Explanations and information regarding each question follow the checklist.

1 = No Impact

2 = Less Than Significant Impact

3 = Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

4 = Potentially Significant Impact

I. AESTHETICS

Would the project:

- 1 a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?
- 2 b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?
- 2 c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?
- 1 d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

II. AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Would the project:

- 2 a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?
- 2 b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract?
- 1 c) Conflict with existing zoning for forest land, timberland or timberland zoned Timberland Production?
- 1 d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?
- 1 e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

III. AIR QUALITY

Would the project:

- 2 a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable Air Quality Plan?
- 2 b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?
- 2 c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under applicable Federal or State ambient air quality standards (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?
- 2 d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?
- 2 e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- 3 a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?
- 1 b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?
- 1 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?
- 1 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?
- 1 e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?
- 1 f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state Habitat Conservation Plan?

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- 2 a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Public Resources Code Section 15064.5?
- 1 b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 15064.5?
- 1 c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site, or unique geologic feature?
- 1 d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?
- 1 e) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074?

VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:

- a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:
 - 2 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?
 - 2 ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?
 - 2 iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?
 - 2 iv) Landslides?
- 2 b) Result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil?
- 2 c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?
- 1 d) Be located on expansive soil as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?

- 1 e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?

VII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

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

VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

- 1 a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?
- 1 b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?
- 1 c) Create hazardous emissions or utilize hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?
- 1 d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?
- 1 e) Result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area for a project located within an Airport Land Use Plan or, where such a Plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport?
- 1 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?
- 2 g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted Emergency Response Plan or Emergency Evacuation Plan?
- 2 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?

IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

- 1 a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?
- 1 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)?
- 1 c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off site?
- 1 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?
- 1 e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage

systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

- 1 f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?
- 1 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?
- 1 h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?
- 1 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?
- 1 j) Cause inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?

X. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

- 1 a) Physically divide an established community?
- 1 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?
- 1 c) Conflict with any applicable Habitat Conservation Plan or Natural Community Conservation Plan?

XI. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

- 1 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?
- 1 b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local General Plan, Specific Plan or other land use plan?

XII. NOISE

Would the project:

- 2 a) Expose persons to or generate noise levels in excess of standards established in the local General Plan or Noise Ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?
- 2 b) Expose persons to or generate excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels?
- 2 c) Create a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?
- 2 d) Create a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?
- 1 e) Expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels, for a project located within an Airport Land Use Plan or, where such a Plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport?
- 1 f) Expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels, for a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip?

XIII. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

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

XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project:

Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically-altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically-altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

- 1 a) Fire protection?
- 1 b) Police protection?
- 1 c) Schools?
- 1 d) Parks?
- 1 e) Other public facilities?

XV. RECREATION

Would the project:

- 1 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?
- 1 b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

XVI. TRANSPORTATION / TRAFFIC

Would the project:

- 2 a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including, but not limited to, intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?
- 2 b) Conflict with an applicable Congestion Management Program including, but not limited to, level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the County congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?
- 2 c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location, which results in substantial safety risks?
- 2 d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?
- 2 e) Result in inadequate emergency access?

- 2 f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?

XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

- 1 a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?
- 1 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?
- 1 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?
- 1 d) Have sufficient water supplies available to service the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?
- 1 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?
- 1 f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?
- 1 g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

XVIII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Would the project:

- 1 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?
- 1 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.)
- 1 c) Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Documents Referenced:

This Initial Study is referenced by the documents listed below. These documents are available for public review at the County of Fresno, Department of Public Works and Planning, Development Services and Capital Projects Division, 2220 Tulare Street, Suite A, Fresno, California (corner of M & Tulare Streets).

Fresno County General Plan, Policy Document, Background Report and Final EIR
 Fresno County Zoning Ordinance
 Important Farmland 2014 Map, State Department of Conservation
 National Wetlands Inventory, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
 Regulatory Maps, Department of Conservation
 USEPA Regulatory lists (RCRAInfo, NPDES, TRI, NPL, ACRES, RADInfo, TSCA) Accessed September 2018
 Bridge Design Hydraulic Study Report, Wreco, May 2015
 Biological Assessment, Caltrans July 15, 2016

Finding of No Adverse Effect, Applied EarthWorks, Inc, December 2015
Historic Property Survey Report, Applied EarthWorks, Inc, October 2015
Initial Site Assessment, Adanta, Inc, February 19, 2015
Location Hydraulic Study, Wreco, May 4, 2015
Natural Environment Study, Caltrans, July 15, 2016
Water Quality Technical Memo, Caltrans, June 2016
Hazamat Supplemental Memorandum, Alexis Rutherford, August 24, 2015
Noise Technical Memorandum, SWCA Environmental Consultants, February 11, 2015
USFWS Concurrence Letter, Thomas Leeman, September 28, 2016

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County of Fresno

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

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

APPLICANT: County of Fresno Design Division

APPLICATION NOS.: Initial Study Application No. 7218

DESCRIPTION: The proposed project consists of replacing the Delta Mendota Canal Bridge on Nees Avenue, east of Douglas Avenue, near City of Firebaugh. The existing functionally obsolete, two-lane bridge would be replaced with a new two-lane bridge that meets current standards. A detour could be constructed on-site, or an on off-site detour could be used to move traffic around the construction project. If an off-site detour is used by way of N. Fairfax Avenue, W. Bullard Avenue and N. Washoe Avenue, the detour route could require an asphalt concrete overlay or asphalt patching with placement of either shoulder backing or a shoulder treatment.

LOCATION: The project site is located on West Nees Avenue, between North Douglas Avenue and North Washoe Avenue

I. AESTHETICS

A. Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The Fresno County General Plan has not identified any scenic vistas in this area. The land surrounding the project limits includes agricultural land, aquatic habitat (Delta Mendota Canal), ruderal habitat, and rural/developed areas/roadways. The surrounding agricultural land in the region includes irrigated pastures, alfalfa, vineyards, orchards, and row crops.

This project will replace the existing 161-foot-long by 31-foot-wide bridge with a structure that is 173 feet long and 40 feet wide. The new bridge will be a three-span precast/pre-stressed voided concrete slab superstructure with a composite concrete deck slab supported on five-pile bents utilizing 16-inch cast-in-steel-shell reinforced concrete piles. The profile grade will be raised approximately 1 foot above the existing bridge. This increase in height will not interfere with the visuals of this area.

- B. Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway; or
- C. Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The Delta-Mendota Canal was built as a major component of the Central Valley Project (CVP) between 1946 and 1952 to supply water to farmers on the West Side of the San Joaquin Valley. The canal retains a high level of integrity and is virtually unchanged from its period of significance (1946–1952). Routine maintenance and the replacement of structural features as provided for in the original canal specifications have not diminished the canal's integrity or significance within the project area (Bureau of Reclamation 1959:71). This canal is a representative example of a particular construction method used to build water conveyance systems during the 25-year period following World War II, a significant time in local, state, and national history for large-scale water projects. The significance and National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility of the Delta-Mendota Canal as a component of the CVP has been established in piecemeal fashion by numerous smaller investigations of related structures along the canal.

This bridge is eligible for the NRHP as a contributing component of the Delta-Mendota Canal system. However, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has found that the project will have no adverse effect on the historic property because the design of the replacement bridge will be similar in appearance without creating a false sense of historical development. In addition, the replacement bridge will continue to serve the bridge's original transportation purpose in the original location. Although the removal of the original bridge will slightly diminish the integrity of materials, the replacement of Bridge 42C0047 with the proposed design will not notably diminish the integrity of the historic property. The Delta Mendota Canal will continue to possess the ability to convey its historic significance as a water conveyance system that contributed to the agricultural and economic development of Central California.

This determination was reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), who concurred in a letter dated March 8, 2016.

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

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

No new lighting is proposed as part of the bridge replacement project and the bridge will not create a new source of glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views.

II. AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

- A. Would the project convert prime or unique farmlands or farmland of state-wide importance to non-agricultural use?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Based on the County's plans and Caltrans Preliminary Environmental Study (PES), the Area of Potential Effects (APE) includes a 960-foot-long by 90-foot-wide section of the Nees Avenue right-of-way, a short portion of the Douglas Avenue right-of-way, and a 250-foot-long segment of the Delta Mendota Canal. Additionally, the project will obtain temporary access to portions of the adjacent properties that will be used as three staging areas, located northwest, northeast and southeast of the bridge. Because the project will not visually or otherwise indirectly affect built environment resource per the Caltrans' PES, the APE does not extend beyond the area physically impacted by the project (i.e., the direct APE). The APE covers approximately 5.8 acres and, to account for any subsurface archaeological deposits, extends 5 feet below the surface.

Within the APE, the Fresno County Important Farmlands 2014 Map identifies primarily semi-agricultural and built-up land. West of Douglas Avenue, the land is designated as Vacant. The northwestern corner of the APE may interfere with farmland of Statewide Importance; however, this part of the project may be used for temporary staging and will not be impacted following construction. Due to the limited area of impacts and the temporary nature of construction staging needs, there will be a less than significant impact on the conversion of prime or unique farmlands or farmland of statewide importance.

- B. Would the project conflict with existing agricultural zoning or Williamson Act Contracts?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Two parcels northeast of the project site are restricted by Williamson Act Contract; however, potential impacts to this farmland are limited to the staging of construction materials. Following construction activities, there will be no impact to the land under Contract.

- C. Would the project conflict with existing zoning for or cause rezoning of forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production; or
- D. Would the project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; or
- E. Would the project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural uses or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

There is no land zoned for timberland production in the vicinity of the bridge and therefore, this project will have no impacts to timberland or land zoned for timberland production. The bridge replacement project will not conflict with existing zoning. Following construction activities, the replacement bridge will serve the same purpose as the existing bridge and will not interfere with the adjacent parcels.

III. AIR QUALITY

- A. Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable Air Quality Plan; or
- B. Would the project violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation; or
- C. Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under a Federal or State ambient air quality standard; or
- D. Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations; or
- E. Would the project create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Construction has the potential for short-term effects on the local area; however, the project will not change the alignment or increase the number of through lanes, therefore, would not increase the level of criteria pollutants in the area. The project will not increase capacity, or cause or contribute to any new localized Carbon Monoxide (CO) or Particulate Matter (PM)-10 violations or increase the frequency or severity of any existing CO or PM-10 non-attainment. The project specifications would require actions during construction to reduce particulate matter in accordance with the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District's Regulation VIII, reducing the impact of construction to less than significant. The replacement bridge is not expected to release any objectionable odors.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- A. Would the project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any candidate, sensitive, or special-status species?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED:

Three special-status animal species have the potential to be impacted by the project: the San Joaquin Kit Fox, the Giant Garter Snake, and the Western Pond Turtle.

The San Joaquin Kit Fox was not observed at the site during field surveys; however, there is one documented occurrence dated December 1920 and a second documentation near Firebaugh in 1990. While no dens were observed at the project

site, this species is mobile and has been documented in the immediate area. The project site is less than one mile from the western edge of the Western Madera County Satellite Area identified in the 1998 Recovery Plan for Upland Species of the San Joaquin Valley, California.

The Giant Garter Snake has been documented approximately two miles north of the project site in 1976. The aquatic habitat within the project site is mostly open water, and emergent vegetation is limited to a thin strip along the canal bank of low-growing plants such as duckweed and milfoil. Upland areas within the Project Impact Area (PIA) could provide suitable basking habitat, but lack vegetation or burrows that could provide escape cover. Because of the lack of burrows, the area surrounding the project does not provide suitable sheltering or hibernating habitat. Aquatic habitat within the PIA is mostly open water in the Delta Mendota Canal and typically has a strong current. The canal is concrete-lined and does not support emergent vegetation such as cattail (*Typha* sp.) that would provide suitable foraging habitat for the snake.

The Western Pond Turtle has been documents in the Mendota Pool, approximately seven miles southeast of the project limits. These waters feed the Delta Mendota Canal and therefore there is potential for this species to occur on site, despite the failure of the survey to identify any in the vicinity. Impacts could occur due to immediate harm as a result of construction activities or delayed harm in the form of water pollution from construction traveling downstream. Such pollution will be mitigated through the compliance with Best Management Practices and therefore said impacts will be less than significant. Direct impacts require compliance with the Mitigation Measure identified below.

There is also the potential for 17 different types of birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to be present at the project site. Even with adoption of the mitigation measures proposed below to protect nesting birds, migratory birds who use the Delta Mendota canal and adjacent agricultural fields may be temporarily impacted due to construction noise. This impact is not considered to be significant.

Cliff swallow nests were observed during the field survey. A mitigation measure below requires that the bridge removal occur outside of the nesting season, or that the swallows be properly excluded prior to the start of nesting season. It is anticipated that the swallows will build nests on the new bridge following construction and therefore, impacts are less than significant with compliance to the mitigation measure.

There is one federally listed plant species documented in the CNDDDB within a ten-mile radius of the project limits. This is the palmate-bracted salty bird's-beak (*chloropyron palmatum*) which requires chenopod scrub, valley and foothill grassland usually on Pescadero silty clay. The project site is highly disturbed land and not optimal habitat for this species.

Due to the poor habitat at the project site, impacts to the Kit Fox, Giant Garter Snake, and Western Pond Turtle are unlikely, but possible. In order to reduce that possibility to less than significant, the following Mitigation Measures have been incorporated into the project:

* **Mitigation Measures**

1. *The following mitigation measures shall be implemented to address impacts to the San Joaquin Kit Fox:*
 - a. *No less than 14 days and no more than 30 days prior to the initiation of site disturbance and/or construction, a qualified biologist shall conduct pre-activity (i.e., pre-construction) survey for known or potentially sensitive species, including San Joaquin kit fox dens and submit a letter to the Fresno County Public Works and Planning Department (County), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) reporting the date the survey was conducted, the survey methodology, survey results, and what measures were necessary (and completed), as applicable, to address any listed species activity within the project site.*
 - b. *Prior to the start of construction, the applicant will retain a qualified biologist who is knowledgeable in the biology of the federally-listed species covered in the Service consultation and their legislative protection to conduct an employee education program for all contractors, their employees, and agency personnel involved in the project. The program will include the following: a description of the natural history of the species and their habitat with the potential to be affected by the proposed project, the general measures that are being implemented to conserve these species as they relate to the proposed project, the penalties for non-compliance, and the boundaries of the work area within which the project must be accomplished.*
 - c. *Prior to or during project activities, if any observations are made of San Joaquin kit fox, or any known or potential San Joaquin kit fox dens are discovered within the project limits, the qualified biologist shall notify the County. The County will notify Caltrans who will then inform the Service. All work in the area of the discovery will stop until such time that the Service and Caltrans determine ways to proceed with the Project and avoid take, or obtain an Incidental Take Statement.*
 - d. *During the site disturbance and/or construction phase, all construction pipes, culverts or similar structures or materials that contain a hole with a diameter of 4 inches or greater and that are stored at the construction site for one or more overnight periods shall be thoroughly inspected for San Joaquin kit fox before the pipe is buried, capped, or otherwise moved in any way. Road culverts shall be capped prior to the start of Project activities. If a federally-listed species is discovered inside a pipe, the section of pipe will not be moved or used until the Service is consulted. All work in the area of the discovery will stop until such time that the Service and Caltrans determine ways to proceed with the Project and avoid take, or obtain an Incidental Take Statement.*

- e. *At the end of each working day, maintenance and construction excavations greater than two feet deep shall be covered, filled in or equipped with earthen escape ramps no greater than 200 feet apart to prevent entrapment of listed species. Before such holes or trenches are filled, they will be thoroughly inspected for trapped animals.*
 - f. *Use of rodenticides and herbicides at the Biological Study Area (BSA) shall be avoided.*
 - g. *During the site disturbance and/ or construction phase, any contractor or employee that inadvertently kills or injures a San Joaquin kit fox, or who finds a kit fox who is dead, injured, or entrapped shall be required to report the incident immediately to the County. The County will report the incident to Caltrans who will then report it to the Service.*
 - h. *Should any long internal or perimeter fencing be proposed or installed, the County shall do the following to provide for kit fox passage:*
 - i. *If a wire strand/pole design is used, the lowest strand shall be no closer to the ground than 12 inches*
 - ii. *If a solid wire mesh fence is used, 8-inch by 12-inch openings near the ground shall be provided every 100 yards.*
2. *The following Mitigation Measures shall be implemented to address impacts to the Giant Garter Snake:*
- a. *When feasible, construction activity within habitat shall be conducted during the active period for giant garter snakes (between May 1 and October 1). If construction activity must occur between October 2 and April 30, a biologist shall survey the project site for ten consecutive days during the final days of the active season to ensure that snakes are not moving into the area for the inactive season. This survey shall occur between September 15 and October 1st. If it is determined by the biologist, in consultation with the Service, that giant garter snakes are not present during the active season, and are not moving into the project site for the inactive season, then construction activities can continue into or commence in the inactive season. Construction during the active period does not relieve the developer of compliance to Mitigation Measures Bio-2(b), Bio-2(c), Bio-2(d), and Bio-2(e).*
 - b. *Twenty-four hours prior to construction activities, the BSA should be surveyed for giant garter snakes. Survey of the (Project Impact Area) PIA should be repeated if a lapse in construction activity of two weeks or greater has occurred during the inactive season.*
 - c. *Confine clearing to the minimal area necessary to facilitate construction activities. Flag and designate giant garter snake habitat within or adjacent*

to the BSA as Environmentally Sensitive Areas. These areas should be avoided by all construction personnel.

- d. *Construction personnel shall receive Service-approved worker environmental awareness training. This training instructs workers to recognize giant garter snakes and their habitat(s).*
 - e. *A qualified biologist shall be on-call during construction activities in the event that a giant garter snake is identified within or adjacent to the BSA. In the event that a snake is found, work shall stop immediately. The County will inform Caltrans who then will inform the Service to determine the appropriate measures needed to continue work and avoid take, or obtain an Incidental Take Statement.*
3. *The following Mitigation Measures shall be implemented to address impacts to Migratory Birds:*
- a. *If project activities occur outside of the nesting season, no further mitigation is required. The nesting season is February 15-September 1.*
 - b. *If project activities must occur during the nesting season, a qualified biologist will conduct pre-construction surveys for active raptor and migratory bird nests within 30 days of the onset of these activities. The survey area will include all of the BSA. If no active nests are found, no further mitigation is required.*
 - c. *Should any active nests be discovered within the biological survey area, the biologist will determine the appropriate construction setback distances based on the applicable CDFW guidelines and/or the biology of the affected species. Construction-free buffers will be identified on the ground with flagging fencing, or by other easily visible means, and will be maintained until the biologist has determined that the young have fledged.*
 - d. *In order to avoid impacts to nesting cliff swallows, project activities that require direct impacts to nests, such as the bridge removal, shall occur outside of the nesting season. If removal is to occur during nesting season, suitable exclusionary devices shall be installed prior to February 15, when the bridge is vacant of nesting birds and before construction activities are to commence.*
4. *The following Mitigation Measure shall be implemented to address impacts to Western Pond Turtle:*
- a. *A focused survey for western pond turtle shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than 24 hours prior to the start of construction. If no western pond turtles are observed, no further mitigation would be necessary. If this species is observed on or adjacent to the project site, a qualified biologist, in coordination with the CDFW, shall capture and*

relocate the turtle to appropriate habitat at a safe distance from the construction site.

- 5. After completion of construction activities, remove any temporary fill and construction debris and, wherever feasible, restore disturbed areas to pre-project conditions.*
 - 6. A litter control program shall be instituted at the project site. All workers shall ensure their food scraps, paper wrappers, food containers, cans, bottles, and other trash from the project area are deposited in covered or closed trash containers. The trash containers shall be removed from the project area at the end of each working day.*
 - 7. No pets or firearms (except for federal, state, or local law enforcement officers and security personnel) shall be permitted on construction sites to avoid harassment, killing, or injuring of listed species.*
 - 8. Nighttime construction shall be prohibited.*
- B. Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); or
- C. Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on federally-protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption or other means; or
- D. Would the project 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; or
- E. Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance; or
- F. Would the project Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

As discussed above, the project site is generally clear of vegetation. The canal is concrete-lined and has been treated to abate the growth of weeds. The waterway does not provide a riparian habitat, nor is it used as a migratory wildlife corridor. There are no federally protected wetlands at the project site and it is not located within an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other conservation plan.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

- A. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The Nees Avenue Bridge has been identified as a contributing component of the Delta-Mendota Canal, which is the only historic property inside the project site. On May 29, 2009, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred that the Delta-Mendota Canal is a major part of the CVP, which has been found eligible for the NRHP.

While the replacement bridge will be 13 feet wider and 15 feet longer than the existing bridge, it will be constructed in the same location as the original bridge. Design elements include use of pile bents, and Caltrans ST-30 see-through two-bar curb-mounted railings will be installed as bridge side barriers. This design will be similar in appearance without creating a false sense of historical development. Both the canal and the bridge will continue their historical functions and the general vicinity will remain agricultural. Although the removal of the original bridge will slightly diminish the integrity of materials, overall the Delta-Mendota Canal retains excellent integrity of location, design, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association. As such, the replacement of Bridge 42C0074 with the proposed design will not notably diminish the integrity of the historic property.

- B. Would the project cause of substantial adverse change in the significance of an archeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5; or
- C. Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature; or
- D. Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries; or
- E. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Native American consultation was initiated by letter to the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) on February 2, 2015. The reply, dated February 20, 2015, stated that there were no sacred lands or other cultural resources listed in their files within the project site. The NAHC provided contact information for individuals and organizations that might have knowledge of cultural resources in the project area and vicinity. Letters were mailed to such individuals and organizations on March 18, 2015. In a letter dated April 15, 2015, Bob Pennell stated that the project lies outside the area of interest of the Table Mountain Rancheria.

Pursuant to the provisions of Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52), notice that this application was complete was sent to the following tribal governments: Dumna Wo Wah, Table Mountain Rancheria, Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians, and Santa Rosa Rancheria. None of the four governments responded within 30 days of receipt of the notice, which were sent by certified mail and therefore the County's obligations under AB 52 are complete.

VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

A. Would the project expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including risk of loss, injury or death involving:

1. Rupture of a known earthquake?
2. Strong seismic ground shaking?
3. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?
4. Landslides?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

This application proposes to allow the installation of a bridge which meets current safety standards in the same location as an existing bridge which was determined to be structurally deficient. The intent of the bridge is to allow traffic to transit from one side of the canal to the other.

The existing bridge was built in 1950 and is approximately 26 feet wide and 161 feet long with two 12 foot wide travel lanes and 1 foot wide shoulders. The proposed bridge would be 173 feet long and 40 feet wide with two 12 foot wide travel lanes and 8 foot wide shoulders. Nees Avenue is a two-lane, major thoroughfare between the City of Firebaugh and Interstate 5 with an ADT of 3,950. Since there is no increase to the number of through lanes, there will be no increase in the exposure of persons to substantial impacts regarding the rupture of a known earthquake, strong seismic shaking, or landslides. The improved safety of the replacement bridge would reduce those risks due to improved design.

- B. Would the project result in substantial erosion or loss of topsoil; or
- C. Would the project result in on-site or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The average channel flow for the replacement bridge was estimated to be 2.8ft/sec, which is not anticipated to create channel erosion at the site. Therefore, downstream impacts relating to the erosion of the canal channel will not occur.

The Project area resides at an elevation of approximately 163 feet above mean sea level (AMSL) in a substantially flat portion of Fresno County. The watercourse is about 10 feet below the bottom of the bridge. Review of topographic maps of the area indicate that the surface topography has a gentle slope to the east. The Project site is underlain by Tranquillity, wet, complex, saline-sodic soils (0 to 1 percent slopes). Erosion factor K indicates the susceptibility of a soil to sheet and rill erosion by water. Values of K range from 0.02 to 0.69. Other factors being equal, the higher the value, the more susceptible the soil is to sheet and rill erosion by water. The Project area soils have a K value of 0.17, representing soils that have low-moderate potential to erode.

Grading and site preparation will require the stripping of vegetation and earth-moving, which could increase the onsite potential for soil erosion. Following construction, typical use of the bridge by automobiles will leave oil, grease, rust, hydrocarbons, and rubber particles on the surface, which could be carried by stormwater into the canal. However, despite the increase in impervious areas, the travel lanes have not been increased and there is no anticipated increase in traffic. Therefore, contaminated rainwater pollution is anticipated to be equal or less than the existing bridge.

The developer is required to obtain a Grading and Excavation permit, which must comply with Chapter 15.28 of the Fresno County Ordinance. The regulations therein set standards for grading and excavation which are intended to protect adjacent properties from adverse impacts. Due to the extent of proposed earthmoving, the developer must also prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan as part of their Construction General Permit. Additional permits which are required include Section 404 compliance, Section 401 Compliance, and Section 1600 Compliance.

With adherence to these existing regulations and the minimal operational increase from the existing bridge, impacts to erosion, loss of topsoil, and on-site or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, and collapse are less than significant.

- D. Would the project be located on expansive soils, creating substantial risks to life or property?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

According to Figure 7-1 (FCGPBR), the project site is not in an area where soils exhibit moderately high to high expansion potential.

- E. Would the project have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative disposal systems where sewers are not available for wastewater disposal?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

This project does not include a septic system or other sanitary facilities. Temporary facilities will be provided for construction workers, and the site will be unmanned during operation.

VII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

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

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Construction of the bridge will occur in compliance with San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District standards. Following construction, there is no proposed increase in the number of through lanes or other factors that could increase traffic. Therefore, the operational emissions from vehicles passing over the bridge remains unchanged from the baseline.

VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

- A. Would the project create a significant public hazard through routine transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials; or
- B. Would the project create a significant public hazard involving accidental release of hazardous materials into the environment; or
- C. Would the project create hazardous emissions or utilize hazardous materials, substances or waste within one quarter-mile of a school?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The scope of this project is limited to the replacement of an existing bridge. Therefore, it will not require the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous material and would not create a risk of release of such materials.

- D. Would the project be located on a hazardous materials site?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The Initial Site Assessment prepared for this project by Adanta, Inc, dated February 19, 2015 identified that the project site and surrounding sites were not located within the RecCheck Database. This database aggregates various regulatory databases to allow a single report to be prepared. The nearest site was located 0.09 miles east: Fourchy Farms, Inc. was located on the CUPA database. This facility is not considered to be part of the project site due to its distance and disparate use.

- E. Would a project located within an airport land use plan or, absent such a plan, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area; or

- F. Would a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project site is located within the secondary review area of the Firebaugh Municipal Airport; however, the project will not result in a safety hazard because it does not propose to have any persons working or residing in the project area.

- G. Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted Emergency Response Plan or Emergency Evacuation Plan; or
- H. Would the project 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?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Impacts from this project are generally limited to the construction period, since the new bridge will perform the same function as the existing bridge with the same number of through lanes. Therefore, no operational impacts to the emergency response plan or personal exposure to wildfires were identified.

During construction, traffic will be detoured, either by alternate streets or through the on-site construction of a detour. The proposed offsite detour has motorists turn south on Washoe Avenue (westbound) or Fairfax Avenue (eastbound), then take Bullard Avenue until they are able to turn north on Fairfax Avenue or Washoe Avenue and return to Nees Avenue. The distance along Nees between the two detour roads, across the bridge is approximately 5.3 miles. The route for the detour is approximately 10.3 miles. As this impact will be temporary and the proposed detour route adds only five miles onto a trip, the impacts will be less than significant.

IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

- A. Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise degrade water quality?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Compliance to the permitting requirements discussed in Section VI will ensure that this project does not exceed any water quality standards due to potential run-off during operation. Similarly, compliance to those regulations will prevent the release of contaminated water during construction. The project does not propose to use or discharge water as part of its operation.

- B. Would the project substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge so that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

No water usage is proposed as part of this application and therefore no impacts will occur with regard to the aquifer volume or the level of the groundwater table.

- C. Would the project substantially alter existing drainage patterns, including alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off site; or
- D. Would the project substantially alter existing drainage patterns, including alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in flooding on or off site; or
- E. Would the project create or contribute run-off which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted run-off; or
- F. Would the project otherwise substantially degrade water quality?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Compliance to the permitting requirements discussed in Section VI will ensure that polluted run-off is not released into the Delta Mendota Canal. No other aspects of the project would degrade water quality.

- G. Would the project place housing within a 100-year floodplain; or
- H. Would the project place structures within a 100-year flood hazard area that would impede or redirect flood flows?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The project site is not located within a 100-year floodplain as designated by FEMA FIRM Panel No. 06019C1430H.

- I. Would the project expose persons or structures to levee or dam failure; or
- J. Would the project cause inundation by seiche, tsunami or mudflow?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Following construction, this bridge will operate identically to the existing bridge. Therefore, no impact to the risk of levee or dam failure, or inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow will occur.

X. LAND USE AND PLANNING

- A. Will the project physically divide an established community?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

This project does not have the potential to divide an established community. The purpose of a bridge is to connect streets which are separated by a physical feature.

- B. Will the project conflict with any Land Use Plan, policy or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project; or
- C. Will the project conflict with any applicable Habitat Conservation Plan or Natural Community Conservation Plan?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

The replacement of a bridge does not require discretionary approval by the County of Fresno. The project is required to comply with existing laws and regulations in addition to mitigation measures identified by this Initial Study. Therefore, the project will not conflict with policies, plans, or regulations of the County of Fresno. There are no Habitat Conservation Plans or Natural Community Conservation Plans applicable to this project.

XI. MINERAL RESOURCES

- A. Would the project result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource; or
- B. Would the project result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site designated on a General Plan?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

This bridge replacement project will not result in the loss of a known mineral resource or prevent a mineral resource recovery site from being accessible.

XII. NOISE

- A. Would the project result in exposure of people to severe noise levels; or
- B. Would the project result in exposure of people to or generate excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels; or
- C. Would the project cause a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity; or
- D. Would the project result in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The private residences surrounding the project site are located greater than 25 feet from the current bridge and potential construction-related vibration impacts (related to pile driving) would only occur at short distances (e.g., 25 feet from the construction activity) during demolition and construction of the bridge, no further vibration analysis will be required. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a less than significant construction vibration impact to the surrounding residences.

No adverse noise impacts from construction are anticipated because the Fresno County Noise Ordinance specifically exempts construction-related noise associated with the maintenance of public utilities conducted between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. In addition, construction would be conducted in accordance with Caltrans *Standard Specifications* Section 14-8.02 and construction noise associated with this project will be short term and intermittent.

Caltrans *Standard Specifications* Section 14-8.02 “Noise Control,” states that noise levels generated during construction shall comply with applicable federal, state, and local regulations, and that all equipment shall be fitted with adequate mufflers according to the manufacturers’ specifications.

Therefore, while there may be some increase to the level of noise in the area of the project during construction, the impacts are considered to be less than significant. There will be no impact to the noise environment during the operation period.

- E. Would the project expose people to excessive noise levels associated with a location near an airport or a private airstrip; or
- F. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Persons using this site are anticipated to be within a vehicle while traveling. The project is located on the edge of the secondary review area for the Firebaugh Municipal Airport and is not located within a noise contour. Given the distance from the airport, there will be no impact on users of the bridge due to noise levels from the nearby airport.

XIII. POPULATION AND HOUSING

- A. Would the project induce substantial population growth either directly or indirectly; or
- B. Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing housing; or
- C. Would the project displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of housing elsewhere?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

This project will not displace any persons from their existing housing. This is not the type of project that would generate an increase in population growth. While it is anticipated that jobs will become available due to the construction and demolition stages, these jobs will be temporary and are likely to be filled by existing residents. Therefore, this project will have no impact on population and housing.

XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES

- A. Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically-altered public facilities in the following areas:

1. Fire protection;
2. Police protection;
3. Schools;
4. Parks; or
5. Other public facilities?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

This project is not anticipated to cause an increase in population and therefore will not require a corresponding increase to public facilities. The bridge will not otherwise require an increase in public facilities, since following construction it will serve an identical purpose to the existing bridge.

XV. RECREATION

- A. Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks; or
- B. Would the project require the construction of or expansion of recreational facilities?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

This bridge replacement project is not anticipated to have an impact on the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks.

XVI. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

- A. Would the project conflict with any applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation; or

- B. Would the project conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to, level of service standards and travel demands measures; or
- C. Would the project result in a change in air traffic patterns; or
- D. Would the project substantially increase traffic hazards due to design features; or
- E. Would the project result in inadequate emergency access; or
- F. Would the project conflict with adopted plans, policies or programs regarding public transit, bicycle or pedestrian facilities or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Nees Avenue is a two-lane, major thoroughfare between the City of Firebaugh and Interstate 5 with an average daily traffic (ADT) of 3,950 vehicles. Following construction, this project will serve in an identical capacity as the existing bridge; however, the new design will feature increased shoulder widths and a higher level of safety than the existing bridge. A five-mile detour may be used during construction; from Nees to Fairfax to Bullard to Washoe eastbound, or the reverse westbound. Impacts from the increase in traffic on these roads will be temporary and will not result in significant adverse impacts to the performance of the circulation system or congestion management programs.

XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

- A. Would the project exceed wastewater treatment requirements; or
- B. Would the project require construction of or the expansion of new water or wastewater treatment facilities; or
- C. Would the project require or result in the construction or expansion of new storm water drainage facilities; or
- D. Would the project have sufficient water supplies available from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed; or
- E. Would the project result in a determination of inadequate wastewater treatment capacity to serve project demand; or
- F. Would the project be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity; or
- G. Would the project comply with federal, state and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

This project will comply with all federal, state, and locale statutes and regulations related to solid waste. During operation, the bridge will not require a supply of water and therefore will have no impact on the existing water supply and wastewater treatment capacity. Compliance to permitting requirements as discussed in Section VI will ensure that run-off generated by the increase in surface area of the bridge does not exceed existing stormwater drainage facilities.

XVIII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 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 prehistory or history?

FINDING: LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED:

The site survey of the project site indicated that special-status species may be present on the project site. In addition, impacts to migratory birds may occur if construction is not timed to be outside of the nesting season. Therefore, mitigation measures are required to ensure that construction activities do not result in take of any special-status species.

Review of the historical significance of this bridge compared to the historic Delta Mendota Canal determined that the proposed design would be similar to the historic bridge and that replacement would not have a significant impact on the historical value of the Canal.

- B. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

Impacts from this project are generally limited to the demolition and construction period. Following construction (during operation), the bridge will function as a part of the complete circulation system in Fresno County. No water will be used or discharged; no toxic or hazardous materials will be used; no increase to the traffic compared to the existing bridge will occur. Therefore, this project does not produce any impacts that would be cumulatively considerable.

- C. Does the project have environmental impacts which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

FINDING: NO IMPACT:

No environmental impacts which would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings were identified. The bridge will function identically to the existing bridge, except that the replacement bridge will have significantly higher safety ratings.

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

Based upon the Initial Study prepared for Initial Study Application No. 7218, staff has concluded that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

It has been determined that there would be no impacts to Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, and Utilities and Service Systems.

Potential impacts related to Aesthetics, Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Air Quality, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Noise, and Transportation/Traffic have been determined to be less than significant.

Potential impacts relating to Biological Resources have determined to be less than significant with compliance with the listed Mitigation Measures.

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

CMM

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File original and one copy with: Fresno County Clerk 2221 Kern Street Fresno, California 93721		Space Below For County Clerk Only. CLK-2046.00 E04-73 R00-00	
Agency File No: IS 7218	LOCAL AGENCY PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION		County Clerk File No: E-
Responsible Agency (Name): Fresno County	Address (Street and P.O. Box): 2220 Tulare St. Sixth Floor		City: Fresno Zip Code: 93721
Agency Contact Person (Name and Title): Christina Monfette, Planner		Area Code: 559	Telephone Number: 600-4245 Extension: N/A
Applicant (Name): Fresno County Design Division		Project Title: Delta Mendota Canal Bridge Replacement	
Project Description: The proposed project consists of replacing the Delta Mendota Canal Bridge on Nees Avenue, east of Douglas Avenue, near City of Firebaugh. The existing functionally obsolete, two-lane bridge would be replaced with a new two-lane bridge that meets current standards. A detour could be constructed on-site, or an on off-site detour could be used to move traffic around the construction project. If an off-site detour is used by way of N. Fairfax Avenue, W. Bullard Avenue and N. Washoe Avenue, the detour route could require an asphalt concrete overlay or asphalt patching with placement of either shoulder backing or a shoulder treatment.			
Justification for Negative Declaration: It has been determined that there would be no impacts to Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, and Utilities and Service Systems. Potential impacts related to Aesthetics, Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Air Quality, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Noise, and Transportation/Traffic have been determined to be less than significant. Potential impacts relating to Biological Resources have determined to be less than significant with compliance with the listed Mitigation Measures.			
FINDING: The proposed project will not have a significant impact on the environment.			
Newspaper and Date of Publication: Fresno Business Journal –		Review Date Deadline: Planning Commission –	
Date:	Type or Print Signature: Marianne Mollring, Senior Planner	Submitted by (Signature): Christina Monfette, Planner	

State 15083, 15085

County Clerk File No.: _____

**LOCAL AGENCY
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

**Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
Delta Mendota Bridge Replacement Initial Study Application No. 7218
(Including Conditions of Approval and Project Notes)**

Mitigation Measures					
Mitigation Measure No.*	Impact	Mitigation Measure Language	Implementation Responsibility	Monitoring Responsibility	Time Span
1.	Biological Resources	<p>The following mitigation measures shall be implemented to address impacts to the San Joaquin Kit Fox:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> No less than 14 days and no more than 30 days prior to the initiation of site disturbance and/or construction, a qualified biologist shall conduct pre-activity (i.e., pre-construction) survey for known or potentially sensitive species, including San Joaquin kit fox dens and submit a letter to the Fresno County Public Works and Planning Department (County), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) reporting the date the survey was conducted, the survey methodology, survey results, and what measures were necessary (and completed), as applicable, to address any listed species activity within the project site. Prior to the start of construction, the applicant will retain a qualified biologist who is knowledgeable in the biology of the federally-listed species covered in the Service consultation and their legislative protection to conduct an employee education program for all contractors, their employees, and agency personnel involved in the project. The program will include the following: a description of the natural history of the species and their habitat with the potential to be affected by the proposed project, the general measures that are being implemented to conserve these species as they relate to the proposed project, the penalties for non-compliance, and the boundaries of the work area within which the project must be accomplished. Prior to or during project activities, if any observations are made of San Joaquin kit fox, or any known or potential San Joaquin kit fox dens are discovered within the project limits, the qualified biologist shall notify the County. The County will notify Caltrans who will then inform the Service. All work in the area of the discovery will stop until such time that the Service and Caltrans determine ways to proceed 	Applicant	Fresno County Design Division, Department of Public Works and Planning	14-30 days prior to construction and ongoing throughout ground-disturbing activities

		<p>with the Project and avoid take, or obtain an Incidental Take Statement.</p> <p>d. During the site disturbance and/ or construction phase, all construction pipes, culverts or similar structures or materials that contain a hole with a diameter of 4 inches or greater and that are stored at the construction site for one or more overnight periods shall be thoroughly inspected for San Joaquin kit fox before the pipe is buried, capped, or otherwise moved in any way. Road culverts shall be capped prior to the start of Project activities. If a federally-listed species is discovered inside a pipe, the section of pipe will not be moved or used until the Service is consulted. All work in the area of the discovery will stop until such time that the Service and Caltrans determine ways to proceed with the Project and avoid take, or obtain an Incidental Take Statement.</p> <p>e. At the end of each working day, maintenance and construction excavations greater than two feet deep shall be covered, filled in or equipped with earthen escape ramps no greater than 200 feet apart to prevent entrapment of listed species. Before such holes or trenches are filled, they will be thoroughly inspected for trapped animals.</p> <p>f. Use of rodenticides and herbicides at the Biological Study Area (BSA) shall be avoided.</p> <p>g. During the site disturbance and/ or construction phase, any contractor or employee that inadvertently kills or injures a San Joaquin kit fox, or who finds a kit fox who is dead, injured, or entrapped shall be required to report the incident immediately to the County. The County will report the incident to Caltrans who will then report it to the Service.</p> <p>h. Should any long internal or perimeter fencing be proposed or installed, the County shall do the following to provide for kit fox passage:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> If a wire strand/pole design is used, the lowest strand shall be no closer to the ground than 12 inches If a solid wire mesh fence is used, 8-inch by 12-inch openings near the ground shall be provided every 100 yards. 			
2.	Biological Resources	<p>The following Mitigation Measures shall be implemented to address impacts to the Giant Garter Snake:</p> <p>a. When feasible, construction activity within habitat shall be conducted during the active period for giant garter snakes (between May 1 and October 1). If construction activity must occur between October 2 and April 30, a biologist</p>	Applicant	Fresno County Design Division, Department of Public Works and Planning	Between October 2 and April 30 and ongoing throughout ground-

		<p>shall survey the project site for ten consecutive days during the final days of the active season to ensure that snakes are not moving into the area for the inactive season. This survey shall occur between September 15 and October 1st. If it is determined by the biologist, in consultation with the Service, that giant garter snakes are not present during the active season, and are not moving into the project site for the inactive season, then construction activities can continue into or commence in the inactive season. Construction during the active period does not relieve the developer of compliance to Mitigation Measures Bio-2(b), Bio-2(c), Bio-2(d), and Bio-2(e).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Twenty-four hours prior to construction activities, the BSA should be surveyed for giant garter snakes. Survey of the (Project Impact Area) PIA should be repeated if a lapse in construction activity of two weeks or greater has occurred during the inactive season. c. Confine clearing to the minimal area necessary to facilitate construction activities. Flag and designate giant garter snake habitat within or adjacent to the BSA as Environmentally Sensitive Areas. These areas should be avoided by all construction personnel. d. Construction personnel shall receive Service-approved worker environmental awareness training. This training instructs workers to recognize giant garter snakes and their habitat(s). e. A qualified biologist shall be on-call during construction activities in the event that a giant garter snake is identified within or adjacent to the BSA. In the event that a snake is found, work shall stop immediately. The County will inform Caltrans who then will inform the Service to determine the appropriate measures needed to continue work and avoid take, or obtain an Incidental Take Statement. 			disturbing activities
3.	Biological Resources	<p>The following Mitigation Measures shall be implemented to address impacts to Migratory Birds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If project activities occur outside of the nesting season, no further mitigation is required. The nesting season is February 15-September 1. b. If project activities must occur during the nesting season, a qualified biologist will conduct pre-construction surveys for active raptor and migratory bird nests within 30 days of the onset of these activities. The survey area will include all of the BSA. If no active nests are found, no further mitigation is required. 	Applicant	Fresno County Design Division, Department of Public Works and Planning	Between September 2 and February 14 and ongoing throughout construction

		<p>c. Should any active nests be discovered within the biological survey area, the biologist will determine the appropriate construction setback distances based on the applicable CDFW guidelines and/or the biology of the affected species. Construction-free buffers will be identified on the ground with flagging fencing, or by other easily visible means, and will be maintained until the biologist has determined that the young have fledged.</p> <p>d. In order to avoid impacts to nesting cliff swallows, project activities that require direct impacts to nests, such as the bridge removal, shall occur outside of the nesting season. If removal is to occur during nesting season, suitable exclusionary devices shall be installed prior to February 15, when the bridge is vacant of nesting birds and before construction activities are to commence.</p>			
4.	Biological Resources	<p>The following Mitigation Measure shall be implemented to address impacts to Western Pond Turtle:</p> <p>a. A focused survey for western pond turtle shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than 24 hours prior to the start of construction. If no western pond turtles are observed, no further mitigation would be necessary. If this species is observed on or adjacent to the project site, a qualified biologist, in coordination with the CDFW, shall capture and relocate the turtle to appropriate habitat at a safe distance from the construction site.</p>	Applicant	Fresno County Design Division, Department of Public Works and Planning	No more than 24 hours before the start of construction
5.	Biological Resources	After completion of construction activities, remove any temporary fill and construction debris and, wherever feasible, restore disturbed areas to pre-project conditions.	Applicant	Fresno County Design Division, Department of Public Works and Planning	Following construction activities
6.	Biological Resources	A litter control program shall be instituted at the project site. All workers shall ensure their food scraps, paper wrappers, food containers, cans, bottles, and other trash from the project area are deposited in covered or closed trash containers. The trash containers shall be removed from the project area at the end of each working day.	Applicant	Fresno County Design Division, Department of Public Works and Planning	Ongoing throughout construction
7.	Biological Resources	No pets or firearms (except for federal, state, or local law enforcement officers and security personnel) shall be permitted on construction sites to avoid harassment, killing, or injuring of listed species.	Applicant	Fresno County Design Division, Department of Public Works and Planning	Ongoing throughout construction

Exhibit C

8.	Biological Resources	Nighttime construction shall be prohibited.	Applicant	Fresno County Design Division, Department of Public Works and Planning	Ongoing throughout construction
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*MITIGATION MEASURE – Measure specifically applied to the project to mitigate potential adverse environmental effects identified in the environmental document.

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