

FINAL NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Fresno County Regional Active Transportation Plan

May 2024

PREPARED FOR:

Fresno Council of Governments
2035 Tulare Street #201
Fresno, CA 93721

PREPARED BY:



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Final Initial Study/ Negative Declaration

Fresno County Regional Active Transportation Plan

Prepared for:

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Summary

This document is the Final Initial Study / Negative Declaration (IS/ND) on the potential environmental effects of the adoption of the Fresno County Regional Active Transportation Plan (ATP or Project). The proposed 2024 ATP is an update of the 2019 plan. It reflects projects that have been newly identified, modified, or completed since the release of the first plan; updated information on disadvantaged communities and safety data; current land use and plans in each city and the county; and updates to reflect best active transportation planning practices. The proposed Project is more fully described in Chapter Two – Project Description.

Note: This Final Initial Study / Negative Declaration (IS/ND) consists of the publicly circulated Draft IS/ND (published 4/11/2024 to 5/13/2024) with the addition of minor clarifying revisions, and the addition of Appendix B. Appendix B provides copies of the three comment letters received on the Draft IS/ND. Based on these comment letters, minor revisions to the document were made in Chapter 3.3 – Air Quality and Chapter 3.4 – Biological Resources. The minor changes did not result in any significant impacts nor did they increase the severity of a previous impact determination. All changes made to the Draft IS/ND are shown in underline for added text. There was no deleted text.

Fresno Council of Governments (FCOG or Fresno COG) will act as the Lead Agency for this project pursuant to the *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)* and the *CEQA Guidelines*.

1.2 Document Format

This IS/ND contains four chapters, and Appendices. Section 1, Introduction, provides an overview of the project and the CEQA environmental documentation process. Chapter 2, Project Description, provides a detailed description of project objectives and components. Chapter 3, Initial Study Checklist, presents the CEQA checklist and environmental analysis for all impact areas, mandatory findings of significance, and feasible mitigation measures. If the proposed Project does not have the potential to significantly impact a given issue area, the relevant section provides a brief discussion of the reasons why no impacts are expected. If the Project could have a potentially significant impact on a resource, the issue area discussion provides a description of potential impacts, and appropriate mitigation measures and/or permit requirements that would

reduce those impacts to a less than significant level. Chapter 4, List of Preparers, provides a list of key personnel involved in the preparation of the IS/ND.

Environmental impacts are separated into the following categories:

Potentially Significant Impact. This category is applicable if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant, and no feasible mitigation measures can be identified to reduce impacts to a less than significant level. If there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impact” entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.

Less Than Significant After Mitigation Incorporated. This category applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures would reduce an effect from a “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact”. The lead agency must describe the mitigation measure(s), and briefly explain how they would reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from earlier analyses may be cross-referenced).

Less Than Significant Impact. This category is identified when the project would result in impacts below the threshold of significance, and no mitigation measures are required.

No Impact. This category applies when a project would not create an impact in the specific environmental issue area. “No Impact” answers do not require a detailed explanation if they are adequately supported by the information sources cited by the lead agency, which show that the impact does not apply to the specific project (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis.)

Regardless of the type of CEQA document that must be prepared, the basic purpose of the CEQA process as set forth in the CEQA Guidelines Section 15002(a) is to:

- (1) Inform governmental decision makers and the public about the potential, significant environmental effects of proposed activities.
- (2) Identify ways that environmental damage can be avoided or significantly reduced.
- (3) Prevent significant, avoidable damage to the environment by requiring changes in projects through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures when the governmental agency finds the changes to be feasible.

- (4) Disclose to the public the reasons why a governmental agency approved the project in the manner the agency chose if significant environmental effects are involved.

According to Section 15070(b), a Negative Declaration is appropriate if it is determined that:

- (1) Revisions in the project plans or proposals made by or agreed to by the applicant before a proposed negative declaration and initial study are released for public review would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effects would occur, and
- (2) There is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project as revised may have a significant effect on the environment.

The Initial Study contained in Section Three of this document contains the analysis to support the determination that the environmental impacts of the proposed Project are less than significant and therefore a Negative Declaration will be adopted.

Chapter 2

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Description

2.1 Project Background

The Fresno Council of Governments (FCOG or Fresno COG) has developed an Active Transportation Plan (ATP or Plan) with the intent of providing a comprehensive document outlining the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. The purpose of the ATP is to equip Fresno COG's member agencies (County of Fresno and the fifteen incorporated cities of Clovis, Coalinga, Firebaugh, Fowler, Fresno, Huron, Kerman, Kingsburg, Mendota, Orange Cove, Parlier, Reedley, San Joaquin, Sanger, and Selma) with the tools to better compete for funding sources that support ATPs and related projects. The ATP is a planning tool and thus, no development will occur with its adoption. Future development under the ATP will be subject to site-specific CEQA and environmental review. The proposed Project area is Fresno County, and no land designation changes are proposed at this time. The ATP is included in this document as Appendix A.

Four cities in Fresno County (Clovis, Fresno, Reedley, and Selma) have recently updated or are currently updating their own active transportation plans. This plan supports connectivity to those cities as part of regional walking and biking networks.

Fresno COG created the ATP in coordination with its member agencies, the general public, and stakeholder groups such as local community group leaders, social media posts, and online surveys. Fresno COG encouraged public participation through open-house format workshops, as well as an online crowdsourced interactive map. The public was also invited to comment on the draft ATP projects during a public review and comment period.

As discussed in greater detail in Section 2.6 (Program vs Project Level CEQA Analysis), specific development is not being proposed under this ATP, and adoption of this CEQA document would not authorize any development. Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a network of safe, comfortable, and attractive sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit.

2.2 Goals, Policies & Vision

The ATP is guided by the following vision: A complete, safe, and comfortable network of paths, sidewalks, and bikeways that serves all residents of Fresno County. Specifically, this plan has been developed to:

- create a network of safe and attractive, sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit;
- create a network of regional bikeways that allows bicyclists to safely ride between cities and other regional destinations;
- create better connections to transit, especially for communities with limited access to other transportation options;

Through implementation of the ATP, Fresno COG seeks to achieve the following goals:

- increase walking and bicycling trips and thus reduce vehicle miles traveled and improve air quality in the region by creating user-friendly facilities; and
- increase safety by improving crosswalks and sidewalks and expanding the bikeway network.

Many local, regional, state, and federal plans and other documents were reviewed in development of the ATP. These plans and documents contain goals and policies as well as specific requirements related to active transportation in Fresno County.

Local Jurisdictions

Each jurisdiction has its own policies and requirements related to bicycling and walking. The documents containing these policies and requirements generally include:

- Existing bicycle and pedestrian plans
- General plans
- Standard drawings
- Municipal codes
- Specific plans and other plans

Specific local plans and documents are discussed in the Appendix C of the ATP.

Regional Plans

The following regional plans were also important in the development of the ATP:

- Fresno Council of Governments Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy
- Fresno County Transportation Authority Measure C
- Fresno Council of Governments Transportation Needs Assessment » Fresno Council of Governments Regional Safety Plan
- Golden State Corridor Design Plans
- Caltrans Bicycle Guide for District 6
- Caltrans District 6 Active Transportation Plan

State and Federal Plans and Policies

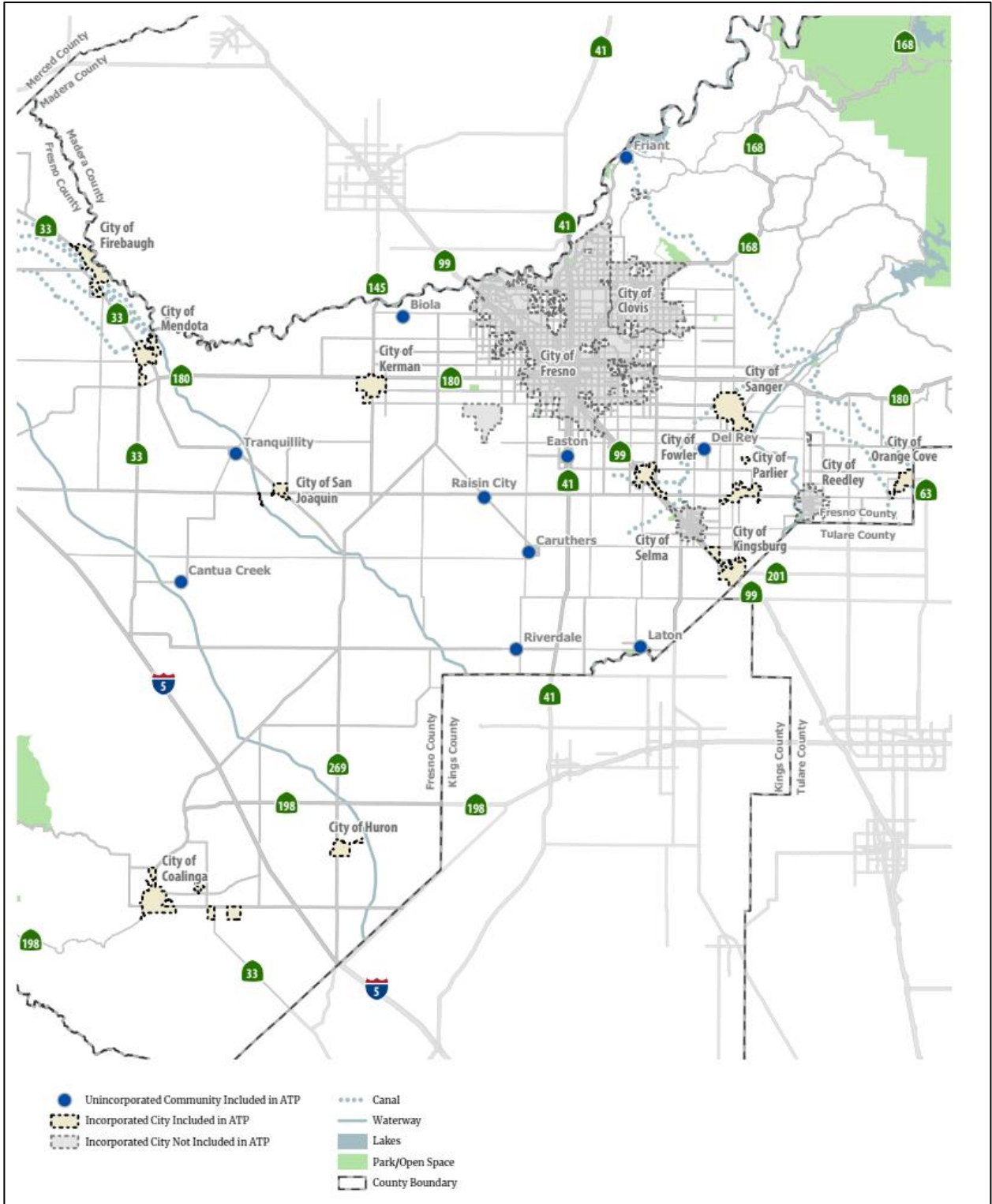
Several state and federal plans and other documents contain goals, policies, and requirements relevant to the ATP.

- California State Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- California Green Building Code
- California Assembly Bill 32
- California Senate Bill 375
- California Assembly Bill 1358
- California Assembly Bill 743
- US DOT Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations
- US Americans with Disabilities Act

2.3 Project Location

The various components/improvements recommended by the ATP are located throughout Fresno County. These recommendations cover incorporated cities, unincorporated communities, and County islands. Four cities in Fresno County (Clovis, Fresno, Reedley, and Selma) have recently updated or are currently updating their own active transportation plans. This plan supports connectivity to those cities as part of regional walking and biking networks. Figure 1 is a map showing the location of Fresno County and incorporated cities and unincorporated communities covered by this ATP, including cities that have their own ATPs.

Figure 1
ATP Regional Location



2.4 Setting and Existing Facilities

Environmental Setting

Fresno County is located near the center of the San Joaquin Valley, stretching approximately 100 miles (east to west) from the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the Coast Range Foothills. The County is bordered by the counties of San Benito, Merced, Madera, Mono, Inyo, Tulare, Kings, and Monterey.

There are 15 incorporated cities in Fresno County and several unincorporated communities within an area of approximately 6,000 square miles. Fresno County's population as of January 1, 2023 was estimated to be 1,011,499. There are approximately 346,456 housing units in the County.¹ Approximately 66% of the County's population resides in the cities of Fresno and Clovis. Outside of the cities, communities, and mountainous areas, most of the land in the County is flat and is used for agricultural production.

Existing Bicycle / Pedestrian Conditions

The existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities provide access to destinations throughout the County and serve as recreational assets themselves. These existing networks include shared-use paths, bike lanes and routes, sidewalks and crosswalk improvements. Table 1 shows current bicycle and pedestrian facilities by type (excluding the jurisdictions that have individual ATPs).

The ATP provides a summary of existing bicycle and pedestrian trips within the County. According to the ATP, the mode share of pedestrians for the journey to work in the County is approximately 1.5%, up from 0.9% at the time of the 2019 ATP, and for bicycles is approximately 0.4%, down from 1.9% at the time of the 2019 ATP.²

¹ Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State, 2020-2023, California Department of Finance. <https://dof.ca.gov/forecasting/demographics/estimates/e-5-population-and-housing-estimates-for-cities-counties-and-the-state-2020-2023/>. Accessed March 2024.

² Table 3-1: Trips to Work by Walking and Bicycling, Fresno COG 2024 Draft ATP, February 2024.

Table 1
Summary of Existing Walking and Bicycling Facilities (in miles)

Jurisdiction	Shared Use Path (Class I)	Bike Lane (Class II)	Bike Route (Class III)	Separated Bikeway (Class IV)	Sidewalks
Coalinga	2.0	4.7	0.0	0.2	83.5
Firebaugh	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.6
Fowler	0.7	3.6	0.0	0.0	49.2
Huron	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	19.6
Kerman	0.9	6.5	2.4	0.0	85.0
Kingsburg	2.5	4.0	0.0	0.0	79.1
Mendota	0.0	2.4	0.0	0.0	47.1
Orange Cove	1.2	1.1	0.0	0.0	33.7
Parlier	1.1	6.0	0.0	0.0	57.7
San Joaquin	0.9	1.1	0.0	0.0	14.7
Sanger	2.1	11.6	0.0	0.0	135.2
Unincorporated Fresno County	3.7	88.3	0.0	0.0	133.1
Total:	16.9	129.5	2.4	0.2	771.5

Source: Fresno COG Draft ATP, February 2024

2.5 Project Description

The proposed project under CEQA is the adoption of the Fresno County Regional Active Transportation Plan. The 2024 plan is an update of the 2019 plan. It reflects projects that have been newly identified, modified, or completed since the release of the first plan; updated information on disadvantaged communities and safety data; current land use and plans in each city and the county; and updates to reflect best active transportation planning practices.

The ATP itself contains various programs, policies, and recommendations pertaining to the development of pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The ATP provides a full description of

conceptual and proposed improvements throughout the County (See Appendix A), which are summarized herein.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Networks

The proposed pedestrian and bicycle networks are designed to fulfill the vision for walking, bicycling, and supporting facilities and programs for the Fresno County region. The build-out of pedestrian and bicycle networks are the long-term vision of the active transportation facilities for the region. The networks include shared-use paths, bike lanes and routes, sidewalks, and crosswalk improvements. The proposed networks are designed to connect to neighborhoods in each community, to provide access to key destinations, and to serve as recreational assets. Details of each jurisdiction's networks are presented in Chapters 5 to 17 of the ATP and are summarized in Table 2.

The networks were developed with the following primary considerations:

- Connectivity to key destinations, especially schools, parks, and civic buildings
- Collision history
- Previous plans
- Connections to adjacent jurisdictions' networks
- Discussions with jurisdiction staff, school district staff, and law enforcement
- Public comment

Table 2 summarizes the proposed network recommendations of the ATP.

Table 2
Summary of Planned Walking and Bicycling Facilities (In Miles)

Jurisdiction	Shared Use Path (Class I)	Bike Lane (Class II)	Bike Route (Class III)	Separated Bikeway (Class IV)	Sidewalks
Coalinga	7.6	4.5	5.7	0.0	3.0
Firebaugh	5.7	8.1	2.7	4.8	2.3
Fowler	8.1	5.0	2.5	1.2	2.6
Huron	3.1	3.6	0.3	0.8	2.6
Kerman	1.6	16.2	6.9	0.0	1.0
Kingsburg	2.0	11.8	0.5	0.0	5.1
Mendota	5.5	9.7	0.7	0.0	1.7
Orange Cove	3.4	14.1	0.0	0.0	3.6
Parlier	1.8	3.9	1.4	4.3	1.8
San Joaquin	2.9	1.2	0.8	1.0	1.9
Sanger	14.7	25.6	1.0	0.0	7.5
Unincorporated Fresno County	218.5	346.6	266.9	19.0	44.8
Total:	274.9	450.3	289.4	31.1	77.9

Source: Fresno COG Draft ATP, February 2024

Crossing and Intersection Improvements

Several crossing improvement projects are also proposed in Chapters 5 to 17 of the ATP to improve pedestrian comfort and safety. The decision to install a marked crosswalk or other crosswalk enhancement should take into account good engineering judgement, engineering study, and/or other necessary considerations as appropriate for each individual location.

Some of these considerations include:

- Pedestrian travel demand. Demand should include both existing demand and latent demand, the increase in pedestrians that would result from the improvement.

- Service of a facility or use that generates higher pedestrian travel or serves a vulnerable population (for example, children, elderly, persons with disabilities). This may include schools, hospitals, senior centers, recreation/community centers, libraries, parks, or trails. Service of such facilities can justify pedestrian improvements to areas of demand less than 20 pedestrians/ hour.
- Sight distance requirements, using appropriate stopping sight distance guidance from AASHTO's A Policy on Geometric Design for Highways and Streets or the Caltrans Highway Design Manual.
- Delay to pedestrian movements.
- Distance to nearest crossing.
- Guidance of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and FHWA's Guide for Improving Pedestrian Safety at Uncontrolled Crossing Locations

High Volume Regional Connecting Roads

The region is connected by many roads that serve large volumes of traffic, often at high speeds. Where these roads pass through cities, speeds are generally slower, but traffic volumes are frequently still high, and the roads must serve pedestrians, bicyclists, and local vehicle traffic as well as traffic moving between communities. Careful design is required to ensure that these roads serve all users, are safe for all users, and do not serve as a barrier to bicyclists and pedestrians.

To serve the needs of all of these different users, Caltrans developed *Main Street, California: A Guide for Improving Community and Transportation Vitality*, most recently updated in 2013. This document provides guidance to create streets that are multimodal, livable, and sustainable. It provided good guidance for use when regional roads pass through cities. The ATP contains policies and strategies to allow for components of the ATP to occur on high volume roads. In rural areas outside of cities and unincorporated communities, bike lanes, separated bikeways, or shared-used paths should be used to support walking and biking.

Bicycle Parking

Current bicycle parking and recommended additions to bicycle parking are presented for each jurisdiction in Chapters 5 to 17 of the ATP.

Supporting Programs: Wayfinding

Wayfinding signage can be used on both bicycle and pedestrian facilities to direct users to connecting facilities and key destinations. Good wayfinding signs can also encourage pedestrians

and bicyclists to visit local business. These signs provide the most value at path junctions and at intersections of key bicycling and walking routes. Chapter 9B of the California MUTCD provides guidance on sign design and installation. These standard signs may also be augmented by signs depicting distances in miles to encourage walking and bicycling. Cities such as Kingsburg and neighborhoods or regions with distinctive branding can also include this branding in these signs.

Most jurisdictions do not have wayfinding signage. Good wayfinding signs can direct users to connecting facilities and key destinations also encourage pedestrians and bicyclists to visit local business. These signs are recommended at trail junctions and at intersections of key bicycling and walking routes.

Supporting Programs

Chapter 3 of the ATP recommends several other programs intended to maximize the success of the ATP, including educational programs, personal safety and lighting resources, and maintenance programs, pedestrian and bicyclist counts, and expenditure tracking.

Implementation

Implementation of the planned bikeway and pedestrian network is anticipated to occur in multiple ways:

- Active transportation projects pursued to implement the plan
- In conjunction with adjacent land development projects as each jurisdiction requires those projects to construct roadway and sidewalk frontage improvements in accordance with jurisdiction standards and the planned facilities identified in this plan
- In conjunction with maintenance and capacity enhancement projects, such as slurry seals, pavement reconstruction, roadway widening, or sidewalk rehabilitation projects

Implementation will require many years to complete; implementation of priority projects will be targeted for completion in the next five to ten years. Implementation of each project is dependent upon availability and acquisition of funding. Projects requiring land acquisition or utility relocation will require extra time to implement. Improvements associated with work on adjacent roadways or development of adjacent land uses will provide opportunities for implementation relatively easily or at lower cost than if implemented separately. In these cases, lower priority improvements may be implemented before higher-priority improvements, depending on the location of these land development and roadway projects. Implementation of each project is also dependent on detailed feasibility and design studies based on local conditions.

Completion of projects in this plan should be reported by jurisdiction staff to the city councils and board of supervisors and on each city's website. Fresno COG will update this plan periodically to reflect changing conditions and needs and progress toward completion.

Prioritization

The elements of these networks were prioritized as “High Priority” or “Other” (not high priority) for all jurisdictions based on several criteria:

- Proximity to key destinations, including schools, parks, bus stops, and activity centers
- Collision locations
- Disadvantaged community indicators
- Senior and youth populations
- Public comment
- Judgement of local jurisdiction staff

Lists of projects with priorities are provided in Appendix D (Project Priorities and Cost Estimates) of the ATP.

Costs

The estimated costs to implement each type of facility are provided in Appendix D of the ATP and summarized in Table 3 below. Summarized costs for each jurisdiction are provided in Chapters 5 to 17. On-street bike routes and bike lanes are the least expensive to construct per mile, while separated bikeways, sidewalks, and shared-use paths are most expensive to construct. If roads must be widened, utilities relocated, or land acquired to implement any of these facilities, costs will increase. However, many of these facilities may be implemented during development of adjacent land uses or in conjunction with other projects. Therefore, some of these costs will not be directly borne by the jurisdiction.

Project cost estimates are based on local unit cost estimates. These estimates were developed based on relevant project experience in the area. Assumptions for each bikeway type and details of these estimates are described in Appendix D. Note that these are high-level cost estimates, therefore more detailed study and design of individual project will be required to refine them.

**Table 3
Project Cost Estimates**

Facility Type	Cost Per Mile	High Priority	Total
Sidewalk	\$369,600	\$10,733,800	\$28,709,100
Shared-Use Path (Class I)	\$955,700	\$74,745,297	\$262,569,018
Bike Lane (Class II)*	\$401,400	\$58,500,036	\$180,674,154
Bike Route (Class III)*	\$16,000	\$947,040	\$4,628,000
Separated Bikeway (Class IV)*	\$633,600	\$13,185,216	\$19,698,624
Intersection improvements		\$5,566,900	\$10,761,500
Overcrossing		\$630,000	\$630,000
Total		\$164,308,289	\$507,103,396

* Distance measured by centerline

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2023, Mark Thomas & Company, 2023

Unit costs for other equipment, including installation, are presented in Table 4 below.

**Table 4
Unit Costs for Other Equipment**

Equipment Type	Cost
Bike Rack (each)	\$2,900
Wayfinding Signage (each)	\$790
Lighting (single street light)	\$15,000

Funding

Regional, state, and federal funding is available for walking and biking projects and programs. Appendix E of the ATP, Funding Sources, summarizes these funding sources including their applicability to projects, planning efforts, and programs proposed in this plan.

The following funding sources are recommended as the most applicable for the projects in this plan:

Regional

- Fresno County Transportation Authority Measure C » SJVAPCD Bikeway Incentive Program

State

- Active Transportation Program » Highway Safety Improvement Program
- California Department of Parks & Recreation Recreational Trails Program

Federal

- Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program » Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program
- Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program » Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program » Reconnecting Communities: Highways to Boulevards
- Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grant Programs » Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program
- Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Grant Program

In addition to these funding programs, two other funding sources may be considered:

- Local Developer Fees: Local fees from land development projects can provide match funding or full implementation of projects where there is a nexus to the project.
- Federal and State Earmarks: Opportunities to secure funding through federal and state legislation via earmarks has occurred at both the federal and state levels. There may be an opportunity to highlight the need for a project with Congressional Representatives and State Assembly members and Senators. Given the often short time frames for consideration, consider proactively developing a fact sheet with funding needs and benefits for potential projects in advance of a request.

2.6 Program vs Project Level CEQA Analysis

As discussed previously, the Project (under CEQA), is the adoption of the proposed ATP. The ATP is a program/policy-level document, which means it does not provide project-specific

construction details that would allow for project-level CEQA analysis. Furthermore, specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and adoption of this CEQA document would not authorize any development. Information such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings will be required in order for future “project-level” CEQA analysis to occur. Therefore, this CEQA document has been prepared at a “program-level”. Under CEQA, a programmatic document is prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and/or for a project that will be implemented over a long period of time. This CEQA document, prepared at a program level, is therefore adequate for adoption of the ATP by Fresno COG.

As Lead Agency, Fresno COG is responsible for adoption of this CEQA document. In addition, if a Responsible Agency (see list of responsible agencies on page 3-2) decides to approve the ATP, it should file a Notice of Determination with the County Clerk. (CEQA Guidelines Section 15096).

Implementation of the physical components of the ATP will occur over years to decades as funding and/or approval occur. Many of the individual projects contained in the ATP will be subject to various CEQA Exemptions, while others may likely be analyzed using a Mitigated Negative Declaration, or additional National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation depending on funding source. The level of documentation will be decided by the implementing agency. Table 5 below provides typical examples of the type of CEQA documentation that may be required for certain types of projects.

**Table 5
Typical Environmental Requirements**

Project Type	CEQA Exemption	Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration	NEPA / other technical studies
Signage, bicycle parking, minor striping, sidewalk improvements, some lighting	X		
Class III Bike Routes	X		
Class II Bike Lanes	X	X	X
Class I Bikeways (trails, paseos, paths); bicycle/pedestrian bridges		X	X

CEQA Exemptions

A typical exemption for bicycle/pedestrian projects is:

- Section 15301 (c) – Existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities.

Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declarations

An Initial Study and Negative – or Mitigated Negative Declaration may be required when a project *may* have a significant impact on the environment. Examples include projects that involve construction in a potentially biological / culturally sensitive area, have potential impacts to existing traffic, have negative aesthetic impacts, or other reasons. Although it is not anticipated that future projects would require full-scale environmental impact reports (EIR), if significant and unavoidable impacts were to occur as a result of a project, an EIR may be required.

NEPA and other technical studies

When a project will be constructed using federal aid transportation funds, it may trigger NEPA requirements. Federal aid transportation funding in particular requires coordination through Caltrans, which can result in the preparation of a Preliminary Environmental Screening (PES) Form, and Environmental Assessment (EA), and/or the preparation of other technical studies (biological, cultural, traffic, etc.).

2.7 Other Required Approvals

This ATP meets all the current requirements of the statewide Active Transportation Program guidelines (as described in Appendix A of the ATP)

The proposed project would include, but not be limited to, the following regulatory requirements:

- The adoption of this Negative Declaration by Fresno COG.
- Adoption by the Responsible Agencies (CEQA Guidelines Section 15096).
- Compliance with other federal, state and local requirements.
- The ATP is also intended to be used by the Fresno Council of Governments to identify projects for the Fresno County Regional Transportation Plan and support the use of funds provided through the Fresno County Measure C program

Chapter 3

IMPACT ANALYSIS

Initial Study Checklist

3.1 Environmental Checklist Form

Project title:

Adoption of the 2024 Fresno County Regional Active Transportation Plan

Lead agency name and address:

Fresno Council of Governments
2035 Tulare Street, #201
Fresno, CA 93721

Contact person and phone number:

Simran Jhutti, Senior Regional Planner
jhutti@fresnocog.org
Fresno Council of Governments
(559) 233-4148 (ext. 241)

Project location:

The various component/improvements recommended by the ATP are located throughout Fresno County. Figure 1 shows the approximate boundaries of the ATP. The ATP (Appendix A) provides location maps of potential project components.

Project sponsor's name/address:

Fresno Council of Governments
2035 Tulare Street, #201
Fresno, CA 93721

General plan designation:

Various – located throughout the County

Zoning:

Various – located throughout the County

Description of project:

The proposed project is the adoption of the Fresno County Regional Active Transportation Plan. The ATP itself contains various programs, policies, and recommendations pertaining to the development of pedestrian, bicycle, and rolling (by wheelchair or scooter) facilities.

The 2024 plan is an update of the 2019 ATP plan. It reflects projects that have been newly identified, modified, or completed since the release of the first plan; updated information on disadvantaged communities and safety data; current land use and plans in each city and the county; and updates to reflect best active transportation planning practices.

The proposed networks are designed to build upon existing shared-use paths; to connect regional routes and paths; to provide access to key destinations; and to serve as recreational assets. See Section Two – Project Description.

Surrounding land uses/setting:

Various – located throughout the County

Other public agencies whose approval or consultation is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, participation agreements):

- Fresno Council of Governments (Lead Agency - CEQA adoption)
- California State Clearinghouse
- Responsible Agencies:
 - County of Fresno
 - City of Coalinga
 - City of Firebaugh
 - City of Fowler
 - City of Huron
 - City of Kerman
 - City of Kingsburg
 - City of Mendota
 - City of Orange Cove
 - City of Parlier
 - City of San Joaquin
 - City of Sanger

3.2 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 Resources and Forest Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geology / Soils | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & 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 | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |

3.3 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.

Simran Jhutti, Senior Regional Planner

Date

Fresno Council of Governments

I. AESTHETICS

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	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"/>

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Fresno County has a diverse visual landscape that gradually changes from east to west. Starting from the east are the Sierra Nevada Mountains which are rich in coniferous forests and provide scenic views of the varied topography. There are several large reservoirs scattered throughout the Sierra which provide recreational as well as scenic opportunities. The San Joaquin and Kings Rivers, which originate high in the Sierra Mountains, are the County’s two major rivers. Two scenic highways, Highway 168 and Highway 180, extend down from the Sierras and terminate in the Eastside Valley area. In addition, there are several scenic drives that wind their way through the Sierra and Sierra Foothill areas. The County’s built environment is located throughout the valley and much of it located along the Highway 99 corridor. Agricultural lands consisting of orchards, vineyards, ranches, and various row crops start on the fringe of these communities and extend to cover much of the valley floor. These large farms provide a sense of open space, emphasize the county’s rural and farming heritage, and allow motorists opportunities for unrestricted panoramic views. The Coastal Foothills, containing gentle rolling hills with scattered

oak trees, extend westward past Interstate 5. Due to the continuous unrestrictive views of adjacent coastal foothills, Interstate 5 (I-5) is an officially designated scenic highway.¹

RESPONSES

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

No Impact. Construction and operation of project components contained in the ATP could potentially impact scenic resources and vistas; degrade the existing visual character of the area; and/or create a new source of light or glare. Although most of the project components are at ground level and would not impose a significant visual impact, there are components such as signage, trail lighting, bicycle racks, pedestrian bridges etc. that could potentially impact visual resources. Individual projects would be subject to site-specific environmental review, at which time the implementing agency would identify the potential impacts to aesthetic resources.

Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a network of safe, comfortable, and attractive sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit. Individual project details such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

¹ Fresno County General Plan EIR, Page 4.16-1.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any aesthetic impacts because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

II. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to 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 Farmland, 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"/>

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Fresno County is differentiated into five geographical regions including: the Coast Range; Westside Valley; Eastside Valley; Sierra foothills; and Sierra Mountains. Most of the high-quality farmland areas are located in the Eastside Valley. Land west of I-5 (the Coast Range foothills area) is generally used for cattle grazing and mineral extraction, although there is also a small amount of irrigated fruit and nut tree crops, row crops, and dry crop farming in that area. The Westside Valley is typically used for row and field crop production, with some fruit and nut tree crops. The Sierra Foothill area supports cattle grazing and citrus production at the lower elevations. Land in the Sierra Nevada area is not typically farmed; however, it is used for cattle grazing. Along the west side of the City of Fresno, Clovis, Sanger, and Reedley, and elsewhere in the Eastside Valley, farms generally grow tree fruits, almonds, and raisin grapes. On the west side of SR 99, farms mostly grow grapes, almonds, apples, and alfalfa. Near the Fresno Slough area of the Eastside Valley, row crops are predominant. Near I-5, as well as on the North and South Valley area, almonds, row crops, field crops, apples, and some grapes are grown.

Farming and agricultural related businesses comprise a significant component of the local economy. Several factors contribute to the success of agricultural operations in Fresno County, not the least of which are excellent soil and climatic growing conditions. Workforce and transportation availability are also key factors.²

RESPONSES

- a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to 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?

² Fresno County General Plan EIR, Page 4.3-2.

- 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?

No Impact. Construction and operation of project components contained in the ATP could potentially impact agricultural resources; conflict with Williamson Act parcels; and/or impact forest land resources. Although most of the project components would occur within existing right of way and outside of agricultural or forest land, it is conceivable that a new trail or path could be placed on or near such lands. Individual projects would be subject to site-specific environmental review, at which time the implementing agency would identify the potential impacts to agricultural and forest resources.

Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a network of safe, comfortable, and attractive sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit. Individual project details such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any agricultural impacts because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

III. AIR QUALITY

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors or adversely affecting a substantial number of people)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Fresno County lies within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin, which is managed by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD or Air District). National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) have been established for the following criteria pollutants: carbon monoxide (CO), ozone (O₃), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}), and lead (Pb). The CAAQS also set standards for sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, and visibility.

Air quality plans or attainment plans are used to bring the applicable air basin into attainment with all state and federal ambient air quality standards designed to protect the health and safety of residents within that air basin. Areas are classified under the Federal Clean Air Act as either “attainment”, “non-attainment”, or “extreme non-attainment” areas for each criteria pollutant based on whether the NAAQS have been achieved or not. Attainment relative to the State standards is determined by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). The San Joaquin Valley is designated as a State non-attainment area and Federal extreme non-attainment area for O₃, a State and Federal non-attainment area for

PM_{2.5}, a State non-attainment area for PM₁₀, and Federal and State attainment area for CO, SO₂, NO₂, and Pb.

Standards and attainment status for listed pollutants in the Air District can be found in Table 1.³ Note that both state and federal standards are presented.

**Table 1
Standards and Attainment Status for Listed Pollutants in the Air District**

	Federal Standard	California Standard
Ozone	0.07 ppm (8-hr avg, 2015)	0.07 ppm (8-hr avg) 0.09 ppm (1-hr avg)
Carbon Monoxide	9.0 ppm (8-hr avg) 35.0 ppm (1-hr avg)	9.0 ppm (8-hr avg) 20.0 ppm (1-hr avg)
Nitrogen Dioxide	0.053 ppm (annual avg) 100 ppb (1-hr avg)	0.30 ppm (annual avg) 0.18 ppm (1-hr avg)
Sulfur Dioxide	0.5 ppm (3-hr avg) 0.075 ppm (1-hr avg)	0.04 ppm (24-hr avg) 0.25 ppm (1hr avg)
Lead	0.15 µg/m ³ (rolling 3-month avg)	1.5 µg/m ³ (30-day avg)
Particulate Matter (PM10)	150 µg/m ³ (24-hr avg) Revoked (annual)	20 µg/m ³ (annual avg) 50 µg/m ³ (24-hr avg)
Particulate Matter (PM2.5)	<u>(2012 standard)</u> 12 µg/m ³ (annual avg) 35 µg/m ³ (24-hr avg)	12 µg/m ³ (annual avg)

µg/m³ = micrograms per cubic meter

Additional State regulations include:

CARB Portable Equipment Registration Program – This program was designed to allow owners and operators of portable engines and other common construction or farming equipment to register their equipment under a statewide program so they may operate it statewide without the need to obtain a permit from the local air district.

U.S. EPA/CARB Off-Road Mobile Sources Emission Reduction Program – The California Clean Air Act (CCAA) requires CARB to achieve a maximum degree of emissions reductions from off-

³ Ambient Air Quality Standards & Attainment Status, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. <https://ww2.valleyair.org/air-quality-information/ambient-air-quality-standards-valley-attainmnet-status/>. Accessed March 2024.

road mobile sources to attain State Ambient Air Quality Standards (SAAQS); off- road mobile sources include most construction equipment. Tier 1 standards for large compression-ignition engines used in off-road mobile sources went into effect in California in 1996. These standards, along with ongoing rulemaking, address emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOX) and toxic particulate matter from diesel engines. CARB is currently developing a control measure to reduce diesel PM and NOX emissions from existing off-road diesel equipment throughout the state.

California Global Warming Solutions Act – Established in 2006, Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32) required that California’s GHG emissions be reduced to 1990 levels by the year 2020. The State’s regulatory program implementing the 2008 Scoping Plan is now fully mature. All regulations envisioned in the Scoping Plan have been adopted by the responsible agencies and the effectiveness of those regulations have been estimated by the agencies during the adoption process and then are tracked to verify their effectiveness after implementation. The Governor Brown, in the introduction to Executive Order B-30-15, states “California is on track to meet or exceed the current target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, as established in the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32).” The progress was evident in emission inventories prepared by CARB, which showed that the State inventory dropped below 1990 levels for the first time in 2016.⁴ The State projects that it will meet the 2020 target and achieve continued progress towards meeting the 2017 Scoping Plan target for 2030.⁵ CARB adopted the 2022 Scoping Plan on December 16, 2022 that addresses long-term GHG goals set forth by AB 1279. The 2022 Scoping Plan outlines the State’s pathway to achieve carbon neutrality and an 85 percent reduction in 1990 emissions goal by 2045. In the 2022 Scoping Plan, CARB advocates for compliance with a local GHG reduction strategy consistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15183.5.

⁴ California Air Resources Board (CARB). 2018. Climate Pollutants Fall Below 1990 Levels for the First Time. Website: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/news/climate-pollutants-fall-below-1990-levels-first-time>. Accessed March, 2024.

⁵ California Air Resources Board (CARB). 2017. The 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan Update, the Proposed Strategy for Achieving California’s 2030 Greenhouse Gas Target. January 17, 2017. Website: https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/scopingplan/2030sp_pp_final.pdf. Accessed March 2024.

RESPONSES

- a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?
- b. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?
- c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?
- d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

No Impact. The State Legislature and Senate Bill (SB) 99 specified that one of the main goals of the Active Transportation Program is to:

“Advance the active transportation efforts of regional agencies to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals as established pursuant to Senate Bill 375 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008) and Senate Bill 391 (Chapter 585, Statutes of 2009).”

By definition, Fresno COG’s ATP would potentially reduce vehicle trips and therefore have a beneficial impact by helping to reduce emissions of greenhouse gas, particulate matter, and other pollutants. In addition, adoption of the ATP would not affect population or employment growth and as a result would not result in growth that exceeds growth estimates of the County’s General Plan or local Community Plans, nor would it generate emissions beyond what have been accounted for in regional air quality plans.

Construction of some components of the ATP, however, has the potential to produce short-term emissions and odors through the use of construction equipment, movement of dirt, etc. Individual future projects would be subject to site-specific environmental review, at which time the implementing agency would identify the potential air quality impacts, including construction emission calculations. Individual future projects would be required to evaluate and implement applicable construction emission reduction measures pursuant to SJVAPCD rules, regulations and guidelines.

As previously discussed, Fresno COG’s ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in the County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a network of safe, comfortable, and attractive sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit. Individual project details such as precise

project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any air quality impacts because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. In addition, one of the goals of the ATP is to reduce vehicle miles traveled. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

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

- 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?

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
--------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------	------------------------------	-----------

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a 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"/>

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Fresno County supports a rich variety of habitat types as defined by the Wildlife Habitat Relationship (WHR) which include the following 28 habitats: annual/ruderal grassland, valley oak woodland, pasture, cropland, valley-foothill riparian, fresh emergent wetland, lacustrine, blue oak woodland, blue oakfoothill pine woodland, mixed chaparral, chamise-redshank chaparral, vernal pool, alkali scrub, orchard, vineyard, montaine chaparral, montaine hardwood-conifer, montaine riparian, sierran mixed conifer, ponderosa pine, Jeffery pine, white fir, lodgepole pine, subalpine, conifer, alpine dwarf scrub, wet meadow, bitterbush, and juniper.

Special-Status Species

Over 164 special-status plant and wildlife species are known to occur in Fresno County. Special-status plants and wildlife have been designated as “rare,” “threatened,” “endangered,” or “species of concern,” under federal or state endangered species legislation, by state resource agencies, or by groups such as the California Native Plant Society (CNPS). The special-status species with potential to occur in Fresno County were determined by review of the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB) and CNPS electronic inventory of vascular plants. In general, special-status species are associated with a specific habitat such as vernal pools,

chaparral, oak woodland, or riparian corridors, however some species can utilize common habitat such as cropland.⁶

RESPONSES

- 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 Game or U.S. 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, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. 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?
- 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?
- e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a 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?

No Impact. The proposed adoption of the ATP would not result in direct physical changes, but future development of project components contained in the ATP could potentially affect protected biological species and/or habitats. Construction and operation of trails, paths, signage, etc. may occur in biologically sensitive areas. Individual projects would be subject to site-specific environmental review, at which time the implementing agency would identify the potential presence of endangered or listed species and mitigation measures that would reduce any impacts

⁶ Fresno County General Plan EIR, Page 4.9-1.

to a less than significant level. Future projects under the ATP will be subject to the rules and regulations of the California Department of Fish & Wildlife as well as the Fish and Game Code, the California Endangered Species Act, and other regulatory authorities as applicable. Future projects may be subject to protocol-level surveys for special status species, regulatory permitting, and other biological evaluation as necessary. Future projects will be evaluated on a project by project basis.

As previously discussed, Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a network of safe, comfortable, and attractive sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit. Individual project details such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. This includes future biological evaluation. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any biological impacts because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §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 §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Cultural resources in Fresno County reflect the area’s history of settlement by Native Americans, Europeans, Mexicans and others, as well as periods of economic and social change such as those associated with the Gold Rush and development of agriculture and rail transportation. This region of the San Joaquin Valley, which extends from the forested Sierra Nevada to the Coastal Range, has supported an abundance of wildlife, riparian habitats and marshes. Records indicate that at least five Native American tribes resided in the area. The presence of archaeological and historic resources would generally be most likely along rivers and streams and in other areas with ground cover or other features which could have invited and sustained habitation. Fresno County’s rich history has produced a large stock of historically significant homes, public buildings, and landmarks including important ethnic historical sites. The physical environment of Fresno County has been greatly altered by human modification over the past 150 years, including archaeological resources which may have been buried or displaced. The California Department of Parks and Recreation records indicate that at least five Native American tribes resided in the area.⁷

⁷ Fresno County General Plan EIR, Pages 4.7-1 and 4.7-2.

RESPONSES

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

No Impact. The proposed adoption of the ATP would not result in direct physical changes, but future development of project components contained in the ATP could potentially affect protected cultural resources. Construction and operation of trails, paths, signage, etc. may occur in culturally sensitive areas. Individual projects would be subject to site-specific environmental review, at which time the implementing agency would identify the potential presence of cultural or historical resources.

As previously discussed, Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a network of safe, comfortable, and attractive sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit. Individual project details such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any cultural or historical impacts because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

VI. ENERGY

Would the project:

		Less than Significant		
	Potentially Significant Impact	With Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact

- a. Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?

- b. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

California’s total energy consumption was the second-highest in the nation in 2020, but its per capita energy consumption was less than in all but three other states. In 2022, California was the fourth-largest electricity producer in the nation. The state was also the nation’s third-largest electricity consumer. In 2022, renewable resources including hydroelectric power and small-scale, customer-sited solar power, accounted for 49% of California's in-state electricity generation, while natural gas fueled another 42%, and nuclear power supplied almost all the rest.⁸

Energy usage is typically quantified using the British Thermal Unit (BTU). As a point of reference, the approximately amounts of energy contained in common energy sources are as follows⁹:

Energy Source/Fuel	BTUs
Motor Gasoline	120,214 per gallon
Natural Gas	1,036 per cubic foot
Electricity	3,412 per kilowatt-hour

⁸ California Profile Overview, U.S. Energy Information Administration. <https://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=CA>. Accessed March 2024.

⁹ U.S. Energy Information Administration. Energy Units and Calculators Explained. <https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/units-and-calculators/british-thermal-units.php>. Accessed March 2024.

California energy consumption in 2021 was approximately 6,784.8 trillion BTU, as provided in Table 4.¹⁰ This represents an approximately 2.4% decrease from energy consumption in 2020.

Table 4
2021 California Energy Consumption

End User	BTU of energy consumed (in trillions)	Percentage of total consumption
Residential	1,228.5	18.2
Commercial	1,156.8	17.1
Industrial	1,597.5	23.6
Transportation	2,802	41.2
Total	6,784.8	--

Total electrical consumption by Fresno County in 2022 was 8,384.41 GWh¹¹, while total Gas consumption was 319.44 million Therms.¹²

RESPONSES

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

No Impact. The proposed adoption of the ATP would not result in direct physical changes, but future development of project components contained in the ATP could potentially affect energy consumption. Construction and operation of trails, paths, signage, street lighting etc. may require additional energy. Individual projects would be subject to site-specific environmental review, at

¹⁰ California Profile Overview, U.S. Energy Information Administration. <https://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=CA#tabs-2>. Accessed March 2024.

¹¹ California Energy Commission. Electricity Consumption by County. <http://ecdms.energy.ca.gov/elecbycounty.aspx>. Accessed March 2024.

¹² California Energy Commission. Gas Consumption by County. <http://ecdms.energy.ca.gov/gasbycounty.aspx>. Accessed March 2024.

which time the implementing agency would identify the potential presence of cultural or historical resources.

As previously discussed, Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a network of safe, comfortable, and attractive sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit. Individual project details such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not result in increased demand for energy because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

VII. 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:

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 most recently adopted Uniform Building Code

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

creating substantial risks to life or property?

- 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?

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

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

There are a number of active and potentially active faults within and adjacent to Fresno County. Faults within Fresno County and major active and potentially active faults in the region are described below. Two of the active faults, which are located near Coalinga and Panoche in the West Valley, have been designated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones (EFZ). Most of Fresno County, from approximately Interstate 5 (I-5) east, is located in Seismic Zone 3, as defined by the most recent California Uniform Building Code. Areas in the Coast Range and foothills and a small area along the Fresno County-Inyo County boundary are located in Seismic Zone 4.¹³ Groundshaking is the primary seismic hazard in Fresno County, because of the County's seismic setting and record of historical activity. Most of the already urbanized locations in the East and West Valleys and Sierra Nevada Foothills areas are subject to less intense seismic effects than locations in the Coast Range Foothills and Sierra Nevada Mountain areas.¹⁴

RESPONSES

- a-i. Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving 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.

¹³ Fresno County General Plan EIR Background Report.

¹⁴ Fresno County General Plan EIR, Page 4.13-1.

- a-ii. Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving strong seismic ground shaking?
- a-iii. Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?
- a-iv. Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving 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 most recently adopted Uniform Building Code creating substantial risks to life or property?
- 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?
- f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

No Impact. The proposed adoption of the ATP would not result in direct physical changes, however future development of project components contained in the ATP (trails, bridges, small structures, etc.) would be subject to existing building codes, the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Zoning Act, and other state and federal regulations related to seismic and geological hazards. Implementation of General Plan policies, Community Plan Policies, and Best Management Practices (BMPs) would further minimize such potential impacts. Examples of BMPs include hydroseeding, erosion control blankets, installing silt fences, etc.

As previously discussed, Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a network of safe, comfortable, and attractive sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit. Individual project details such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as

necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any geological or seismic hazards because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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b. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Various gases in the earth’s atmosphere play an important role in moderating the earth’s surface temperature. Solar radiation enters earth’s atmosphere from space and a portion of the radiation is absorbed by the earth’s surface. The earth emits this radiation back toward space, but the properties of the radiation change from high-frequency solar radiation to lower-frequency infrared radiation. GHGs are transparent to solar radiation, but are effective in absorbing infrared radiation. Consequently, radiation that would otherwise escape back into space is retained, resulting in a warming of the earth’s atmosphere. This phenomenon is known as the greenhouse effect. Scientific research to date indicates that some of the observed climate change is a result of increased GHG emissions associated with human activity. Among the GHGs contributing to the greenhouse effect are water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), ozone, Nitrous Oxide (NO_x), and chlorofluorocarbons. Human-caused emissions of these GHGs in excess of natural ambient concentrations are considered responsible for enhancing the greenhouse effect. GHG emissions contributing to global climate change are attributable, in large part, to human activities associated with the industrial/manufacturing, utility, transportation, residential, and agricultural sectors.

In California, the transportation sector is the largest emitter of GHGs, followed by electricity generation. Global climate change is, indeed, a global issue. GHGs are global pollutants, unlike criteria pollutants and TACs (which are pollutants of regional and/or local concern). Global climate change, if it occurs, could potentially affect water resources in California. Rising temperatures could be anticipated to result in sea-level rise (as polar ice caps melt) and possibly

change the timing and amount of precipitation, which could alter water quality. According to some, climate change could result in more extreme weather patterns; both heavier precipitation that could lead to flooding, as well as more extended drought periods. There is uncertainty regarding the timing, magnitude, and nature of the potential changes to water resources as a result of climate change; however, several trends are evident.

Snowpack and snowmelt may also be affected by climate change. Much of California's precipitation falls as snow in the Sierra Nevada and southern Cascades, and snowpack represents approximately 35 percent of the state's useable annual water supply. The snowmelt typically occurs from April through July; it provides natural water flow to streams and reservoirs after the annual rainy season has ended. As air temperatures increase due to climate change, the water stored in California's snowpack could be affected by increasing temperatures resulting in: (1) decreased snowfall, and (2) earlier snowmelt.

RESPONSES

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

No Impact. The State Legislature and SB 99 specified that one of the main goals of the Active Transportation Program is to:

“Advance the active transportation efforts of regional agencies to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals as established pursuant to Senate Bill 375 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008) and Senate Bill 391 (Chapter 585, Statutes of 2009).”

By definition, Fresno COG's ATP would potentially reduce vehicle trips and therefore have a beneficial impact by helping to reduce emissions of greenhouse gas, particulate matter, and other pollutants. In addition, adoption of the ATP would not affect population or employment growth and as a result would not result in growth that exceeds growth estimates of the County's General Plan or local Community Plans, nor would it generate emissions beyond what have been accounted for in regional air quality plans.

Construction of some components of the ATP, however, has the potential to produce short-term emissions and odors through the use of construction equipment, movement of dirt, etc.

Individual projects would be subject to site-specific environmental review, at which time the implementing agency would identify the potential GHG impacts.

As previously discussed, Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a connected and complete network of trails, walkways and bikeways that provides safe convenient and enjoyable connections to key destinations around the County. Individual project details such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any greenhouse gas impacts because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. In addition, one of the goals of the ATP is to reduce greenhouse gases. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	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. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- f. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?
- g. Expose people or structures either directly or indirectly to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Hazardous materials refer generally to hazardous substances that exhibit corrosive, poisonous, flammable, and/or reactive properties and have the potential to harm human health and/or the environment. Accidental releases of hazardous materials can occur from a variety of causes including roadway accidents, fires, train derailments, shipping accidents and industrial accidents.

Various industrial and commercial facilities within the County use and store hazardous materials and generate hazardous waste. Underground storage tanks (USTs) are primarily used to contain gasoline and other petroleum products such as diesel and waste oil. A variety of other hazardous materials and wastes, such as solvents, are also stored in underground storage tanks. Facilities that use and store hazardous materials and wastes must comply with federal, State, and local laws governing hazardous materials/waste handling, storage, transportation, and disposal.¹⁵

The various project components contained in the ATP are proposed to be located throughout the County and are likely to be near places such as schools, residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.

RESPONSES

- a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

¹⁵ Fresno County General Plan EIR, Page 4.14-1.

- 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?
- c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?
- 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?
- e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?
- f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?
- g) 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?

No Impact. The proposed adoption of the ATP would not result in direct physical changes, however future development of project components contained in the ATP (trails, bridges, small structures, etc.) could potentially involve the use and/or transport of hazardous materials that could be located near sensitive areas such as schools, residential or commercial areas. This could occur during the construction stage and may include items such as petroleum, natural gas, cleaners, solvents, paint, pesticides, etc. No on-going use or transport of hazardous materials is anticipated once construction is complete. Use and transport of such materials would be subject to existing state and federal regulations related to hazards and hazardous materials. Implementation of General Plan policies, Community Plan policies and Best Management Practices (BMPs) would further minimize such potential impacts. Individual projects would be subject to site-specific environmental review, at which time the implementing agency would identify the potential hazard-related impacts.

As previously discussed, Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a network of safe, comfortable, and attractive sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit. Individual project details such as precise

project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any hazard-related impacts because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	<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 or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off- site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii. substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii. create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv. impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Water resources in Fresno County include a number of rivers and streams, artificial waterways, and groundwater.

Surface Water Resources

The San Joaquin River originates in the Sierra Nevada and flows westerly forming the border between Fresno and Madeira Counties downstream from Mammoth Pool Reservoir. The North and Middle Forks originate in Madeira County near Devils Postpile National Monument. The South Fork begins at Martha Lake in northern Kings Canyon National Park within Fresno County. Average annual precipitation in the upper reaches of the river falls mainly in the form of snow and is as high as 70 inches. By comparison, the arid San Joaquin Valley to the west, average annual rainfall is as low as six inches near Mendota. Friant Dam is the most significant of the several dams on the San Joaquin River. It was completed in 1942 by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) for the purposes of agricultural irrigation and is part of the Central Valley Project (CVP). There are several dams upstream of Friant owned and operated by Southern California Edison (SCE) and Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) for power generation. The combined storage capacity of the dams upstream of Friant is 609,530 acre-feet and the storage capacity of Millerton Lake (formed by Friant Dam) is 520,500 acre-feet.

The Kings River originates high in the Sierra Nevada Mountains near the Inyo County line. It has a large drainage basin including most of Kings Canyon National Park and most of the area between Shaver and Florence Lakes in the north to the Fresno/Tulare County border in the south.

The average annual precipitation for the mountain region has not been consistently recorded but, it is probably greater than the 43 inches that falls in Grant Grove on the southern reaches of the Kings River watershed. Downstream average precipitation is approximately 7 to 10 inches per year. The major portions of the upper reaches feed into Pine Flat Lake, a 1,000,000 acre-feet reservoir constructed by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) in 1944 for flood control purposes. There are additional reservoirs upstream of Pine Flat that are owned and operated by PG&E for the purpose of hydroelectric power generation. These facilities have a combined storage capacity of about 252,000 acre-feet.

There are many creeks and lakes in the high Sierra Nevada within Fresno County, all of which eventually feed into either the Kings River or the San Joaquin River. In addition, several creeks drain the foothill areas and flow into developed areas in central Fresno County. Most of these streams (i.e., Redbank, Fancher, Dry and Dog Creeks) have been controlled by efforts of the Corps and the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District (FMFCD).

Groundwater Resources

Groundwater conditions vary considerably from eastern to western Fresno County. Aquifers east of the valley trough are generally semi-confined to unconfined, while aquifers west of the valley trough are generally semi-confined to confined. Most pumping occurs below a naturally occurring subterranean clay, although considerable pumping also occurs above the layer, depending upon location and water quality issues. This layer is several hundred feet below the ground surface, and pumping costs are high.¹⁶

RESPONSES

- a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?
- b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

¹⁶ Fresno County General Plan EIR, Page 4.8-1 thru 4.8-3.

- c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:
 - i. result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or offsite;
 - ii. substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;
 - iii. create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff;
or
 - iv. impede or redirect flood flows?
- d) In flood hazard, tsunami or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?
- e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

No Impact. The proposed adoption of the ATP would not result in direct physical changes, however future development of project components contained in the ATP (trails, bridges, small structures, etc.) could potentially increase the impervious surface areas and utilize water supply during construction and for potential landscaping. Individual future projects would be required (depending on size and location) to comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit and implementation of the construction Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that require the incorporation of BMPS. In addition, construction water usage will be minimal and temporary; and any proposed landscaping will be installed pursuant to Fresno COG's guidance and regulations, the County General Plan, and/or local Community Plans, thereby minimizing water use. Individual projects would be subject to site-specific environmental review, at which time the implementing agency would identify the potential hydrological impacts.

As previously discussed, Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a network of safe, comfortable, and attractive sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit. Individual project details such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual

projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any hydrology-related impacts because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	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. Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Fresno County encompasses roughly 6,000 square miles, making it California’s sixth largest county by land size. Agriculture, with 2,911 square miles, and resource conservation (includes national forests and parks and timber reserves), with 2,691 square miles, are overwhelmingly the predominate land use in the county -- occupying over 90 percent of county land. The 15 incorporated cities occupy the next largest amount of land with 154 square miles. Closely behind the cities is unincorporated residential land with 152 square miles. The last three categories include commercial (seven square miles), industrial (11 square miles), and unclassified lands such as highways, streets, and rivers (11 square miles).¹⁷

RESPONSES

- a) Physically divide an established 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?

¹⁷ Fresno County General Plan EIR, Page 4.2-1.

No Impact. The proposed adoption of the ATP would not result in direct physical changes, however future development of project components contained in the ATP (trails, bridges, small structures, etc.) could occur at various places throughout the County. None of the proposed projects would physically divide an established community, nor would they conflict with any applicable land use plans or habitat conservation plans.

As previously discussed, Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a network of safe, comfortable, and attractive sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit. Individual project details such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any land use impacts because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. In addition, all of the proposed development is consistent with approved land use documents. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

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

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Fresno County has been a leading producer of minerals because of the abundance and wide variety of mineral resources that are present in the County. Extracted resources include aggregate products (sand and gravel), fossil fuels (oil and coal), metals (chromite, copper, gold, mercury, and tungsten), and other minerals used in construction or industrial applications (asbestos, high-grade clay, diatomite, granite, gypsum, and limestone).

Oil production has long been a major industry in western Fresno County, particularly in the Coalinga area. Extensive oil recovery operations are located mostly to the north of the city of Coalinga. Oil companies such as Chevron USA, Union Oil Company, Shell Production, and Santa Fe Energy have substantial land holdings in the area. Natural gas and natural gas liquids occur in oil sands or with oil in an overlying gas cap or as dry gas in separate zones in oilfields and in separate gas fields.¹⁸

RESPONSES

¹⁸ Fresno County General Plan EIR, Page 4.11-1.

- 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?
- 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?

No Impact. The proposed adoption of the ATP would not result in direct physical changes, however future development of project components contained in the ATP (trails, bridges, small structures, etc.) could occur at various places throughout the County. However, it is unlikely that any of the projects listed in the ATP will impact mineral resources.

As previously discussed, Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a network of safe, comfortable, and attractive sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit. Individual project details such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any mineral resource impacts because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

XIII. NOISE

Would the project:

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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- a. Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?
- b. Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?
- c. For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Noise is most often described as unwanted sound. Although sound can be easily measured, the perception of noise and the physical response to sound complicate the analysis of its impact on people. The County is impacted by a multitude of noise sources. Mobile sources of noise, especially cars and trucks, are the most common and significant sources of noise in most communities, and they are predominant sources of noise in the County. In addition, commercial, industrial, and institutional land uses throughout the County (i.e., schools, fire stations, utilities) generate stationary-source noise.

RESPONSES

- a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?
- b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?
- c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan, or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

No Impact. The proposed adoption of the ATP would not result in direct physical changes, however future development of project components contained in the ATP (trails, bridges, small structures, etc.) could potentially increase noise due to construction (temporary impact) and possibly operation (due to increased use or establishment of a new trail). Noise from these sources is not expected to be substantial, particularly with regard to on-going use, because there is little noise generated from walking and bicycling. Individual projects would be subject to site-specific environmental review, at which time the implementing agency would identify the potential noise-related impacts.

As previously discussed, Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a network of safe, comfortable, and attractive sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit. Individual project details such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any noise-related impacts because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	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"/>

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Fresno County’s population as of January 1, 2023 was estimated to be 1,011,499. There are approximately 346,456 housing units in the County.¹⁹

RESPONSES

- 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?

No Impact. Adoption of the ATP would not affect population or employment growth and as a result would not result in growth that exceeds growth estimates of the County’s General Plan or

¹⁹ Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State, 2020-2023, California Department of Finance. <https://dof.ca.gov/forecasting/demographics/estimates/e-5-population-and-housing-estimates-for-cities-counties-and-the-state-2020-2023/>. Accessed March 2024.

local Community Plans, nor would it result in the displacement or relocation of people or housing.

As previously discussed, Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a network of safe, comfortable, and attractive sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit. Individual project details such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any population or housing impacts because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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Would the project:

- a. 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 the public services:

Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Fresno County provides full service sheriff and fire protection services. There are numerous schools, parks, libraries and other public facilities located throughout the County.

RESPONSES

- a. 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 the public services:

Fire protection?

Police Protection?

Schools?

Parks?

Other public facilities?

No Impact. Adoption of the ATP would not affect population or employment growth and as a result would not result in growth that would require the assemblage of additional fire or police resources, or the expansion of any schools or other public facilities. The proposed adoption of the ATP would not result in direct physical changes, however future development of project components contained in the ATP (trails, bridges, small structures, etc.) could potentially increase the need for security for pedestrians and bicyclists utilizing these facilities. Individual projects would be subject to site-specific environmental review, at which time the implementing agency would identify the potential public service related impacts.

As previously discussed, Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a network of safe, comfortable, and attractive sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit. Individual project details such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any public service impacts because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

XVI. RECREATION

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Fresno County has a variety of regional parks and landscaped areas. Regional recreational facilities include 12 parks, two fishing access areas and a boat-launch/parking facility at Shaver Lake. These areas are used for picnicking, fishing, hiking, jogging, bird watching, nature study, non-organized sports, barbecues, softball, soccer, volleyball, overnight camping, passive recreation and more.²⁰

RESPONSES

- 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?

²⁰ Resources and Parks Division, Public Works and Planning, County of Fresno. <https://www.fresnocountyca.gov/Departments/Public-Works-and-Planning/divisions-of-public-works-and-planning/resources-and-parks-division/parks>. Accessed March 2024.

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?

No Impact. Adoption of the ATP would not affect population or employment growth and as a result would not result in growth that would require expansion of existing recreational facilities. More so, the ATP is intended to increase the pedestrian and bicycle recreational opportunities for the residents of the County and thus will have a beneficial impact on recreational facilities and opportunities.

As previously discussed, Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a network of safe, comfortable, and attractive sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit. Individual project details such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any recreational impacts because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

XVII. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

Would the project:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric 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"/>
d. Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The existing transportation system and services in Fresno County includes airports, highways, local roadways, transit systems, railroads, and bicycle paths. Two major functions of roadways are to provide mobility for through-traffic and provide direct access to adjacent properties. Roadways also provide bicycle and pedestrian access and allow for the circulation of non-vehicular traffic.

In 2017, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed SB 1, also known as the Road Repair and Accountability Act. SB 1 directs \$100 million annually from the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account to the ATP, significantly augmenting the available funding for this popular program.²¹

²¹ Active Transportation Program, California Transportation Commission. <https://catc.ca.gov/programs/active-transportation-program>. Accessed March 2024.

RESPONSES

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

No Impact. The proposed adoption of the ATP would not result in direct physical changes, however future development of project components contained in the ATP (trails, bridges, small structures, etc.) could potentially impact existing roadways and intersections. For instance, if new crosswalks or bicycle lanes are proposed, these projects could require additional analysis to determine their impacts to (and safety from) roadway and vehicular activity. Additionally, construction activities will require various vehicular trips to and from the various project sites. However, these will be minimal and temporary. In the event that partial or full road closure is necessary during project construction, the contractor will be required to adhere to any and all regulations from the local jurisdiction, Caltrans and/or other regulatory agency. Individual projects would be subject to site-specific environmental review, at which time the implementing agency would identify the potential transportation-related impacts.

As previously discussed, Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a network of safe, comfortable, and attractive sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit. Individual project details such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any transportation-related impacts because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or

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

RESPONSES

a) 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:

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

No Impact. In accordance with Assembly Bill (AB) 52, potentially affected Tribes were formally notified of this Project and were given the opportunity to request consultation on the Project. The City contacted the Native American Heritage Commission, requesting a contact list of applicable Native American Tribes, which was provided to the City. The City provided letters to the listed Tribes on February 13, 2024, notifying them of the Project and requesting consultation, if desired. The City did not receive any responses from the tribes contacted.

The proposed adoption of the ATP would not result in direct physical changes, however future development of project components contained in the ATP (trails, bridges, small structures, etc.) could potentially impact Tribal Cultural Resources. Individual projects would be subject to site-specific environmental review, at which time the implementing agency would identify the potential Tribal Cultural Resource impacts and would need to comply with AB 52 and/or SB 18, as necessary.

As previously discussed, Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. 'It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a network of safe, comfortable, and attractive sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit. Individual project details such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any Tribal Cultural Resource impacts because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project’s projected demand in addition to the provider’s existing commitments? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Many unincorporated communities have elected to form special districts to provide services to rural clients. Cities and special districts own and operate numerous water, wastewater, and stormwater systems throughout Fresno County.

RESPONSES

- a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?
- b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?
- c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?
- d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?
- e) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

No Impact. The proposed adoption of the ATP would not result in direct physical changes, however future development of project components contained in the ATP (trails, bridges, small structures, etc.) could potentially utilize water supply during construction and for potential landscaping. Once the various project components are in operation, no wastewater generation is expected and solid waste generation will be limited mostly to construction activity. Individual projects would be subject to site-specific environmental review, at which time the implementing agency would identify the potential utility-related impacts.

As previously discussed, Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a connected and complete network of trails, walkways and bikeways that provides safe convenient and enjoyable connections to key destinations around the County. Individual project details such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects

are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any utility-related impacts because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

XX. WILDFIRE

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

- a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?
- b. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?
- c. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?
- d. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Fresno County is located approximately in the center of the San Joaquin Valley, stretching approximately 100 miles from the Coast Range foothills to the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada.

The State Fire Marshal is mandated to classify lands within State Responsibility Areas into Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ). Fire Hazard Severity Zones fall into one of the following classifications:

- Moderate

- High
- Very High

According to the latest State Responsibility Area-Fire Hazard Severity Zones map of the Fresno County, the central portion of the County falls under Local Responsibility Area, with the foothills to the east and region west of Interstate-5 consisting of a mix of Moderate to Very High severity zones. The region of Sierra-Nevada mountains falls under the Federal Responsibility Area.²²

RESPONSES

- Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?
- Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?
- Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?
- Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

No Impact. The proposed adoption of the ATP would not result in direct physical changes, however future development of project components contained in the ATP (trails, bridges, small structures, etc.) could potentially exacerbate wildfire risks or expose people or structures to increased risks during construction. Once the various project components are in operation, no wildfire risks or exposure to pollutants is expected, with improved active transportation network potentially improving emergency response and evacuation plans. Individual projects would be subject to site-specific environmental review, at which time the implementing agency would identify the potential wildfire-related impacts.

As previously discussed, Fresno COG's ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as

²² Fire Hazard Severity Zones Map, CalFire. <https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/fire-hazard-severity-zones/fire-hazard-severity-zones-maps-2022>. Accessed March 2024.

a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a connected and complete network of trails, walkways and bikeways that provides safe convenient and enjoyable connections to key destinations around the County. Individual project details such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County's General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any wildfire-related impacts because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Mitigation Measures: None are required.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Would the project:

Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
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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?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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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)?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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c. Does the project 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"/>
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RESPONSES

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?

- 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?

No Impact. Fresno COG’s ATP is a programmatic document that proposes goals and policies pertaining to the future of walking and bicycling in Fresno County. It is intended as a guidance document with the ultimate vision of a network of safe, comfortable, and attractive sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bikeways that connect Fresno County residents to key destinations, especially local schools, parks, and transit. Individual project details such as precise project locations, project timing, funding mechanisms, material types, types of equipment and ultimately construction drawings are currently not available. At such time that specific individual projects are implemented, the implementing agency will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Furthermore, implementation of the ATP would be required to comply with the goals and policies under the County’s General Plan, County Community Plans, and other relevant regulatory documents.

Adoption of the ATP alone would not create any impacts because specific development is not being proposed under this ATP and it would not authorize any development. Therefore, there is *no impact*.

Chapter 4

List of Preparers

LIST OF PREPARERS AND CONSULTATIONS

List of Preparers

Crawford & Bowen Planning, Inc.

- Travis Crawford, AICP, Principal Environmental Planner
- Deepesh Tourani, Associate Environmental Planner

Persons and Agencies Consulted

Fresno Council of Governments

- Simran Jhutti, Senior Regional Planner

Fehr & Peers

- Rod Brown

Appendices

Appendix A

Active Transportation Plan

Appendix B

Comment Letters Received

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 6 OFFICE
1352 WEST OLIVE AVENUE | P.O. BOX 12616 | FRESNO, CA 93778-2616
(559) 908-7064 | FAX (559) 488-4195 | TTY 711
www.dot.ca.gov



May 13, 2024

FRE-GEN
Notice of Intent (NOI) to Adopt a Negative Declaration
FCOG Fresno County
Regional Active Transportation Plan
SCH# 2024040476
<https://ld-igr-gts.dot.ca.gov/district/6/report/32817>

SENT VIA EMAIL

Simran Jhutti, Senior Planner
Fresno Council of Governments
2035 Tulare Street, Suite 201
Fresno, CA 93721

Dear Mx. Simran Jhutti:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Negative Declaration document for the Fresno County Regional Active Transportation Plan (ATP) which is a regional document that includes programs, policies, and recommendations regarding the development of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in Fresno County. The plan scope generally covers all of Fresno County and participating jurisdictions.

Caltrans provides the following comments consistent with the State's smart mobility goals that support a vibrant economy and sustainable communities:

1. It is noted in the Negative Declaration that, "during project construction, the contractor will be required to adhere to any and all regulations from the local jurisdiction, Caltrans/or other regulatory agency." The ATP document also mentions utilizing resources, such as the Caltrans Highway Design Manual, for designing and implementing walking and biking facilities.

Caltrans recognizes that some State Routes act as main streets and arterials for some communities and play a vital role in transportation and accessing services. While Caltrans supports the implementation of active transportation infrastructure, we highly encourage agencies to coordinate early with Caltrans when implementing active transportation projects on State Routes.

2. As a point of information, any work completed in the State's right-of-way will require a Caltrans encroachment permit. An encroachment permit must be obtained for

all proposed activities for placement of encroachments within, under or over the State highway rights-of-way. Activity and work planned in the State right-of-way shall be performed to State standards and specifications, at no cost to the State. Engineering plans, calculations, specifications, and reports (documents) shall be stamped and signed by a licensed Engineer or Architect. Engineering documents for encroachment permit activity and work in the State right-of-way may be submitted using English Units. The Permit Department and the Environmental Planning Branch will review and approve the activity and work in the State right-of-way before an encroachment permit is issued. The Streets and Highways Code Section 670 provides Caltrans discretionary approval authority for projects that encroach on the State Highway System. Encroachment permits will be issued in accordance with Streets and Highway Codes, Section 671.5, "Time Limitations." Encroachment permits do not run with the land. A change of ownership requires a new permit application. Only the legal property owner or his/her authorized agent can pursue obtaining an encroachment permit.

3. Prior to an encroachment permit application submittal, the project proponent is required to schedule a "Pre-Submittal" meeting with District 6 Encroachment Permit Office. To schedule this meeting, please call the Caltrans Encroachment Permit Office - District 6: 1352 W. Olive, Fresno, CA 93778, **at (559) 383-5047 or (559) 383-5235.**

Please review the permit application - required document checklist at:

<https://forms.dot.ca.gov/v2Forms/servlet/FormRenderer?fmid=TR0402&distpath=M AOTO&brqpath=PERM>.

Please also review the permit application - processing checklist at:

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep>, and the **Applicant's Check List to determine appropriate review process (TR-0416) (Rev 01/23)**

If you have any other questions, please call or email Christopher Xiong at (559) 908-7064 or Christopher.Xiong@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



DAVID PADILLA, Branch Chief
Transportation Planning – North

May 13, 2024

Simran Jhutti
Fresno Council of Governments
2035 Tulare Street #201
Fresno, CA 93721

Project: Fresno County Regional Active Transportation Plan, Negative Declaration

District CEQA Reference No: 20240458

Dear Ms. Jhutti,

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (District) has reviewed the Regional Active Transportation Plan (ATP) and Negative Declaration (ND) from the Fresno Council of Governments (FCOG). Per the ATP, the project is an update to the 2019 ATC Plan and consists of a comprehensive document outlining the future of walking and bicycling in 11 cities (Coalinga, Firebaugh, Fowler, Huron, Kerman, Kingsburg, Mendota, Orange Cove, Parlier, San Joaquin, and Sanger) within Fresno County (Project). The Project is located at various locations throughout Fresno County, CA.

The Project is a plan level project and, while project-specific data may not be available until specific approvals are being granted, the ATP should include a discussion of policies, which when implemented, will reduce or mitigate impacts on air quality at the individual project level.

The District offers the following comments at this time regarding the Project:

1) Project Siting

The ATP is the blueprint for future growth and provides guidance for the community's sidewalk and bikeway development. Without appropriate mitigation and associated policy, site specific projects under the ATP may contribute to negative impacts on air quality due to increased construction emissions.

Samir Sheikh
Executive Director/Air Pollution Control Officer

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Tel: (209) 557-6400 FAX: (209) 557-6475

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1990 E. Gettysburg Avenue
Fresno, CA 93726-0244
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Southern Region
34946 Flyover Court
Bakersfield, CA 93308-9725
Tel: (661) 392-5500 FAX: (661) 392-5585

2) **Project Related Emissions**

The District recommends that the ATP stipulate that site specific projects under the ATP identify and characterize project construction emissions. The District recommends the air emissions be compared to the District significance thresholds as identified in the District's Guidance for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts: <https://ww2.valleyair.org/media/g4nl3p0g/gamaqi.pdf>. The District recommends that future projects be mitigated to the extent feasible, and that future projects with air emissions above the aforementioned thresholds be mitigated to below these thresholds.

The District understands that the ATP is a plan-level project where future site specific project data may not be available at this time. As such, the ATP should include a discussion of policies, which when implemented, will require assessment and characterization of project-level emissions, and subsequently require mitigation of air quality impacts to the extent feasible at the individual project-specific level.

2a) **Construction Emissions**

The District recommends, to further reduce impacts from construction-related diesel exhaust emissions, the Project should utilize the cleanest available off-road construction equipment.

3) **District's Bikeway Incentive Program**

Incorporating design elements (e.g., installing bikeways) within the Project that enhance walkability and connectivity can result in an overall reduction of vehicles miles traveled (VMT) and improve air quality within the area. Site specific projects under the ATP are expected to result in an overall reduction in VMT by installing bikeways, and may be eligible for funding through the District's Bikeway Incentive Program. The Bikeway Incentive Program provides funding for eligible Class 1 (Bicycle Path Construction), Class II (Bicycle Lane Striping), or Class III (Bicycle Route) projects. These incentives are designed to support the construction of new bikeway projects to promote clean air through the development of a widespread, interconnected network of bike paths, lanes, or routes and improving the general safety conditions for commuter bicyclists. Only municipalities, government agencies, or public educational institutions are eligible to apply. More information on the grant program can be found at:

<https://ww2.valleyair.org/grants/bike-paths/>

Guidelines and Project Eligibility for the grant program can be found at:

<https://ww2.valleyair.org/media/drpijuw1/bikeway-program-guidelines-62515.pdf>

4) **District Rules and Regulations**

The District issues permits for many types of air pollution sources, and regulates some activities that do not require permits. A project subject to District rules and regulations would reduce its impacts on air quality through compliance with the District's regulatory framework. In general, a regulation is a collection of individual rules, each of which deals with a specific topic. As an example, Regulation II (Permits) includes District Rule 2010 (Permits Required), Rule 2201 (New and Modified Stationary Source Review), Rule 2520 (Federally Mandated Operating Permits), and several other rules pertaining to District permitting requirements and processes.

The list of rules below is neither exhaustive nor exclusive. Current District rules can be found online at: <https://ww2.valleyair.org/rules-and-planning/current-district-rules-and-regulations>. To identify other District rules or regulations that apply to future projects, or to obtain information about District permit requirements, the project proponents are strongly encouraged to contact the District's Small Business Assistance (SBA) Office at (559) 230-5888.

4a) **District Rule 9510 - Indirect Source Review (ISR)**

Site specific projects under the ATP may be subject to District Rule 9510 if upon full buildout, the project would equal or exceed any of the following applicability thresholds, depending on the type of development and public agency approval mechanism:

Table 1: ISR Applicability Thresholds

Development Type	Discretionary Approval Threshold	Ministerial Approval / Allowed Use / By Right Thresholds
Residential	50 dwelling units	250 dwelling units
Commercial	2,000 square feet	10,000 square feet
Light Industrial	25,000 square feet	125,000 square feet
Heavy Industrial	100,000 square feet	500,000 square feet
Medical Office	20,000 square feet	100,000 square feet
General Office	39,000 square feet	195,000 square feet
Educational Office	9,000 square feet	45,000 square feet
Government	10,000 square feet	50,000 square feet
Recreational	20,000 square feet	100,000 square feet
Other	9,000 square feet	45,000 square feet

District Rule 9510 also applies to any transportation or transit development projects where construction exhaust emissions equal or exceed two tons of NOx or two tons of PM.

The purpose of District Rule 9510 is to reduce the growth in both NO_x and PM emissions associated with development and transportation projects from mobile and area sources; specifically, the emissions associated with the construction and subsequent operation of development projects. The Rule requires developers to mitigate their NO_x and PM emissions by incorporating clean air design elements into their projects. Should the proposed development project clean air design elements be insufficient to meet the required emission reductions, developers must pay a fee that ultimately funds incentive projects to achieve off-site emissions reductions.

In the case the individual development project is subject to District Rule 9510, per Section 5.0 of the rule, an Air Impact Assessment (AIA) application is required to be submitted no later than applying for project-level approval from a public agency so that proper mitigation and clean air design under ISR can be incorporated into the public agency's analysis.

Information about how to comply with District Rule 9510 can be found online at: <https://ww2.valleyair.org/permitting/indirect-source-review-rule-overview>

The AIA application form can be found online at: <https://ww2.valleyair.org/permitting/indirect-source-review-rule-overview/forms-and-applications/>

District staff is available to provide assistance and can be reached by phone at (559) 230-5900 or by email at ISR@valleyair.org.

4b) District Rule 4002 (National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants)

In the event an existing building will be renovated, partially demolished or removed, site specific projects under the ATP may be subject to District Rule 4002. This rule requires a thorough inspection for asbestos to be conducted before any regulated facility is demolished or renovated. Information on how to comply with District Rule 4002 can be found online at: <https://ww2.valleyair.org/compliance/demolition-renovation/>

4c) District Rule 4601 (Architectural Coatings)

Site specific projects under the ATP may be subject to District Rule 4601 since it may utilize architectural coatings. Architectural coatings are paints, varnishes, sealers, or stains that are applied to structures, portable buildings, pavements or curbs. The purpose of this rule is to limit VOC emissions from architectural coatings. In addition, this rule specifies architectural coatings storage, cleanup and labeling requirements. Additional information on how to comply with District Rule 4601 requirements can be found online at: <https://ww2.valleyair.org/media/tkgjeusd/rule-4601.pdf>

4d) Other District Rules and Regulations

Site specific projects under the ATP may also be subject to the following District rules: Rule 4102 (Nuisance) and Rule 4641 (Cutback, Slow Cure, and Emulsified Asphalt, Paving and Maintenance Operations).

5) Future Projects / Land Use Agency Referral Documents

Per the ND, future development under the ATP will be subject to site-specific CEQA and environmental review, including air emissions mitigation. A project's referral documents and environmental review documents provided to the District for review should include a project summary, the land use designation, project size, air emissions quantifications and impacts, and proximity to sensitive receptors and existing emission sources, and air emissions mitigation measures. For reference and guidance, more information can be found in the District's Guidance for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts at:
<https://ww2.valleyair.org/media/g4nl3p0g/gamaqi.pdf>

6) District Comment Letter

The District recommends that a copy of the District's comments be provided to the Project proponent.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact Ryan Grossman by e-mail at Ryan.grossman@valleyair.org or by phone at (559) 230-6569.

Sincerely,

Tom Jordan
Director of Policy and Government Affairs



For: Mark Montelongo
Program Manager



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Central Region
1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, California 93710
(559) 243-4005
www.wildlife.ca.gov

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



May 16, 2024

Simran Jhutti, Senior Regional Planner
Fresno Council of Governments
2035 Tulare Street #201
Fresno, California 93721
jhutti@fresnocog.org
(559) 233-4148

**Subject: Fresno County Regional Active Transportation Plan (Plan)
Initial Study (IS)/Negative Declaration (ND)
SCH No.: 2024040476**

Dear Simran Jhutti:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) received an Initial Study (IS)/Negative Declaration (ND) from the Fresno Council of Governments (COG) for the Fresno County Regional Active Transportation Plan (Plan) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations regarding those activities involved in the Plan that may affect California fish and wildlife. Likewise, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments regarding those aspects of the Plan that CDFW, by law, may be required to carry out or approve through the exercise of its own regulatory authority under the Fish and Game Code. While the comment period may have ended, CDFW respectfully requests that the COG still consider our comments.

CDFW ROLE

CDFW is California's **Trustee Agency** for fish and wildlife resources and holds those resources in trust by statute for all the people of the State (Fish & Game Code, Section 711.7, subd. (a) & 1802; Pub. Resources Code, Section 21070; CEQA Guidelines Section 15386, subd. (a)). CDFW, in its trustee capacity, has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species (Id., Section 1802). Similarly, for purposes of CEQA, CDFW is charged by law to provide, as available, biological expertise during public agency environmental review efforts, focusing

Conserving California's Wildlife Since 1870

Simran Jhutti, Senior Regional Planner
Fresno Council of Governments
May 16, 2024

specifically on projects and related activities that have the potential to adversely affect fish and wildlife resources.

CDFW is also submitting comments as a **Responsible Agency** under CEQA (Pub. Resources Code, Section 21069; CEQA Guidelines, Section 15381). CDFW expects that it may need to exercise regulatory authority as provided by the Fish and Game Code. As proposed, for example, reasonably foreseeable future projects may be subject to CDFW's lake and streambed alteration regulatory authority (Fish & Game Code, Section 1600 et seq.). Likewise, to the extent implementation of reasonably foreseeable future projects may result in "take" as defined by State law of any species protected under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Fish & Game Code, Section 2050 et seq.), related authorization as provided by the Fish and Game Code may be required.

Fully Protected Species: CDFW has jurisdiction over fully protected species of birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and fish, pursuant to Fish and Game Code sections 3511, 4700, 5050, and 5515. Take of any fully protected species was previously prohibited and CDFW was not able to authorize their incidental take. Senate Bill No. 147, which became effective on July 10, 2023, amended Fish and Game Code sections 3511, 4700, 5050, and 5515, and added section 2081.15 to authorize CDFW to issue a permit that authorizes the take of a fully protected species resulting from impacts attributable to the implementation of specified projects, such as a transportation project, including any associated habitat connectivity and wildlife crossing project, undertaken by a state, regional, or local agency, that does not increase highway or street capacity for automobile or truck travel, if certain conditions are satisfied. Fresno County is known to be inhabited by several fully protected species such as blunt nosed leopard lizard, bald eagle, and golden eagle.

Other Special-Status Species: Species of plants and animals need not be officially listed as Endangered, Rare, or Threatened on any State or federal list pursuant to CESA and/or the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) to be considered Endangered, Rare, or Threatened under CEQA. If a species can be shown to meet the criteria specified in the CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, Chapter 3, § 15380), it should be fully considered in the environmental analysis for the Plan.

Bird Protection: CDFW has jurisdiction over actions that may result in the disturbance or destruction of active nest sites or the unauthorized take of birds. Fish and Game Code sections that protect birds, their eggs, and nests include section 3503 (regarding unlawful take, possession, or needless destruction of the nest or eggs of any bird), section 3503.5 (regarding the take, possession, or destruction of any birds-of-prey or their nests or eggs), and section 3513 (regarding unlawful take of any migratory nongame bird).

Simran Jhutti, Senior Regional Planner
Fresno Council of Governments
May 16, 2024

PLAN DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Proponent: Fresno Council of Governments

Objective: The Plan is an update to the 2019 Fresno County Regional Active Transportation Plan. It reflects projects that have been newly identified, modified, or completed since the release of the first plan; updated information on disadvantaged communities and safety data; current land use and plans in each city and within Fresno County; and updates to reflect best active transportation planning practices.

The purpose of the Plan is to equip the COG's member agencies (Fresno County and the fifteen incorporated cities of Clovis, Coalinga, Firebaugh, Fowler, Fresno, Huron, Kerman, Kingsburg, Mendota, Orange Cove, Parlier, Reedley, San Joaquin, Sanger, and Selma) with the tools to better compete for funding sources that support ATPs and related projects. The Plan area incorporates Fresno County, and no land designation changes are proposed at this time. In addition, adoption of this CEQA document would not authorize any development.

Location: The Plan area is located throughout Fresno County and covers incorporated cities, unincorporated communities, and Fresno County islands.

Timeframe: Unspecified

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CDFW offers the following comments and recommendations to assist the COG's in adequately identifying and/or mitigating the Plan's significant, or potentially significant, direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on fish and wildlife (biological) resources. Editorial comments or other suggestions may also be included to improve the CEQA document prepared for this Plan.

COMMENT 1: Protocol-Level Surveys

CDFW did not find any measures included in the IS/ND document indicating the need to consider protocol level surveys that may be needed for future projects tiered from the Plan. While the proposed adoption of the Plan would not result in direct physical changes, future development of project components contained in the Plan could potentially affect protected biological species and/or habitats. Construction and operation of trails, paths, signage, etc. may occur in biologically sensitive areas. Individual projects tiered from the Plan would be subject to site-specific environmental review, at which time the CEQA lead should identify the potential presence of endangered or listed species.

Simran Jhutti, Senior Regional Planner
 Fresno Council of Governments
 May 16, 2024

CDFW recommends that for all future projects tiered from this Plan, qualified biologists assist with the scoping effort for projects by conducting additional database searches for potential wildlife, plant, and invertebrate species and rare habitat types, and conduct early consultation with CDFW to help with this identification effort. CDFW also recommends that these qualified individuals subsequently perform appropriate reconnaissance, biological, and/or protocol surveys, as appropriate, as part of the biological technical studies conducted in support of the ensuing CEQA documents tiered from this Plan.

COMMENT 2: Special-Status Species

CDFW did not find any special status species information in the IS/ND. Based on aerial imagery and species occurrence records from the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) (CDFW 2024), the proposed Plan area is known to and/or has the potential to support special-status species, and these resources need to be evaluated and addressed prior to any approvals that would allow ground-disturbing activities or land use changes. CDFW is concerned regarding potential impacts to special-status animal species including, but not limited to, the State endangered (SE), State fully protected (FP) and federally endangered (FE) blunt-nosed leopard lizard (*Gambelia sila*), the SE and FE foothill yellow-legged frog – south Sierra Distinct Population Segment (DPS) (*Rana boylei* pop. 5), Fresno kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys nitratooides exilis*), giant kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys ingens*), and least bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*); the SE and federally threatened (FT) foothill yellow-legged frog – central coast DPS (*Rana boylei* pop. 4) and western yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*); the SE and FP bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*); the FP Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*); the SE willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*); the State candidate endangered Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*) and Temblor legless lizard (*Anniella alexanderae*); the State Threatened (ST) and FE San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*); the ST and FT California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense* pop. 1) and giant gartersnake (*Thamnophis gigas*); the ST bank swallow (*Riparia riparia*), Nelson's (=San Joaquin) antelope squirrel (*Ammospermophilus nelsoni*), Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), and tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*); the FE longhorn fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta longiantenna*) and vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Lepidurus packardii*); the FT vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*); the State species of special concern (SSC) and FT California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) and steelhead – Central Valley DPS (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus* pop. 11); the SSC and federally proposed threatened (PT) western pond turtle (*Emys marmorata*) and western spadefoot (*Spea hammondi*); the SSC American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), California glossy snake (*Arizona elegans occidentalis*), coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*), hardhead (*Mylopharodon conocephalus*), Le Conte's thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*), loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), long-eared owl (*Asio otus*), mountain plover (*Charadrius montanus*), northern harrier (*Circus hudsonius*), northern legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra*), pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), San Joaquin

Simran Jhutti, Senior Regional Planner
Fresno Council of Governments
May 16, 2024

coachwhip (*Masticophis flagellum ruddocki*), short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*), short-nosed kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys nitratooides brevinasus*), spotted bat (*Euderma maculatum*), two-striped gartersnake (*Thamnophis gigas*), Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), Tulare grasshopper mouse (*Onychomys torridus tularensis*), western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*), western red bat (*Lasiurus frantzii*), yellow-headed blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*), and yellow warbler (*Setophaga petechia*).

CDFW is also concerned regarding potential impacts to special-status plant species including, but not limited to, the SE and FE California jewelflower (*Caulanthus californicus*), Hartweg's golden sunburst (*Pseudobahia bahiifolia*), and palmate-bracted bird's-beak (*Chloropyron palmatum*); the SE and FT San Joaquin adobe sunburst (*Pseudobahia peirsonii*), San Joaquin Valley Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia inaequalis*), and succulent owl's-clover (*Castilleja campestris var. succulenta*); the FE San Joaquin woollythreads (*Monolopia congdonii*); and the California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) 1B.1 and FE Keck's checkerbloom (*Sidalcea keckii*).

CDFW recommends that the IS/ND for this Plan include a cumulative impacts analysis of the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects to be implemented within the Plan area on all special-status biological resources. At a minimum, CDFW recommends that each of the species listed above be included in the cumulative impacts analysis conducted as part of the IS/ND for this Plan with specific recommendations for focused biological surveys conducted by a qualified biologist and appropriate permits acquired for future projects tiered from this Plan.

COMMENT 3: Cumulative Impacts

CDFW did not find any analysis of cumulative impacts during review of the IS/ND for the Plan and therefore has the following recommendation: Given that a Transportation Plan serves primarily as a planning tool and that future project-level CEQA documents are expected to be tiered from it, CDFW recommends that a cumulative impact analysis be conducted for all potential biological resources that will either be significantly or potentially significantly impacted by implementation of this Plan, including those whose impacts are determined to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated or for those resources that are rare or in poor or declining health and will be impacted by the any future project tiered from this Plan, even if those impacts are expected to be relatively small (i.e., less than significant). CDFW recommends cumulative impacts be analyzed using an acceptable methodology to evaluate the impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects on resources and be focused specifically on the resource, not the project. An appropriate resource study area identified and utilized for this analysis is advised. CDFW staff is available for consultation in support of cumulative impacts analyses as a trustee and responsible agency under CEQA.

Simran Jhutti, Senior Regional Planner
Fresno Council of Governments
May 16, 2024

COMMENT 4: California Endangered Species Act

Reasonably foreseeable future projects tiered from this Plan may be subject to CDFW's regulatory authority pursuant to CESA. If species listed under CESA are detected during surveys, consultation with CDFW is warranted to discuss how to implement the Project and avoid "take," or if avoidance is not feasible, to acquire a State Incidental Take Permit (ITP), pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081 subdivision (b), prior to any ground disturbing activities. In addition, CDFW advises that mitigation measures for CESA listed species be fully addressed in the CEQA document prepared for any future project that is tiered from this Plan.

CDFW therefore recommends that the IS/ND for this Plan include information related to these requirements and advises that should any projects be tiered from this Plan, a qualified biologist should be retained to determine if potential impacts to CESA listed species may require the need to obtain an ITP.

COMMENT 5: Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement

Throughout Fresno County there is a wide variety of water features. Project activities that substantially change the bed, bank, and channel of any river, stream, or lake are subject to CDFW's regulatory authority pursuant Fish and Game Code section 1600 et seq. Fish and Game Code section 1602 requires an entity to notify CDFW prior to commencing any activity that may (a) substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of any river, stream, or lake; (b) substantially change or use any material from the bed, bank, or channel of any river, stream, or lake (including the removal of riparian vegetation); (c) deposit debris, waste or other materials that could pass into any river, stream, or lake. "Any river, stream, or lake" includes those that are ephemeral or intermittent as well as those that are perennial and may include those that are highly modified such as canals and retention basins. It is important to note that if projects tiered from this Plan include activities that require notification and subsequently a Lake or Streambed Alteration (LSA) Agreement, CDFW is required to comply with CEQA in the issuance of the Agreement; therefore, if the CEQA document approved for any project tiered from the Plan does not adequately describe the project and its impacts, a subsequent CEQA analysis may be necessary for LSA Agreement issuance. Additional information on notification requirements is available through the Central Region LSA Program at (559) 243-4593 or R4LSA@wildlife.ca.gov and the CDFW website: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/LSA>.

CDFW therefore recommends that the IS/ND for this Plan include information related to these requirements of Fish and Game code and advises that projects tiered from this Plan retain a qualified biologist to determine if activities within or adjacent to streams or lakes may require notification to CDFW and potentially a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement.

Simran Jhutti, Senior Regional Planner
Fresno Council of Governments
May 16, 2024

COMMENT 6: Botanical Surveys

CDFW did not find any discussion of botanical surveys in the IS/ND. CDFW recommends that the IS/ND for this Plan include a measure requiring that each project site, for projects implemented within the Plan area, be surveyed by a qualified botanist for any possible special-status plants following the “Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Natural Communities” (2018) during biological technical studies completed in support of the future CEQA documents tiered from this Plan. CDFW recommends that the plant surveys be floristic and, if necessary, utilize a known reference site for any special-status plants in order to provide a high level of confidence in the effort and results.

If a special-status plant is found, CDFW recommends that the special-status plant species be avoided whenever possible by delineating and observing a no disturbance buffer of at least 50 feet from the outer edge of the plant population(s) or specific habitat type(s) required by special status plant species. If buffers cannot be maintained, then consultation with CDFW is warranted to determine appropriate minimization and mitigation measures for impacts to special-status plant species. If a State or federally listed plant species is identified during botanical surveys, it is recommended that consultation with CDFW and/or the USFWS be conducted to determine permitting needs.

COMMENT 7: Nesting birds

CDFW did not find any analysis of cumulative impacts on nesting birds in the IS/ND. CDFW recommends that all projects tiered from this Plan occur during the bird non-nesting season; however, if ground-disturbing or vegetation-disturbing activities must occur during the breeding season (February 1 through September 15), the project applicant is responsible for ensuring that implementation of their project does not result in a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act or relevant Fish and Game Codes as referenced above.

To evaluate future project-related impacts on nesting birds, CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist conduct an assessment of nesting habitat during biological surveys in support of the project’s CEQA document, and then conduct pre-activity surveys for active nests no more than one week prior to the start of ground or vegetation disturbance to maximize the probability that nests that could potentially be impacted are detected. CDFW also recommends that surveys cover a sufficient area around each project site to identify nests and determine their status. A sufficient area means any area potentially affected by a project. In addition to direct impacts (i.e., nest destruction), noise, vibration, and movement of workers or equipment could also affect nests. Prior to initiation of construction activities, CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist conduct a survey to establish a behavioral baseline of all identified nests. Once construction

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begins, CDFW recommends having a qualified biologist continuously monitor nests to detect behavioral changes resulting from each project site/area. If behavioral changes occur, CDFW recommends halting the work causing that change and consulting with CDFW for additional avoidance and minimization measures.

If continuous monitoring of identified nests by a qualified biologist is not feasible, CDFW recommends a minimum no-disturbance buffer of 250 feet around active nests of non-listed bird species and a 500-foot no-disturbance buffer around active nests of non-listed raptors. These buffers are advised to remain in place until the breeding season has ended or until a qualified biologist has determined that the birds have fledged and are no longer reliant upon the nest or on-site parental care for survival. Variance from these no-disturbance buffers is possible when there is compelling biological or ecological reason to do so, such as when the construction areas would be concealed from a nest site by topography. CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist advise and support any variance from these buffers and notify CDFW in advance of implementing a variance.

COMMENT 8: CEQA Alternatives Analysis

CDFW recommends that the information and results obtained from the cumulative impacts analysis conducted as part of this Plan's CEQA document be used to develop and modify the Plan's alternatives to avoid and minimize impacts to biological resources to the maximum extent possible. Please note that for all future projects tiered from this Plan, that when efforts to avoid and minimize have been exhausted, remaining impacts to sensitive biological resources may need to be mitigated to reduce impacts to a less than significant level, if feasible.

CNDDDB

Please note that the CNDDDB is populated by records through voluntary submissions of species detections. As a result, species may be present in locations not depicted in the CNDDDB but where there is suitable habitat and features capable of supporting species. A lack of an occurrence record in the CNDDDB does not mean a species is not present. All projects tiered from this Plan should adequately assess any potential project-related impacts to biological resources by ensuring biological surveys are conducted by a qualified biologist during the appropriate survey period(s) and using the appropriate protocol survey methodology as warranted in order to determine whether or not any special status species are present at or near the project area.

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Federally Listed Species

CDFW recommends consulting with USFWS regarding potential impacts to federally listed species including but not limited to the blunt-nosed leopard lizard, foothill yellow-legged frog – south Sierra DPS, Fresno kangaroo rat, giant kangaroo rat, least bell's vireo, foothill yellow-legged frog – central coast DPS, western yellow-billed cuckoo, San Joaquin kit fox, California tiger salamander, giant garter snake, longhorn fairy shrimp, vernal pool fairy shrimp, vernal pool fairy shrimp, California red-legged frog, steelhead – Central Valley DPS, western pond turtle, western spadefoot, California jewelflower, Hartweg's golden sunburst, palmate-bracted bird's-beak, San Joaquin adobe sunburst, San Joaquin Valley Orcutt grass, succulent owl's-clover, San Joaquin woollythreads, and Keck's checkerbloom. Take under the ESA is more broadly defined than CESA; take under ESA also includes significant habitat modification or degradation that could result in death or injury to a listed species by interfering with essential behavioral patterns such as breeding, foraging, or nesting. Consultation with the USFWS in order to comply with ESA is advised well in advance of any future project activities tiered from this Plan.

Environmental Data

CEQA requires that information developed in environmental impact reports and negative declarations be incorporated into a database which may be used to make subsequent or supplemental environmental determinations. (Pub. Resources Code, Section 21003, subd. (e).) Accordingly, please report any special-status species and natural communities detected during any future project surveys to the CNDDDB. The CNDDDB field survey form can be found at the following link: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Submitting-Data>. The completed form can be mailed electronically to CNDDDB at the following email address: CNDDDB@wildlife.ca.gov. The types of information reported to CNDDDB can be found at the following link: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Plants-and-Animals>.

Filing Fees

The Plan, as proposed, would have an impact on fish and/or wildlife, and assessment of filing fees is necessary. Fees are payable upon filing of the Notice of Determination by the Lead Agency and serve to help defray the cost of environmental review by CDFW. Payment of the fee is required in order for the underlying Plan approval to be operative, vested, and final. (Cal. Code Regs, tit. 14, Section 753.5; Fish & G. Code, Section 711.4; Pub. Resources Code, Section 21089.)

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CONCLUSION

CDFW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the IS/ND to assist the COG in identifying, analyzing, and mitigating this Plan's impacts on biological resources.

More information on survey and monitoring protocols for sensitive species can be found at CDFW's website (<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Survey-Protocols>). Questions regarding this letter or further coordination should be directed to Kelley Nelson, Environmental Scientist, at (559) 580-3194 or Kelley.Nelson@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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For Julie A. Vance
Regional Manager

cc: California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CESA R4CESA@wildlife.ca.gov

State Clearinghouse
Governor's Office of Planning and Research
State.Clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov

United States Fish and Wildlife
Patricia Cole; Patricia_Cole@fws.gov

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REFERENCES

California Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2018. Protocols for surveying and evaluating impacts to special status native plant populations and sensitive natural communities. Sacramento, California, USA.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2024. Biogeographic information and observation system [BIOS]. <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/BIOS>. Accessed April 22, 2024.