Wasco State Route 43/State Route 46 Intersection Improvements

On State Route 43 at the State Route 46 intersection
in the city of Wasco in Kern County

06-KER-43-PM 25.1/25.3, SR 46-PM 51.0/51.4
EA 06-0X770/Project ID 0618000131
State Clearinghouse Number: 2021090404

Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration

Volume 1 of 2

Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation

October 2021

Caltrans

General Information About This Document

Document prepared by: Christine Kelley, Associate Environmental Planner

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State Clearinghouse Number: 2021090404
06-KER-43-PM 25.1/25.3, SR 46-PM 51.0/51.4
Project ID 0618000131

Construct a roundabout at the intersection of State Route 43 and State Route 46 from post mile 25.1 to post mile 25.3 on State Route 43 and from post mile 51.0 to 51.4 on State Route 46 in the city of Wasco in Kern County, California

INITIAL STUDY
with Mitigated Negative Declaration

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation

Responsible Agency: California Transportation Commission

Jennifer H. Taylor

Jennifer H. Taylor
Environmental Office Chief, District 6
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

10/28/2021
Date

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Mitigated Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

State Clearinghouse Number: 2021090404

District-County-Route-Post Mile: 06-KER-43-PM 25.1/25.3, SR 46-PM 51.0/51.4

EA/Project Number: EA 06-0X770/Project ID 0618000131

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to construct a single-lane roundabout on a two-lane roundabout footprint at the east junction intersection of State Route 43, State Route 46 and J Street in the city of Wasco in Kern County, California.

Determination

An Initial Study has been prepared by Caltrans, District 6.

On the basis of this study, it is determined that the proposed action with the incorporation of the identified mitigation measures will not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

- To reduce risk and exposure to the State and to bring the project into a less than significant finding for hazardous waste, the project will include hazardous waste mitigation activities. These activities include, but are not limited to, development of a soil management plan, excavation of soil for offsite disposal, removal and relocation of monitoring wells per Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board guidance, and potential relocation of a soil vapor extraction system.

Jennifer H. Taylor

Jennifer H. Taylor
Environmental Office Chief, District 6
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

10/28/2021

Date

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Proposed Project

1.1 Introduction

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to construct a single-lane roundabout on a two-lane roundabout footprint at the east junction intersection of State Route 43, State Route 46 and J Street in the city of Wasco in Kern County, California. See Figures 1-1 and 1-2.

State Route 43 at the project location is a two-lane undivided conventional highway with flexible pavement. The State Route 43 alignment runs south to north and exists as the north leg of the project intersection. For several hundred feet, State Route 43 has an “S-curve” alignment just north of the project intersection before straightening and running parallel to the adjacent railroad tracks west of State Route 43. The existing paved shoulders on State Route 43 are 4 feet wide.

State Route 46 at the project location is a two-lane undivided conventional highway with flexible pavement that runs west to east and exists as the east and west legs of the project intersection. The two legs of State Route 46 have left-turn lanes. The through and left-turn lanes of State Route 46 are 12 feet wide, and the paved shoulders approaching the intersection vary from 5 feet to 8 feet wide.

The south leg of the project intersection is J Street, a two-lane county road running south to north with flexible pavement and 2-foot paved shoulders.

The existing intersection of State Route 43, State Route 46 and J Street has two-way stop control, with stop signs on the minor legs of State Route 43 and J Street. The stop signs have flashing red beacons attached, and the State Route 46 legs have flashing yellow warning beacons for the intersection.

This safety project is funded from the State Highway Operation and Protection Program 20.10.201.010 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The project’s estimated cost is $10,481,000. Construction is expected to begin in 2023 and end in 2025.

Caltrans in cooperation with the California High Speed Rail Authority is proposing to coordinate adjacent projects that overlap in schedule and construction limits between the west junction of State Route 43 and State Route 46 at F Street (local road) and the east junction of State Route 43 and State Route 46 at J Street (local road). As noted earlier, State Route 43 is a south-north route and State Route 46 is a west-east route. Between F Street and J Street, State Route 43 has a route break and State Route 46 carries State Route 43 traffic between the route junctions at F Street and J Street.

Caltrans Traffic Operations determined the intersection should be reconstructed as a single-lane roundabout with the ability to be reconfigured into a two-lane roundabout if traffic volumes increase in the future.

1.2 Purpose and Need

1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the project is to improve intersection traffic operations and safety by reducing the number and severity of collisions and reducing traffic congestion at the east junction intersection of State Route 43 and State Route 46 by placing a roundabout at the intersection.

1.2.2 Need

The intersection of State Route 43, State Route 46 and J Street is experiencing an above-average number of collisions. These collisions are mostly broadside and rear-end collisions, which are typically associated with left-turning vehicles.

The intersection has a collision rate above the statewide average for similar facilities, and traffic warrants have been met that establish the need for a safety improvement project at the intersection.

1.3 Project Description

The project will construct a single-lane roundabout on a two-lane roundabout footprint at the east junction intersection of State Route 43, State Route 46 and J Street. The diameter of the roundabout will be 180 feet. The single-lane roundabout will be designed to accommodate Surface Transportation Assistance Act vehicles (large trucks), and a truck apron will enable Surface Transportation Assistance Act vehicles to maneuver through the roundabout. The central and splitter islands will be primarily hardscaped to minimize maintenance activities and worker exposure to moving traffic.

A drainage system will be composed of drainage inlets along the outside flowlines of the roundabout intersection legs to convey stormwater to the State Route 46 pump house basin southwest of the roundabout. This basin was built by the adjacent California High Speed Rail State Route 46 Widening project and has adequate capacity for the roundabout drainage needs. Installation of a lighting system, flashing beacon system, and traffic monitoring station will be included in the project. In addition, the project will require additional right-of-way from six parcels. Temporary construction easements will be necessary when staging for construction or conforming to private driveways at the gas station in the southeast quadrant. Existing

utilities and utility poles will be relocated by the California High Speed Rail Authority prior to roundabout construction starting. The project will include a 10-foot-wide shared-path sidewalk and a 5-foot buffer to accommodate pedestrians and bicycle passage away from the roundabout traveled way.

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map

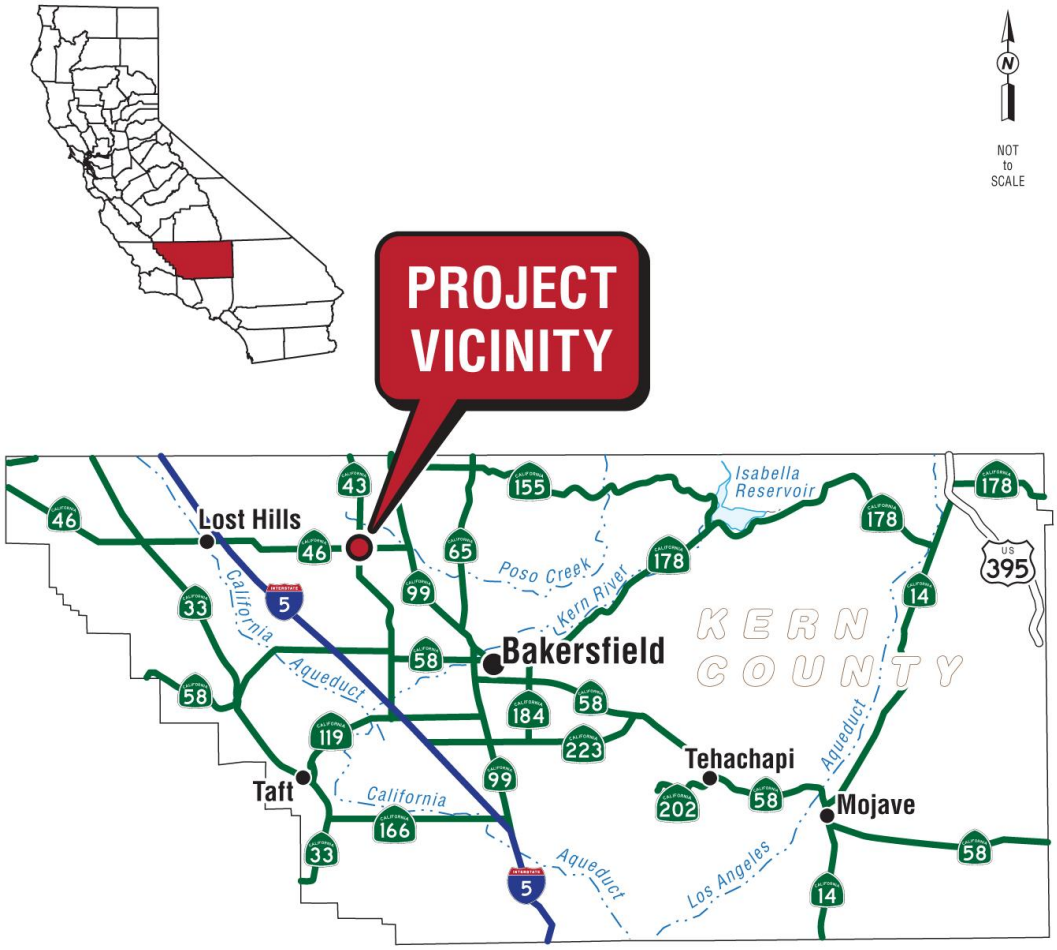
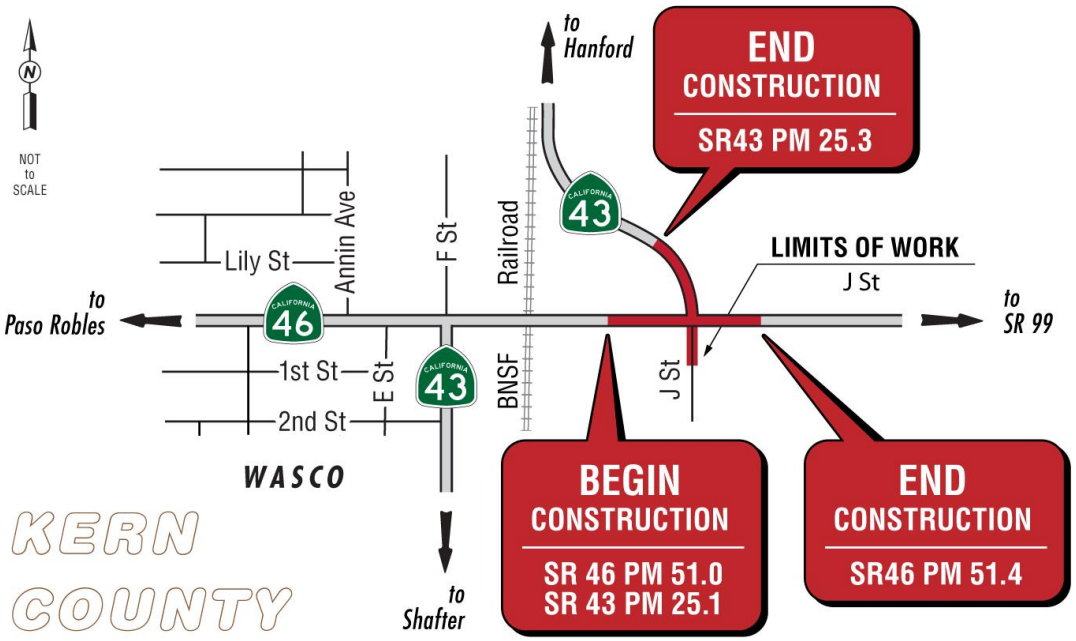


Figure 1-2 Project Location Map



1.4 Project Alternatives

Two alternatives—the Build Alternative and the No-Build Alternative—were considered.

1.4.1 Build Alternative

This safety improvement project will construct a single-lane roundabout on a two-lane roundabout footprint at the east junction intersection of State Route 43, State Route 46 and J Street. The diameter of the roundabout will be 180 feet. The single-lane roundabout will accommodate Surface Transportation Assistance Act vehicles, with a truck apron to enable Surface Transportation Assistance Act vehicles to maneuver through the roundabout. The central and splitter islands will be primarily hardscaped to minimize maintenance activities and worker exposure to moving traffic.

The project will include a drainage system composed of drainage inlets along the outside flowlines of the roundabout intersection legs to convey stormwater to the State Route 46 pump house basin southwest of the roundabout. This basin was built by the adjacent California High Speed Rail State Route 46 Widening project and has adequate capacity for the roundabout drainage needs. In addition, a lighting system, flashing beacon system, and traffic monitoring station will be installed.

The project will also include a 10-foot-wide shared-path sidewalk and a 5-foot buffer to accommodate pedestrians and bicycle passage away from the roundabout traveled way.

To construct the roundabout, the project will require additional right-of-way. Also, temporary construction easements will be needed when staging for construction or conforming to private driveways at the gas station in the southeast quadrant. Approximately 2.4 acres will be acquired from six parcels within the project area. Existing utilities and utility poles will be relocated by the California High Speed Rail Authority prior to roundabout construction starting.

This project contains a number of standardized project measures that are used on most, if not all, Caltrans projects and were not developed in response to any specific environmental impact resulting from the proposed project. These measures are listed later in this chapter under “Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Alternatives.”

1.4.2 No-Build (No-Action) Alternative

The No-Build Alternative will leave this intersection of State Route 43 and State Route 46 as it is, without a roundabout. This alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the project to improve intersection traffic operations and safety by reducing the number and severity of collisions and reducing traffic congestion.

1.5 Identification of a Preferred Alternative

The Build Alternative was selected by Caltrans as the preferred alternative. The No-Build Alternative would not meet the purpose for the project which is to improve intersection traffic operations and safety by reducing the number and severity of collisions and reducing traffic congestion at the east junction intersection of State Route 43 and State Route 46.

1.6 Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Alternatives

Air Quality

- Caltrans Standard Specifications, Section 14-9.02 “Air Pollution Control” and Section 10-5 “Dust Control,” require the contractor to comply with the air pollution control rules, ordinances, and regulations and statutes that apply to work performed under the contract, including those provided in Government Code Section 11017.

- The contractor will comply with a Dust Control Plan approved by the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District. The Dust Control Plan is needed if at least 2,500 cubic yards of material are moved in a day for at least three days of the project or 5 or more acres of land will be disturbed during construction.

Biology

- If construction occurs into the avian nesting season (February 1 to September 30), pre-construction surveys for migratory birds will be required. If work runs into the nesting season and an active nest is found within the project area, the project may require a biological monitor or an environmentally sensitive area buffer depending on the extent of the work and species affected. Surveys for migratory birds and raptors will be completed prior to construction by a qualified biologist.

Noise

- No adverse noise impacts from construction are anticipated because construction would be conducted in a rural setting and in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 14-8.

- Construction noise will not exceed 86 dBA Lmax at 50 feet from the job site activities from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

- Any internal combustion engines will be equipped with the manufacturer-recommended muffler. Do not operate an internal combustion engine on the job site without the appropriate muffler.

Visual

- Include architectural surfaces in the roundabout center and in raised islands.

- Include highway planting in the roundabout center.

1.7 Discussion of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion

This document contains information regarding compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and other state laws and regulations. Separate environmental documentation, supporting a Categorical Exclusion determination, has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. When needed for clarity, or as required by CEQA, this document may contain references to federal laws and/or regulations (CEQA, for example, requires consideration of adverse effects on species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species by the U.S.

National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—that is, species protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act).

1.8 Permits and Approvals Needed

No permits, licenses, agreements, or certifications are required for project construction.

Chapter 2 CEQA Evaluation

2.1 CEQA Environmental Checklist

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the project. Potential impact determinations include Significant and Unavoidable Impact, Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated, Less Than Significant Impact, and No Impact. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with a project will indicate that there are no impacts to a particular resource. A "No Impact" answer reflects this determination. The questions in this checklist are intended to encourage the thoughtful assessment of impacts and do not represent thresholds of significance.

Project features, which can include both design elements of the project and standardized measures that are applied to all or most Caltrans projects such as Best Management Practices and measures included in the Standard Plans and Specifications or as Standard Special Provisions, are considered to be an integral part of the project and have been considered prior to any significance determinations documented below.

"No Impact" determinations in each section are based on the scope, description, and location of the project as well as the appropriate technical report (bound separately in Volume 2), and no further discussion is included in this document.

2.1.1 Aesthetics

Considering the information in the Visual Impact Assessment dated September 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	**No Impact**
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	**No Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	**No Impact**
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	**No Impact**

2.1.2 Agriculture and Forest Resources

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project; and the forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

Considering the information in the project plans and design, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources
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?	**No Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	**No Impact**
c) Conflict with existing zoning, 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))?	**No Impact**
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	**No Impact**
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**

2.1.3 Air Quality

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations.

Considering the information in the Air Quality Report dated September 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	**No Impact**
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?	**No Impact**
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	**No Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	**No Impact**

2.1.4 Biological Resources

Considering the information in the Biology Compliance Report dated September 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration Fisheries?	**No Impact**
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	**No Impact**
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	**No Impact**
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?	**No Impact**
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	**No Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources
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**

2.1.5 Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Historic Property Survey Report dated September 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Cultural Resources
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	**No Impact**
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	**No Impact**
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	**No Impact**

2.1.6 Energy

Considering the project would not add travel lanes or increase roadway capacity or build structures that would require substantial direct or indirect energy use, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Energy
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation?	**No Impact**
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	**No Impact**

2.1.7 Geology and Soils

Considering the information in the Paleontological Identification Report dated September 2021 and the California Geologic Survey, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils
a) Directly or indirectly cause 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.	**No Impact**
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	**No Impact**
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	**No Impact**
iv) Landslides?	**No Impact**
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	**No Impact**
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 onsite or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	**No Impact**
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	**No Impact**
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?	**No Impact**
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	**No Impact**

2.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Considering the information in the Climate Change Report dated September 2021 and Air Quality Report dated September 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Greenhouse Gas Emissions
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	**Less Than Significant Impact**

Affected Environment

The project is located at the eastern intersection of State Routes 43 and 46, at J Street in the city of Wasco in Kern County. The existing State Route 43, State Route 46 and J Street intersection is two-way-stop-controlled with stop signs on the minor legs of State Route 43 and J Street. State Routes 43 and 46 at the project location are two-lane undivided conventional highways with flexible pavement. The roundabout location is approximately 500 feet east of the High Speed Rail alignment at a heavily traveled junction on the eastern outskirts of Wasco. The areas adjacent to the project are characterized by urban developments, such as commercial stores and industrial areas, along with agricultural lands.

Environmental Consequences

Construction greenhouse gas emissions will result from material processing, onsite construction equipment, and traffic delays due to construction. These emissions will be produced at different levels throughout the construction phase; their frequency and occurrence can be reduced through innovations in plans and specifications and by implementing better traffic management during construction phases.

In addition, with innovations such as longer pavement life, improved traffic management plans, and changes in materials, the greenhouse gas emissions produced during construction can be offset to some degree by longer intervals between maintenance and rehabilitation activities.

Per Caltrans protocol, carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions generated from construction equipment (which are used to gauge impacts to climate change) were estimated using the Caltrans Construction Emissions Tool (known as CALCET). The estimated carbon dioxide construction emissions are 198 U.S. tons over a 120-day work period.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

While the project will result in greenhouse gas emissions during construction, it is anticipated that the project will not result in any increase in operational greenhouse gas emissions. The project does not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. With the implementation of construction greenhouse gas reduction measures, the impacts will be less than significant.

The following measures will also be implemented in the project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and potential climate change impacts from the project.

Caltrans Specification 14.9.02, Air Pollution Control, requires contractors to comply with all air pollution control rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes. Measures that reduce construction vehicle emissions also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The following greenhouse gas reduction measures will be implemented for the project:

Project-level Measures at Construction

- Schedule truck trips outside of peak morning and evening commute hours.
- Reduce construction waste. For example, re-use or recycle construction and demolition waste (reduces consumption of raw materials, reducing landfill waste, and encourages cost savings).
- Reduce construction water consumption of potable water. Encourage recycled water for construction.
- Encourage improved fuel efficiency from construction equipment such as 1) maintain equipment in proper working condition; 2) right-size equipment for the job; 3) use equipment with new technologies.
- Construction Environmental Training—provide construction personnel with the knowledge to identify environmental issues and best practice methods to minimize impacts to the human and natural environment. Supplement existing training with information regarding methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to construction.
- Onsite recycling of existing project features is encouraged (for example, Sub-base Granual Material or native material that meets Caltrans specifications for incorporation into new work).
- Earthwork balance—reduce the need for transport of earthen materials by balancing cut and fill quantities.
- Long-Life Pavement—minimize life-cycle costs by designing long-lasting pavement structures.

- Use sign panels with ultra-reflective materials that are illuminated by headlights.
- Construction scheduling—lengthen lane closure duration to reduce necessary mobilization efforts.

Project-level Measures During Operations

- Incorporation of Complete Streets components.
- Installation of solar to supply power to highway facility components or buildings.
- Design and installation of long-life pavement structures to minimize life-cycle costs.
- Include measures to support multi-modal transportation that will offset project climate impacts, such as additional Park and Ride lots and bike lockers.
- Local infiltration also reduces energy costs related to conveying and treating storm water through municipal systems.
- Select project features that minimize the need for irrigation and nonnative plants
- Provide balanced earthwork, and that reduces import/export of fill with a goal of 10 percent.
- Match existing grade as much as possible, reducing earthwork.
- Alternatives should be balanced against competing environmental constraints, for example, longer alignment may have a reduced overall impact.
- Maximize use of solar cells for a point-of-use energy source. Considerations should be given for compatibility with existing structures.
- Promote/encourage use of solar-powered equipment when feasible.

2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Considering the information in the Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment dated June 15, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	**No Impact**
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?	**No Impact**
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	**No Impact**
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?	**Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated**
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	**No Impact**
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	**No Impact**
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	**No Impact**

Affected Environment

The project will construct a single-lane roundabout on a two-lane footprint to allow for future expansion. The roundabout will be constructed at the intersection of State Route 43, State Route 46 and J Street in the city of Wasco in Kern County.

An Initial Site Assessment was performed in 2019. The Initial Site Assessment noted that several parcels will need further investigation.

Preliminary Site Investigations were performed in two phases in 2020. An Initial Site Assessment for Hazardous Materials Disclosure Document was prepared for the project on June 15, 2021, which included an updated search of the following five California Environmental Protection Agency Data Resources, commonly referred to as the "Cortese List":

- EnviroStor database, List of Hazardous Waste and Substances sites, Department of Toxic Substances Control
- Geotracker database, List of Leaking Underground Storage Tank sites, State Water Resources Control Board
- Sites identified with waste constituents above hazardous waste levels outside the waste management unit
- Cease and Desist Orders/Cleanup and Abatement Orders List, showing the active Cease and Desist Orders and Cleanup and Abatement Orders
- List of hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action, Department of Toxic Substances Control

Environmental Consequences

Assessor's Parcel Number 030-0220-04 (88357-1) is listed on the above referenced databases. The parcel is listed as an active remediation case with the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Preliminary Site Investigation validates that the site is impacted by pesticides/herbicides associated with past use.

No other parcels affected by the project were listed on any of the above referenced databases. However, the Preliminary Site Investigations performed on the parcels indicate that there are impacts to shallow soils from historical pesticide use and petroleum hydrocarbons.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

To reduce risk and exposure to the State and to bring the project into a less than significant finding for hazardous waste, the project will include hazardous waste mitigation activities. These activities include, but are not limited to, development of a soil management plan, excavation of soil for offsite disposal, removal and relocation of monitoring wells per Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board guidance, and potential relocation of a soil vapor extraction system (a soil vaper extraction system designed to remove volatile and semi-volatile contaminants).

2.1.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Considering the information in the Water Compliance Report dated September 2021 and the Location Hydraulic Study dated September 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface water or groundwater quality?	**No Impact**
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	**No Impact**
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 onsite or offsite;	**No Impact**
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding onsite or offsite;	**No Impact**
(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	**No Impact**
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	**No Impact**
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	**No Impact**
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	**No Impact**

2.1.11 Land Use and Planning

Considering the project location and the proposed work on an existing intersection, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Land Use and Planning
a) Physically divide an established community?	**No Impact**
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?	**No Impact**

2.1.12 Mineral Resources

Considering the information in the California Department of Conservation Mineral Land Classification Interactive Map dated 1998, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Mineral Resources
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?	**No Impact**
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**

2.1.13 Noise

Considering the information in the Noise Compliance Report dated September 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project result in:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise
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?	**No Impact**

Question—Would the project result in:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	**No Impact**
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**

2.1.14 Population and Housing

Considering the information in the Kern County General Plan 2004 and the project description, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Population and Housing
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	**No Impact**
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	**No Impact**

2.1.15 Public Services

Considering the information in the Kern County General Plan 2004 and the project description, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Public Services
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?	**No Impact**
Police protection?	**No Impact**
Schools?	**No Impact**
Parks?	**No Impact**
Other public facilities?	**No Impact**

2.1.16 Recreation

Considering the information in the Kern County General Plan 2004 and the project description, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Recreation
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?	**No Impact**
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**

2.1.17 Transportation

Considering the information in the Kern County General Plan 2004 and the project description, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Transportation
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	**No Impact**
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	**No Impact**
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	**No Impact**
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	**No Impact**

2.1.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Historic Property Survey Report dated September 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

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:

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or	**No Impact**

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	**No Impact**

2.1.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Considering the information in the Project Report dated June 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems
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?	**No Impact**
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	**No Impact**
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?	**No Impact**
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?	**No Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	**No Impact**

2.1.20 Wildfire

Considering the information in the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection online Fire Hazard Severity Zones Maps dated November 2007, the following significance determinations have been made.

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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Wildfire
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	**No Impact**
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?	**No Impact**
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?	**No Impact**
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?	**No Impact**

2.1.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Mandatory Findings of Significance
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	**No Impact**
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)?	**No Impact**
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	**No Impact**

Appendix A Title VI Policy Statement

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY Gavin Newsom, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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Making Conservation a California Way of Life.

August 2020

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

The California Department of Transportation, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ensures *"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."*

Caltrans will make every effort to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its services, programs and activities, whether they are federally funded or not, and that services and benefits are fairly distributed to all people, regardless of race, color, or national origin. In addition, Caltrans will facilitate meaningful participation in the transportation planning process in a nondiscriminatory manner.

Related federal statutes, remedies, and state law further those protections to include sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, and age.

For information or guidance on how to file a complaint, or obtain more information regarding Title VI, please contact the Title VI Branch Manager at (916) 324-8379 or visit the following web page: https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/title-vi.

To obtain this information in an alternate format such as Braille or in a language other than English, please contact the California Department of Transportation, Office of Civil Rights, at 1823 14th Street, MS-79, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 324-8379 (TTY 711); or at <Title.VI@dot.ca.gov>.

Original signed by
Toks Omishakin
Director

"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability"

Appendix B Comment Letters and Responses

This appendix contains the comments received during the public circulation and comment period from September 24, 2021 to October 24, 2021, retyped for readability. A Caltrans response follows each comment presented. Copies of the original comment letters and documents can be found in Volume 2 of this document.

Comment from: Christine Otakan

Comment 1:

October 18, 2021

From: Chris <christinemt12@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, October 18, 2021 12:44 PM

To: Lim, Haesun@DOT <haesun.a.lim@dot.ca.gov>

Subject: Project Question

Hello, can you please tell me the current status of the project below? When is ROW acquisition anticipated to begin for this project?

PROJECT ID: 0618000131
PPNO: 6982
0X770
Route 43: In Wasco, from Route 46 to south of Gromer Avenue. Improve safety by constructing a roundabout

Thank you,
Christine Otakan

Response to comment 1: The public comment period for the draft environmental document ended on October 24, 2021. If the project is given environmental approval and funding is appropriated, Caltrans may proceed with the design and construction of the project.

The earliest right-of-way acquisition is anticipated to begin in January/February of 2022. Right-of-way acquisition is expected to be completed in the spring of 2023.

List of Technical Studies Bound Separately (Volume 2)

Air Quality Report

Climate Change Report

Noise Compliance Report

Water Compliance Report

Location Hydraulic Study

Biology Compliance Report

Historic Property Survey Report

- Archaeological Survey Report

Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment

Visual Impact Assessment

Paleontological Identification Report

To obtain a copy of one or more of these technical studies/reports or the Initial Study, please send your request to:

Haesun Lim
District 6 Environmental Division
California Department of Transportation
2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100, Fresno, California 93726

Or send your request via email to: haesun.a.lim@dot.ca.gov

Or call: 559-970-2348

Please provide the following information in your request:

Wasco State Route 43/State Route 46 Intersection Improvements
On State Route 46 at the State Route 43 intersection
06-KER-SR43-PM25.1/25.3, SR46-PM51.0/51.4
06-0X770/Project ID 0618000131