

CITY OF
LEMOORE
2030 GENERAL PLAN

Prepared for
the City of Lemoore
by

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

In association with

Dowling Associates Inc.,
Transportation Engineers,
Charles Salter Associates,
Noise Consultants

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

SCH # 2006081113

FEBRUARY 13, 2008

Contents

Contents	1
1 Introduction	1
2 Comments and Responses	
2.1 Comments Received	
2.2 Response to Department of Public Health Comments January 14, 2008	
2.3 Response to California Department of Transportation September 6, 2006	
2.4 Response to California Department of Transportation January 15, 2008	
2.5 Response to California Department of Transportation January 25, 2008	
2.6 Response to California Public Utilities Commission, January 25, 2008	
2.7 Response to the Public Health Department, January 25, 2008	
2.8 Response to Comments from Department of Navy, January 28, 2008	

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1 Introduction

This Program Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) has been prepared on behalf of the City of Lemoore (City) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City is the lead agency responsible for ensuring that the proposed 2030 Lemoore General Plan (General Plan) complies with CEQA.

This Final EIR, which includes the Draft EIR, Comments on and Responses to Comments on the Draft EIR, and minor corrections and clarifications to the Draft EIR, is intended to disclose to City decision makers, responsible agencies, organizations, and the general public, the potential impacts of implementing the General Plan. This program level analysis addresses potential impacts of activities associated with implementation of the General Plan, which are described in Chapter 2, Project Description, of the Draft EIR.

The primary purpose of the Final EIR is to revise and refine the environmental analysis and mitigation measures in the Draft EIR, published December 13, 2007, in response to comments received during the 45-day public review period. The review period for the Draft EIR (State Clearinghouse No. 2006081113) was from December 13, 2007 to January 28, 2008. This Response Addendum, combined with the Draft EIR, constitutes the Final EIR on the project. This Final EIR amends and incorporates by reference the Draft EIR, which is available as a separately bound document from the City of Lemoore Planning Department, 210 Fox Street, in Lemoore.

The Draft EIR contains some impacts that are significant and unavoidable despite extensive mitigating policies, such as impacts to farmland, air quality, special status species, and the noise environment related to Naval Air Station Lemoore (NASL). Other potentially significant impacts can be avoided or reduced to levels that are not significant through implementation of the policies or mitigation measures identified in the Draft EIR.

Upon issuance of the Final EIR, the City will hold public hearings to certify the EIR and to consider adoption of the proposed General Plan. The City will determine the adequacy of the Final EIR, and, if determined adequate, will make findings and certify the document as compliant with CEQA.

Copies of the Final EIR have only been mailed to agencies and other parties that sent in General Plan EIR comments or have requested the Final EIR. The Final EIR is also available at the City of Lemoore Planning Department, 210 Fox Street, in Lemoore and the City's website at www.lemoore.com/planning/general_plan_update

The remainder of this document, Section 2, contains a list of all comment letters received during the comment period on the Draft EIR, copies of each comment letter with comments numbered, and written responses to each comment.

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2 Comments and Responses

2.1 COMMENTS RECEIVED

Eight sets of written comments were received on the Draft EIR by the close of the 45-day comment period on January 28, 2008. More specifically, comments on the Draft EIR were received from the agencies listed in Table 2-1. Copies of the comment letters are included in this chapter in Section 2.2.

Table 2-1 Comment Letters Received on Draft EIR		
<i>Comment Set</i>	<i>Commenting Agency or Individual</i>	<i>Date</i>
1.	California Department of Water Resources	January 7, 2008
2.	County of Kings Department of Public Health	January 14, 2008
3.	California Department of Transportation (NOP)	September 6, 2006
4.	California Department of Transportation	January 15, 2008
5.	California Department of Transportation (addendum)	January 25, 2008
6.	California Public Utilities Commission	January 25, 2008
7.	County of Kings Department of Public Health	January 25, 2008
8.	Department of the Navy	January 28, 2008

2.2 RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

Responses to each comment contained in the eight comment letters are provided on the following pages, along with the relevant comment letter. Responses are keyed to comment numbers inserted on the right hand side of each comment letter. Comments pertaining to the General Plan as opposed to the Draft EIR will be addressed separately by City staff.

Additions to the Draft EIR are underlined; deletions are in ~~strikethrough~~ format.

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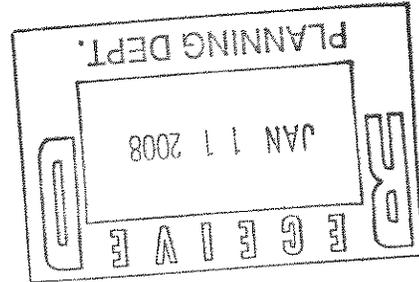
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

1416 NINTH STREET, P.O. BOX 942836
SACRAMENTO, CA 942360001
(916) 653-5791



January 7, 2008

Holly Smyth
City of Lemoore Planning Department
210 Fox Street
Lemoore, California 93245



2030 Lemoore General Plan
State Clearinghouse (SCH) Number: 2006081113

The project corresponding to the subject SCH identification number has come to our attention. The limited project description suggests your project may be an encroachment on the State Adopted Plan of Flood Control. You may refer to the California Code of Regulations, Title 23 and Designated Floodway maps at <http://recbd.ca.gov/>. Please be advised that your county office also has copies of the Board's designated floodways for your review. If indeed your project encroaches on an adopted food control plan, you will need to obtain an encroachment permit from the Reclamation Board prior to initiating any activities. The attached Fact Sheet explains the permitting process. Please note that the permitting process may take as much as 45 to 60 days to process. Also note that a condition of the permit requires the securing all of the appropriate additional permits before initiating work. This information is provided so that you may plan accordingly.

1-A

If after careful evaluation, it is your assessment that your project is not within the authority of the Reclamation Board, you may disregard this notice. For further information, please contact me at (916) 574-1249.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Chris Huitt".

Christopher Huitt
Staff Environmental Scientist
Floodway Protection Section

Enclosure

cc: Governor's Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

Encroachment Permits Fact Sheet

Basis for Authority

State law (Water Code Sections 8534, 8608, 8609, and 8710 – 8723) tasks the Reclamation Board with enforcing appropriate standards for the construction, maintenance, and protection of adopted flood control plans. Regulations implementing these directives are found in California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 23, Division 1.

Area of Reclamation Board Jurisdiction

The adopted plan of flood control under the jurisdiction and authority of the Reclamation Board includes the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers and their tributaries and distributaries and the designated floodways.

Streams regulated by the Reclamation Board can be found in Title 23 Section 112. Information on designated floodways can be found on the Reclamation Board's website at http://recbd.ca.gov/designated_floodway/ and CCR Title 23 Sections 101 - 107.

Regulatory Process

The Reclamation Board ensures the integrity of the flood control system through a permit process (Water Code Section 8710). A permit must be obtained prior to initiating any activity, including excavation and construction, removal or planting of landscaping within floodways, levees, and 10 feet landward of the landside levee toes. Additionally, activities located outside of the adopted plan of flood control but which may foreseeable interfere with the functioning or operation of the plan of flood control is also subject to a permit of the Reclamation Board.

Details regarding the permitting process and the regulations can be found on the Reclamation Board's website at <http://recbd.ca.gov/> under "Frequently Asked Questions" and "Regulations," respectively. The application form and the accompanying environmental questionnaire can be found on the Reclamation Board's website at <http://recbd.ca.gov/forms.cfm>.

Application Review Process

Applications when deemed complete will undergo technical and environmental review by Reclamation Board and/or Department of Water Resources staff.

Technical Review

A technical review is conducted of the application to ensure consistency with the regulatory standards designed to ensure the function and structural integrity of the adopted plan of flood control for the protection of public welfare and safety. Standards and permitted uses of designated floodways are found in CCR Title 23 Sections 107 and Article 8 (Sections 111 to 137). The permit contains 12 standard conditions and additional special conditions may be placed on the permit as the situation warrants. Special conditions, for example, may include mitigation for the hydraulic impacts of the project by reducing or eliminating the additional flood risk to third parties that may caused by the project.

Additional information may be requested in support of the technical review of

your application pursuant to CCR Title 23 Section 8(b)(4). This information may include but not limited to geotechnical exploration, soil testing, hydraulic or sediment transport studies, and other analyses may be required at any time prior to a determination on the application.

Environmental Review

A determination on an encroachment application is a discretionary action by the Reclamation Board and its staff and subject to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code 21000 et seq.). Additional environmental considerations are placed on the issuance of the encroachment permit by Water Code Section 8608 and the corresponding implementing regulations (California Code of Regulations – CCR Title 23 Sections 10 and 16).

In most cases, the Reclamation Board will be assuming the role of a “responsible agency” within the meaning of CEQA. In these situations, the application must include a certified CEQA document by the “lead agency” [CCR Title 23 Section 8(b)(2)]. We emphasize that such a document must include within its project description and environmental assessment of the activities for which are being considered under the permit.

Encroachment applications will also undergo a review by an interagency Environmental Review Committee (ERC) pursuant to CCR Title 23 Section 10. Review of your application will be facilitated by providing as much additional environmental information as pertinent and available to the applicant at the time of submission of the encroachment application.

These additional documentations may include the following documentation:

- California Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Notification (<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/1600/>),
- Clean Water Act Section 404 applications, and Rivers and Harbors Section 10 application (US Army Corp of Engineers),
- Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification, and
- corresponding determinations by the respective regulatory agencies to the aforementioned applications, including Biological Opinions, if available at the time of submission of your application.

The submission of this information, if pertinent to your application, will expedite review and prevent overlapping requirements. This information should be made available as a supplement to your application as it becomes available. Transmittal information should reference the application number provided by the Reclamation Board.

In some limited situations, such as for minor projects, there may be no other agency with approval authority over the project, other than the encroachment permit by Reclamation Board. In these limited instances, the Reclamation Board

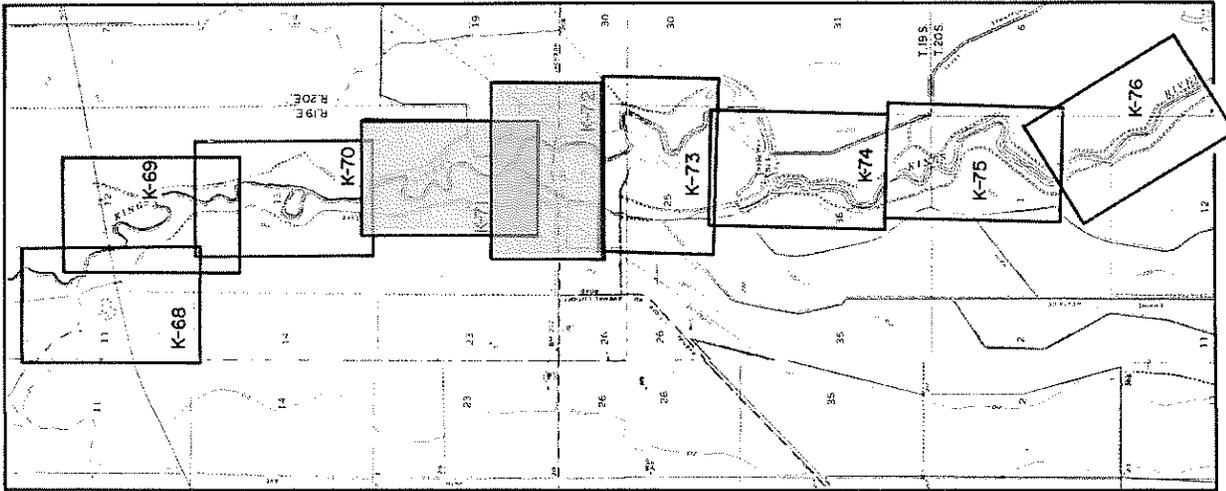
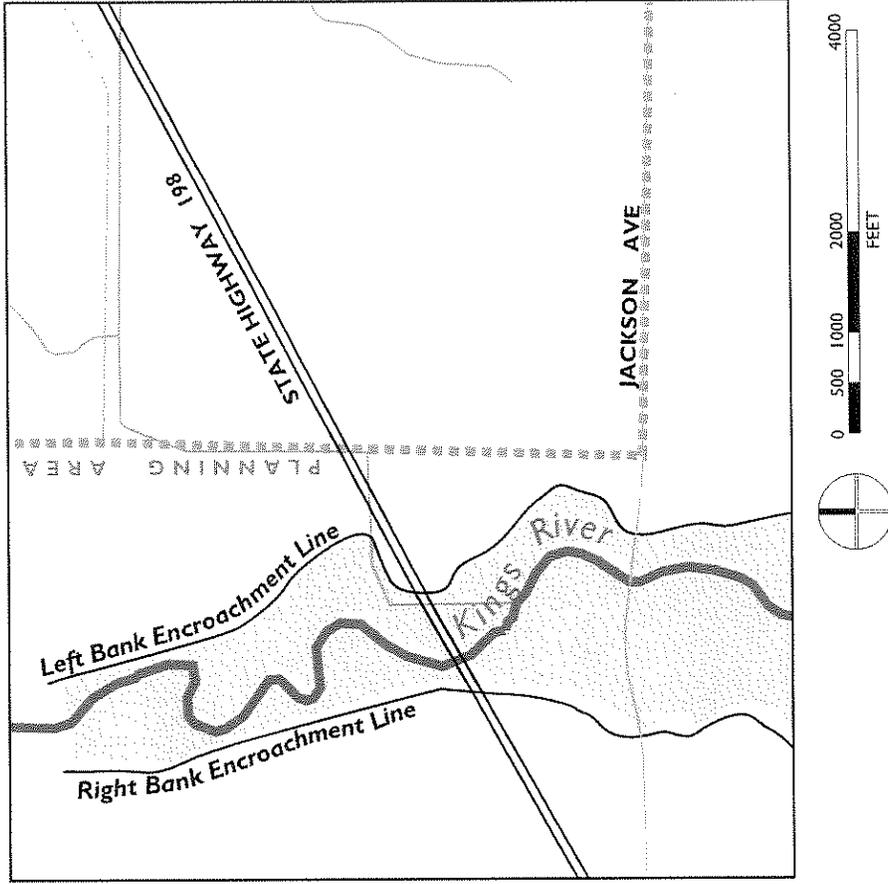
may choose to serve as the "lead agency" within the meaning of CEQA and in most cases the projects are of such a nature that a categorical or statutory exemption will apply. The Reclamation Board cannot invest staff resources to prepare complex environmental documentation.

Additional information may be requested in support of the environmental review of your application pursuant to CCR Title 23 Section 8(b)(4). This information may include biological surveys or other environmental surveys and may be required at anytime prior to a determination on the application.

**2.2-1 RESPONSE TO DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES COMMENTS
JANUARY 7, 2008**

- 1-A: Comments noted. The Planning Area westernmost boundary is close to, though not crossing, the Kings River. After careful evaluation of the Designated Floodway maps depicting the vicinity of Lemoore – in particular the segment of the Kings River included on map tile K-72, which encompasses the point at which Jackson Avenue crosses the Kings River– it is apparent that, while a small segment of the Planning Area is included within the map tile itself, no part of the Planning Area falls within the left bank encroachment line of the Kings River floodway. Therefore, no part of the Planning Area falls under the jurisdiction of Reclamation Board, no land use proposals in the General Plan will encroach on the floodway, and there are no EIR text revisions necessary. Figure 2.2-1 on the following page depicts the relationship between the Kings River encroachment boundary and the Lemoore General Plan Planning Area, using the Index Map and Map Tiles 71 and 72 from the Department of Water Resources website.

Figure 2.2-1
 Relationship of Kings River Encroachment
 Boundary to Lemoore General Plan



Source: California State Board of Reclamation,
 Designated Floodway of the Kings River and Distributaries
 within Kings County, Sheets K-71 and K-72.

PERRY RICKARD
Director of Public Health Services

MICHAEL MACLEAN, M.D., M.S.
Health Officer



COUNTY OF KINGS

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

KEITH WINKLER, DEPUTY HEALTH DIRECTOR
Environmental Health Services

330 Campus Drive - Hanford, California 93230
Telephone: (559) 584-1411 Fax: (559) 584-6040
www.countyofkings.com/health/ehs

January 14, 2008

Holly Smyth, Planning Director
City of Lemoore Planning Department
210 Fox Street
Lemoore, CA 93245



Re: Draft Environmental Impact Report for the 2030 Lemoore General Plan (SCH #200608113)

Dear Ms. Smyth:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposed 2030 Lemoore General Plan and its associated Draft Environmental Impact Report. Our comments follow below:

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recognizes that there are significant health issues related to community land use planning and implementation. The Kings County Department of Public Health commends the City of Lemoore for its understanding of this relationship as evidenced by the proactive embrace of the healthy community design principles detailed in the proposed General Plan.

2-A

The Plan describes an interconnected, active, pedestrian-friendly community that is conducive to physical activity in an aesthetically harmonious environment. Our Department applauds this example of planning for a healthier, more sustainable community for all its residents.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lee Johnson, MPH, REHS
Environmental Health Officer IV

**2.2-2 RESPONSE TO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH COMMENTS
JANUARY 14, 2008**

2-A: Comments noted. No response necessary.



STATE OF CALIFORNIA - BUSINESS, TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING AGENCY

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

1352 WEST OLIVE AVENUE
P.O. BOX 12616
SACRAMENTO, CA 95833-2616
PHONE (559) 488-4347
FAX (559) 488-4088
TTY (559) 488-4066

Post-It® Fax Note 7671

Date	6/14/07	# of pages	6
To	Rachel	From	Paul Marquez
Co./Dept	City of Lemoore	Co.	Caltrans
Phone #		Phone #	445-8867
Fax #	924-6743	Fax #	



erl
mtl

September 6, 2006

2133 IGR/CEQA
6-KIN-41/198
LEMOORE GENERAL PLAN
UPDATE NOP
SCH # 2006081113

Ms. Holly Smyth
Planning Director
City of Lemoore
201 Fox Street
Lemoore, CA 93245

Dear Ms. Smyth:

Caltrans has reviewed the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the City of Lemoore's General Plan Update. We have the following comments:

The last General Plan included annexation of approximately 1,400 acres west of State Route (SR) 41, between SR 198 and the Hanford-Armona Road. Traffic Impact Studies (TIS) for the 1997 College Park at West Hills Development, for Wal-Mart, and for Victory Village indicate traffic congestion in this area will be significant unless traffic mitigation improvements and controlled growth occurs.

The Westside Development exists in an area with limited access. The existing Bush Street interchange (a tight diamond), the Hanford-Armona Road at-grade intersection (a future overcrossing and interchange), and a planned interchange along SR 198 will be the only means of access to the Westside. Each of these access points will be critically important to emergency services, as well as to the Westside residential and business communities.

When the last General Plan was prepared, development in the Westside was limited to an existing subdivision in the northwest quadrant of the SR 41/SR 198 interchange. Access to this location is from Belle Haven Road. This road should be considered a means of temporary access, particularly now that additional development is being proposed and traffic studies have confirmed there are intersection spacing problems between the southbound ramp termini and the Belle Haven Road intersection. Turning movements and queuing problems have been defined in one traffic study as "theoretically infinite." One solution to mitigate this concern is to close all or part of the Belle Haven intersection at Bush Street. It cannot be emphasized enough how potentially problematic the Belle Haven Road intersection could be to traffic movements along Bush Street. The Belle Haven Road - Bush Street intersection has the potential to cause back-up on the SR 41 off-ramps, creating potentially adverse operational conditions.

3-A

Ms. Holly Smyth
September 6, 2006
Page 2

A recent traffic study for the Westside Development indicates there is consideration to extend the north leg of Belle Haven Road to Hanford-Armona Road. The current access road to Leprino Foods (on Belle Haven Road) is a problem for operations at Bush Street and the SR 41 ramps. Extending the use of this road, beyond access to Leprino Foods, will exacerbate the operational and safety problems on Bush Street and the ramps. Moreover, extending the road north to Hanford-Armona Road, without consideration for the future interchange and without setbacks from the ramps, will create another location with operational and safety problems – potentially worse than at Bush Street. The future overcrossing will create sight distance constraints not present at Bush Street. The first and best solution would be to realign Belle Haven Road toward the west, along the back of the Wal-Mart development, as part of the Westside Development traffic impact mitigation. Any northerly connection between Bush and Hanford-Armona Road should be away from the freeway and the future Hanford-Armona Road interchange.

3-B

The Bush Street interchange will need to be modified to mitigate development-driven traffic impacts. Mitigation is required by CEQA for impacts to State and local facilities. The “build-out” mitigation at the Bush Street interchange has not been sufficiently studied in the above-referenced traffic impact studies. Additionally, impacts to local streets will occur, requiring setback for development, dedication of right-of-way, and construction of through and turn lanes. For example, the 19-1/2 Avenue/Bush Street intersection is critical for east-west movements along Bush Street. The traffic studies indicate queuing will be a problem. Mitigation includes increasing the capacity of the 19-1/2 Avenue intersection by adding of lanes. The City of Lemoore is encouraged to require dedications of right-of-way at this and other locations.

3-C

Caltrans encourages the consideration of a future interchange on SR 198 for the Westside Development. The location is important as it could impact the operations of the SR 198/SR 41 interchange. This interchange is defined in State and Federal guidelines as a freeway-to-freeway interchange, which has more stringent geometric and operational guidelines associated with it. Advance planning will provide for more affordable solutions for mitigating for traffic impacts. This is true for the future Hanford-Armona, 19th Avenue and SR 198 interchanges.

3-D

Please be advised that the existing crossing movements at the termini of the westbound and eastbound SR 198 ramps will one day need to be removed in favor of a safer and more operationally efficient movement. Closing the median and left-turn crossing movements could be required as part of development-driven traffic mitigation or as part of an interregional or regional traffic impact mitigation program. In either case, the improvements to a freeway-to-freeway interchange are expensive as branch connectors (high speed ramps) will be preferred over low speed loop ramps.

3-E

Development along SR 41, south of SR 198, should include provisions for up-grading the facility from a 2-lane highway to a future 4-lane freeway, on a 6-lane right-of-way, and a new interchange south of Idaho Avenue. Right-of-way planning should occur in conjunction with land use planning activities or as part of proposed development.

3-F

Ms. Holly Smyth
September 6, 2006
Page 3

Caltrans notes that the City is considering implementing an impact fee program. We support this approach to mitigating for development's impacts to infrastructure. Caltrans recommends that the City consider incorporating State facilities within this fee program. The State Highway System provides the backbone for transportation, both regionally and locally. A seamless, efficient transportation system, including the State Highways, is critical for the movement of people and goods and hence the future economic development of the area. We have provided a copy of the fee program in place in Bakersfield. If the City would like examples from other jurisdictions, please let us know.

3-G

Caltrans suggests that the City consider use the "Toolbox" from the San Joaquin Valley Growth Response Study to evaluate the proposed alternatives in the General Plan Update. The Toolbox can provide additional information than that contained within a standard EIR as the "INDEX" includes over 70 indicators to assist the decision-makers and the general public in developing the best option available. Use of the Toolbox would require the City to hire consultants to develop intensive GIS and indicator data. It may also require coordination with KCAG, Kings County, and Hanford if there is to be development of a regional model. We understand at this stage of the project it may not be practical for the City to invest the time and money to develop the necessary data to use the Toolbox, but the City may wish to consider its use at a later date for a large development project. We have enclosed a fact sheet on the Toolbox and a summary of the demonstration project prepared as part of the development of this important planning tool.

3-H

Ongoing development throughout the City of Lemoore will make traffic operations significantly worse by adding considerably to delay and congestion. Transit alternatives can help reduce congestion and delay and reduce overall degradation of air quality and gridlocked intersections. The City should focus on ways to eliminate trips in addition to enhancing capacity. Transportation alternatives the City should consider include standard highway solutions along with the following:

3-I

1. Park and ride facilities on site or within the proximity of large developments.
2. A study of the general accommodation and provision of mass transit in this area to provide insight on ways of increasing transit usage.
3. Exploring the potential of commuter shuttles. The shuttle could be financed through an assessment district and provide a way for individuals to utilize a park-and-ride facility or commercial area parking lot and be shuttled to various commercial/office centers within the area. Commuters who need to go further could use the Kings Area Rural Transit (KART) transit if the City and KART planned for convenient connections. This may help to reduce the Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) demand seeking to use the State Highway System.
4. Providing for continuity of non-motorized transportation.

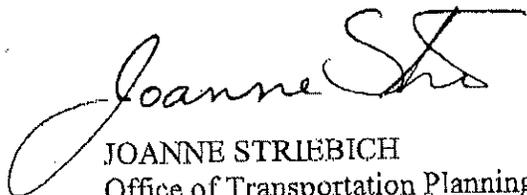
Ms. Holly Smyth
September 6, 2006
Page 4

5. Exploring the potential for employer-sponsored carpools/vanpools or monthly transit passes for employees as well as including as a condition of project approval a covered transit stop as mitigation for project-related impacts to the transportation/circulation system.
6. Exploring the potential for linking the purchase of a monthly transit pass with new residential development as partial mitigation for congestion and air quality impacts, and to ensure the long term viability of public transportation.

Caltrans has committed itself to the pursuit of Environmental Justice in all aspects of Transportation Planning and recommends that all of our partner agencies make similar commitments to include traditionally underrepresented communities and groups in the planning process. Please be mindful that opportunities exist to reach these groups at every step in the process and that creation of a more balanced, equitable future begins in the planning stages of every project. If we can be of any assistance, please let us know.

Please contact me at (559) 488-4347 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



JOANNE STRIEBICH
Office of Transportation Planning
District 6

Enclosure

C: Ms. Terri King, Kings County Association of Governments
Mr. Bill Zumwalt, Kings County Planning Agency
Mr. Ron Hughes, Kings Area Rural Transit

3-J

San Joaquin Valley Growth Response Study, Phase II

Fresno, Clovis, Southeast Madera Region Demonstration Project

FACT SHEET

- ◆ Purpose of Study
 - Evaluate urban development form (landscape) at the regional scale
 - Consider alternative sets of policy choices and assumptions about the future
 - Develop new land use modeling tools and enhanced transportation and quality of life evaluation tools

- ◆ Study Goals
 - Assist in reviewing the urban landscape and considering alternative growth scenarios including their feasibility, to illustrate how options and tools could be used to study policy changes and successfully implement community goals
 - Provide information on the land use patterns that could enhance transit, reduce vehicle miles traveled, identify fiscal implications of growth and development, and address air quality issues

- ◆ Models Developed for Use with Existing Transportation Demand Models
 - Land use allocation model
 - Considers projected population and employment, future household characteristics, development densities, and other factors
 - Views the likely land use patterns of alternative growth policies in easy-to-understand maps and tables
 - Visualization and Indicator model
 - Considers a set of indicators to measure conditions, identify issues, evaluate alternative courses of action, and monitor changes overtime
 - Indicators include population and employment, development density, multi-family housing share, share of employees and housing within 1/4 mile of transit, vehicle miles traveled, and air pollutant emissions

- ◆ Public and Stakeholder Outreach
 - Diverse group of stakeholders including local elected officials, affected agency staff, transit proponents, the League of Women Voters, the Sierra Club, the business community, the Farm Bureau, health organizations, and environmental justice groups
 - Assisted in selecting the indicators appropriate for the models
 - Provided input on alternative growth scenarios to run and analyze in the models

- ◆ Model Runs
 - In addition to the 2034 initial base scenario, two alternative land use/transportation scenarios were run for comparisons. They were:
 - Blackstone / State Route (SR) 41 - Downtown Fresno Scenario
 - "Fixed guideway" transit: Blackstone/SR 41 and Ventura/Kings Canyon corridors
 - Intensification areas: Blackstone Corridor, Downtown Fresno, Kings Canyon Corridor to Southeast Fresno and Southeast Madera New Towns
 - High-Capacity Transit Network Scenario
 - High-capacity transit in dedicated lanes: Blackstone/SR 41 Corridor, Ventura/Kings Canyon Corridor, Shaw Corridor- east of Blackstone, and Clovis Corridor- Kings Canyon to Shaw
 - Intensification areas: Blackstone Corridor, Downtown Fresno, Fancher Creek & Southeast Fresno, Clovis Shaw Corridor & Southeast Urban Center, Whitesbridge Corridor, and Southeast Madera New Towns

San Joaquin Valley Growth Response Study, Phase III City of Fresno, Madera, and Merced Region Demonstration Project

FACT SHEET

- ◆ Potential Alternatives that Could be Studied
 - Increase employment densities to reflect market and rezone selected employment areas to allow housing and services.
 - Explore additional employment and services in Madera County to minimize traffic pressure on SR 41 along the San Joaquin River Crossing.
 - Identify options for increasing the amount of medium density housing (townhomes, patio homes, detached cottages, etc.) in proximity to services and transit.
 - Refine transit corridors to better link compact employment areas with medium density mixed-use neighborhoods.
- ◆ Potential Applications of Modeling Tools
 - Test additional land use alternatives
 - City of Fresno General Plan Implementation Program
 - Council of Fresno County Governments' Regional Public Transportation Infrastructure Study
 - Fresno-Madera Regional Transportation Study
 - Downtown Fresno Transportation Study
 - SR 41 Corridor Study
- ◆ Final Phase III documents can be found at:
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist6/planning/sjvgrs/index.htm>

For more information, please contact:

Paul-Albert Marquez
California Department of Transportation, District 6
1352 W. Olive Avenue, P.O. Box 12616
Fresno, CA 93778-2616
Phone: (559) 445-5867
Fax: (559) 488-4088
Email: Paul-Albert_Marquez@dot.ca.gov

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

1352 WEST OLIVE AVENUE
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Flex your power!
Be energy efficient!

Post-it* Fax Note	7671	Date	1/28/08	# of pages	▶
To	MS HOLLY SMYTH	From	AL DIAS		
Co./Dept.		Co.	CALTRANS		
Phone #		Phone #	4887306		
Fax #	9246743	Fax #			

January 15, 2008

2135-IGR/CEQA
6-KIN-GEN
2030 LEMOORE GENERAL PLAN DEIR
SCH 2006081113

Ms. Holly Smyth
City of Lemoore
Planning Department
210 Fox Street
Lemoore, CA 93245

Dear Ms. Smyth:

Caltrans has completed its review of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) City of Lemoore 2030 General Plan Update. Caltrans has the following comments:

Recently, the City has approved a number of residential subdivisions, commercial or retail centers, and industrial projects that are developed or are currently being constructed. Growth resulting from these and the proposed changes in the General Plan will continue to impact State Route (SR) 198 and SR 41 in the future. The increased traffic volumes on the State Routes will need to be mitigated as part of project specific development and as part of regional effort through Kings County's Regional State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) or local funds. Individual developments will typically be required to prepare Traffic Impact Studies (TIS).

4-A

The addition of approximately 1,400 acres of land to the City's limits west of SR 41 will significantly increase traffic volumes; in particular the southbound left from SR 41 to eastbound SR 198 and the northbound left from SR 41 to westbound SR 198. These movements will substantially impact the existing configuration of the SR 41/SR 198 Interchange. Currently, the movements are accomplished through at-grade intersections. It is anticipated that both existing at-grade intersections will need to be replaced with loop ramps or fly-overs.

4-B

With the change in land use and future growth in the vicinity of SR 41/Hanford-Armona Road, it is recommended a project study report to be prepared to identify the need of a future interchange at this at grade intersection. It will also provide an opportunity to establish and preserve right of way for the future footprint of the interchange.

4-C

Caltrans acknowledges that the SR 41/Hanford-Armona Road area improvements are depicted in the Figure 4-2. However, it is recommended to include the above construction and modifications of the state highway facilities into page 4-8 "Planned Improvement to accommodate Buildouts" of the General Plan.

Caltrans acknowledges the implementing actions, C-I-9, as described in page 4-28 of the General Plan. It indicates the establishment of a Transportation Performance Monitoring program for the

4-D

Ms. Holly Smyth
 January 15, 2008
 Page 2

Business, Technology and Industrial Reserve Area, located in the southwest quadrant of the SR 198/SR 41 Interchange. It is recommended that the development of this area, generally along SR 41 and south of SR 198 should include a planning provision to upgrade the facility from a 2-lane highway to a 4-lane freeway, and possibly a new interchange at SR 41 and Jackson Avenue. The state route to state route interchange requires a 2-mile separation. It enables the local agencies to establish a building envelope setback of future development in order to allow preservation of right of way along the SR 41 corridor.

4-D

The General Plan Update process of evaluating and preparing circulation plans is an ideal time to consider updating the citywide Traffic Impact Fee Program (TIFP). A TIFP allows for the city to establish a pro-rata fair share fee structure that collects mitigation fees based on project development impacts and provides needed funds for improvements to the State and local road systems in an equitable and efficient manner. Since a project's TIS needs to address impacts for the highest use of undeveloped lands, Caltrans recommends that the City develop a TIFP that is based on "build-out" of the General Plan. If the City were to develop a comprehensive TIFP that would adequately address the impacts of subsequent development based on the General Plan "build-out", it may not be necessary for Caltrans to comment on every development proposed. Caltrans would need to continue reviewing development proposals that are adjacent to state facilities, of regional significance or may reduce the level of services of state facilities. As a transportation partner, Caltrans is requesting a copy of the City of Lemoore Zoning Ordinance to facilitate the review of future projects. The Ordinance is necessary to evaluate the TIS comparison assessment of the highest land uses utilized in the study in order to properly comment during the project review cycle.

4-E4-F

In order to mitigate impacts, it is recommended that a financing plan be required for development projects filed with the City. The plan should identify the financing measures necessary to carry out the various elements of the development plan. The elements should include the construction and maintenance of, State, local and private transportation, sewage, water, drainage and any other infrastructure and public services, and any other appropriate regulations, programs or public works projects. The financing plan would be evaluated, modified and expanded over time as the planning process evolves through the various levels with the intent that each of the development projects "pay their fair share" over the long term so as not to be a financial burden on the COG, City or State.

4-G

With any new development or as part of the redevelopment effort, the City should plan for the future widening of SR 41 and SR 198 by requiring the dedication to the ultimate right of way as delineated in the Transportation Concept Report. The City should require sufficient setbacks from the highway system to incorporate or modify the system as required in the future. Many of the interchanges have had only minor modifications since originally constructed. In the future, modification of the existing interchanges may be necessary. In rare cases, complete reconstruction of an interchange could be warranted. The General Plan Update should consider the traffic impacts and mitigation at interchanges. The City should not take any action that could jeopardize the future acquisition of right of way for roadway purposes.

4-H

The integration between the State highway system and local road network is a critical component for a safe and efficient seamless transportation network. As growth occurs, the need for auxiliary lanes on State Routes, additional lanes on the ramps, intersection and driveway set

4-I

Ms. Holly Smyth
January 15, 2008
Page 3

backs on the local road away from the State highway system are typically needed. Caltrans is your partner in planning an efficient design of the integration between the highway system and the local roads. We look forward to working with you in addressing this important portion of the transportation system.

Where development occurs in constrained locations such as Bush Street at SR 41, the creation of a local road arterial can, at times, be the only means of adequately addressing a lack of State highway right of way. Caltrans would like to partner with the City to address congestion by preserving right of way or for the creation of the local road arterial networks.

As traffic volumes increase, roadway noise becomes more pronounced. Noise studies in conformance with FHWA regulations should be included in the Environmental Impact Report and areas of concern should be defined. Mitigation for the defined area needs to be considered for all non-commercial and industrial areas. The City needs to make a condition of approval stating that any required future noise abatement will be the responsibility of the property owner or the City of Lemoore.

4-J

Caltrans notes that the City has implemented a Transportation Impact Fee program. We support this approach to mitigating for development's impacts to infrastructure. Caltrans recommends that the City incorporate State facilities within this fee program. The State Highway System provides the backbone for transportation, both regionally and locally. A seamless, efficient transportation system, including the State Highways, is critical for the movement of people and goods and hence the future economic development of the area.

4-K

Caltrans recommends that the City of Lemoore incorporate the guiding principles of the "San Joaquin Valley Regional Blueprint; Vision for the Valley." The Blueprint represents a collaborative planning process, with the eight San Joaquin Valley counties working together to prepare a guide for growth within the Central Valley. The Blueprint will develop a valley-wide "vision" that will include the integration of transportation, housing, land use, economic development and environmental protection that will serve as a significant contribution to improving the Valley's quality of life.

4-L

Please provide us with your responses to our comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the General Plan Update in advance of preparing the Final EIR for public hearing. If you have any questions, please call me at (559) 488-7306.

Sincerely,



AL DIAS
Central Planning Branch
District 6

C: Ms Terry King, Kings County Association of Governments
Executive Director
SCH 2006081113

**2.2-3 RESPONSE TO CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
SEPTEMBER 6, 2008 LETTER FROM MS. JOANNE STRIEBICH REGARDING
NOTICE OF PREPARATION**

- 3-A When the last General Plan was prepared, development in the Westside was limited to an existing subdivision in the northwest quadrant of the SR 41/SR 198 interchange. Access to this location is from Belle Haven Road. This road should be considered a means of temporary access, particularly now that additional development is being proposed and traffic studies have confirmed there are intersection spacing problems between the southbound ramp termini and the Belle Haven Road intersection. Turning movements and queuing problems have been defined in one traffic study as "theoretically infinite." One solution to mitigate this concern is to close all or part of the Belle Haven intersection at Bush Street. It cannot be emphasized enough how potentially problematic the Belle Haven Road intersection could be to traffic movements along Bush Street. The Belle Haven Road - Bush Street intersection has the potential to cause back-up on the SR 41 off ramps, creating potentially adverse operational conditions.

During consideration of the proposed Walmart development northwest of the intersection of Belle Haven and Bush Street, it was agreed that the north leg of Belle Haven will be moved west, to be 525' from the southbound off ramp, and the south leg will no longer be a through public street, but a private driveway into the future commercial area.

- 3-B A recent traffic study for the Westside Development indicates there is consideration to extend the north leg of Belle Haven Road to Hanford-Armona Road. The current access road to Leprino Foods (on Belle Haven Road) is a problem for operations at Bush Street and the SR 41 ramps. Extending the use of this road, beyond access to Leprino Foods, will exacerbate the operational and safety problems on Bush Street and the ramps. Moreover, extending the road north to Hanford-Armona Road, without consideration for the future interchange and without setbacks from the ramps, will create another location with operational and safety problems - potentially worse than at Bush Street. The future overcrossing will create sight distance constraints not present at Bush Street. The first and best solution would be to realign Belle Haven Road toward the west, along the back of the Wal-Mart development, as part of the Westside Development traffic impact mitigation. Any northerly connection between Bush and Hanford-Armona Road should be away from the freeway and the future Hanford-Armona Road interchange.

As noted in the previous response, the north leg of Bush has been agreed to be moved west as a component of Walmart construction, connecting to the existing railroad crossing. Bush Street north of the railroad crossing to its connection with Hanford-Armona Road was constructed by Caltrans at its present location. The potential relocation westerly of the Belle Haven intersection with Hanford Armona Road is discussed in the response to Comment 30.

- 3-C The Bush Street interchange will need to be modified to mitigate development-driven, traffic impacts. Mitigation is required by CEQA for impacts to State and local facilities. The “build-out” mitigation at the Bush Street interchange has not been sufficiently studied in the above-referenced traffic impact studies. Additionally, impacts to local streets will occur, requiring setback for development, dedication of right-of-way, and construction of through and turn lanes. For example, the 19 1/2 Avenue/Bush Street intersection is critical for east-west movements along Bush Street. The traffic studies indicate queuing will be a problem. Mitigation includes increasing the capacity of the 19 1/2 Avenue intersection by adding of lanes. The City of Lemoore is encouraged to require dedications of right-of-way at this and other locations.

Build-out” mitigation at the Bush Street-State Route (SR) 41 interchange has now been the subject of four traffic studies which have been reviewed by Caltrans. Lanes have been added at the 19 ½ Avenue – Bush Street intersection in conjunction with recent construction at its southwest quadrant.

- 3-D Caltrans encourages the consideration of a future interchange on SR 198 for the Westside Development. The location is important as it could impact the operations of the SR 198/SR 41 interchange. This interchange is defined in State and Federal guidelines as a freeway-to-freeway interchange, which has more stringent geometric and operational guidelines associated with it. Advance planning will provide for more affordable solutions for mitigating for traffic impacts. This is true for the future Hanford-Armona, 19th Avenue and SR 198 interchanges.

The proposed General Plan incorporates such an interchange where the current freeway bridge structure over the 21st Avenue / Marsh Drive alignment is located.

- 3-F Please be advised that the existing crossing movements at the termini of the westbound and eastbound SR 198 ramps will one day need to be removed in favor of a safer and more operationally efficient movement. Closing the median and left-turn crossing movements could be required as part of development-driven traffic mitigation or as part of an interregional or regional traffic impact mitigation program. In either case, the improvements to a freeway-to-freeway interchange are expensive as branch connectors (high speed ramps) will be preferred over low speed loop ramps.

The comment is noted; the City concurs. Such improvements in a freeway-to-freeway interchange are, however, the responsibility of Caltrans for planning and funding.

- 3-G Development along SR 41, south of SR 198, should include provisions for up-grading the facility from a 2-lane highway to a future 4-lane freeway, on a 6-lane right-of-way, and a new interchange south of Idaho Avenue. Right-

of-way planning should occur in conjunction with land use planning activities or as part of proposed development.

The comment is noted. General plan development implementation, however, does not trigger a need for such upgrading. Again, freeway lane construction is a Caltrans responsibility for planning and funding.

- 3-H Caltrans notes that the City is considering implementing an impact fee program. We support this approach to mitigating for development's impacts to infrastructure. Caltrans recommends that the City consider incorporating State facilities within this fee program. The State Highway System provides the backbone for transportation, both regionally and locally. A seamless, efficient transportation system, including the State Highways, is critical for the movement of people and goods and hence the future economic development of the area. We have provided a copy of the fee program in place in Bakersfield. If the City would like examples from other jurisdictions, please let us know.

The impact fee program to be considered by the City will incorporate funding for the City's share of freeway interchanges with local streets and will be put in place over the next year. We will provide Caltrans an opportunity to comment on the draft program prior to adoption..

- 3-I Caltrans suggests that the City consider use the "Toolbox" from the San Joaquin Valley Growth Response Study to evaluate the proposed alternatives in the General Plan Update. The Toolbox can provide additional information than that contained within a standard EIR as the "INDEX" includes over 70 indicators to assist the decision-makers and the general public in developing the best option available. Use of the Toolbox would require the City to hire consultants to develop intensive GIS and indicator data. It may also require coordination with KCAG, Kings County, and Hanford if there is to be development of a regional model. We understand at this stage of the project it may not be practical for the City to invest the time and money to develop the necessary data to use the Toolbox, but the City may wish to consider its use at a later date for a large development project. We have enclosed a fact sheet on the Toolbox and a summary of the demonstration project prepared as part of the development of this important planning tool.

The comment is noted.

- 3-J Ongoing development throughout the City of Lemoore will make traffic operations significantly worse by adding considerably to delay and congestion. Transit alternatives can help reduce congestion and delay and reduce overall degradation of air quality and gridlocked intersections. The City should focus on ways to eliminate trips in addition to enhancing capacity. Transportation alternatives the City should consider include standard highway solutions along with the following:

1. Park and ride facilities on site or within the proximity of large developments.
2. A study of the general accommodation and provision of mass transit in this area to provide insight on ways of increasing transit usage.
3. Exploring the potential of commuter shuttles. The shuttle could be financed through an assessment district and provide a way for individuals to utilize a park-and-ride facility or commercial area parking lot and be shuttled to various commercial/office centers within the area. Commuters who need to go farther could use the Kings Area Rural Transit (KART) transit if the City and KART planned for convenient connections. This may help to reduce the Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) demand seeking to use the State Highway System.
4. Providing for continuity of non-motorized transportation.
5. Exploring the potential, for employer-sponsored carpools/vanpools or monthly transit passes for employees as well as including as a condition of project approval a covered transit stop as mitigation for project-related impacts to the transportation/circulation system.
6. Exploring the potential for linking the purchase of a monthly transit pass with new residential development as partial mitigation for congestion and air quality impacts, and to ensure the long term viability of public transportation.

The comment is noted. The General Plan promotes these principles.

- 3-K Caltrans has committed itself to the pursuit of Environmental justice in all aspects of Transportation Planning and recommends that all of our partner agencies make similar commitments to include traditionally underrepresented communities and groups in the planning process.

The comment is noted; the City concurs.

2.2-4 RESPONSE TO CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION JANUARY 15 2008

- 4-A Recently, the City has approved a number of residential subdivisions, commercial or retail centers, and industrial projects that are developed or are currently being constructed. Growth resulting from these and the proposed changes in the General Plan will continue to impact State Route (SR) 198 and SR 41 in the future. The increased traffic volumes on the State Routes will need to be mitigated as part of project specific development and as part of regional effort through Kings County's Regional State Transportation Improvement Program (ST1P) or local funds. Individual developments will typically be required to prepare Traffic Impact Studies (TIS).

It is anticipated that developments in accord with the General Plan may not be required to prepare Traffic Impact Studies, absent regional significance which might reduce the level of service of state facilities.

- 4-B The addition of approximately 1,400 acres of land to the City's limits west of SR 41 will significantly increase traffic volumes; in particular the southbound left from SR 41 to eastbound SR 198 and the northbound left from SR 41 to westbound SR 198. These movements will substantially impact the existing configuration of the SR 41/SR 198 Interchange. Currently, the movements are accomplished through at-grade intersections. It is anticipated that both existing at-grade intersections will need to be replaced with loop ramps or flyovers.

General Plan development implementation does not posit traffic volumes warranting such changes. Safety considerations make such changes desirable. They are, as freeway-to-freeway connections, the responsibility of Caltrans for planning and funding.

- 4-C With the change in land use and future growth in the vicinity of SR 41/Hanford-Armona Road, it is recommended a project study report to be prepared to identify the need of a future interchange at this at grade intersection. It will also provide an opportunity to establish and preserve right of way for the future footprint of the interchange.

Caltrans acknowledges that the SR 41/Hanford-Armona Road area improvements are depicted in the Figure 4-2. However, it is recommended to include the above construction and modifications of the state highway facilities into page 4-8, "Planned Improvement to Accommodate Buildouts" of the General Plan.

General Plan development implementation does not create the need for a freeway interchange at this location. The City will, however, take appropriate and feasible steps to preserve rights-of-way for such an interchange once the City and Caltrans agree to a design configuration that does not remove most of the commercial viability of the south east portion of the intersection.

- 4-D Caltrans acknowledges the implementing action, C-I-9, as described in page 4-28 of the General Plan. It indicates the establishment of a Transportation Performance Monitoring program for the Business, Technology and Industrial Reserve Area, located in the southwest quadrant of the SR 198/SR 41 Interchange. It is recommended that the development of this area, generally along SR 41 and south of SR 198 should include a planning provision to upgrade the facility from a 2-lane highway to a 4-lane highway freeway, and possibly a new interchange at SR 41 and Jackson Avenue. The state route to state route interchange requires a 2-mile separation. It enables the local agencies to establish a building envelope setback of future development in order to allow preservation of right of way along the SR 41 corridor.

General Plan development implementation does not warrant the comment described widening and interchange construction. Lane addition on State Route 41 is a Caltrans responsibility for planning and funding.

- 4-E The General Plan Update process of evaluating and preparing circulation plans is an ideal time to consider updating the citywide Traffic Impact Fee Program (TIFP). A TIFP allows for the city to establish a pro-rata fair share fee structure that collects mitigation fees based on project development impacts and provides needed funds for improvements to the State and local road systems in an equitable and efficient manner. Since a project's TIS needs to address impacts for the highest use of undeveloped lands, Caltrans recommends that the City develop a TIFP that is based on "build-out" of the General Plan. If the City were to develop a comprehensive TIFP that would adequately address the impacts of subsequent development based on the General Plan "build-out", it may not be necessary for Caltrans to comment on every development proposed. Caltrans would need to continue reviewing development proposals that are adjacent to state facilities, of regional significance or may reduce the level of services of state facilities.

Two policies provided in the proposed General Plan pertain specifically to funding for improvements and the creation and continuing maintenance of a traffic impact fee program. These policies are found on page 4-30 of the proposed General Plan.

The City will propose and consider a citywide Traffic Impact Fee Program after the General Plan is adopted. We are pleased that Caltrans may find it not necessary to comment upon all development undertaken in accord with the General Plan if such a Fee Program is adopted.

For clarification, these above mentioned two policies are added to the list of applicable policies in the Draft EIR under Impact 3.2-1, after policy C-I-11 and before any suggested mitigation measures:

C-I-13 Continue to require that new development pay its fair share of the costs of street and other traffic improvements based on traffic generated and its impact on traffic service levels.

C-I-14 Establish city-wide traffic impact fees to provide additional funding for transportation improvements needed to serve new development including new interchanges and ramps. Provide for automatic annual adjustments in traffic fees to reflect increases in construction costs (e.g materials, rate of inflation, etc.)

- 4-F As a transportation partner, Caltrans is requesting a copy of the City of Lemoore Zoning Ordinance to facilitate the review of future projects. The Ordinance is necessary to evaluate the TIS comparison assessment of the highest land uses utilized in the study in order to properly comment during the project review cycle.

The City's existing zoning ordinance is available on the City of Lemoore website. However, the zoning ordinance will be modified after General Plan adoption to be made consistent with the new Plan which will govern land use and development. Information regarding allowed land use densities is contained in the General Plan and should be adequate to determine impact.

- 4-G In order to mitigate impacts, it is recommended that a financing plan be required for development projects filed with the City.

Please see the response to Comment 4-E.

- 4-H With any new development or as part of the redevelopment effort, the City should plan for the future widening of SR 41 and SR 198 by requiring the dedication to the ultimate right of way as delineated in the Transportation Concept Report. The City should require sufficient setbacks from the highway system to incorporate or modify the system as required in the future. Many of the interchanges have had only minor modifications since originally constructed. In the future, modification of the existing interchanges may be necessary. In rare cases, complete reconstruction of an interchange could be warranted. The General Plan Update should consider the traffic impacts and mitigation at interchanges. The City should not take any action that could jeopardize the future acquisition of right of way for roadway purposes.

The City will cooperate to the maximum extent appropriate and feasible in preserving essential rights-of-way for freeway widening and interchange modifications. The General Plan considers traffic impacts and mitigation at freeway – local street interchanges. It is again noted that the planning and funding of freeway-to-freeway interchanges is a Caltrans, not a City, responsibility.

Caltrans also points to a number of transportation projects in the proposed General Plan list of planned improvements which either impact or are located within the right-of-way of the State highway system. The program-level Draft EIR does not assess the particular impacts of each proposed future roadway project or enhancement; however, the Draft EIR can be improved by

providing a mitigation measure that calls for the more detailed studies Caltrans suggests. This mitigation measure is inserted at the end of Impact 3.2-2 of the Draft EIR, pertaining to levels of service on State highways:

Mitigation Measure 3.2.2.A

In conjunction with Caltrans and on a project-by-project basis, the City will require engineering studies that evaluate the right-of-way requirements and potential impacts of General Plan roadway projects on the State highway system. Candidate projects for these pre-development studies include, but are not limited to:

- The extension of Cedar Lane connecting to 18th Avenue (per Caltrans comment 4-D)
- The Hanford Road-Armona Road and SR-41 intersection is identified in the existing freeway agreement as a future interchange. Prior to the development of the NW quadrant of SR 198/SR 41 and any of the lands north of Hanford-Armona Road, engineering studies should be conducted to establish the right-of-way and design features of these improvements. (per Caltrans comment 4-G)
- The realignment of Belle Haven west of SR-41 at Hanford-Armona Road should be established to be 1,600 west of the centerline of SR-41 unless detailed engineering studies recommend an alternative placement of this intersection. (per Caltrans comment 4-H)
- The future new interchange at SR 198 and 21st Avenue should be evaluated as part of the development planning of the SW quadrant of SR-198 and SR-41 as well as the most westerly portions of the NW quadrant of these two freeways. The configuration of the new interchange and the locations of the local roadways and land use accesses to 21st Avenue must be addressed. (per Caltrans comment 4-I)

- 4-I. As growth occurs, the need for auxiliary lanes on State Routes, additional lanes on the ramps, intersection and driveway setbacks on the local road away from the State highway system are typically needed. Caltrans is your partner in planning an efficient design of the integration between the highway system and the local roads. We look forward to working with you in addressing this important portion of the transportation system.

Where development occurs in constrained locations such as Bush Street at SR 41, the creation of a local road arterial can, at times, be the only means of adequately addressing a lack of State highway right of way. Caltrans would like to partner with the City to address congestion by preserving right of way or for the creation of the local road arterial networks.

The City is appreciative of Caltrans' continuing cooperation. The issues noted in this comment are addressed in other responses.

- 4-J Noise studies in conformance with FHWA regulations should be included in the Environmental Impact Report and areas of concern should be defined. Mitigation for the defined area needs to be considered or all non-commercial

and industrial areas. The City needs to make a condition of approval stating that any required future noise abatement will be the responsibility of the property owner or the City of Lemoore.

It is presumed that the comment should read "...all non-commercial and non-industrial areas." The General Plan Draft EIR fully addresses traffic noise impacts and mitigation within the Noise Element on Page 3.8-11 of the Draft EIR Noise section, under "Methodology and Assumptions" states "Street noise exposure contours for Lemoore were modeled by Charles Salter Associates by applying the Federal Highway Administration's noise modeling procedure." This Draft EIR analysis found the General Plan policies sufficient to reduce traffic noise impacts to a level that is less than significant. Further, the General Plan policies (e.g. SN-I-35) place the responsibility for meeting noise standards on new residential development "through acoustical design and construction of the building elements". Non-residential development would be subject to performance standards and mitigation as established in the Noise Ordinance. Caltrans should bear proportional responsibility for noise mitigation for freeway widening and related capacity enhancements that may serve through trips as well as local trips. The distribution of responsibilities and extent of enhancements would be addressed in project-specific review.

- 4-K Caltrans notes that the City has implemented a Transportation Impact Fee program. We support his approach to mitigating for development's impacts to infrastructure. Caltrans recommends that the City incorporate State facilities within this fee program. The State Highway System provides the backbone for transportation, both regionally and locally. A seamless, efficient transportation system, including the State Highways, is critical for the movement of people and, nodes and hence the future economic development of the area.

The City's Transportation Impact Fee Program will not incorporate provisions for non-State funding for freeway-to-freeway interchange or freeway land addition.

- 4-L Caltrans recommends that the City of Lemoore incorporate the guiding principles of the "San Joaquin Valley Regional Blueprint; Vision for the Valley." The Blueprint represents a collaborative planning process, with the eight San Joaquin Valley counties working together to prepare a guide for growth within the Central Valley. The Blueprint will develop a valley-wide "vision" that will include the integration of transportation, housing, land use, economic development and environmental protection that will serve as a significant contribution to improving the Valley's quality of life.

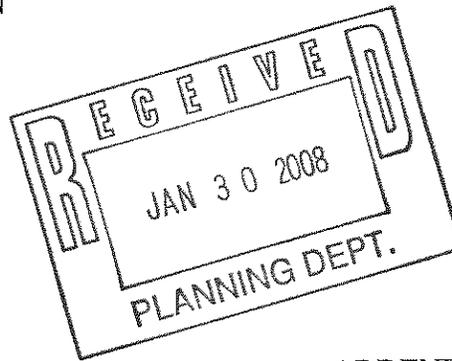
The City is a participant in the collaborative planning process of the Blueprint project.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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January 25, 2008

2135-IGR/CEQA
 6-KIN-GEN
 ADDENDUM 2030 LEMOORE
 GENERAL PLAN DEIR
 SCH 2006081113

Ms. Holly Smyth, Planning Director
 City of Lemoore
 Planning Department
 210 Fox Street
 Lemoore, CA 93245

Dear Ms. Smyth:

This comment letter is an addendum to our letter of January 15, 2008 and the comments need to be added to the official record of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) City of Lemoore 2030 General Plan Update. Caltrans has the following additional comments:

5-A

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY RAILROAD

The State Highway System could be negatively affected by increasing the number, size or frequency of train traffic on the San Joaquin Valley Railroad line. Increasing train traffic could increase the vehicle-to-train conflict potential resulting in the need to plan for and fund a State Route (SR) 43 grade separation (railroad overhead crossing).

Similarly, increasing train traffic could be incompatible with the high traffic volumes projected on 12th Avenue, north of SR 198 in the City of Hanford. A train crossing delay could create vehicle queuing on the ramps. Ramps are transition areas between freeway free flow and the stop and go on local roads. Traffic backing up along the ramps could impact public safety.

Caltrans has public safety concerns with increasing the vehicle-to-train conflict frequency. Please check to insure that the potential increase in vehicle-to-train conflict does not violate the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) rules.

TRAFFIC IMPACTS

The General Plan land use classifications are broad enough to give the City flexibility in implementing City policy but not specific enough to assess the full measure of traffic impacts. Moreover, the Travel Demand Model in local areas typically does not contain the level of detail, accuracy, or sensitivity necessary for developing intersections or sub-areas. This model is typical of an air quality conformity model that could be used to size collectors and major roadways but is insufficient to define detailed geometry. The Kings County model does not have strong origination and destination characteristics. Caltrans has not reviewed any calibration data that would suggest the model reasonably account for the interaction between traffic analysis zones and the roadway network. Caltrans is concerned that impacts to State facilities will not be

5-B

adequately addressed. To that end Caltrans offers the following comments on the proposed roadway improvements.

- 18th Avenue, north and south of SR 198, is proposed to be 4 lanes - (2 lanes in each direction on each side of the freeway). It is suggested that widening the 18th Avenue Overcrossing/Bridge to 4 lanes be added to the local circulation system list of improvements. The existing two through lanes would create a bottleneck. At this same location, the westbound off ramps is a short, single lane off ramp that will need a second lane added to the termini. This feature should be included in the bridge-widening project. 5-C
- The City is proposing to extend Cedar Lane, connecting it to 18th Avenue south of Larish Street. The proposed connection to 18th Avenue is within the operational limits of the freeway interchange warranting a detailed engineering study. Caltrans will be requesting submittal of engineering studies prior to land use entitlements in the vicinity or developing the Cedar Lane alignment and improvement plans. 5-D
- The transportation model indicates a SR 198 overcrossing is proposed at 17th Avenue. Caltrans agrees that this improvement is needed to enhance cross-freeway access. The model depicts this as part of the circulation system. However, it is not on the list of Planned Improvements. It is recommended that this overcrossing project be included on the list to maintain consistency with the regional transportation model and for cross-freeway access. 5-E
- Caltrans is please to see that widening Bush Street to 8-lanes at SR 41 is on the list of Planned Improvements, Figure 4-2 5-F
- The Hanford-Armona Road, SR 41 intersection is identified in the existing Freeway Agreement as a future interchange. Caltrans has expressed the need for this improvement and would like to work with the City to preserve the right of way and establish future funding. As part of joint planning efforts, Caltrans requests that the General Plan include text that identifies it as a future improvement and development should not encroach into the physical footprint. In addition, Caltrans is willing to work with the City to develop the means of protecting the footprint from development or against issues of inverse condemnation. 5-G
- At this same location, the General Plan identifies Belle Haven as being reconstructed west of the future Hanford-Armona Road interchange to 6-lanes. Caltrans appreciates the City's recognition of this important feature. For the purpose of the General Plan and subject to detailed studies, Caltrans suggests the Belle Haven and Hanford-Armona Road intersection be set 1600 feet west of the centerline of the freeway. 5-H
- The 21st Avenue, SR 198 interchange has been the subject of discussion between the City of Lemoore staff and Caltrans. This interchange is not part of the existing freeway agreement and would require a New Public Road Connection, which must be approved by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and Caltrans. In addition, 21st Avenue is within the 2-mile interchange spacing Standard found in Section 501.3 *Spacing*, of the Highway Design Manual. A Mandatory Design Exception Fact Sheet must be approved. Caltrans encourages the City to begin processing the agreements necessary to ensure approval of this General Plan circulation feature. 5-I

- Figure 4-2, Planned Improvement to the State Highway System includes widening SR 198 from 4-lanes to 6-lanes. Caltrans Planning agrees that widen SR 198 to 6-lanes will be needed in the future. However, there is currently no project or funding allocation for this improvement. SR 198 is an interregional route that is critical for employment and goods movement in Lemoore, Hanford and Visalia. Caltrans has been working with the City of Visalia, Tulare County, Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG), City of Hanford, City of Lemoore, Kings County and Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG) to develop local roads parallel to SR 198 that could be used as east-west arterial. It is suggested that the City of Lemoore designate Jackson Avenue as a principle arterial in the General Plan. This is consistent with having an interchange on SR 41. In addition, it could reduce noise in the neighborhoods along SR 198 by shifting truck traffic. Furthermore, Jackson Avenue could be used by the local area people as an alternative roadway to SR 198 via SR 43.

5-J

5-K

Please provide us with your responses to our comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the General Plan Update in advance of preparing the Final EIR for public hearing. If you have any questions, please call me at (559) 488-7306.

Sincerely,



AL DIAS
Central Planning Branch
District 6

C: Ms Terry King, Kings County Association of Governments
Executive Director
SCH 2006081113

**2.2-5 RESPONSE TO CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
JANUARY 25, 2008 LETTER FROM MR. AL DIAS OFFERING ADDITIONAL
COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT EIR**

- 5-A The State Highway System could be negatively affected by increasing the number, size or frequency of train traffic on the San Joaquin Valley Railroad line. Increasing train traffic could increase the vehicle-to-train conflict potential resulting in the need to plan for and fund a State Route (SR) 43 grade separation (railroad overhead crossing).

Similarly, increasing train traffic could be incompatible with the high traffic volumes projected on 12th Avenue, north of SR. 198 in the City of Hanford. A train crossing delay could create vehicle queuing on the ramps. Ramps are transition areas between freeway free flow and the stop and go on local roads. Traffic backing up along the ramps could impact public safety.

Caltrans has public safety concerns with increasing the vehicle-to-train conflict frequency. Please check to insure that the potential increase in vehicle-to-train conflict does not violate the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) rules.

This comment is apparently mis-directed; it applies to the City of Hanford. However, please see the response to comment 6-A from the Public Utilities Commission, which incorporates an additional railroad safety mitigation measure into the Draft EIR.

- 5-B The General Plan land use classifications are broad enough to give the City flexibility in implementing City policy but not specific enough to assess the full measure of traffic impacts. Moreover, the Travel Demand Model in local areas typically does not contain the level of detail, accuracy, or sensitivity necessary for developing intersections or sub-areas. This model is typical of an air quality conformity model that could be used to size collectors and major roadways but is insufficient to define detailed geometry. The Kings County model does not have strong origination and destination characteristics. Caltrans has not reviewed any calibration data that would suggest the model reasonably account for the interaction between traffic analysis zones and the roadway network. Caltrans is concerned that impacts to State facilities will not be adequately addressed. To that end Caltrans offers the following comments on the proposed roadway improvements.

Comments noted. Caltrans is correct that the model only addresses roadway segment levels of service and capacity requirements. The General Plan and its policies acknowledge the need for detailed study of local and regional intersections as part of subsequent environmental review for local development projects. These project-specific improvements would augment those called for in the General Plan and are intended to satisfy all of the CEQA requirements for the impacts of local growth on local and regional

facilities. However, the model utilized is the best available technology for this City. No EIR text revisions are necessary.

- 5-C 18th Avenue, north and south of SR 198, is proposed to be 4 lanes - (2 lanes in each direction on each side of the freeway). It is suggested that widening the 18th Avenue Overcrossing/Bridge to 4 lanes be added to the local circulation system list of improvements. The existing two through lanes would create a bottleneck. At this same location, the westbound off ramps is a short, single 1 lane off ramp that will need a second lane added to the termini. This feature should be included i the bridge-widening project.

Corrective improvements, if any, for this interchange require further study; traffic analysis at the General Plan level, properly, do not address intersection analysis.

- 5-D The City is proposing to extend Cedar Lane, connecting it to 18th Avenue south of Larish Street. The proposed connection to 18th Avenue is within the operational limits of the freeway interchange warranting a detailed engineering study. Caltrans will be requesting submittal of engineering studies prior to land use entitlements in the vicinity or developing the Cedar Lane alignment and improvement plans.

The existing General Plan has listed the Cedar Lane extension for over 15 years as a needed east-west collector connection. Prior to extension being carried out, the City will submit draft engineering plans. See additional response under comment in 4-H.

- 5-E The transportation model indicates a SR 198 overcrossing is proposed at 17th Avenue. Caltrans agrees that this improvement is needed to enhance cross-freeway access. The model depicts this as part of the circulation system. However, it is not on the list of Planned Improvements. It is recommended that this overcrossing project be included on the list to maintain consistency with the regional transportation model and for cross-freeway access.

The traffic model used in the General Plan analysis did incorporate a crossing of SR 198 at 17th Avenue. This crossing was not considered critical as mitigation against future growth as it only attracts 7,200 daily trips under the General Plan build out condition and 4,600 daily trips under 2005 conditions (a net increase of only 2,600 daily trips from development of the General Plan at buildout). Therefore, the freeway overcrossing was not included in the General Plan list of planned improvements, on the maps, or evaluated in the Draft EIR. This would be an extremely expensive project to serve a small number of trips. Furthermore, it is not needed to maintain level of service standards on local streets with General Plan buildout. No EIR text revisions are necessary.

- 5-F Caltrans is pleased to see that widening Bush Street to 8-lanes at SR 41 is on the list of Planned Improvements, Figure 4-2.

The City has, as a result of traffic studies associated with a proposed Walmart development near the Bush Street/SR 41 interchange, agreed with Caltrans regarding the need for widening Bush Street to 7 lanes at SR 41. The Draft EIR will be corrected to reflect this agreement, as it was erroneously shown as 8-lanes under the bridge structure.

- 5-G The Hanford-Armona Road, SR 41 intersection is identified in the existing Freeway Agreement as a future interchange. Caltrans has expressed the need for this improvement and would like to work with the City to preserve the right of way and establish future funding. As part of joint planning efforts, Caltrans requests that the General Plan include text that identifies it as a future improvement and development should not encroach into the physical footprint. In addition, Caltrans is willing to work with the City to develop the means of protecting the footprint from development or against issues of inverse condemnation.

The City will cooperate to the extent appropriate and feasible to preserve essential right-of-way for this interchange. Caltrans has indicated that it will provide to the City additional detail regarding potential interchange design and footprint.

- 5-H At this same location, the General Plan identifies Belle Haven as being reconstructed west of the future Hanford-Armona Road interchange to 6-lanes. Caltrans appreciates the City's recognition of this important feature. For the purpose of the General Plan and subject to detailed studies, Caltrans suggests the Belle Haven and Hanford-Armona Road intersection be set 1600 feet west of the centerline of the freeway.

The City looks forward to receipt from Caltrans of further, detailed, studies confirming the desired location for a revised Belle Haven/Hanford-Armona Road intersection.

- 5-I The 21st Avenue, SR 198 interchange has been the subject of discussion between the City of Lemoore staff and Caltrans. This interchange is not part of the existing freeway agreement and would require a New Public Road Connection, which must be approved by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and Caltrans. In addition, 21st Avenue is within the 2-mile interchange spacing Standard found in Section 501.3 *Spacing*, of the Highway Design Manual. A Mandatory Design Exception Fact Sheet must be approved. Caltrans encourages the City to begin processing the agreements necessary to ensure approval of this General Plan circulation feature.

The City will be pleased to work with Caltrans in planning for the design and construction of the proposed interchange at SR 198 and 21st Avenue / Marsh Drive alignment.

- 5-J Figure 4-2, Planned Improvement to the State Highway System includes widening SR 198 from 4-lanes to 6-lanes. Caltrans Planning agrees that widening SR 198 to 6-lanes will be needed in the future. However, there is currently no project or funding allocation for this improvement. SR 198 is an interregional route that is critical for employment and goods movement in Lemoore, Hanford and Visalia. Caltrans has been working with the City of Visalia, Tulare County, Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG), City of Hanford, City of Lemoore, Kings County and Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG) to develop local roads parallel to SR 198 that could be used as east-west arterial.

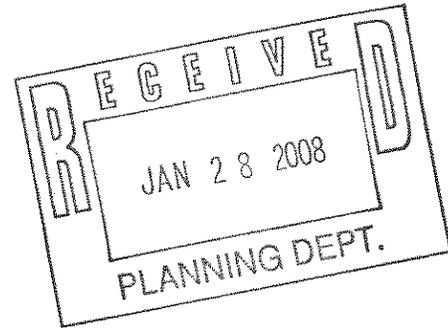
The comment is noted; it is again noted that the City has no responsibility or resources for the funding of main line freeway lane additions.

- 5-K It is suggested that the City of Lemoore designate Jackson Avenue as a principle arterial in the General Plan. This is consistent with having an interchange on SR 41. In addition, it could reduce noise in the neighborhoods along SR 198 by shifting truck traffic. Furthermore, Jackson Avenue could be used by the local area people as an alternative roadway to SR 198 via SR 43.

The General Plan will be modified to designate Jackson Avenue west of 19th Avenue as a principal arterial within the Planning Area. Jackson Avenue east of 19th Avenue is outside the General Plan Planning Area and outside the City's jurisdiction; the City has no authority to effect such designation at that location, it is the responsibility of Kings County.

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



January 25, 2008

Holly Smyth
City of Lemoore Planning Department
210 Fox Street
Lemoore, CA 93245

RE: 2030 Lemoore General Plan, SCH# 2007122069

Dear Ms. Smyth:

As the state agency responsible for rail safety within California, we recommend that any development projects planned adjacent to or near the rail corridor in the City be planned with the safety of the rail corridor in mind. New developments may increase traffic volumes not only on streets and at intersections, but also at at-grade highway-rail crossings. This includes considering pedestrian circulation patterns/destinations with respect to railroad right-of-way (ROW).

Safety factors to consider include, but are not limited to, the planning for grade separations for major thoroughfares, elimination of the at-grade highway-rail crossing by closure of roadway approaches to the crossings, improvements to existing at-grade highway-rail crossings (including upgrades to existing railroad crossing warning devices both for vehicular traffic on the street and pedestrian traffic on the sidewalk, modifications to traffic control devices at highway-highway intersections near the highway-rail crossing such as installing traffic signals or adding protected left turn signal phases, etc.) due to increase in traffic volumes, and appropriate fencing to limit the access of trespassers onto the railroad right-of-way.

Any project that includes a modification to an existing crossing, including widening of the crossing or modifications to adjacent interconnected traffic signal systems is legally required to obtain authority from the Commission. As mentioned in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), the Commission will be a responsible party under CEQA for the proposed new crossing at College Drive and the impacts of the crossing must be discussed within the environmental documents for the project.

In general, it is the Commission's policy to oppose all new at-grade crossings of main line tracks. Depending on the nature and volume of rail and highway traffic, a crossing proposal for a new crossing may not be opposed and may be considered if it includes consolidation or elimination of other crossings or other improvements along the rail corridor, thereby resulting in an increase in the overall safety along the corridor. The City's planning should account for and acknowledge this Commission policy.

Any proposed new crossing would need to include:

- o A raised median of at least 100 feet in advance of the railroad gate arms,
- o Standard 9 or 9A warning devices (railroad gates), and
- o ADA compliant pedestrian treatment.

The City needs to establish a long-term plan to improve safety along the rail corridor. Other railroad improvements that should be considered include:

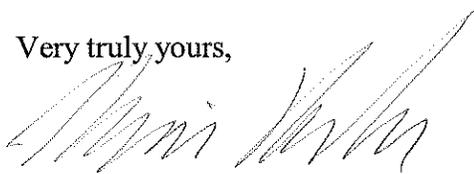
- Closure of hazardous or unnecessary crossings such as Follett Street
- Closure of four private crossings as required by the Commission Order authorizing the Belle Haven Drive railroad crossing
- Installation of automatic gates at all crossings (Follett St and Fox St currently lack gates)
- Median installation on approach to gated crossings to deter motorists from driving around lowered railroad gates
- Continuous vandal resistant fencing or other appropriate barriers along the railroad right-of-way
- Roadway illumination (street-lighting) where automatic warning devices are not activated by an approaching train (siding tracks)
- Maintenance of advance warning signs and markings as specified in the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices
- ADA compliant sidewalks at crossings where pedestrians are present (such as Fox Street)

New development should pay their fair share for mitigation of impacts which may require rail safety improvements. Every project adjacent to the rail corridor should be required to install vandal-resistant fencing to prevent trespassing onto the ROW. Any new or expansion to an existing school where children may cross the tracks to reach the school should provide pedestrian improvements at the crossings and fencing to deter trespassing across or along the tracks at unauthorized locations.

The above-mentioned considerations and safety improvements should be considered when approval is sought for the new development. Working with Commission staff early in the conceptual design phase will help improve the safety to motorists and pedestrians in the City.

If you have any questions in this matter, please call me at (415) 703-2795.

Very truly yours,



Kevin Boles
Environmental Specialist
Rail Crossings Engineering Section
Consumer Protection and Safety Division

cc: Randy Perry, San Joaquin Valley Railroad

2.2-6 RESPONSE TO CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION, JANUARY 25, 2008

6-A: Comments noted. The Draft EIR evaluates the ways in which implementation of the proposed General Plan could substantially decrease hazards due to design features or incompatible land uses under Impact 3.2-4 on page 3.2-47. While at-grade railroad crossings could fall into this category, they are not explicitly listed in the impact statement. The text of the impact statement is revised as follows to clarify this issue:

“Implementation of the proposed General Plan could substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g. sharp curves, or dangerous intersections, or at-grade railroad crossings) or incompatible uses as well as potentially adversely affect emergency access needs.”

For this program-level Draft EIR, project-specific traffic impacts at at-grade rail crossings were not analyzed. All grade crossings currently requiring improvements are included in the proposed improvements list for the larger traffic analysis (listed on page 3.2-25 through 3.2-27 and depicted in Figure 3.2-5 on page 3.2-29 of the Draft EIR), and new crossings were proposed where overall circulation needs warranted. There are no longer any at-grade highway-rail crossings within the City of Lemoore.

While project-specific impacts at at-grade crossings were not analyzed, it is prudent to include the PUC recommendations as an additional mitigation measure related to roadway safety and incompatible uses, under Impact 3.2-4. The following mitigation measure is added at the end of Impact 3.2-4 on page 3.2-49:

Mitigation Measure 3.2.4.A

The City will prepare a long-term program to improve safety along the City's rail corridor, in consultation with the California Public Utilities Commission. Railroad improvements that will be considered by the City (as well as financing and project approval requirements) include, but are not limited to:

- Closure of hazardous or unnecessary crossings;
- Closure of four private crossings as required by the Commission Order authorizing the Belle Haven Drive railroad crossing if not already implemented;
- Installation of automatic gates at all existing and proposed new crossings (Follett Street and Fox Street currently lack gates);
- Installation of a raised median at least 100 feet in advance of gated crossings to deter motorists from driving around lowered railroad gates;

- Continuous vandal resistant fencing or other appropriate barriers to prevent trespassing along one side of the railroad right-of-way;
- Roadway illumination (street-lighting) where automatic warning devices are not activated by an approaching train (siding tracks);
- Maintenance of advance warning signs and markings as specified in the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices; and
- Sidewalks that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act at all crossings where pedestrians are present where feasible;

This mitigation measure can be incorporated as a Plan policy if the Planning Commission so recommends and the City Council approves, to ensure that the General Plan is self-mitigating.

Melissa McMahon

From: Holly Smyth [hsmyth@lemoore.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 30, 2008 4:42 PM
To: 'Michael Dyett'; 'Melissa McMahon'
Cc: jbriltz@lemoore.com; 'Dale Bacigalupi'
Subject: FW: Lemoore General Plan comments
Attachments: Lemoore General Plan comments, revised.doc; Obesity research and Data.doc

Attached are some additional comments made on draft GP that I just opened in my email today.

Holly

From: Ibarra, Juan [mailto:Juan.Ibarra@co.kings.ca.us]
Sent: Friday, January 25, 2008 3:54 PM
To: 'hsmyth@lemoore.com'
Subject: Lemoore General Plan comments

Hi Holly,

This is Juan from the Public Health Department, hope all is well. We, the PHD and Heather Wooten from Public Health Law and Policy have reviewed most of the Lemoore General Plan and have made some comments on the attached document. I have also included a document with some obesity research and local data. Hope all this is helpful. Heather would also know if you're interested in further discussion about the plan, we would love to participate in any way. Hope to hear from you.

Best,

Juan Ibarra
CCROPP-Health Capacity Building Specialist
330 Campus Dr. Hanford CA, 93230
(559) 582-3311 ext. 4955
juan.ibarra@co.kings.ca.us

7-A

The draft comment period will close soon and I wanted to get this out to you!

- Comments are divided into those related to the "Healthy Food Environment" and "Opportunities for Physical Activity" – those areas of the plan most related to preventing childhood obesity.
- An overarching comment is the role that health-related data could play in augmenting and supporting policies, and the potential for the health department to play an active and named role in implementation of appropriate policies (See Chapter 9: Implementation and Monitoring, for examples of how other local government agencies are listed as implementation partners).

Healthy Food Environment

The Land Use Chapter of the General Plan, in particular the section on "Downtown and Shopping Centers" (p. 2-20) contains the policies most relevant to creating a healthy food environment. However, the plan lacks explicit mentioning of the components of healthy food environments. In particular, there is a lack of data about existing conditions; for example:

- Where do residents currently shop for groceries?
- Are there any farmers' markets or community gardens in Lemoore? Do farmers' markets accept WIC/Food Stamps?
- What about truck farms or mobile produce vendors?
- What is the ratio of fast food outlets and convenience stores to healthy food options like grocery stores and produce markets?

Depending on the time and resources available at this stage of the plan review process, it might be worthwhile to try and answer some of these questions in thinking about how to create land use policies that would support a healthy food environment. We can talk through some ideas on how to find out this information.

It might be useful to look both at the model policies suggested in "How to Create and Implement Healthy General Plans" as well as the policies developed for the Kettleman City community plan for ideas on getting access to healthy food prioritized in the plan. There are lots of things we could talk about, but I'd like to hold off giving you a laundry list until Lemoore stakeholders have had some prioritized feedback (for example, are community residents interested in limiting "drive-through" or fast food restaurants around schools or in neighborhoods? Have they expressed interest in/desire for a farmers' market? Are they already served well by small stores or a supermarket – or is there desire to attract new store(s) or improve existing stores?)

Kings County Health Department could provide whatever local health **data on obesity and diet-related disease** in a summary form than can be included in the plan to support these policies.

Opportunities for Physical Activity

The Circulation Chapter of the General Plan discusses plans and policies for supporting walking and biking, and Parks, Schools, and Community Facilities discusses plans and policies for developing and maintaining parks and other facilities (some discussion of trails occurs in the Open Space Chapter). In general, the plan does a decent job of supporting access to opportunities to engage in physical activity, although there wasn't a chance to identify whether policies address currently underserved neighborhoods in Lemoore that could be prioritized for any infrastructure improvements – especially noting the list of "Additional Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Oriented Street Improvements" on p. 4-10.

One of the many discussions that is currently occurring in the “built environment and health” field is how to connect the concept of “complete streets” to Level of Service standards (LOS), which typically plan for only automobile users of roadways. Since there is an extensive section in this plan on Level of Service standards (see page 4-11), Public Health Law and Policy wanted to pass on some ideas for including bicycle/pedestrian service standards in LOS measurement. Attached is a document prepared by WalkSanDiego (www.walksandiego.org) that includes lots of examples – this is a great resource to share with your planners.

More public health data about both obesity and overweight, as well as pedestrian and bicycle injuries and collisions is needed – if possible, mapped by location – to better understand where existing problems are and helping to make the case for prioritizing upgrades. This might be especially relevant around schools and in underserved neighborhoods.

Same for public health **data on asthma and other respiratory diseases**.

A few additional comments:

- On p. 4-10, the plan calls for “Cul de sac Larish Street...”. This policy should state that any traffic calming measures should ensure continued pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, if appropriate.
- On p. 5-12, PSCF-I-15 calls for developing partnerships with the school district to create joint-use opportunities, and says that the elementary and high school districts currently have joint use agreements. This is great! Perhaps there is a role for public health in identifying and promoting additional joint use opportunities?

Additional comments:

While a highly political topic, it might be worthwhile for the health department to consider how to support increased densities than what the plan currently calls for, especially with regards to residential densities. Affordable housing, “life cycle housing” (the ability of residents to find housing that meets their needs throughout their life), aging in place, PLUS the ability of development to support transit and walkability all suggest densities greater than what the plan currently calls for. For example, most of the new housing units planned for are low-medium and low density residential (p.1-15), and in at least one place, higher-density residential is given a negative connotation without any mention of the benefits that can, if planned for, come from higher densities (p. 2-16 – see the phrase, “no one area is unduly burdened by higher-density residences”). This could be a more positive statement, such as “to ensure that all neighborhoods provide a mix of housing types to serve residents’ income levels and needs.”

A special note of the green building section of the general plan (p.3-43) and the global warming section (p. 7-43). Perhaps there is an opportunity for some public health rationale supporting these policies?

Last but not least, it might be worth raising the profile of “health” in the general plan. In particular, I think the “General Plan Themes and Key Initiatives” could be strengthened with Health Department input to include ways that the Lemoore General Plan will support a healthy community.

2.2-7 RESPONSE TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT, JANUARY 25, 2008

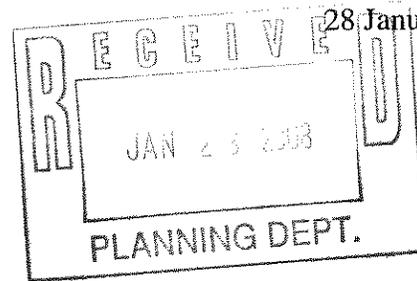
- 7-A: Comments noted. However, these are General Plan comments and do not pertain to the adequacy of the Draft EIR; as such, no EIR text revisions are necessary. Comments on the General Plan will be addressed separately by City staff.



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
COMMANDING OFFICER
NAVAL AIR STATION
700 AVENGER AVENUE
LEMOORE, CALIFORNIA 93246-5001

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Holly Smyth, Planning Director
City of Lemoore Planning Department
210 Fox Street
Lemoore, CA 93245



28 January 2008

Dear Ms. Smyth:

On behalf of Navy, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the 2030 Lemoore General Plan. Our specific comments are included as an attachment. The Navy and the City of Lemoore have long enjoyed a cordial, professional, and mutually supportive relationship, which has enabled us to share our ideas and concerns over the proposed 2030 Lemoore General Plan. We appreciate that relationship, and we appreciate the city's continued constructive engagement with Naval Air Station Lemoore.

I am still concerned, however, with the provisions of the General Plan that will potentially result in residential development under an existing flight path. The adverse impacts of such development are predictable and supported by many precedents in other communities. The Environmental Impact Report predicts that up to 23 percent of the anticipated 7,000 person population in the area will be "highly annoyed" and predicts that future impacts will be both "significant and unavoidable" if the area is developed as proposed.

I believe these warnings in the EIR should be well regarded. Conflict has inevitably emerged in many communities throughout the United States when residential areas are developed under flight paths. There is no reasonable evidence to support a conclusion that Lemoore will somehow avoid that conflict. While I appreciate the sincere and genuinely deep patriotic support of the community presently, we cannot rationally believe that such goodwill will insulate the Navy or the surrounding community from expensive and administratively burdensome conflict in the years ahead.

I recommend the City consider land uses other than residential development in the area beneath the flight pattern. This might entail increasing the density in open areas elsewhere within the city boundaries, fully developing or evaluating alternatives to expand the city to the east or to the north, or focusing on other types of development under the flight path. Possible compatible land uses could include agricultural, industrial, commercial, or research parks.

The Navy greatly values the enduring, strong, and positive relationship between the base and local community. That relationship is one of our greatest strategic advantages. I understand the responsibility of the city to effectively plan now to accommodate future growth. I commend the Advisory Group and the Planning Commission on their diligence

in developing this plan. The professional planning staff has been receptive to our concerns and proactive in recommending mitigations such as mandatory noise attenuation measures as a condition of permit. While I applaud these initiatives, they are not sufficient to insulate either the city or the Navy from future conflict. The Navy and many other communities have learned a hard and expensive lesson: residential development under flight paths inevitably results in conflict, regardless of mitigation measures.

Naval Air Station Lemoore is a nationally critical asset with unique capabilities that cannot be duplicated elsewhere. The Navy and local governments must work together to preserve that vital capability. The Air Station is also a major component of the local community and economy, employing approximately 9,000 civilians and military personnel with an annual payroll of \$250 million, the vast majority of which is invested locally. Additionally, the Navy invests more than \$50 million in construction, service, and supply contracts in the local economy annually. Senate Bill SB1468 recognizes that military bases are strategic assets and of high economic value to the local communities and mandates planning guidelines to minimize negative impacts on both.

This is an important decision for the Planning Commission, the City Council, and for the citizens of Lemoore. I believe our strong partnership can continue to preserve the enduring strategic value of Naval Air Station Lemoore for the nation while simultaneously enabling the city to manage its growth effectively. I urge the Planning Commission and the Council to consider land use alternatives other than residential development west of state highway 41.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald P. Townsend". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the top.

Ronald P. Townsend
Captain, United States Navy
Commanding Officer, NAS Lemoore

Enclosure

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The City should consider alternative land uses other than residential development in the area beneath the Naval Air Station Lemoore Runway 32R Ground Control Approach pattern. This may include increasing the density in open areas elsewhere in the city boundaries and/or fully developing and evaluating alternatives to expand the city east and/or north. While Naval Air Station Lemoore understands and acknowledges the responsibility of the city to plan for and manage its growth, the 2030 General Plan should prepare and present alternatives that would reduce the potential for future conflict resultant from incompatible residential develop under an established flight path.

8-A

2. Naval Air Station Lemoore recommends the city ensure its planning principles are consistent with the principles established by California Senate Bill SB 1468, SEC 2, Section 65040.9, to include reduction of land use conflicts between the effects of civilian development and military readiness activities carried out on military installations, military operating areas, military training areas, military training routes, and military airspace, and other territory adjacent to those installations and areas.

8-B

3. Naval Air Station Lemoore understands there is no formal Airport Land Use Commission established. Therefore we recommend that the City send its draft General Plan Update and EIR to the State of California Division of Aeronautics for review against current standards that specifically address airport land use compatibility in the State.

8-C

4. Naval Air Station Lemoore recommends the City send its General Plan and EIR to Kings County for a review of consistency with planning concepts of the County and other nearby communities.

8-D

SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON GENERAL PLAN SAFETY AND NOISE SECTION:

1. Page 8-18. The second bullet states that the State Governor's Office has published guidelines indicating residential noise as conditionally acceptable in range between 55dB and 70dB and normally unacceptable in the range of 70 dB and 75 dB and above. Naval Air Station Lemoore recommends the use of CALTRANS California Land Use Planning Handbook and Department of the Navy Air Installation Compatibility Use Zones (AICUZ) standards as more appropriate and germane references. The State Handbook states that "most federal and state of California regulations and policies set DNL/CNEL 65 dB as the basic limit of acceptable noise exposure for residential and other noise-sensitive land uses." It further identifies this standard (65 dB) as an urban standard and states that for quieter areas (such as a rural community), a lower threshold may be appropriate.

8-E

2. Page 8-19, last paragraph. The objective should be noise compatibility, which may include minimizing the effects of aircraft noise on communities but should also include prevention of incompatible land use (specifically residential development) in areas adjacent to airports. The document, as currently written, focuses exclusively on

8-F

mitigation, without sufficient regard for the broader responsibility of avoiding incompatible use.

3. Page 8-23. The State handbook identifies Department of the Navy AICUZ guidelines as the best source for military airports. It requires airport land use commissions to use AICUZ if the commission chooses to adopt an Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) for the military airport. We would recommend the City be consistent with the State Handbook recommendation.

8-G

4. Page 8-23, paragraph 2. The document states that expansion westward is unavoidable. However, based on the land use tables in the EIR, it appears that uses other than residential land uses will occur to the west. Naval Air Station Lemoore recommends evaluation of alternative land uses in order to minimize impacts to residential development, in addition to noise mitigation measures. Rejecting growth in other directions without full evaluation is neither prudent nor reasonable. The city should identify and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of development in other directions.

8-H

5. Page 8-23, Guiding Policy SN-G-9. There does not appear to be any proactive effort to *avoid* incompatible land use other than noise abatement.

8-I

6. Page 8-25 Land Use Compatibility. Consistent with previous comments, this table allows for residential development in higher CNELs than the Navy's AICUZ land use table guidelines or the State Handbook.

8-J

7. Page 8-28, SN-I-47. This implementing policy states that the AICUZ will be incorporated into future updates. We recommend inclusion of the Navy's land use tables at this time.

8-K

EIR 3.8 NOISE SECTION:

1. Page 3.8-4. The land uses in this table (3.8-1) do not correlate with the future land use table (3.8-3). This table shows 33 acres of existing land uses in 66-70 dB areas with an additional 100 acres of future development. The significant impact of this decision is not discussed in any substantial detail. The Navy recommends that the impacts to residents be separately discussed, as residential use is not compatible while non-residential uses are or may be compatible.

8-L

2. Page 3.8-8. Naval Air Station Lemoore recommends that the percentage of population that will be highly annoyed or awakened be discussed in terms of actual number of residents, in addition to percentages, so there is a comprehensive understanding of the size of the population that will be impacted.

8-M

3. Page 3.8-9 Regulatory Setting. Naval Air Station Lemoore recommends a much more detailed discussion of Airport Land use commissions and clarification with reference to the Navy. The statement that military air installations do not use these

8-N

commissions is inaccurate and misleading. The State of California allows airport land use commissions to prepare airport land use compatibility plans for military airports and, if prepared, to use Department of the Navy AICUZ. We encourage ALUCs to prepare military ALUCPs, as they provide additional safety and noise oversight. To be consistent with its own implementing guideline, the city should adopt Department of the Navy AICUZ land use guidelines.

4. 3.8-11. This section appears to understate the future impacts associated with residential development to the west. Three times the amount of existing residential acreage will be subjected to unacceptable noise per State and federal guidelines.

8-O

5. Page 3.8-16 Table 3.8-4 EIR. The concept of “Conditionally Acceptable” and “Normally Unacceptable” noise levels is derived from the 2003 version of the State of California General Plan Guidelines, published by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR). However, our understanding is that the table and terminology were originally prepared by the State Office of Noise Control in support of the Noise Control Act of 1973. We recommend the CALTRANS California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook as a more appropriate source for acceptable land uses that is also consistent with recommended residential land uses per the Navy’s AICUZ guidelines.

8-P

6. Page 3.8-19 Impact 3.8-3. This section implies that Navy guidelines are in alignment with city guidelines. We request the reference to Navy be deleted, as we do not agree with the proposed city land use guidelines (unless they are changed to reflect the CALTRANS and Navy standards) and do not concur on the implied alignment.

8-Q

7. Page 3.8-20 Table 3.8-5. Recommend this table be revised to include the current and future build-out population that the Plan proposes to expose to the various levels of noise from NAS Lemoore. In addition, recommend that the prediction, on page 8-20 of the noise element (assessing that 3 to 23 percent of the population will be highly annoyed) be supplemented with the actual number of residents and others that the General Plan proposes to place into the position of being highly annoyed by the noise.

8-R

8. Page 3.8-21 Table 3.8-6. The federal government (Naval Air Station Lemoore) can not accept aviation easements. The easements should be conveyed to the County.

8-S

**2.2-8 RESPONSE TO COMMENTS FROM DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY,
JANUARY 28, 2008**

8-A through 8-K:

Comments noted. However, these are General Plan comments and do not pertain to the adequacy of the Draft EIR; as such, no EIR text revisions are necessary. However, during the General Plan Update process the City reduced the number and intensity of residential units on the Westside based on the Navy's original input early in the process, reducing the Westside population by approximately 5, 000 persons.

8-C: The Draft General Plan and EIR was sent to the California Division of Aeronautics, however they did not make comments on the documents.

8-D: The General Plan and EIR were sent to Kings County Planning for their comments, however they did not make comments on the documents.

8-E: The items pointed out in this comment are included in the December 2007 Public Hearing Draft General Plan as additional bulleted points on page 8-18.

8-F: Some level of incompatibilities already existing throughout the entire residential community as general noise from daily flights occurs over the entire community at various levels. Placing housing west of State Highway 41 with the sound attenuation measures will put interior noise affects to similar or lower levels than is experienced in other portions of the community where attenuation mitigations are not applied. Location of alternative residential land uses was evaluated in the General Plan update and are outlined in comment 8-H.

8-G: Kings County does not have an Airport Land Use Commissions and therefore as stated in your comment, the AICUZ standards do not apply. See comment 8-N for additional discussion.

8-H: During the creating of the Map Atlas during at the beginning of the General Plan process, various constraints were identified adjacent to the City limits. Development to the North of the City would eliminate Prime agricultural farmland. Development to the east of the Lemoore Canal along the majority of the community would further bifurcate the community and cause the City to grow into Armona, eliminating the open space and agricultural lands between the community. Additionally, substantial investments have been made on the Westside with the construction of the West Hills College and Leprino Foods and entitlements are already in place for approximately 1400 acres of the Westside and are in City limits. Abandonment of residential development would be detrimental in light of these facts.

8-I: See general comment to items 8-A through 8-K

- 8-J: See paragraph 4 discussion under response 8-L.
- 8-K: See paragraph 4 discussion under response 8-L.
- 8-L: Comments noted. In terms of the table correlation, as stated on pages 2-1 and 2-2 of the General Plan, the existing land use table “depicts uses in existence today, using both County data and field reconnaissance. These existing land uses do not necessarily match the land use designations in the existing General Plan.” Furthermore, as stated on page 2-10, “the residential land use designation definitions in the proposed 2030 Lemoore General Plan are somewhat different than those in the existing General Plan.” The EIR tables and analysis comparing existing and future land uses follow directly from the land uses as portrayed in the General Plan.

The EIR tables mentioned in this comment pertain only to traffic noise. Impact 3.8-3, starting on page 3.8-20 of the EIR, addresses the specific exposure of persons to aircraft noise from the Lemoore Naval Air Station facility. In terms of adequate emphasis on residential land exposure to aircraft noise, this impact discussion, excerpted below, adequately discusses residential land uses and sensitive receptors:

“Impact 3.8-3 Implementation of the proposed General Plan would expose about 7,000 persons to noise in excess of 65 dB generated by aircraft originating from or destined for the Lemoore Naval Air Station facility. (Significant and Unavoidable)

“According to the proposed General Plan land use compatibility standards for community noise environments, additional development in West Lemoore would be subject to aircraft noise that would be in the “conditionally acceptable” and “normally unacceptable” ranges of noise exposure for residential development and sensitive land uses. Noise mitigation policies are included within the proposed General Plan, but due to development restrictions in other directions (namely north and east) as well as existing entitlements for development to the west, the proposed General Plan provides for new development in West Lemoore, subject to standards for Noise Level Reductions (NLRs) that exceed the NLR criteria in the Navy’s instructions for AICUZ studies by 10 to 15 dB (See Policy SN-I-35). The Navy’s Air Installations Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) land use compatibility guidelines for aircraft noise zones state that residential uses are not compatible and should be “discouraged in areas of DNL or CNEL noise exposure in DNL 65-69 and strongly discouraged in DNL 70-74”¹ and go on to state that: “The absence of viable alternative development options should be determined and an evaluation should be conducted locally prior to local approvals indicating that a demonstrated community need for the residential use would not be met if development were prohibited in these Zones. Where the community determines that these uses must be allowed, measures to

¹ Pg. 20, OPNAC Instruction 11010.36B, *AICUZ Program Procedures and Guidelines*, Department of the Navy Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, December 19, 2002.

achieve an outdoor to indoor Noise Level Reduction (NLR) of at least 25 dB in DNL 65-69 and NLR of 30 dB in DNL 70-74 should be incorporated into building codes and be in individual approvals”. Policy SN-I-35 requires NLRs of 40 dB for habitable rooms and 45 dB for bedrooms. **Table 3.8-5** below summarizes acres of urban land exposed to NAS Lemoore noise contours. The calculation of the number of persons is based on the density assumptions and average household sizes assumed for Plan buildout. This analysis does not quantify the potential impact of possible Joint Strike Fighters based at NAS Lemoore.”

Table 3.8-5 Proposed General Plan Land Use Exposure to NAS Lemoore Noise (acres)

	60 to 64 dB	65 to 74 dB	Total
Agriculture	1,199	714	1,913
Very Low Density Residential	52	0	52
Low Density Single Family Residential	152	256	408
Low Medium Density Residential	53	158	212
Medium Density Multi-Family Residential	5	16	21
Commercial	65	87	151
Neighborhood Commercial	11	0	11
Professional Office	27		27
Mixed-Use		30	30
Business Park	59		59
Industrial	460	230	690
Public/Institutional	12	177	188
Parks/Recreation	50	47	97
Greenway/Detention Basin	34	32	66
Wetlands	54	10	64
Total	2,232	1,758	3,990
<i>Each Contour as Percent of Total Land in Planning Area</i>	18	14	33

Source: Dyett & Bhatia, 2007.

- 8-M: Comments noted. On page 3.8-20 and 3.8-21 (excerpted above for comment 6-L) the EIR provides a specific calculation of the number of persons affected by NASL noise (which is about 7,000 persons), as well as how that calculated number was obtained.
- 8-N: Comments noted. The last paragraph on page 3.8-9 of the Draft EIR describes airport land use commissions, airport land use compatibility plans, and their relation to military facilities:

“California counties that include an airport served by a scheduled airline or operated for the benefit of the general public must establish an airport land use commission. (California Public Utilities Code section 21670). The State

legislature's purpose in requiring these commissions is to "protect public health, safety, and welfare by ensuring the orderly expansion of airports and the adoption of land use measures that minimize the public's exposure to the extent that these areas are not already devoted to incompatible uses." The commission's chief business is to prepare and enforce a land use plan for the area surrounding each airport in its jurisdiction. This requirement applies regardless of whether a county chooses to establish and maintain an airport land use commission or to utilize the alternative process or county-specific exception provisions of the law. *Adoption of compatibility plans for military airports is optional under the Act. Some airport land use commissions (ALUCs) have done this using the Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) studies that are required for each base.*" (emphasis added)

- 8-O: Comments noted. The data available and presented in the Draft EIR support the impact statement "Implementation of the proposed General Plan would expose about 7,000 persons to noise in excess of 65 dB generated by aircraft originating from or destined for the Lemoore Naval Air Station facility." We believe these data also support the EIR's conclusion that the impact is significant and unavoidable.
- 8-P: Comments noted. The General Plan page 8-18 and Draft EIR pages 3.8-9 and 3.8-20 through 3.8-21 (excerpted earlier for comment 7-L) contain discussion of the other noise compatibility criteria. The impact assessment related to NASL noise uses the 65-74 dBA range from Navy AICUZ Guidelines as the criteria to assess significant noise exposure.
- 8-Q: Comments noted. Impact 3.8-3 starting on page 3-20 (excerpted earlier for comment 6-L) refers to the AICUZ table and footnote but does not imply an alignment of the Navy Guidelines and the City's. The text does note that the Noise Level Reduction (NLR) described in the AICUZ table footnote is less than the City's proposed Noise Level Reduction (Policy SN-I-35).
- 8-R: Comments noted. Impact 3.8-3 starting on page 3-20 (excerpted earlier for comment 6-L) states the number of people (7000) potentially affected by the noise levels over DNL 65 dBA. This number is derived from the density assumptions for each individual land use.
- 8-S: Comments noted. Table 3.8-6 on page 3.8-22 of the EIR describes aviation easements as being conveyed to "the City of Lemoore or Kings County."