

5.5 - Cultural Resources

5.5.1 - Introduction

This section describes the existing cultural resources setting in the Planning Area. Current CEQA Guidelines divide the cultural resources category into three different branches of study: historical resources, archaeological resources, and paleontological/geological resources. The descriptions in this section are based in part on information obtained from a records search conducted at the Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center (SSJVIC), background literature research, and a review of environmental compliance documents in and near the Planning Area.

For the purposes of this analysis, an archaeological resource is considered any cultural resource that was deposited before Europeans established a Franciscan Mission in California (1769), although it has long been recognized that Europeans plied the coast as early as the mid 16th Century and landed on the Coast on several occasions. Buried resources deposited after 1769 are technically considered historical resources. Such resources would also include Native American resources deposited after that date.

The following information is provided in accordance with Section 15125 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The environmental setting discussion provides a baseline discussion of the existing conditions within the Planning Area and surrounding area.

5.5.2 - Environmental Setting

Study Area for Project Impacts

The study area for project impacts regarding cultural resources is the City of Fresno Planning Area because potential development under the City of Fresno 2035 General Plan and Development Code Update is limited to areas within the Planning Area.

Study Area for Cumulative Impacts

The study area for the analysis of cumulative cultural resources includes the counties of Fresno and Madera, and the analysis is based on the summary of projections approach discussed in Section 15130(b)(1)(B) of the CEQA Guidelines.

Historic Context and Cultural Setting

Cultural resources include prehistoric-era archaeological sites, historic-era archaeological sites, Native American traditional cultural properties, sites of religious and cultural significance, and historical buildings, structures, objects, and sites. The importance of any single cultural resource is defined by the context in which it was first created, current public opinion and modern yet evolving analysis. From the analytical perspective, temporal and geographic considerations help to define the historical context of the Planning Area. The importance or significance of a cultural resource is in part described by the context in which it originated or developed. National Park Service Bulletin 16a (1997: <http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb16a.pdf>), describes a historic context as “information about historic trends and properties grouped by an important theme in prehistory or

history of a community, state, or the nation during a particular period of time.” A context links an existing property to important historic trends and this allows a framework for determining the significance of a property. Given this, a major goal of the historian is to determine accurate themes of analysis, a task that can only be undertaken by a thorough review of previous researchers’ thoughts and ideas, as well as reviewing the literature of the resources.

In California, historians have divided the past into broad categories based on climate models, archaeological dating and written histories. Paleontologists divide time into much larger segments, with defined and named periods of time shortening in timespan as the modern era is reached. For the purposes of this analysis, these periods in history have been summarized below.

Prehistoric Era

To better understand the past, archaeologists develop models of prehistoric resource chronologies and description of lifestyles based on data collected at the archaeological sites they investigate. Essentially a template of understanding that is subject to change and reinterpretation, models of prehistoric lifeways are tested against what is derived from archaeological research and ethnographic information. As more archaeological data is brought forth, the models are refined and reinterpreted.

Unfortunately, prehistoric archaeological investigations are very limited in the Fresno area. Indeed, the San Joaquin River section of the middle and lower San Joaquin Valley is identified by many researchers to be one of the least understood areas of the State (Rosenthal et al. 2007). For this reason, the prehistoric background review in this section is derived from several regional reports of recent publication. General information associated with Fresno County and San Joaquin Valley regional archaeology has been derived from Moratto (1984), Fagan (2003) and Arnold et al. (2004). Prehistoric background information derived from near-City cultural resource projects has been derived from Rosenthal et al. (2007), SJRRP (2011) and the California High Speed Rail Project (2012). Bennyhoff and Fredrickson’s Central California Taxonomic System (CCTS: see Hughes 1994) has in the past been used to form descriptions of the temporal background for certain projects in Fresno County. A more generalized systemic description is provided here because many of the archaeological elements supporting the CCTS have not been uncovered in the Planning Area. Part of the challenge associated with archaeological research in this area is that the eastern side of the San Joaquin Valley has been farmed for generations and farming tends to destroy the surface signatures of most prehistoric sites.

Terminal Pleistocene (13,500 to 11,000 ybp [years before present])

About 14,000 years ago, California was a much wetter and cooler place, but with the retreat of continental Pleistocene glaciers, the whole of California except the northwest coast saw a warming and drying trend. Large shallow lakes filled with glacial meltwater were located in the Central Valley and used by populations of large game animals, most of which are now extinct. The water in these pluvial lakes rose and fell with the season, but are unlikely to have dried completely. A few prehistoric sites have been discovered near the southwestern shore of Tulare Lake, but none in or near the Planning Area and none in the middle San Joaquin Valley. Native American populations were probably widely dispersed hunter-gatherers, and their archaeological assemblages would have

consisted of large projectile points with distinctive “fluted” styles and deeply buried features with animal fragments. Such sites would likely be discovered on Late Pleistocene-dated ground surfaces. Within the City, these surfaces are not exposed at the ground surface and would quite probably be deeply buried.

Early and Middle Holocene (11,000 to 7,000 ybp --- 7,000 to 3,800 ybp)

Moratto (1984) argued that land located between the floodplain of the middle and lower San Joaquin Valley and the lower foothills is covered with a recent and thick blanket (30 feet or more) of alluvium derived from a post-Pleistocene erosion of the western Sierras. Thus, while a few sites from the early Holocene periods are found in upland environments, there are no such dated sites in or very near the Planning Area.

Sites in the nearby foothills exhibit groundstone assemblages suggesting that acorns and pine nuts were harvested when ripe by bands of mobile groups. Comparative ethnographic data suggests that mobile peoples with a seasonal round may have created a home base (village) in winter during these periods, then travelled to exploit pockets of certain resources in temporary encampments. This type of lifeway was likely common for most California peoples except those on the North Coast, and probably continued in a like fashion throughout the Early and Middle Holocene. Differences in lowland and upland sites emerged about 4,500 ybp giving the regional populations distinct patterns. Lowland groups may have predominated in the Fresno area during the late Middle Holocene and archaeological sites dated to this time would likely exhibit foodstuff and processing tools more focused on lakeshore resources than grinding implements seen in upland sites. Soil strata found in the northwestern portion of the City has been defined as a Late Pleistocene non-marine alluvial fan covered with a veneer of late Holocene soil. In general, early and Middle Holocene alluvial deposits with cultural resources in them would typically be exposed only after several feet of soil has been removed. Soils near active stream channels are younger and are less likely to exhibit sites from this period except on intact dunes and at some depth. Thus, sites from this period are likely located in the Planning Area, but are more likely to be found at depth after a disturbed topsoil horizon has been removed.

Late Holocene (3,800 to 1,500 ybp)

This period saw an increase in the number of sites and evidence for an increased sophistication in the toolkit of the local prehistoric groups. Archaeologists often interpret increases in the number of sites dated to a certain period as reflecting an increase in population: the Arnold et al. (2004) report reflects this concept. Populations existing on flatter areas between braided stream channels near the City and those along the major riverine systems in the middle San Joaquin Valley probably concentrated their lifeways on marsh-based resources. Evidence for trading networks between nearby groups is robust.

The quantity of sites near the south bank of the San Joaquin River (in and near the City limits) is large and several were investigated by Rosenthal et al. (2007). Archaeologists seldom excavate buried sites exhibiting data that might allow a determination of whether or not a prehistoric site “belongs” to one ethnographic group or another, but at the end of this period cultural groups possessing Great Basin-style toolkits began to arrive in California and appear to have begun

influencing and/or merging with the existing populations. Local sites saw changes in the toolkit with an overall reduction of projectile point size suggestive of bow and arrow technologies. Rosenthal et al. (2007) suggests that at about 2,300 years ago large villages were clustered along the banks of the San Joaquin River and other watersheds (winter villages). Structured social hierarchies are inferred in the archaeological data. Evidence for Late Holocene deposits in and very near the City limits is likely. These would lie upon buried alluvial fans and riverine deposits at shallow depths, and possibly near the exposed surface of vacant properties.

Late Prehistoric (1,500 ybp to Contact with the Spanish)

With the introduction of Great Basin populations into the Eastern Sierras of California at the beginning of the Late Prehistoric, many of the ancestral California tribes were influenced by their toolkits and lifestyles. Part of this interpretation is derived from linguistic studies. The Yokuts were Penutian speakers, which appear to have arrived earlier, and many of the tribes to the east and southeast were newly arrived Takic or Uto-Aztecan (Kroeber 1925) speakers. The Takic speakers exhibited toolkits and lifeways adapted to desert climates. Bow and arrow technologies and the use of pottery are found in sites dating to this period. This period was the zenith of prehistoric California life, with an increase in sophisticated lifestyles, extensive trade networks, and a burgeoning population. The end of the period saw the introduction of Europeans and their diseases of which the local tribes had little defense or resistance. For more information on the Yokuts, see the ethnographic section below.

Ethnographic Overview

At the time of European contact, most of the San Joaquin Valley and the foothills of the western slope of the Sierra Nevada were occupied by 40 or so groups classified together as the Yokuts (Silverstein 1978) with a Foothills division and a Valley division of language dialects. The Yokuts were recognized as having three major subgroups: the Northern Valley, the Foothill, and the Southern Valley. Each of these ethnolinguistic groups was composed of autonomous, culturally and linguistically related tribes or tribelets. Ethnographic evidence suggests the City of Fresno is located in part of the Southern Valley Yokuts territory.

Alfred Kroeber divided a Yokuts classification system into Valley Divisions and Foothill Divisions based on ethnographic lines, geographic habitat, and dialect (1963). Here, the Foothill Division's world-view and economy were influenced more by their Shoshonean neighbors than the Valley Division Yokuts. Later, William Wallace divided the Yokuts into three subgroups, Southern Valley, Northern Valley, and Foothill, and shifted the known tribelets among these divisions (see Wallace 1978). The following is a review of ethnographic information associated with the Southern Valley Yokuts.

The Southern Valley Yokuts occupied a rich environment with abundant water resources from the nearby sloughs, lake basins, and river systems. Swamps and tule marshes surrounded the waterways and teemed with wildlife, including aquatic mammals, fish, and waterfowl. Adjacent grasslands provided food for herds of elk, antelope, and (in the winter) deer. The regional flora was equally, if not more, diverse and was used as a main staple of the Yokuts diet. The Southern Valley Yokuts dietary base relied on a mixed strategy of fishing, waterfowl hunting, shellfish, and plant collecting, with less emphasis on large-game hunting. Important vegetal resources included cattail roots,

grasses, nuts, seeds, tule, and bulbs. The resource-rich environment allowed for permanent village sites, which typically were occupied throughout the year.

Resources not found in the local environment were obtained through an extensive trade network, which had begun to develop during the Late Holocene. Quality stone and wood were lacking in the Valley environment and were often acquired through trade with nearby tribes. Imported items included acorns, salt, obsidian, and seashells, which were exchanged for locally available asphaltum, steatite, and animal skins.

The material culture of the Southern Valley Yokuts included structures, watercraft, basketry, weapons, and tools fashioned primarily from local resources. The ubiquitous tule was the primary component used for house construction and other fiber crafts such as basketry, mats, and cradles. Rafts were central to the economy base because of the abundance of waterways, which made watercraft the preferred mode of transportation. Wood, stone, and bone were commonly used to manufacture a variety of tools and weapons. Sweathouses were common to every settlement and, in the case of the Southern Valley Yokuts, were used exclusively by men on a daily basis.

The Southern Valley Yokuts were divided into true tribes, with individual tribelets having their own name, dialect, and territory. Typically, a tribelet was ruled by a central chief who inherited the position, was assisted by one or more aides, and lived in the largest village. The chief's duties included decisions that affected the well-being of the entire tribelet, sanctioning trade, entertaining guests, and arbitration of intra-tribal disputes. Marriage was typically informal, and patrilocality was the accepted practice following marriage. Thus, if a family had numerous sons, a circle of extended family members would inhabit the area immediately adjacent to the patriarch's home. Polygamy was not objected to, but it was practiced solely by men. There is scant evidence that the Southern Valley Yokuts participated in a large number of organized religious ceremonies.

Historic Era

Gabriel Moraga was one of the first Europeans to see and explore the Central Valley of California. In 1805, he was ordered by the Spanish Governor to send his cavalry into the Modesto area and Calaveras Rivers, naming both (Bancroft 1884-1890). In 1806, he travelled past the Kings, Merced and Stanislaus watersheds, naming each river. In 1808, he was ordered into the Central Valley once again in search of potential new Mission sites and runaway neophytes. He named a tributary of the San Joaquin during this trip (San Joaquin Creek). It was later discovered that the creek fed into a larger river, which was named San Joaquin River. As Spanish California passed to Mexican control, American trappers increasing began to exploit the regions resources and once gold was discovered, the population rush into California began, with mineral exploration in the mountains and foothills east of the Planning Area. During the latter half of the 19th century, the size of all Yokuts populations dwindled dramatically, due to the spread of European settlements and the diseases the Europeans brought with them.

Mexican Period

With the declaration of Mexican independence in 1821, Spanish control of Alta California ended, although little change actually occurred. Political change did not take place until mission

secularization in 1834, when Native Americans were released from missionary control and the mission lands were granted to private individuals. Researchers hypothesize that mission secularization removed the social protection and support on which Native Americans had come to rely. It exposed them to further exploitation by outside interests, often forcing them into a marginal existence as laborers for large ranchos. Following mission secularization, the Mexican population grew as the native population continued to decline. Anglo-American settlers began to arrive in Alta California during this period and often married into Mexican families, becoming Mexican citizens, which made them eligible to receive land grants. In 1846, on the eve of the U.S.-Mexican War (1846 to 1848), the estimated population of Alta California was 8,000 non-natives and 10,000 natives. However, these estimates have been debated (Cook 1976). It is estimated that the Native American population was 100,000 in 1850; the U.S. Census of 1880 reports the Native American population as 20,385.

American Expansion

In 1848, California became a United States territory as a result of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Also in 1848, John Marshall found gold at Sutter's Mill, which marked the start of the Gold Rush. The influx of miners and entrepreneurs increased the non-native population of California from 14,000 to 224,000 in just four years. In 1854, gold was discovered in the upper reaches of the Kern River, which brought a tremendous influx of miners into eastern Kern County. This, in turn, stimulated commercial growth in the central and lower San Joaquin Valley as eager entrepreneurs set up business to support the miners and mining operations. Gold and silver were mined along the San Joaquin but the deposits were not large. When the Gold Rush was over, many of the miners settled in the Central Valley communities and established farms, ranches, and lumber mills.

Local History

Mining opportunities allowed the development of very small communities along rivers and streams in the foothills and mountains east and northeast of the City. In 1856, Fresno County was created and the first county seat was located in the foothill community of Millerton. In 1867, the San Joaquin River flooded Millerton and several other small towns along its banks, causing locals to look for a safer place to build a trade center that could serve the whole of the foothills. Named for the Spanish word for "ash tree," Fresno has its roots in the form of a large farm established in 1867 by A.Y. Easterby in an area of what is now central downtown. Moses Church, his partner, began building a water delivery system for this farm and others and began diverting water from the Kings River into the region via a series of ditches. By 1871, Easterby's 5,000-acre ranch featured plots of wheat irrigated by these river-fed "Church ditches." When Central Pacific Railroad officials, including Leland Stanford, saw the Easterby farm in 1871, legend has it that Stanford declared the area the site of a stop for the new Central California Railroad (Southern Pacific) line.

Because the railroad followed a northwest-southeast track, the first town site of Fresno Station (1872) was built on the Easterby farm paralleling the tracks, with the upslope portions (east) preferred for development. After locals realized Fresno Station would become the trading center for the area, development spread beyond the original Easterby plat, and began to be oriented toward roadways put in along Section lines in cardinal directions.

The need for water to irrigate the arid San Joaquin Valley became a priority for the economic development of Central Valley towns such as Fresno. Agriculture's dominance over ranching was exhibited in 1873 when the California State Legislature passed the "No Fence Law." Under this law, farmers were no longer obligated to put up fences to keep roaming livestock out of their crops; furthermore, any crop destruction became the responsibility of the rancher who owned the offending livestock. Irrigation companies, colonies, and districts were formed in the vicinity of various small towns including Fresno to promote agriculture.

In 1875 the Central California Colony was established south of Fresno, which set the model for a system of development that was used throughout the San Joaquin Valley. Tracts of land were subdivided into 20-40 acre parcels, irrigated from a system of canals and often landscaped with boulevards of palms, eucalyptus or other drought-resistant trees. By 1903, there were 48 separate colonies or tracts in Fresno County which drew farmers and their families from Scandinavia and from across the United States.

Church's Fresno Canal and Irrigation Company, a predecessor of the Fresno Irrigation District, began expanding in 1876 in response to locals moving into the area near the railroad stop; this became the first extensive irrigation system in the Central Valley. Agricultural colonies were developed and water rights for those colonies established. The expanding irrigation system led to a shift in both the types of crops grown and the size of a typical farm. Pioneers initially grew wheat and other grain crops or raised cattle. As irrigation water became more readily available, individual farmers realized that premium crops like grapes, citrus, and tree fruit could be profitably grown on lots as small as 20 acres (The Planning Center 2010).

Fresno incorporated in 1885, with a population of over 3,000. Development was restricted to a six-block area beginning at and northeast from the Central Pacific Depot; development was concentrated at Mariposa and H Street. Development of the infrastructure needed to support increases in agricultural and commercial industry soon followed and once diversity of industry began, immigrant populations also began to increase. Chinese, Armenian and Volga Germans began to arrive and settle. By 1900, Fresno held 12,000 people.

Fresno County's first lumber mill was constructed in 1852, with 23 new mills following soon after. Wood flumes, some measuring more than 50 miles in length, were built by large lumber companies to transfer logs from the mills in the mountains to Fresno for rail transport. In 1921, the Sugar Pine Lumber Company (Sugar Pine) was incorporated: the goal was to harvest the vast sugar pine strands of the Sierra Nevada east of Fresno. Sugar Pine located its mill on a 574-acre tract overlooking the San Joaquin River north of Fresno. Fresno County historian Charles Clough called Pinedale "the largest [lumber mill] in the world at that time" with the capacity to cut 600,000-board feet and send out forty boxcars of lumber per day (Clough 1963, 1986).

As Fresno grew from its founding as a regional agricultural center, municipal infrastructure and amenities also increased. One of the first projects to build Fresno's infrastructure was the electric intra-urban railway. By 1905, Fresno Traction Company had laid 15.5 miles of track on Fresno streets before being purchased in 1910 by Southern Pacific Railroad. In addition, the Fresno Traction

Company built an amusement park on eight acres of San Joaquin River bottomland eleven miles from downtown Fresno named Fresno Beach. They extended the tracks to the beach in 1913. The Fresno Beach route was terminated at Herndon Avenue in 1930 due to increasing automobile use. Fresno Traction Company continued to cut back all of its routes and in 1939 streetcar service in Fresno ended.

The founding and expansion of Fresno in the late 19th Century plus the extensive developments before World War I has left its mark on the setting of the City, its cultural and physical enclaves, the names of streets, and how the suburban areas of the City expanded and changed. Numerous project-level historical studies have taken place in the City during the last ten years (Bungalow Courts 2004; Chinatown Survey 2006; Germantown Historical Context 2006; Arts and Culture District 2006-7; Pinedale 2007; Mid-Century Modern Historic Context 2008; North Park 2008; South Stadium 2008; Wilson Island 2009), and each have focused on the background history of specific areas in the City. Future historical research is likely to occur at neighborhood analytical levels because of the City's status as a NPS-SHPO Certified Local Government.

The first three decades of the 20th Century were a period of steady growth and increasing prosperity for Fresno during which the city established itself as the primary city of the San Joaquin Valley. The City's first electric streetcar was in use in 1902. By 1909, the first double-track streetcar line was installed along J Street. By the early 1920s, streetcar lines would radiate out from the central business district to the north, east, south, and west where farmland was being subdivided for suburban development. The expanding transit infrastructure, along with exponentially increasing private automobile ownership, made living further from the city center possible. Land within the central city increasingly became used for commercial and civic purposes.

By the end of the 1920s, Fresno had transformed into a thriving city at the center of the United States most productive agricultural region. The downtown was fully established as the San Joaquin Valley's primary marketplace offering office, retail, lodging, dining, and entertainment facilities. Adjacent industrial activity enabled agricultural goods to be processed and shipped to distant consumers. The central city's residential areas had largely been developed. Residential properties were increasingly redeveloped for commercial uses as the City's wide-ranging streetcar system and increased private automobile ownership allowed more of Fresno's citizens to live outside of the city center. Fresno, along with the nation, appeared increasingly prosperous. Then on November 24, 1929, the New York Stock Exchange crashed and millions of dollars in stock value vanished. The stock market crash exposed structural weaknesses in the banking and finance systems, key industries, and the economy as a whole, ushering in the Great Depression.

The Great Depression had a profound effect on the San Joaquin Valley. Farmers were forced to cut costs in the face of reduced demand for their products; many were forced into foreclosure. Along with the rest of the country, unemployment skyrocketed. The Valley's problems were exacerbated by the influx of migrant refugees or "Dust Bowl" migrants. It is believed that 2.5 million people migrated from the Midwestern Plains states between 1930 and 1940, with over 300,000 relocating to California just between 1930 and 1934. Thousands more would continue to arrive throughout the 1930s and many ended up in the Central Valley as migrant farm workers earning very low wages.

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the United States officially entered World War II. The United States entrance into the War effectively ended the Depression in California as all aspects of the national economy mobilized to serve the war effort. California received almost 12% of the government war contracts and produced 17% of all war supplies. California also acquired more military installations than any other state by a wide margin, and military bases were opened throughout the state. Aircraft, shipbuilding, and numerous other industries were booming due to the war effort, and unemployment was virtually eliminated.

Approximately 60,000 service members were stationed in and around Fresno during the War. Military activity was concentrated at two locations. One, the Hammer Field bomber base, was constructed in 1941 just beyond what was then the eastern boundary of the City. Today it is the site of Fresno Yosemite International Airport. The second, Camp Pinedale, was located six miles east of Downtown Fresno in the (then) unincorporated community of Pinedale on the site of the defunct Sugar Pine Lumber Company. The Army had acquired the site in March of 1942 for use as an Army Signal Training School.

Following World War II, the passage of the G.I. Bill enabled returning veterans to purchase homes and establish businesses, prompting another period of rapid expansion. The Mayfair subdivision, completed in 1947 northeast of the Project Area, included Fresno's first suburban shopping mall and ushered in an era of development at the suburban fringe. Between 1940 and 1950, the City's population grew by 30,000, with much of the growth accommodated in new auto-oriented suburbs. The Interstate Highway Act of 1956 served to spur development of suburbs, and ultimately led to the economic decline of many inner cities.

By the mid-1950s, however, the results of rapid suburbanization were becoming evident in Downtown Fresno as major retailers such as Sears & Roebuck relocated to newly developed suburban shopping centers such as Manchester Center (1955) and Fig Garden Village (1956). The downtown core was continually being bypassed as a place to locate new businesses. With Downtown unable to compete with burgeoning suburban development, construction of new buildings in Downtown Fresno came to a virtual halt.

Historic-era Architectural Styles in Fresno

Fresno is home to a diversity of architectural styles that include Victorian, Revival (Colonial, Italian, Renaissance, Mission, Mediterranean, Spanish, and Tudor), Neoclassical, Craftsman Bungalow, Streamline Moderne, Beaux-Arts, Art Deco, International, Mid-Century Modern, and Ranch among others. While styles focus upon a collection of specific decorative features; types are based on form. Considered a distinctly American type, the Prairie Box—also known as the American Foursquare—was popular in Fresno in the early 20th Century.

Beginning in the early 20th century the city's downtown was completely transformed: the elegant "Victorian" style blocks and hotels were demolished or in the case of smaller buildings were eventually refaced with a "modern" storefront. What emerged was a more "rational" Classic Revival city, one influenced by the latest trends in architectural design emanating from American cities such as New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, as well as Paris, France. The first "high-rise" neoclassical

office building was the Griffith-McKenzie Building, also known as the Helm Building, a 10-story steel frame structure constructed in 1914 and designed by the San Francisco architect George Kelham. Numerous office buildings followed suit, many of them designed and constructed by the R.F. Felchlin Company. The building boom in downtown was halted in mid-1930 as the Depression began to sink in. Many of the downtown buildings that survived relatively intact are listed on Fresno's Local Register of Historic Resources (www.fresno.gov: City of Fresno 2012). There are also 26 National Register-listed structures in the downtown core.

Although farming and ranching remain at the economic forefront, its place in central California means that Fresno is an excellent location for industrial complexes and distribution centers. In addition, its central location and less expensive housing prices offer opportunities for expansion.

Paleontologic/Geologic Context

The general structure of the central San Joaquin Basin had begun to take shape in the Late Cretaceous (65 to 75 million years ago [MYA]) as the effects of subductive North American and Pacific Plates collision lifted once extremely deep ocean sediments above sea level. During the Paleocene (65 to 53 MYA) and Eocene (53 to 35 MYA) Epochs, regional changes in the structure of the Earth's crust caused the Basin to rise and fall below sea level numerous times. During periods when the area was above sea level, large deltas brought sediment out of the Sierras to the east with smaller amounts out of the Diablos to the west. During periods when the Basin was below sea level, sedimentation within a shallow sea environment at maximum several hundred feet deep would occur. The deeper rocks and strata in the Basin, as encountered by petroleum geologists, reflect the fresh and saltwater layer-cake nature of geological time, and many of the deeper petroleum and natural gas deposits trapped by oceanic sedimentation are under extremely high pressure.

By the Miocene Epoch, the relationship between the North American and Pacific Plates had changed from subduction to transpression, and the Pacific Plate began sliding northwest. Tremendous volumes of sediment ran into the Basin, filling it by the end of the Pliocene Epoch (5 to 2 MYA) as the seaways were cut off, and raising the land level above the sea. The surrounding mountains were uplifted by tectonic pressure at the same time erosion filled the valleys below. The San Joaquin quickly became a major trap for freshwater and as the water table rose, and the massive Lake Corcoran formed filling the southern and middle San Joaquin Valley with a deltaic outlet to the sea west of Sacramento. Finally, during the Pleistocene Epoch, the deeper areas became individual freshwater lakes that filled and shrank as each season progressed. The low nature of the Valley produced large swamps and meandering stream and river channels. Pleistocene-era and earlier rock strata will exhibit freshwater and marine fossils within slow-moving lithological environments, only to be hidden by the non-fossiliferous Holocene strata that has formed within the last 10,000 years.

Krazan (Nelson 2012) performed a geological analysis of the Project area in support of this MEIR. Based on a review of geological information, the geological subgrade of the Planning Area is entirely alluvial consisting of gravels, sands and clays.

SSJVIC Literature Review

Background information associated with cultural resources was derived from an extensive record search conducted at the Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center (SSJVIC) in Bakersfield by FirstCarbon Solutions Senior Project Archaeologist, Carrie D. Wills. The record search was conducted over a four-day period from May 7, 2012 to May 10, 2012. The record search review included examinations of existing reports, historic maps, and Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) forms for the area within the City of Fresno boundaries. As of May 2012, there were more than 50 cultural resource studies filed with the SSJVIC. Of these, there are 16 survey reports associated with block acreage. The total amount of area surveyed inside the Planning Area is approximately 358 acres or less than 0.3 percent of the total area within the Planning Area. As part of the literature review, the following files were reviewed at the SSJVIC:

- California Inventory of Historic Resources;
- California Historical Landmarks;
- California Points of Historical Interest;
- National Register of Historic Places;
- A Guide to Historic Architecture in Fresno (online site: www.HistoricFresno.org);
- California Register of Historical Resources;
- The Historic Property Data File for Fresno County as maintained by the Office of Historic Preservation, Sacramento (HRI)

One of the primary goals of the record search review was to identify previously recorded archaeological sites and archaeological analyses to determine, if possible, which parts of the Planning Area are sensitive for cultural resources. In addition, every effort was made to determine what areas within the Planning Area have environmental components (e.g., adjacent to water or vegetal resources), which would have the potential for unidentified archaeological deposits. Since the vast majority of the Planning Area is within an urbanized built environment, it is expected that the vast majority of listed cultural resources would be historic-era buildings. Table 5.5-1 provides a quantification of the known cultural resources within the Planning Area.

Table 5.5-1: Known Cultural Resources within the Planning Area, SSJVIC Records Search¹

Prehistoric Archaeological Site Count	Historic Archaeological Site Count	Historic-era Buildings and Structures	Linear Historic Resources	Isolated Artifacts	HRI Address Count
0	4	602	5	0	1916
¹ This table identifies known cultural resources in the Planning Area based on an SSJVIC records search. Additional resources, including historic-era buildings, may qualify as cultural resources.					

In addition, all on-line documents found on the City of Fresno website related to historical resources located inside the Planning Area, of which many of the documents are not included in the SSJVIC database, were reviewed.

Several historic building surveys and landscape surveys are known to have been prepared within the Planning Area but have not been filed with the SSJVIC (i.e., Bungalow Court, Hattersley-Drayton 2004; Germantown, ARG 2006; Pinedale, PRA 2007; Mid-century Modern, PRA 2008), and these sources name many buildings not currently on information center lists. Two new studies have been recently prepared since the records search was undertaken and do not yet appear within the SSJVIC database. These analyses are discussed in some detail below. Historic maps were also examined. These maps illustrated the substantial increase in development density since the 1960s.

Data from Greenwood and Associates' published archaeological report (Slawson and Kay 2012), which was focused within the Downtown area, uses an unconventional but not unprecedented technical analysis to show it was possible that the potential for buried cultural resources in any area of the Planning Area could be demonstrated through scientific means. Surveys of certain selected vacant parcels confirmed that there was moderate to high potential for impacts to buried historic archaeological deposits during future construction in those parcels, and that enough historic residues could be observed during the survey to warrant the preparation of DPR523 form sets for inclusion into the SSJVIC. For the first time within the Planning Area, Slawson and Kay demonstrated that a Moderate potential and High potential for buried archaeological resources exists within the Planning Area.

Over 300 individual properties were evaluated for their historical significance in the Downtown Area using a reconnaissance survey and intensive survey format. The historical importance of any one structure used the concepts of integrity and significance following the Historic Preservation Ordinance of the City of Fresno, National Register and California Register criteria. Based on the historical evaluation of the properties, there were 63 properties that potentially meet the criteria for designation as individual Historic resources eligible for listing on the City of Fresno Local Register of Historic Resources. Seven of the 63 properties had previously been designated to the Local Register of Historic Resources by the City. Of the 56 properties that have not been designated by the City to the Local Register of Historic Resources, 14 appear to be eligible for listing in the National Register. In addition, 50 of the 56 properties appear to be eligible for listing in the California Register. The HRG evaluation in 2011 also identified a potential Local Historic District, referenced as the "Civic

Center Historic District," with 14 contributing buildings and one non-contributing building. The "Civic Center Historic District" has not been designated by the City as a Local Historic District. However, seven of the 14 contributing buildings have been previously designated individually to the Local Register of Historic Resources by the City.

Known Prehistoric Resources

Review of documents at the SSJVIC and from on-line sources show that no previous prehistoric site or artifact has been recorded within the Planning Area, which covers approximately 106,027 acres. Although this may be a consequence of developmental disturbance, the research data shows that less than 0.3 percent of this acreage has been surveyed by a qualified archaeologist. Since prehistoric deposits are typically detected by surveying archaeologists during the planning stages of a project, the lack of recorded deposits is not surprising. Additional reviews of various historic newspaper archive websites shows that no references to a Native American discovery within the City limits has been noted in an archived newspaper, such as the Fresno Bee. This is somewhat unusual for a California city, but not unique. Review of studies prepared for development projects located within the City show that little information is provided regarding the possibility that prehistoric resources might be uncovered during construction-related earthmoving.

As shown above in the historical and geological setting of the City, except near the San Joaquin River, most parts of the City are clearly not conducive to deposition or preservation of surface prehistoric resources at the modern ground surface. Slawson and Kay (2012:34) identified that the City is located in areas that might have had good potential for archaeological deposits, and that such deposits may have been damaged by development and farming practices.

Citywide, an accurate assessment of resource sensitivity for prehistoric resources cannot be established at the present time. Based on existing data, the sensitivity for prehistoric cultural resources to be uncovered within the Planning Area is not certain because there have been a minor amount of land (approximately 0.3 percent of the Planning Area that has been surveyed. Upstream and downstream of the Planning Area, the banks of the San Joaquin River are known to contain prehistoric archaeological sites (see Byrd et al. 2009). This is because the river channel has carved a 50-70 foot deep cut into the surrounding alluvium since the end of the Pleistocene, and the banks of permanent rivers in the Central Valley of California have a much greater chance to contain buried or otherwise undiscovered prehistoric resources compared to areas subject to regular flooding.

The portion of the Planning Area that extends from the south bank of the San Joaquin River to approximately one-mile south of the River is identified as having a high sensitivity for buried prehistoric resources. Because most lands in the remainder of the Planning Area have been built upon or disturbed by farming, it is difficult to predict when prehistoric resources will be uncovered as a result of new development. Researchers have shown that when reliable water is available, prehistoric people may have lived nearby and exploit local resources. They could have built permanent villages. Based on the geological study provided in Appendix E-1, it may be possible to detect certain types of Pleistocene and Holocene ground surfaces once the disturbed horizons have been removed by earthmoving equipment during development activities. Finally, the Native

American Heritage Commission characterized the City of Fresno as being “very sensitive” for potential impacts to Native American sacred sites and prehistoric deposits.

Known Historical Resources

The City of Fresno has experienced extensive growth since the 1800s when the railroad arrived and the broad plain between the Kings and San Joaquin Rivers was hand-cleared of brush and native grasses. As agricultural commerce strengthened, most of the downtown area was transformed from little farms and railroad-supply businesses, to a burgeoning agricultural center, then to the development of Victorian style blocks with grand hotels, to more modern styles evidenced in many Classic Revival buildings.

The City of Fresno retains many of its historically significant buildings and structures through listings on various registers; local and national. Within the Planning Area there are 29 historical resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and 240 existing structures that are designated by the City on the Local Register of Historic Resources. Additionally, there are 13 Heritage Properties, which are not Historic Resources for the purposes of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance but could potentially be treated as historical resources for the purposes of CEQA at the City's discretion. (<http://www.historicfresno.org/>). According to Map Atlas – Existing Conditions Report prepared for the City of Fresno, there are three designated Local Historic Districts: the Porter Tract, the Wilson Island, and the Chandler Airfield/Fresno Municipal Airport. Since 1995, numerous historic building surveys have been undertaken by the City's Historic Preservation Division and technically qualified consultants, resulting in a potential of an additional 11 historic districts identified but not formally designated by the City on the local register as Local Historic Districts.

Unlike the analysis of prehistoric resources, a process for establishing the significance of individual buildings and historic districts was mandated by the City in 1979 in the form of a Historic Preservation Ordinance, which was updated in 1999. The Ordinance has resulted in the identification of over 2,000 older structures within the City limits, and as the City ages more historic-era properties are added to the databases each year. Many formal studies have been undertaken, especially in the last 10 years, primarily because the City recognizes the advantages of preservation.

Paleontologic/Geologic Research Results

Kenneth L. Finger, Ph.D., a micropaleontologist and Manager of Microfossil Collections at U.C.-Berkeley undertook a search of the University of California Museum of paleontology vertebrate paleontology database (Appendix D-1). Current geological maps indicate that the Planning Area consists of Quaternary alluvium with two primary surficial deposits: 1) Pleistocene non-marine and, 2) Quaternary non-marine fan deposits. The Pleistocene non-marine deposits have been more recently referred to as the Riverbank Formation, and are considered to have high potential sensitivity. The Quaternary non-marine terrace deposits consist of undifferentiated Pleistocene-Holocene alluvial sediments and is also considered to have high potential sensitivity.

Based on a database records search at the University of California Museum of Paleontology (UCMP), three Pleistocene Riverbank Formation localities (#V4401, #V65100, and #V81121) were found in surrounding Fresno County, all of which yielded elements of the Rancholabrean (late Pleistocene)

vertebrate fauna. Locality #V81121 is referred to the Riverbank Formation, whereas the other two units are unnamed. Locality #V4401 (Tranquility) accounts for 149 of the 151 specimens listed. Numerous specimens have been published, several of which are types for their species. The recovered faunal assemblage includes pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata*), rattlesnake (*Crotalus*), loon (*Gavia*), broad-footed mole (*Scapanus latimanus*), jackrabbit (*Lepus*), vole (*Microtus*), wood rat (*Neotoma*), pocket gopher (*Thomomys*), badger (*Taxidea*), grey fox (*Urocyon*), true fox (*Vulpes*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), horse (*Equus*), bison (*Bison*), elk (*Cervus*), and mule deer (*Odocoileus*). Among these are type specimens of *Clemmys marmorata*, *Scapanus latimanus*, and *Canis latrans* that have been documented in scientific publication. The UCMP database also records 12 plant localities in Fresno County, in the Pleistocene alluvial deposits of the Modesto, Riverbank, and Turlock Lake formations.

Native American Consultation

The City of Fresno consulted with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) in October 2010. A letter to the NAHC was sent by City staff requesting a sacred lands search. The NAHC identified that there were no known sacred lands that were located within the Planning Area; however, the NAHC provided a list of 11 Native American tribes to consult. The City sent letters to each of the tribes in February 2011. They followed-up with a phone call to the representative of the tribes. Appendix D-2 includes the Native American consultation information. No Native American resources were identified during the City's consultation with the tribes.

5.5.3 - Regulatory Setting

State and local laws, regulations, plans, or guidelines that are potentially applicable to the Planning Area are summarized below. The Federal Section 106 compliance process is commonly discussed within EIRs but the process holds no regulatory requirement within the City unless cultural resources listed on the National Register are adversely affected by a City-approved project. Therefore, a review of the Federal process is necessary here only to provide background. Cultural resource law and regulations associated with the CEQA process are based upon, but are statutorily distinct from, the Section 106 process.

Federal

National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) is the most concise and effective federal law dealing with historic preservation. Federal preservation law does not apply to the purpose of this analysis but a short review of the legislation is needed because the State and Local requirements have been derived from this legislation. The NHPA established guidelines to "preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our cultural heritage, and to maintain, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and a variety of individual choice." The NHPA includes regulations specifically for federal land-holding agencies, but also includes regulations (known as Section 106) which pertain to all projects that are funded, permitted, or approved by any federal agency and which have the potential to affect cultural resources. In addition, the NHPA authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to establish a National Register of Historic Places (The National

Register). The Register is an inventory of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects significant at a national, State, or local level in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. The National Register is wholly maintained by the National Park Service, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the State Office of Historic Preservation (SHPO) and grants-in-aid programs.

According to the National Park Service (NPS) and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the City is a Certified Local Government (CLG). The CLG program is a preservation partnership between local, state and national governments focused on promoting historic preservation at the grass roots level. The program is jointly administered by NPS and SHPO, with each local community working through a certification process to become recognized as a CLG. CLG's become an active partner in the Federal Historic Preservation Program and the opportunities (and funding) it provides.

State

California Register of Historical Resources

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register or CRHR) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. Important cultural resources can be listed in the California Register through a number of methods, and listing requires approval from the State Historic Resources Commission. Properties can be nominated to the California Register by local governments, private organizations, or citizens. State Historical Landmarks and National Register-listed properties gain automatic listing in the California Register. The evaluative criteria used by the California Register for determining eligibility are closely based on those developed by the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places. In order for a cultural resource to be *significant*, or in other words eligible, for listing in the California Register, it must reflect one or more of the following criteria (PRC 5024.1c):

- Criterion 1 (Events): Resources that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
- Criterion 2 (Persons): Resources that are associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.
- Criterion 3 (Architecture): Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values.
- Criterion 4 (Information Potential): Resources or sites that have yielded or have the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

California Environmental Quality Act

CEQA requires that public agencies assess the effects on historical resources of public or private projects that the agencies finance or approve. Historical resources are defined as buildings, sites,

structures, objects, areas, places, records, or manuscripts that the lead agency determines to have historical significance, including architectural, archaeological, cultural, or scientific significance.

CEQA requires that if a project results in an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, alternative plans or mitigation measures must be considered. However, only significant historical resources need to be addressed. Therefore, before the assessment of effects or development of mitigation measures, the significance of cultural resources must be determined. The steps that are normally taken in a cultural resources investigation for CEQA compliance are as follows:

1. Identify potential historical resources.
2. Evaluate the eligibility of historical resources.
3. Evaluate the effects of the project on all eligible historical resources.

In addition, properties that are listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP are considered eligible for listing in the CRHR and thus are significant historical resources for the purposes of CEQA (PRC Section 5024.1[d][1]).

According to CEQA, a project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource may have a significant impact on the environment (State CEQA Guidelines 15064.5[b]). CEQA also states that a substantial adverse change in the significance of a resource means the physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of an historical resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of the resource would be materially impaired. Actions that would materially impair the significance of a historical resource are any actions that would demolish or materially and adversely alter the physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance and qualify or justify its eligibility for inclusion in the CRHR or in a local register or survey that meet the requirements of PRC Sections 5020.1(k) and 5024.1(g).

Significant Historical Resources under CEQA Guidelines

In completing an analysis of a project under CEQA, it must first be determined if the project site possesses a historical resource. A site may qualify as a historical resource if it falls within at least one of four categories listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a). The four categories are:

1. A resource listed in, or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission, for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (Pub. Res. Code Section 5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4850 et seq.).
2. A resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in Section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or identified as significant in an historical resource survey meeting the requirements of section 5024.1 (g) of the Public Resources Code, shall be presumed to be historically or culturally significant. Public agencies must treat any such resource as significant unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant.

3. Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California may be considered to be an historical resource, provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record. Generally, a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be "historically significant" if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources (Pub. Res. Code SS5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4852).

These conditions are related to the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the CRHR (PRC Sections 5020.1[k], 5024.1, 5024.1[g]). A cultural resource may be eligible for inclusion in the CRHR if it:

- Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
- Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
- Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction; represents the work of an important creative individual; or possesses high artistic values; or
- Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, not included in a local register of historical resources (pursuant to section 5020.1(k) of the Pub. Resources Code), or identified in an historical resources survey (meeting the criteria in section 5024.1(g) of the Pub. Resources Code) does not preclude a lead agency from determining that the resource may be an historical resource as defined in Pub. Resources Code sections 5020.1(j) or 5024.1.

A lead agency must consider a resource that has been listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register (Category 1) as an historical resource for CEQA purposes. In general, a resource that meets any of the other three criteria listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a) is also considered to be a historical resource unless "the preponderance of evidence demonstrates" that the resource is not historically or culturally significant."

State Health and Safety Code

The discovery of human remains is regulated according to California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, which states, "If human remains are encountered, no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. The County Coroner must be notified to the find immediately. If the remains are determined to be prehistoric, the Coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), which will determine and notify Most Likely Descendant (MLD). With the permission of the landowner or his or her authorized representative, the MLD may inspect the site of the discovery. The MLD shall complete the inspection within 24 hours of notification by the NAHC. The MLD may

recommend scientific removal and nondestructive analysis of human remains and items associated with Native American burials.”

California Government Code 65352.3-5: Local Government-Tribal Consultation

California Government Code Sections 65092, 65351, 65352, 65352.3, and 65352.4, formally known as Senate Bill (SB) 18, regulate the consultation with California Native American tribes having traditional lands located within the jurisdiction of applicable cities and counties. The intent of the underlying legislation was to provide all California Native American tribes that are on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission, an opportunity to consult with specific local governments for the purpose of preserving and protecting their sacred places. Such consultations apply to the preparation, adoption and amendment of general plans.

City of Fresno

Historic Preservation Ordinance

The City of Fresno has established a Historic Preservation Commission and a Local Register of Historic Resources (Fresno Municipal Code, Chapter 12, Article 16). First established in 1979, the Ordinance was last updated in 1999. The Ordinance is used to provide local levels of control over the historical aesthetics of cultural resources within the City, and to ensure that the potential impact to locally significant historical resources that may be the subject of redevelopment are given reasonable consideration. The purpose of the Ordinance is to:

...continue to preserve, promote and improve the historic resources and districts of the City of Fresno for educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public; to continue to protect and review changes to these resources and districts which have a distinctive character or a special historic, architectural, aesthetic or cultural value to this city, state and nation; to continue to safeguard the heritage of this city by preserving and regulating its historic buildings, structures, objects, sites and districts which reflect elements of the city’s historic, cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history; to continue to preserve and enhance the environmental quality and safety of these landmarks and districts; to continue to establish, stabilize and improve property values and to foster economic development. (Article 16 Section 12-1602(a).)

The Ordinance provides legislative mechanisms to protect certain historical resources. Local registers of identified historical resources are known, including:

- 1. Heritage Properties.** These are defined as a resource which is worthy of preservation because of its historical, architectural or aesthetic merit but which is not proposed for and is not designated as an Historic Resource under the ordinance.
- 2. Historic Resources.** These are defined as any building, structure, object or site that has been in existence more than fifty years and possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of City history, or is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, or embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type,

period or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values; or has yielded, or may be likely to yield, important information in prehistory or history; and has been designated as such by the Council pursuant to the provisions of the Ordinance.

- 3. Local Historic Districts.** These are defined as any finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way or any geographically definable area which possesses a significant concentration, linkage or continuity of sites, buildings, structures or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. The Local Historic District must be significant as well as identifiable and it must meet Local Register Criteria for listing on that Register. Contributors to Historic Districts are defined as any Historic Resource that contributes to the significance of the specific Local Historic District or a proposed National Register Historic District under the criteria set forth in the Ordinance.
- 4. National Register Historic Districts,** which shall mean any finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way or any geographically definable area which possesses a significant concentration, linkage or continuity of sites, buildings, structures or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. A National Register Historic District must be significant as well as identifiable and it must meet National Register Criteria for listing on that Register. Contributors to a National Register Historic District are defined as any individual Historic Resource which contributes to the significance of a National Register Historic District under the criteria set forth in the Ordinance.

Certified Local Government

The Certified Local Government (CLG) Program is administered by the State Historic Preservation Office (OHP). When a Lead Agency becomes a CLG it agrees to carry out the intent of and serve as a local steward of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. In meeting those standards, OHP serves as an advisor. The use of the National Register/California Register criteria and the Secretary of the Interior Standards integrates local, state, and federal levels of review. It brings clarity to the question of what resources are significant when it comes to CEQA and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Adopting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards will allow the use of categorical exemptions under CEQA, and likely result of findings of no adverse effect under Section 106. The use of these criteria and standards make environmental review faster, more efficient, and reduces costs and delays. The City has been certified as a CLG since September 1996.

Local Policies

Following are the objectives and policies related to cultural resources from the existing City of Fresno 2025 General Plan.

G-10. Objective: Foster community pride, attract visitors and tourists to distinctive areas, provide recreational opportunities, enhance educational opportunities, and augment the body of scientific and historic knowledge through identification, appropriate recognition, and promotion of historic and cultural resources.

G-10-b. Policy: Historic structures, districts, sites, and landscape features shall be considered as those which:

- Represent past eras, events, and persons important in history.
- Provide significant examples of architectural styles of the past or are landmarks in the history of architecture.
- Are unique and irreplaceable assets to the city and its neighborhoods or provide examples of the physical surroundings in which past generations lived, for this and future generations.
- Designated historic districts shall be “living” examples of maintaining quality and continuity of historic resource material and the overall character of the neighborhood.

G-10-c. Policy: Unique prehistoric resource sites shall be considered as those archaeological and paleontological/geological sites which:

- Contain information needed to answer important scientific research questions.
- Have special quality or unique features, such as being the oldest, largest, or most complete example of a particular type of site or are directly associated with a scientifically recognized prehistoric or historic event or person.

G-11. Objective: Safeguard Fresno’s heritage by preserving resources which reflect important cultural, social, economic, and architectural features so that community residents will have a foundation upon which to measure and direct physical change.

G-11-d. Policy: Prehistoric resources (those containing archaeological and paleontological/geological material) shall be protected.

G-11-e Policy: If the site of a proposed development or public works project is found to contain unique prehistoric (archaeological or paleontological/geological) resources, and it can be demonstrated that the project will cause damage to these resources, reasonable efforts shall be made to permit any or all of the resource to be scientifically removed, or it shall be preserved in situ (left in an undisturbed state).

5.5.4 - Thresholds of Significance

CEQA Thresholds

In accordance with CEQA, the effects of a project are evaluated to determine if they will result in significant adverse impact on the environment. The criteria used to determine the significance of an impact to cultural resources are based on the Environmental Checklist in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines and identified below. Accordingly, cultural resources impacts resulting from the proposed project are considered significant if the project would:

- a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5? (See Historical Resource, Impact CUL-1.)

- b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5? (See Archaeological Resource, Impact CUL-2.)
- c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? (See Paleontological Resource or Geologic Feature, Impact CUL-3.)
- d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? (See Human Remains, Impact CUL-4.)

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 defines “substantial adverse change” as physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of an historical resource would be materially impaired. CEQA Section 15064.5(b)(2) defines “materially impaired” for purposes of the definition of substantial adverse change as follows:

The significance of an historical resource is materially impaired when a project:

- a) demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that conveys its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for, inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources; or
- b) demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources pursuant to PRC Section 5020.1(k) or its identification in an historical resource survey meeting the requirements of PRC Section 5024.1(g), unless the public agency reviewing the effects of the project establishes by a preponderance of evidence that the resource is not historically or culturally significant; or
- c) demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources by a lead agency for the purposes of CEQA.

5.5.5 - Impact Analysis, Mitigation Measures, and Level of Significance After Mitigation

Historical Resources

Impact CUL-1	The project could cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5?
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Project Specific Impact Analysis

Known historical resources are located primarily in Downtown Fresno because this is the area where development of the city began in the mid-1800s. These known resources meet the definition of historical resource under CEQA Section 15064.5(a). As discussed previously, there are 29 historical resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places, 31 historical resources listed on the California Register of Historic Resources, four State Historic Landmarks, and 240 existing structures

that are on the Local Register of Historic Places. There are also 13 Heritage Properties, which are not Historic Resources for the purposes of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance but could potentially be treated as historical resources for the purposes of CEQA at the City's discretion. In addition to the individual resources, there are three designated Local Historic Districts within the Planning Area. As additional surveys for potential historical resources are prepared, such as the surveys that were prepared for the Fulton Corridor Specific Plan in Downtown Fresno, additional resources may be added to the various lists. Many areas of Downtown, as well as other locations within the Planning Area, have not been surveyed. As a result, only a portion of the resources in the Planning Area are known.

As land uses are built out in accordance with the General Plan and Development Code Update, the growth that would occur within the Planning Area would include infill development and buildout of rural, agricultural, and undeveloped areas. As the density and intensity increases in the existing urban areas, there is a possibility that the new development could result in demolition or substantial alterations of historical or potentially historical buildings and structures. In addition to land use development, infrastructure and other public works improvements could result in demolition or substantial alterations of historical resources.

To reduce the potential impacts on historical resources, there are federal, state, and local regulations. These regulations are discussed in Section 5.5.5 in this Draft MEIR. The City of Fresno Historic Preservation Ordinance provides a process to preserve, promote, and improve the Historic Resources and Historic Districts within its jurisdiction. In addition to the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the General Plan Update includes the following objectives and policies to preserve historic resources.

Objective HCR-1: Maintain a comprehensive, citywide preservation program to identify, protect and assist in the preservation of Fresno's historic and cultural resources.

Policy HCR-1-c: Historic Preservation Ordinance. Maintain the provisions of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, as may be amended, and enforce the provisions as appropriate.

Objective HCR-2: Identify and preserve Fresno's historic and cultural resources which reflect important cultural, social, economic and architectural features so that community residents will have a foundation upon which to measure and direct physical change.

Policy HCR-2-a: Identification and Designation of Historic Properties. City staff and the Historic Preservation Commission shall work in tandem to identify potential historic resources and districts and to prepare nomination forms for Fresno's Local Register of Historic Resources. Historic resources may include not only buildings but also structures, objects and sites, as well as cultural and historic landscapes and traditional cultural properties (as defined by the National Park Service) – examples include farm complexes, canal systems, signage, gardens, infrastructure such as lighting and street furniture, and landscaped boulevards. As appropriate, resources may be forwarded to the State Historical Resources Commission for consideration for the California Register of Historical Resources and/or the National Register of Historic Places.

Policy HCR-2-b: Historic Surveys. Prepare historic surveys according to California Office of Historic Preservation protocols, as funding is available. Prioritize the survey of resources located on parcels within the Bus Rapid Transit corridors slated for development and intensification.

Policy HCR-2-c: Project Development. Prior to project approval, a subject parcel and its Area of Potential Effects (APE), without benefit of a prior historic survey, will be evaluated and reviewed for the potential for historical and/or cultural resources by a professional who meets the Secretary of Interior's Qualifications. Survey costs shall be the responsibility of the project developer.

Policy HCR-2-f: Demolition Review. Require that preservation staff review all demolition permits to ascertain whether or not a resource scheduled for demolition is potentially eligible for listing on the Local Register of Historic Resources. Potential resources that appear to meet the threshold for individual eligibility will be reviewed by the City's Historic Preservation Commission and referred as appropriate to the City Council for consideration and a final determination before demolition may be approved.

Policy HCR-2-g: City-owned Resources. Maintain all City-owned historic and cultural resources in a manner that is consistent with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, as appropriate.

Objective HCR-3: Promote a "New City Beautiful" ethos by linking historic preservation, public art, and planning principles for complete neighborhoods with green building and technology.

Policy HCR-3-c: Context Sensitive Design. Work with the development and planning communities to ensure that infill development is context sensitive in its design, massing, set-backs, color, and architectural detailing.

The City's Historic Preservation Ordinance and the above objectives and policies are aimed at preserving publicly and privately owned historic resources. These existing and proposed regulations provide the maintenance of the City's historic preservation program, the identification of resources, the evaluation of resources by qualified professionals, and the treatment of resources in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

The implementation of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and the above objectives and policies would reduce the potential impacts on historical resources. However, in some instances, historical resources may need to be demolished due to health and safety reasons. In addition, modifications to historical resources may be proposed and as discussed in the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties would need to be implemented. However, after the procedures identified in the Historic Preservation Ordinance are followed and all feasible mitigation measures are imposed, potential significant impacts to an historic resource could remain. Since the Historic Preservation Ordinance or the objectives or policies identified above do not prevent the City from approving a project posing a significant impact to an historical resource, the potential impact is considered significant.

In addition to known historical resources, development in accordance with the General Plan and Development Code Update could result in potential impacts to unknown resources that are located below the ground surface. Based on data from the Greenwood and Associates' archaeological report for the Fulton Corridor Specific Plan and Downtown Neighborhoods Community Plan project, there is a moderate to high potential for buried historic deposits in the Downtown Fresno area. Therefore, during grading and construction activities associated with future developments in accordance with the General Plan and Development Code Update, potential impacts to historic deposits could be significant.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Future development in areas outside the Planning Area as well as other cumulative development, such as the High Speed Rail, could result in impacts to known and unknown historical resources. These resources could be buildings in adjoining jurisdictions, such as the counties of Fresno and Madera, and the City of Clovis. Current regulations to preserve historical resources are expected to reduce potential impacts to known resources. Cities or counties could implement all feasible measures to reduce impacts to known historical resources; however, the impacts may remain significant. In addition, construction activities could result in potential significant impacts to unknown buried historical resources. Development within the Planning Area as well as outside the Planning Area could result in significant impacts to historical resources. Since the proposed General Plan and Development Code Update could result in significant impacts to historical resources, the project's contribution to cumulative impacts would be cumulatively considerable and therefore cumulatively significant.

Mitigation Measures

Project Specific

MM CUL-1 If previously unknown resources are encountered before or during grading activities, construction shall stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and a qualified historical resources specialist shall be consulted to determine whether the resource requires further study. The qualified historical resources specialist shall make recommendations to the City on the measures that shall be implemented to protect the discovered resources, including but not limited to excavation of the finds and evaluation of the finds in accordance with Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines and the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance.

If the resources are determined to be unique historical resources as defined under Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines, measures shall be identified by the monitor and recommended to the Lead Agency. Appropriate measures for significant resources could include avoidance or capping, incorporation of the site in green space, parks, or open space, or data recovery excavations of the finds.

No further grading shall occur in the area of the discovery until the Lead Agency approves the measures to protect these resources. Any historical artifacts recovered as a result of mitigation shall be provided to a City-approved institution or person who is capable of providing long-term preservation to allow future scientific study.

Cumulative

Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 is required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Project Specific

Potentially significant impact.

Cumulative

Potentially significant impact.

Archaeological Resource

Impact CUL-2	The project could cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?
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Project Specific Impact Analysis

Prehistoric archaeological resources are those cultural resources deposited before Europeans established a Franciscan Mission in California (1769). These resources include any deposits, features or isolated artifacts. Historical archaeological resources are discussed in Impact CUL-1 above. Under PRC 21083.2(h), prehistoric archaeological resources can be divided into two classes, unique and non-unique. Unique resources must be treated as if they are significant and avoidance of those resources is the first choice, while non-unique resources do not meet criteria in 21083.2(g) and therefore need not be avoided under CEQA Guidelines. Based on the data sources reviewed for the Planning Area and identified above in Section 5.5.3 of this Draft MEIR, there have been no prehistoric archaeological resources found within the Planning Area. Since the banks of the San Joaquin River has yielded prehistoric archaeological resources upstream and downstream of the Planning Area, grading and construction activities within previously undisturbed soils within the vicinity of the San Joaquin River could result in significant impact to unknown resources. In addition, given the limited area within the Planning Area that has been surveyed by a professional archaeologist (0.3 percent of the Planning Area), the prehistoric archaeological sensitivity of the majority of the Planning Area is uncertain. Due to the nominal amount of prehistoric archaeological information within the majority of the Planning Area, the potential to impact prehistoric archaeological resources during grading and construction activities within previously undisturbed soils is considered significant.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Due to the nominal amount of prehistoric archaeological information in the vicinity of the Planning Area, future development in areas outside the Planning Area as well as other cumulative development, such as the High Speed Rail, could result in impacts to unknown prehistoric archaeological resources during excavation and/or construction activities. These potential impacts from cumulative development could be significant. Since future development within the Planning Area could result in significant impacts to unknown prehistoric archaeological resources, the project's contribution to cumulative impacts would be cumulatively considerable and therefore cumulatively significant.

Mitigation Measures

Project Specific

MM CUL-2 Subsequent to a preliminary City review of the project grading plans, if there is evidence that a project will include excavation or construction activities within previously undisturbed soils, a field survey and literature search for prehistoric archaeological resources shall be conducted. The following procedures shall be followed.

If prehistoric resources are not found during either the field survey or literature search, excavation and/or construction activities can commence. In the event that buried prehistoric archaeological resources are discovered during excavation and/or construction activities, construction shall stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and a qualified archaeologist shall be consulted to determine whether the resource requires further study. The qualified archaeologist shall make recommendations to the City on the measures that shall be implemented to protect the discovered resources, including but not limited to excavation of the finds and evaluation of the finds in accordance with Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines. If the resources are determined to be unique prehistoric archaeological resources as defined under Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines, mitigation measures shall be identified by the monitor and recommended to the Lead Agency. Appropriate measures for significant resources could include avoidance or capping, incorporation of the site in green space, parks, or open space, or data recovery excavations of the finds. No further grading shall occur in the area of the discovery until the Lead Agency approves the measures to protect these resources. Any prehistoric archaeological artifacts recovered as a result of mitigation shall be provided to a City-approved institution or person who is capable of providing long-term preservation to allow future scientific study.

If prehistoric resources are found during the field survey or literature review, the resources shall be inventoried using appropriate State record forms and submit the forms to the Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center. The resources shall be evaluated for significance. If the resources are found to be significant, measures shall be identified by the qualified archaeologist. Similar to above, appropriate mitigation measures for significant resources could include avoidance or capping, incorporation of the site in green space, parks, or open space, or data recovery excavations of the finds. In addition, appropriate mitigation for excavation and construction activities in the vicinity of the resources found during the field survey or literature review shall include an archaeological monitor. The monitoring period shall be determined by the qualified archaeologist. If additional prehistoric archaeological resources are found during excavation and/or construction activities, the procedure identified above for the discovery of unknown resources shall be followed.

Cumulative

Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-2 is required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Project Specific

Less than significant impact.

Cumulative

Less than significant impact.

Unique Paleontological Resource / Site or Unique Geologic Feature

Impact CUL-3	The project could directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature.
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Project Specific Impact Analysis

Based on a review of geologic maps of the Planning Area, there are two primary surficial deposits: 1) Pleistocene non-marine and 2) Quaternary non-marine fan deposits. The Pleistocene non-marine deposits are considered to have a high potential sensitivity. The Quaternary non-marine deposits consist of Pleistocene-Holocene alluvial sediments. Since these deposits include Pleistocene sediments, they are also considered to have a high potential for sensitivity. Therefore, excavation and/or construction activities within the Planning Area that are associated with the General Plan and Development Code Update have the potential to impact paleontological/geological resources during excavation and construction activities within previously undisturbed soils. Although many areas have been previously disturbed by farming activities or previous structural development, the project could include future development that will require excavations or construction within previously undisturbed soils. The potential to impact paleontological/geological resources is considered significant.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Future development in areas outside the Planning Area as well as other cumulative development, such as the High Speed Rail, could result in impacts to paleontological/geological resources during excavation and/or construction activities within previously undisturbed soils. These potential impacts from cumulative development could be significant. Since future development within the Planning Area could result in significant impacts to paleontological/geological resources, the project's contribution to cumulative impacts would be cumulatively considerable and therefore cumulatively significant.

Mitigation Measures

Project Specific

MM CUL-3 Subsequent to a preliminary City review of the project grading plans, if there is evidence that a project will include excavation or construction activities within previously undisturbed soils, a field survey and literature search for unique

paleontological/geological resources shall be conducted. The following procedures shall be followed:

If unique paleontological/geological resources are not found during either the field survey or literature search, excavation and/or construction activities can commence. In the event that unique paleontological/geological resources are discovered during excavation and/or construction activities, construction shall stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and a qualified paleontologist shall be consulted to determine whether the resource requires further study. The qualified paleontologist shall make recommendations to the City on the measures that shall be implemented to protect the discovered resources, including but not limited to, excavation of the finds and evaluation of the finds. If the resources are determined to be significant, mitigation measures shall be identified by the monitor and recommended to the Lead Agency. Appropriate mitigation measures for significant resources could include avoidance or capping, incorporation of the site in green space, parks, or open space, or data recovery excavations of the finds. No further grading shall occur in the area of the discovery until the Lead Agency approves the measures to protect these resources. Any paleontological/geological resources recovered as a result of mitigation shall be provided to a City-approved institution or person who is capable of providing long-term preservation to allow future scientific study.

If unique paleontological/geological resources are found during the field survey or literature review, the resources shall be inventoried and evaluated for significance. If the resources are found to be significant, mitigation measures shall be identified by the qualified paleontologist. Similar to above, appropriate mitigation measures for significant resources could include avoidance or capping, incorporation of the site in green space, parks, or open space, or data recovery excavations of the finds. In addition, appropriate mitigation for excavation and construction activities in the vicinity of the resources found during the field survey or literature review shall include a paleontological monitor. The monitoring period shall be determined by the qualified paleontologist. If additional paleontological/geological resources are found during excavation and/or construction activities, the procedure identified above for the discovery of unknown resources shall be followed.

Cumulative

Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-3 is required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Project Specific

Less than significant impact.

Cumulative

Less than significant impact.

Human Remains

Impact CUL-4 **The project could disturb human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.**

Project Specific Impact Analysis

There is currently no evidence that the Planning Area contains prehistoric cemeteries or Native American cemeteries, however, various cemeteries are located throughout the Planning Area. The General Plan and Development Code Update identifies these cemeteries as Public Facilities on the Land Use Map. Future development within the Planning Area would not impact existing cemeteries. Although there is no record of isolated human remains or unknown cemeteries, there is always a possibility that ground-disturbing activities associated with future development may uncover previously unknown buried human remains. In the event that human remains are encountered, the potential impact is considered significant.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Although no known prehistoric or Native American human remains have been identified within or in the vicinity of the Planning Area, there is a possibility that ground-disturbing activities associated with cumulative development may uncover previously unknown buried human remains. The uncovering of human remains is considered a significant impact. Since, there is a possibility for the project to uncover previously unknown buried human remains, the project's contribution to cumulative impacts on human remains would be cumulatively considerable and therefore cumulatively significant.

Mitigation Measures

Project Specific

MM CUL-4 In the event that human remains are unearthed during excavation and grading activities of any future development project, all activity shall cease immediately. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code (HSC) Section 7050.5, no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made the necessary findings as to origin and disposition pursuant to PRC Section 5097.98(a). If the remains are determined to be of Native American descent, the coroner shall within 24 hours notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). The NAHC shall then contact the most likely descendent of the deceased Native American, who shall then serve as the consultant on how to proceed with the remains. Pursuant to PRC Section 5097.98(b), upon the discovery of Native American remains, the landowner shall ensure that the immediate vicinity, according to generally accepted cultural or archaeological standards or practices, where the Native American human remains are located is not damaged or disturbed by further development activity until the landowner has discussed and conferred with the most likely descendants regarding their recommendations, if applicable, taking into account the possibility of multiple human remains. The landowner shall discuss and confer with the descendants all reasonable options regarding the descendants' preferences for treatment.

Cumulative

Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-4 is required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Project Specific

Less than significant impact.

Cumulative

Less than significant impact.

