This section of the EIR analyzes the potential impacts of the proposed West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan (Specific Plan) on the surrounding transportation system including roadways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and transit services. An evaluation of emergency access and design features is also provided. This section is based on the Technical Memorandum for the Specific Plan of the West Area – CEQA Impacts and Mitigations that was completed for the project (Kittelson & Associates, Inc., July 2020), which is included in **Appendix G**.

Comments were received during the public review period or scoping meeting for the Notice of Preparation regarding this topic from the following: City of Fresno Department of Transportation (July 29, 2019), Forgotten Fresno (July 17, 2019), San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (July 15, 2019), Carl and Lydia Franklin (August 2, 2019), Cathy Caples (August 1, 2019), and Patricia and Clifford Upton (July 24, 2019). Each of the comments related to this topic are addressed within this section. Full comments received are included in **Appendix A**.

3.14.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

REGIONAL SETTING AND LOCATION

The West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan (also-known-as "Specific Plan", "West Area") encompasses approximately 7,077 acres (or a little more than 11 square miles) in the City of Fresno city limits and unincorporated Fresno County. The footprint of the Specific Plan is referred to as the "Plan Area." Of the eleven square miles within the Plan Area, 6.9 square miles are in the city limits and 4.1 square miles are in the growth area. The growth area is land outside the city limits but within the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI) boundary, which is the adopted limit for future growth.

The Plan Area is triangular in shape and located west of State Route 99 (SR-99). It is bounded on the south by West Clinton Avenue, and to the west by Grantland and Garfield Avenues. The Plan Area includes the southwest portion of Highway City adjacent to SR-99.

ROADWAY NETWORK

The existing roadway network in the Plan Area is comprised of a street system made up of freeways, super arterials, arterial roads, and collector roads. Roadway classifications listed are from the City of Fresno General Plan.

Freeway

State Route 99 (SR-99) is a six-lane freeway with a posted speed limit of 65 miles per hour (MPH). The northwest-southeast freeway connects most major cities in Central California including Chico, Bakersfield, Selma, Sacramento, Modesto, and Fresno. It also provides access to the greater freeway network with direct connections to State Route 180 and State Route 41.

The Plan Area is generally bordered by SR-99 on the northeast. The average daily traffic on SR-99 near the Plan Area ranges between approximately 82,000 and 112,000 vehicles per day. Bicyclists and pedestrians are not allowed on this facility.

Super Arterial

Grantland Avenue is a two-lane to four-lane north-south roadway with a posted speed limit of 40 MPH near the Plan Area. The facility extents from SR-99 on the north to Kearny Boulevard on the south. The facility is a four-lane roadway with a median north of Shaw Avenue, and a two-lane roadway south of Shaw Avenue. Sidewalks are limited; additional sidewalks, Class I, and Class II bikeways are planned along the roadway.

Veterans Boulevard is currently a single lane in each direction between Riverside Drive and N. Hayes Avenue east of SR-99 and a six-lane stub roadway west of SR-99. However, the Veterans Boulevard Interchange and Corridor Improvement Project is currently underway which will connect these two facilities and create a six-lane super arterial in northwest Fresno connecting Herndon Avenue in the north to Shaw Avenue in the south including the construction of an interchange with SR-99.

Arterials

Polk Avenue is a two-lane north-south roadway with a posted speed limit of 35 or 40 MPH near the Plan Area. The facility extends from SR-99 on the north to Olive Avenue on the south. Sidewalks and Class II bike lanes exist intermittently and are proposed along the roadway.

Shaw Avenue is a two-lane east-west roadway with a posted speed limit of 35 to 45 MPH near the Plan Area. The facility extents from the San Joaquin River on the west to the Friant-Kern Canal on the east. Sidewalks and Class II bike lanes are proposed along the roadway.

Ashlan Avenue is a two-lane to four-lane east-west roadway with a posted speed limit of 40 to 50 MPH near the Plan Area. The facility extends from Grantland Ave on the west and becomes Watts Valley Road on the east. Sidewalks and Class II bike lanes exist intermittently and are proposed along the roadway.

Grantland Avenue north of Shaw Avenue is a two lane north-south roadway with a posted speed limit of 40 MPH in the Plan Area. North of Shaw Avenue, Grantland Avenue extends north to SR-99 near the Herndon Avenue interchange. There are no sidewalks of bicycle facilities on this roadway.

Blythe Avenue from Ashlan Avenue to Dakota Avenue is a two lane north-south roadway with a center median located along most of its length. The speed limit is posted as 40 MPH. Sidewalks are generally available along frontages that have been developed but no sidewalks are present along undeveloped parcels. Class II bicycle lane exist intermittently in both the northbound and southbound directions.

Collectors

Collectors in the Plan Area include the following:

- North-south collectors:
    - Garfield Avenue

  - Bryan Avenue
  - Hayes Avenue
  - Cornelia Avenue
  - Blythe Avenue
  - Brawley Avenue
  - Valentine Avenue
  - Marks Avenue
- East-west collectors:
  - Bullard Avenue
  - Barstow Avenue
  - Gettysburg Avenue
  - Dakota Avenue
  - Shields Avenue
  - Clinton Avenue

Collectors are generally two-lane roadways with posted speeds of 30 to 45 MPH. Sidewalks and bike lanes are generally not present but are proposed along most collectors.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are important components of the transportation network in the Plan Area. These facilities not only offer non-vehicular opportunities for both commute and recreational trips, but also provide connections to the region's transit network.

Existing Bicycle Facilities

Bicycle facilities are defined by the following four classes[1]:

- **Class I** – Provides a completely separated facility designed for the exclusive use of bicyclists and pedestrians with crossing points minimized.
- **Class II** – Provides a restricted right-of-way designated lane for the exclusive or semi-exclusive use of bicycles with through travel by motor vehicles or pedestrians prohibited, but with vehicle parking and crossflows by pedestrians and motorists permitted.
- **Class III** – Provides a right-of-way designated by signs or permanent markings and shared with pedestrians and motorists.
- **Class IV** – Provides a restricted right-of-way designated lane for the exclusive use of bicyclists that is separated by a vertical element to provide further separation from motor vehicle traffic.

[1] As detailed in Chapter 1000 of the Highway Design Manual (Caltrans, 2015).

The City of Fresno adopted the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) in March 2017. This plan identifies existing and future planned bicycle facilities within the City's jurisdiction.

As shown in Figure 3.14-1, the following bikeways are currently present within the Plan Area and vicinity at intermittent locations on major roads:

- East-west streets with **Class II Bike Lanes:**
    - Bullard Avenue, east of Grantland Avenue
    - Barstow Avenue, west of Grantland Avenue
    - Gettysburg Avenue, east of Hayes Avenue
    - Ashlan Avenue, east of Cornelia Avenue
    - Dakota Avenue, east of Polk Avenue
    - Clinton Avenue, east of Cornelia Avenue
- North-south streets with **Class II Bike Lanes:**
    - Grantland Avenue, south of SR-99
    - Bryan Avenue, south of Gettysburg Avenue
    - Hayes Avenue, south of Shaw Avenue
    - Polk Avenue, south of Shaw Avenue
    - Cornelia Avenue, south of Gettysburg Avenue
    - Brawley Avenue, south of Dakota Avenue

Planned and Proposed Bicycle Facilities

As shown in Figure 3.14-1, the ATP includes the following planned and proposed bikeway facilities in the Plan Area:

- Streets with **Class I Bike Paths:**
    - Grantland Avenue, south of Gettysburg Avenue
    - Veteran's Boulevard, north of Gettysburg Avenue
    - Gettysburg Avenue, east of Cornelia Avenue

Class II Bike Lanes are located along all arterials and collectors. Bike lanes on Veterans Boulevard, Gettysburg Avenue, and Cornelia Avenue are identified as priority bikeways in the ATP.

Pedestrian Facilities

Pedestrian facilities are present in the Plan Area. Sidewalks are present intermittently along some major roadways. Sidewalks are proposed on most arterials and collectors. Crosswalks are present intermittently at signalized and unsignalized intersections in the Plan Area. Figure 3.14-2 shows existing and planned sidewalks in the Plan Area.

The City of Fresno adopted the 2016 Update to the ADA Transition Plan for the Right of Way (ROW) in February 2016. The ROW Transition Plan incorporates retrofitting Curb Ramps, Sidewalks, and Accessible Pedestrian Signals and replaced the 2003 Amended Curb Ramp Transition Plan.

TRANSIT FACILITIES

Fresno is primarily served by the Fresno Area Express (FAX) transit system which operates bus service and paratransit operations servicing the city. Regional connections are provided by the Fresno County Rural Transit Agency (FCRTA) and Amtrak for travel outside of the Fresno-Clovis Metropolitan Area.

Fresno Area Express (FAX)

FAX provides the principal bus service in the City of Fresno. It operates eighteen fixed routes with a fleet of over 100 buses, and Handy Ride, its paratransit operation, with a fleet of over 50 vehicles. The paratransit service, FAX Handy Ride, is a service designed to meet the transportation needs of eligible persons with disabilities who cannot functionally use the FAX fixed-route bus system. Handy Ride is a shared ride, curb-to-curb service, provided from any origin to any destination throughout the service area for any trip purpose. Handy Ride operates during the same hours and days as the FAX fixed-route bus system. The service area boundaries for the FAX Handy Ride service are generally Copper Avenue to the north, east to Willow Avenue, south to Ashlan Avenue, east to Temperance Avenue, south to Central Avenue, west to Polk Avenue, north to the Fresno County line, and east to Copper Avenue.

FAX operates two routes that directly serve the Plan Area through curbside bus stops, with additional service coming into the Plan Area in 2021. Bus service on these routes is detailed in Table 3.14-1 with the routes near the Plan Area shown in Figure 3.14-3.

TABLE 3.14-1: BUS ROUTES SERVING THE PLAN AREA

ROUTE	SERVING	DAY	TIMES		FREQUENCY
12-35	Starting at Shaw and Brawley and serving Forestiere Underground Gardens, Teague Elementary School, Inspiration Park, Central High School East, Tower District, DMV, Roeding Park, Yosemite Middle School, and Social Security Office	Week-day	6:00 AM	10:00 PM	Every 30 minutes
		Week-end	7:00 AM	7:30 PM	Every 30 minutes
39	Starting at Brawley Avenue/Shields Ave. and serving Hamilton K-8, Fresno High, Fresno City College, VA Medical Center, McLane High, Alliant University, and Fresno Yosemite International Air Terminal primarily along Clinton Ave.	Week-day	5:30 AM	10:00 PM	Every 30 minutes
		Week-end	7:30 AM	7:00 PM	Every 30 minutes
45	Along Ashlan Avenue serving Central High School East, Cooper Middle School, Blackbeard's Family Entertainment, Army Navy Reserve, and ARC Fresno Production Center	Week-day	5:45 AM	9:30 PM	Every 45 minutes
		Week-end	6:30 AM	6:30 PM	Every 45 minutes

SOURCE: FAX WEBSITE, WWW.FRESNO.GOV/FAX, ACCESSED MARCH 11, 2021, KITTELSON & ASSOCIATES, INC., 2021.

Route 12 provides local commuter and weekend service with the route originating or terminating at Shields Avenue/Brawley Avenue and San Jose Avenue/Marty Avenue intersections. Between these two origin/destinations, the route has fixed stops as it runs mostly along Brawley Avenue and Cornelia in the Plan Area, from Clinton Avenue to Shaw Avenue. Key destinations served include Central High School, Inspiration Park, and Forestriere Underground Gardens.

Route 35 provides local commuter and weekend served with the route originating or terminating in the Plan Area at Shields Avenue/Brawley Avenue and on the east side of Fresno at the intersection of Belmont Avenue/Clovis Avenue. In the Plan Area, the route provides fixed stops along Brawley and Clinton Avenues. Key destinations served by the route include the DMV, Talking Book Library, Post Office, and the Social Security Office.

Route 39 provides local commuter and weekend service with the route originating or terminating at Brawley Avenue/Shields Avenue intersection and Fresno Yosemite International Air Terminal. Between these two origin/destinations, Route 39 runs in a loop from Clinton Avenue/Marks Avenue to Brawley Avenue/Shields Avenue in the Plan Area where it has fixed stops. Key destinations served include Fresno High School, Fresno City College, Veteran's Medical Center, and Alliant University.

TRUCK FACILITIES

According to the City of Fresno Public Works Department, there are designated truck routes in the Plan Area. Existing and future truck routes are shown in Figure 3.14-4.

3.14.2 REGULATORY SETTING

Existing transportation polices, laws, and regulations that would apply to the proposed project are summarized below. This information provides a context for the impact discussion related to the project's consistency with applicable regulatory conditions and development of significance criteria for evaluating project impacts.

FEDERAL

No federal plans, policies, regulations, or laws pertaining to transportation have been determined to be applicable to this project.

STATE

Senate Bill 743

Senate Bill (SB) 743 (Steinberg, 2013) required changes to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines regarding the analysis of transportation impacts. Those proposed changes identify vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) as the most appropriate metric to evaluate a project's transportation impacts. Since the bill has gone into effect, automobile delay, as measured by "level of service" and other similar metrics, no longer constitutes a significant environmental effect under CEQA. Auto-mobility (often expressed as "level of service") may continue to be a measure for planning purposes.

In December 2018, the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) and the State Natural Resources Agency submitted updated CEQA Guidelines to the Office of Administrative Law for final approval to implement SB 743. The Office of Administrative Law approved the updated CEQA Guidelines, thus implementing SB 743 and making VMT the primary metric used to analyze

transportation impacts. Beginning July 1, 2020 local agencies are required to implement the updated guidelines.

LOCAL

Fresno Council of Governments

The Fresno Council of Governments (COG) is a voluntary association of local governments and a regional planning agency comprised of 16 member jurisdictions, including the City of Fresno. The members are represented by a Policy Board consisting of mayors of each incorporated city, and the Chairman of the County Board of Supervisors, or their designated elected official. The Fresno COG's purpose is to establish a consensus on the needs of the Fresno County area and further action plans for issues related to the Fresno County region. The current regional transportation plan, known as the Fresno County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) (2042), was adopted in 2018. The RTP addresses GHG emissions reductions and other air emissions related to transportation, with the goal of preparing for future growth in a sustainable way. The plan specifies how funding will be sourced and financed for the region's planned transportation investments, ongoing operations, and maintenance. The goals, objectives, and policies of the RTP are established to direct the courses of action that will provide efficient, integrated multimodal transportation systems to serve the mobility needs of people, including accessible pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and freight, while fostering economic prosperity and development, and minimizing mobile sources of air pollution. These goals, objectives, and policies are organized into six categories:

- General Transportation;
- Highway, Streets, and Roads;
- Mass Transportation;
- Aviation;
- Active Transportation; and
- Rail

The RTP is updated every four years. The Fresno COG is currently updating their RTP. The 2020-2022 RTP is anticipated to be adopted in June 2022.

Fresno County Congestion Management Process

In June 1990, California voters approved legislation that required Congestion Management Plans (CMP) be developed in urbanized counties to address congestion on California's highways and roads. The Fresno County Congestion Management Process (CMP) implements this requirement and its responsibilities include providing information on transportation system performance and assessing alternative strategies for alleviating congestion and improving mobility for people and goods to levels that meet State and local needs. The Fresno County CMP identifies four general objectives:

1. Optimize the transportation facilities through efficient system management;

2. Invest in strategies that reduce travel demand, improve system performance, increase safety, and provide effective incident management;
3. Reduce VMT by encouraging alternative modes of transportation and promotion of sustainable land use development; and
4. Improve public transit, extend bicycle and pedestrian systems, and promote car-sharing and bike-sharing programs to facilitate the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system in the Fresno region.

Fresno General Plan

The City of Fresno adopted the Fresno 2035 General Plan[2] in December 2014 as an update to the previous Fresno General Plan approved in 2002. It serves as the City's guide for the continued development, enhancement, and revitalization of the Fresno metropolitan area.

It is noted that the approved General Plan text was updated in order to reflect changes in applicable statutes and regulations related to VMT, as well as updating the General Plan EIR to include a current baseline for the continued implementation of the approved General Plan, and reflect changes in City planning documents that have occurred since adoption of the approved General Plan in 2014. The City did not propose any land use changes as a part of the recent General Plan changes. The following objectives and policies reflect the most recent (2021) General Plan policies and objectives.

The Fresno General Plan contains the following objectives and policies that are relevant to transportation and circulation:

MOBILITY AND TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

Objective MT-1: Create and maintain a transportation system that is safe, efficient, provides access in an equitable manner, and optimizes travel by all modes.

> **Policy MT-1-d**: Integrate Land Use and Transportation Planning. Plan for and maintain a coordinated and well-integrated land use pattern, local circulation network and transportation system that accommodates planned growth, reduces impacts on adjacent land uses, and preserves the integrity of established neighborhoods.
>
> **Policy MT-1-f**: Match Travel Demand with Transportation Facilities. Designate the types and intensities of land uses at locations such that related travel demands can be accommodated by a variety of viable transportation modes and support Complete Neighborhoods while avoiding the rerouting of excessive or incompatible traffic through local residential streets.

[2] City of Fresno General Plan 2035, December 18, 2014.

Policy MT-1-g: Complete Streets Concept Implementation. Provide transportation facilities based upon a Complete Streets concept that facilitates the balanced use of all viable travel modes (pedestrians, bicyclists, motor vehicle and transit users), meeting the transportation needs of all ages, income groups, and abilities and providing mobility for a variety of trip purposes, while also supporting other City goals.

Policy MT-1-m: Standards for Planned Bus Rapid Transit Corridors and Activity Centers. Independent of the Traffic Impact Zones identified in MT-2-I and Figure MT-4, strive to maintain the following vehicle LOS standards on major roadway segments and intersections along Bus Rapid Transit Corridors and in Activity Centers:

- LOS E or better at all times, including peak travel times, unless the City Traffic Engineer determines that maintaining this LOS would be infeasible and/or conflict with the achievement of other General Plan policies.
- Accept LOS F conditions in Activity Centers and Bus Rapid Transit Corridors only if provisions are made to improve the overall system and/or promote non-vehicular transportation and transit as part of a development project or a City-initiated project. In accepting LOS F conditions, the City Traffic Engineer may request limited analyses of operational issues at locations near Activity Centers and along Bus Rapid Transit Corridors, such as queuing or left-turn movements.
- Give priority to maintaining pedestrian service first, followed by transit service and then by vehicle LOS, where conflicts between objectives for service capacity between different transportation modes occur.
- Identify pedestrian-priority and transit-priority streets where these modes would have priority in order to apply a multi-modal priority system, as part of the General Plan implementation

Objective MT-2: Make efficient use of the City's existing and proposed transportation system and strive to ensure the planning and provision of adequate resources to operate and maintain it.

Policy MT-2-b: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled and Trips. Partner with major employers and other responsible agencies, such the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and the Fresno Council of Governments, to implement trip reduction strategies, such as eTRIP, to reduce total vehicle miles traveled and the total number of daily and peak hour vehicle trips, thereby making better use of the existing transportation system.

Policy MT-2-c: Reduce VMT through Infill Development. Provide incentives for infill development that would provide jobs and services closer to housing and multi-modal transportations corridors in order to reduce citywide vehicle miles travelled (VMT).

Policy MT-2-d: Street Redesign where Excess Capacity Exists. Evaluate opportunities to reduce right of way and/or redesign streets to support non-automobile travel modes along

streets with excess roadway capacity where adjacent land use is not expected to change over the planning period

Policy MT-2-e: Driveway and Access Consolidation. Take advantage of opportunities to consolidate driveways, access points, and curb cuts along designated major roadways when a change in development or a change in intensity occurs or when traffic operation or safety warrants

Policy MT-2-f: Optimization of Roadway Operations. Optimize roadway operations by continuing to expand the use of techniques such as the City's intelligent transportation system (ITS) to manage traffic signal timing coordination in order to improve traffic operations and increase traffic-carrying capacity, while reducing unnecessary congestion and decreasing air pollution emissions. In order to facilitate roadway optimization and as a potential revenue source for the optimization, the following strategies need to be implemented:

- Dig Once Policy. Install conduit for telecommunications use when trenching or construction occurs.
- Telecommunications Strategy. Develop a costing mechanism for allowing the use of excess conduit within the City for use by communication carriers. The Policy shall follow regulations of the California Public Utilities Commission.
- Grant Funding. Pursue grant funding to assist in construction and/or implementation of fiber-optic or other telecommunication infrastructure for additional public services such as education, economic development, reaching underserved populations, and public safety communications.

Policy MT-2-g: Transportation Demand Management and Transportation System Management. Pursue implementation of Transportation Demand Management and Transportation System Management strategies to reduce peak hour vehicle traffic and supplement the capacity of the transportation system.

Policy MT-2-i: Transportation Impact Studies. Require a Transportation Impact Study (currently named Traffic Impact Study) to assess the impacts of new development projects on existing and planned streets for projects meeting one or more of the following criteria, unless it is determined by the City Traffic Engineer that the project site and surrounding area already has appropriate multi-modal infrastructure improvements.

- When a project includes a General Plan amendment that changes the General Plan Land Use Designation.
- When the project will substantially change the off-site transportation system (auto, transit, bike or pedestrian) or connection to the system, as determined by the City Traffic Engineer.

- Transportation impact criteria are tiered based on a project's location within the City's Sphere of Influence. This is to assist with areas being incentivized for development. The four zones, as defined on Figure MT-4, are listed below. The following criteria apply:
    - Traffic Impact Zone I (TIZ-I): TIZ-I represents the Downtown Planning Area. Maintain a peak hour LOS standard of F or better for all intersections and roadway segments. A TIS will be required for all development projected to generate 200 or more peak hour new vehicle trips.
    - Traffic Impact Zone II (TIZ-II): TIZ-II generally represents areas of the City currently built up and wanting to encourage infill development. Maintain a peak hour LOS standard of E or better for all intersections and roadway segments. A TIS will be required for all development projected to generate 200 or more peak hour new vehicle trips.
    - Traffic Impact Zone III (TIZ-III): TIZ-III generally represents areas near or outside the City Limits but within the SOI as of December 31, 2012. Maintain a peak hour LOS standard of D or better for all intersections and roadway segments. A TIS will be required for all development projected to generate 100 or more peak hour new vehicle trips.
    - Traffic Impact Zone IV (TIZ-IV): TIZ-IV represents the southern employment areas within and planned by the City. Maintain a peak hour LOS standard of E or better for all intersections and roadway segments. A TIZ will be required for all development projected to generate 200 or more peak hour new vehicle trips.

Policy MT-2-l: Region-Wide Transportation Impact Fees. Continue to support the implementation of metropolitan-wide and region-wide transportation impact fees sufficient to cover the proportional share of a development's impacts and need for a comprehensive multi-modal transportation system that is not funded by other sources. Work with the Council of Fresno County Governments, transportation agencies (e.g., Caltrans, Federal Transportation Agency) and other jurisdictions in the region to develop a method for determining:

- Regional transportation impacts of new development;
- Regional highways, streets, rail, trails, public transportation, and goods movement system components, consistent with the General Plan, necessary to mitigate those impacts and serve projected demands;
- Projected full lifetime costs of the regional transportation system components, including construction, operation, and maintenance; and
- Costs covered by established funding sources.

Policy MT-2-m: Use VMT analysis for CEQA. Use Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as the criteria for evaluating transportation impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act

(CEQA), pursuant to Senate Bill 743. Level of Service (LOS) may still be used for planning purposes and implementation of Capital Improvement Projects; however, VMT shall be used for determining mitigation under CEQA beginning in July of 2020.

Objective MT-4: Establish and maintain a continuous, safe, and easily accessible bikeways system throughout the metropolitan area to reduce vehicle use, improve air quality and the quality of life, and provide public health benefits.

Policy MT-4-b: Bikeway Improvements. Establish and implement property development standards to assure that projects adjacent to designated bikeways provide adequate right-of-way and that necessary improvements are constructed to implement the planned bikeway system shown on Figure MT-2 to provide for bikeways, to the extent feasible, when existing roadways are reconstructed; and alternative bikeway alignments or routes where inadequate right-of-way is available.

Policy MT-4-d: Prioritization of Bikeway Improvements. Prioritize bikeway components that link existing separated sections of the system, or that are likely to serve the highest concentration of existing or potential cyclists, particularly in those neighborhoods with low vehicle ownership rates, or that are likely to serve destination areas with the highest demand such as schools, shopping areas, recreational and park areas, and employment centers

Objective MT-5: Establish a well-integrated network of pedestrian facilities to accommodate safe, convenient, practical, and inviting travel by walking, including for those with physical mobility and vision impairments.

Policy MT-5-a: Sidewalk Development. Pursue funding and implement standards for development of sidewalks on public streets, with priority given to meeting the needs of persons with physical and vision limitations; providing safe routes to school; completing pedestrian improvements in established neighborhoods with lower vehicle ownership rates; or providing pedestrian access to public transportation routes

Policy MT-5-b: Sidewalk Requirements. Assure adequate access for pedestrians and people with disabilities in new residential developments per adopted City policies, consistent with the California Building Code and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Policy MT-5-d: Pedestrian Safety. Minimize vehicular and pedestrian conflicts on both major and non-roadways through implementation of traffic access design and control standards addressing street intersections, median island openings and access driveways to facilitate accessibility while reducing congestion and increasing safety. Increase safety and accessibility for pedestrians with vision disabilities through the installation of Accessible Pedestrian Signals at signalized intersections

Policy MT-5-e: Traffic Management in Established Neighborhoods. Establish acceptable design and improvement standards and provide traffic planning assistance to established neighborhoods to identify practical traffic management and calming methods to enhance the pedestrian environment with costs equitably assigned to properties receiving the benefits or generating excessive vehicle traffic

Objective MT-6: Establish a network of multi-purpose pedestrian and bicycle paths, as well as limited access trails, to link residential areas to local and regional open spaces and recreation areas and urban Activity Centers in order to enhance Fresno's recreational amenities and alternative transportation options.

Policy MT-6-g: Path and Trail Development. Require all projects to incorporate planned multi-purpose path and trail development standards and corridor linkages consistent with the General Plan, applicable law and case-by-case determinations as a condition of project approval

Objective MT-8: Provide public transit options that serve existing and future concentrations of residences, employment, recreation and civic uses and are feasible, efficient, safe, and minimize environmental impacts.

Policy MT-8-a: Street Design Coordinated with Transit. Coordinate the planning, design, and construction of the major roadway network with transit operators to facilitate efficient direct transit routing throughout the Planning Area.

Policy MT-8-c: New Development Facilitating Transit. Continue to review development proposals in transportation corridors to ensure they are designed to facilitate transit. Coordinate all projects that have residential or employment densities suitable for transit services, so they are located along existing or planned transit corridors or that otherwise have the potential for transit orientation to FAX, and consider FAX's comments in decision-making

Objective MT-11: Achieve necessary capacity increasing and inter-modal connectivity enhancing improvements to the goods movement transportation system to support the growth in critical farm product and value added industries.

Policy MT-11-c: Truck Route Designations. Continue to plan and designate truck routes within the Metropolitan Area to facilitate access to and from goods production and processing areas while minimizing conflicts with other transportation priorities

The General Plan also has policies related to maintaining acceptable Levels of Service (LOS). However, LOS can no longer be used for CEQA evaluations and is, therefore, not relevant to this section which focuses on CEQA impacts. Additional analyses of the Specific Plan will be documented in another report that will detail LOS.

City of Fresno VMT Guidelines

The City of Fresno adopted their VMT guidelines on June 25, 2020[3]. This document serves as a detailed guideline for preparing VMT analysis consistent with SB 743 requirements for development projects, transportation projects, and plans. Key elements of these guidelines include:

- The County of Fresno was selected as the region for assessing VMT impacts. Therefore, all projects will compare their VMT metrics against the county averages.
- The draft guidelines recommend the following significant thresholds for land development projects in the City of Fresno:
    - 13 percent below existing regional average VMT per capita for residential projects
    - 13 percent below existing regional average VMT per employee for office projects
    - No net increase in VMT for retail projects.
- For land use plans such as specific plans and general plans, the guidelines recommend comparing the existing VMT per capita and/or VMT per employee for the region with the expected horizon year VMT per capita and/or VMT per employee for the land use plan. If there is a net increase in the applicable VMT metrics (VMT/capita and VMT/employee) under horizon year conditions, then the project will have a significant impact.

City of Fresno Active Transportation Plan

The City of Fresno Active Transportation Plan (ATP)[4] is a comprehensive guide that creates a vision for active transportation in the City of Fresno. It is an update to the City of Fresno Bicycle, Pedestrian, & Trails, Master Plan that was adopted in 2010. The ATP lays out specific goals to improve bicycle access and connectivity in Fresno. The goals include the following:

- Equitably improve the safety and perceived safety of walking and bicycling in Fresno;
- Increase walking and bicycling trips in Fresno by creating user friendly facilities;
- Improve the geographical equity of access to walking and bicycling facilities in Fresno; and
- Fill key gaps in Fresno's walking and bicycling networks.

City of Fresno ADA Transition Plan for the Right of Way (ROW)

On February 25, 2016 the City Council adopted the 2016 Update to the ADA Transition Plan for the Right of Way (ROW). The ROW Transition Plan incorporates retrofitting Curb Ramps, Sidewalks, and Accessible Pedestrian Signals and replaces the 2003 Amended Curb Ramp Transition Plan. The goal of the ADA Transition Plan for the ROW is to ensure that the City maintains accessible paths of travel in the ROW for people with disabilities.

[3] https://www.fresno.gov/darm/planning-development/plans-projects-under-review/#tab-02
[4] City of Fresno Active Transportation Plan, December 2016.

3.14.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The transportation analysis assesses how the study area's transportation system would operate with the implementation of the proposed project. The analysis includes effects that would result in significant impacts as set forth in the CEQA Guidelines.

The project's impact is not considered to be significant unless it would:

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

Significance criteria "b" is related to the implementation of VMT as the primary performance metric. The following criteria are used to assess a significant impact related to VMT consistent with the City of Fresno "CEQA Guidelines for Vehicle Miles Traveled Thresholds" dated June 25, 2020:

- A proposed (residential) project exceeding a level of 13 percent below existing regional average[5] VMT per capita may indicate a significant transportation impact.
- A similar threshold would apply to office projects (13 percent below existing regional average VMT per employee).
- VMT generated by retail projects would indicate a significant impact for any net increase in total VMT.
- Section 6 of the VMT guidelines includes Significance Criteria for Specific Plans: For land use plans such as the Specific Plan for the West Area, the recommended methodology for conducting VMT assessments is to compare the existing VMT per capita and/or VMT per employee for the region with the expected horizon year VMT per capita and/or VMT per employee for the land use plan. If there is a net increase in the VMT metric under horizon year conditions, then the project will have a significant impact.

[5] The City of Fresno defines the region for applying these thresholds as Fresno County.

IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact 3.14-1: Implementation of the Specific Plan would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. (Less than Significant)

Development associated with the proposed Plan would increase the amount of multimodal transportation activity which would require the improvement and expansion of the local transportation network in the Plan Area to serve the associated travel demand. The West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan includes the following guiding principles related to transit, bicycle, and pedestrian travel:

- Accommodate and improve roadway access, connectivity and mobility among all modes of transportation, and prioritize roadway widening where bottlenecks exist.
- Accommodate planned transit services in the West Area by locating routes near or adjacent to the community centers, schools, parks, and retail centers.
- Provide a complete, safe, and well-maintained sidewalk network from residential neighborhoods to commercial centers, schools, parks, and community centers.
- Provide a complete, safe, and well-maintained roadway network that allows for efficient and smooth access from the West Area to other sections of the City and region.

These guiding principles are consistent with General Plan policies which detail how the circulation system will be improved to meet the needs of all users. Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would promote the use of alternative transportation modes by accelerating development in the Plan Area, which would in turn require development of a circulation system that addresses all users. Development of the Specific Plan would be required to be consistent with the following General Plan policies that address transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian travel:

- **Policy MT-1-g**: Complete Streets Concept Implementation.
    - Requires transportation facilities be based upon a Complete Streets concept that facilitates the balanced use of all viable travel modes (pedestrians, bicyclists, motor vehicle and transit users), meeting the transportation needs of all ages, income groups, and abilities and providing mobility for a variety of trip purposes, while also supporting other City goals
- **Policy MT-1-m**: Standards for Planned Bus Rapid Transit Corridors and Activity Centers.
    - Requires intersections and roadways along transit corridor and in activity centers maintain acceptable operations to facilitate transit movement.
- **Policy MT-2-d**: Street Redesign where Excess Capacity Exists.
    - Requires roadways with extra capacity to be modified to “right size” the roadway.
- **Policy MT-4-b**: Bikeway Improvements.
    - Requires new development to set aside an adequate amount of right of way to construct bicycle facilities.
- **Policy MT-4-d**: Prioritization of Bikeway Improvements.

  - Prioritizes connections between existing facilities to complete a comprehensive bicycle network.
- **Policy MT-5-a**: Sidewalk Development.
  - Establishes a goal of developing sidewalks to improve connectivity to transit
- **Policy MT-5-b**: Sidewalk Requirements.
  - Requires sidewalks to be constricted to the latest standards
- **Policy MT-6-g**: Path and Trail Development.
  - Requires planned multi use paths be constructed along with new development
- **Policy MT-8-a**: Street Design Coordinated with Transit.
  - Requires coordination with roadway design and transit to ensure an efficient public transportation system
- **Policy MT-8-c**: New Development Facilitating Transit.
  - Requires new development to facilitate transit.

Additionally, the Specific Plan has a strong emphasis on Complete Neighborhoods, which is a tool to achieve environmental justice. The concept of Complete Neighborhoods is to enable residents of Fresno to live in communities with convenient access to services, employment, and recreation within walking distance. It provides residents with amenities that make their neighborhood mostly self-sufficient and interconnected. According to the Specific Plan, planning for Complete Neighborhoods will help support the provision of resources to neighborhoods where they are currently lacking or are under-resourced. Section 5.4 of the Specific Plan includes a series of maps which show a reasonable walkshed from existing and planned schools; bus stops; commercial uses; and existing and planned parks.

Since the guiding principles of the Specific Plan support the policies of the General Plan, no conflict with policies, plans, and programs for alternative transportation would occur from future development and redevelopment under the proposed Specific Plan. Therefore, the impact would be ***less than significant*** and no mitigation measures would be required.

Impact 3.14-2: Implementation of the Specific Plan would not conflict with or be inconsistent with CEQA Guideline section 15064.3, subdivision (b). (Less Than Significant with Mitigation)

The Fresno COG Activity Based travel demand model was used to estimate existing and horizon year average VMT per capita and VMT per employee for the traffic analysis zones (TAZs) that comprise the Specific Plan Area and Fresno County. The number of dwelling units and employment for the Specific Plan Area were calculated at buildout and provided to Fresno COG. Fresno COG used the buildout numbers to run a population synthesizer to generate land use input files for running the activity-based model. These land use input files were then run through the activity-based model to develop horizon year (2035) forecasts with the buildout of the Specific Plan Area.

Table 3.14-2 presents VMT per capita and VMT per employee findings for existing conditions in Fresno County and for the Plan Area at buildout in the horizon year. Based on the City of Fresno VMT Guidelines, a specific plan would have a significant impact if the VMT per capita and VMT per

employee of the Specific Plan Area exceeded the same metrics for existing conditions in all of Fresno County.

TABLE 3.14-2: VMT PER CAPITA AND VMT PER EMPLOYEE - EXISTING AND HORIZON YEAR CONDITIONS

TRIP TYPES	*FRESNO COUNTY (2019)*	*SPECIFIC PLAN AREA (2035)*	*DIFFERENCE (%)*
VMT Per Capita	16.1	8.7	-7.4 (46%)
VMT Per Employee	25.6	13.2	-12.4 (48%)

NOTE: THESE NUMBERS ARE BASED ON FRESNO COG'S ACTIVITY-BASED TRAVEL DEMAND MODEL, AND THE LAND USE INPUTS OBTAINED FOR HORIZON YEAR 2035 FROM FRESNO COG (ASSUMING FULL BUILDOUT OF THE FRESNO WEST AREA OUTLINED IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN).
SOURCE: FRESNO COG TRAVEL DEMAND MODEL, AND KITTELSON & ASSOCIATES, INC., 2020.

As Table 3.14-2 shows, the projected VMT per capita and VMT per employee in the Plan Area are lower than existing conditions. Under the Specific Plan, VMT per capita is 7.4 lower, or 46% lower, while VMT per employee is 12.4 lower, or 48% lower. The decrease in VMT is the result of the proposed land use mix within the Plan Area. The retail and employment opportunities keep the VMT per capita lower than the County average, while the large number of dwelling units near the jobs allows employees to live close to work resulting in a VMT per employee that is lower than the County average today.

CONCLUSION

The City of Fresno VMT Guidelines state specific plans would have an impact if the VMT per capita or VMT per employee in the specific plan area for the horizon year increases compared to the existing VMT per capita or VMT per employee in the region (Fresno County). The VMT per capita in the Specific Plan Area during the horizon year is 8.7, while VMT per employee is 13.2. Under existing conditions in Fresno County, the VMT per capita is 16.1, while the VMT per employee is 25.6. Because the VMT per capita and VMT per employee in the Specific Plan Area during the horizon year is less than the VMT per capita and VMT per employee for existing conditions in Fresno County, the proposed Specific Plan would not result in a significant impact for residential and office projects. Therefore, impacts related to CEQA Guideline section 15064.3, subdivision (b), would be ***less than significant***.

Impact 3.14-3: Implementation of the Specific Plan would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment). (Less than Significant)

The proposed Specific Plan would result in a relocation of density in the Plan Area to central corridors compared to what would develop under the City's General Plan where density is more distributed throughout the Plan Area; however, the Specific Plan does not propose to change the types (i.e., residential, commercial, office, etc.) of land uses in the Plan Area. The West Area

Neighborhoods Specific Plan includes the following guiding principles related to transportation and hazards:

- Provide a complete, safe, and well-maintained sidewalk network from residential neighborhoods to commercial centers, schools, parks, and community centers.
- Provide a complete, safe, and well-maintained roadway network that allows for efficient and smooth access from the West Area to other sections of the city and region.

Buildout of the proposed Specific Plan would result in some changes to the City's circulation network, but would not increase hazards or incompatible uses due to design features. All future roadway system improvements associated with development and redevelopment activities under the Specific Plan would be designed in accordance with the established roadway design standards, some of which have also been incorporated into the Circulation Element of the City's General Plan.

The City's General Plan policies that would address design and safety issues are:

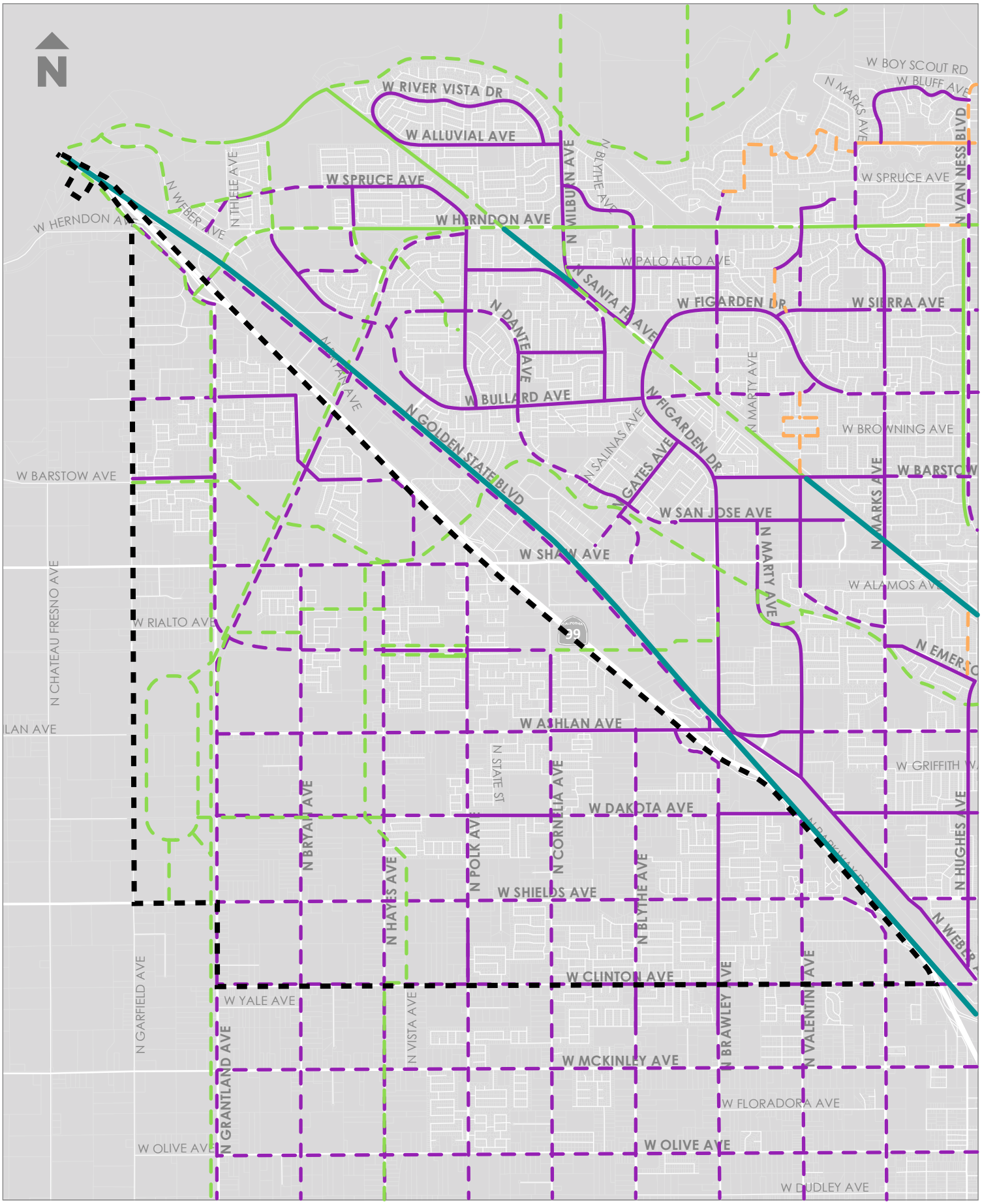
- **Policy MT-2-e**: Driveway and Access Consolidation.
- **Policy MT-2-i**: Transportation Impact Studies.
- **Policy MT-5-d**: Pedestrian Safety.
- **Policy MT-5-e**: Traffic Management in Established Neighborhoods.

The future roadway improvements that would result with implementation of the Specific Plan would be subject to review and future consideration by the City of Fresno. An evaluation of the roadway alignments, intersection geometrics, and traffic control features would be needed. Roadway improvements would be made in accordance with the City's Circulation Plan, roadway functional design guidelines, and would have to meet design guidelines such as the accessibility requirements of Title 24 (California Building Code), ADA standards, California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), and the Caltrans Roadway Design Manual. Implementation of the Specific Plan would not result in hazardous conditions, or create conflicting uses. With implementation of General Plan Policy MT-2-e, Policy MT-2-I, and application of the conditions of approval at the time of review of land development projects, the Specific Plan would be designed to ensure that no hazardous circulation conditions are created as a result of implementation of the Plan. The Specific Plan would implement components of the roadway system consistent with the City's General Plan. Therefore, impacts related to hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation measures would be required.

Impact 3.14-4: Implementation of the Specific Plan would not result in inadequate emergency access. (Less than Significant)

Emergency response requires a balance of emergency response time and evacuation needs with other community concerns, such as urban design and traffic calming. Future roadway improvements associated with buildout of the Plan Area would be made in accordance with the City's Circulation Plan and roadway functional design guidelines.

With the application of the conditions of approval at the time of review of land development projects, the Specific Plan would be designed to ensure that adequate emergency access is provided. The Specific Plan would implement components of the roadway system consistent with the City's General Plan. Therefore, impacts related to inadequate emergency access would be ***less than significant***, and no mitigation measures would be required.



Project Boundary

Existing Bicycle Facilities
- Class I Bike Path
- Class II Bike Lane
- Class III Bike Lane

Planned Bicycle Facilities
- Class I Bike Path
- Class II Bike Lane
- Class III Bike Lane

Rails-to-Trails

Figure 3.14-1
Existing and Proposed Bicycle Routes in the Specific Plan Area

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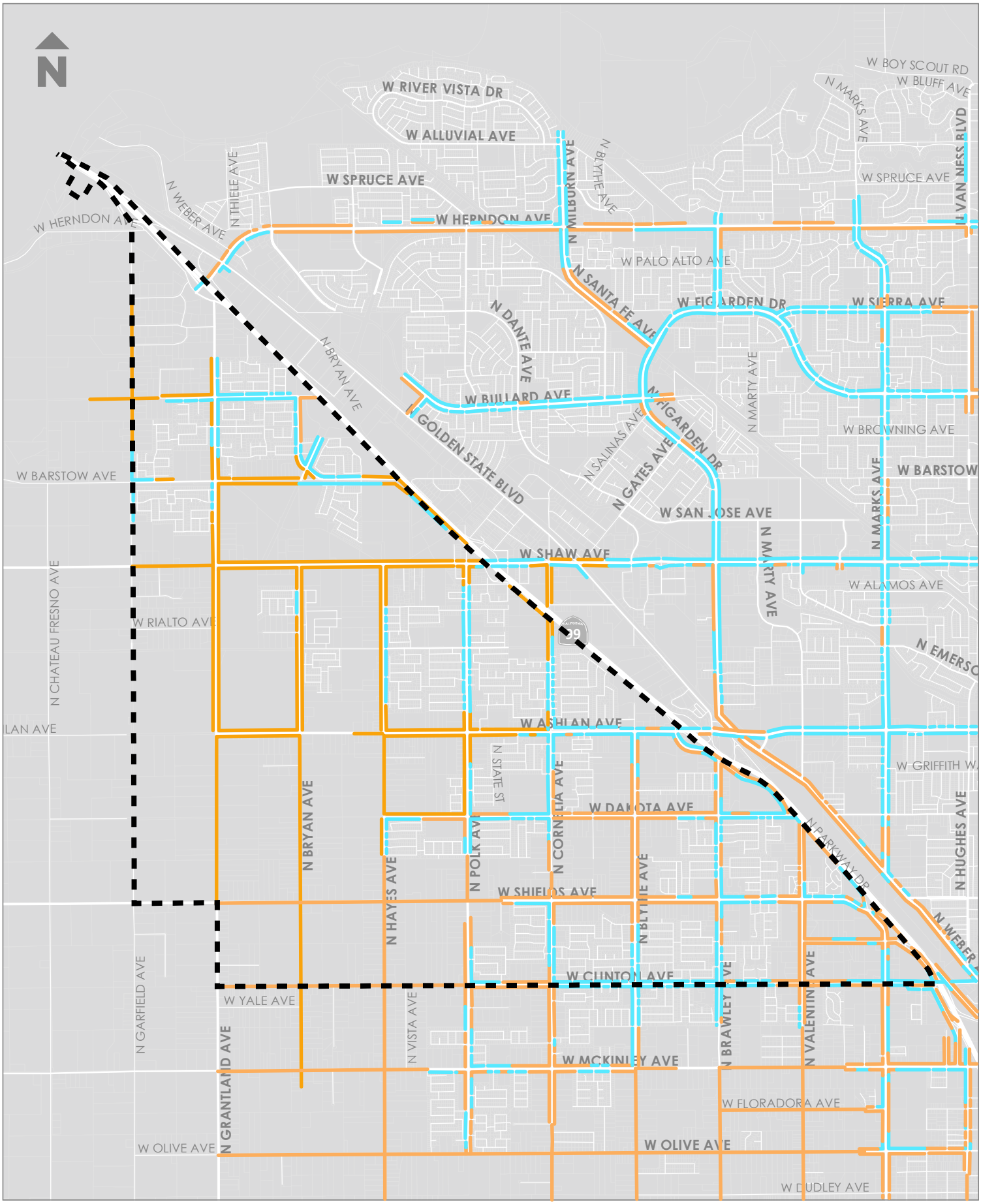

Project Boundary

Existing Sidewalk

Planned Sidewalk

Figure 3.14-2

Existing and Proposed Sidewalks in the Specific Plan Area

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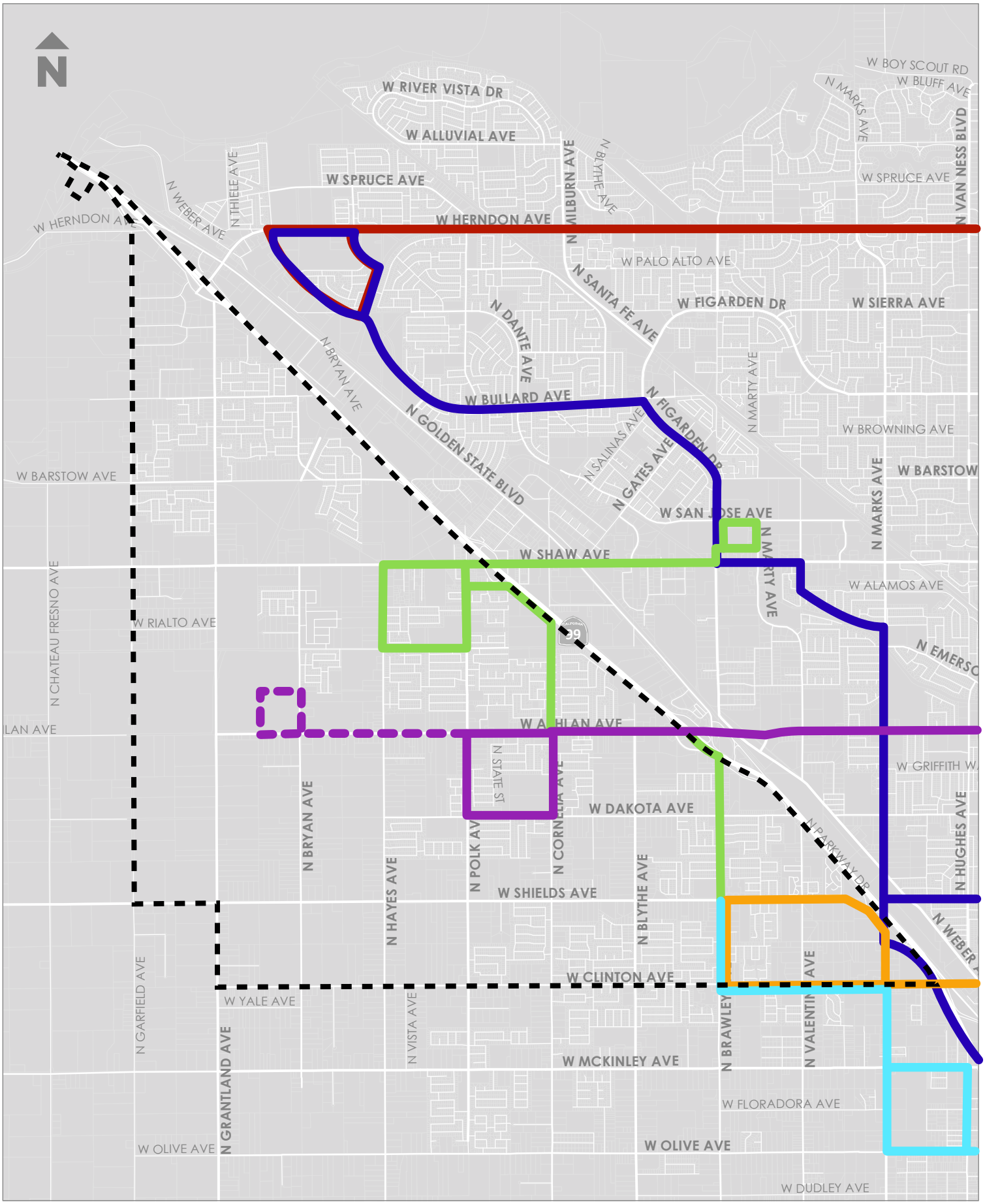

Project Boundary

Route 12

Route 39

Route 35

Route 45

Route 3

Route 12

Figure 3.14-3
Existing and Proposed Transit Service in the Specific Plan Area

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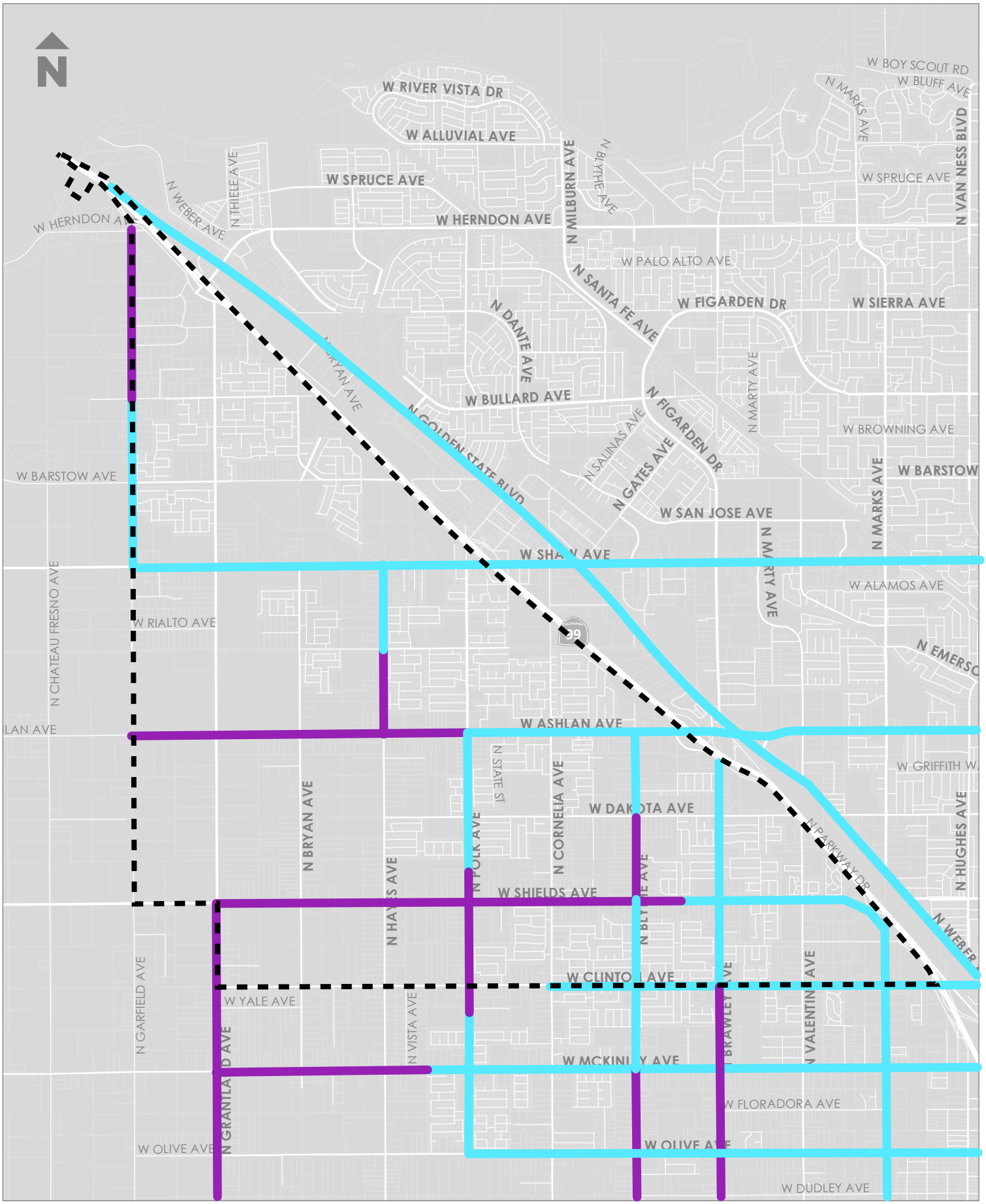

Project Boundary

Existing Route

Future Planned Route

Figure 3.14-4
Existing and Planned Truck Routes in the Specific Plan Area

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