

## NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To: State Clearinghouse  
PO Box 3044/ 1400 Tenth St  
Sacramento CA 95814

From: County of Tulare – RMA  
5961 S Mooney Blvd  
Visalia CA 93277

Date: January 12, 2017

Subject: **Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)**

Project Title: Sequoia Drive-In Business Project

Project Applicant: Castlewood Partners

Project Location: The project is located at 29421 Road 156, the southwest corner of Avenue 296 (Noble Avenue) and Road 156. The project is south of and adjacent to State Route 198, less than one mile east of the City of Visalia and less than one mile west of the City of Farmersville. The entire 46.17-acre site is within the Exeter USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle and is on Tulare County APNs 101-090-014, -015 and 101-100-009, -010. The site is within the NE ¼ portion of Section 35, Township 18 South, Range 25 East, MDB&M.

Tulare County Resource Management Agency (RMA) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project identified below. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. The NOP is available on the County website at:

<http://tularecounty.ca.gov/rma/index.cfm/documents-and-forms/planning-documents/environmental-planning/environmental-impact-reports/>

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

A scoping meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, February 2, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.** in the Main Conference Room of the Tulare County Resource Management Agency at the address shown above.

Please direct your response to Hector Guerra, Chief Environmental Planner at the address shown above. He may be contacted by e-mail at [hguerra@co.tulare.ca.us](mailto:hguerra@co.tulare.ca.us) or by telephone at 559-624-7121.

Please provide us with the name of a contact person in your agency.

Signature:   
Hector Guerra

Date: 1/12/17

Title: Chief Environmental Planner

Signature:   
Benjamin Ruiz Jr.

Date: 1/12/17

Title: Resource Management Agency Director/Environmental Assessment Officer

Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 14, (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375

## **PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING**

The proposed Sequoia Drive-In Business Park (Project) will be located at the southwest corner of Road 156 and Avenue 296 (Noble Avenue). The project is south of and adjacent to State Route 198, less than one mile east of the City of Visalia and less than one mile west of the City of Farmersville. The 46.17-acre site is located on Tulare County APNs 101-090-014, -015 and 101-100-009, -010. The site is currently zoned PD-C-3-SC (Planned Development, Service Commercial, Scenic Corridor Combining Zone) and is located within the Exeter USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle. The proposed Project site lies within the NE ¼ portion of Section 35, Township 18 South, Range 25 East, MDB&M.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.), the County of Tulare Resource Management Agency (RMA) will be preparing an Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to evaluate the environmental effects associated with the development of the proposed Sequoia Drive-In Business Park.

The Applicant is proposing to construct a 358,370 square foot business park consisting of a total of 30 buildings (46 units), access roads, and stormwater retention basins. The Project will be developed in four (4) separate phases of construction.

Phase 1 will include a convenience market with gas pumps and an attached fast-food restaurant, along with five (5) separate commercial buildings for a total combined square footage of 68,340. Access into the development will occur on Road 156, and will eventually connect access from Noble Avenue during Phase 3.

Phase 2 will construct 14 commercial buildings for a total combined square footage of 88,000, leaving a remainder lot for the existing cellular tower. Two access points into the development will occur on Road 156, providing a circle drive connecting part of Phase 1, and all of Phase 2 and Phase 4.

Phase 3 will include ten (10) separate commercial buildings with one (1) remaining lots for a retention pond. A stormwater retention pond will be installed for on-site water storage in the event of extreme weather. The total square footage buildout for phase 3 will be 104,000.

Phase 4, the final phase, will include 13 commercial buildings and a remaining lot for a second stormwater retention pond for on-site water storage. The total square footage buildout for Phase 4 will be 98,030.

The local electricity and gas service provider is Southern California Edison and Southern California Gas; respectively. As such, the Project will likely receive these utilities from Southern California Edison and Southern California Gas. The Applicant proposes receiving water supplied through an on-site domestic well and proposes that sewage be treated with an on-site engineered septic/wastewater treatment system. USA Waste is the franchise solid waste disposal service for the Project area.

To accommodate the proposed development, the following two actions will need to occur: (1) update to the existing Development Agreement and (2) Tulare County approval of a Tentative Subdivision Map.

If you require additional information related to this notice, please contact:

**Hector Guerra, Chief Environmental Planner**  
[hguerra@co.tulare.ca.us](mailto:hguerra@co.tulare.ca.us) or at (559) 624-7121

## **REVIEWING AGENCIES AND POTENTIAL APPROVALS REQUIRED:**

The following agencies may have jurisdiction over elements of the proposed Project:

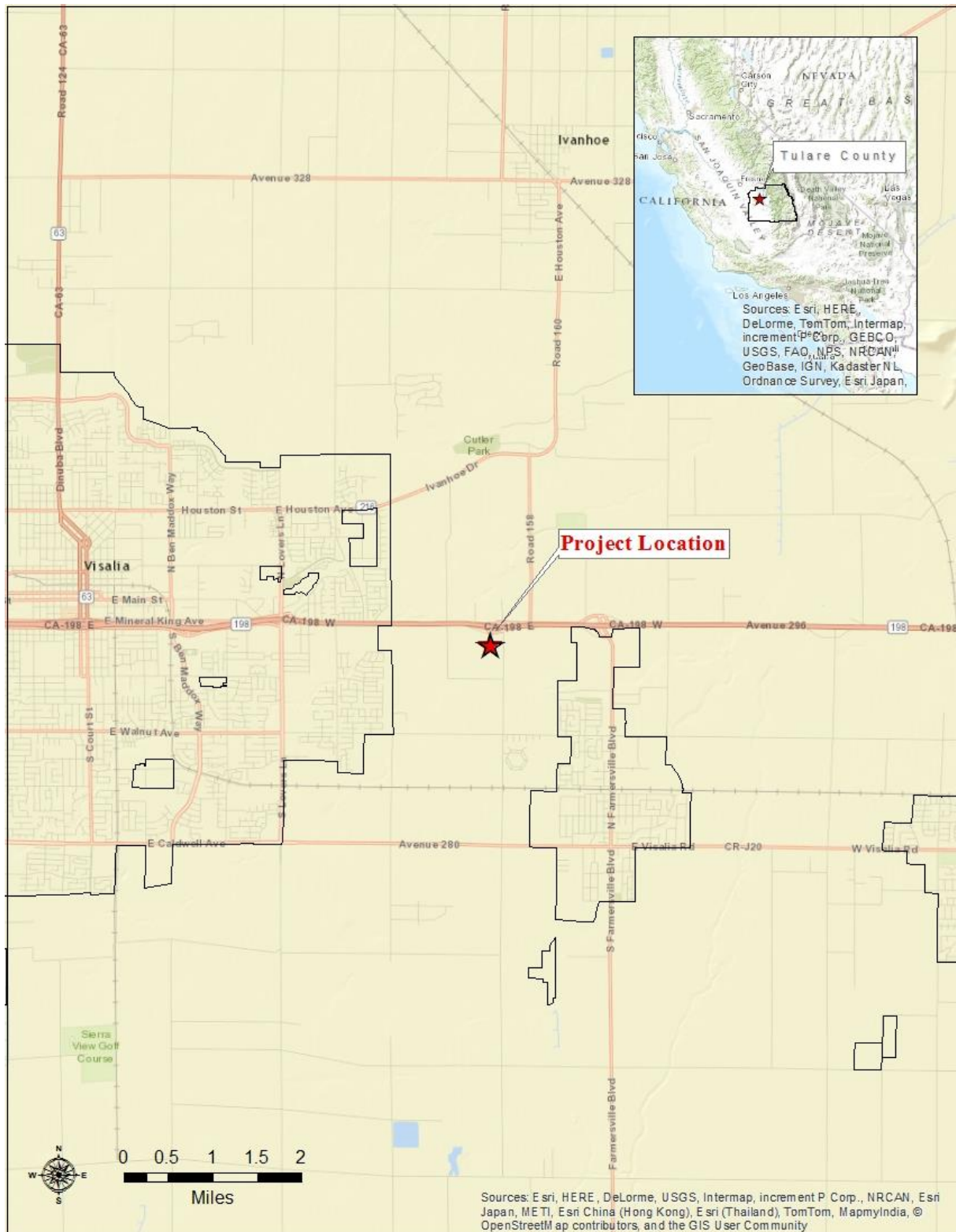
### **State and Federal:**

- California Air Resources Board
- California Department of Conservation
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- California Department of Toxic Substances Control
- California Department of Transportation
- California Department of Water Resources
- California Native American Heritage Commission
- California Office of Emergency Services
- California Office of Historic Preservation
- California Public Utilities Commission
- California Resources Agency
- California State Water Resources Control Board
- United States Army Corps of Engineers
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service

### **Local and Regional:**

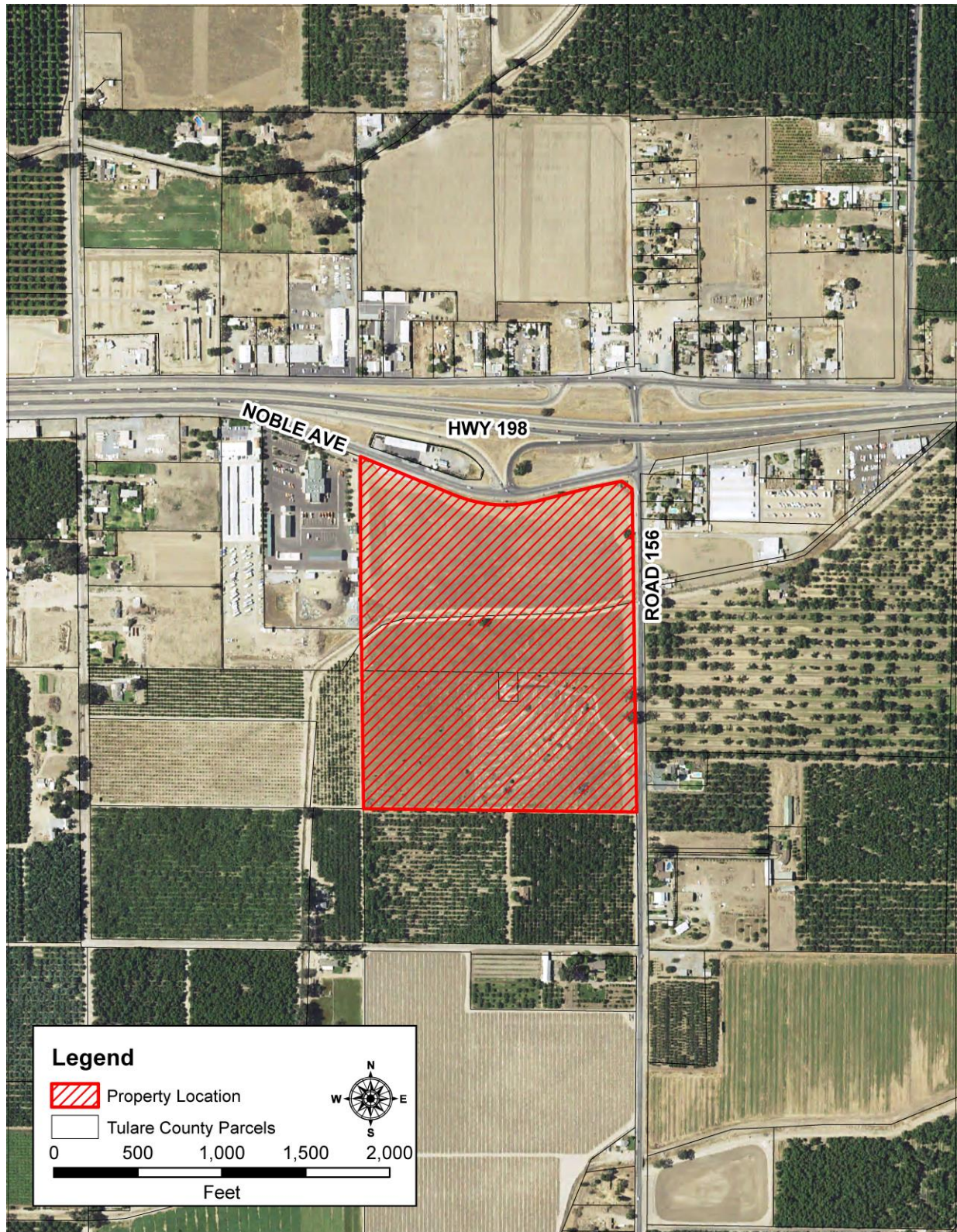
- Central Valley Flood Protection Board
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
- City of Farmersville
- City of Visalia
- San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District
- Southern California Edison
- Southern California Gas Company
- Tulare County Association of Governments
- Tulare County Fire Warden
- Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency (Environmental Health)
- Tulare County Local Agency Formation Commission
- Tulare County Office of Emergency Services
- Tulare County Resource Management Agency (Fire, Flood Control, Planning, Public Works)
- Tulare County Sheriff's Office

### Regional Location Map for the Sequoia Drive-In Business Park Project





**Vicinity Map for the Sequoia Drive-In Business Park Project**



**MAY 2016 1 of 7**

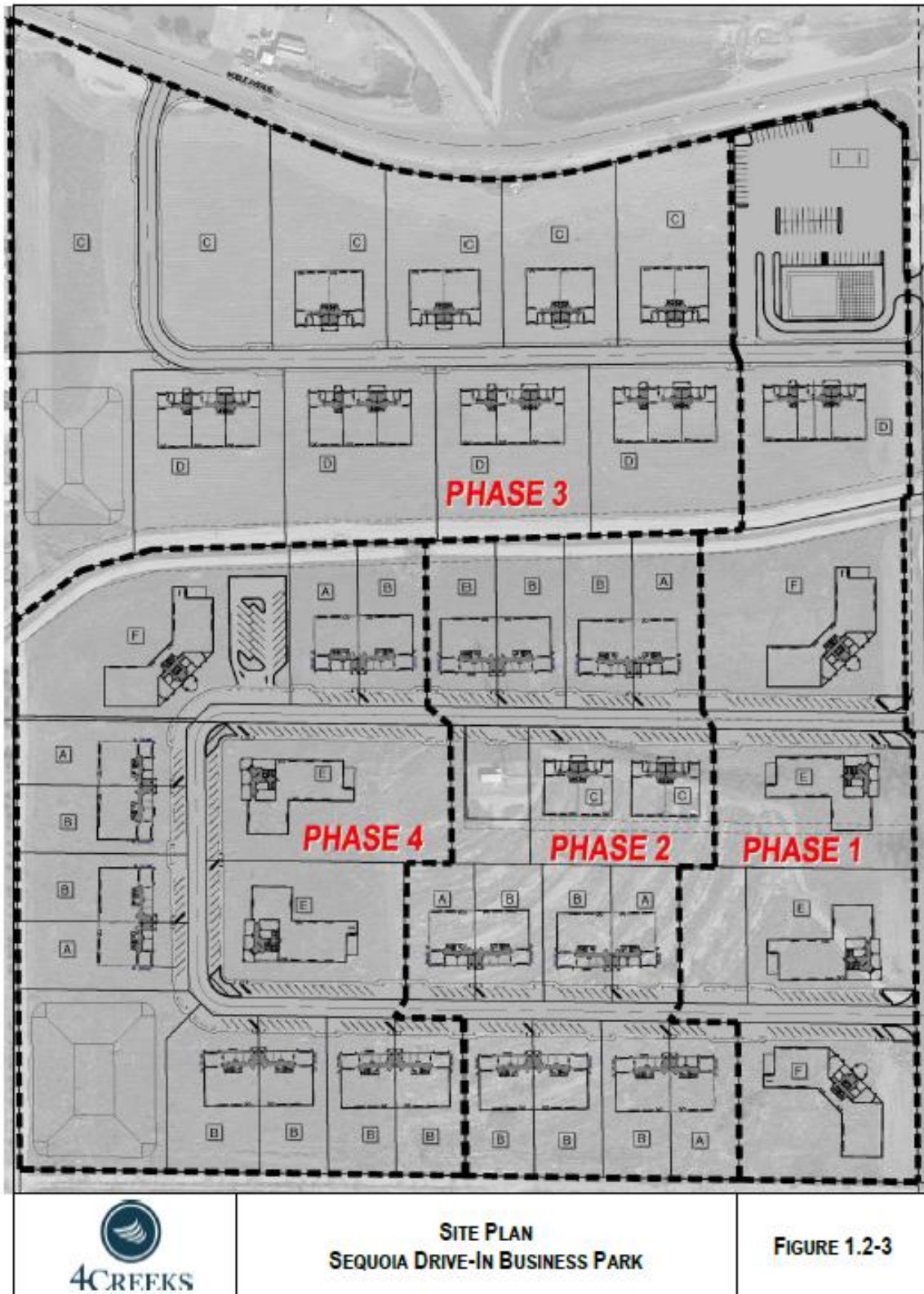
**SEQUOIA DRIVE-IN BUSINESS PARK**

**VESTING TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAP**

**ADDRESS:** SOUTH WEST CORNER NOBLE AND ROAD 106  
**APN:** 15-480-014, 15-480-015, 15-480-016, 15-480-017, 15-480-018, 15-480-019, 15-480-020, 15-480-021, 15-480-022, 15-480-023, 15-480-024, 15-480-025, 15-480-026, 15-480-027, 15-480-028, 15-480-029, 15-480-030, 15-480-031, 15-480-032, 15-480-033, 15-480-034, 15-480-035, 15-480-036, 15-480-037, 15-480-038, 15-480-039, 15-480-040, 15-480-041, 15-480-042, 15-480-043, 15-480-044, 15-480-045, 15-480-046, 15-480-047, 15-480-048, 15-480-049, 15-480-050, 15-480-051, 15-480-052, 15-480-053, 15-480-054, 15-480-055, 15-480-056, 15-480-057, 15-480-058, 15-480-059, 15-480-060, 15-480-061, 15-480-062, 15-480-063, 15-480-064, 15-480-065, 15-480-066, 15-480-067, 15-480-068, 15-480-069, 15-480-070, 15-480-071, 15-480-072, 15-480-073, 15-480-074, 15-480-075, 15-480-076, 15-480-077, 15-480-078, 15-480-079, 15-480-080, 15-480-081, 15-480-082, 15-480-083, 15-480-084, 15-480-085, 15-480-086, 15-480-087, 15-480-088, 15-480-089, 15-480-090, 15-480-091, 15-480-092, 15-480-093, 15-480-094, 15-480-095, 15-480-096, 15-480-097, 15-480-098, 15-480-099, 15-480-100, 15-480-101, 15-480-102, 15-480-103, 15-480-104, 15-480-105, 15-480-106, 15-480-107, 15-480-108, 15-480-109, 15-480-110, 15-480-111, 15-480-112, 15-480-113, 15-480-114, 15-480-115, 15-480-116, 15-480-117, 15-480-118, 15-480-119, 15-480-120, 15-480-121, 15-480-122, 15-480-123, 15-480-124, 15-480-125, 15-480-126, 15-480-127, 15-480-128, 15-480-129, 15-480-130, 15-480-131, 15-480-132, 15-480-133, 15-480-134, 15-480-135, 15-480-136, 15-480-137, 15-480-138, 15-480-139, 15-480-140, 15-480-141, 15-480-142, 15-480-143, 15-480-144, 15-480-145, 15-480-146, 15-480-147, 15-480-148, 15-480-149, 15-480-150, 15-480-151, 15-480-152, 15-480-153, 15-480-154, 15-480-155, 15-480-156, 15-480-157, 15-480-158, 15-480-159, 15-480-160, 15-480-161, 15-480-162, 15-480-163, 15-480-164, 15-480-165, 15-480-166, 15-480-167, 15-480-168, 15-480-169, 15-480-170, 15-480-171, 15-480-172, 15-480-173, 15-480-174, 15-480-175, 15-480-176, 15-480-177, 15-480-178, 15-480-179, 15-480-180, 15-480-181, 15-480-182, 15-480-183, 15-480-184, 15-480-185, 15-480-186, 15-480-187, 15-480-188, 15-480-189, 15-480-190, 15-480-191, 15-480-192, 15-480-193, 15-480-194, 15-480-195, 15-480-196, 15-480-197, 15-480-198, 15-480-199, 15-480-200, 15-480-201, 15-480-202, 15-480-203, 15-480-204, 15-480-205, 15-480-206, 15-480-207, 15-480-208, 15-480-209, 15-480-210, 15-480-211, 15-480-212, 15-480-213, 15-480-214, 15-480-215, 15-480-216, 15-480-217, 15-480-218, 15-480-219, 15-480-220, 15-480-221, 15-480-222, 15-480-223, 15-480-224, 15-480-225, 15-480-226, 15-480-227, 15-480-228, 15-480-229, 15-480-230, 15-480-231, 15-480-232, 15-480-233, 15-480-234, 15-480-235, 15-480-236, 15-480-237, 15-480-238, 15-480-239, 15-480-240, 15-480-241, 15-480-242, 15-480-243, 15-480-244, 15-480-245, 15-480-246, 15-480-247, 15-480-248, 15-480-249, 15-480-250, 15-480-251, 15-480-252, 15-480-253, 15-480-254, 15-480-255, 15-480-256, 15-480-257, 15-480-258, 15-480-259, 15-480-260, 15-480-261, 15-480-262, 15-480-263, 15-480-264, 15-480-265, 15-480-266, 15-480-267, 15-480-268, 15-480-269, 15-480-270, 15-480-271, 15-480-272, 15-480-273, 15-480-274, 15-480-275, 15-480-276, 15-480-277, 15-480-278, 15-480-279, 15-480-280, 15-480-281, 15-480-282, 15-480-283, 15-480-284, 15-480-285, 15-480-286, 15-480-287, 15-480-288, 15-480-289, 15-480-290, 15-480-291, 15-480-292, 15-480-293, 15-480-294, 15-480-295, 15-480-296, 15-480-297, 15-480-298, 15-480-299, 15-480-300, 15-480-301, 15-480-302, 15-480-303, 15-480-304, 15-480-305, 15-480-306, 15-480-307, 15-480-308, 15-480-309, 15-480-310, 15-480-311, 15-480-312, 15-480-313, 15-480-314, 15-480-315, 15-480-316, 15-480-317, 15-480-318, 15-480-319, 15-480-320, 15-480-321, 15-480-322, 15-480-323, 15-480-324, 15-480-325, 15-480-326, 15-480-327, 15-480-328, 15-480-329, 15-480-330, 15-480



Site Map for the Sequoia Drive-In Business Park Project



## **SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS**

The EIR will address all checklist items contained in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. The analysis will address the probable direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts associated with construction and operation of the Sequoia Drive-In Business Park (Project). The following is a discussion of the environmental topics to be covered in the EIR:

### **Aesthetic/ Visual Resources**

The Project site can be characterized as vacant land in the “PD-C-3-SC” (Planned Development, Service Commercial, Scenic Corridor Combining) Zone. The Project site is on property that encompasses four parcels directly south of State Route 198 on the southwest corner of Noble Avenue and Road 156. The C-2 (General Commercial) and C-3 (Service Commercial) Zones are located to the north of the Project site along State Route 198. The surrounding properties to the east, west, and south are zoned AE-20 (Exclusive Agriculture, 20-acre minimum) and C-3-SC (Service Commercial, Scenic Corridor Combining Zone). The Project area is bounded on the west by a Caltrans maintenance yard, and is bounded on the south by tree crops. A Tulare Irrigation Canal traverses the Project site in an east-west direction and bisects the Project site. The EIR will provide an assessment of Project related impacts to visual resources, as well as lighting and glare impacts.

### **Agriculture Resources**

According to the Soil Survey of Tulare County, Western Part, the on-site soil is classified Nord Fine Sandy Loam, which is considered Prime Farmland if irrigated and either protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season. The Department of Conservation California Important Farmland Finder identifies the northern and southwestern portion of the Project property as Farmland of Local Importance and the southeastern portion of the property as Vacant or Disturbed Land. The Project site is located within the Tulare County East Visalia Urban Development Boundary (UDB) of the Visalia Area Land Use Plan and is currently zoned for service commercial land uses. There are commercial uses located directly west, north, and east of the Project site. The southeastern portion of the Project site was previously a drive-in movie theater. There are currently no agricultural operations occurring on the northern and southwestern portions of the Project site which have been agriculturally unproductive for many years. With the exception of the single cellular tower on-site, the entire site remains in undeveloped open space conditions. The Project will not encroach into adjacent agricultural uses and will not require adjacent properties to discontinue any agriculture related operations. The EIR will provide an assessment of potential Project related impacts to agricultural resources.

### **Air Quality / Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

The EIR will describe regional and local air quality in the vicinity of the proposed Project site and evaluate impacts to air quality associated with Project construction and operation. An air quality study will be prepared to establish baseline, project, and cumulative impacts. The Project-related estimated air emissions will be compared to emissions thresholds of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD). The EIR will describe existing air quality conditions within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin and will evaluate the proposed Project’s potential air quality impacts. Potential air quality emissions impacts include odor, dust, pathogens, and construction and operations related activities. The EIR will also include a discussion of greenhouse gas emissions and the proposed Project’s contribution to potential cumulative impacts on global climate.



## **Biological Resources**

The proposed Project site has been previously disturbed. Potential habitats within the Project site include an agricultural left in open space conditions, a vacant lot that was formally a drive-in theater, and scattered on-site trees. The Project site is bisected by one hydrological feature, a Tulare Irrigation Canal, which would likely be considered a water of the U.S. based on its connectivity with other known waters of the U.S. A biological evaluation of the proposed Project site will be conducted and the proposed Project's potential to affect biological resources will be analyzed in the EIR.

## **Cultural Resources / Tribal Cultural Resources**

Although the proposed Project will be constructed on previously disturbed land, it cannot be definitively concluded that cultural resources are absent. A search of the Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) was conducted. The search identified one recorded cultural resource, a Tulare Irrigation Canal, within the Project site. The search also identified six recorded resources within a one-half mile radius, including a prehistoric era mound, an historic period ranch, barn, single-family residence, canal, and drive-in theater. There are no recorded cultural resources within the Project site or radius that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, the California Points of Historical Interest, California Inventory of Historic Resources, or the California State Historic Landmarks. A Sacred Land File (SLF) Search was submitted to the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) on August 31, 2016. The NAHC responded on September 8, 2016, stating that the SLF search was completed with "negative" results. The NAHC provided a list of nine (9) tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project area. Pursuant to the requirements of AB 52 and SB 18, on September 14, 2016, the County mailed twenty-seven (27) tribal consultation requests, representing twenty-one (21) tribes, which included the nine (9) tribes listed on the SLF search. Depending upon responses from tribal consultation, a cultural resources evaluation may be prepared for this Project. The EIR will examine the proposed Project's potential to affect cultural resources and Tribal cultural resources.

## **Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources,**

Initial construction, buildout, and operation of the proposed Project on the Project site could result in impacts related to geotechnical hazards, including seismicity of the area, potential for liquefaction and subsidence, potential for soil erosion, soil stability characteristics, and shrink/swell potential of site soils, as applicable. According to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey, the entire Project site consists of Nord fine sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes. Nord fine sandy loam is considered to be well drained soil. According to the Tulare County General Plan 2030 Update EIR, there are no known potential mineral resources on or in the vicinity of the Project site. It is currently unknown whether the proposed Project site soils have the potential to contain paleontological resources. If such resources exist on the site, construction, expansion, and continued operational activities could result in potentially significant impacts. A geological evaluation of the proposed Project site will be conducted to establish baseline, project, and cumulative impacts related to geology, soils, mineral resources, and paleontological resources.

## **Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

There are no known hazards or hazardous materials located within the proposed Project site, nor is the proposed Project site located on a Cortese List site. The EIR will evaluate the potential for the proposed Project to result in, or be affected by, impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials.

## **Hydrology, Water Quality, and Water Supply**

The Project site lies within flood Zone X (Shaded), which is a moderate flood hazard area with a 0.2 percent annual chance or a 500 year flood according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zone designation. Construction of buildings within this flood zone require no specific flood mitigation measures; however, it is recommended that all finished floor levels be elevated one (1) foot above adjacent natural ground. The proposed Project is within the Kaweah River Watershed and over the Kaweah River Groundwater Basin. The Applicant proposes receiving water supplied through an on-site domestic well and proposes that sewage be treated with an on-site engineered septic/wastewater treatment system. The EIR will describe the proposed Project's effect, both directly and cumulatively on the hydrology, water quality, and water supply resources. A hydrological and water sustainability evaluation will be prepared to establish baseline, project, and cumulative impacts.

## **Land Use and Planning**

The EIR will describe the proposed Project's potential effects on existing and planned land uses. The proposed Project is outside of the City of Visalia city limits, but within the Tulare County East Visalia UDB of the Visalia Area Land Use Plan. The Visalia Area Land Use Plan zoning designation is PD-C-3-SC (Planned Development, Service Commercial, Scenic Corridor Combining Zone). The Project is an allowed use "by right" under the current zoning "C-3" zoning; however, when the "SC" zone is combined with other zones, allowed uses in the underlying or base zone are allowed if the project is approved in accordance with the procedures referred to in Chapter 9 of Part VII of the Ordinance Code of Tulare County. As such, the EIR will provide a discussion of relevant local plans and policies because conflicts could potentially result in environmental impacts.

## **Noise**

The EIR will describe the noise levels associated with proposed Project construction and operation and will compare these levels to applicable noise thresholds to determine whether the proposed Project would result in a significant noise impact.

## **Population and Housing**

The EIR will evaluate the Project's effect on population and housing in the local area based on estimations of Project employment and distribution of the employees by place of residence.

## **Public Services and Recreation**

The EIR will evaluate the proposed Project's potential to create an adverse impact to schools, and will also evaluate effects on local police and fire services along with parks and regional recreational facilities.

## **Transportation/Traffic**

The EIR will evaluate the proposed Project's impact on regional and local transportation facilities based on a transportation analysis that will assess both construction-related impacts (heavy truck trips and construction worker trips), as well as operational impacts (employee and visitor trips). The Project site is located at the intersection of Avenue 296 (Noble Avenue) and Road 156. Avenue 296 (Noble Avenue) and Road 156 are County-designated minor collector streets. The Project site is also located adjacent to and south of State Route 198, which is a four-lane divided freeway in the Project area and designated in the General Plan as a Scenic Corridor. The Project includes the construction of two new roadways, with four ingress/egress points within the Project site. The northern road will run through the northern half of the Project site (north of the Tulare Irrigation Canal) and will connect Avenue 296 (Noble Avenue) to

Road 156. The southern road will provide two access points on Road 156, which requires a “U” shaped configuration such that the road is contained fully within the Project site. The Tulare County General Plan 2030 Update considers LOS D as the minimum acceptable LOS standard during peak hours for County roadways and intersections. A traffic impact study will be prepared to establish a baseline, and to evaluate project and cumulative impacts for the proposed Project in consultation with the County of Tulare, the Tulare County Association of Governments, and Caltrans. Similarly, the EIR will examine alternative traffic distribution.

### **Utilities**

The proposed Project site can be characterized as vacant land in the “PD-C-3-SC” (Planned Development, Service Commercial, Scenic Corridor Combining) Zone. The local electricity and gas service provider is Southern California Edison and Southern California Gas; respectively. As such, the Project will likely receive these utilities from Southern California Edison and Southern California Gas. The Applicant proposes receiving water supplied through an on-site domestic well and proposes that sewage be treated with an on-site engineered septic/wastewater treatment system. USA Waste will provide solid waste disposal services. The EIR will analyze the current capacity of the above-mentioned services, as well as the proposed Project’s impact on these systems and the capacity available to support the proposed Project. The EIR will also describe the solid waste facilities that would serve the proposed site.

The applicant would be required to construct infrastructure to urban development standards set forth by Tulare County, including the construction of appropriate Caltrans road improvements to Avenue 296 (Noble Avenue), Road 156, and State Route 198 to the extent that an appropriate nexus to the proposed Project is established. The EIR prepared for the Project will analyze the adequacy of infrastructure services for the Project including road, water and wastewater services, and if appropriate, may require mitigation measures.

### **Growth Inducement**

The EIR will evaluate the proposed Project's potential for growth inducement resulting from the establishment of a new source of employment, as well as new demand for housing, and goods and services. The effect of primary and secondary increases in employment and economic activity will be discussed.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

The EIR will discuss the incremental contribution of the proposed Project to cumulative effects of other past, current, and planned and reasonably foreseeable projects in the vicinity. The summary of projects method will be used where applicable. Also, to the extent feasible, the Cumulative Impacts section will quantify the degree of severity of any cumulative impact.

### **ALTERNATIVES EVALUATED IN THE EIR**

In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6, the EIR will describe a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed Project that are capable of meeting most of the proposed Project’s objectives, but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the proposed Project. The EIR will also identify any alternatives that were considered but rejected by the Lead Agency as infeasible and briefly explain the reasons why. The EIR will also provide an analysis of the No Project Alternative.



## **OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

Interested individuals, groups, and agencies may provide to the County of Tulare Resource Management Agency, Planning Branch, written comments on topics to be addressed in the EIR for the proposed Project. Because of time limits mandated by state law, comments should be provided no later than **5:00 p.m. Monday, February 13, 2017**. Agencies that will need to use the EIR when considering permits or other approvals for the proposed Project should provide the name of a staff contact person. Please send all comments to:

**Hector Guerra, Chief Environmental Planner**  
**Tulare County Resource Management Agency**  
**Economic Development and Planning Branch**  
**5961 South Mooney Boulevard**  
**Visalia, CA 93277-9394**  
or via e-mail at: [HGuerra@co.tulare.ca.us](mailto:HGuerra@co.tulare.ca.us)  
or via facsimile: 559-730-2653  
or via phone: 559-624-7121