

STANISLAUS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

November 21, 2024

STAFF REPORT

USE PERMIT APPLICATION NO. PLN2023-0146
CENTRAL IRRIGATION, INC.

REQUEST: TO OPERATE AN AGRICULTURAL IRRIGATION SUPPLY BUSINESS WITHIN TWO EXISTING 5,000± SQUARE-FOOT WAREHOUSES ON A 3.5± ACRE PORTION OF A 194.8± ACRE PARCEL, IN THE GENERAL AGRICULTURE (A-2-40) ZONING DISTRICT.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Applicant:	Keith Yamamoto, Central Irrigation, Inc.
Property owner:	Yamamoto Family Farms, LP (Karen M. and Bobby S. Yamamoto)
Agent:	N/A
Location:	117 Orchard Road, between State Route 33 and River Road, in the Vernalis area.
Section, Township, Range:	1-4-6
Supervisory District:	Three (Supervisor Withrow)
Assessor's Parcel:	016-006-007
Referrals:	See Exhibit F Environmental Review Referrals
Area of Parcel(s):	194.8± acres
Water Supply:	Private well
Sewage Disposal:	Private septic system
General Plan Designation:	Agriculture
Community Plan Designation:	N/A
Existing Zoning:	General Agriculture (A-2-40)
Sphere of Influence:	N/A
Williamson Act Contract No.:	1977-2782
Environmental Review:	Negative Declaration
Present Land Use:	Two agricultural warehouse buildings, a wooden barn, one single-family dwelling with an attached garage, and a swimming pool. The balance of the property is planted in almond trees and row crops.
Surrounding Land Use:	Agricultural parcels planted in almond and walnut trees and alfalfa in all directions; the San Joaquin River to the east; wood pallet storage to the south; the California Northern Railroad and a wood pallet manufacturing operation to the west; a legal non-conforming (LNC) agriculture storage facility, a modular trailer manufacturing operation, and San Joaquin County to the northwest.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission approve this request based on the discussion below and on the whole of the record provided to the County. If the Planning Commission decides to approve the project, Exhibit A provides an overview of all of the findings required for project approval, which include use permit findings.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project is a request to operate an agricultural irrigation supply business within two existing 5,000± square-foot warehouses on a 3.5± acre portion of a 194.8± acre parcel, in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district. The proposed irrigation supply business will operate wholesale for delivery or pickup of irrigation materials by agricultural customers and will utilize the existing 5,000± square-foot warehouses to store PVC pipe, drip irrigation hoses, and other irrigation components. The business will primarily serve agricultural customers within the areas of Vernalis, Westley, South Tracy, and West Modesto. The applicant proposes outdoor storage of irrigation supply materials and seven parking stalls behind the warehouses to the north. The outdoor storage and parking area will be graveled and enclosed by a six-foot-tall chain link fence with privacy slats. As part of this request, the western warehouse will be improved with an office and employee restroom. The applicant proposes to drill a new domestic well and septic system to serve the proposed restroom within the warehouse. Proposed signage includes a 12± square-foot wall sign on the south facing side of the western warehouse (see Exhibit B – *Maps, Plans, and Elevations*).

The business will operate Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and on Saturdays from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The operation will consist of a maximum of three employees on a single shift with an estimated number of 15 customers coming to the site per-day. A total of ten customers are anticipated on-site at peak times between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. One truck trip for deliveries and resupply for the business is anticipated per-day, and up to four truck trips for deliveries to customers are expected per-day.

No landscaping is proposed. Existing on-site lighting includes a dusk to dawn light affixed to the east side of the eastern warehouse. Additional lighting will include LED lighting placed on the sides of the warehouses at a height of roughly 12 feet from the ground. Stormwater will be required to be maintained on-site and is proposed to be handled via overland drainage.

The existing warehouses were constructed in 1948; no records were found that indicate the warehouses have been utilized for anything beyond hay and agricultural storage. Each warehouse sits on a concrete slab located on the southwest corner of the parcel fronting County-maintained Orchard Road. Between the warehouses is a 4,560 square-foot cement slab enclosed by an existing chain-link fence. Building permits will be required for the installation of the restroom and office within the western warehouse, and for a change of occupancy for both warehouses prior to operation.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The 3.5± acre project site is part of a 194.8± acre parcel located at 117 Orchard Road, between State Route 33 and River Road, in the Vernalis area (see Exhibit B – *Maps, Plans, and Elevations*).

In addition to the existing 5,000 square-foot warehouses, the parcel is currently improved with a 1,440 square-foot wooden barn located 972± feet to the east of the warehouses; and a 2,777± square-foot single-family dwelling with a 1,394 square-foot attached garage and a swimming pool located 2,465± feet to the east of the warehouses. The single-family dwelling is currently served by an existing private well and septic system. The balance of the parcel is currently planted in almond trees and row crops. However, the applicant has indicated that the row crops, which includes approximately 30 acres of the site, will be planted in almonds within the next year.

The project area has access to Orchard Road via two driveways, one 20-foot-wide paved driveway located between the two warehouses and one approximately 30-foot-wide unpaved dirt driveway east of the eastern warehouse. The eastern driveway will be graveled and will provide access for the proposed project.

Surrounding land uses include agricultural parcels planted in almond and walnut trees and alfalfa in all directions; the San Joaquin River to the east; wood pallet storage to the south; the California Northern Railroad and a wood pallet manufacturing operation is adjacent to the west; a legal non-conforming (LNC) agriculture storage facility to the northwest, at the intersection of State Route 33 and McCracken Road, a modular trailer manufacturing operation off State Route 33 and San Joaquin County to the northwest.

ISSUES

One issue regarding signage was identified during review of the proposed project. In addition to a 12 square-foot wall sign, the applicant has proposed to place a banner sign along the chain link fencing facing Orchard Road; however, temporary signage is not permitted within the General Agriculture (A-2) zoning district. A condition of approval has been placed on the project requiring a sign plan including the location, height, and area of the sign(s) be approved by the Planning Director, or appointed designee, prior to installation of any signage. One monument sign and one wall sign, not to exceed 12 square-feet in area per sign, will be permitted for the irrigation supply business. All signage shall be non-flashing, non-animated, and nonmoving. Temporary signs including banner signs shall not be permitted.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

The site is currently designated “Agriculture” in the Stanislaus County General Plan. The agricultural designation recognizes the value and importance of agriculture by acting to preclude incompatible urban development within agricultural areas. This designation establishes agriculture as the primary use in land so designated, but allows dwelling units, limited agriculturally related commercial services, agriculturally related light industrial uses, and other uses which by their unique nature are not compatible with urban uses, provided they do not conflict with the primary use.

Goal One, Objective 1.2 of the General Plan's Agricultural Element encourages vertical integration of agriculture by organizing uses requiring use permits into three tiers based on the type of uses and their relationship to agriculture. Tier Two uses include agriculture-related commercial and industrial uses, such as agricultural processing plants and facilities, and agricultural services establishments. Agricultural service establishments are allowed in the A-2 zoning district when the Planning Commission finds that the operation will not be substantially detrimental to or in conflict with the agricultural use of other property in the vicinity; the establishment as proposed will not create a concentration of commercial and industrial uses in the vicinity; and it is necessary and desirable for such establishment to be located within the agricultural area as opposed to areas zoned commercial or industrial. An assessment of the proposed uses compliance with the findings required for approval of a Tier Two use is provided in the *Zoning Ordinance Consistency* section of this report.

To protect the long-term health of local agriculture by minimizing conflicts resulting from normal agricultural practices as a consequence of new or expanding uses approved in or adjacent to the A- 2 (General Agriculture) zoning district, Appendix "A" of the Agricultural Element requires a buffer between agricultural and non-agricultural uses. These guidelines state that all projects shall incorporate a minimum 150-foot-wide buffer setback; projects which propose people-intensive outdoor activities, such as athletic fields, shall incorporate a minimum 300-foot-wide buffer setback. Agricultural buffer design standards for new or expanding uses stipulate that certain activities are permitted uses within the buffer area such as parking lots and low-people intensive uses. Uses classified under Tier 1 and Tier 2 use permits in the A-2 zoning district are generally considered to be low-people intensive; however, the decision-making body (Planning Commission) shall have the ultimate authority to determine if the proposed or expanded use is "low-people intensive." The proposed business will have three employees and expects 15 customer visits per-day; all sales will take place within the warehouses. Planning staff believes the project can be considered low people-intensive, thus not subject to the County's Agricultural Buffer requirements. The project was referred to the Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner, and no comments have been received to date. If the project were to be considered people intensive, the project meets the 150-foot setback to the parcels to the north and east. No buffer would be required from the project area to the parcel to the west as the adjacent parcel to the west is designated Planned Development (P-D) (215) and is not in agricultural production. The proposed project is located 60 feet from a parcel in agricultural production to the south; however, the project area and the parcel to the south are separated by Orchard Road.

Staff believes that the proposed use can be found to be consistent with the General Plan if the Planning Commission can make the necessary findings to approve the request, as outlined in the *Zoning Ordinance Consistency* section of this report.

ZONING ORDINANCE CONSISTENCY

The site is currently zoned General Agriculture (A-2-40). In accordance with Section 21.20.020(B) of the Stanislaus County Zoning Ordinance, Tier Two uses, agriculture-related commercial and industrial uses, may be allowed when the Planning Commission makes the following findings:

- 1) The establishment as proposed will not be substantially detrimental to or in conflict with agricultural use of other property in the vicinity; and

- 2) The establishment as proposed will not create a concentration of commercial and industrial uses in the vicinity; and
- 3) It is necessary and desirable for such establishment to be located within the agricultural area as opposed to areas zoned for commercial or industrial usage.

An Agricultural Service Establishment is defined by Section 21.12.030 of the Stanislaus County Zoning Ordinance as meaning “a business engaging in activities designed to aid production agriculture. Service does not include the provision of tangible goods except those sold directly to farmers and used specifically to aid in production of farm animals or crops. Nor does service include any business which has the primary function of manufacturing products.” Production agriculture is defined by Section 21.12.495 as meaning “agriculture for the purpose of producing any and all plant and animal commodities for commercial purposes.” Section 21.20.030(B)(3)(a) recognizes agricultural service establishments as a Tier Two use when primarily engaging in the provision of agricultural services to farmers and when such establishments are designed to serve the immediately surrounding area as opposed to having a widespread service area.

As detailed in the project description, the project will operate as an irrigation supply business primarily for farmers engaged in production agriculture located within the areas of Vernalis, Westley, South Tracy, and West Modesto. Neither the County’s General Plan nor Zoning Ordinance define the appropriate service area for an agricultural service establishment and, as such, each proposed use must be individually assessed. It is staff’s belief that the stated service area could meet the requirement of serving the immediately surrounding area.

In addition to the findings outlined above, the following finding is required for approval of any use permit:

- The establishment, maintenance, and operation of the proposed use or building applied for is consistent with the General Plan and will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, be detrimental to the health, safety, and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the use and that it will not be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the County.

The project site is also enrolled under Williamson Act Contract No. 1977-2782. County Code Section 21.20.045, in compliance with Government Code Section 51238.1, specifies that uses approved on contracted lands shall be consistent with three principles of compatibility. Those principles state that the proposed use shall be consistent with the following principles of compatibility:

- 1) The use will not significantly compromise the long-term productive agricultural capability of the subject contracted parcel or parcels or on other contracted lands in the A-2 zoning district.
- 2) The use will not significantly displace or impair current or reasonably foreseeable agricultural operations on the subject contracted parcel or parcels or on other contracted lands in the A-2 zoning district. Uses that significantly displace agricultural operations on

the subject contracted parcel or parcels may be deemed compatible if they relate directly to the production of commercial agricultural products on the subject contracted parcel or parcels or neighboring lands, including activities such as harvesting, processing, or shipping.

- 3) The use will not result in the significant removal of adjacent contracted land from agricultural or open-space use.

Within the A-2 zoning district, the County has determined Tier Two uses shall be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Planning Commission and/or Board of Supervisors to determine whether they are consistent with the principles of compatibility set forth in Section 21.20.045 of the County Code. Based on the specific features and design of this project, it does not appear this project will impact the long-term productive agricultural capability of surrounding contracted lands in the A-2 zoning district. The project itself directly relates to the production of agricultural products as it proposes to supply farmers engaged in production agriculture with irrigation materials. There is no indication this project will result in the removal of adjacent contracted land from agricultural use. In response to a project referral, the Department of Conservation (DOC) recommended the use of permanent agricultural conservation easements, on land of at least equal quality and size, to compensate for the loss of agricultural land. Given that the warehouses are existing, and no agricultural production is proposed to be removed as part of this request, Planning staff considers the project to meet the principles of compatibility for the Williamson Act. The proposed use is considered to primarily be in support of production agriculture, specifically farming operations as the proposed irrigation supply business will directly serve farmers engaged in production agriculture.

Staff believes the establishment as proposed will not be substantially detrimental to or in conflict with agricultural use of other property in the vicinity, nor be detrimental to the health, safety, property or improvements and the general welfare of persons within the surrounding area of use and the County as a whole; the proposed use will not create a concentration of commercial or industrial uses in the vicinity; and that all findings required for approval can be made.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

An environmental assessment for the project has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The assessment included preparation of an Initial Study (see Exhibit D – *Initial Study*). Pursuant to CEQA, the proposed project was circulated to interested parties and responsible agencies for review and comment and no significant issues were raised (see Exhibit F – *Environmental Review Referrals*).

A Negative Declaration has been prepared for approval prior to action on the project itself as the project will not have a significant effect on the environment (see Exhibit E – *Negative Declaration*). Conditions of approval reflecting referral responses have been placed on the project (see Exhibit C – *Conditions of Approval*).

Note: Pursuant to California Fish and Game Code Section 711.4, all project applicants subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) shall pay a filing fee for each project;

therefore, the applicant will further be required to pay **\$2,973.75** for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (formerly the Department of Fish and Game) and the Clerk-Recorder filing fees. The attached Conditions of Approval ensure that this will occur.

Contact Person: Emily DeAnda, Associate Planner, (209) 525-6330

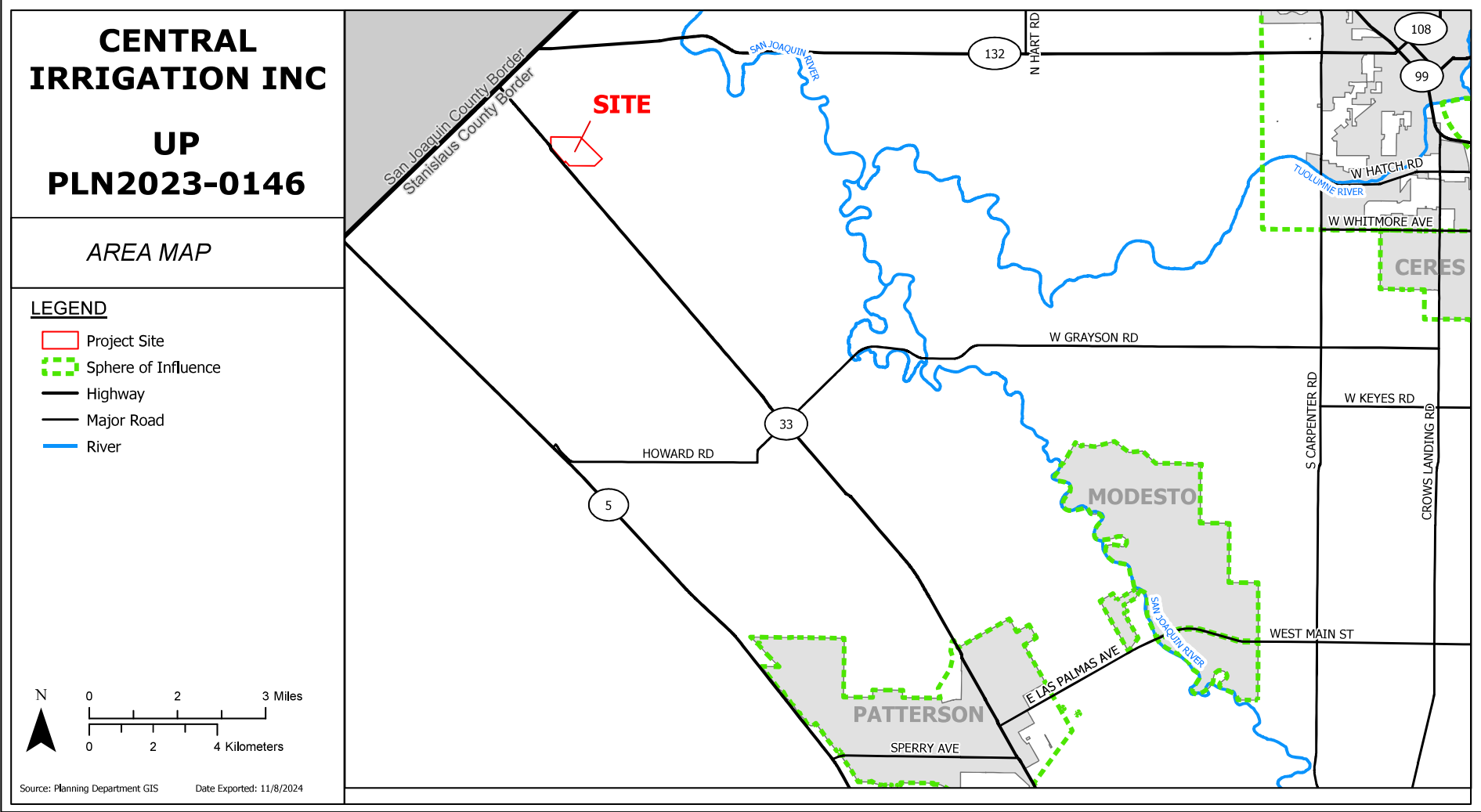
Attachments:

- Exhibit A - Findings and Actions Required for Project Approval
- Exhibit B - Maps, Plans, and Elevations
- Exhibit C - Conditions of Approval
- Exhibit D - Initial Study
- Exhibit E - Negative Declaration
- Exhibit F - Environmental Review Referrals

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Findings and Actions Required for Project Approval

1. Adopt the Negative Declaration pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15074(b), by finding that on the basis of the whole record, including the Initial Study and any comments received, that there is no substantial evidence the project will have a significant effect on the environment and that the Negative Declaration reflects Stanislaus County's independent judgment and analysis.
2. Order the filing of a Notice of Determination with the Stanislaus County Clerk-Recorder's Office pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21152 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15075.
3. Find that:
 - a. The establishment, maintenance, and operation of the proposed use or building applied for is consistent with the General Plan designation of "Agriculture" and will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, be detrimental to the health, safety, and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the use and that it will not be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the County.
 - b. The use will not significantly compromise the long-term productive agricultural capability of the subject contracted parcel or parcels or on other contracted lands in the A-2 zoning district.
 - c. The use will not significantly displace or impair current or reasonably foreseeable agricultural operations on the subject contracted parcel or parcels or on other contracted lands in the A-2 zoning district. Uses that significantly displace agricultural operations on the subject contracted parcel or parcels may be deemed compatible if they relate directly to the production of commercial agricultural products on the subject contracted parcel or parcels or neighboring lands, including activities such as harvesting, processing, or shipping.
 - d. The use will not result in the significant removal of adjacent contracted land from agricultural or open-space use.
 - e. The use as proposed will not be substantially detrimental to or in conflict with agricultural use of other property in the vicinity.
 - f. The use as proposed will not create a concentration of commercial and industrial uses in the vicinity.
 - g. It is desirable for such establishment to be located within the agricultural area as opposed to areas zoned for commercial or industrial usage.
 - h. That the proposed Tier Two use is "low-people intensive" and not subject to the agricultural buffer.
4. Approve Use Permit Application No. PLN2023-0146 – Central Irrigation, Inc. subject to the attached Conditions of Approval.



CENTRAL IRRIGATION, INC.

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PLN2023-0146

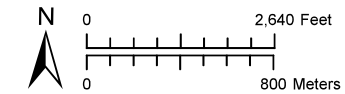
GENERAL PLAN MAP

LEGEND

- Parcel
- Road
- Canal

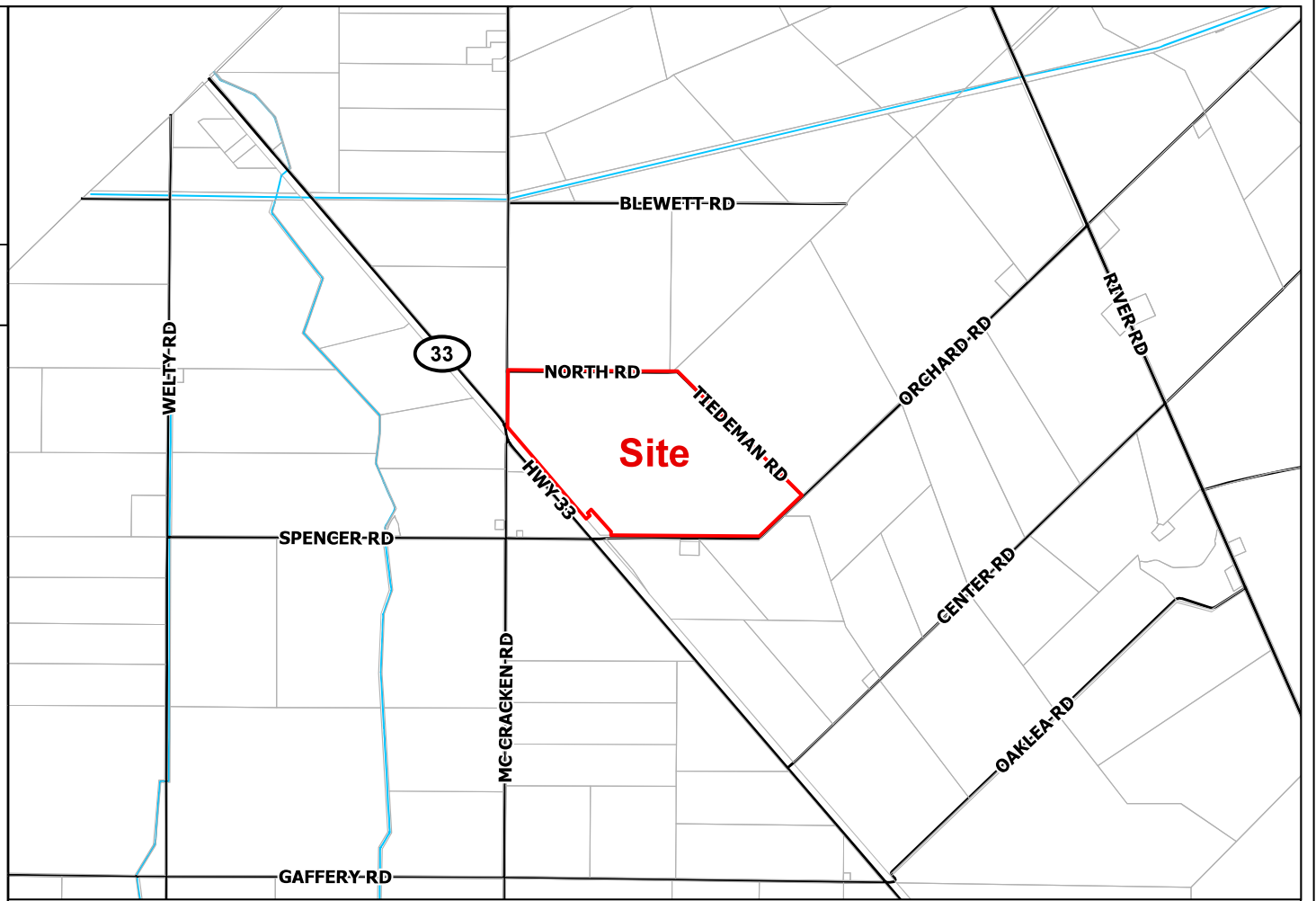
General Plan

- Agriculture
- Project Site



Source: Planning Department GIS

Date Exported: 11/20/2023




CENTRAL IRRIGATION, INC.

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PLN2023-0146


ZONING MAP

LEGEND

 County Boundary

 Project Site

 Parcel

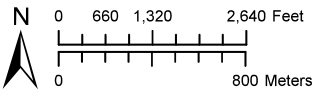
 Road

 Canal

Zoning Designation

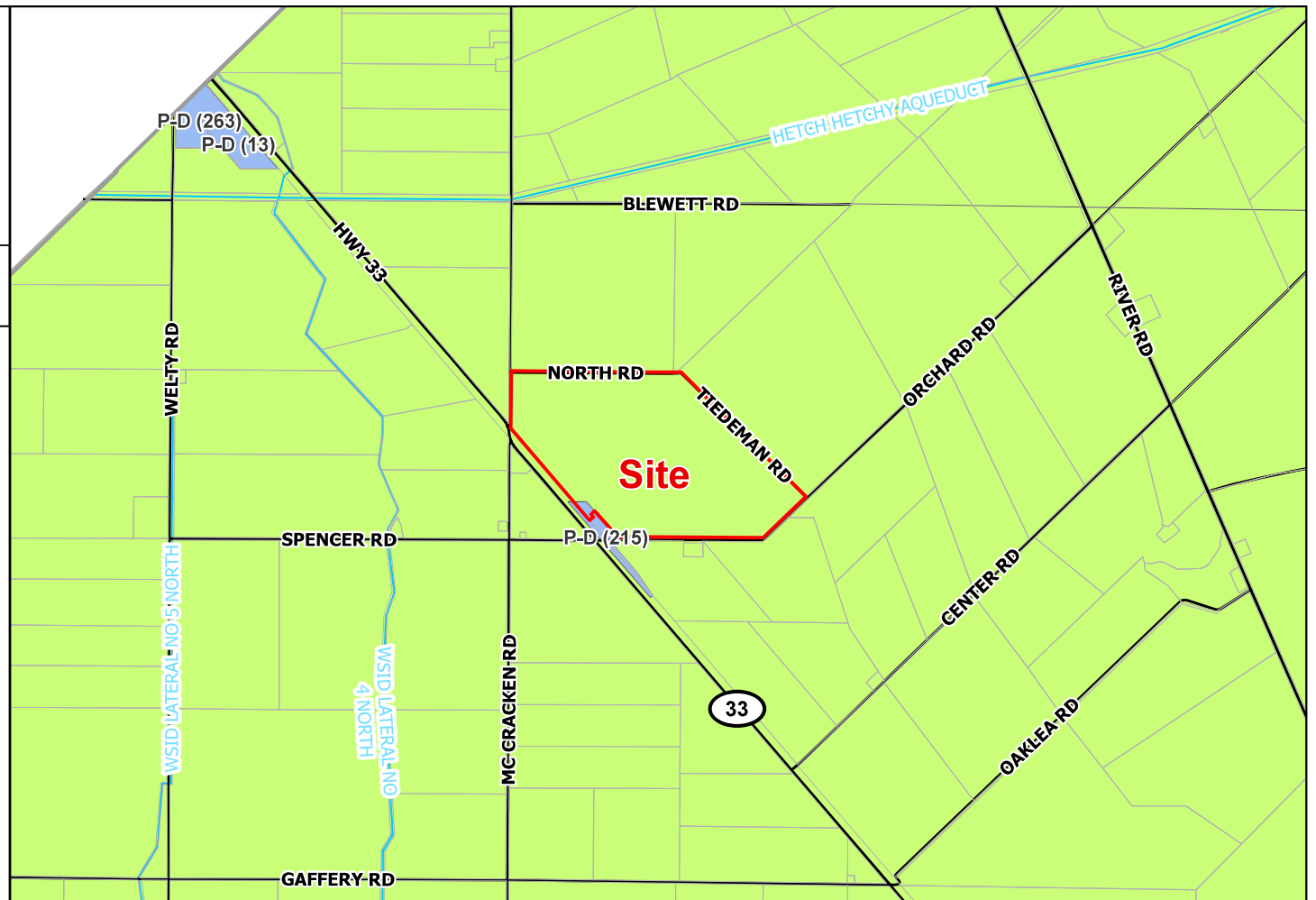
 General AG 40 Acre

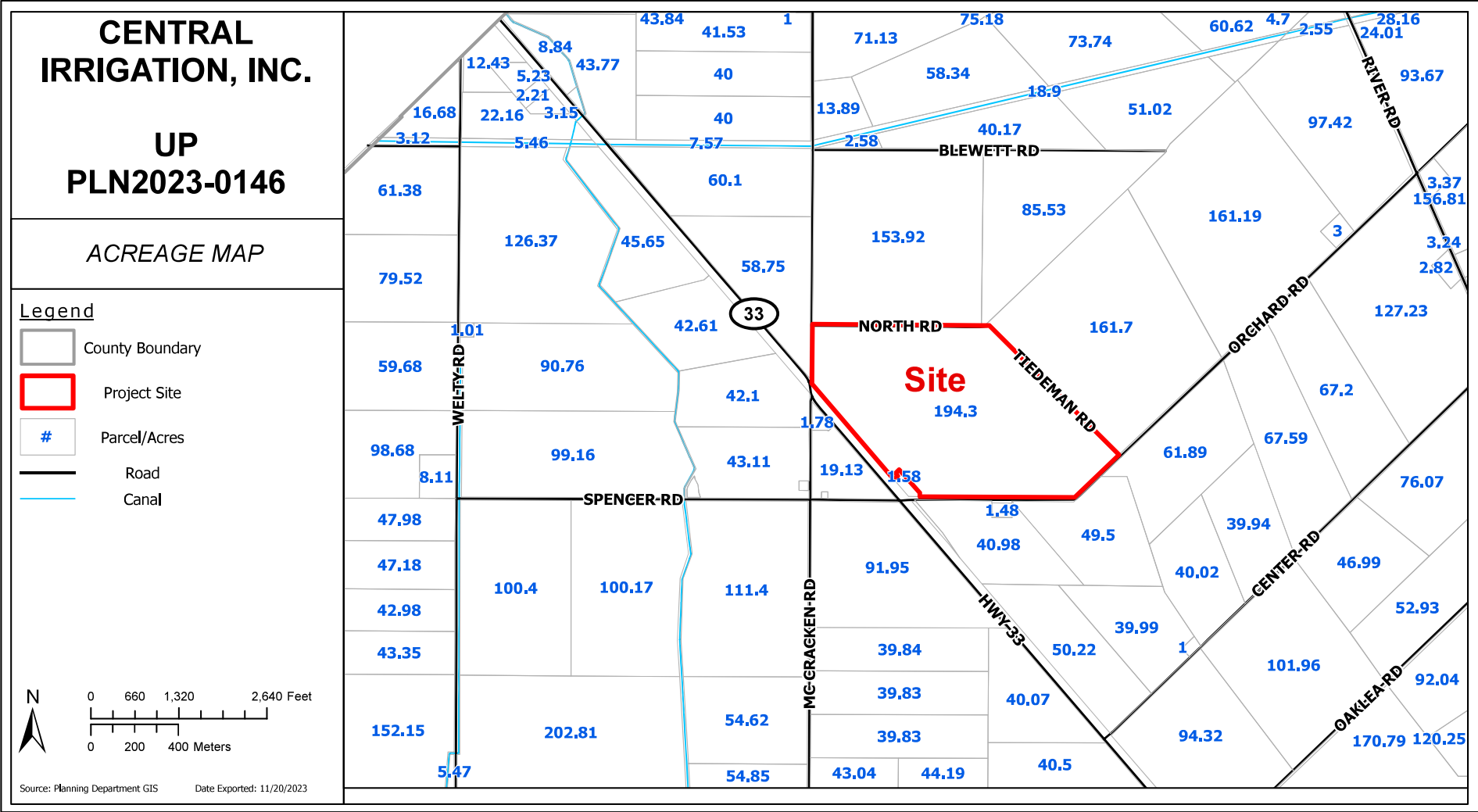
 Planned Development



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Date Exported: 11/20/2023











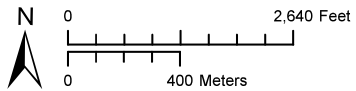
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AERIAL AREA MAP

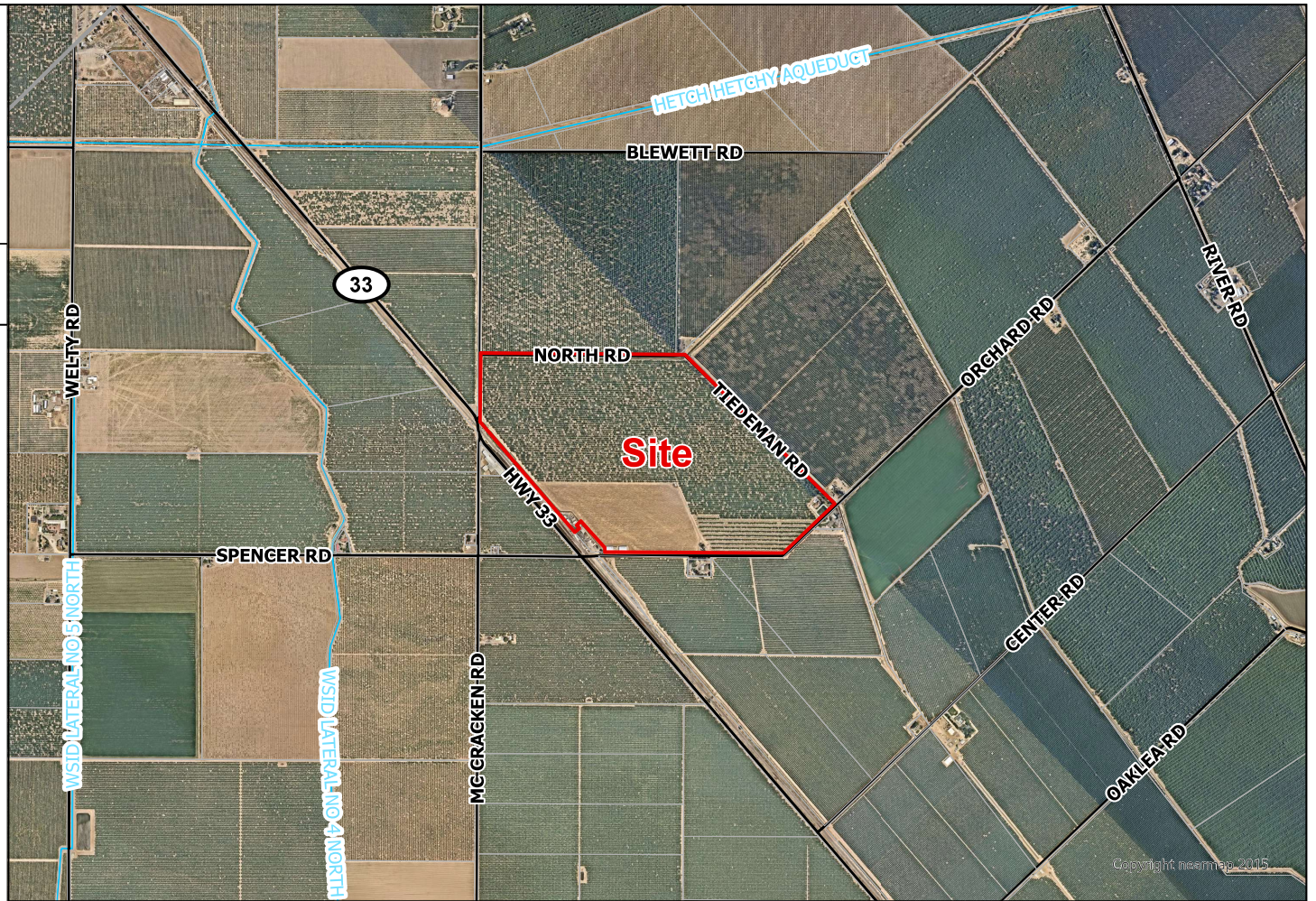
LEGEND

-
-  County Boundary
 Project Site
 Parcel
 Road
 Canal
 Rivers



Source: Planning Department GIS

Date Exported: 11/20/2023









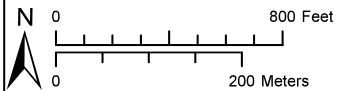
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IRRIGATION, INC.**

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AERIAL SITE MAP

LEGEND

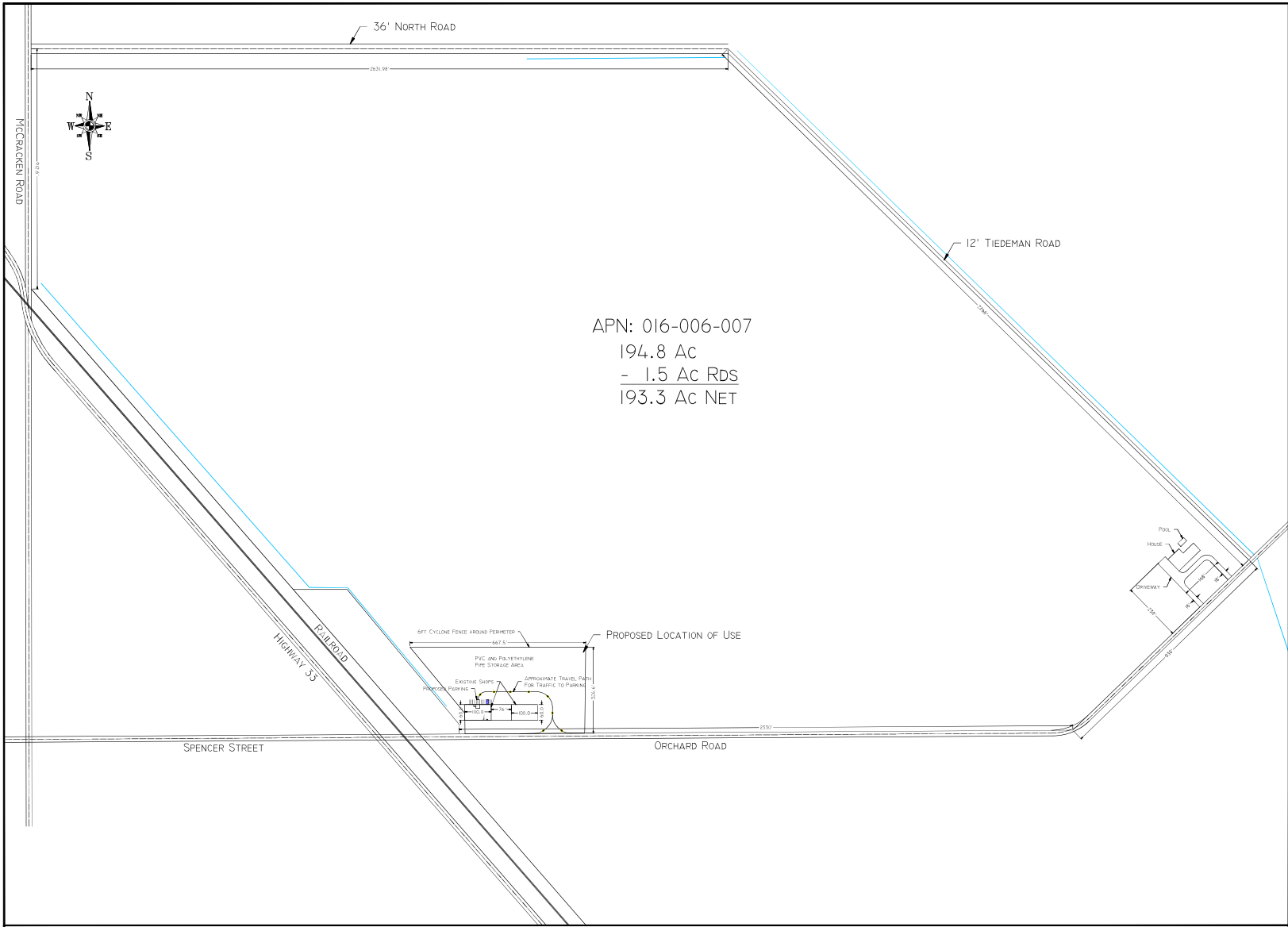
-  County Boundary
-  Project Site
-  Parcel
-  Road
-  Canal
-  Rivers




Source: Planning Department GIS

Date Exported: 11/20/2023





APN: 016-006-007
194.8 Ac
- 1.5 AC RDS
193.3 AC NET




2941 LOS BANDOS HWY., MERCED, CA 95361 (209) 262-3723
LICENSE NUMBER: 1067538

REVISIONS	
DATE	DESIGNER
5/14/24	GRANT D

LEGEND	
△	HOME
△	SHOP
△	BARN

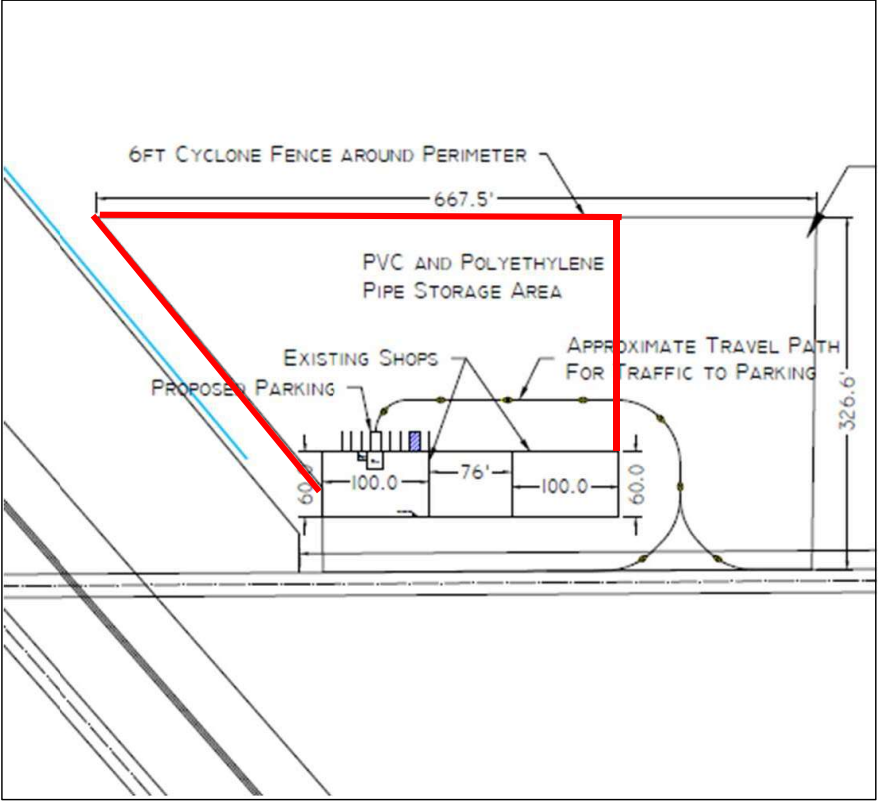
DESIGN BY: GRANT DOERKSEN
ORIGINAL DATE: 10/2/2023

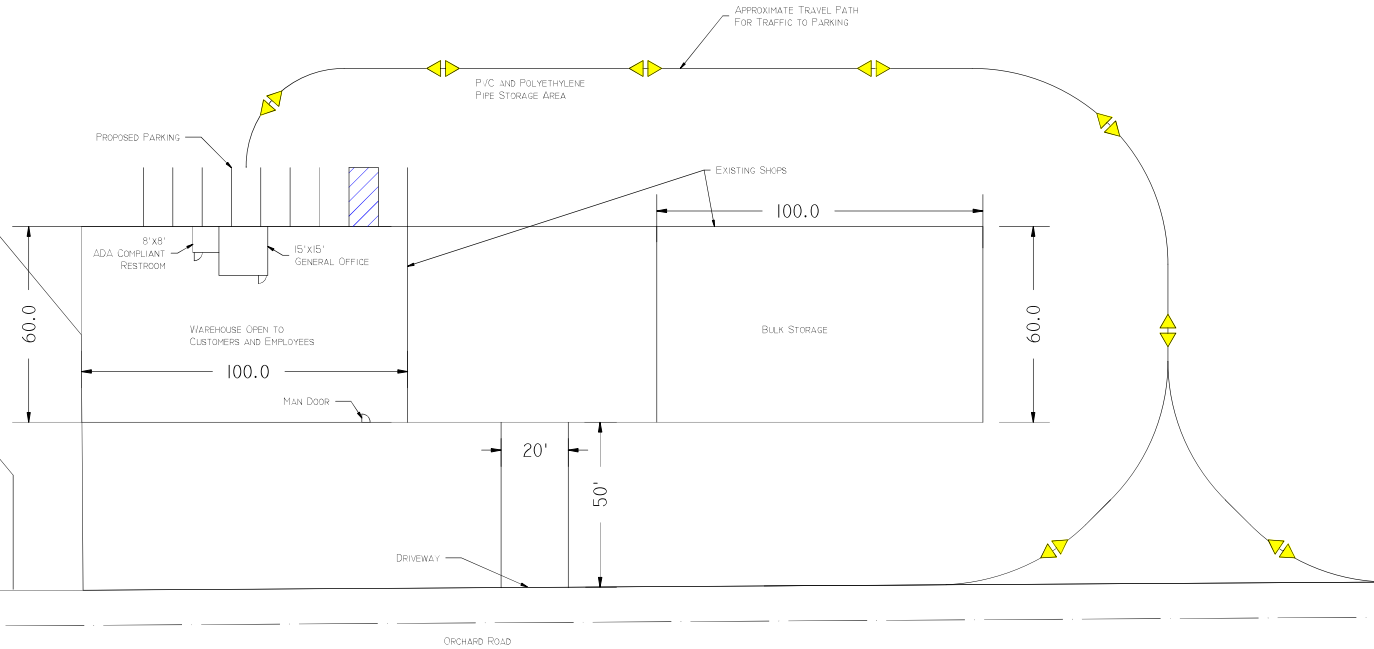


Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

PRINT DATE: 05/14/24 08:12

Proposed 6-foot-tall
chain link fencing in red —





LEGEND		REVISIONS	
Δ	HOME	DATE	DESIGNER
Δ	SHOP	5/14/24	GRANT D.
Δ	BARN		

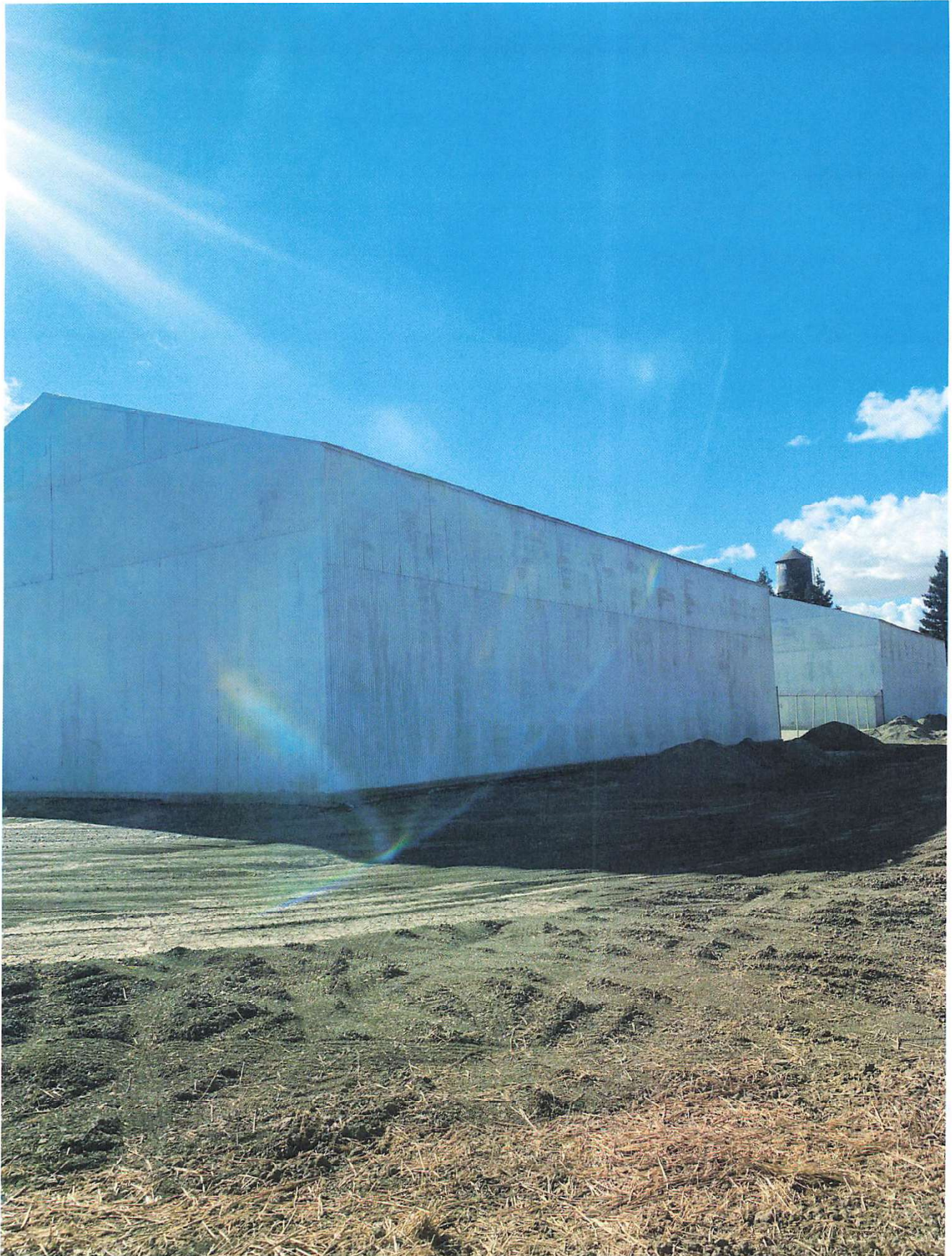
PREPARED BY: **GRANT DOERKSEN P.E.**
ADDRESS: 2941 LOS BANOS HWY.,
MERCED, CA 95361
TEL: (209) 535-0086
EMAIL: GRANT@CENTRALIRRIGATION.COM

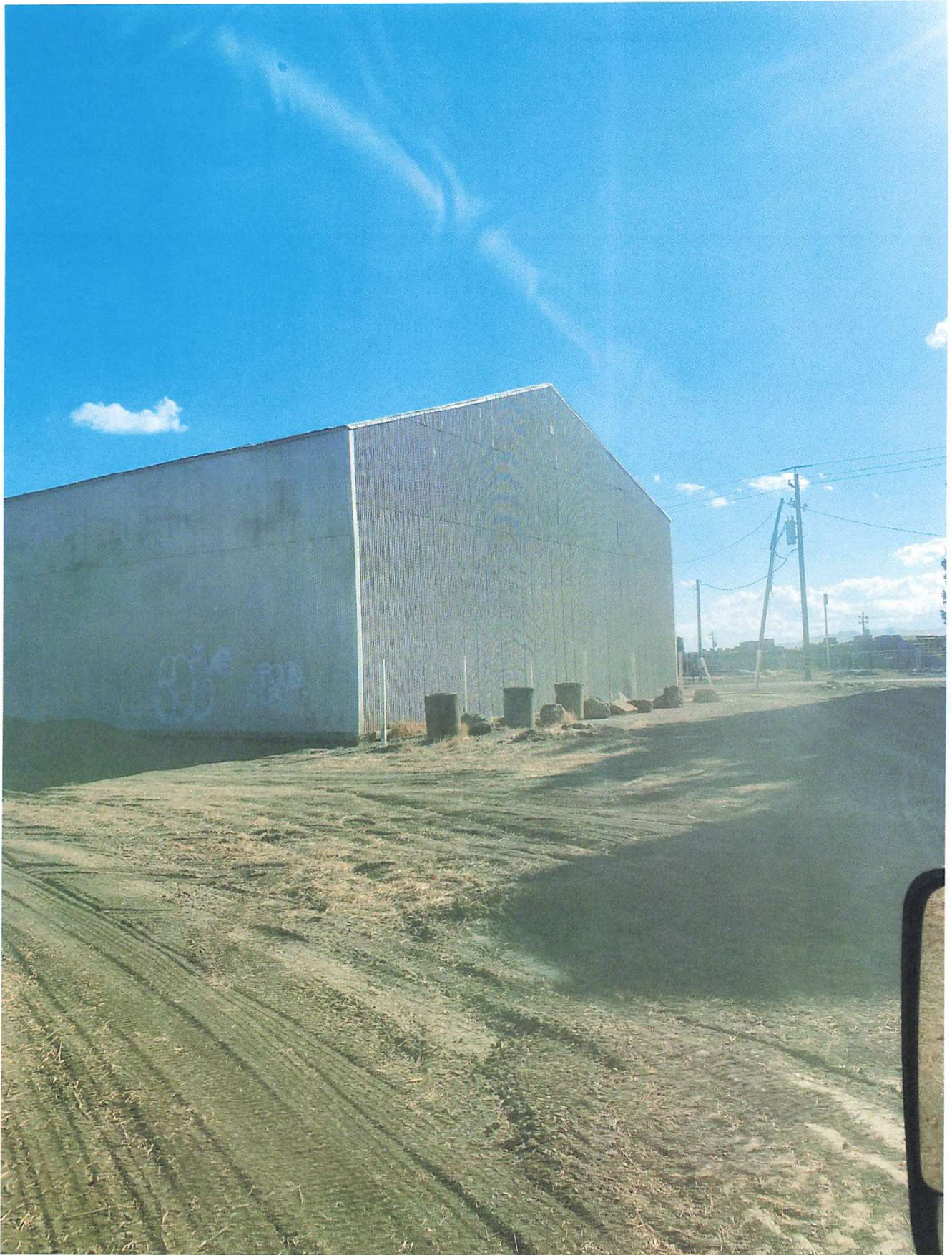
PREPARED FOR: STANISLAUS COUNTY
LOCATION: VERNALIS, CA

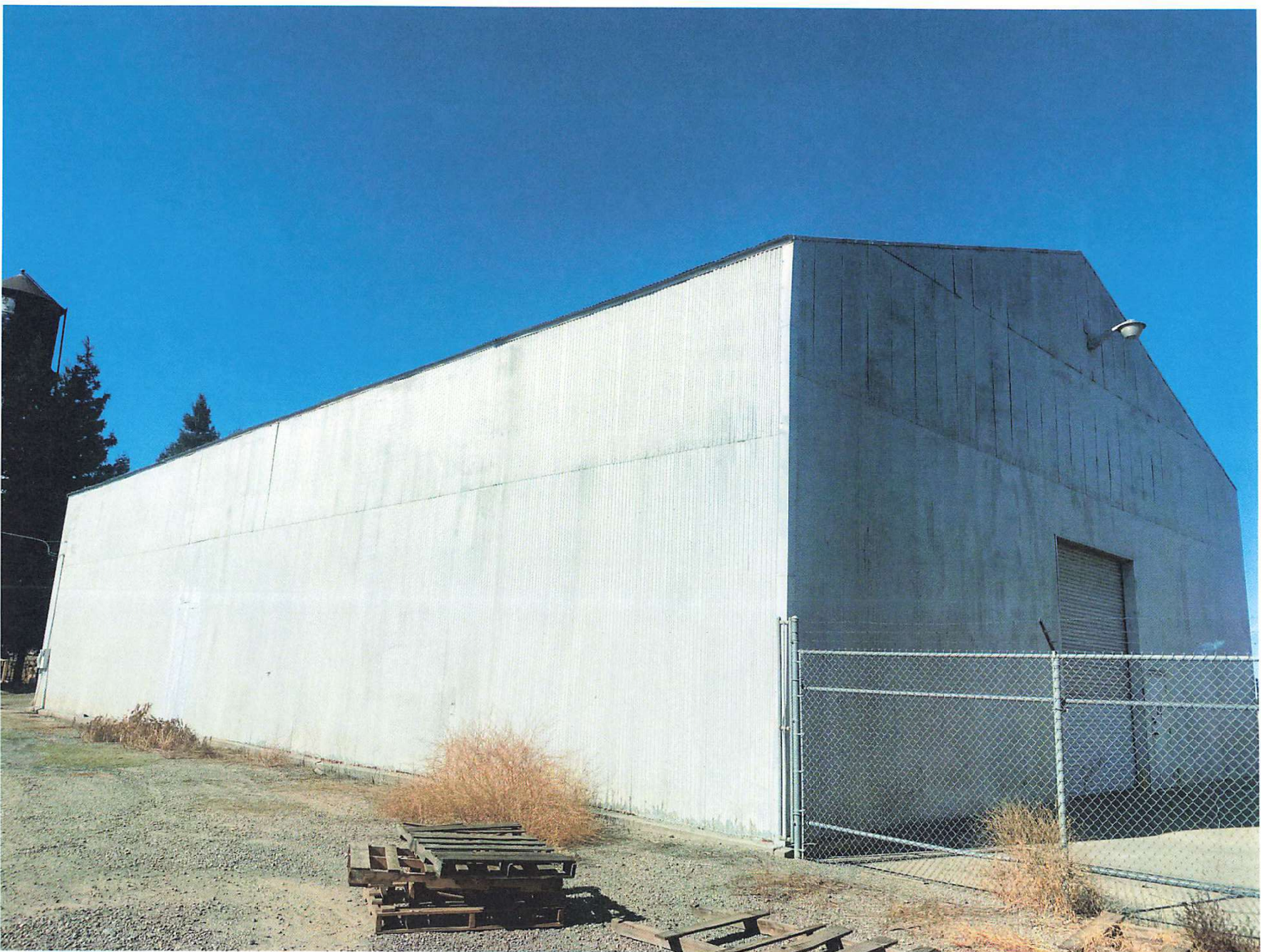
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ORIGINAL DATE: 10/2/2023







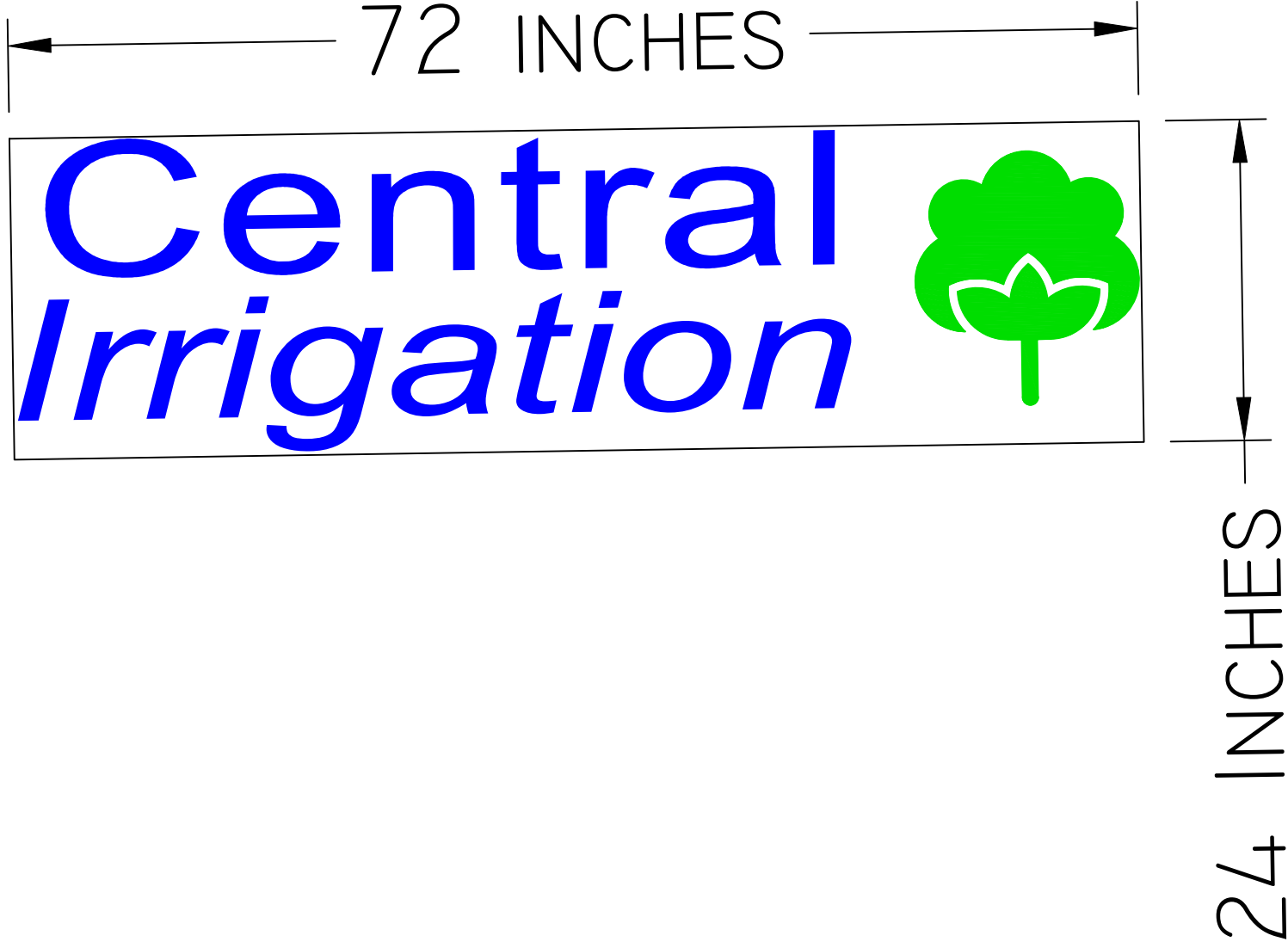












NOTE: Approval of this application is valid only if the following conditions are met. This permit shall expire unless activated within 18 months of the date of approval. In order to activate the permit, it must be signed by the applicant and one of the following actions must occur: (a) a valid building permit must be obtained to construct the necessary structures and appurtenances; or, (b) the property must be used for the purpose for which the permit is granted. (Stanislaus County Ordinance 21.104.030)

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

USE PERMIT APPLICATION NO. PLN2023-0146 CENTRAL IRRIGATION, INC.

Department of Planning and Community Development

1. Use(s) shall be conducted as described in the application and supporting information (including the plot plan) as approved by the Planning Commission and/or Board of Supervisors and in accordance with other laws and ordinances.
2. Pursuant to Section 711.4 of the California Fish and Game Code, the applicant is required to pay a California Department of Fish and Wildlife (formerly the Department of Fish and Game) fee at the time of filing a "Notice of Determination." Within five (5) days of approval of this project by the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors, the applicant shall submit to the Department of Planning and Community Development a check for **\$2,973.75**, made payable to **Stanislaus County**, for the payment of California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Clerk-Recorder filing fees.

Pursuant to Section 711.4 (e) (3) of the California Fish and Game Code, no project shall be operative, vested, or final, nor shall local government permits for the project be valid, until the filing fees required pursuant to this section are paid.

3. Developer shall pay all Public Facilities Impact Fees and Fire Facilities Fees as adopted by Resolution of the Board of Supervisors. The fees shall be payable at the time of issuance of a building permit for any construction in the development project and shall be based on the rates in effect at the time of building permit issuance.
4. The applicant/owner is required to defend, indemnify, or hold harmless the County, its officers, and employees from any claim, action, or proceedings against the County to set aside the approval of the project which is brought within the applicable statute of limitations. The County shall promptly notify the applicant of any claim, action, or proceeding to set aside the approval and shall cooperate fully in the defense.
5. The Department of Planning and Community Development shall record a Notice of Administrative Conditions and Restrictions with the County Recorder's Office within 30 days of project approval. The Notice includes: Conditions of Approval and a project area map.
6. All exterior lighting shall be designed (aimed down and toward the site) to provide adequate illumination without a glare effect. This shall include, but not be limited to, the use of shielded light fixtures to prevent skyglow (light spilling into the night sky) and the

installation of shielded fixtures to prevent light trespass (glare and spill light that shines onto neighboring properties). The height of the lighting fixtures should not exceed 15 feet above grade.

7. No operations shall be conducted on any premises in such a manner as to cause an unreasonable amount of noise, odor, dust, smoke, vibration, or electrical interference detectable off the site.
8. The applicant shall obtain and maintain a valid Stanislaus County Business License for the facility.
9. A sign plan including the location, height, and area of the sign(s) shall be approved by the Planning Director, or appointed designee, prior to sign installation and/or replacement. Signage shall be limited to the following:
 - a. One monument sign not more than 12 square-feet in area nor more than six feet in height within the setback area.
 - b. One wall sign, not exceeding 12 square feet in size on a warehouse.
 - c. Directional signs, as approved by the Planning Director, or appointed designee, for size and placement, without limit on number.

All signage shall be non-flashing, non-animated, and nonmoving. Temporary signs including banner signs shall not be permitted.

10. All outside storage shall be screened from the view of any public right-of-way by a screen fence of uniform construction or landscaping as approved by the Planning Director.

Department of Public Works

11. No parking, loading or unloading of vehicles will be permitted within the County Road right-of-way.
12. The developer will be required to install or pay for the installation of any signs and/or markings, if warranted.
13. An Encroachment Permit shall be obtained for driveway approaches at all point of ingress and egress on the project site and any other work done within the County right-of-way. All driveway locations and widths shall be approved by the Department of Public Works.

Department of Environmental Resources

14. Prior to issuance of any building or grading permit, the applicant shall submit a site plan that includes the location of any on-site water wells, and the location, layout and design of the existing on-site wastewater treatment system (OWTS) and the future 100% expansion (replacement) area. The applicants shall demonstrate and secure any necessary permits

for the destruction/relocation of all on-site OWTs and/or water wells impacted or proposed by this project, under the direction of the Stanislaus County Department of Environmental Resources (DER). All applicable County Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) standards and required setbacks are to be met.

15. Prior to issuance of any building permit for the proposed project, DER shall review updated documentation from the applicant to determine whether the proposed project qualifies as a new Public Water System subject to SB1263 and may require a Water Supply Permit to be issued by the Local Primacy Agency (Department of Environmental Resources).

Department of Environmental Resources – Hazardous Resources Division

16. The applicant shall contact the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) regarding any discovery of underground storage tanks, former underground storage tank locations, buried chemicals, buried refuse, or contaminated soil, and appropriate permitting requirements for hazardous materials, and/or wastes. The applicant and/or occupants handling hazardous materials or generating wastes must notify the DER prior to operation.

Building Permits Division

17. Building permits are required for the restroom and office improvements in the western warehouse, and for a change in occupancy for both warehouses prior to operation. The project shall conform with the California Code of Regulations, Title 24.

West Stanislaus County Fire Protection District (WSCFPD)

18. Prior to issuance of a building permit, the project shall comply with all WSCFPD standards regarding access and water for fire suppression.

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD)

19. Any construction resulting from this project shall comply with standardized dust controls adopted by the SJVAPCD and may be subject to additional regulations/permits, as determined by the SJVAPCD.
20. Prior to final of any building permit for the proposed use, the applicant shall contact the SJVAPCD to determine if a Permit to Operate or Authority to Construct (ACT) must be issued to the project proponent by the SJVAPCD.
21. Prior to the start of construction, the property owner/operator shall contact the SJVAPCD to determine if any SJVAPCD rules or permits are required, including, but not limited to, Regulation VIII (Fugitive PM10 Prohibitions), Rule 4601 (Architectural Coatings), and Rule 4641 (Cutback, Slow Cure, and Emulsified Asphalt, Paving, and Maintenance Operations).

California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)

22. Prior to any construction, the applicant shall contact and coordinate with the Regional Water Quality Control Board to determine if any permits or Water Board requirements shall be obtained/met prior to operation.

Please note: If Conditions of Approval/Development Standards are amended by the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors, such amendments will be noted in the upper right-hand corner of the Conditions of Approval/Development Standards; new wording will be in bold font and deleted wording will be in strikethrough text.



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1010 10TH Street, Suite 3400, Modesto, CA 95354
Planning Phone: (209) 525-6330 Fax: (209) 525-5911
Building Phone: (209) 525-6557 Fax: (209) 525-7759

CEQA INITIAL STUDY

Adapted from CEQA Guidelines APPENDIX G Environmental Checklist Form, Final Text, January 1, 2020

1. **Project title:** Use Permit Application No. PLN2023-0146 – Central Irrigation, Inc.
2. **Lead agency name and address:** Stanislaus County
1010 10th Street, Suite 3400
Modesto, CA 95354
3. **Contact person and phone number:** Emily DeAnda, Associate Planner
(209) 525-6330
4. **Project location:** 117 Orchard Road, State Route 33 and River Road, in the Vernalis area (APN: 016-006-007).
5. **Project sponsor's name and address:** Keith Yamamoto, Central Irrigation, Inc.
2941 Los Banos Highway, Merced, CA 95341
6. **Williamson Act Contract:** 1977-2782
7. **General Plan designation:** Agriculture
8. **Zoning:** General Agriculture (A-2-40)
9. **Description of project:**

This is a request to operate an agricultural irrigation supply business within two existing 5,000± square-foot agricultural storage buildings on a 3.5±-acre portion of a 194.8-acre parcel in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district. The irrigation business will serve as a wholesale warehouse for delivery or pickup of irrigation materials by agricultural customers. The existing agricultural storage buildings will be utilized as warehouses to store PVC pipe, drip irrigation hoses, and other irrigation components to be sold directly to farmers. Additional storage of material will be stored outdoors adjacent to the northernly edge of each building. The 3.5±-acre area comprised of outdoor storage, and the warehouses will be enclosed by a six-foot-tall chain-link fence. The warehouses and outdoor storage areas are located at the southwest corner of the parcel, fronting County-maintained Orchard Road. Each warehouse sits on a concrete slab with the area between the warehouses is enclosed by an existing chain-link fence. The project proposes a tenant improvement to the western warehouse by adding an office and employee restroom. The project site has access to Orchard Road via two driveways, one paved located between the two warehouses and one unpaved east of the eastern warehouse. The primary areas served for agricultural customers will consist of Vernalis, Westley, South Tracy, and West Modesto. The business will be open Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The operation will consist of a maximum of three people on a single shift with an estimated number of customers per-day at 15, with ten on-site at peak times between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. One truck trip for deliveries to the business is anticipated per-day, and up to four truck trips for customer deliveries are expected per-day. The project site is also developed with a 1,440 square-foot wooden barn adjacent to the southern property line of the parcel, and a 2,777± square-foot single-family dwelling with a 1,394 square-foot garage and swimming pool are located at the southeastern edge of the parcel. Proposed signage includes a wall sign on the south facing side of the western warehouse, and a banner to be located on the proposed fencing around the warehouses adjacent to Orchard Road. As part of this request, the applicant proposes seven parking stalls to the north of the western warehouse. No landscaping is proposed. Existing on-site lighting includes a dusk to dawn light on the east end of the eastern warehouse. Additional lighting including an LED light to be hung on the corrugated siding of the warehouses is proposed to be installed and hang at a height of roughly 12-feet from the ground. The applicant proposes to drill a new domestic well and install a new septic system to serve the proposed employee restroom within the western most warehouse.

10. **Surrounding land uses and setting:** Agricultural parcels planted in almond, walnut trees and alfalfa in all directions; San Joaquin County and a modular trailer manufacturing operation to the north; wood pallet manufacturing, composting operations, and a legal but non-conforming (LNC) agriculture storage facility to the west; and the San Joaquin River to the east.
11. **Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement.):** Stanislaus County Department of Public Works
Stanislaus County Department of Environmental Resources
12. **Attachments:** None

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a “Potentially Significant Impact” as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture & Forestry Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geology / Soils | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology / Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☒ I find that the proposed project **COULD NOT** have a significant effect on the environment, and a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.
- ☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment, and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a “potentially significant impact” or “potentially significant unless mitigated” impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- ☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION**, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature on File

Prepared by Emily DeAnda Associate Planner

September 16, 2024

Date

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except “No Impact” answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A “No Impact” answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).

2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.

3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. “Potentially Significant Impact” is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impact” entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.

4) “Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated” applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact.” The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from Section XVII, “Earlier Analyses,” may be cross-referenced).

5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration.

Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:

a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.

b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.

c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are “Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated,” describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.

6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). References to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.

7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.

8) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project’s environmental effects in whatever format is selected.

9) The explanation of each issue should identify:

a) the significant criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and

b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significant.

ISSUES

I. AESTHETICS – Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, could the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?			X	
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?			X	
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?			X	
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?			X	

Discussion: The site itself is not considered to be a scenic resource or unique scenic vista. The site is currently developed with the two 5,000± square-foot agricultural storage buildings, a 1,440 square-foot wooden barn, a 2,777± square-foot single-family dwelling, a 1,394 square-foot garage, and swimming pool. The balance of the project site is planted in almond trees. The agricultural storage buildings will be used as warehouses as part of this request to store irrigation components. Additional storage of material will be stored outside, directly north of each building, enclosed by a six-foot-tall chain-link fence. The applicant proposes seven parking stalls to the north of the warehouses behind the western warehouse. The warehouses and storage are located at the southwest corner of the parcel, fronting County-maintained Orchard Road. Each warehouse sits on a concrete slab with the area between the buildings enclosed by a chain-link fence. A building permit to add an office and employee restroom to one of the warehouses is proposed. The only designated scenic highway in the County is along I-5, which is approximately 3.5± miles west of the project site but outside of line-of-sight of the project site. The site itself is not considered to be a scenic resource or a unique vista. Proposed signage includes a wall sign on the south facing-side of the western warehouse, and a banner to be located on the proposed fencing adjacent to Orchard Road that is proposed around the warehouses. Building permits will be required for the proposed on-site signage. Existing on-site lighting includes a dusk to dawn light on the east end of the eastern warehouse. Additional lighting including an LED light to be hung on the corrugated siding of the warehouses is proposed to be installed and hang at a height of roughly 12-feet from the ground. Standard conditions of approval will be added to this project to address glare from any on-site lighting. Additionally, conditions of approval will be added to the project for privacy slats to be installed for the proposed chain-link fence around outside storage areas in order to fully screen the storage of materials from view from the public right-of-way and adjoining properties prior to operation. No landscaping is proposed as part of this request.

With conditions of approval in place, the project is not expected to degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site or its surroundings. No adverse impacts to the existing visual character of the site or its surroundings are anticipated.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Stanislaus County Zoning Ordinance; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

II. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES: In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?			X	
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?			X	
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?				X
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				X
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?			X	

Discussion: The 194.8±-acre project site is enrolled under Williamson Act Contract No. 1977-2782 and is classified as "Prime Farmland" and the area developed with the warehouses is classified as "Semi-Agricultural and Rural Commercial Land" by the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS) Web Soil Survey indicates that three-quarters of the project site is comprised of Capay clay, with a grade of 4, 0 to 1 percent slopes (MRLA 17) (California Revised Storie Index Rating: 35). The remaining one-quarter of the parcel is comprised of the following soils: El Solyo silty clay loam, with a grade of 1, 0 to 2 percent slopes (California Revised Storie Index Rating: 95); Stomar clay loam, with a grade of 1, 0 to 2 percent slopes (California Revised Storie Index Rating: 90); and Vernalis-Zacharias complex, with a grade of 1, 0 to 2 percent slopes (California Revised Storie Index Rating: 95). The California Revised Storie Index is a rating system based on soil properties that dictate the potential for soils to be used for irrigated agricultural production in California. This rating system rates the site's soils as an index rating of 35 as poor, and 90 and 95 as excellent. Stanislaus County considers land that meets at least one of the following requirements to be prime farmland under the Uniform Rules: parcels comprised of Grade 1 or 2 soils; irrigated pastureland which supports livestock used for the production of food and fiber; and land used for unprocessed agricultural plant production with an annual gross value of not less than eight hundred dollars per acre. The project site meets the definition of prime farmland under the County's Uniform Rules as the parcel is planted almost entirely in almond trees. The proposed project will not convert any Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use as the use is related to agriculture, can reasonably be returned to production

agriculture in the future and the area developed with the warehouses is current considered to be "Semi-Agricultural and Rural Commercial Land" by the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.

The project site receives irrigated water from the El Solyo Irrigation District and is within the service boundaries of the District. The project was referred to the District; however, no comments were received. A condition of approval will be applied to the project requiring any development that impacts irrigation facilities to meet the District's requirements.

The project site has general plan designation of Agriculture and Zoning Destination of General Agriculture (A-2-40). Within the A-2 zoning district, the County has determined that certain uses related to agricultural production are "necessary for a healthy agricultural economy." The County allows agriculture service establishments, which are agriculture-related commercial and industrial uses by obtaining a Tier Two Use Permit if specific criteria can be met and if specific findings can be made. Those findings include that the establishment, as proposed, will not be substantially detrimental to, or in conflict with, the agricultural use of other property in the vicinity; that the use is necessary and desirable for such establishment to be located within the agricultural area as opposed to areas zoned for commercial or industrial usage; and that it will not create a concentration of commercial and industrial uses in the vicinity. Agricultural service establishments under a Tier Two Use Permit must also serve the immediately surrounding area, or local agriculture and customers, as opposed to having a widespread service area. In addition, the Planning Commission must find that the establishment, maintenance, and operation of the proposed use is consistent with the General Plan and will not be detrimental to the health, safety, and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the use and that it will not be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the County. The project proposes to utilize the existing agricultural storage buildings as warehouses to operate a wholesale irrigation supply business. The wholesale operation will provide irrigation components for delivery and pickup by farmers located in Stanislaus and San Joaquin counties. The facility will have three employees and expects 15 customers per-day. Up to 18 vehicle trips are anticipated per-day for customers and employees. One truck trip for deliveries to the business is anticipated per-day, and up to four truck trips for customer deliveries are expected per-day. The business will be open Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The request is not expected to create a concentration of commercial and industrial uses in the vicinity or perpetuate any significant conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or impact agricultural operations. The project as proposed would be considered a Tier Two use.

County Code Section 21.20.045, in compliance with Government Code Section 51238.1, specifies that uses approved on contracted lands shall be consistent with three principles of compatibility. Those principles state that the proposed use shall not significantly compromise, displace, impair, or remove current or reasonably foreseeable agricultural operations on the subject contracted parcel(s) or on other contracted lands in the A-2 zoning district. The project as proposed is considered a Tier Two use. Within the A-2 zoning district, the County has determined Tier Two uses shall be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Planning Commission and/or Board of Supervisors to determine whether they are consistent with the principles of compatibility set forth in Section 21.20.045 of the County Code. During project review, this application was referred to the Department of Conservation (DOC) for review and input and no response has been received to date.

The surrounding area is comprised of agricultural parcels planted in almond and walnut trees and alfalfa in all directions; San Joaquin County and a modular trailer manufacturing operation to the north; wood pallet manufacturing, composting operations, and a legal but non-conforming (LNC) agriculture storage facility to the west; and the San Joaquin River to the east. Production agriculture exists in all directions. The nearest parcels enrolled in a Williamson Act Contract are parcels which abut the project site to the north, east and south across Orchard Road.

Buffer and Setback Guidelines are applicable to new or expanding uses approved in or adjacent to the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district and are required to be designed to physically avoid conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses. General Plan Amendment No. 2011-01 – Revised Agricultural Buffers was approved by the Board of Supervisors on December 20, 2011, to modify County requirements for buffers on agricultural projects. As this is a Tier Two use, if not considered people-intensive by the Planning Commission, the project is not subject to agricultural buffers. The operation will consist of a maximum of three people on a single shift with an estimated number of customers per-day at 15, with ten customers on-site at peak times between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. Operations will primarily be conducted within the warehouses and the proposed 3.5±-acre fenced area. The project was referred to the Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner, and no comments have been received to date. Therefore, staff believes the project can be considered low people-intensive, thus not subject to the County's Agricultural Buffer requirements.

Based on the specific features and design of this project, it does not appear this project will impact the long-term productive agricultural capability of surrounding contracted lands in the A-2 zoning district. There is no indication this project will result

in the removal of adjacent contracted land from agricultural use. No forest lands exist in Stanislaus County. The project will have less than significant impacts to Agriculture and Forest Resources.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; California State Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program - Stanislaus County Farmland 2022; United States Department of Agriculture NRCS Web Soil Survey; Stanislaus County Zoning Ordinance (Title 21); Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

III. AIR QUALITY: Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. -- Would the project:				
	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?			X	
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?			X	
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?			X	
d) Result in other emissions (such as those odors adversely affecting a substantial number of people?			X	

Discussion: The proposed project is located within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB) and, therefore, falls under the jurisdiction of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD). In conjunction with the Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG), the SJVAPCD is responsible for formulating and implementing air pollution control strategies. The SJVAPCD's most recent air quality plans are the 2007 PM₁₀ (respirable particulate matter) Maintenance Plan, the 2008 PM_{2.5} (fine particulate matter) Plan, and the 2007 Ozone Plan. These plans establish a comprehensive air pollution control program leading to the attainment of state and federal air quality standards in the SJVAB, which has been classified as "extreme non-attainment" for ozone, "attainment" for respirable particulate matter (PM-10), and "non-attainment" for PM 2.5, as defined by the Federal Clean Air Act.

The primary source of air pollutants generated by this project would be classified as being generated from "mobile" sources. Mobile sources would generally include dust from roads, farming, and automobile exhausts. Mobile sources are generally regulated by the Air Resources Board of the California EPA which sets emissions for vehicles and acts on issues regarding cleaner burning fuels and alternative fuel technologies. As such, the SJVAPCD has addressed most criteria air pollutants through basin wide programs and policies to prevent cumulative deterioration of air quality within the Basin. Proposed hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The applicant anticipates a maximum of three employees on a single shift per-day and an estimated number of customers per-day at 15, with ten customers on-site at peak times between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. Delivery trucks (heavy duty trucks) are expected to make one trip per-day for resupplies to the business, and up to four truck trips for deliveries to customers per-day. Up to 18 vehicle trips per-day are expected.

A comment was received from SJVAPCD in response to the Early Consultation prepared for the proposed project. The SJVAPCD indicated that the project description in the Early Consultation referral for the project did not provide sufficient information to allow the SJVAPCD to assess the Project's impact on air quality, and as such, the environmental review under this report should include a project summary detailing the project's construction and operational emissions, proximity to sensitive receptors and existing emission sources, and provide more information on truck trips. The SJVAPCD also recommended industrial warehouse emission reduction strategies, as well as assessment of truck routing, use of best practices such as utilizing cleanest available heavy duty trucks, reduce idling of trucks, utilize electric on-site off-road and on-road equipment, on-site solar development, and electric infrastructure to support the use of on-road zero emissions vehicles.

The SJVAPCD's significance thresholds are identified in the District's Guidance for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts (GAMAQI) for operational and stationary emissions. The Guidance for Assessing and Mitigation Air Quality Impacts (GAMAQI) has a Small Project Analysis Level (SPAL) screening tool which establishes specific thresholds based on land use category with projects using various metrics corresponding to that land use type, including trips per-day, development and size. Projects which fall under the respective threshold are presumed to have less than significant impact on air quality due to criteria pollutant emissions not exceeding SJVAPCD's thresholds and are therefore excluded from quantifying criteria pollutants for CEQA purposes. For the industrial (warehouse) land use category, which is the closest category under which the warehouse for the irrigation components would fall, a project size which is less than 190,000 square feet in size and generating less than 140 one-way passenger vehicle trips and 15 one-way heavy duty truck trips would meet the screening criteria. In this case, the project will utilize two existing warehouses each 5,000± square feet in size and the overall area proposed to be utilized for the irrigation business including the warehouses and the area for outdoor storage will be approximately 3.5-acres overall, below the 190,00 square-foot threshold. The applicant anticipates up to 18 vehicle round trips (36 one-way trips) and one round trip truck trip for material supplies per-day, and up to four round-trip truck trips for customer deliveries per-day (ten one-way truck trips) which is below the threshold. Therefore, operational and stationary emissions for the warehouses and the vehicle trips is less than significant under the SJVAPCD's guidelines.

The SJVAPCD also specified that the project may be subject to District Rules 2010 (Permits Required) and 2201 (New and Modified Stationary Source Review) and requires that the applicant contact the District to determine if an application for an Authority to Construct (ATC) permit as well as a Permit to Operate (PTO) is required prior to construction of the proposed improvements (restroom and office within the existing warehouse). The project may also be subject to the following rules: Regulation VIII, (Fugitive PM10 Prohibitions), Rule 8021 (Construction, Demolition, Excavation, Extraction, and other Earthmoving Activities), Rule 4601 (Architectural Coatings), and Rule 4641 (Cutback, Slow Cure, and Emulsified Asphalt, Paving and Maintenance Operations). A condition of approval will be placed on the project requiring that the applicant be in compliance with the SJVAPCD's rules and regulations prior to issuance of a building permit.

Potential impacts to air quality from the proposed project are also evaluated by Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). The calculation of VMT is the number of cars/trucks multiplied by the distance traveled by each car/truck. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (a), defines VMT as the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project. A technical advisory on evaluating transportation impacts in CEQA published by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) in December of 2018 clarified the definition of automobiles as referring to on-road passenger vehicles, specifically cars and light trucks. While heavy trucks are not considered in the definition of automobiles for which VMT is calculated for, heavy-duty truck VMT could be included for modeling convenience. According to the same OPR technical advisory, many local agencies have developed a screening threshold of VMT to indicate when detailed analysis is needed. Absent substantial evidence indicating that a project would generate a potentially significant level of VMT, or inconsistency with a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) or general plan, projects that generate or attract fewer than 110 trips per-day generally may be assumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact. The proposed project will generate a low amount of vehicle trips with 18 round trip vehicle trips per-day, one round-trip truck trip per-day for material resupplies, and up to four round-trip truck trips for customer deliveries per-day, for a total of 36 one-way vehicle trips (inbound and outbound trips for 18 vehicles) and ten one-way truck trips (inbound and outbound trips for up to five trucks). As this is below the SJVAPCD's threshold of significance for vehicle and heavy truck trips, no significant impacts from vehicle and truck trips to air quality are anticipated.

The applicant proposes a tenant improvement to the western most warehouse by adding an office and employee restroom. The tenant improvement under this request may require use of heavy-duty construction equipment. However, all construction activities are required to occur in compliance with all SJVAPCD regulations; therefore, construction emissions are anticipated to be less than significant without mitigation.

The closest off-site sensitive receptor to the project site is a single-family dwelling located on a 1.48±-acre parcel to the south approximately 780±-feet from the project area across Orchard Road (Assessor's parcel number (APN):016-008-030). As the project must comply with District regulations, the project's emissions would be less than significant for all criteria pollutants, would not be inconsistent with any applicable air quality attainment plans, and would result in less than significant impacts to air quality.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District - Regulation VIII Fugitive Dust/PM-10 Synopsis; Referral response from the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District, dated January 9, 2024;

www.valleyair.org; San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's Small Project Analysis Level (SPAL) guidance, November 13, 2020; Governor's Office of Planning and Research Technical Advisory, December 2018; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			X	
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			X	
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?			X	
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?			X	
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?			X	
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?			X	

Discussion: The project is located within the Vernalis Quad of the California Natural Diversity Database. There are six species of animals and fourteen plant species which are state or federally listed, threatened, or identified as species of special concern or a candidate of special concern within this quad. These species include the golden eagle, California horned lark, tricolored blackbird, Burrowing owl, San Joaquin kit fox, American badger, hogwallow starfish, Mt. Hamilton coreopsis, showy golden madia, Lemmon's jewelflower, small-flowered morning glory, slender cottongrass, Mt. Diablo phacelia, Santa Clara thorn-mint, Halls bushmallow, Brewers clarkia, San Benito poppy, Tracy's eriastrum, serpentine leptosiphon, and phlox-leaf serpentine bedstraw. There are no reported siting's of the aforementioned species on the project site; however, according to the California Natural Diversity Database, there are records related to the following species within two miles of the project site: riparian (San Joaquin Valley) woodrat siting of a male and female in 1932 that has been determined extirpated; riparian brush rabbit male and female caught in 1931; tricolored blackbird colony observed in 1974 and adults and fledglings observed in the area without a colony located; and Swainson's hawk adult observed in 1979, and a nesting pair observed on May 2, 1994 which produced three young and two fledglings were observed on July 29, 1994. There is a very low likelihood that these species are present on the project site as the site has been ripped and planted in nut bearing trees and has already been disturbed and developed with various structures.

An Early Consultation was referred to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and no response was received. The project will not conflict with a Habitat Conservation Plan, a Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other locally approved

conservation plans. Impacts to endangered species or habitats, locally designated species, or wildlife dispersal or mitigation corridors are considered to be less than significant.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Natural Diversity Database Quad Species List; California Natural Diversity Database, Planning and Community Development GIS, accessed September 18, 2024; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:				
	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to in § 15064.5?			X	
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?			X	
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?			X	

Discussion: It does not appear this project will result in significant impacts to any archaeological or cultural resources. The project site is improved with the two 5,000± square-foot agricultural storage buildings, a 1,440 square-foot wooden barn, a 2,777± square-foot single-family dwelling, a 1,394 square-foot garage, and swimming pool. No construction of new structures is proposed; however, conditions of approval will be placed on the project, requiring that any construction activities shall be halted, if any resources are found, until appropriate agencies are contacted, and an archaeological survey is completed.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

VI. ENERGY -- Would the project:				
	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?			X	
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?			X	

Discussion: The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Appendix F states that energy consuming equipment and processes, which will be used during construction or operation such as: energy requirements of the project by fuel type and end use, energy conservation equipment and design features, energy supplies that would serve the project, total estimated daily vehicle trips to be generated by the project, and the additional energy consumed per trip by mode, shall be taken into consideration when evaluating energy impacts. Additionally, the project's compliance with applicable state or local energy legislation, policies, and standards must be considered.

As stated above in the Air Quality section, the proposal includes a request to utilize two existing 5,000± square-foot warehouses for the wholesale and storage of irrigation components. A comment was received from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) in response to the Early Consultation prepared for the proposed project, specifically in response to the project's potential impact on air quality, and requested that the environmental review for the project include a summary detailing the project's construction and operational emissions, proximity to sensitive receptors and existing emission sources, and provide more information on truck trips. The SJVAPCD recommended industrial warehouse emission reduction strategies including use of electric on and off-road vehicles and equipment, as well as assessment of truck routing, use of best practices such as utilizing cleanest available heavy-duty trucks, reduce idling of trucks, on-site solar development, and electric infrastructure to support the use of on-road zero emissions vehicles. The SJVAPCD also specified that the project may be subject to District Rules 2010 (Permits Required) and 2201 (New and Modified Stationary Source Review) and requires that the applicant contact the District to determine if an application for an Authority to Construct (ATC) permit as well as a Permit to Operate (PTO) is required prior to construction of the proposed improvements (restroom and office within the existing warehouse). The project may also be subject to the following rules: Regulation VIII, (Fugitive PM10 Prohibitions), Rule 8021 (Construction, Demolition, Excavation, Extraction, and other Earthmoving Activities), Rule 4601 (Architectural Coatings), and Rule 4641 (Cutback, Slow Cure, and Emulsified Asphalt, Paving and Maintenance Operations). A condition of approval will be placed on the project requiring that the applicant be in compliance with the District's rules and regulations prior to issuance of a building permit.

The proposed structures are subject to the mandatory planning and design, energy efficiency, water efficiency and conservation, material conservation and resources efficiency, and environmental quality measures of the California Green Building Standards (CALGreen) Code (California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 11). Building permits will be required for the proposed office and restroom. Conditions of approval will be added to the project requiring building permits to be finalized by the Stanislaus County Building Permits Division prior to operation. All construction activities will be required to occur in compliance with all SJVAPCD regulations.

Energy consuming equipment and processes include construction equipment, trucks, and the customer and employee vehicles. As discussed in Section III – Air Quality, these activities would not significantly increase Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), due to the number of vehicle trips not exceeding a total of 110 vehicle trips per-day. The proposed project will generate a low amount of vehicle trips with 18 round trip vehicle trips per-day, one round-trip truck trip per-day for material resupplies, and up to four round-trip truck trips for customer deliveries per-day, for a total of 36 one-way vehicle trips (inbound and outbound trips for 18 vehicles) and ten one-way truck trips (inbound and outbound trips for up to five trucks). The trucks are the main consumers of energy associated with this project but will be subject to applicable SJVAPCD regulations, including rules and regulations that increase energy efficiency. Therefore, consumption of energy resources would be less than significant without mitigation for the proposed project.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; CEQA Guidelines; San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District – Regulation VIII Fugitive Dust/PM-10 Synopsis; www.valleyair.org; Referral response from the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD), dated January 9, 2024; Governor's Office of Planning and Research Technical Advisory, December 2018; Title 16 of County Code; CA Building Code; Stanislaus County Zoning Ordinance (Title 21); Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:			X	
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.			X	
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?			X	
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?			X	
iv) Landslides?			X	
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?			X	
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?			X	
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?			X	
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?			X	
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?			X	

Discussion: The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Eastern Stanislaus County Soil Survey indicates approximately three-quarters of the project site is comprised of Capay clay, with a grade of 4, 0 to 1 percent slopes (MRLA 17) (California Revised Storie Index Rating: 35). The remaining one-quarter of the parcel is comprised of the following soils: El Solyo silty clay loam, with a grade of 1, 0 to 2 percent slopes; Stomar clay loam, with a grade of 1, 0 to 2 percent slopes; and Vernalis-Zacharias complex, with a grade of 1, 0 to 2 percent slopes. As contained in Chapter 5 of the General Plan Support Documentation, the areas of the County subject to significant geologic hazard are located in the Diablo Range, west of Interstate 5; however, as per the California Building Code, all of Stanislaus County is located within a geologic hazard zone (Seismic Design Category D, E, or F) and a soils test may be required at building permit application. Results from the soils test will determine if unstable or expansive soils are present. If such soils are present, special engineering of the structure will be required to compensate for the soil deficiency. A tenant improvement within the existing warehouse is proposed. While no new buildings are proposed, any future structures will be designed and built according to building standards appropriate to withstand shaking for the area in which they are constructed. A referral response received from the Department of Environmental Resources required that prior to issuance of any building permit, the applicant shall demonstrate that the existing on-site wastewater treatment system (OWTS) meet minimum required sizing and setback, and all other applicable Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) standards. Likewise, any addition or expansion of a septic tank or alternative wastewater disposal system would require the approval of the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) through the building permit process, which also takes soil type into consideration within the specific design

requirements. These requirements have been added as conditions of approval. The project site is not located near an active fault or within a high earthquake zone. Landslides are not likely due to the flat terrain of the area.

DER, Public Works, and the Building Permits Division review and approve any building or grading permit to ensure their standards are met. Conditions of approval regarding these standards will be applied to the project and will be triggered when a building permit is requested.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; United States Department of Agriculture NRCS Web Soil Survey; Referral response from the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) – Environmental Health Division, dated May 6, 2024; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS -- Would the project:				
	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?			X	
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?			X	

Discussion: The principal Greenhouse Gasses (GHGs) are carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), and water vapor (H₂O). CO₂ is the reference gas for climate change because it is the predominant greenhouse gas emitted. To account for the varying warming potential of different GHGs, GHG emissions are often quantified and reported as CO₂ equivalents (CO₂e). In 2006, California passed the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Assembly Bill [AB] No. 32), which requires the California Air Resources Board (ARB) design and implement emission limits, regulations, and other measures, such that feasible and cost-effective statewide GHG emissions are reduced to 1990 levels by 2020. Two additional bills, SB 350 and SB32, were passed in 2015 further amending the states Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS) for electrical generation and amending the reduction targets to 40% of 1990 levels by 2030.

The short-term emissions of GHGs during construction, primarily composed of CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O, would be the result of fuel combustion by construction equipment and motor vehicles. The other primary GHGs (HFCs, PFCs, and SF₆) are typically associated with specific industrial sources and are not expected to be emitted by future construction at this project site. As described above in Section III - *Air Quality*, the use of heavy-duty construction equipment would be very limited as no new structures are proposed; therefore, the emissions of CO₂ from future construction would be less than significant. Additionally, the construction of the office and restroom within the existing warehouse and any necessary building permit for a change of occupancy are subject to the mandatory planning and design, energy efficiency, water efficiency and conservation, material conservation and resources efficiency, and environmental quality measures, of the California Green Building Standards (CALGreen) Code (California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 11) which includes minimum statewide standards to significantly reduce GHG emissions from new construction. Construction activities associated with this project are considered to be less than significant as they are temporary in nature and are subject to meeting San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) standards for emissions.

Direct emissions of GHGs from the operation of the proposed project are primarily due to the employee and customer vehicle trips, and truck trips for material supplies and customer deliveries. As required by California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines section 15064.3, potential impacts regarding Green House Gas Emissions should be evaluated using Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). The calculation of VMT is the number of cars/trucks multiplied by the distance traveled by each car/truck. Total vehicle trips as a result of this project will not exceed 110 trips per-day. As in Section III – *Air Quality*, the proposed project will generate a total of 36 one-way vehicle trips and ten one-way truck trips per-day, below the OPR threshold.

This project was referred to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD). As discussed in Section III – Air Quality, SJVAPCD provided a response to the Early Consultation prepared for the proposed project and requested that the environmental review for the project should include a summary detailing the project's construction and operational emissions, proximity to sensitive receptors and existing emission sources, and provide more information on truck trips. The SJVAPCD recommended industrial warehouse emission reduction strategies including use of electric on and off-road vehicles and equipment, as well as assessment of truck routing, use of best practices such as utilizing cleanest available heavy duty trucks, reduce idling of trucks, on-site solar development, and electric infrastructure to support the use of on-road zero emissions vehicles. The SJVAPCD also specified that the project may be subject to SJVAPCD Rules 2010 (Permits Required) and 2201 (New and Modified Stationary Source Review) and requires that the applicant contact the District to determine if an application for an Authority to Construct (ATC) permit as well as a Permit to Operate (PTO) is required prior to construction of the proposed improvements (restroom and office within the existing warehouse). The project may also be subject to the following rules: Regulation VIII, (Fugitive PM10 Prohibitions), Rule 8021 (Construction, Demolition, Excavation, Extraction, and other Earthmoving Activities), Rule 4601 (Architectural Coatings), and Rule 4641 (Cutback, Slow Cure, and Emulsified Asphalt, Paving and Maintenance Operations). The closest sensitive receptor to the project site is a single-family dwelling located on a 1.48± acre parcel to the south approximately 780± feet from the project area across Orchard Road (APN:016-008-030). Staff will include a condition of approval requiring the applicant to comply with all appropriate SJVAPCD rules and regulations. Consequently, GHG emissions associated with this project are considered to be less than significant.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) referral response, dated January 9, 2024; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?			X	
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?			X	
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?			X	
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?			X	
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?			X	
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			X	

g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?			X	
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Discussion: The County Department of Environmental Resources (DER) is responsible for overseeing hazardous materials. A referral response from the Hazardous Materials Division of the Stanislaus County Department of Environmental Resources (DER) indicated that the project is anticipated to not have a significant impact with respect to hazards and hazardous materials, and required the applicant to contact the Hazardous Materials Division for information regarding regulatory requirements for hazardous materials and/or wastes. These comments will be reflected through the application of a condition of approval. During building permit review, the Environmental Health Division of the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) will review the on-site wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) and/or water wells and ensure that all applicable County Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) standards and required setbacks are maintained as applicable. Pesticide exposure is a risk in areas located in the vicinity of agriculture. Sources of exposure include contaminated groundwater from drift from spray applications. Application of sprays is strictly controlled by the Agricultural Commissioner and can only be accomplished after first obtaining permits. Additionally, agricultural buffers are intended to reduce the risk of spray exposure to surrounding people.

As Stated in Section II – *Agricultural and Forest Resources*, up to 18 vehicle trips for employees and customers are expected per-day, one truck trip for deliveries to the business is anticipated per-day, and up to four truck trips for customer deliveries are expected per-day. Proposed hours of operation are Monday through Friday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturday from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The project was referred to the Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner, and no comments have been received to date. Therefore, staff believes the project can be considered low people-intensive, thus not subject to the County's Agricultural Buffer requirements. The project site is not listed on the EnviroStor database managed by the CA Department of Toxic Substances Control or within the vicinity of any airport. The site is located in a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) for fire protection and is served by West Stanislaus Fire Protection District. The project was referred to the District which responded with requirements that the proposed project comply with all applicable West Stanislaus Fire Prevention District standards with respect to access and water for fire suppression. Staff will add a condition of approval to the project addressed the District's requirements.

No significant impacts associated with hazards or hazardous materials are anticipated to occur as a result of the proposed project.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Referral response from Department of Environmental Resources (DER) – Hazardous Materials Division, dated January 4, 2024; Referral response from West Stanislaus Fire Protection District, dated January 9, 2024; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?			X	
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?			X	
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:			X	

i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;			X	
ii) substantially increase the rate of amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site.			X	
iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or			X	
iv) impede or redirect flood flows?			X	
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?			X	
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?			X	

Discussion: Areas subject to flooding have been identified in accordance with the Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA). The project site is located in FEMA Flood Zone X, which includes areas determined to be outside the 0.2 percent annual chance floodplains. The project proposes to handle stormwater drainage overland. The project proposes the construction of an office within the western warehouse, which will require a building permit. Additionally, the applicant proposes to install a new septic system and well to serve the restroom within the warehouse. As part of the building permit review process, the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) will evaluate the wastewater treatment systems (OWTS), and the site's adherence to current Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) standards. LAMP standards include minimum setback from wells to prevent negative impacts to groundwater quality. The site is currently served by a private septic system and well. The proposed well to be constructed on-site will be subject to review under the County's Well Permitting Program, which will determine whether the well will require environmental review. The project was referred to DER, who provided regulatory requirements regarding applicable County Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) standards and required setbacks are maintained. All applicable standards under Public Works and the DER will be addressed under the building permit review process for the office as well. These comments will be applied as conditions of approval and required prior to issuance of any building permits.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) was passed in 2014 with the goal of ensuring the long-term sustainable management of California's groundwater resources. SGMA requires agencies throughout California to meet certain requirements including forming Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA), developing Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP), and achieving balanced groundwater levels within 20 years. The site is located in the Northwestern Delta-Mendota GSA. The Northwestern Delta-Mendota GSA, along with 22 other GSAs, are tasked with developing and maintaining a single coordinated GSP for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin, after six separate GSPs prepared and submitted in 2023 were determined by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) as inadequate. Following this determination on March 2, 2023, the 23 GSAs are currently working on preparing a single GSP to cover the subbasin. On August 13, 2024, the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors adopted the revised single Delta-Mendota Subbasin GSP, which will be subsequently submitted and reviewed by the DWR. The GSA prepared their annual report for the Delta-Mendota Subbasin addressing groundwater and surface water conditions during Water Year (WY) 2023 and submitted the report to DWR in March, 2024. Total groundwater extractions in the Delta-Mendota Subbasin during WY 2023 were approximately 231,300 acre-feet (AF). This total is based on both direct measurements by local water agencies and estimates for private agricultural and domestic pumping. During WY 2023, agricultural groundwater extraction accounts for 78.4± percent (181,300AF) of the total pumping in the Delta-Mendota Subbasin, while urban, industrial and managed wetlands and managed recharge groundwater extraction accounts for the remaining 21.6± percent (50,000AF). The proposed project is subject to the requirements of the GSP for the region which was adopted to minimize impacts to groundwater supplies.

The Department of Environmental Resources - Groundwater Resources Division provided a referral response for the project indicating that the project will have minimal additional water use and accordingly did not have comments on the project.

The California Safe Drinking Water Act (California Health and Safety Code (CHSC) Section 116275(h)) defines a Public Water System as a system for the provision of water for human consumption through pipes or other constructed

conveyances that has 15 or more service connections or regularly serves at least 25 individuals daily at least 60 days out of the year. A public water system includes the following:

1. Any collection, treatment, storage, and distribution facilities under control of the operator of the system that are used primarily in connection with the system.
2. Any collection or pretreatment storage facilities not under the control of the operator that are used primarily in connection with the system.
3. Any water system that treats water on behalf of one or more public water systems for the purpose of rendering it safe for human consumption.

The project was referred to the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) – Environmental Health Division which responded with requirements to submit a water system evaluation for the project to determine if the project would meet the definition of a public water system. After water system evaluation was submitted, DER indicated that the private well on the project site does not currently meet the definition of a Public Water System as defined in CHSC Section 116275(h). However, DER requested that the applicant contacts DER if the water system ever meets the definition of a public water system. If the existing or proposed well is ever required to become a Public Water System, the applicant must submit an application for a water supply permit with the associated technical report to Stanislaus County DER which will determine if the well water meets State mandated standards for water quality and must also obtain concurrence from the State of California Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), Drinking Water Division, in accordance to CHSC Section 116527 (SB1263). If the well water does not meet State standards, the applicant may need to either drill a new well or install a water treatment system for the current well.

The project was referred to El Solyo Irrigation District which did not respond to the project. As a result of the conditions of approval required for this project, impacts associated with drainage, water quality, and runoff are expected to have a less than significant impact.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Referral response from the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) – Groundwater Division, dated January 8, 2024; Delta-Mendota Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan, Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors Report, dated August 13, 2024; Delta-Mendota Subbasin: Water Year 2023 Annual Report, March, 2024; Referral response from Department of Environmental Resources (DER) – Environmental Health Division May 6, 2024; Email received from DER – Environmental Health Division, dated September 24, 2024; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?			X	
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?			X	

Discussion: The project site is designated Agriculture by the Stanislaus County General Plan land use diagrams and zoned General Agriculture (A-2-40). The applicant is requesting to establish a warehouse for irrigation supplies within two existing 5,000± square-foot agricultural storage buildings on a 3.5±-acre portion of a 194.8-acre parcel.

The County allows agriculture service establishments primarily engaging in the provision of agricultural services to farmers, by obtaining a Tier Two Use Permit if specific criteria can be met and if specific findings can be made. Those findings include that the establishment, as proposed, will not be substantially detrimental to, or in conflict with, the agricultural use of other properties in the vicinity; that the use is necessary and desirable for such establishment to be located within the agricultural area as opposed to areas zoned for commercial or industrial usage; and that it will not create a concentration of

commercial and industrial uses in the vicinity. To be considered a Tier Two use, the proposed use is required to be found related to agricultural production and necessary for a healthy agricultural economy. The facility proposes to serve as a wholesale warehouse for delivery or pickup of irrigation materials by agricultural customers. Agricultural service establishments under a Tier Two Use Permit must also serve the immediately surrounding area, or local agriculture and customers, as opposed to having a widespread service area. In addition, the Planning Commission must find that the establishment, maintenance, and operation of the proposed use is consistent with the General Plan and will not be detrimental to the health, safety, and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the use and that it will not be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the County. The applicant has submitted a project description indicating their client base is exclusively farmers within the Vernalis, Westley, South Tracy, and West Modesto areas of Stanislaus and San Joaquin counties. The operation will consist of a maximum of three people on a single shift with an estimated number of customers per-day at 15.

The project itself relates to production agriculture as a wholesale irrigation supply business for farmers. A legal but non-conforming (LNC) agriculture storage facility is located across State Route 33 to the west of the project site. Additionally, the following non-agricultural commercial or industrial uses within the vicinity of the project site include: a wood pallet manufacturing business adjacent to the project site to the west; a composting operation for food waste located 2.3± miles to the west of the project site; and a modular trailer manufacturing operation currently operating without a business license is located approximately .9± miles from the project site to the north, on a 2.97± acre parcel in the Planned Development (P-D) (13) zoning district. The proposed project will not displace any existing on-site farming operations.

The project site is currently enrolled in California Land Conservation Act ("Williamson Act") Contract No. 77-2782. County Code Section 21.20.045, in compliance with Government Code Section 51238.1, specifies that uses approved on contracted lands shall be consistent with three principles of compatibility. Those principles state that the proposed use shall not significantly compromise, displace, impair or remove current or reasonably foreseeable agricultural operations on the subject contracted parcel or parcels or on other contracted lands in the A-2 zoning district. The project as proposed is considered a Tier Two use. Within the A-2 zoning district, the County has determined Tier Two uses shall be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Planning Commission and/or Board of Supervisors to determine whether they are consistent with the principles of compatibility set forth in Section 21.20.045 of the County Code. Surrounding parcels in agricultural production that are also enrolled under the Williamson Act are adjacent to the project site on all sides and range in size from 160±-acres to 1.4±-acres and are planted in almonds, walnuts and alfalfa. It is not anticipated that the proposed project will impact agricultural operations on the project site or surrounding parcels.

As Discussed in Section II – Agricultural and Forest Resources, Buffer and Setback Guidelines are applicable to new or expanding uses approved in or adjacent to the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district, and are required to be designed to physically avoid conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses. As the facility will have three employees and expects 15 customers on-site per-day, and up to five trucks traveling in and out of the project site per-day, staff believes the project can be considered low people-intensive, thus not subject to the County's Agricultural Buffer requirements.

With the application of conditions of approval, there is no indication that, under the circumstances of this particular case, the proposed operation will be detrimental to the health, safety, and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the use or that it will be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the County.

The project will not physically divide an established community nor conflict with any habitat conservation plans.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Stanislaus County Zoning Ordinance (Title 21); Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?			X	
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?			X	

Discussion: The location of all commercially viable mineral resources in Stanislaus County has been mapped by the State Division of Mines and Geology in Special Report 173. There are no known significant resources on the site, nor is the project site located in a geological area known to produce resources.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

XIII. NOISE -- Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?			X	
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?			X	
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?			X	

Discussion: The Stanislaus County General Plan identifies noise levels up to 75 dB Ldn (or CNEL) as the normally acceptable level of noise for agricultural uses. The Stanislaus County General Plan identifies noise levels for residential or other noise-sensitive land uses of up to 55 hourly Leq, dBA and 75 Lmax, dBA from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and 45 hourly Leq, dBA and 65 Lmax, dBA from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Pure tone noises, such as music, shall be reduced by five dBA; however, when ambient noise levels exceed the standards, the standards shall be increased to the ambient noise levels. The closest off-site sensitive receptor to the project site is a single-family dwelling located on a 1.48±-acre parcel to the south approximately 780±-feet from the project area across Orchard Road (APN:016-008-030). Noise impacts associated with on-site activities and traffic are not anticipated to exceed the normally acceptable level of noise. The operation of the business will be conducted within the warehouses, with the exception of outdoor storage for the materials behind the warehouses. Additionally, agricultural activity, as defined within the County's Right to Farm Ordinance (Section 9.32.010(B) of the County Code) such as the operation of a digester is exempt from the Stanislaus County Noise Control Ordinance (Ord. CS 1070 §2, 2010). The site itself is impacted by noise generated by vehicular traffic on Orchard Road, State Route 33 to the west, and neighboring agricultural operations.

The site is not located within an airport land use plan. Impacts associated with noise are considered to be less than significant.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Stanislaus County Noise Ordinance (Title 10); Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING -- Would the project:				
	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?			X	
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?			X	

Discussion: The site is not included in the vacant sites inventory for the 2016 Stanislaus County Housing Element, which covers the 5th cycle Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) or the draft 2023 6th cycle RHNA for the county and will therefore not impact the County's ability to meet their RHNA. No population growth will be induced nor will any existing housing be displaced as a result of this project.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES --				
	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project result in the substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?			X	
Police protection?			X	
Schools?			X	
Parks?			X	
Other public facilities?			X	

Discussion: This project was circulated to all applicable school, fire, police, and public works departments and districts including the Patterson Joint School District, West Stanislaus Fire Protection District, Stanislaus County Sheriff's Office, and the Stanislaus County Public Works Department during the Early Consultation referral period and no concerns were

identified with respect to the proposed project. The West Stanislaus Fire Protection District responded with a comment letter requesting the project comply with all District standards regarding access and water for fire suppression. The Stanislaus County Public Works Department responded with requirements that no parking or unloading of vehicles will be permitted within the County road right-of-way; that the developer will be required to install or pay for the installation of any signs and/or markings, if warranted; and that all driveway locations and widths be approved by Public Works and that an encroachment permit shall be obtained for driveway approaches at all points of ingress and egress on the project site and for any other work done within the County road right-of-way. Staff will add conditions of approval to the project to address the West Stanislaus Fire Protection District and Public Works' requirements.

The County has adopted Public Facilities Fees, as well as Fire Facility Fees on behalf of the appropriate fire district, to address impacts to public services. School Districts also have their own adopted fees. All facility fees are required to be paid at the time of building permit issuance.

The project was referred to the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) which responded requesting that the applicant coordinate with their agency to determine if any permits or Water Board requirements be obtained/met prior to operation. A condition of approval will be added to the project requiring the applicant comply with this request prior to issuance of a building permit.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Referral response received from West Stanislaus Fire Protection District, dated January 9, 2024; Referral response received from Stanislaus County Department of Public Works, dated June 24, 2024; Referral response received from Regional Water Quality Control Board, dated January 8, 2024; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

XVI. RECREATION --	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?			X	
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?			X	

Discussion: This project will not increase demands for recreational facilities, as such impacts typically are associated with residential development.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

XVII. TRANSPORTATION -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?			X	
b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?			X	
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?			X	
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?			X	

Discussion: The project proposes to establish a warehouse for irrigation supplies within two existing 5,000± square-foot agricultural storage buildings on a 3.5±-acre portion of a 194.8-acre parcel. Proposed hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The facility will have three employees and expects up to 15 customer visits per-day, one material resupply truck trip per-day, and up to four customer delivery truck trips per-day. The project site has access to County-maintained Orchard Road which is classified as a 60-foot-wide local road via two driveways, one paved located between the two warehouses and one unpaved east of the eastern warehouse.

It is not anticipated that the project would substantially affect the level of service on Orchard Road. The project was referred to the Stanislaus County Department of Public Works, which has requested conditions of approval to address driveway approaches to be installed according to Public Works' Specifications, and restrictions on loading, parking, unloading within the County right-of-way. The developer will be required to install or pay for the installation of any signs and/or markings, if warranted. Conditions of Approval reflecting Public Works' requests and requirements will be added to the project.

Section 15064.3 of the CEQA Guidelines establishes specific considerations for evaluating a project's transportation impacts. The CEQA Guidelines identify vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which is the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project, as the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. A technical advisory on evaluating clarified the definition of automobiles as referring to on-road passenger vehicles, specifically cars and light trucks. While heavy trucks are not considered in the definition of automobiles for which VMT is calculated for, heavy duty truck VMT could be included for modeling convenience. According to the same technical advisory from OPR, projects that generate or attract fewer than 110 trips per-day generally may be assumed to cause a less-than significant transportation impact. As discussed in Section III – *Air Quality*, the applicant anticipates a total of 36 one-way vehicle trips and up to ten one-way truck trips associated with this request. The VMT increase associated with the proposed project is less-than significant as the number of vehicle trips will not exceed 110 per-day.

The project is located within the West Stanislaus Fire Protection District. The project was referred to the District which responded with requirements that the proposed project comply with all applicable West Stanislaus Fire Prevention District standards with respect to access and water for fire suppression which will include District approved Knox key boxes and/or Knox gate locks to be installed, all-weather emergency fire apparatus access road(s) be provided and maintained, a secondary emergency vehicle access gate was recommended by the District as well. A condition of approval reflecting the District's comments will be added to the project.

All development on-site will be required to pay applicable County public facility fees (PFF) fees, which will be utilized for maintenance and traffic congestion improvements to all County roadways.

The proposed project is not anticipated to conflict with any transportation program, plan, ordinance, or policy. Transportation impacts associated with the project are considered to be less than significant.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Referral response from Stanislaus County Department of Public Works, dated June 24, 2024; Referral response from West Stanislaus Fire Protection District, dated January 9, 2024; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California native American tribe, and that is:			X	
i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or			X	
ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set for the in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.			X	

Discussion: It does not appear that this project will result in significant impacts to any archaeological or cultural resources. The project site is already improved with multiple buildings. In accordance with SB 18 and AB 52, this project was not referred to the tribes listed with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) as the project is not a General Plan Amendment and no tribes have requested consultation or project referral noticing. While the site is already developed, if any resources are found during future construction, construction activities would halt until a qualified survey takes place and the appropriate authorities are notified.

No significant impacts to Tribal Cultural resources are anticipated to occur as a result of this project.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?			X	
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?			X	
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?			X	
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?			X	
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?			X	

Discussion: Limitations on providing services have not been identified. The project proposes to construct one new well and septic system and will also utilize an existing private well and existing private septic facilities. The project was referred to the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) – Environmental Health Division, who provided regulatory requirements regarding applicable County Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) standards and required setbacks are maintained. All applicable standards under DER will be addressed under the building permit review process for the office as well. DER's comments will be applied as conditions of approval and required prior to issuance of any building permits.

As discussed in Section X – *Hydrology and Water Quality*, DER confirmed that the private well on the project site does not currently meet the definition of a Public Water System as defined in California Health and Safety Code Section 116275(h). However, DER requested that the applicant contacts DER if the water system ever meets the definition of a public water system. If the existing well is ever required to become a Public Water System, the applicant will be subject to the process and regulations for a Public Water System as discussed in detail in Section X – *Hydrology and Water Quality*.

The project site receives irrigation water from the El Solyo Irrigation District. The was referred to the District; however, no comments have been received.

The project was referred to the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) which responded requesting that the applicant coordinate with their agency to determine if any permits or Water Board requirements be obtained/met prior to operation. A condition of approval will be added to the project requiring the applicant comply with this request prior to issuance of a building permit.

The project proposes to handle stormwater drainage overland. The project was referred to the Stanislaus Department of Public Works which did not respond with comments regarding drainage.

The project was also referred to PG&E and AT&T and no response has been received to date.

Impacts to utilities and services are considered to be less than significant.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Referral response from Department of Environmental Resources (DER) – Environmental Health Division May 6, 2024; Email received from DER – Environmental Health Division, dated September 24, 2024;; Referral response from Regional Water Quality Control Board, dated January 8, 2024; Referral response from Stanislaus County Department of Public Works, dated June 24, 2024; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

XX. WILDFIRE – If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			X	
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?			X	
c) Require the installation of maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?			X	
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?			X	

Discussion: The Stanislaus County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies risks posed by disasters and identifies ways to minimize damage from those disasters. The terrain of the site is relatively flat, and the site has access to a County-maintained road. The site is located in a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) for fire protection and is served by West Stanislaus Fire Protection District. The project was referred to the District, and the District responded with a comment letter requesting the project comply with all District standards regarding access and water for fire suppression. A condition of approval will be added to the project addressing the District's comments. California Building and Fire Code establishes minimum standards for the protection of life and property by increasing the ability of a building to resist intrusion of flame and burning embers. The building permits for the tenant improvement for the office and restroom will be reviewed by the County's Building Permit Services Division and Fire Prevention Bureau to ensure all State of California Building and Fire Code requirements are met prior to construction and all applicable standards will be required to be met.

Wildfire risk and risks associated with postfire land changes are considered to be less-than significant.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Referral response received from West Stanislaus Fire Protection District, dated January 9, 2024; California Fire Code Title 24, Part 9; California Building Code Title 24, Part 2, Chapter 7; Stanislaus County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE --	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Included	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?			X	
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)			X	
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?			X	

Discussion: The 194.8-acre project site is designated Agriculture by the Stanislaus County General Plan land use diagrams and zoned General Agriculture (A-2-40). The 194.8±-acre project site is enrolled under Williamson Act Contract No. 1977-2782 and is classified as "Prime Farmland" and the 3.5±-acres area developed with the warehouses and proposed to be utilized under this request is classified as "Semi-Agricultural and Rural Commercial Land" by the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. The project site meets the definition of prime farmland under the County's Uniform Rules as the parcel is planted almost entirely in almond trees; however, the proposed project will not convert any Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use as the use is related to agriculture, can reasonably be returned to production agriculture in the future and the area developed with the warehouses is current considered to be "Semi-Agricultural and Rural Commercial Land" by the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.

The project itself relates to the production of agricultural products as an irrigation supply business for farmers. A legal but non-conforming (LNC) agriculture storage facility is located across State Route 33 to the west of the project site. Additionally, the following non-agricultural commercial or industrial uses are within the vicinity of the project site: a wood pallet manufacturing business is adjacent to the project site to the west; a composting operation for food waste is located 2.3± miles to the west; and a modular trailer manufacturing operation currently operating without a business license is located approximately .9± miles from the project site to the northwest on a 2.97±-acre parcel in the Planned Development (P-D) 13 zoning district. The proposed project will not displace any existing on-site farming operations. Any development of the surrounding area would be subject to the permitted uses of the applicable zoning district, or for the immediately adjacent parcels, the A-2 Zoning District, or would require additional land use entitlements and environmental review. The nearest parcels enrolled in a Williamson Act Contract are parcels which abut the project site to the north, east and south across Orchard Road. During project review, this application was referred to the Department of Conservation (DOC) for review and input and no response has been received to date. The request is not expected to create a concentration of commercial and industrial uses in the vicinity or perpetuate any significant conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or impact agricultural operations. The project as proposed would be considered an agriculture service establishment which is considered a Tier Two use under the A-2 Zoning Ordinance subject to a Use Permit.

The proposed project will generate a low amount of vehicle trips with a total of up to 36 one-way vehicle trips for employees and customers per-day and ten one-way truck trips for deliveries to the business and customers. As this is below the

threshold of significance for vehicle and heavy truck trips as discussed in Section XVII - *Transportation*, no significant impacts to transportation from the 36 one-way vehicle trips and ten one-way truck trips are anticipated.

Review of this project has not indicated any features which might significantly impact the environmental quality of the site and/or the surrounding area.

Mitigation: None.

References: Initial Study; Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation¹.

¹Stanislaus County General Plan and Support Documentation adopted in August 23, 2016, as amended. **Housing Element** adopted on April 5, 2016.



NEGATIVE DECLARATION

NAME OF PROJECT: Use Permit Application No. PLN2023-0146 – Central Irrigation, Inc.

LOCATION OF PROJECT: 117 Orchard Road, between State Route 33 and River Road, in the Vernalis area.

PROJECT DEVELOPERS: Keith Yamamoto, Central Irrigation, Inc.
2941 Los Banos Highway, Merced, CA 95341

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: Request to operate an agricultural irrigation supply business within two existing 5,000± square-foot warehouses on a 3.5± acre portion of a 194.8± acre parcel, in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district.

Based upon the Initial Study, dated **September 25, 2024**, the Environmental Coordinator finds as follows:

1. This project does not have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, nor to curtail the diversity of the environment.
2. This project will not have a detrimental effect upon either short-term or long-term environmental goals.
3. This project will not have impacts which are individually limited but cumulatively considerable.
4. This project will not have environmental impacts which will cause substantial adverse effects upon human beings, either directly or indirectly.

The Initial Study and other environmental documents are available for public review at the Department of Planning and Community Development, 1010 10th Street, Suite 3400, Modesto, California.

Initial Study prepared by: Emily DeAnda, Associate Planner

Submit comments to: Stanislaus County
Planning and Community Development Department
1010 10th Street, Suite 3400
Modesto, California 95354

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW REFERRALS

PROJECT: USE PERMIT APPLICATION NO. PLN2023-0146 - CENTRAL IRRIGATION, INC.

REFERRED TO:				RESPONDED		RESPONSE			MITIGATION MEASURES		CONDITIONS	
	2 WK	30 DAY	PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE	YES	NO	WILL NOT HAVE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	MAY HAVE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO COMMENT NON CEQA	YES	NO	YES	NO
CA DEPT OF CONSERVATION LAND RESOURCES	X	X	X		X							
CA DEPT OF FISH & WILDLIFE	X	X	X		X							
CA DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION DIST 10	X	X	X		X							
CA OPR STATE CLEARING HOUSE	X	X	X		X							
CA RWQCB CENTRAL VALLEY REGION	X	X	X	X				X		X	X	
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION	X	X	X		X							
DER GROUNDWATER RESOURCES DIVISION	X	X	X		X							
FIRE PROTECTION DIST: WEST STAN	X	X	X	X				X		X	X	
GSA: NW DELTA MENDOTA	X	X	X		X							
IRRIGATION DISTRICT: EL SOLYO	X	X	X		X							
MOSQUITO DISTRICT: TURLOCK	X	X	X		X							
STANISLAUS COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL	X	X	X		X							
PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC	X	X	X		X							
SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY APCD	X	X	X	X				X		X	X	
SCHOOL DISTRICT 1: PATTERSON JOINT UNIFIED	X	X	X		X							
STAN CO AG COMMISSIONER	X	X	X		X							
STAN CO BUILDING PERMITS DIVISION	X	X	X		X							
STAN CO CEO	X	X	X		X							
STAN CO DER	X	X	X	X				X		X	X	
STAN CO FARM BUREAU	X	X	X		X							
STAN CO HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X	
STAN CO PUBLIC WORKS	X	X	X	X				X		X	X	
STAN CO SHERIFF	X	X	X		X							
STAN CO SUPERVISOR DIST 3: WITHROW	X	X	X		X							
STAN COUNTY COUNSEL	X	X	X		X							
STANISLAUS FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU	X	X	X		X							
STANISLAUS LAFCO	X	X	X		X							
TELEPHONE COMPANY: AT&T	X	X	X		X							
SFPUC: HETCH HETCHY	X	X	X		X							
SURROUNDING LAND OWNERS		X	X		X							
US FISH & WILDLIFE	X	X	X		X							

UP PLN2023-0146

CENTRAL IRRIGATION, INC.

Planning Commission
November 21, 2024

Overview

- Tier Two Use Permit to establish an agricultural service establishment
- Utilize two existing 5,000 square-foot warehouses for an agricultural irrigation supply business on a $3.5\pm$ acre area of a $194.8\pm$ acre parcel

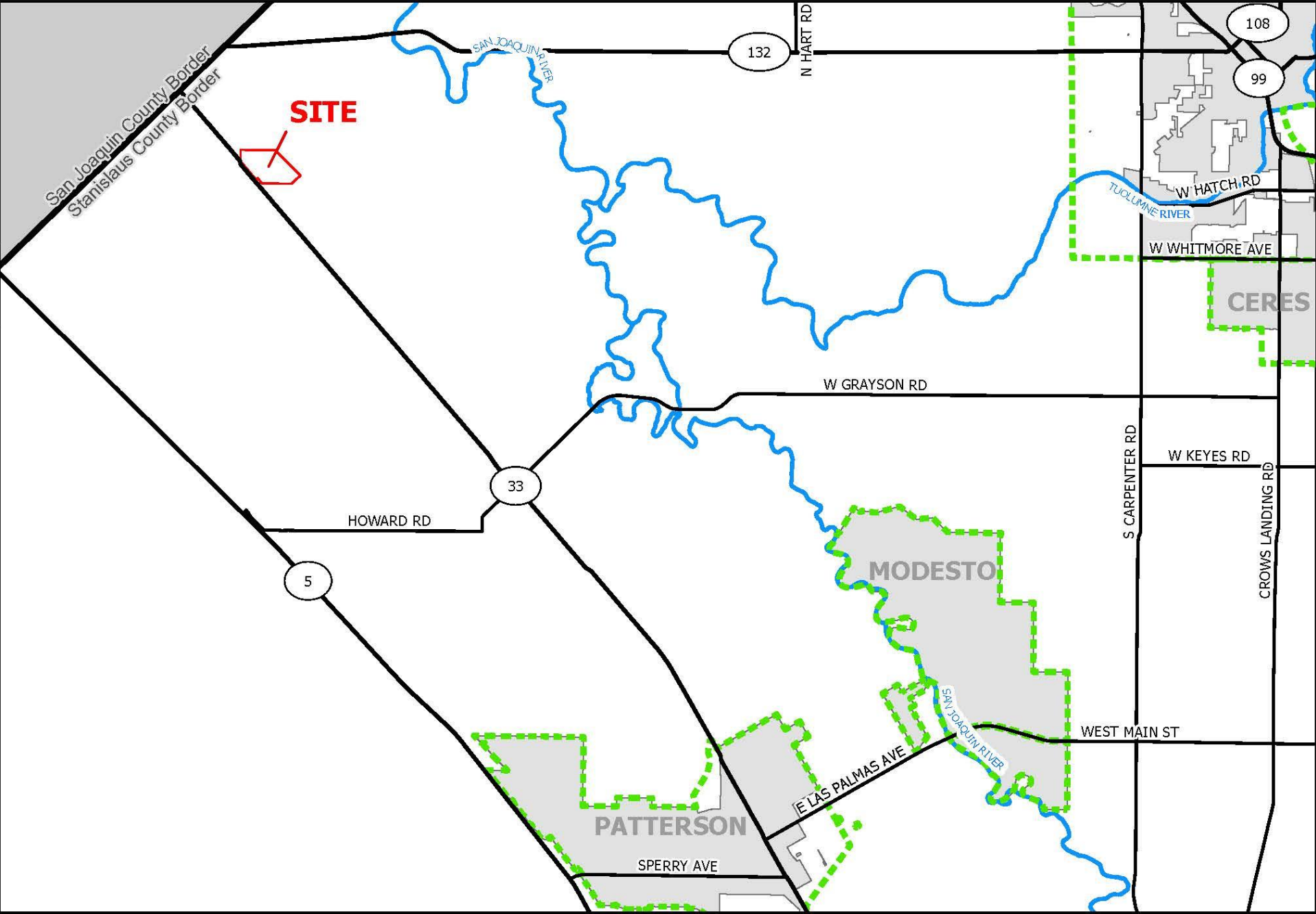
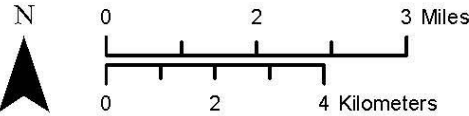
**CENTRAL
IRRIGATION INC**

**UP
PLN2023-0146**

AREA MAP

LEGEND

-  Project Site
-  Sphere of Influence
-  Highway
-  Major Road
-  River



CENTRAL
IRRIGATION
INC

PLN2023-0146

GENERAL PLAN MAP

LEGEND

- Parcel
- Road
- Canal
- General Plan**
- Agriculture
- Project Site

N

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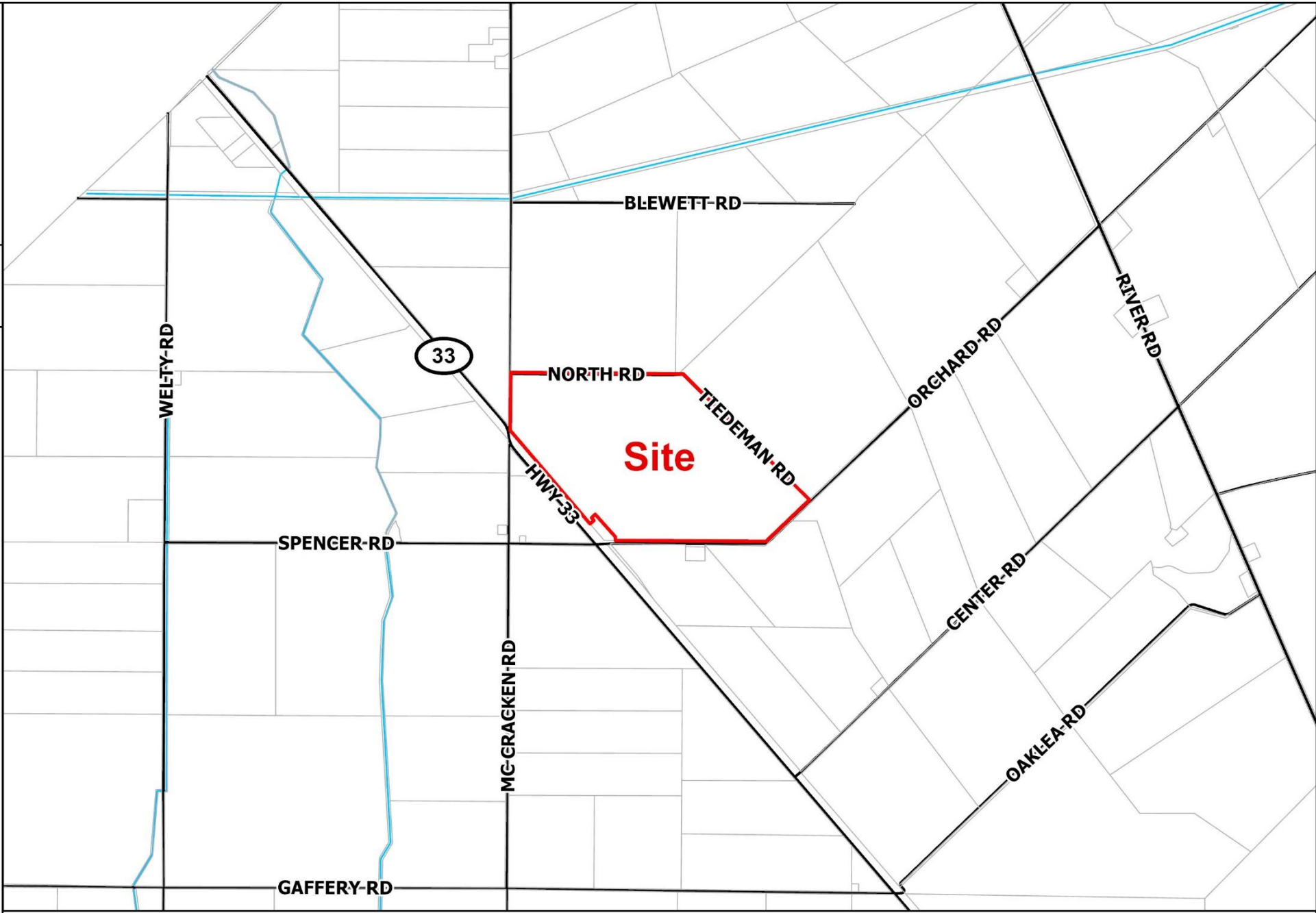
2,640 Feet

0

800 Meters

Source: Planning Department GIS

Date Exported: 11/20/2023



CENTRAL IRRIGATION INC

PLN2023-0146


ZONING MAP

LEGEND

 County Boundary


 Project Site

 Parcel

 Road

 Canal

Zoning Designation

 General AG 40 Acre

 Planned Development

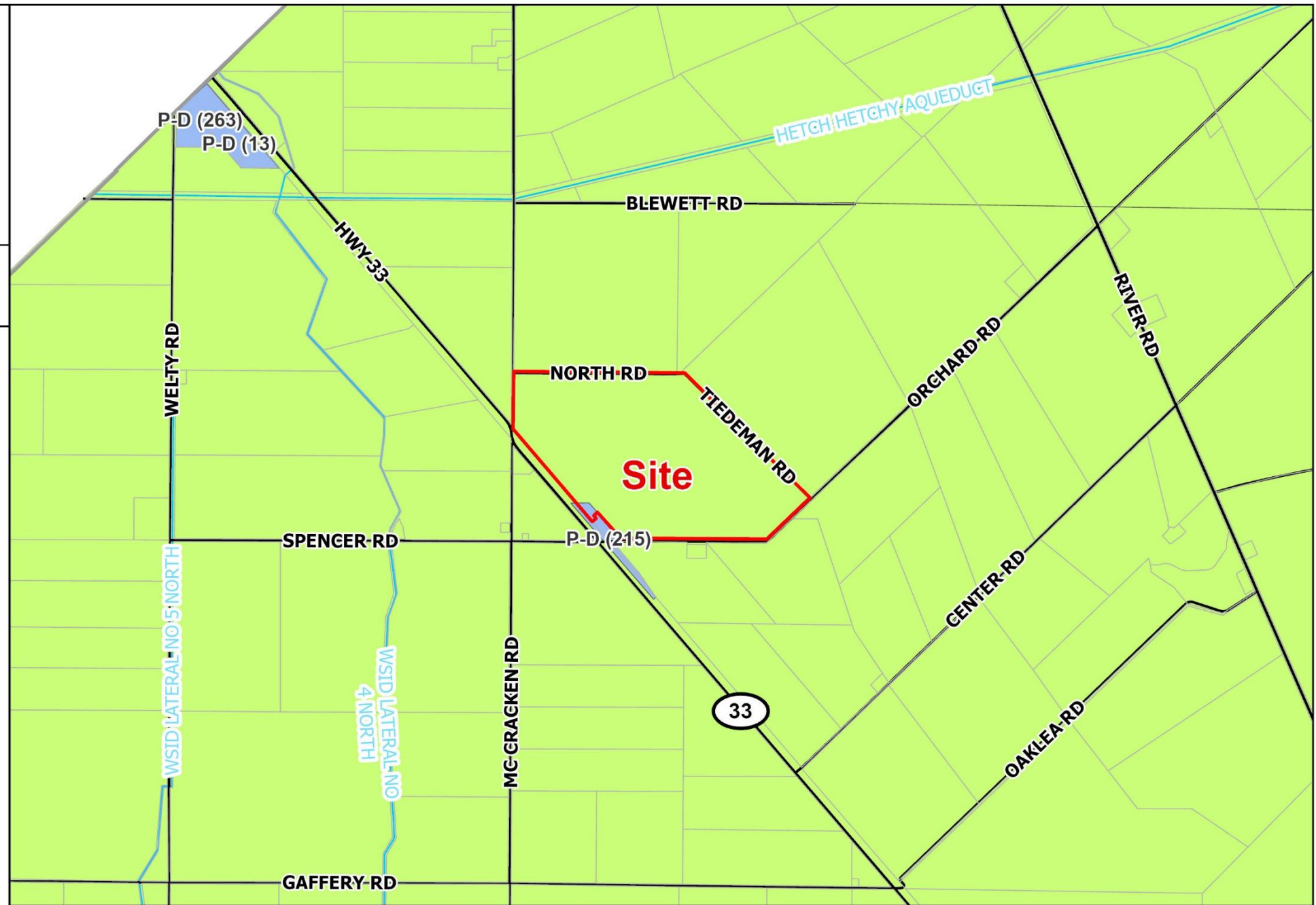


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0 800 Meters

Source: Planning Department GIS

Date Exported: 11/20/2023









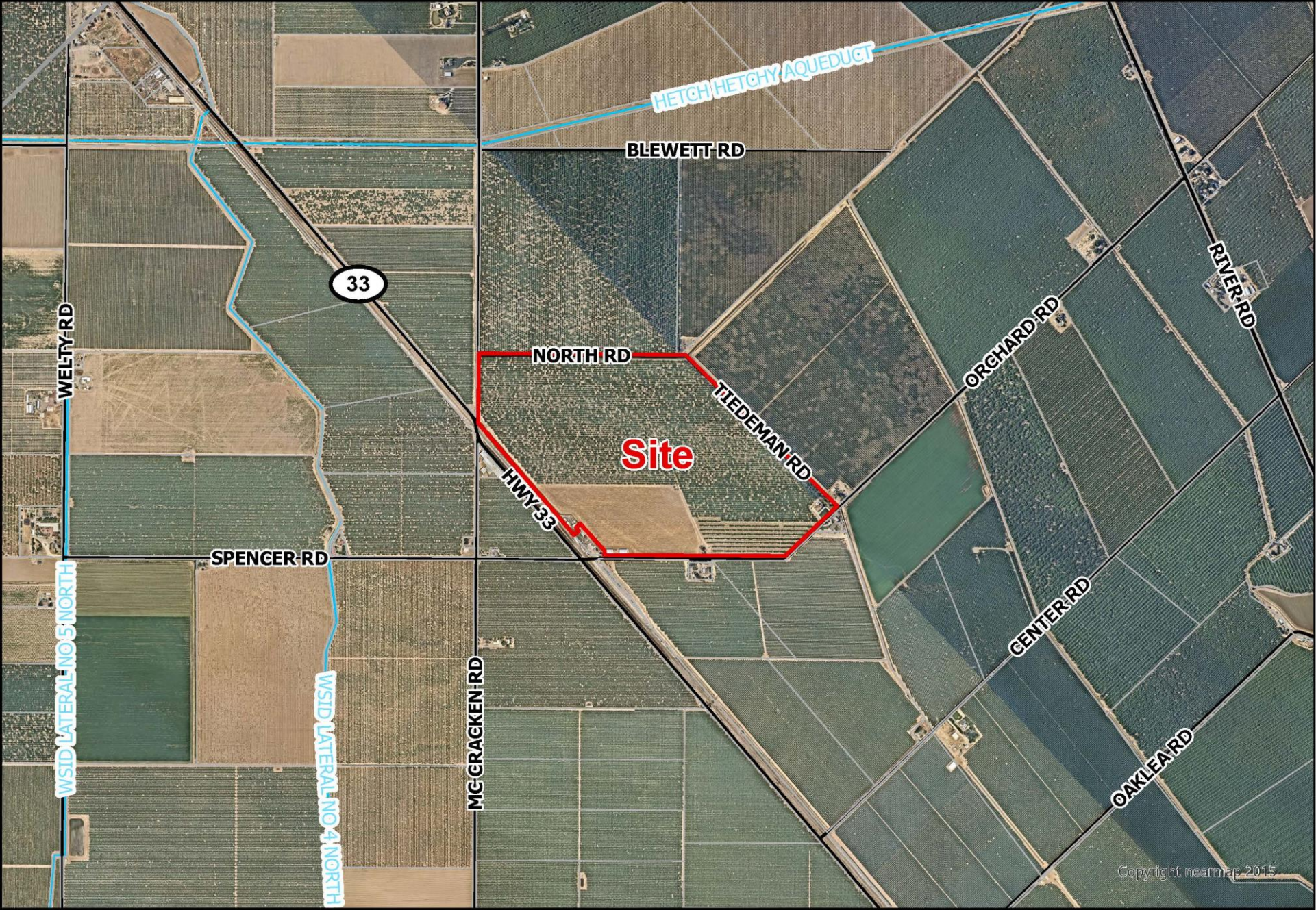
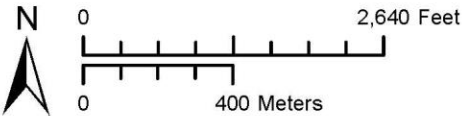
CENTRAL
IRRIGATION
INC

PLN2023-0146

AERIAL AREA MAP

LEGEND

-  County Boundary
-  Project Site
-  Parcel
-  Road
-  Canal
-  Rivers



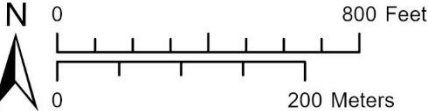
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INC

PLN2023-0146

AERIAL SITE MAP

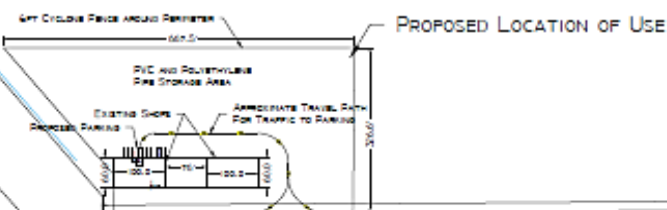
LEGEND

- County Boundary
- Project Site
- Parcel
- Road
- Canal
- Rivers

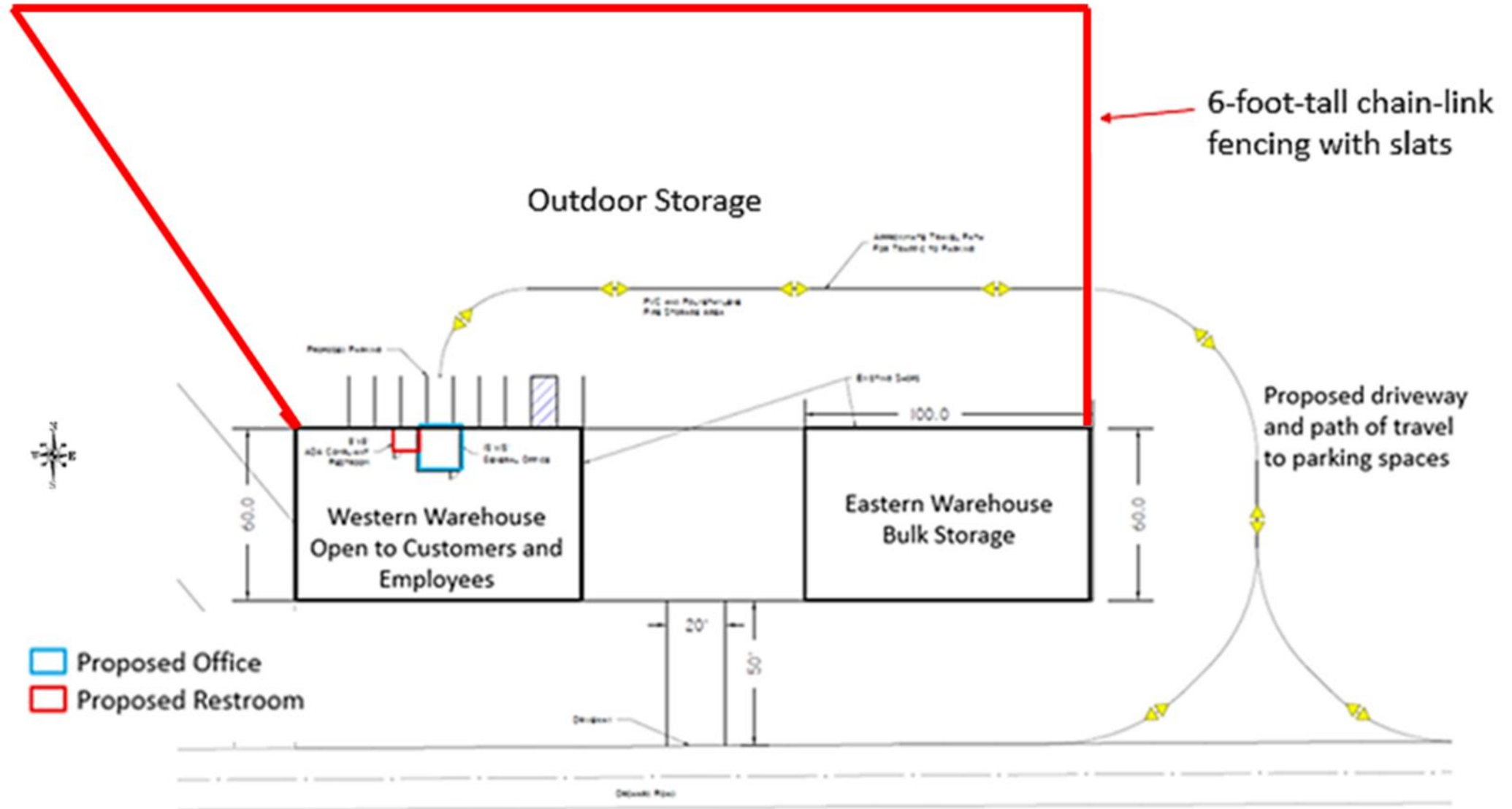


Central Irrigation, Inc. Site Plan

APN: 016-006-007
194.8 Ac
- 1.5 Ac RDS
193.3 Ac NET



Central Irrigation, Inc. Site Plan



Elevations



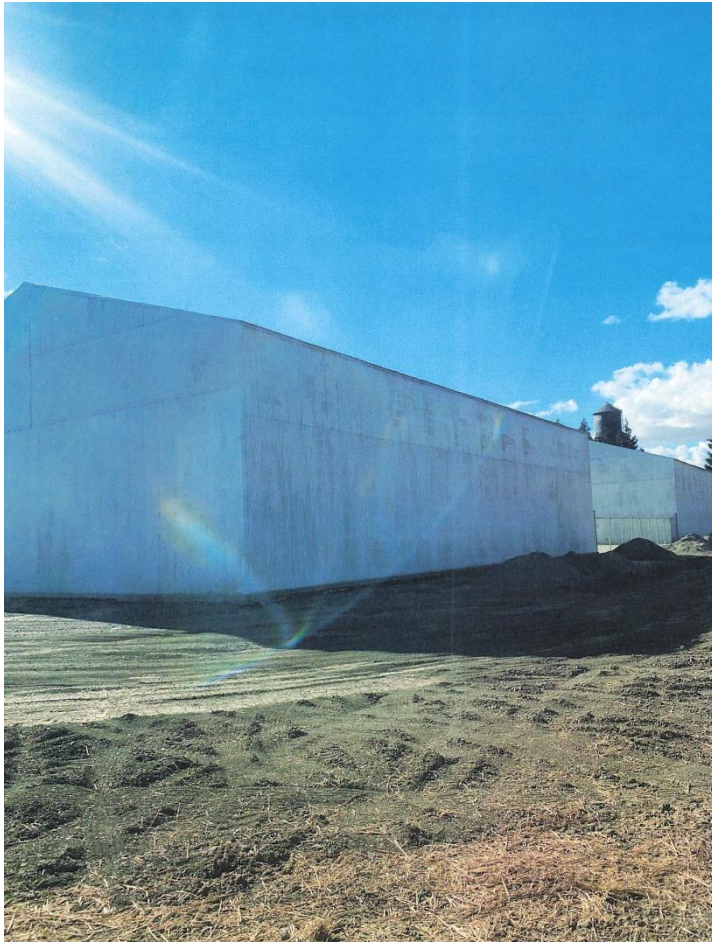
View to the northeast from the front of the parcel

Elevations

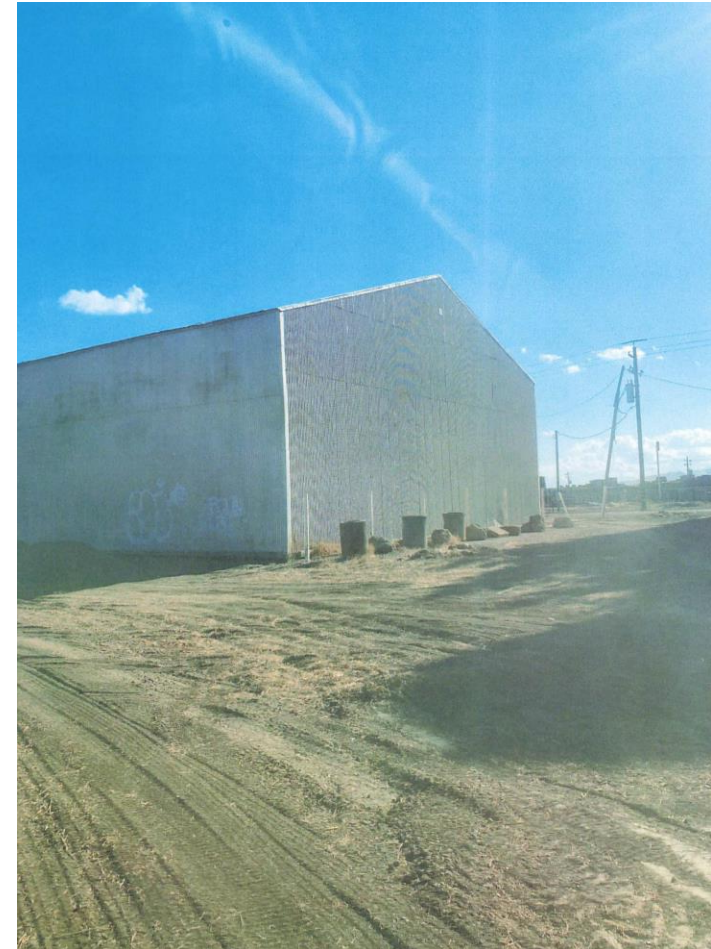


View to the northwest from the front of the parcel

Elevations



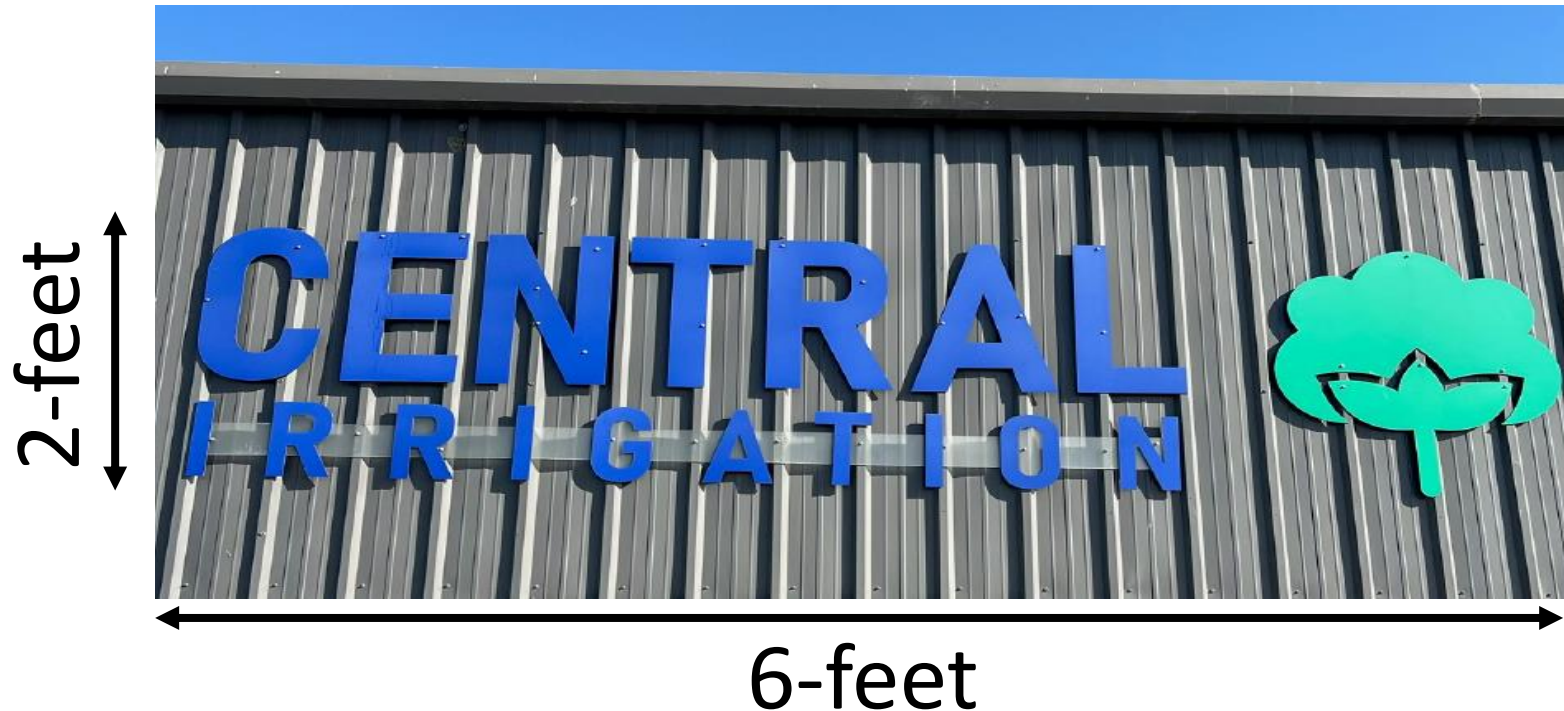
View to the southwest from behind
the eastern warehouse



View to the southeast from behind
the western warehouse

Proposed Signage

- Applicant proposes a 12-square-foot wall sign on the south side of the western warehouse



Staff Site Visit – Nov 21, 2024



Issues

- Signage
 - Proposed banner
 - Temporary sign located on Orchard Road
- Temporary signage not permitted
 - Condition of Approval No. 9 added to the project regarding signage requiring the approval of the Planning Director or appointed designee



General Plan and Zoning Consistency

General Plan

- Land Use Element designation
 - Agriculture
- Agricultural Element
 - Policy 1.10 – Agricultural Buffers

Zoning

- General Agriculture (A-2-40)
 - Tier Two Use Permit

Environmental Review

- CEQA
 - Negative Declaration
 - Conditions of Approval

Planning Commission Determination

- Findings – Exhibit A
 - Environmental Review
 - Use Permit finding
 - Agricultural buffer
 - Project Approval

Questions?