



CEQA Referral Initial Study And Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration

Date: December 19, 2025

To: Distribution List (See Attachment A)

From: Christine Smith, Associate Planner
Planning and Community Development

Subject: USE PERMIT APPLICATION NO. PLN2024-0067 – CAL ALMOND

Comment Period: December 19, 2025 – January 22, 2026

Respond By: January 22, 2026

Public Hearing Date: Not yet scheduled. A separate notice will be sent to you when a hearing is scheduled.

You may have previously received an Early Consultation Notice regarding this project, and your comments, if provided, were incorporated into the Initial Study. Based on all comments received, Stanislaus County anticipates adopting a Negative Declaration for this project. This referral provides notice of a 30-day comment period during which Responsible and Trustee Agencies and other interested parties may provide comments to this Department regarding our proposal to adopt the Negative Declaration.

All applicable project documents are available for review at: Stanislaus County Department of Planning and Community Development, 1010 10th Street, Suite 3400, Modesto, CA 95354. Please provide any additional comments to the above address or call us at (209) 525-6330 if you have any questions. Thank you.

Applicant: Gary Madsen, NorthStar Engineering Group

Project Location: 5019, 5207, 5213, and 5237 Christofferson Rd, between South Commons and South Washington Roads, in the Turlock area

APN: 057-016-002, -025, -028, and -029

Williamson Act Contract: 1978-3131 (APN: 057-016-025)

General Plan: Agriculture

Current Zoning: General Agriculture (A-2-40)

Project Description: Request to permit an expansion of an existing almond hulling, shelling, and storage facility, to allow for the storage of stockpiles of almond hulls and shells on two adjacent parcels totaling 38.8± acres in size, in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district.

Full document with attachments available for viewing at:
<http://www.stancounty.com/planning/pl/act-projects.shtm>



USE PERMIT APPLICATION NO. PLN2024-0067 – CAL ALMOND

Attachment A

Distribution List

X	CA DEPT OF CONSERVATION Land Resources		STAN CO ALUC
X	CA DEPT OF FISH & WILDLIFE		STAN CO ANIMAL SERVICES
	CA DEPT OF FORESTRY (CAL FIRE)	X	STAN CO BUILDING PERMITS DIVISION
X	CA DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION DIST 10	X	STAN CO CEO
X	CA OPR STATE CLEARINGHOUSE		STAN CO CSA
X	CA RWQCB CENTRAL VALLEY REGION	X	STAN CO DER
	CA STATE LANDS COMMISSION		STAN CO ERC
	CEMETERY DISTRICT	X	STAN CO FARM BUREAU
	CENTRAL VALLEY FLOOD PROTECTION	X	STAN CO HAZARDOUS MATERIALS
	CITY OF:		STAN CO PARKS & RECREATION
	COMMUNITY SERVICES DIST:	X	STAN CO PUBLIC WORKS
X	COOPERATIVE EXTENSION		STAN CO PUBLIC WORKS - SURVEY
X	COUNTY OF: MERCED		STAN CO RISK MANAGEMENT
X	DER GROUNDWATER RESOURCES DIVISION	X	STAN CO SHERIFF
X	DISPOSAL DIST: TURLOCK SCAVENGER	X	STAN CO SUPERVISOR DIST 2: CHIESA
X	FIRE PROTECTION DIST: MOUNTAIN VIEW FIRE	X	STAN COUNTY COUNSEL
X	GSA: WEST TURLOCK SUBBASIN		StanCOG
	HOSPITAL DIST:	X	STANISLAUS FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU
X	IRRIGATION DIST: TURLOCK	X	STANISLAUS LAFCO
X	MOSQUITO DIST: TURLOCK	X	STATE OF CA SWRCB DIVISION OF DRINKING WATER DIST. 10
X	STANISLAUS COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES	X	SURROUNDING LAND OWNERS
	MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL:		INTERESTED PARTIES
X	PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC	X	TELEPHONE COMPANY: AT&T
	POSTMASTER:		TRIBAL CONTACTS (CA Government Code §65352.3)
X	RAILROAD: UNION PACIFIC		US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
X	SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY APCD	X	US FISH & WILDLIFE
X	SCHOOL DIST 1: CHATOM UNION		US MILITARY (SB 1462) (7 agencies)
X	SCHOOL DIST 2: TURLOCK UNIFIED		USDA NRCS
	WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT		WATER DIST:
X	STAN CO AG COMMISSIONER		
	TUOLUMNE RIVER TRUST		

STANISLAUS COUNTY CEQA REFERRAL RESPONSE FORM

TO: Stanislaus County Planning & Community Development
1010 10th Street, Suite 3400
Modesto, CA 95354

FROM: _____

SUBJECT: USE PERMIT APPLICATION NO. PLN2024-0067 – CAL ALMOND

Based on this agency's particular field(s) of expertise, it is our position the above described project:

- _____ Will not have a significant effect on the environment.
- _____ May have a significant effect on the environment.
- _____ No Comments.

Listed below are specific impacts which support our determination (e.g., traffic general, carrying capacity, soil types, air quality, etc.) – (attach additional sheet if necessary)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Listed below are possible mitigation measures for the above-listed impacts: *PLEASE BE SURE TO INCLUDE WHEN THE MITIGATION OR CONDITION NEEDS TO BE IMPLEMENTED (PRIOR TO RECORDING A MAP, PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF A BUILDING PERMIT, ETC.):*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

In addition, our agency has the following comments (attach additional sheets if necessary).

Response prepared by:

Name	Title	Date
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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, 2025

1. **Project title:** Use Permit Application No. PLN2024-0067 - Cal Almond
2. **Lead agency name and address:** Stanislaus County
1010 10th Street, Suite 3400
Modesto, CA 95354
3. **Contact person and phone number:** Christine Smith, Associate Planner
(209) 525-6330
4. **Project location:** 5019, 5207, 5213, and 5237 Christofferson Rd, between South Commons and South Washington Roads, in the Turlock area (APNs: 057-016-002, -025, -028, and -29)
5. **Project sponsor's name and address:** Gary Madsen
NorthStar Engineering Group
620 12th Street
Modesto, CA 95354
6. **General Plan designation:** Agriculture
7. **Zoning:** General Agriculture (A-2-40)
8. **Description of project:**

This is a request to permit the expansion of an existing almond hulling, shelling, and storage facility, currently permitted to operate on two parcels totaling 19.55± acres (Assessor Parcel Numbers [APN]: 057-016-028 and 057-016-029) in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district.

This request is to permit the expansion of the facility on two adjacent parcels, allowing the storage of stockpiles of almond hulls and shells, and empty trailers, totaling 38.8± acres. The unhulled and unshelled nuts and shell and hull biproducts are stored year-round on-site and are kept in 16-foot-high mounds and covered with tarps. Operations at the facility would remain unchanged under this request.

The facility's operating season runs from August to December, with typical hours of operation Monday to Saturday, 4:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., and two eight-hour shifts for employees. During peak harvest season, typically September and October, the facility operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with three eight-hour shifts. Six full-time employees, including one manager, and up to 20 part-time employees may be on-site at any given time. Up to 100 daily truck trips (for trucks bringing in unprocessed almonds and trucks leaving with shell and hull biproducts or empty trailers to fill off-site) and 52 passenger vehicle trips (inbound and outbound trips for up to 26 employees) are expected per-day during the peak harvest season, and 12 passenger vehicle trips (inbound and outbound trips for six employees) are scheduled during the other months of the operating season (August, November, and December). A maximum of 20 truck trips per-day is expected during the facility's nonoperating season (January through July) to perform on-site maintenance and pick up stockpiled product for further processing. The proposed expansion is not expected to result in any additional employees, truck trips, or hours of operation.

The balance of the parcel has been previously developed with three agricultural storage buildings, one almond huller, an overhead auger system, an office, solar panels, fire water pond, a domestic well, septic system, and a single-family dwelling, for a total of 48,950± square feet of building space, originally approved under Use Permit No. 77-28 on APN 057-016-028 and 057-016-029 and with various expansions over the years, permitted at a staff level. The expansion area comprises two agricultural storage buildings, one detached garage, one single-family dwelling, a septic

system, and a domestic well on APN 057-016-002, totaling 22,430± square feet of building space. No structures currently exist, and none are proposed for on APN: 057-016-025.

Stormwater runoff is contained within drainage basins at the northern end of the project parcels and will accommodate any additional runoff resulting from this project. No extra or modified utilities would be required. Access to the site is via County-maintained Christofferson Road. The existing facility has a paved parking lot with 10 parking spaces, exterior lighting affixed to the buildings, and an eight-foot chain-link fence with privacy slats along South Commons Road. There are 3 existing driveways on APN: 057-016-028 and 1 private driveway for the residence located on 057-016-029. The expansion area has 2 existing driveways, both taking access via County-maintained Christofferson Road. No additional driveways are planned for this request.

The current use permit application was submitted in response to an active Code Enforcement case for the unpermitted expansion onto APNs 057-016-002 and 057-016-025, which occurred without securing the necessary land use entitlements (CE 24-0146). APN: 057-016-025 is enrolled under Williamson Act Contract Number 1978-3131 and, if approved, will remain under contract.

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 9. | Surrounding land uses and setting: | Irrigated orchards and scattered single-family dwellings in all directions; a dairy to the southeast; and the County of Merced to the south. |
| 10. | 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, Turlock Irrigation District (TID) |
| 11. | Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?: | 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. |
| 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 Christine Smtih, Associate Planner

December 19, 2025

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.
- 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 proposed expansion areas will be used to store eight almond mounds in the northern portion of APN 057-016-002, and storage of empty trailers and an additional eight mounds on APN 057-016-025. No new structures will be developed as a result of the project. The only scenic designation in the County is along Interstate 5, which is not near the project site. The site itself is not considered a scenic resource or a unique vista.

A dairy is located south of the project site, with agricultural farming in all directions, and the City of Turlock is located to the south. Structures within the surrounding area consist primarily of agricultural buildings, as well as residential and accessory structures featuring stucco, metal, and wood facades. No adverse effects on the visual character of the site or its surroundings are anticipated. The project will not degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site or its surroundings. Although, no structures or lighting will be constructed as a result of the project, standard conditions of approval will be added to this project to address glare from any on-site lighting. No adverse impacts to the existing visual character of the site or its surroundings are anticipated.

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: Assessor's Parcel Number 057-016-025 is currently enrolled in California's Land Conservation Act (the "Williamson Act") under Contract No. 78-3131 and will remain under this contract. The remaining portion of the project site is not enrolled in the Williamson Act.

This project site is situated on soils classified as "Prime Farmland" and "Semi-agricultural and Rural Commercial Land" by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. According to the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS) Web Soil Survey, nearly 100 percent of the project site consists of Hanford sandy loam with slopes of 0 to 1 percent (HfA). This soil type has a California Revised Storie Index Rating of 86.

The California Revised Storie Index is a rating system based on soil properties that determine the potential for soils to be used for irrigated agricultural production in California. A rating of 86 corresponds to Grade 1 soils, which are considered suitable for irrigated agriculture.

Stanislaus County considers land that meets at least one of the following requirements to be prime farmland under the Uniform Rules: parcels comprised of Class 1 or Class 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 proposed project expansion sites, APNs: 057-016-025 and 002, meet the definition of prime farmland under the County's Uniform Rules. Additionally, the remaining project area could be classified as prime farmland if it is irrigated.

Within the A-2 zoning district, the County has determined that certain uses related to agricultural production, such as Tier One uses, are "necessary for a healthy agricultural economy," provided it is found that the proposed use "will not be substantially detrimental to or in conflict with the agricultural use of other property in the vicinity." Pursuant to Section 21.20.045(B)(3) of the Stanislaus County Zoning Ordinance, Tier One uses are determined to be consistent with the Principles of Compatibility and may be approved on contracted land unless a finding to the contrary is made. During project review, this application was referred to the Department of Conservation (DOC) for review and input; no response has been received to date. 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 General Agriculture (A-2) zoning district. As such, the project is classified as a Tier One uses, which are considered compatible with the Williamson Act.

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 the current

operation and proposed expansion would be consistent with a Tier One use and is not considered people-intensive by the Planning Commission, the proposed project would not be subject to agricultural buffers.

The project site is currently served by the Turlock Irrigation District (TID) for irrigation water. The project was referred to TID. TID responded to the project, stating that an irrigation pipeline and valves belonging to Improvement District (ID) 82B, the Chatom Ditch, run along the northern boundary of the subject parcels. A 25-foot easement belonging to this pipeline exists along the northern boundary of the center parcel (APN 057-016-029). It will be necessary to establish a 25-foot easements for the pipeline on the northern boundary of the eastern and western subject parcels (APNs 057-016-002, -025). The developer will be required to obtain an Encroachment Permit (EP) from the District for the existing fence encroachment into the future pipeline easement in approximately the northwest corner of the western subject parcel APN: 057-016-025. The plans also appear to indicate an existing fence line along the width of the boundary of the center parcel APN:057-016-029, which should be included in the EP. If other encroachments within District easements or right-of-way exist or will exist with the establishment of the new required easements, than those shall be included in the EP. Any improvements to this property that impact irrigation facilities shall be subject to the District's approval and meet all District standards and specifications. If it is determined that irrigation facilities will be impacted, the applicant must provide irrigation improvement plans and enter into an Irrigation Improvements Agreement for the required modifications to the irrigation facilities. Conditions of approval will be added to the project to reflect these requirements.

Based on this information, the project site will not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland) to non-agricultural use. It will not involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use.

The surrounding area is comprised of irrigated orchards and scattered single-family dwellings in all directions, a dairy to the south, and the City of Turlock to the south.

The project site has a General Plan designation of Agriculture and Zoning Destination of General Agriculture (A-2-40). 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 General Agriculture (A-2) zoning district. Pursuant to Section 21.20.045(F) of the Stanislaus County Zoning Code, all other uses requiring use permits on contracted lands, except those specified in subsections B, C, D and E of the subject section, 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 Government Code Section 51238.1.

Based on this information, staff believes that the proposed project will not conflict with any agriculturally zoned land or Williamson Act Contracted land, nor will the project result in the conversion of unique farmland, farmland of statewide importance. No forest lands or timberland exist in Stanislaus County. Therefore, this project will have no impact to forest land or timberland.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application Information; Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Survey; Referral response from the Turlock Irrigation District, dated September 18, 2025; California State Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program - Stanislaus County Farmland 2022; 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 PM2.5 (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 District has addressed most criteria air pollutants through basin wide programs and policies to prevent cumulative deterioration of air quality within the Basin. The project will not substantially increase traffic in the area and thereby impact air quality. The facility's operating season runs from August to December, with usual hours Monday through Saturday, from 4:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., comprising two eight-hour shifts for staff. During peak harvest season, which typically occurs in September and October, the facility operates up to 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with three eight-hour shifts. Six full-time employees, including one manager, and up to 20 part-time employees may report to the site at any given time. The applicant does not anticipate an increase in the number of full-time employees or part-time employees. Up to 100 daily truck trips (for trucks bringing in unprocessed almonds and trucks leaving with shell and hull biproducts or empty trailers to fill off-site) and up to 52 passenger vehicle trips (inbound and outbound trips for up to 26 employees) are expected per-day during the peak harvest season, totaling 152 trips per-day, between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. No additional truck trips are anticipated as part of this project. During the non-peak season, there are a maximum of up to 20 truck trips per-day (total inbound and outbound), and a total of 12 automobile trips per-day (anticipated inbound and outbound trips by employees), for a total of 32 trips per-day are scheduled during the other months of the operating season (August, November, and December). A maximum of 20 truck trips is expected per-day during the nonoperating season for the facility (January through July) to perform on-site maintenance and pick up stockpiled product for further processing. The SJVAPCD has pre-qualified emissions and determined a size below, which is reasonable to conclude that a project would not exceed applicable thresholds of significance for criteria pollutants. Any project falling below the thresholds identified by the SJVAPCD are deemed to have a less-than significant impact on air quality due to criteria pollutant emissions. The SJVAPCD's threshold of significance for industrial projects is identified as 1,506 additional trips per-day. As stated previously, the project currently generates 52 employee vehicle-trips and up to 100 truck-trips per-day, and no additional trips will be generated as part of this request. As this is below the SJVAPCD's threshold of significance, no significant impacts to air quality are anticipated.

Further, the SJVAPCD has published Guidance for Assessing and Mitigation Air Quality Impacts (GAMAQI) which has a Small Project Analysis Level (SPAL) screening tool. The SPAL establishes specific thresholds based on land use category with projects using various metrics corresponding to that land use type, including trips per-day, development size, number of students or dwelling units. Projects which fall under the respective threshold are presumed to have less than significant impact on air quality due to criteria pollutant emissions and are therefore excluded from quantifying criteria pollutants for CEQA purposes. For the general farming or almond storage facilities land-use categories, the category closest to almond hulling, shelling, and storage facilities that generates 100 or fewer one-way vehicle trips would meet the screening criteria. The project does not propose to utilize any structures; however, as previously, mentioned, up to 100 daily truck trips (for trucks bringing in unprocessed almonds and trucks leaving with shell and hull biproducts or empty trailers to fill off-site) and 52 passenger vehicle trips (inbound and outbound trips for up to 26 employees) are expected per-day during the peak harvest season, and 12 one-way passenger vehicle trips (inbound and outbound trips for six employees) are scheduled during the other months of the operating season (August, November, and December). A maximum of 20 one-way truck trips are expected per-day during the facility's nonoperating season (January through July) to perform on-site maintenance and pick up stockpiled product for further processing, which are below the SJVAPCD thresholds of significance under SPAL.

As required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, potential impacts regarding Air Quality should be evaluated using Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). Stanislaus County has currently not adopted any significance thresholds for VMT, and projects are treated on a case-by-case basis for evaluation under CEQA. However, the State of California - Office of Planning and

Research (OPR) has issued guidelines regarding VMT significance under CEQA. 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. 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. 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. The proposed project will not exceed the screening criteria for VMT analysis, with a 100 daily truck trips (for trucks bringing in unprocessed almonds and trucks leaving with shell and hull biproducts or empty trailers to fill off-site) and up to 52 passenger vehicle trips (inbound and outbound trips for up to 26 employees) are expected per-day during the peak harvest season, totaling 152 trips per-day, between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. No additional truck trips are anticipated as part of this project. During the non-peak season, there are a maximum of up to 20 truck trips per-day (total inbound and outbound), and a total of 12 automobile trips per-day (anticipated inbound and outbound trips by employees), for a total of 32 trips per-day are scheduled during the other months of the operating season (August, November, and December). A maximum of 20 truck trips is expected per-day during the nonoperating season for the facility (January through July). The estimated number of vehicle trips for the operation throughout the entire year is below the District's significance threshold for both vehicle and heavy truck trips, no significant impacts on air quality from vehicle and truck activities are expected. As this is below the District's threshold of significance for vehicle and heavy truck trips, no significant impacts from vehicle and truck trips to air quality are anticipated.

No construction is proposed; however, should future construction occur as a result of this project, construction activities associated with new development can temporarily increase localized PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, volatile organic compound (VOC), nitrogen oxides (NOX), sulfur oxides (SOX), and carbon monoxide (CO) concentrations a project's vicinity. The primary source of construction-related CO, SOX, VOC, and NOX emission is gasoline and diesel-powered, heavy-duty mobile construction equipment. Primary sources of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} emissions are generally clearing and demolition activities, grading operations, construction vehicle traffic on unpaved ground, and wind blowing over exposed surfaces. Future construction activities associated with the proposed project may require use of heavy-duty construction equipment. However, all construction activities would occur in compliance with all SJVAPCD regulations; therefore, construction emissions would be less than significant without mitigation.

The closest sensitive receptor is a single-family dwelling approximately 250 feet away, located across South Commons Road to the west. Project activities on-site are not expected to impact this receptor as odors are not expected as a result of the proposed project.

The project was referred to the SJVAPCD. SJVAPCD responded that the project-specific annual criteria pollutant emissions from operations are not expected to exceed any of the significance thresholds identified in the District's Guidance for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts. Staff will include a condition of approval on the project requiring that the applicant be in compliance with the District's rules and regulations.

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: San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District - Regulation VIII Fugitive Dust/PM-10 Synopsis; www.valleyair.org; San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's Small Project Analysis Level (SPAL) Guidance dated November 13, 2020; Referral response from San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, dated September 24, 2025 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: It does not appear this project will result in impacts to endangered species or habitats, locally designated species, or wildlife dispersal or mitigation corridors. There is no known sensitive or protected species or natural community located on the site. The project is situated in the Hatch Quad of the California Natural Diversity Database.

Based on results from the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), there are two animal species (excluding fish and mollusk species for which there is no feasible or potential habitat on the project site due to the lack of hydrological features) which are state or federally listed, threatened, or identified as species of special concern or a candidate of special concern within the Hatch California Natural Diversity Database Quad. These species include Swainson's hawk and tricolored blackbird.

Swainson's hawk has been spotted within a 2.16-mile radius of the site and is presumed extant in the area since 2007, per the database. However, the project site is already disturbed and improved with a single-family dwelling, agricultural storage buildings, a huller machine, used to remove the husk from almond shells, and storage of almonds in covered mounds. No rivers, creeks, ponds, or open canals exist on the project site. No construction is proposed as part of the project, and the project shall have no effect on Biological Resources.

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.

An early consultation was referred to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and no response has been received to date. 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: California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Natural Diversity Database Quad Species List; California Natural Diversity Database, Planning and Community Development GIS, accessed November 7, 2025; 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. No construction is proposed; however, conditions of approval will be placed on the project, requiring that any future 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. The project was also referred to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD), and no response has been received to date.

The applicant is proposing to expand an existing almond hulling, shelling, and storage facility on 38.8± acres. No construction, signage or lighting is proposed as part of this request. The project site remains dark and unlit during non-work hours, and the applicant proposes using heat-sensing drones to monitor the stored almonds on-site once weekly to offset energy consumption. Additionally, if any future lighting is installed, a condition of approval will be added requiring any site lighting to meet industry standards for energy efficiency. Any future construction would be 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). Additionally, any future construction activities must comply with all SJVAPCD regulations.

The project was referred to the Turlock Irrigation District (TID) which serves the project site and surrounding area for electrical service. TID responded to the project with no comments related to electrical utility service to the site.

Senate Bill 743 (SB743) requires that the transportation impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) evaluate impacts by using Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as a metric. Stanislaus County has currently not adopted any significance thresholds for VMT, and projects are treated on a case-by-case basis. As discussed in Section III – *Air Quality*, these activities would not significantly increase 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 up to 100 daily truck trips (for trucks bringing in unprocessed almonds and trucks leaving with shell and hull biproducts or empty trailers to fill off-site) and up to 52 passenger vehicle trips (inbound and outbound trips for up to 26 employees) are expected per-day during the peak harvest season, totaling 152 trips per-day, between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. No additional truck trips are anticipated as part of this project. During the non-peak season, there are a maximum of up to 20 truck trips per-day (total inbound and outbound), and a total of 12 automobile trips per-day (anticipated inbound and outbound trips by employees), for a total of 32 trips per-day are scheduled during the other months of the operating season (August, November, and December). A maximum of 20 truck trips is expected per-day during the nonoperating season for the facility (January through July). Accordingly, VMT impacts are anticipated to be less than significant.

It does not appear that this project will result in significant impacts to the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. Accordingly, the potential impacts to Energy are considered to be less than significant.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Referral response received from Turlock Irrigation District, dated September 18, 2025; San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District - Regulation VIII Fugitive Dust/PM-10 Synopsis; www.valleyair.org; Title 16 of County Code; CA Building Code; Governor's Office of Planning and Research Technical Advisory, December 2018; 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 that approximately 100 percent of the project site is comprised of Hanford sandy loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes (HfA), which has a California Revised Storie Index Rating of 86. 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.

No new construction is proposed; however, any future structures resulting from this project will be designed and built according to building standards appropriate to withstand shaking for the area in which they are constructed. Any earth moving is subject to Public Works Standards and Specifications, which consider the potential for erosion and run-off prior to permit approval. 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. The project was referred to DER, and it responded with no comments. Additionally, the project was referred to the Stanislaus County Public Works Department, and no response has been received to date. DER, Public Works, and the Building Permits Division review and approve building or grading permits to ensure compliance with their standards. Conditions of approval regarding these standards will be applied to the project and will be triggered when a building permit is requested.

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.

Impacts to geology and soils are anticipated to be less than significant.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Referral response from the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) Environmental Health Division, dated September 22, 2025; 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: This is a request to expand an existing 19.55± almond hulling, shelling, and storage facility by incorporating two additional parcels for on-site storage purposes. The expansion area will cover approximately 38.8± acres and includes no new construction.

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*, no new construction is proposed; however, should future construction occur as a result of the project, the use of heavy-duty construction equipment would be very limited; therefore, the emissions of CO₂ from future construction would be less than significant. Any future construction resulting from the project would be required to meet 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. Future construction activities associated with this project would be considered less than significant as they are temporary in nature and subject to meeting San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) standards for emissions.

Direct GHG emissions from the proposed project's operations are primarily due to truck trips to drop off and pick up equipment. 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 discussed in Section III – *Air Quality*, up to 100 daily truck trips (for trucks bringing in unprocessed almonds and trucks leaving with shell and hull biproducts or empty trailers to fill off-site) and up to 52 passenger vehicle trips (inbound and outbound trips for up to 26 employees) are expected per-day during the peak harvest season, totaling 152 trips per-day, between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. No additional truck trips are anticipated as part of this project. During the non-peak season, there are a maximum of up to 20 truck trips per-day (total inbound and outbound), and a total of 12 automobile trips per-day (anticipated inbound and outbound trips by employees), for a total of 32 trips per-day are scheduled during the other months of the operating season (August, November, and December). A maximum of 20 truck trips is expected per-day during the nonoperating season for the facility (January through July). The project was referred to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD). The SJVAPCD provided a project referral response indicating that the proposed project is below the District's thresholds of significance for emissions and any future construction will require an Authority to Construct (ATC) Permit and may be subject to the following District Rules: Regulation VIII, Rule 4102, Rule 4601, Rule 4641, Rule 4002, Rule 4102, Rule 4550, and Rule 4570. Staff will include a condition of approval on the project requiring that the applicant be in compliance with the District's rules and regulations. Consequently, GHG emissions are considered to be less than significant.

Based on project details and the conditions of approval to be placed on the project requiring that the applicant be in compliance with the District's rules and regulations, GHG emissions are considered to be less than significant for the project.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Referral response from San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, dated September 24, 2025; 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	

Discussion: The project is not anticipated to interfere with the Stanislaus County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, which identifies risks posed by disasters and identifies ways to minimize damage from those disasters. The County Department of Environmental Resources (DER) is responsible for overseeing hazardous materials. A referral response from the Hazardous Materials Division of DER indicated that the project is not anticipated to have a significant effect on the environment in terms of hazards and hazardous materials, and advised the applicant contact DER regarding regulatory requirements for hazardous materials and/or wastes. A referral response received from the Environmental Health Division of DER requested that the applicant demonstrate and secure any necessary permits for the destruction/relocation of all on-site wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) and/or water wells impacted or proposed by this project; and that all applicable County Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) standards and required setbacks are maintained. No new construction or modifications of any existing structures, wells, or septic systems are proposed as part of this request. The project is subject to meeting all applicable hazardous materials handling procedures.

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. The nearest properties in production agriculture with a record of pesticide use are the parcels directly adjacent to the project site in all directions. The project site itself also has a record of pesticide use but is not currently improved with production agriculture. As Stated in Section II – *Agricultural and Forest Resources*, 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, who regulates pesticide use, and no comments have been received to date.

The project site is not listed on the EnviroStor database managed by the CA Department of Toxic Substances Control. The site is located in a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) for fire protection and is served by the Mountain View Fire Protection District. The project was referred to the Mountain View Fire Protection District, and no comments have been received to date. The project is not anticipated to interfere with the Stanislaus County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, which identifies risks posed by disasters and identifies ways to minimize damage from those disasters.

The project site is not within the vicinity of any airstrip or wildlands. 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 the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) Environmental Health Division, dated September 22, 2025; Referral response from the Department of Environmental

Resources (DER) Hazardous Materials Division, dated September 24, 2025; 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% annual chance floodplains. All flood zone requirements will be addressed by the Building Permits Division during the building permit process.

The project proposes to handle stormwater drainage via overland runoff, and the current absorption patterns of water upon this property will not be altered. A referral response received from the Environmental Health Division of DER stated that any new building requiring an on-site wastewater treatment system (OWTS) shall be designed according to type and/or maximum occupancy of the proposed structure to the estimated waste/sewage design flow rate. All applicable County Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) standards and required setbacks are to be met, and prior to issuance of any grading or building permit, the applicant(s) shall submit a site plan that includes the location of the existing on-site water well(s), and the location, layout and design of all existing on-site wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) and the Future 100% Expansion (Replacement) Areas. This proposed project expansion does not include any new construction. However, as part of any future building permit review process, the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) will evaluate the existing wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) and the site's compliance with current Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) standards. LAMP standards specify minimum setbacks from wells to prevent negative impacts on groundwater quality. Conditions of approval will be added to the project to reflect these requirements.

The project was referred to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). A referral response received from the RWQCB outlined the regulatory setting and permitting requirements of the Central Valley RWQCB. A condition of approval will be added to the project requiring the applicant to coordinate with the RWQCB prior to issuance of

a building or grading permit to determine if any permits or Water Board requirements need to be obtained/ met prior to operation.

The site is currently served by a private septic system and well. No new wells or septic tanks are proposed as part of this request. Any future wells constructed on-site will be subject to review under the County's Well Permitting Program, which will determine whether a new well will require environmental review. Any potential regulatory requirements regarding applicable County Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) standards and required setbacks can be enforced during the building permit review process.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), passed in 2014 requires the formation of local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to oversee the development and implementation of Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs), with the ultimate goal of achieving sustainable management of the state's groundwater basins. Stanislaus County is a participating member in five GSAs across four groundwater subbasins, including: the Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Subbasin, which covers a portion of Stanislaus County occurring north of the Stanislaus River; commonly referred to as the "northern triangle"; the Modesto Groundwater Subbasin, which covers an area of land located between the Stanislaus and Tuolumne rivers, occurring west of the Sierra Nevada foothills and east of the San Joaquin River; the Turlock Groundwater Subbasin which covers an area of land located between the Tuolumne and Merced rivers, occurring west of the Sierra Nevada Foothills and occurring east of the San Joaquin River; and the Delta-Mendota Groundwater Subbasin which covers an area of land within Stanislaus County located west of the San Joaquin River and east of the basement rock of the Coast Range. Public and private water agencies and user groups within each of the four groundwater subbasins work together as GSAs to implement SGMA. The project site is located in the Turlock Subbasin, which the West Turlock Subbasin GSA administers. The project was referred to the West Turlock Subbasin GSA, and no comments were received regarding the proposed project.

Stanislaus County adopted a Groundwater Ordinance in November 2014 (Chapter 9.37 of the County Code, hereinafter, the "Ordinance") that codifies requirements, prohibitions, and exemptions intended to help promote sustainable groundwater extraction in unincorporated areas of the County. The Ordinance prohibits the unsustainable extraction of groundwater and makes issuing permits for new wells, which are not exempt from this prohibition, discretionary. For unincorporated areas covered in an adopted GSP pursuant to SGMA, the County can require holders of permits for wells it reasonably concludes are withdrawing groundwater unsustainably to provide substantial evidence that continued operation of such wells does not constitute unsustainable extraction and has the authority to regulate future groundwater extraction. The site has an existing private well and septic system. There are no additional wells proposed as part of this request. The project was referred to DER's Groundwater Resource Division, which responded with no 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.

A referral response received from DER indicated that the proposed well for the project site will meet the definition of a Public Water System as defined in California Health and Safety Code Section 116275(h). 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 of California 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 of California standards, the applicant may need to either drill a new well or install a water treatment system for the new well. Title 22 compliant well testing will take place during the initial drilling process. Potential constituents of concern that would require treatment include Total Dissolved Solids and similar naturally occurring minerals, Hexavalent Chromium, Arsenic, organic compounds, and Nitrates. This requirement of issuance of a water supply permit will be added as a condition of approval, to be met prior to issuance of a building permit.

The project site is currently served by the Turlock Irrigation District (TID) for irrigation water. The project was referred to TID. As was discussed in Section II- *Agriculture and Forest Resources*, TID responded to the project requiring that the developer obtain an encroachment permit (EP) from the District because the existing fence is within one of the District's 25' pipeline easement, which runs along the northwest corner of the western subject parcel APN: 057-016-025 and an existing fence line along the width of the boundary of the center parcel APN:057-016-029, which should be included in the EP. Additionally, an irrigation pipeline and valves belonging to Improvement District (ID) 82B, the Chatom Ditch, run along the northern boundary of the subject parcels. A 25-foot easement belonging to this pipeline exists along the northern boundary of the center parcel (APN 057-016-029). It will be necessary to establish a 25-foot easement for the pipeline on the northern boundary of the eastern and western subject parcels (APNs 057-016-002, -025). Any improvements to this property which impact irrigation facilities shall be subject to the District's approval and meet all District standards and specifications. Conditions of approval will be added to the project to reflect these requirements.

As a result of the development standards 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) Environmental Health Division, dated September 22, 2025; Referral response received from Turlock Irrigation District, dated September 18, 2025; Referral response from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), dated September 24, 2025; 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 has a General Plan designation of Agriculture and is zoned A-2-40 (General Agriculture – 40-Acre Minimum). The applicant is requesting to permit the expansion of an existing almond hulling, shelling, and storage facility, currently permitted to operate on two parcels totaling 19.55± acres (Assessor's Parcel Numbers [APN]: 057-016-028 and 057-016-029) in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district, in the Turlock area. This request is to permit the expansion of the facility on two adjacent parcels, allowing the storage of stockpiles of almond hulls and shells, and empty trailers, totaling 38.8± acres. The unhulled and unshelled nuts and shell and hull biproducts are stored year-round on-site and are kept in 16-foot-high mounds and covered with tarps. Operations at the facility would remain unchanged under this request.

Assessor's Parcel Number 057-016-025 is enrolled under Williamson Act Contract Number 1978-3131 and, if approved, will remain under contract.

The facility's operating season is from August to December, with typical hours of operation Monday to Saturday, 4:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., consisting of two eight-hour shifts for employees. During peak harvest season, which typically occurs in September and October, the facility operates up to 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with three eight-hour shifts. Six full-time employees, including one manager, and up to 20 part-time employees may report to the site at any given time. Up to 100 one-way truck trips (for trucks bringing in unprocessed almonds and trucks leaving with shell and hull biproducts or empty trailers to fill off-site) and 52 one-way passenger vehicle trips (inbound and outbound trips for up to 26 employees) are expected per-day during the peak harvest season, and 12 one-way passenger vehicle trips (inbound and outbound trips for six employees are scheduled during the other months of the operating season (August, November, and December). A maximum of 20 one-way truck trips are expected per-day during the nonoperating season for the facility (January through July) to perform on-site maintenance and pick up stockpiled product for further processing.

The proposed use is considered a Tier One use, which are closely related to agriculture and necessary for a healthy agricultural economy. Tier One uses may be allowed when the Planning Commission finds that:

1. The use as proposed will not be substantially detrimental to or in conflict with agricultural use of other property in the vicinity; and
2. 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.

The facility was originally permitted as an almond hulling, shelling, and storage facility under Use Permit No. UP 77-28 and has since been expanded with multiple subsequent Staff Approval Permits, the most recent of which is SAA No. PLN2011-24. With the application of conditions of approval, there is no indication that, under the circumstances of this particular case, the proposed expansion of this existing facility 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 the general welfare of the County. Tier One uses are an important component of the agricultural economy in Stanislaus County. There is no indication that this project will interfere with or conflict with other agricultural uses in the area.

The proposed use will not physically divide an established community and/or conflict with any Habitat Conservation Plan or Natural Community Conservation Plan. This project is not known to conflict with any adopted Land Use Plan, Habitat Conservation Plan, policy, or regulation of any agency with jurisdiction over the project. The use of the huller and storage of almonds is considered to be a Tier One use, which is a use considered to be closely related to agriculture and is necessary for a healthy agricultural economy. Tier One uses are considered to be consistent with the Williamson Act principles of compatibility. There is no indication that this project will interfere with or conflict with other agricultural uses in the area.

Mitigation: None.

References: 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: 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 industrial and 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 noise-producing activities happen during a limited period, specifically from August to December. To perform these tasks efficiently, the operation runs three shifts, each lasting eight hours. The activities conducted on-site are typical for almond orchards throughout the County. Noise-generating operations are executed as far away from residential areas as possible. The nearest sensitive noise receptor is a single-family dwelling approximately 250 feet away, located across South Commons Road to the west. Outside of the active season, there are no other activities on the site that produce noise, odors, or other nuisances. Furthermore, the noise from this operation does not extend beyond the applicant's property lines.

Noise impacts from on-site activities and traffic are not anticipated to exceed the normally acceptable level. The site itself is impacted by the noise generated from traffic on Christofferson Road and South Commons Road and by farming operations in the surrounding area. Noise impacts associated with on-site activities will include trucks entering and exiting the property and the idling of engines. Such uses should be under the threshold established by the General Plan's Noise Element and Chapter 10.46 of the County Code – Noise Control. No construction is proposed as part of this request. If future construction occurs, on-site grading and construction resulting from this project may temporarily increase the area's ambient noise levels; however, noise impacts associated with on-site activities and traffic are not anticipated to exceed the normally acceptable noise level.

The site is not located within an airport land use plan.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Stanislaus County Noise Control Ordinance (Title 10); Stanislaus County Health and Safety Ordinance (Title 9); Stanislaus County General Plan, Chapter IV – Noise Element; 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	
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Discussion: The site is not included in the vacant sites inventory for the 2016 Stanislaus County Housing Element, which covers the 6th cycle Regional Housing Needs Allocation (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: 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:			X	
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, irrigation, and public works departments and districts during the early consultation referral period including Mountain View Fire Protection District, the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Office, Chatom Union School District and Turlock Unified School District, Stanislaus County Public Works Department, Caltrans and Turlock Irrigation District (TID).

TID responded to the project with no comments related to electrical utility service to the site. As was discussed in Section II- *Agriculture and Forest Resources*, TID responded to the project, stating that an irrigation pipeline and valves belonging to Improvement District (ID) 82B, the Chatom Ditch, run along the northern boundary of the subject parcels. A 25-foot easement belonging to this pipeline exists along the northern boundary of the center parcel (APN 057-016-029). It will be necessary to establish 25-foot easements for the pipeline on the northern boundary of the eastern and western subject parcels (APNs 057-016-002, -025). The developer will be required to obtain an Encroachment Permit (EP) from the District for the existing fence encroachment into the future pipeline easement in approximately the northwest corner of the western subject parcel APN: 057-016-025. The plans also appear to indicate an existing fence line along the width of the boundary of the center parcel APN:057-016-029, which should be included in the EP. If other encroachments within District easements or right-of-way exist or will exist with the establishment of the new required easements, than those shall be included in the EP. Any improvements to this property that impact irrigation facilities shall be subject to the District's approval and meet all District standards and specifications. If it is determined that irrigation facilities will be impacted, the applicant must provide irrigation improvement plans and enter into an Irrigation Improvements Agreement for the required modifications to the irrigation facilities. Conditions of approval will be added to the project to reflect these requirements.

The project was referred to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB) who responded with a list of the Board's permits and programs that may be applicable to the proposed project. The developer will be required to contact CVRWQCB to determine which permits/standards must be met prior to construction as a condition of approval.

An early consultation referral for the project was referred to the Stanislaus County Public Works Department, and no response has been received to date.

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. No buildings are proposed as part of this project. However, should any construction occur on the property in the future, all adopted public facility fees will be required to be paid at the time of building permit issuance.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application Information; Referral response from the Turlock Irrigation District, dated September 18, 2025; Referral response from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, dated September 24, 2025; 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: This request is to permit the expansion of an existing almond hulling, shelling, and storage facility, currently permitted to operate on two parcels totaling 19.55± acres (Assessor's Parcel Numbers [APN]: 057-016-028 and 057-016-029) in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district. This request is to permit the expansion of the facility on two adjacent parcels, allowing the storage of stockpiles of almond hulls and shells, and empty trailers, totaling 38.8± acres. The unhulled and unshelled nuts and shell and hull biproducts are stored year-round on-site and are kept in 16-foot-high mounds and covered with tarps. Operations at the facility would remain unchanged under this request. The facility's operating season runs from August to December, with usual hours Monday through Saturday, from 4:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., comprising two

eight-hour shifts for staff. During peak harvest season, which typically occurs in September and October, the facility operates up to 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with three eight-hour shifts. Six full-time employees, including one manager, and up to 20 part-time employees may report to the site at any given time. The applicant anticipates up to 100 one-way truck trips (for trucks bringing in unprocessed almonds and trucks leaving with shell and hull biproducts or empty trailers to fill off-site) and 52 one-way passenger vehicle trips (inbound and outbound trips for up to 26 employees) are expected per-day during the peak harvest season, and 12 one-way passenger vehicle trips (inbound and outbound trips for six employees are scheduled during the other months of the operating season (August, November, and December). A maximum of 20 one-way truck trips is expected per-day during the facility's nonoperating season (January through July) to perform on-site maintenance and pick up stockpiled product for further processing.

Potential impacts to transportation 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 100 one-way truck trips and 52 one-way passenger vehicle trips for up to 26 employees per-day during the peak harvest season, and 12 one-way passenger vehicle trips for six employees are scheduled during the other months of the operating season (August, November, and December). A maximum of 20 one-way truck trips is expected per-day during the facility's nonoperating season (January through July). As this is below the screening threshold of significance for vehicle and heavy truck trips, no significant impacts from vehicle and truck trips to transportation are anticipated.

Access is proposed to be taken off County-maintained Christofferson Road via six driveways: one 60-foot-wide compacted dirt driveway on APN 057-016-025, one 24-foot-wide crushed rock driveway on APN 057-016-002, one 22-foot-wide crushed rock driveway on APN 057-016-028 for the rental home on-site, and three asphalt driveways on APN 057-016-029 that are 13 feet, 18 feet, and 35-feet-wide. It is not anticipated that the project would substantially affect the level of service on Christofferson Road. This project was referred to the Stanislaus County Department of Public Works, Mountain View Fire Protection District, and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and no responses have been received to date.

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; 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 does not include any construction or ground-disturbance. 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. A condition of approval regarding the discovery of cultural resources during any future construction process will be added to the 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: The project proposes to utilize an existing private well for water and an existing septic system. Although no new structures are proposed, the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) Environmental Health Division commented that any new building requiring an on-site wastewater treatment system (OWTS) shall be designed according to type and/or maximum occupancy of the proposed structure to the estimated waste/sewage design flow rate. All applicable

County Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) standards and required setbacks are to be met, and prior to issuance of any grading or building permit, the applicant(s) shall submit a site plan that includes the location of the existing on-site water well(s), and the location, layout and design of all existing on-site wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) and the Future 100% Expansion (Replacement) Areas.

As discussed in Section X – *Hydrology and Water Quality*, DER confirmed that the water system serving the project site is a public water system operating without a required Water Supply Permit, as defined under California Health and Safety Code (HSC) Section 116275 and Title 22, California Code of Regulations (CCR) Sections 64400.10, 64400.80, and 64401.85. Prior to the issuance of any building permits or licenses to operate a business associated with this project, the property owner is required to submit a Public Water Supply Permit Application pursuant to HSC Section 116525, along with a Public Water System Technical Report [HSC §116530], Documentation of technical, managerial, and financial (TMF) capacity [HSC §116540], and any additional information necessary for the issuance of a Public Water Supply Permit under HSC Sections 116525, 116530, 116540, and 116550. Conditions of approval will be added to the project to reflect these requirements, which will be triggered if a building permit is applied for in the future.

The project was referred to the Turlock Irrigation District (TID), who responded to the project with no comments related to electrical utility service to the site.

The project was referred to the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), which responded by requesting that the applicant coordinate with their agency to determine whether any permits or Water Board requirements are to 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 was also referred to PG&E and AT&T and no response has been received to date.

The project proposes to handle stormwater drainage through a drainage basin. The project was referred to DER's Groundwater Resources Division, which responded with no comments. This project was also referred to the Stanislaus County Department of Public Works, and no responses have been received to date.

The project is not anticipated to have a significant impact to utilities and service systems.

Mitigation: None.

References: Application information; Referral response from the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) Environmental Health Division, dated September 22, 2025; Referral response from the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) Groundwater Resources Division, dated September 22, 2025; Referral response from the Turlock Irrigation District, dated September 18, 2025; Referral response from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, dated September 24, 2025; 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	
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Discussion: The Stanislaus County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies risks posed by disasters and identifies ways to minimize damage from those disasters. With the Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Activities of this plan in place, impacts to an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan are anticipated to be less than significant. The terrain of the site is relatively flat, and the site has access to County-maintained Christofferson Road. The site is located in a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) for fire protection and is served by the Mountain View Fire Protection District. The project was referred to the Mountain View Fire Protection District, and no response has been received to date. 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. No construction is proposed; however, any future construction will be subject to building permits and will be reviewed by the County's Building Permits Division and Fire Prevention Bureau to ensure all State of California Building and Fire Code requirements are met prior to construction.

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

Mitigation: None.

References: 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: This request is to permit the expansion of an existing almond hulling, shelling, and storage facility, currently permitted to operate on two parcels totaling 19.55± acres (Assessor's Parcel Numbers [APN]: 057-016-028 and 057-016-029) in the General Agriculture (A-2-40) zoning district. This request is to permit the expansion of the facility on two adjacent parcels, allowing the storage of stockpiles of almond hulls and shells, and empty trailers, totaling 38.8± acres. The unhulled and unshelled nuts and shell and hull biproducts are stored year-round on-site and are kept in 16-foot-high mounds and covered with tarps. Operations at the facility would remain unchanged under this request. This project site is situated on soils classified as "Prime Farmland" and "Semi-agricultural and Rural Commercial Land" by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. According to the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS) Web Soil Survey, nearly 100 percent of the project site consists of Hanford sandy loam with slopes of 0 to 1 percent (HfA). This soil type has a California Revised Storie Index Rating of 86. While the site's soils are characterized

as prime farmland under the County's Uniform Rules, it is not currently improved with any production agriculture. The proposed project will not permanently convert any Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use. The surrounding area is comprised of irrigated orchards and scattered single-family dwellings in all directions, a dairy to the northwest, and the City of Turlock to the south.

Assessor's Parcel Number 057-016-025 is currently enrolled in California Land Conservation Act ("Williamson Act") Contract No. 78-3131 and will remain enrolled if approved. The remaining portion of the project site is not enrolled in the Williamson Act. It is not anticipated that the proposed project will impact agricultural operations on the project site or the surrounding parcels that are also under contract and in agricultural production. Staff believes that the proposed project will not conflict with any agriculturally zoned land or Williamson Act Contracted land in the vicinity.

Parcels immediately surrounding the project site are in agricultural production, enrolled in Williamson Act Contracts, and are all zoned General Agriculture (A-2). Any future unrelated new or expanding development of parcels located in the A-2 zoning district in the vicinity of the project site would be subject to the uses permitted by the A-2 zoning district or would require discretionary land use permits that are subject to CEQA review and the public hearing process. Rezoning parcels to another designation that would create islands or disregard infilling are not consistent with the General Plan and would likely not be approved.

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 migratory corridors are considered to be less than significant.

It does not appear that this project will result in significant impacts to any archaeological or cultural resources. The project site is already developed, and no new construction is proposed. The project site has already been disturbed. Standard conditions of approval regarding the discovery of cultural resources during any future construction resulting from this request will be added to the project.

The project will not physically divide an established community. Any development of the surrounding area would be subject to the permitted uses of the A-2 Zoning District or would require additional land use entitlements and environmental review. Additionally, surrounding parcels located adjacent to the project site are restricted by Williamson Act Contracts and are limited to the uses found to be compatible with the Williamson Act. Any uses beyond those uses permitted in the A-2 zoning district would require a General Plan Amendment and rezoning of the property which would be evaluated through additional environmental review which would take into consideration impacts from the loss of farmland and the potential for farmland conversion and cumulative impacts to the surrounding area. Any additional request for expansion for the agricultural service establishment under this request, may be subject to further land use entitlement review.

The proposed project will generate a low amount of vehicle trips with a total of 100 vehicle and truck round-trips per-day (for trucks bringing in unprocessed almonds and trucks leaving with shell and hull biproducts or empty trailers to fill off-site) and 52 one-way passenger vehicle trips (inbound and outbound trips for up to 26 employees) are expected per-day during the peak harvest season, and 12 one-way passenger vehicle trips (inbound and outbound trips for six employees are scheduled during the other months of the operating season (August, November, and December). 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 100 one-way truck and 52 one-way passenger vehicle trips are anticipated. These trips are reduced during the nonoperating season.

Review of this project has not indicated any features that 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 December 9, 2025.

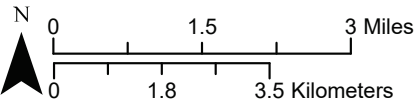
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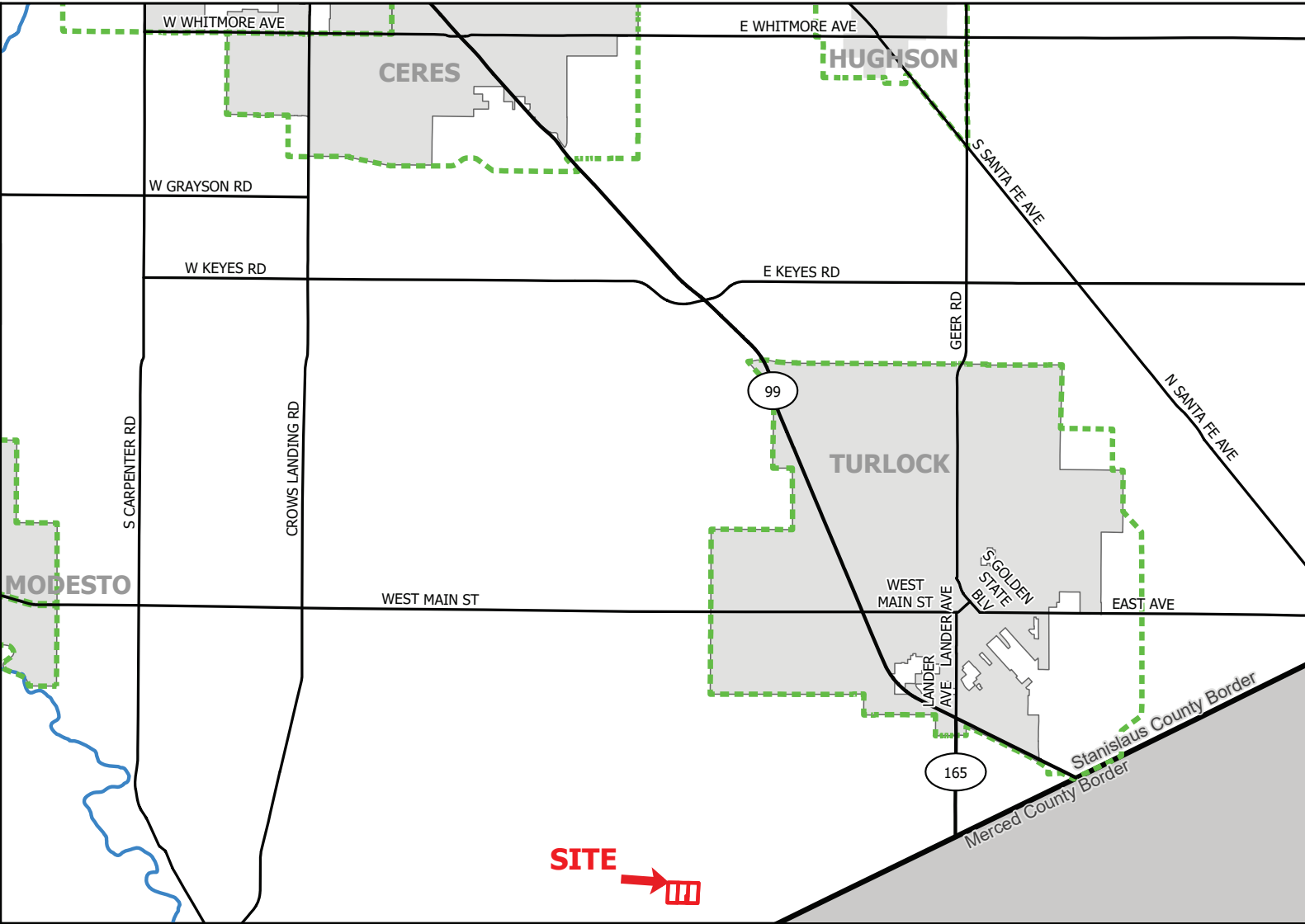
AREA MAP

LEGEND

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



Source: Planning Department GIS Date Exported: 8/6/2025



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GENERAL PLAN MAP


LEGEND

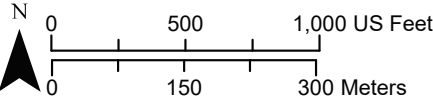
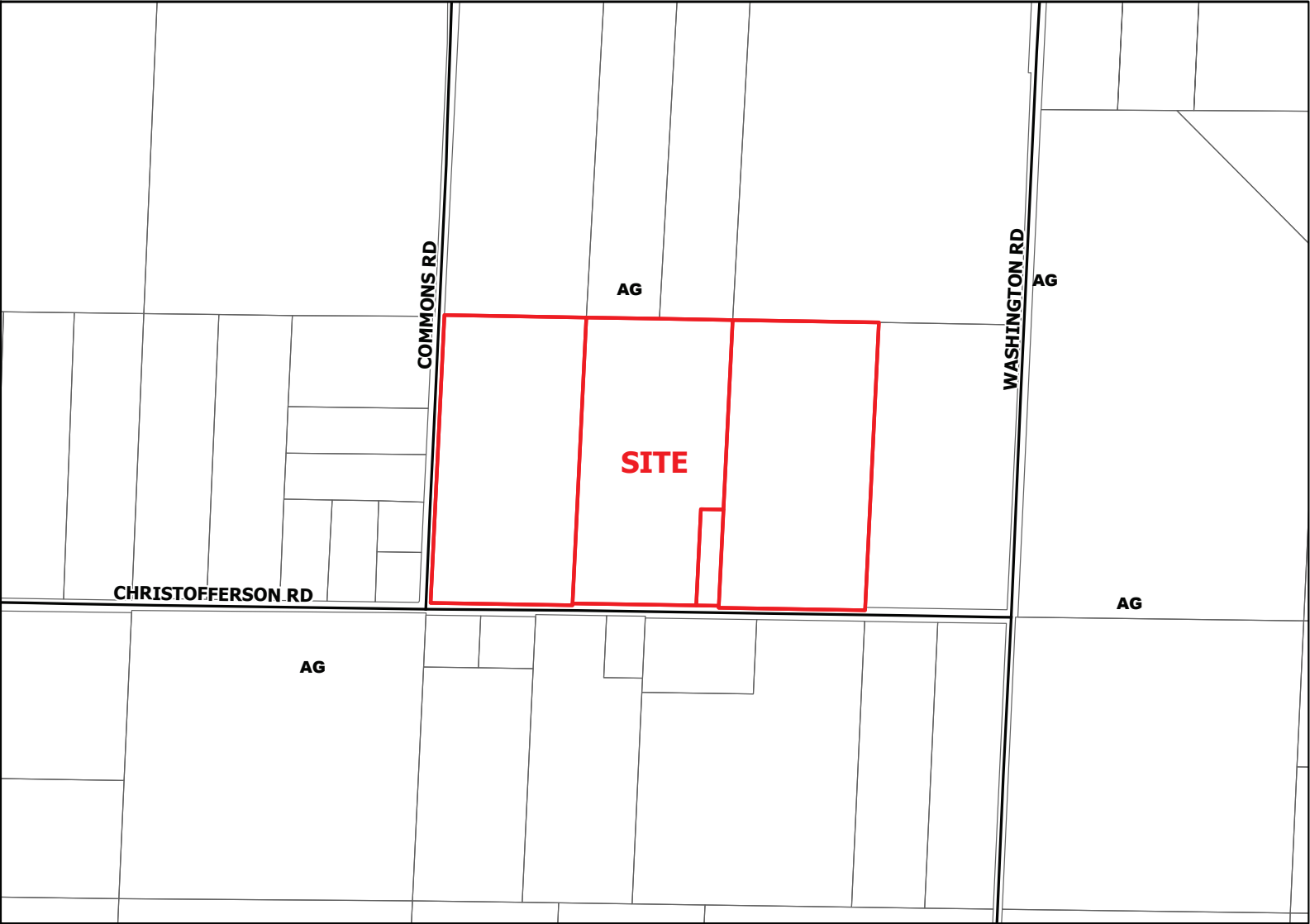
 Project Site

 Parcel

 Street

General Plan

 Agriculture (AG)






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PLN2024-0067**

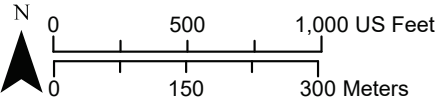
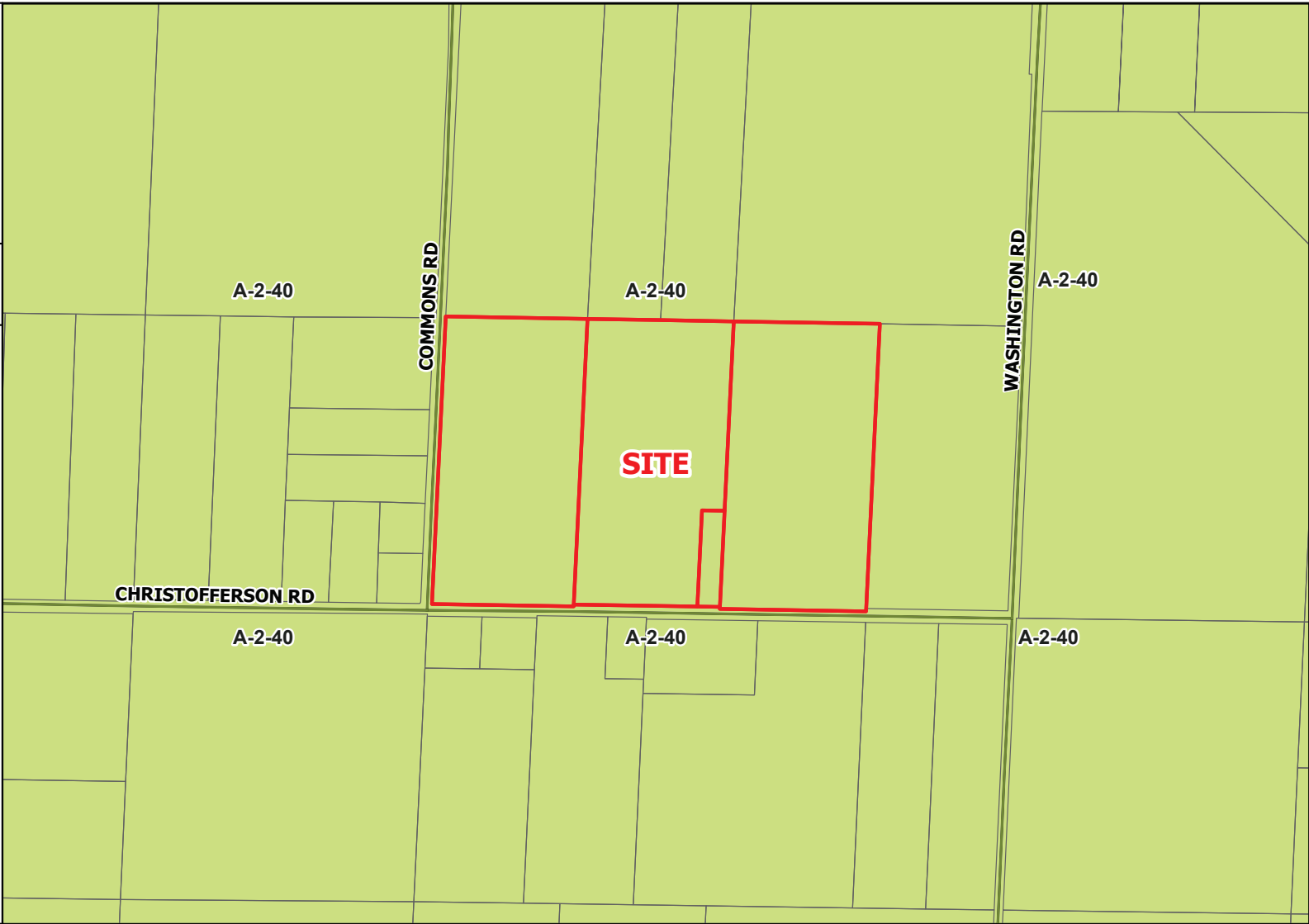
ZONING MAP

LEGEND

-  Project Site
-  Parcel
-  Street

Zoning Designation

-  General AG 40 Acre (A-2-40)






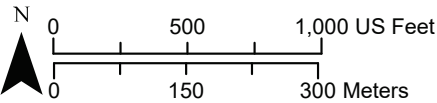
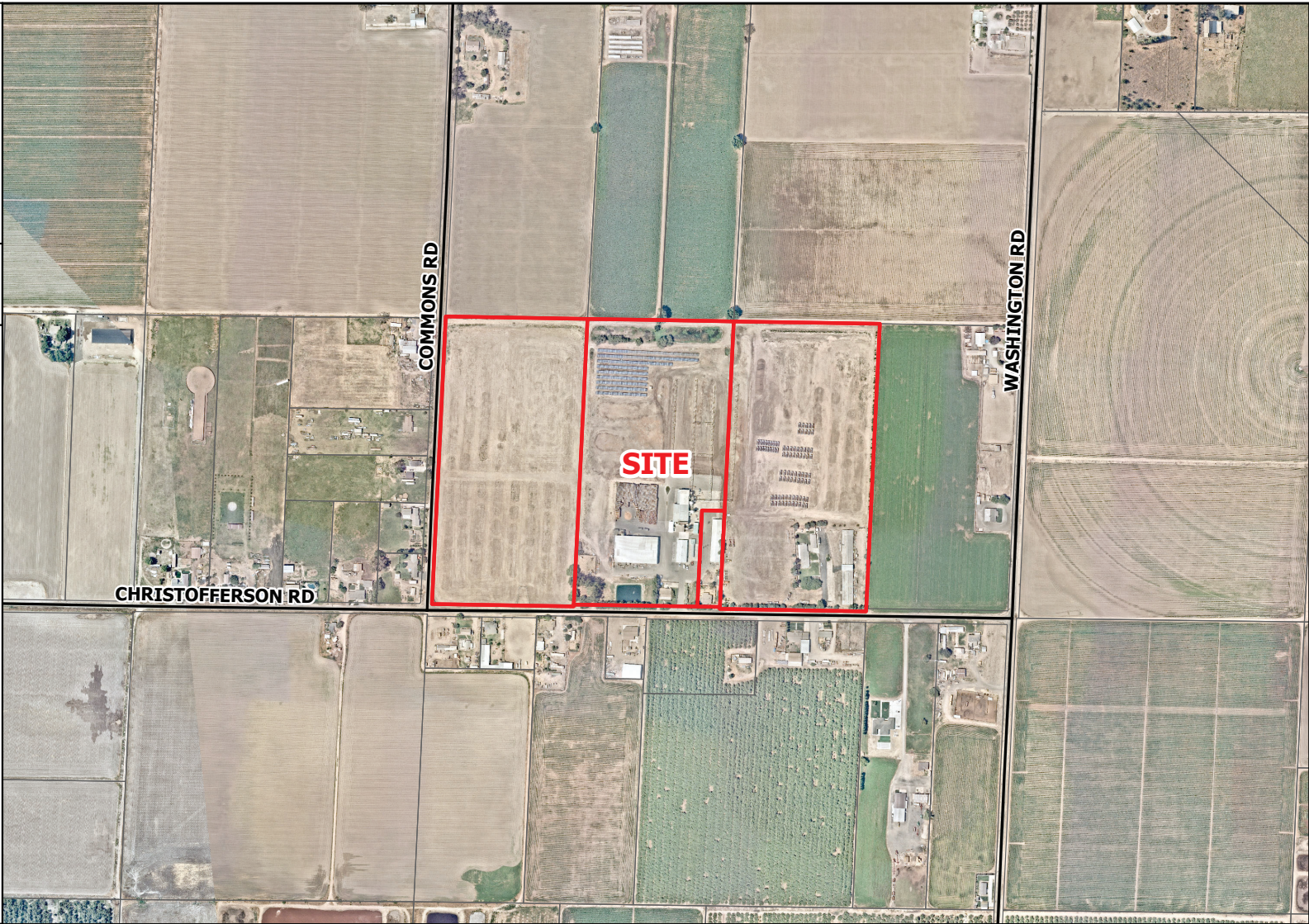
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2023 AERIAL AREA MAP

LEGEND

-  Project Site
-  Parcel
-  Street






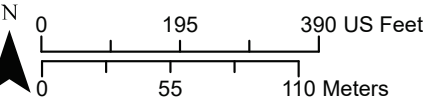
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2023 AERIAL SITE MAP

LEGEND

-  Project Site
-  Parcel
-  Street



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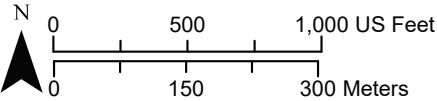
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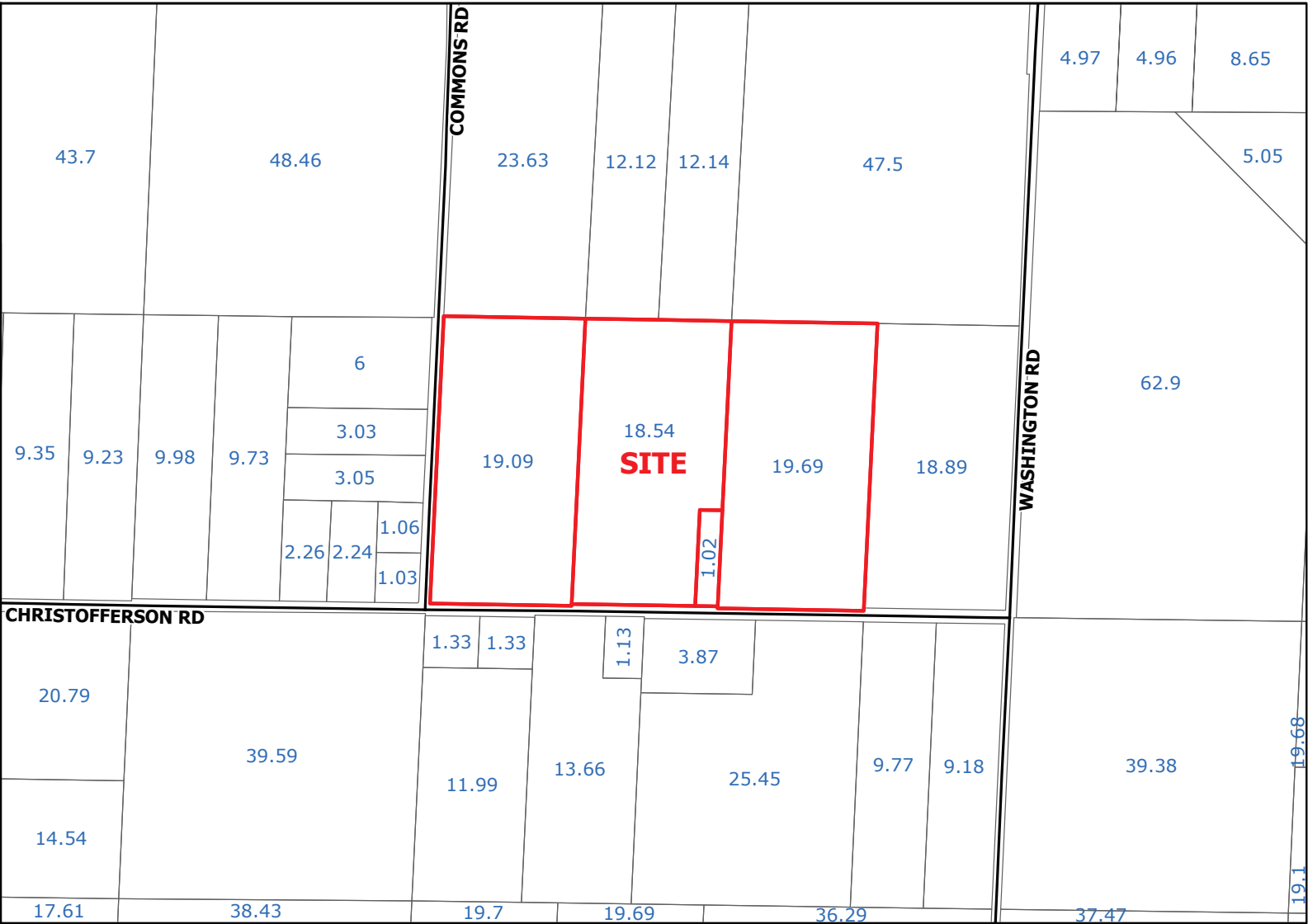
ACREAGE MAP

LEGEND

-  Project Site
-  Parcel
-  Acres
-  Street



Source: Planning Department GIS Date Exported: 8/6/2025



OVERALL SITE PLAN CAL ALMOND

STANISLAUS COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

SHEET INDEX

- SP1.1 OVERALL SITE PLAN
- SP1.2 SITE PLAN WITH ELEVATIONS FOR APN 057-016-025
- SP1.3 SITE PLAN WITH ELEVATIONS FOR APN's 057-016-028 & 029
- SP1.4 SITE PLAN WITH ELEVATIONS FOR APN 057-016-002



NOTE: AERIAL PHOTO PER GOOGLE EARTH IMAGE DATED 2/28/2025

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NO.	DATE	REVISIONS	DESCRIPTIONS

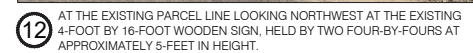
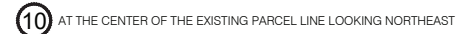
OVERALL SITE PLAN
CAL ALMOND
STANISLAUS COUNTY
CALIFORNIA



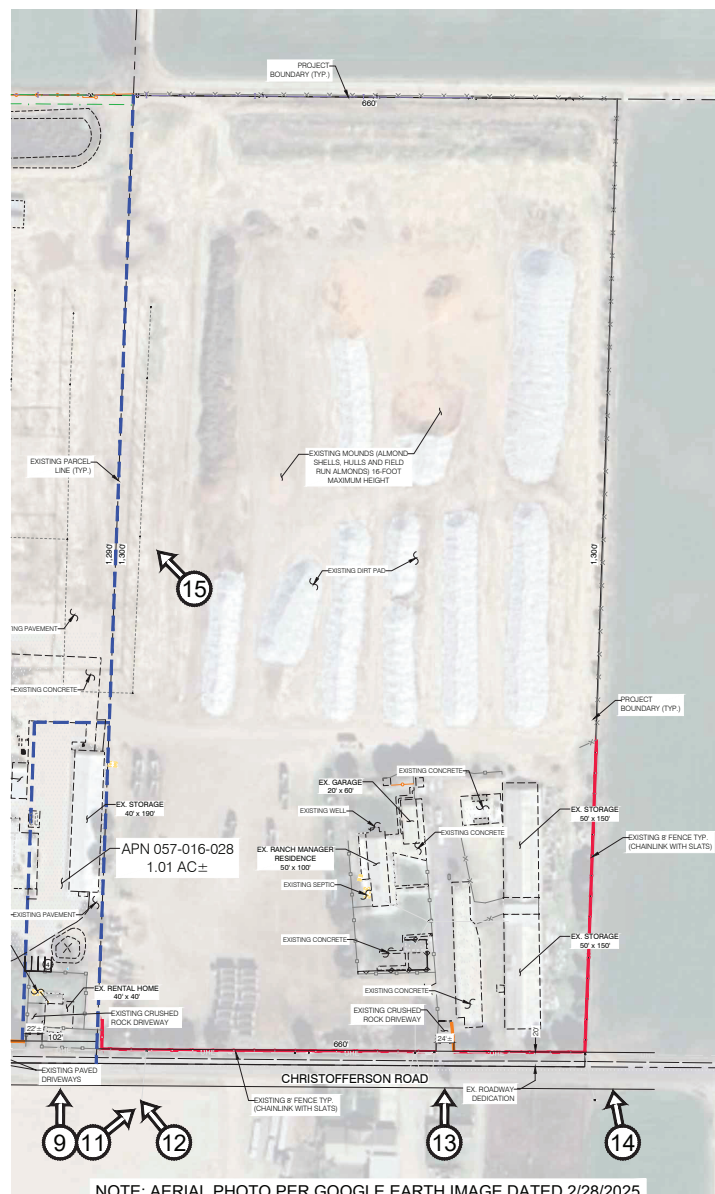
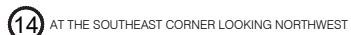
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SP1.1

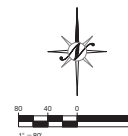
STANISLAUS COUNTY, CALIFORNIA



STANISLAUS COUNTY, CALIFORNIA



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SITE PLAN WITH ELEVATIONS

CAL ALMOND

CALIFORNIA

STANISLAUS COUNTY



JOB #:	25-3731
DATE:	08/28/2025
SCALE:	AS SHOWN
DRAWN:	PMH
DESIGN:	PMH
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SHEET

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