

**Attachment to Notice of Preparation
Friant Ranch Project Description**

BACKGROUND

In February 2011, the County of Fresno approved the Friant Ranch Project (the Project), a master planned community incorporating age-restricted (ages 55+) and non-age restricted single-family and multi-family residential units, a commercial village center, a recreation center, trails, open spaces, parks and parkways located in Friant, California in Fresno County. The Fresno County Board of Supervisors approvals included the following:

- Certification of the Final EIR (FEIR) as complete and in compliance with CEQA;
- Approval of the following:
 - Friant Ranch Project: Alternative 3 – Northeast Development Configuration (as described in the FEIR);
 - General Plan Amendment No 511;
 - Friant Community Plan Update;
 - Friant Ranch Specific Plan; and
 - Amendment to Zoning Text Application No 363 and Amendment Application No. 3751.
- Adoption of Mitigation Measures and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan; and
- Adoption of Findings of Fact and a Statement of Overriding Conditions.

The approved Project provides higher density development on fewer acres, and a reduced unit count (2,500 units) from that of the originally proposed project (2,956 units).

The FEIR was subsequently challenged. The California Court of Appeal (Court) ruled that the FEIR was inadequate because 1) it failed to include an analysis that specifically correlated the Project's emission of air pollutants to its impact on human health; and 2) Mitigation Measure 3.3.2 for the Project's long term operational emissions was vague, unenforceable and lacked specific performance standards, and thus did not adequately demonstrate that air quality impacts would be substantially reduced.

The Court thus ordered that the FEIR be decertified and the Project approvals be set aside. The Court ordered that the County prepare a revised EIR that (1) analyzes the adverse human health impacts that are likely to result from the air quality impacts identified in the EIR; (2) addresses the deficiencies concerning vagueness, enforceability and lack of specific performance standards in Mitigation Measure 3.3.2; and (3) addresses the issues related to the statement that Mitigation Measure 3.3.2 will substantially reduce air quality impacts. Pursuant to the Court's order the County is preparing a partially revised recirculated draft EIR (Recirculated Draft EIR) that will address the issues identified in the Court's ruling.

Although not connected to the Court's ruling, the Recirculated Draft EIR also will address proposed changes to the agreement securing the Project's long-term water supply. These changes have been proposed to address new information regarding dry year conditions and the availability of Class 1 water by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) to its Central Valley Project (CVP) contractors.

The certified FEIR determined the Project has a secure long-term water supply based on a 2008 Water Supply Assessment and a proposed water supply agreement between County Waterworks District 18 (WWD18), Friant Ranch and Lower Tule River Irrigation District (LTRID) (Water Transfer Agreement). The Water Transfer Agreement, which was signed subsequent to the FEIR certification by WWD18, Friant Ranch and LTRID and consented to by the USBR in 2014, secures up to 2,000 acre feet (AF) per year of water for the Project. Specifically, the Water Transfer Agreement provides that water sufficient to meet the Project's needs will be provided through an existing contract with the USBR for 150 AF of CVP Friant Division Class I water and a transfer of 2,000 AF of CVP Friant Division Class 1 water from LTRID to WWD18. In response to changed circumstances since the certification of the FEIR, LTRID and WWD18 have agreed in principle to modify the Water Transfer Agreement to provide greater water supply assurance during dry year periods, including the conditions resulting from zero allocation of Class 1 water. Specifically, the amendments would provide for a more secure water supply for Friant Ranch by using LTRID's ability to "carry over" Class 1 water in Millerton Lake from one year to the next in order to assure that WWD18 has a water supply to serve Friant Ranch independent of the USBR Class 1 allocation to LTRID during dry year periods.

LOCATION and SURROUNDING LAND USES

The Project vicinity location is shown in Figure 1. The Project involves the following property:

- The approximately 920 acres approved for inclusion within the Friant Community Plan area and proposed for development within the Friant Ranch Specific Plan area (the "Friant Ranch Specific Plan Area"), located approximately five miles north of the Fresno city limit and 21 miles east of the city of Madera.
- The "Friant Depot Parcel," within the existing Friant Community Plan area, located on the east side of Friant Road, south of the intersection with Road 206 and north of Bugg Street.

The unincorporated community of Friant is in central Fresno County, northeast of the cities of Fresno and Clovis. The Friant Community Plan area is bounded by the San Joaquin River and Madera County to the west, Friant Dam and Millerton Lake to the north, and the Friant-Kern Canal to the east. The Friant Ranch Specific Plan Area is bounded by residential single-family homes to the north, Friant Road to the west and vacant open space to the south and east. The Friant Ranch Specific Plan Area is bordered to the east by the Friant-Kern Canal, which runs north to south through the Project site. The Friant Ranch Specific Plan Area is in the vicinity of several neighborhoods within the existing Friant Community Plan Area. Nearby developments include but are not necessarily limited to Millerton New Town, Lakeview Estates and Monte Verde Estates.

The Friant Depot Parcel is surrounded to the north by commercial uses, to the east by residential areas, to the south by vacant buildings and some commercial uses, and to the west by Friant Road and additional vacant buildings and commercial uses.

SCOPE of RECIRCULATED DRAFT EIR

In order to comply with the Court's ruling and new information present in connection with the Friant Ranch water supply, the County will prepare a partially revised Recirculated Draft EIR, based on the unit counts, density and acreage approved in 2011, to address the above-described issues pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15088.5. The original FEIR with comments and record of project approval is available to the general public at Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning, 2220 Tulare Street, Street Level, Fresno, CA 93721.

Air Quality

The Recirculated Draft EIR will include both further analyses of potential air quality impacts and how they may be correlated to human health, and revisions of mitigation measures as related to the approved, planned commercial/retail and residential community development within the Friant Ranch Specific Plan area pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15088.5(f)(2).

Water Supply

The Recirculated Draft EIR will consider potential impacts to water supply, including those impacts related to the proposed "carry over" of water from LTRID, the use of pre-1914 water rights to "free up" Class I water, and USBR provisions for emergency water allocation for municipal and irrigation (M&I) water users. A revised water supply analysis will include an assessment of whether the projected water supplies available during normal, single dry, and multiple dry water years will meet the 20-year projected demand associated with the Project.

