

## 3.15 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

### 3.15.1 Introduction

This section discusses parks, recreation, and open-space resources because of their importance to the communities' quality of life where they are found. NEPA and CEQA require consideration of environmental effects on parks, recreation, and open space. This section describes the regulatory setting; the affected environment; the environmental consequences that would likely result from the project; and the mitigation measures that would reduce project-related environmental consequences on parks, recreation, and open space. The current HST design reflects the application of 2005 Final Program EIR/EIS for the Proposed California HST System (Authority and FRA 2005) commitments to follow engineering best practices along the existing transportation corridors that would avoid impacts on parks, recreation, and open space; to follow design practices that would minimize impacts on these resources; and to engage in construction practices that would reduce the impacts on these resources in areas where construction impacts would be unavoidable.

Section 3.2, Transportation; Section 3.3, Air Quality and Global Climate Change; Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration; Section 3.11, Safety and Security; Section 3.16, Aesthetics and Visual Resources; and Section 3.17, Cultural and Paleontological Resources provide additional information about issues related to potential parks, recreation, and open-space impacts.

Federal regulations specifically protect parklands through 49 U.S.C. 303, commonly known as Section 4(f), which applies to transportation projects that may receive federal funding and/or discretionary approvals. FRA may not approve the use of a Section 4(f) property, which includes publicly owned land of parks, recreational areas, and wildlife refuges and historic sites, unless it determines there is no feasible and prudent avoidance alternative to the use of the land and the action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from such use or the project has a *de minimis* impact according to 49 U.S.C. 303(d).

Section 6(f) properties are recreation resources funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965. Land purchased with these funds cannot be converted to a non-recreation use without coordination with the National Park Service (NPS) and mitigation that includes replacement of the quality and quantity of land used. Chapter 4 evaluates the project's use of Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) properties based on the impacts analyzed in this section and Section 3.17 for historic properties.

### 3.15.2 Laws, Regulations, and Orders

This section identifies the relevant federal, state, regional, and local regulations, laws, and orders that apply to parks, recreation, and open space. The Authority and FRA will comply with all federal and state regulations. The HST alternatives would be compatible with local plans and policies where policies allow conversion of public park land to transportation uses with appropriate replacement of converted land or other compensation consistent with the California Public Park Preservation Act.

#### A. FEDERAL

##### **Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act (49 U.S.C Section 303)**

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, codified in federal law at 23 U.S.C 138 and 49 U.S.C. 303, declares that "it is the policy of the United States Government that

special effort should be made to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside and public park and recreation land, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites." Section 4(f) states that the Secretary of Transportation "may approve a transportation program or project . . . requiring the use of publicly owned land of a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, state, or local significance, or land of an historic site of national, state, or local significance (as determined by the federal, state, or local officials having jurisdiction over the park, area, refuge, or site) only if:

1. there is no prudent and feasible avoidance alternative to the use of the land from the Section 4(f) property; and
2. the program or project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the Section 4(f) property resulting from the use.

### **Section 6(f) Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (Public Law 88-578, 16 U.S.C Section 460I-4 – 460I-11)**

The purpose of the LWCF Act is to assist in preserving, developing, and ensuring accessibility to outdoor recreation resources as to strengthen the health and vitality of the citizens of the United States by providing funds, planning, acquisition, and development of facilities. Recreation facilities awarded such funds are subject to the provisions of this Act. The LWCF's most important tool for ensuring long-term stewardship is its "conversion protection" requirement. Section 6(f)(3) strongly discourages conversions of state and local park and recreation facilities to other uses. Conversion of property acquired or developed with assistance under the program requires approval of the NPS and substitution of other recreation properties of at least equal fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location.

### **National Park Service Organic Act (16 U.S.C. Sections 1-4)**

This act created the NPS, an agency within the Department of the Interior, to administer the nation's national parks, which are areas of national significance afforded special recognition and protection in accordance with various acts of Congress. This act also sets the purpose of the park system as follows: "The fundamental purpose of the parks is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." The NPS is required to keep park units in an unimpaired state in perpetuity and to provide the highest quality of use and enjoyment of the entire system by today's visitors as well as those in the future. Areas in parks designated as natural zones must be managed to ensure that natural ecological processes operate unimpaired unless otherwise specifically provided for in the law creating them, and the NPS is required to manage native animal life for its essential role in natural ecosystems. Historic zones must be managed to provide full protection for cultural resources.

### **Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. Sections 1131 to 1136)**

This act establishes a National Wilderness Preservation System to be composed of federally owned areas designated by Congress as "wilderness areas." Congress administers the system for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave those areas unimpaired for future use (for example, wilderness) and to provide for the protection of these areas, the preservation of their wilderness character, and for the gathering and dissemination of information regarding their use and enjoyment as wilderness.

**B. STATE**

**California Public Park Preservation Act (California Public Resources Code Sections 5400-5409)**

This act provides that a public agency that acquires public parkland for non-park use must either pay compensation that is sufficient to acquire substantially equivalent substitute parkland or to provide substitute parkland of comparable characteristics. If less than 10% of the park land, but not more than 1 acre is acquired, the operating entity may improve the portion of the park land and facilities not acquired, using the funds received.

**California Department of Fish and Game Ecological Reserves (California Fish and Game Section 1580 et seq.), California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 1, Chapter 11, Section 630**

This legislation specifies areas as ecological reserves and establishes protections for resources in these areas.

**C. REGIONAL AND LOCAL**

Table 3.15-1 lists the county and city general plans (including appropriate general plan elements such as open space and conservation), parks and recreation master plans, municipal codes, and maps reviewed to identify parks, recreation, and open-space regulations, plans, and policies. These local plans and policies were identified and considered in the preparation of this analysis.

**Table 3.15-1**  
 Local Jurisdiction Plans and Policies

Jurisdiction	Document	Adoption/ Document Date
Fresno County	General Plan Open-Space and Conservation Element	October 2000
	Fresno County Code of Ordinances	March 2004
City of Fresno	General Plan, Section E, Public Facilities Element and Section F, Open-Space/Recreation Element	February 2002
	City of Fresno Municipal Code and Charter	August 2009
Kings County	County of Kings 2035 General Plan, Open-Space Element	January 2004
	Kings County Zoning Ordinance	March 2010
City of Corcoran	Corcoran General Plan 2025, Open-Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element Policies	March 2007
	Municipal Code	July 2009
Tulare County	General Plan Goals and Policies Report; Economic Development, Component B and Scenic Landscapes, Component C	January 2008
	Tulare County Zoning Ordinance	March 2010

**Table 3.15-1**  
 Local Jurisdiction Plans and Policies

Jurisdiction	Document	Adoption/ Document Date
Kern County	Kern County General Plan, Land Use/Conservation/Open-Space Element	March 2007
	Kern County Code of Ordinances	March 2010
City of Wasco	City of Wasco General Plan	August 2002
	City of Wasco Municipal Code	September 2010
City of Shafter	City of Shafter General Plan	April 2005
	City of Shafter Code of Ordinances	May 2010
City of Bakersfield	Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan, Open-Space Element and Parks Element	December 2007
	Bakersfield Recreation and Parks Master Plan	Adopted 2007
	Bakersfield Municipal Code	November 2010

### 3.15.3 Methods for Evaluating Impacts

Data collection for parks, recreation, and open space consisted of a review of the plans and policies referenced in Table 3.15-1, interviews with local planning organizations, and the use of GIS data banks. The cities and counties provided the boundaries for parks, recreation, and open-space properties within 1,000 feet of the alignment, within 0.5 mile of an HST station, 0.5 mile of an HMF, and 1,000 feet of any road construction required to implement the HST System in GIS data format and in adopted plans.

Construction impacts are determined using the following methods:

- GIS spatial analysis to determine the distance of parks, recreation, and open-space facilities from the project and the amount of park, recreation, or open-space land that would be required and facilities and functions that would be affected as a result of project construction.
- Review and analysis of proposed construction right-of-way to determine if there are temporary changes to access and a reduction in parking capacity for parks, recreation, and open-space resources.
- Examination of the potential disruption of established community and visitor use of parks, recreation, and open-space resources because of temporary construction easements and general construction activity.
- Review and analysis of other EIR/EIS sections, including Section 3.2, Transportation; Section 3.3, Air Quality and Global Climate Change; Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration; Section 3.11, Safety and Security; and Section 3.16, Aesthetics and Visual Resources, to determine if there would be any indirect impacts on parks, recreation, and open-space resources as a result of project construction.

Impacts of the proposed project alternatives are determined using the following methods:

- Review and analysis of the design and location of project elements to determine if any barriers to park access and use would be created or changes in access and parking for parks, recreation, and open-space resources would occur.
- GIS analysis to determine the distance of park, recreation, and open-space facilities from the project and the amount of land that would be required, as well as facilities and functions that would be permanently affected.
- Review and analysis of the other EIR/EIS sections, including Section 3.3, Air Quality and Global Climate Change; Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration; and Section 3.16, Aesthetics and Visual Resources, to determine if there would be any indirect impacts on parks, recreation, and open-space resources as a result of project operation.
- Review and analysis of Section 3.13, Station Planning, Land Use, and Development, to determine if there would be any project-related increase in the use of parks, recreation, and open-space resources such that substantial physical deterioration of the resource would occur or be accelerated.

#### **A. METHODS FOR EVALUATING EFFECTS UNDER NEPA**

Pursuant to NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), project effects are evaluated based on the criteria of context and intensity. Context means the affected environment in which a proposed project occurs. Intensity refers to the severity of the effect, which is examined in terms of the type, quality, and sensitivity of the resource involved, location and extent of the effect, duration of the effect (short- or long-term), and other consideration of context. Beneficial effects are identified and described. When there is no measurable effect, impact is found not to occur. Intensity of adverse effects are summarized as the degree or magnitude of a potential adverse effect where the adverse effect is thus determined to be negligible, moderate, or substantial. It is possible that a significant adverse effect may still exist when on balance the impact is negligible or even beneficial.

For parks and recreation, the terms are defined as follows:

Negligible is defined as indirect impacts that would be measurable, but not perceptible to park users. Moderate is defined as indirect impacts on parks that would not change the overall character and/or setting. Substantial results in one or more of the following impacts: park acquisition; indirect impacts (i.e., noise and visual) that change the character and/or setting of the park; and closure of all or part of the park during construction.

#### **B. CEQA SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA**

CEQA significance criteria define the following effects as significant:

- Prevents the use of an established or planned park, recreation, or open space.
- Acquires an open-space resource that would result in a diminished capacity to use that resource or a substantially reduced value of that resource.
- Creates a physical barrier (or a perceived barrier) to the access to or established use of any park, recreation, or open-space areas.
- Results in acquisition of a recreation resource that would result in a diminished capacity to use the resource for specific and defined recreational activities. Thresholds of significance for indirect impacts on community facilities are defined in other sections such as Section 3.2,

Transportation; Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration; and Section 3.16, Aesthetics and Visual Resources.

- Increases the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreation facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.
- Results in the physical alteration of the existing facilities or a need to provide new parks or other recreation facilities—the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts—to maintain acceptable service ratios or other performance objectives.

### C. STUDY AREA FOR ANALYSIS

The study area for this resource—in Fresno, Corcoran, Wasco, Shafter, Bakersfield, and in Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and Kern counties—includes parks, recreation, and open space, which vary in size, type, and function. The study area for parks, recreational facilities, and open space is defined as 1,000 feet on either side of the alignments and 0.5 mile around the HMFs, station areas, and support facilities such as power substations for the HST alternatives, with one exception. In areas where an existing transportation corridor, for example SR 43 and the BNSF right-of-way, separates parks, recreational facilities, and open space from project components, the 1,000-foot study area does not extend beyond these transportation rights-of-way because they provide a barrier to potential impacts on park and recreation resources.

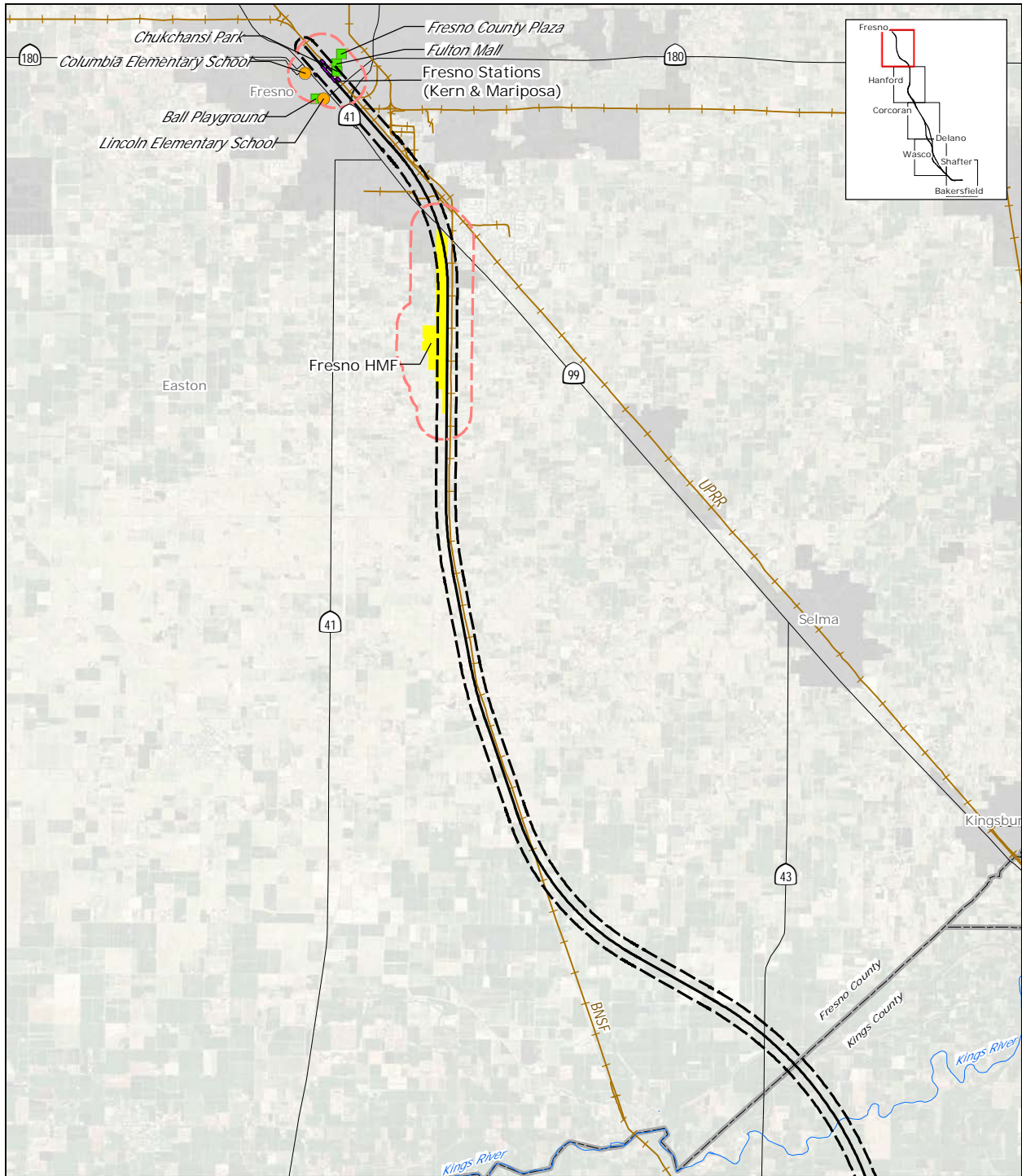
#### 3.15.4 Affected Environment

This section describes the parks, recreation, and open-space resources located within the study area for the HST alternatives. These resources are publically owned properties used for recreation and include one or more of the following: public parks and open spaces, including greenbelts, pedestrian and bicycle trails, playfields, and school district play areas available for public use during non-school hours. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, and California Department of Parks and Recreation own and maintain study area resources in Tulare and Kern counties. Other than the school district properties, the cities of Fresno, Corcoran, Wasco, Shafter, and Bakersfield and the counties of Fresno and Kern own or operate the remaining properties. Figures 3.15-1 through 3.15-5 depict the locations of parks, recreation, and open-space resources within the study area for each alignment alternative.

This section does not contain a discussion of on-street bicycle routes, unless identified as recreational facilities by jurisdictions, as on-street bicycle routes are considered transportation facilities. Section 3.2, Transportation, covers the impacts on these facilities. Kings County identifies the proposed Kings County cross-county path, a portion of which is located on 6th Street in Hanford, as a recreational facility. Therefore, the Kings County cross-county path is included in this analysis.

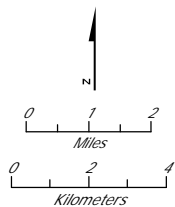
Table 3.15-2 identifies the parks, recreation, and open space within the study area. Nine parks lie within 300 feet, or less, of the HST alternatives, stations, or HMF. Project construction and operation would have the most impacts on these parks, particularly those less than 100 feet from the project.

There are no applicable regional plans or policies pertaining to parks, recreation, and open space within the Fresno to Bakersfield Section study area.



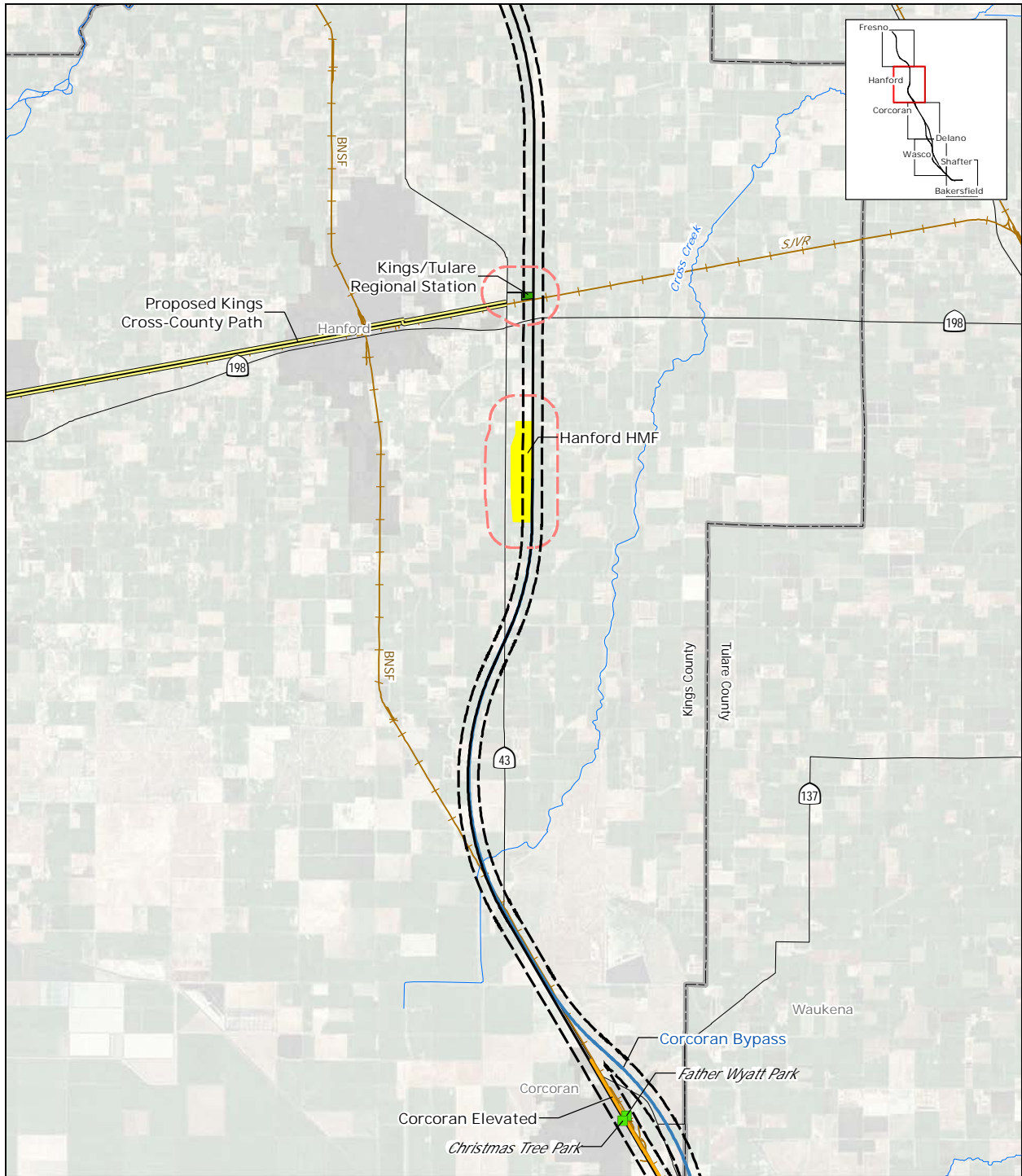
PRELIMINARY DRAFT/SUBJECT TO CHANGE - HST ALIGNMENT IS NOT DETERMINED  
 Data source: USGS Geographic Names Information System, 2009  
 Base map source: USGS National Elevation Dataset, 90-m hillshade

July 5, 2011



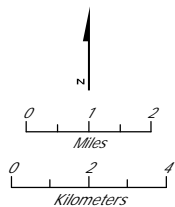
- BNSF Alternative (Bypasses labeled)
  - Existing rail line
  - Steam/River
  - Highway
  - 1/2-mile buffer of heavy maintenance facility and station
  - 1,000-foot buffer of alignments
  - Community/Urban area
  - Potential heavy maintenance facility
  - Proposed station
  - Potential Kings/Tulare Regional Station
  - Park
  - School
- \*Orchard Park is a proposed park*

**Figure 3.15-1**  
 Fresno area:  
 Parks, recreation, and open-space  
 resources within the project study area



PRELIMINARY DRAFT/SUBJECT TO CHANGE - HST ALIGNMENT IS NOT DETERMINED  
 Data source: USGS Geographic Names Information System, 2009  
 Base map source: USGS National Elevation Dataset, 90-m hillshade

July 5, 2011

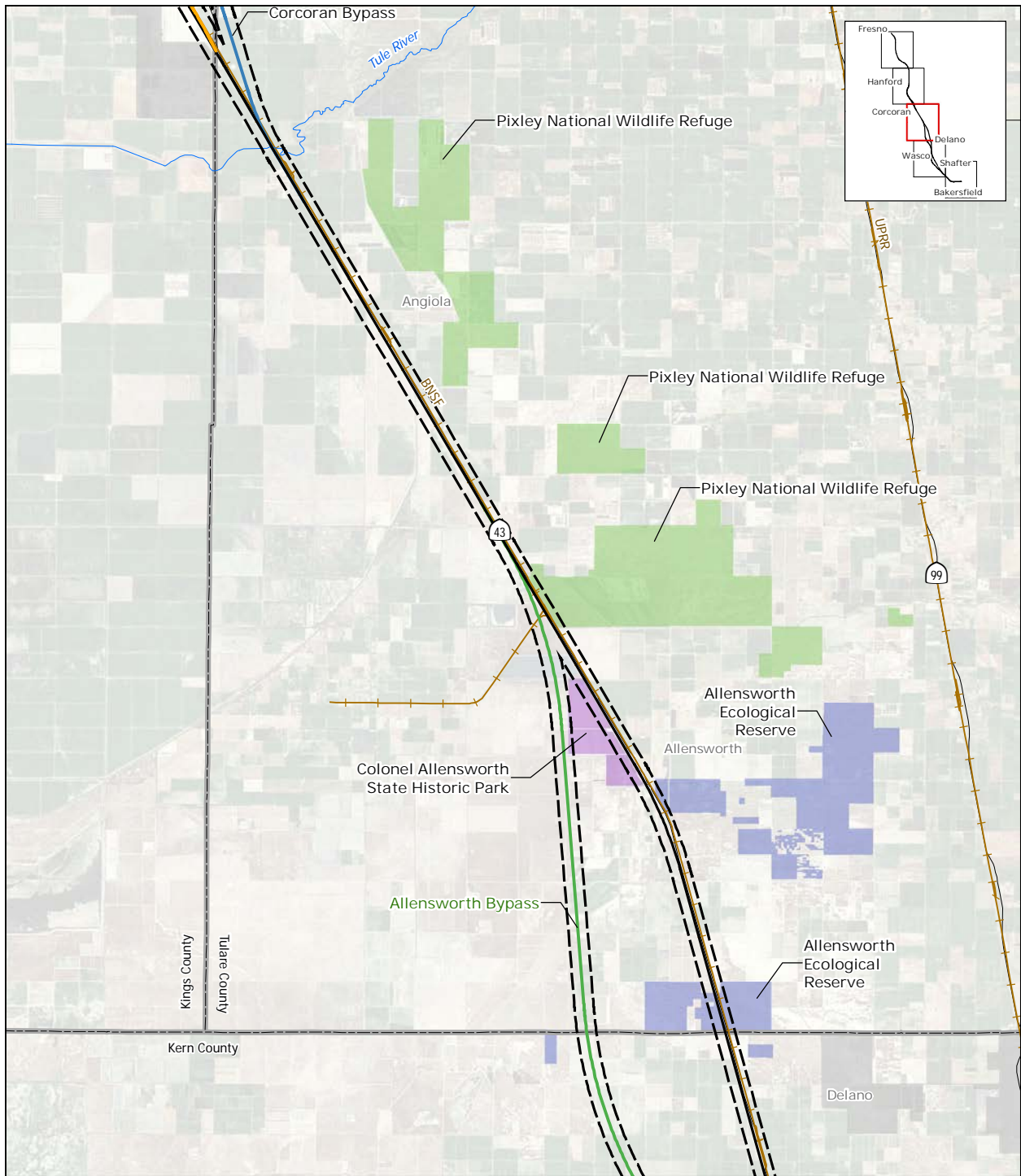


- BNSF Alternative (Bypasses labeled)
- Existing rail line
- Steam/River
- Highway
- 1/2-mile buffer of heavy maintenance facility and station
- 1,000-foot buffer of alignments
- Community/Urban area
- Potential heavy maintenance facility
- Proposed station
- Potential Kings/Tulare Regional Station
- Park
- School

\*Orchard Park is a proposed park

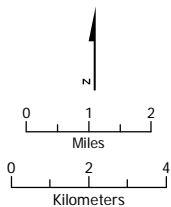
Figure 3.15-2  
 Hanford area:  
 Parks, recreation, and open-space  
 resources within the project study area





PRELIMINARY DRAFT/SUBJECT TO CHANGE - HST ALIGNMENT IS NOT DETERMINED  
 Data source: USGS Geographic Names Information System, 2009  
 Base map source: USGS National Elevation Dataset, 90-m hillshade

July 5, 2011

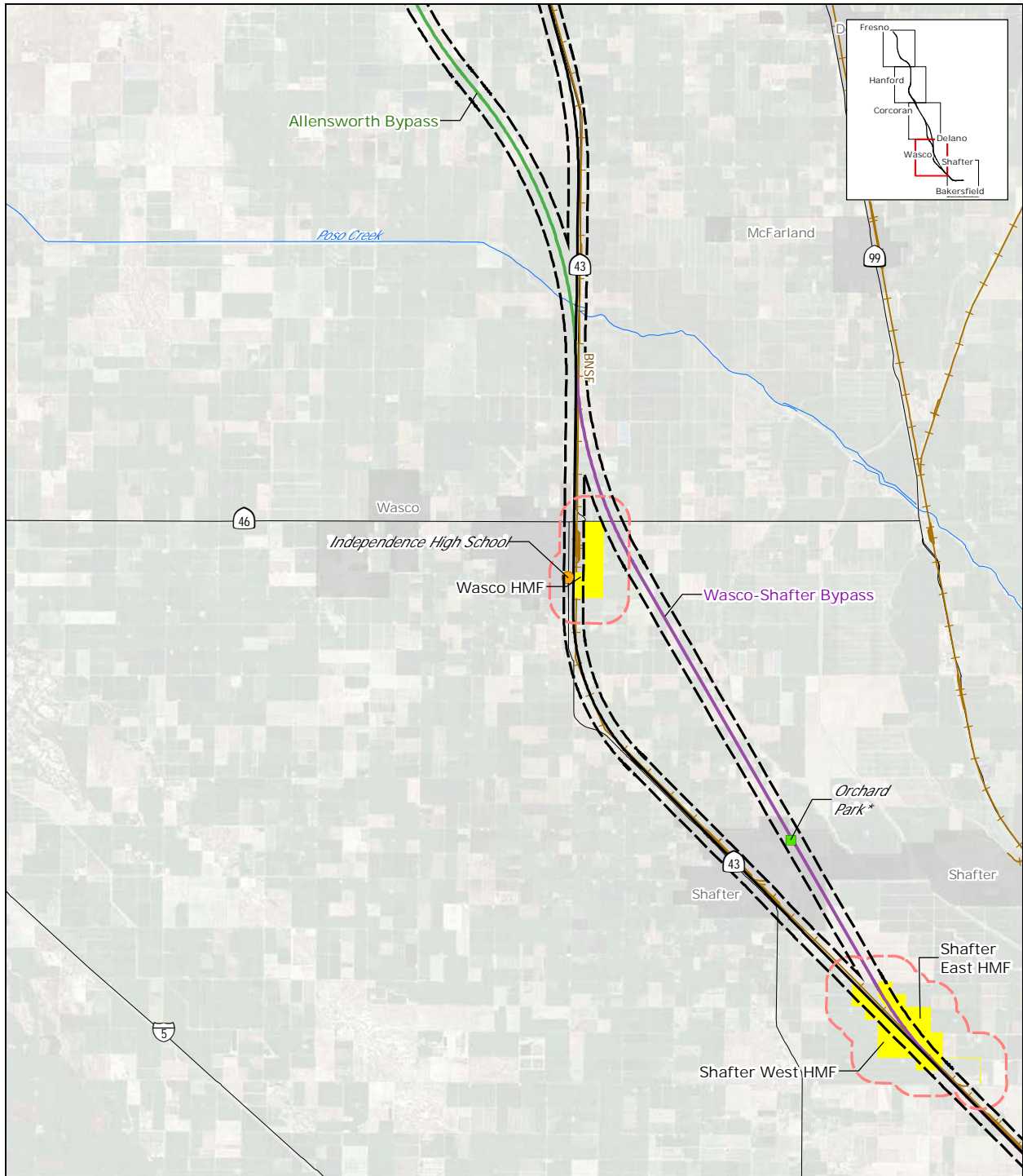


- BNSF Alternative (Bypasses labeled)
- Existing rail line
- Steam/River
- Highway
- 1/2-mile buffer of heavy maintenance facility and station
- 1,000-foot buffer of alignments

- Community/Urban area
- Potential heavy maintenance facility
- Proposed station
- Potential Kings/Tulare Regional Station

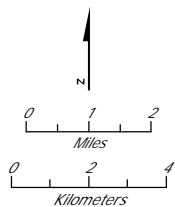
- Park
- School
- \*Orchard Park is a proposed park

**Figure 3.15-3**  
**Corcoran area:**  
**Parks, recreation, and open-space**  
**resources within the project study area**



PRELIMINARY DRAFT/SUBJECT TO CHANGE - HST ALIGNMENT IS NOT DETERMINED  
 Data source: USGS Geographic Names Information System, 2009  
 Base map source: USGS National Elevation Dataset, 90-m hillshade

July 5, 2011

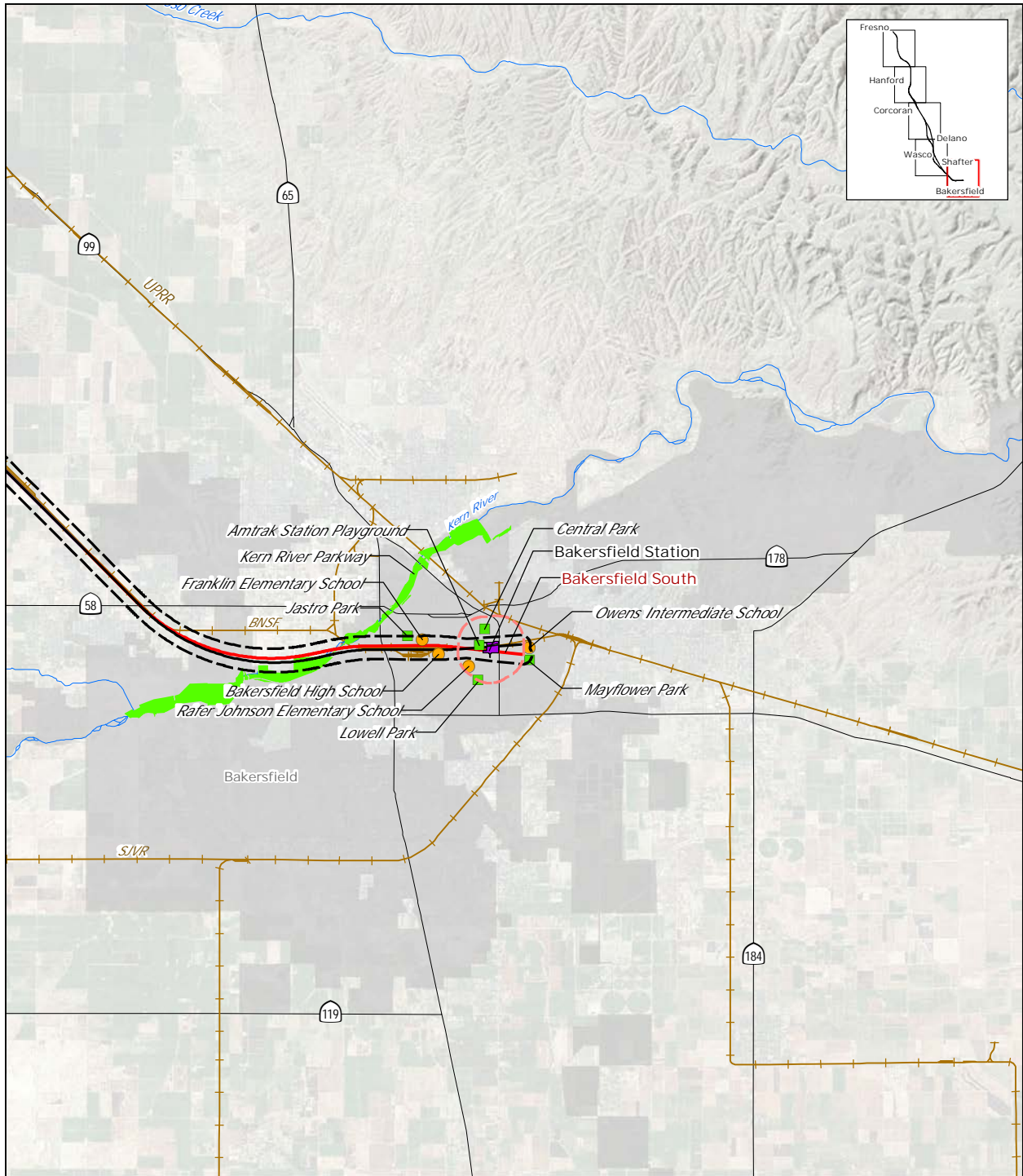


- BNSF Alternative (Bypasses labeled)
- Existing rail line
- Steam/River
- Highway
- 1/2-mile buffer of heavy maintenance facility and station
- 1,000-foot buffer of alignments

- Community/Urban area
- Potential heavy maintenance facility
- Proposed station
- Potential Kings/Tulare Regional Station

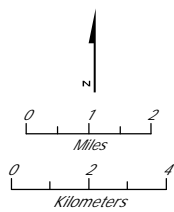
- Park
- School
- \*Orchard Park is a proposed park*

Figure 3.15-4  
 Wasco-Shafter area:  
 Parks, recreation, and open-space  
 resources within the project study area



PRELIMINARY DRAFT/SUBJECT TO CHANGE - HST ALIGNMENT IS NOT DETERMINED  
 Data source: USGS Geographic Names Information System, 2009  
 Base map source: USGS National Elevation Dataset, 90-m hillshade

July 5, 2011



- BNSF Alternative (Bypasses labeled)
- Existing rail line
- Steam/River
- Highway
- 1/2-mile buffer of heavy maintenance facility and station
- 1,000-foot buffer of alignments

- Community/Urban area
- Potential heavy maintenance facility
- Proposed station
- Potential Kings/Tulare Regional Station

- Park
  - School
- \*Orchard Park is a proposed park*

**Figure 3.15-5**  
 Bakersfield area:  
 Parks, recreation, and open-space  
 resources within the project study area

**Table 3.15-2**  
 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space within the HST Alternatives' Study Area

Resource Name	Location	Amenities	HST Alternative						Size (acres)	Distance from Alignment/Project Component (feet)
			BNSF	Corcoran Elevated	Corcoran Bypass	Allensworth Bypass	Wasco-Shafter Bypass	Bakersfield South		
Chukchansi Park	Fresno	12,500-seat-capacity baseball stadium and event center.	x						11	20
Fulton Mall	Fresno	Public open-space area with benches and pedestrian walkway.	x						25	450
Father Wyatt Park	Corcoran	Playground area, covered arbor, picnic tables, and benches.	x	x					1	0 to 230
Christmas Tree Park	Corcoran	Grass areas, picnic tables, and benches	x						0.5	65
Pixley National Wildlife Refuge	Tulare County	Hiking trails	x						10,320	195
Allensworth State Historic Park	Tulare County	Visitor's center, exhibits and programs, guided tours, picnic areas, and tent and RV campsites	x			x			924	0 to 500 (from visitor areas)
Allensworth Ecological Reserve	Tulare County	Trails and wildlife viewing areas	x						5,224	0
Independence High	Wasco	Paved areas, playground equipment, ball fields, basketball courts, and gymnasium	x						8	590
Orchard Park (proposed)	Shafter	Tot lot, picnic areas, open space					x		5	0

**Table 3.15-2**  
 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space within the HST Alternatives' Study Area

Resource Name	Location	Amenities	HST Alternative						Size (acres)	Distance from Alignment/ Project Component (feet)
			BNSF	Corcoran Elevated	Corcoran Bypass	Allensworth Bypass	Wasco-Shafter Bypass	Bakersfield South		
Jastro Park	Bakersfield	Barbeque pits, picnic tables, picnic shelter, amphitheater, 7 tennis courts, horseshoe pits, sandlot playgrounds, restrooms, and spray park						x	9	560
Kern River Parkway	Bakersfield	32-mile linear community park with bike path, equestrian facilities, fishing pond, fitness par course, horseshoe pit, skate park, picnic tables	x					x	1,138	0
Franklin Elementary	Bakersfield	Blacktop area with basketball courts, grass field area, and sandlot playground equipment						x	5	555
Bakersfield High	Bakersfield	Football field, youth football and soccer fields, gym, tennis courts, outdoor basketball courts, and auditorium	x						26	100

**Table 3.15-2**  
 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space within the HST Alternatives' Study Area

Resource Name	Location	Amenities	HST Alternative						Size (acres)	Distance from Alignment/Project Component (feet)
			BNSF	Corcoran Elevated	Corcoran Bypass	Allensworth Bypass	Wasco-Shafter Bypass	Bakersfield South		
Owens Middle School	Bakersfield	Track, football fields, basketball courts, and baseball fields	x					x	7	730
Amtrak Station Playground	Bakersfield	Tot lot with playground equipment	x					x	0.5	80
Mayflower Park/Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center	Bakersfield	Community center building with kitchen, picnic areas, serving shelters, swimming pool, spray park, baseball diamond, basketball and tennis courts, gym with exercise equipment and basketball courts						x	16	435
Total within 1,000 feet of project study area			11	1	0	1	1	6	NA	NA
Total within 300 feet of project study area			9	1	0	0	1	2	NA	NA
Total within 100 feet of project study area			7	1	0	0	1	1	NA	NA

**A. BNSF ALTERNATIVE**

Table 3.15-2 shows 11 parks, recreation, and open-space resources lying within 1,000 feet of the BNSF Alternative:

- Two parks in Fresno.
- Two parks in Corcoran.
- Three parks in Tulare County.
- One school/park resource in Wasco.
- Seven school/park resources in Bakersfield.

Parks, recreation, and open-space resources along the BNSF Alternative and other alternatives are shown in Figures 3.15-1 through 3.15-5. Park resources include neighborhood and community parks, school recreational facilities, Pixley National Wildlife Refuge, Allensworth State Historic Park, Allensworth State Ecological Reserve, and the Kern River Parkway. School districts along the alignment alternatives allow public use of recreational facilities on school property after hours or with permission. Most of the identified parks have vehicular and pedestrian access to attract users from the surrounding area.

Chukchansi Park in Fresno lies 20 feet from the BNSF Alternative and 70 feet from the Fresno Station and has easy access for pedestrians and vehicles. Other parks in downtown Fresno include Fulton Mall, Fresno County Plaza, and three playgrounds associated with elementary schools and a community center. Father Wyatt Park in Corcoran is east of the existing BNSF right-of-way. Father Wyatt Park can currently be accessed on all sides from streets surrounding the park. Christmas Tree Park in Corcoran is 60 feet west of the BNSF Alternative.

Pixley National Wildlife Refuge is 35 miles south of Tulare and 45 miles north of Bakersfield. Although a portion of the refuge adjacent to the eastern side of SR 43 is within the study area, Pixley National Wildlife Refuge is separated from the HST alignment by SR 43.

Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park is on the southwestern side of Tulare County, 20 miles north of Wasco on SR 43. Portions of the park are within the study area. The BNSF Railway runs along the eastern side of the park. Access into the park is available from Palmer Avenue. The park was established by the California Department of Parks and Recreation in 1974 for the preservation, development, and interpretation of resources of the historic community of Allensworth. Several homes, including the Allensworth home, several other residences, stores, a bakery, blacksmith area, drugstore, barber shop, post office, library, hotel, schoolhouse, Baptist Church, restaurant, various farm buildings, and several other buildings have been reconstructed to reflect the 1908–1918 historical period (California State Parks 2009).

The Allensworth Ecological Reserve is composed of several parcels and covers land in both Tulare and Kern counties. The Allensworth Ecological Reserve is managed by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). Wildlife viewing is the only activity permitted at the Allensworth Ecological Reserve. A portion of the Allensworth Ecological Reserve is located within the study area.

The Kern River Parkway is a 1,138-acre, 32-mile linear community park with bike path, equestrian facilities, fishing pond, fitness parcourse, horseshoe pit, skate park, and picnic tables. The parkway connects several city parks. A portion of the parkway would be crossed by both the BNSF and the Bakersfield South alternatives.

**Downtown Fresno Station**

Table 3.15-3 describes the six parks located within the study area of the Downtown Fresno Station, which consists of an area within 0.5 mile of the station. Figure 3.15-1 shows the locations of these parks within that study area. All have easy pedestrian and residential access. Chukchansi Park is a baseball stadium and event center privately managed on city property. Chukchansi Park use generally requires an entrance fee for events and a rental fee for event sponsors. Chukchansi Park lies 70 feet from the proposed Downtown Fresno Station and has easy access for pedestrians and vehicles. Fulton Mall is a six-block-long outdoor pedestrian mall. Fulton Mall is flanked by many of Fresno’s historic buildings. Public art is displayed along its length.

**Table 3.15-3**

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space in the Downtown Fresno Station Study Area–Common to All HST Alternatives

Resource Name	Amenities	Size (acres)	Distance from Station (feet)
Fresno County Plaza	Benches, ballroom for rent	2.4	975
Chukchansi Park	12,500-seat-capacity baseball stadium and event center	11.0	70
Columbia Elementary	Blacktop play area with basketball courts, grass field areas, and sandlot playground equipment	12.0	875
Fulton Mall	Public open-space area with benches and pedestrian walkway	25.0	450
Frank Ball Playground and Community Center	Ball field, basketball, community building, horseshoe pits, multiuse field, picnic area, playground, gym, swimming and wading pool, and tennis courts	3.0	2,580
Lincoln Elementary	Blacktop play area with basketball courts, grass field areas, and sandlot playground equipment	7.0	2,120

Source: USGS 2009.

**Kings/Tulare Regional Station**

A portion of the proposed Kings County cross-county path would be located in the study area for the Kings/Tulare Regional Station. The Kings County cross-county path is a 13-mile Class I multi-use (pedestrian/bicycle) pathway and Class II and III (on-street) bike lane extending from West Hills College, west of Lemoore, to SR 43, east of Hanford. Class I bikeways are defined by the California State Highway Code as a bike path, or completely separated right-of-way, designated for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians, with crossflows by motorists minimized. The Kings County cross-county path would extend east to west partially on a separate right-of-way and on streets in parts of the city of Hanford as a Class II and III bikeway (see Figure 3.15-2). Although the Kings County cross-county path is shown in the Kings County Bike Plan, the County has no plans to construct the path at this point and it is possible the path will not be constructed (McAllister 2010, personal communication).



**Downtown Bakersfield Station**

Table 3.15-4 describes the four parks located within the study area of the Downtown Bakersfield Station, which consists of an area within 0.5 mile of the station. All have easy pedestrian and vehicle access.

**Table 3.15-4**  
 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space in the Downtown Bakersfield Station Study Area Common to All HST Alternatives

Resource Name	Amenities	Size (acres)	Distance from Station (feet)
Amtrak Playground	Tot lot and children’s play area	0.5	540
Central Park	Walkways and covered bridge for pedestrians	9.0	1,240
Lowell Park	Play area, lighted basketball court	6.0	2,375
Rafer Johnson Elementary	Blacktop play area, grass field areas	2.0	2,025

Source: USGS 2009.

**B. CORCORAN BYPASS ALTERNATIVE**

There are no park resources within the study area for the Corcoran Bypass Alternative.

**C. ALLENSWORTH BYPASS ALTERNATIVE**

As shown in Figure 3.15-3, the Allensworth Bypass Alternative would be located to the west of Allensworth State Historic Park and only a portion of the area in the southwestern part of the park would fall within the study area. This area of the park is former farmland and does not contain any visitor resources. The Allensworth Bypass would also avoid all portions of the Allensworth Ecological Reserve.

**D. WASCO-SHAFTER BYPASS ALTERNATIVE**

One planned park resource is located within the study area of the Wasco-Shafter Bypass Alternative. Orchard Park is a 140-acre planned community which proposes construction of 440 single-family homes in the northeasterly portion of Shafter (Sage Community Group, Inc. 2006). The community would include one public park, covering about 5 acres, including a tot lot, picnic areas, and open-space turf areas for passive recreation.

**E. BAKERSFIELD SOUTH ALTERNATIVE**

As shown in Table 3.15-2, six school/park resources are located within 1,000 feet of the Bakersfield South Alternative. The Kern River Parkway and Owens Intermediate School are located within the study area for both the BNSF Alternative and the Bakersfield South Alternative.

**F. HEAVY MAINTENANCE FACILITY ALTERNATIVES**

There are no park resources within the study area of the Fresno Works or Kings County–Hanford HMF. One park resource, Independence High, would be located approximately 760 feet from the Kern Council of Governments–Wasco HMF.

### 3.15.5 Environmental Consequences

#### A. OVERVIEW

This section describes the construction and operation impacts associated with the HST alternatives as they relate to parks, recreation, and open space. One alternative, the Allensworth Bypass Alternative, would avoid impacts to Allensworth State Historic Park.

Temporary construction impacts, including noise, dust, and visual degradation could affect as many as 11 parks for the BNSF Alternative and 6 parks for the Bakersfield South Alternative. Construction within 300 feet of a park, recreational resource, or open-space area would have the greatest noise impact depending on the construction activity. Construction activities would be limited to daytime hours, which would eliminate construction impacts in the evening or early morning hours. Parks located farther than 300 feet from construction are generally sufficiently remote to remain comparatively unaffected for most activities during the daytime.

Temporary construction effects and impacts, such as small temporary property use noise, dust, and visual degradation associated with the HST alternatives that do not diminish capacity, are considered moderate under NEPA and potentially significant to significant under CEQA, depending on the park's location and features. Full park closures during the construction period are considered a substantial effect under NEPA and a significant impact under CEQA.

Permanent effects and impacts include the acquisition of park lands. The BNSF Alternative would require the acquisition of varying amounts of land. Project construction would require the permanent acquisition of 1.7 acres at Allensworth State Historic Park and 7.3 acres of Allensworth Ecological Reserve for the BNSF Alternative. Construction of the Corcoran Elevated and Wasco-Shafter Bypass Alternatives would require minor amounts of land, 0.01 and 1 acre, respectively. These permanent effects from acquisition, depending on the size of the acquisition, are considered negligible to substantial under NEPA. Impacts from the acquisition of land would be significant under CEQA.

Where the alignment passes through a park, project operations could permanently affect the character of the park, depending on the location and extent of land acquired. The BNSF Alternative Alignment and project components required for it would extend through or over three parks: Allensworth State Historic Park, Allensworth Ecological Reserve, and the Kern River Parkway. The Wasco-Shafter Bypass would extend through the proposed Orchard Park. The Bakersfield South Alternative would extend over the Kern River Parkway. None of the other alternatives would affect existing parks lying within 100 feet of their alignments. These effects are considered as having no effect to substantial under NEPA and no impact to significant under CEQA depending on the park resource and the effect or impact.

#### B. NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

The No Project Alternative would not increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreation facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated. This is because the No Project Alternative would not directly increase population above and beyond regional population projections accounted for in regional and local land use plans. Those plans and related county and city ordinances contain provisions for funding, acquiring, and maintaining public parks and recreation facilities adequate to meet the needs of future planned population growth. The No Project Alternative would not conflict with established or planned open space, parks, or recreational use of the project area.

Future developments planned under the No Project Alternative would require individual environmental review, including an analysis of their impacts on parks, recreation, and open-space resources, and the environmental impacts of acquiring new parks and constructing new

recreation facilities necessary to meet acceptable service ratios. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would not result in the physical alteration of existing parks or other recreation facilities, or result in a need to provide new parks or other recreation facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts in order to maintain acceptable service ratios or other performance objectives. The No Project Alternative would not exceed any of the significance criteria for this resource area. This alternative would have no effect under NEPA and no impact under CEQA.

### C. HIGH-SPEED TRAIN ALTERNATIVES

The following sections evaluate direct and indirect impacts of the HST alternatives. Except where specifically noted, the stations, HMFs, and design options would have no impacts or no impacts other than those described for the BNSF and other alignment alternatives.

#### **Construction Period Impacts**

##### ***Common Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Impacts***

Chukchansi Park, Father Wyatt Park, Orchard Park, Kern River Parkway, and Bakersfield High School would experience construction impacts due to their proximity to the alignment. These impacts would include increased noise caused by the operation of equipment and visual change caused by construction activities, exposed earth, and stockpiled materials. Construction effects would be negligible, moderate, or substantial under NEPA depending on the construction activity and distance to the park resource. Construction of the project would be limited to daytime hours. Under CEQA, these impacts would be less than significant or significant, depending on the park resource and timing of the activity.

##### ***BNSF Alternative***

Construction activities for the BNSF Alternative would pass within 1,000 feet of 11 parks and within 300 feet of 9 parks. Parks within 300 feet would potentially experience the greatest effects because of the proximity of construction to park users. A description of the direct and indirect effects and impacts from construction on each of the parks follows:

**Chukchansi Park (Fresno).** Construction of the HST would not require temporary use of Chukchansi Park property and would not create any direct impacts. As shown in Figure 3.15-6, Chukchansi Park is located approximately 530 feet to the BNSF right-of-way centerline and approximately 100 feet from study area for a grade separation required for the BNSF Alternative. Indirect impacts would include noise, dust, and visual changes. As stated in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration, construction activities closer than 200 feet would generate increased noise that park users may consider a nuisance. Activities at Chukchansi Park would be separated from construction activities by the high stadium walls and bleachers. As stated in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration, increased noise would be reduced by mitigation measures incorporated into project construction practices. Construction dust would be mitigated by measures included in Section 3.3, Air Quality and Global Climate Change. Therefore, due to the intervening structure, distance, and mitigation measures, impacts from noise would not reduce the recreational value of the park. In addition, views of construction areas from the park would be blocked by bleachers. Construction effects to Chukchansi Park would be negligible under NEPA due to lack of views of construction activities and mitigation measures that would reduce construction dust and noise. Construction impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

**Father Wyatt Park (Corcoran).** Father Wyatt Park would be separated from the HST by the existing BNSF. However, construction of the HST would create some indirect impacts on Father Wyatt Park property. Construction activities closer than 200 feet would generate increased noise

that park users may consider a nuisance. Portions of Father Wyatt Park are located as close as 230 feet from the BNSF alternative. Increased noise from project construction activities has the potential to create moderate effects from noise under NEPA. Impacts from noise would be significant impacts under CEQA.

Trees that shield views of construction activities are located along the north and west edge of Father Wyatt Park, closest to construction areas. Therefore, effects on Father Wyatt Park would be negligible under NEPA because views of construction activities would be shielded. These impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

**Christmas Tree Park (Corcoran).** Christmas Tree Park is located 65 feet to the west of the BNSF Alternative study area or approximately 700 feet from the right-of-way centerline. This park would be sufficiently remote that construction activities would not generate increased noise that park users may consider a nuisance. Construction noise effects to Christmas Tree Park would be negligible under NEPA due to the distance of the park to construction activities. Construction impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

**Pixley National Wildlife Refuge (Tulare County).** The right-of-way for the BNSF Alternative would require construction activities near Pixley National Wildlife Refuge lands. However, these activities would be separated from Pixley National Wildlife Refuge by SR 43 and would not create any direct or indirect impacts. HST construction effects on access to Pixley National Wildlife Refuge would be negligible under NEPA because there would be no loss of access. Construction impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

**Allensworth State Historic Park (Tulare County).** Construction of the HST on the BNSF Alternative would occur directly to the east of Allensworth State Historic Park (see Figure 3.15-7). Although, historic structures are located near this area of the park, construction activities would be located over 1,500 feet from areas of the park subject to extended periods of visitation, such as the visitor's center or campground. Therefore, construction noise would not create impacts to these more heavily visited areas of the park.

As discussed in Section 3.16, Aesthetics and Visual Resources, the BNSF Alternative would result in some visual disturbance during construction. However, because construction areas would be nearly 1,000 to 1,500 feet from visitor areas of the park, construction would be minimally visible. Park access would be maintained during construction and construction would not create a physical barrier to Allensworth State Historic Park. Effects on access to Allensworth State Historic Park and to park character from visual changes associated with construction of the HST and overcrossing would be negligible under NEPA because there would be no loss of access and construction activities would be only minimally visible. Impacts on park access from construction and park character from visual changes during construction would be less than significant under CEQA.

**Allensworth Ecological Reserve (Tulare County).** The BNSF Alternative would require construction activities on Allensworth Ecological Reserve lands (see Figure 3.15-8). Allensworth Ecological Reserve lands to the east of the alignment would be separated from construction activities by SR 43, which would create a barrier to any impact. Allensworth Ecological Reserve lands located on the west side of the BNSF do not offer access to Allensworth Ecological Reserve and are not visited by the public. Project construction would not create noise or visual changes that would reduce the recreational value of the park or result in park closure. HST construction effects to Allensworth Ecological Reserve would be negligible under NEPA because they would occur in areas of the park that offer public access. HST construction impacts would be less than significant under CEQA to Allensworth Ecological Reserve.

**Kern River Parkway (Bakersfield).** The BNSF Alternative would pass over the Kern River Parkway on an elevated guideway. Construction activities would create noise and visual changes. As stated in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration, construction activities closer than 200 feet would generate increased noise that park users may consider a nuisance. However, construction activities would create temporary closures of some areas of the parkway including bike and equestrian facilities. Therefore, these areas would not be used during construction and there would be no noise impact to park users. Following construction, these areas would be restored and available again for park use. Construction effects from park closure would be substantial under NEPA due to temporary closures during construction. Construction impacts to the Kern River Parkway would be significant under CEQA.

**Bakersfield High School (Bakersfield).** Construction activities for the BNSF Alternative would occur less than 200 feet from the playfields at Bakersfield High School. Construction activities closer than 200 feet would generate increased noise that playfield users may consider a nuisance. As stated in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration, increased noise would be reduced by mitigation measures incorporated into the project construction. However, since construction activities would occur less than 200 feet from the playfields, Bakersfield High School would experience substantial effects under NEPA due to the increase in noise. Impacts from noise would be significant under CEQA.

#### *Corcoran Elevated*

Father Wyatt Park would be located approximately 220 feet from construction areas for the Corcoran Elevated Alternative. Trees that shield views of construction activities are located along the edge of Father Wyatt Park, closest to construction areas. Therefore, views of construction would be blocked and construction impacts on Father Wyatt Park would be negligible under NEPA and less than significant under CEQA. Construction of the elevated track structure would generate noise approximately 200 feet from park user areas. Therefore, Father Wyatt Park would experience moderate effects from construction noise. This impact would be significant under CEQA.

#### *Corcoran Bypass Alternative*

There are no park resources within the study area for the Corcoran Bypass Alternative.

#### *Allensworth Bypass Alternative*

As shown in Figures 3.15-3 and 3.15-7, the Allensworth Bypass Alternative would be located to the west of Allensworth State Historic Park; only a portion of the area in the northwestern part of the park would fall within the study area. This area of the park is former farmland and does not contain any visitor resources; therefore, construction activities for the Allensworth Bypass Alternative would have no effect on park uses. The Allensworth Bypass would also avoid all portions of Allensworth Ecological Reserve. Construction effects to Allensworth State Historic Park and Allensworth Ecological Reserve would be negligible under NEPA as construction would not affect any visitor resources. Construction impacts to Allensworth State Historic Park and Allensworth Ecological Reserve from the Allensworth Bypass Alternative would be less than significant under CEQA.

#### *Wasco-Shafter Bypass Alternative*

The proposed Orchard Park would be located within the study area of the Wasco-Shafter Bypass Alternative. Although the Orchard Park Specific Plan has been adopted by the City of Shafter and tentative and subdivision maps have been filed, there are no plans to construct Orchard Park and no permits have been issued (Forrest 2010, personal communication). Therefore, it would be

speculative to assume that Orchard Park would exist at the time of construction of the HST and there would be no effect under NEPA and no impact under CEQA.

#### *Bakersfield South Alternative*

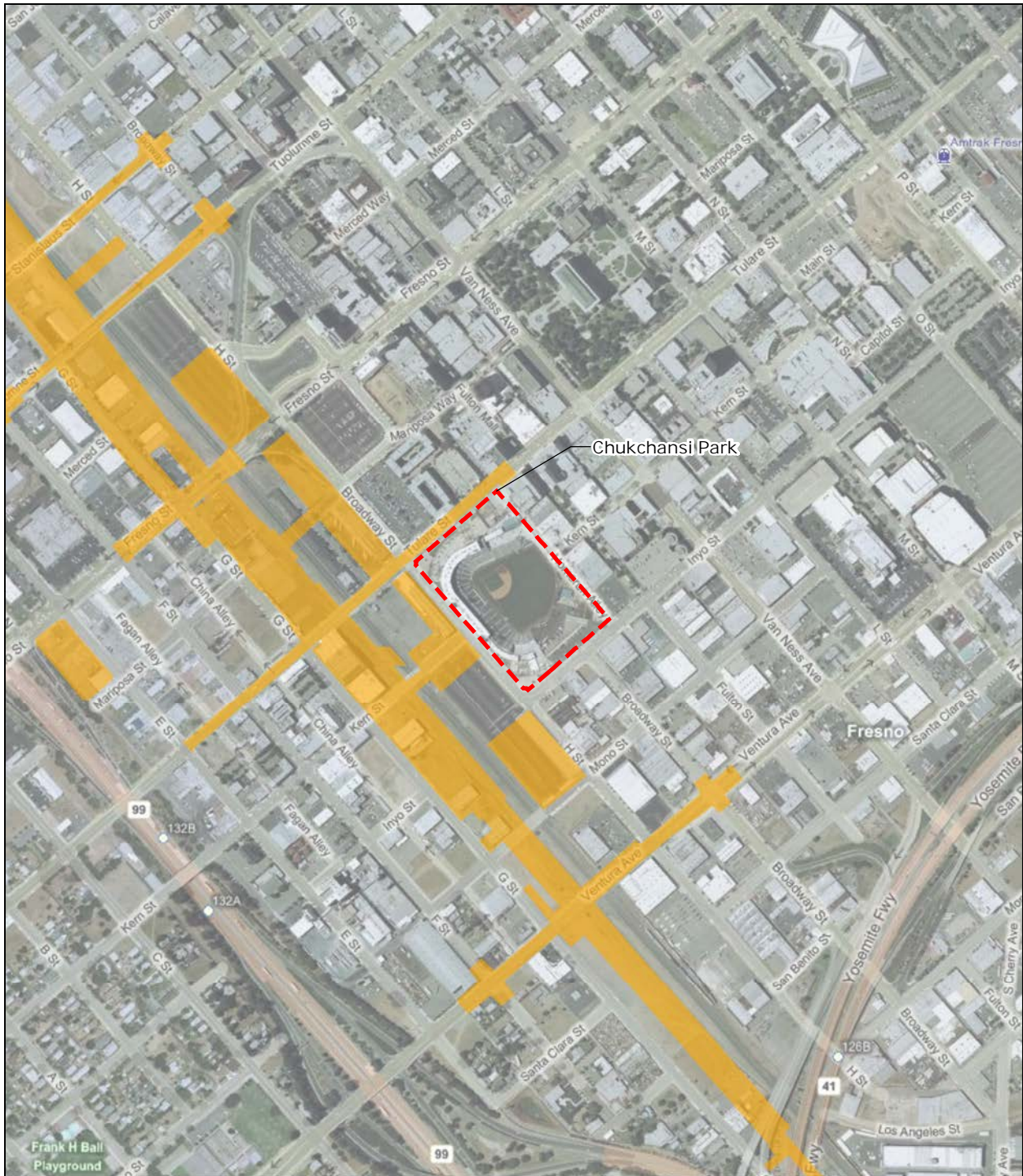
A portion of the Kern River Parkway is located within the study area for the Bakersfield South Alternative (Figure 3.15-5). Construction activities would create noise and visual changes. As stated in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration, construction activities closer than 200 feet would generate increased noise that park users may consider a nuisance. However, construction activities would create temporary closures of some areas of the parkway including bike and equestrian facilities. Therefore, these areas would not be used during construction and there would be no noise impact to park users. Following construction, these areas would be restored and available again for park use. Construction effects from park closure would be substantial under NEPA. Construction impacts to the Kern River Parkway would be significant under CEQA.

#### *Downtown Fresno Station*

Because Chukchansi Park Stadium is within 70 feet of station construction, noise and visual change could indirectly affect the park. Impacts would be similar to the BNSF Alternative.

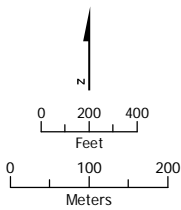
The Fulton Mall, a public open-space area with benches and pedestrian walkways, is approximately 450 feet from any HST construction activities and is separated from those activities by buildings. Therefore, construction of the station would have a negligible effect under NEPA. Impacts from station construction would be less than significant under CEQA.

Columbia Elementary, Fresno County Plaza, Frank Ball Community Center, and Lincoln Elementary School are located approximately 875, 975, 2,500, and 2,100 feet, respectively, from where the station would be built. Several multistory buildings, parking lots, and streets separate these facilities from where station construction activities would occur. Therefore, construction of the station would have a negligible effect under NEPA as these resources are too distant to be affected. Impacts from construction on these facilities would be less than significant under CEQA.



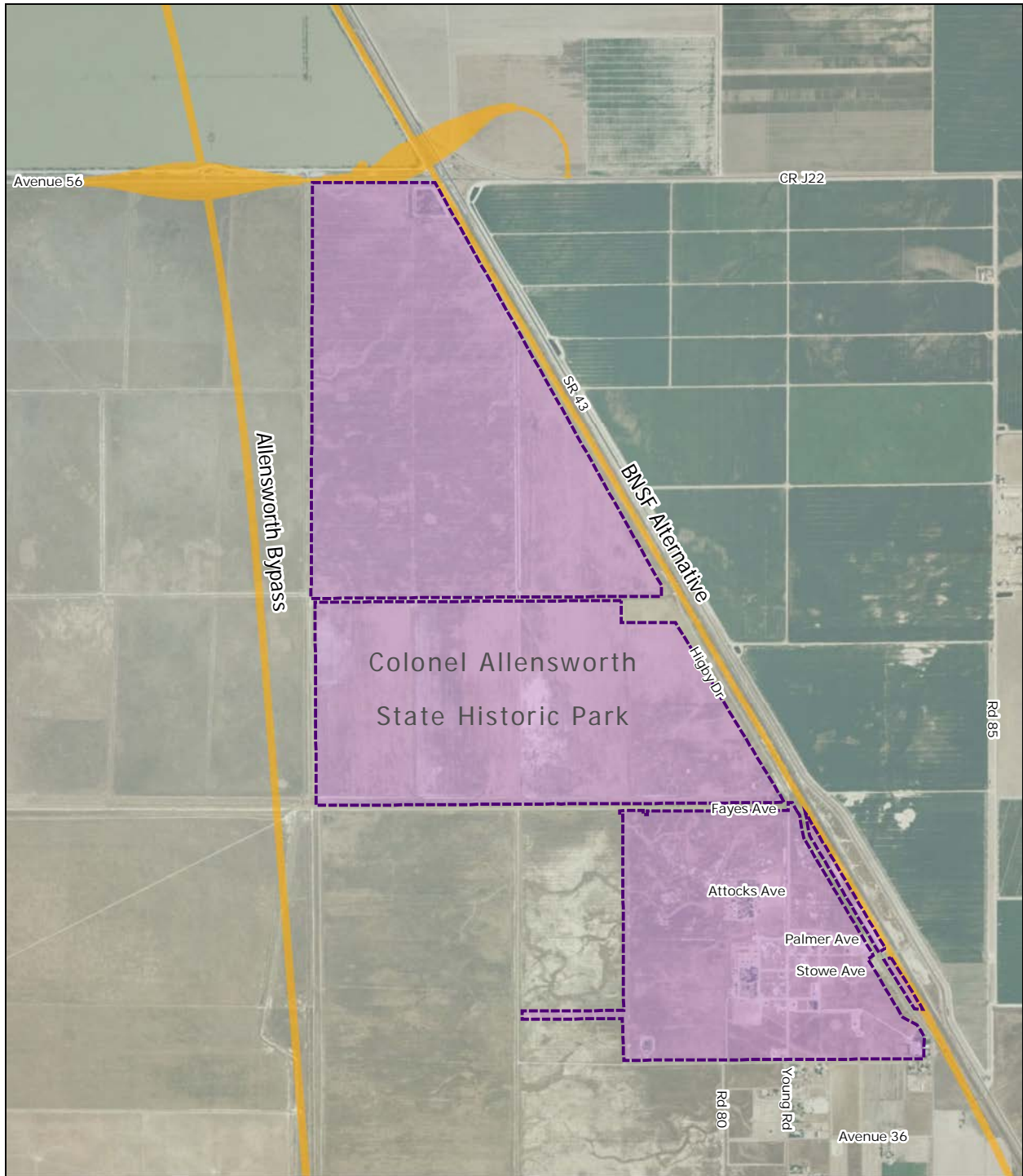
PRELIMINARY DRAFT/SUBJECT TO CHANGE - HST ALIGNMENT IS NOT DETERMINED  
 Source: URS, 2011

July 5, 2011



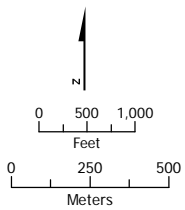
- Chukchansi Park
- Property acquisition footprint

Figure 3.15-6  
 City of Fresno, Chukchansi Park



PRELIMINARY DRAFT/SUBJECT TO CHANGE - HST ALIGNMENT IS NOT DETERMINED  
 Source: URS, 2011

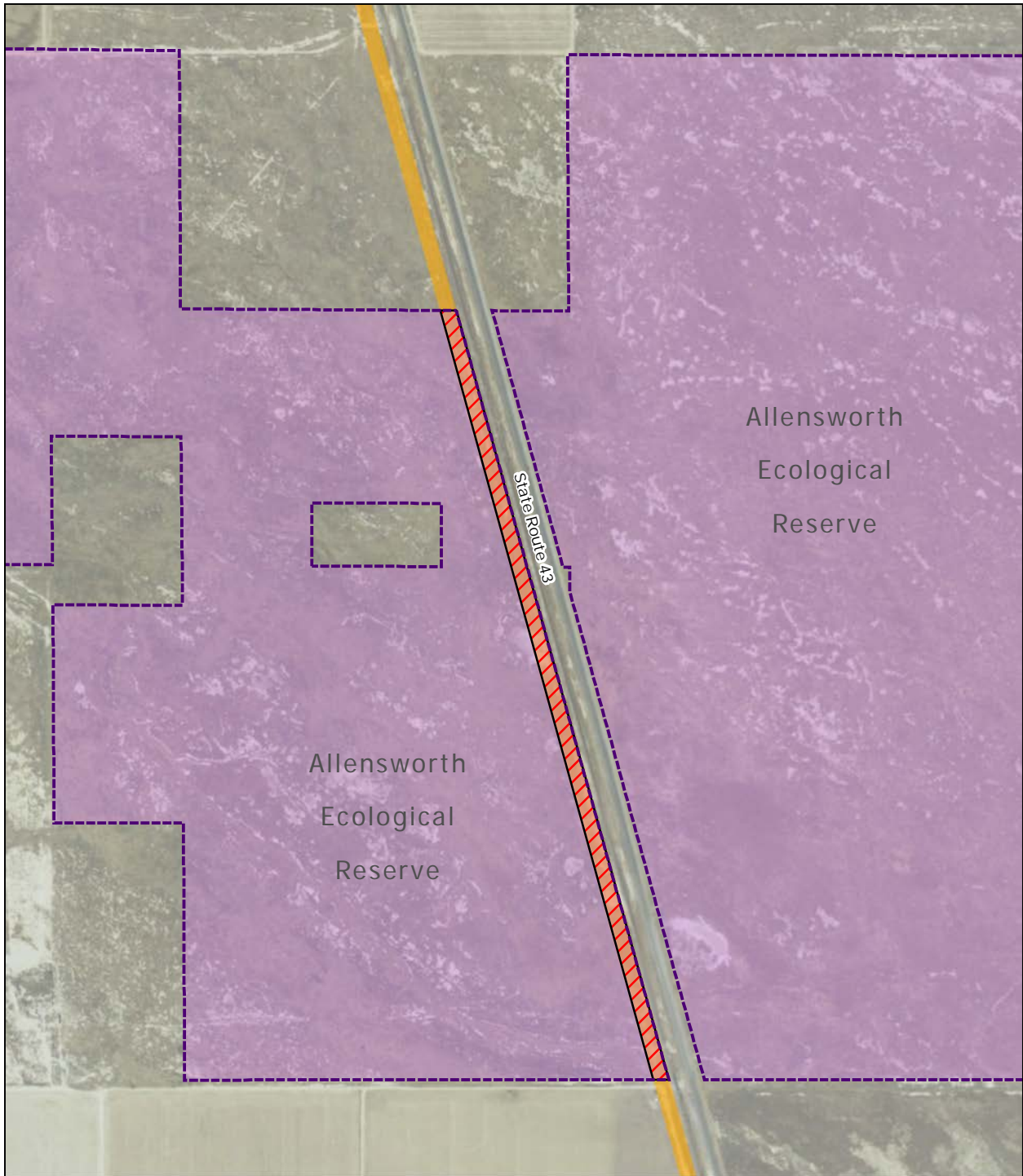
July 5, 2011



- Allensworth State Historic Park boundary
- Property acquisition footprint

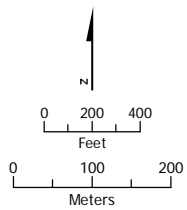
Figure 3.15-7  
 Tulare County, Colonel  
 Allensworth State Historic Park





PRELIMINARY DRAFT/SUBJECT TO CHANGE - HST ALIGNMENT IS NOT DETERMINED  
 Source: URS, 2011

July 6, 2011






-  Allensworth Ecological Reserve
-  Property acquisition footprint
-  Property acquired

Figure 3.15-8  
 Tulare County, Allensworth  
 Ecological Reserve land acquisition

*Kings/Tulare Regional Station*

The proposed Kings County cross-county bike path is the only recreational resource located within the study area for the Kings/Tulare Regional Station. The path would terminate at SR 43 in an area near the Kings/Tulare Regional Station. Station construction activities would be separated from the path by SR 43, which would provide a barrier to potential impacts on park and recreation resources and there would be no effect under NEPA. There would be no impact under CEQA.

*Downtown Bakersfield Station*

The Bakersfield Amtrak Station playground, Central Park, Lowell Park, and Bakersfield High School recreation facilities would be distant enough from station construction that effects would be negligible under NEPA. Construction impacts on the Amtrak Station playground, Central Park, Lowell Park, and Bakersfield High School recreation facilities would be less than significant under CEQA.

*Heavy Maintenance Facility Alternatives*

No park resources fall within the study area of the Fresno Works–Fresno or Kings County–Hanford HMFs; therefore, there would be no impacts to park resources from HMF construction. One park resource, Independence High, would be approximately 590 feet from the Kern Council of Governments–Wasco HMF. This distance would preclude impacts from noise or visual changes from construction and there would be no construction effects under NEPA. Additionally, there would be no construction impacts under CEQA.

**Project Impacts*****Common Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Impacts***

Impacts on parks, recreation, and open-space resources would include direct impacts associated with acquisition of park resources. Indirect impacts from HST operations relate to the distance between an HST alternative and the potentially affected park or recreation and open-space resource. Indirect impacts include increased noise levels, changes in access, degradation of the visual setting, or changes in the surrounding land uses.

Park users would most notice these impacts at facilities within 300 feet of the HST alignment. Parks located within 100 feet of the HST alternatives, would experience the most effects. After mitigation, none of the HST alternatives would have traffic impacts to intersections near parks. Section 3.2, Transportation, provides an analysis of traffic impacts. As discussed in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration, noise impacts are anticipated after mitigation on some park resources depending on the location. Direct effects from land acquisition would be substantial under NEPA. Direct impacts from land acquisition would be significant under CEQA.

***Acquisition of Park Resources***

The following describes the acquisition of park resources for the HST alternatives. The BNSF Alternative would result in the acquisition of land. Parkland acquisition would only have a significant effect if the acquisition results in a diminished capacity to use that resource or a substantially reduced value of that resource. There would be no acquisition of park land required for construction of the HST stations or HMF alternatives.

*BNSF Alternative*

Where feasible, the BNSF Alternative would be located along existing vehicle and rail transportation corridors to minimize potential impacts on adjacent properties, including parks, recreation, and open-space resources (Authority and FRA [2008] 2010). The BNSF Alternative would not require the acquisition of land from nearby parks, such as Chukchansi Park or Father Wyatt Park. The BNSF Alternative would require the acquisition of 1.7 acres of land at Allensworth State Historic Park and 7.3 acres from Allensworth Ecological Reserve. The BNSF Alternative would pass within approximately 100 feet of the recreational facilities on the Bakersfield High School campus and would require the acquisition of a portion of the parking area adjacent to the Industrial Arts building. However, the HST would not require the acquisition of any recreational facilities on the Bakersfield High School campus. Permanent acquisition acreage for the alternative alignments is shown in Table 3.15-5. Effects from land acquisition resulting from the BNSF Alternative would be substantial under NEPA. Impacts from land acquisition are considered significant under CEQA.

**Table 3.15-5**  
 Alternative Alignment Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Permanent Acquisition Acreage

Resource Name	HST Alternative						
	BNSF	Fresno West	Corcoran Elevated	Corcoran Bypass	Allensworth Bypass	Wasco-Shafter Bypass	Bakersfield South
Chukchansi Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Father Wyatt Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pixley National Wildlife Refuge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Allensworth State Historic Park	1.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Allensworth Ecological Reserve	7.3	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres Affected</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

*Corcoran Elevated Alternative*

Father Wyatt Park would be located to the east of the Corcoran Elevated Alternative. The Corcoran Elevated Alternative would not require the acquisition of parkland and there would be no effect under NEPA and no impact under CEQA.

*Corcoran Bypass Alternative*

There are no parks, recreation or open space resources within the study area for the Corcoran Bypass Alternative.

*Allensworth Bypass Alternative*

As shown in Figures 3.15-3 and 3.15-7, the Allensworth Bypass Alternative would be located to the west of Allensworth State Historic Park and only a portion of the area in the northwestern part of the park would fall within the study area. The Allensworth Bypass Alternative would not require the acquisition of any parkland and there would be no effect under NEPA. There would be no impact under CEQA.

*Wasco-Shafter Bypass Alternative*

As shown in Figure 3.15-9, the proposed Orchard Park would be located within the study area of the Wasco-Shafter Bypass Alternative. However, there are no permits issued to construct Orchard Park and it would be speculative to assume it would exist at the time of operation of the HST. Therefore, there would be no effect to Orchard Park from acquisition of land under NEPA and no impact under CEQA.

*Bakersfield South Alternative*

A portion of the Kern River Parkway is located within the study area for the Bakersfield South Alternative. Similar to the BNSF Alternative, the Bakersfield South Alternative would not require any land acquisition from the Kern River Parkway and effects under NEPA would be negligible. Impacts from land acquisition to Kern River Parkway would be less than significant under CEQA.

*Downtown Fresno Station*

No land would be acquired from Chukchansi Park. Other resources, such as Fresno County Plaza, Frank Ball Community Center, and Lincoln Elementary School, are located approximately 875, 975, 2,500, and 2,100 feet, respectively from the station location; therefore, no land would be acquired. Since no land would be acquired, there would be no effect from land acquisition under NEPA. Impacts under CEQA would be less than significant.

*Kings/Tulare Regional Station*

The proposed Kings County Cross-County bike path is the only recreational resource located within the study area for the Kings/Tulare Regional Station. The path would terminate at SR 43 to the west of the Kings/Tulare Regional Station and no land would be acquired from the bike path for the Kings/Tulare Station. Land acquisition effects would be negligible under NEPA due to the separation of the path by SR-43. Impacts under CEQA would be less than significant.

*Downtown Bakersfield Station*

The Downtown Bakersfield Station would not require the acquisition of any park resources and effects from land acquisition would be negligible under NEPA. Impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

*Heavy Maintenance Facility Alternatives*

No park resources fall within the study area of the Fresno Works–Fresno or Kings County–Hanford HMFs; therefore, there would be no acquisition of park resources required for the HMF. One school whose playfields are used as a park resource, Independence High School, would be approximately 590 feet from the Kern Council of Governments–Wasco HMF. Therefore, this HMF

would not result in the acquisition of park resources and there would be no effect from land acquisition under NEPA and no impact under CEQA.

### ***Change in Park Character***

The following sections describe the changes in park character, such as visual change and changes to the setting, for the HST alternatives. In addition, the HST alternatives could create an increase in park use. Effects from changes in park character would be negligible or moderate under NEPA depending on the location of the park resource. Changes to park character would be less than significant or significant under CEQA depending on the location of the park resource.

#### ***BNSF Alternative***

As discussed earlier, where feasible, the BNSF Alternative would be located along existing vehicle and rail transportation corridors to minimize potential impacts on adjacent properties, including parks, recreation, and open-space resources (Authority and FRA [2008] 2010). As discussed in Section 3.16, Aesthetics and Visual Resources, the HST would add a modern feature not consistent with the historical setting that has been created at Allensworth State Historic Park, which would be substantial under NEPA. This impact would be significant under CEQA.

**Chukchansi Park (Fresno).** Because of distance and the urban nature of the park, noise would not affect the character of Chukchansi Park. Views of the HST from Chukchansi Park would be blocked by bleachers and would not create any changes to the park setting. Although it is possible that Chukchansi Park may experience an increase in visitor use as a result of its proximity to the BNSF Alternative and the Downtown Fresno Station, it is not anticipated that this increase would be substantial enough to create physical deterioration of Chukchansi Park. Therefore, effects to park character resulting from the HST would be negligible under NEPA as there would be changes in visitation are expected to be minor. Impacts from changes to park character would be less than significant under CEQA.

**Father Wyatt Park (Corcoran).** Noise increases and visual changes have the potential to change the character of Father Wyatt Park. Upon implementation of noise mitigation measures, noise would not affect the character of Father Wyatt Park. Regarding visual changes, views of the HST to the west from Father Wyatt Park in Corcoran would be shielded by tall trees growing along the park border. Project effects to Father Wyatt Park's setting and visual character would be negligible under NEPA as noise would be mitigated and views of the HST would be shielded. Project impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

**Christmas Tree Park (Corcoran).** Christmas Tree Park is located 65 feet to the west of the study area for the BNSF Alternative and approximately 700 feet from the HST centerline. Upon implementation of noise mitigation measures, noise would not affect the character of Christmas Tree Park. The park is located in Corcoran and urban development would be located between it and the HST. Therefore, remaining views of the HST from the park would be similar to the existing urban setting and project effects to Christmas Tree Park would be negligible under NEPA. Project impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

**Pixley National Wildlife Refuge (Tulare County).** Pixley National Wildlife Refuge is accessible to the public for hiking, photography, and wildlife viewing. Pixley National Wildlife Refuge is separated from the HST by SR 43, an existing transportation corridor. Therefore, there would be no project effects to Pixley National Wildlife Refuge under NEPA due to the separation. There would be no project impacts under CEQA.

**Allensworth State Historic Park (Tulare County).** No HST stations or stops are proposed in the vicinity of Allensworth State Historic Park; therefore, no increase in use is anticipated. At Allensworth State Historic Park, the HST would add a modern feature not consistent with the

historical setting that has been re-created at the park. Because the purpose of Allensworth State Historic Park is to re-create an atmosphere from the past, the intrusion of a modern HST would change the character of the park. Project effects to Allensworth State Historic Park would be substantial under NEPA due to this change in character. Project impacts would be significant under CEQA.

**Allensworth Ecological Reserve (Tulare and Kern Counties).** Portions of Allensworth Ecological Reserve would be located to the west across SR 43 and directly to the east of the BNSF Alternative. Areas of Allensworth Ecological Reserve that are separated from the BNSF Alternative by SR 43 would not experience any change in park character. Areas west of the BNSF do not offer access to Allensworth Ecological Reserve. Therefore, visitors are not anticipated in this area of the park. There would be no Project effects to Allensworth Ecological Reserve under NEPA due to the lack of opportunity for visitors to see the HST in those areas of the park. There would be no Project impacts under CEQA.

**Kern River Parkway (Bakersfield).** The BNSF Alternative would pass over the Kern River Parkway on an elevated guideway. Although the parkway is located in the Kern River channel, it is crossed by streets and by SR 99/58 in the vicinity of the project. Therefore, the visual change to park character would not be unlike other areas along the parkway and this change would be negligible under NEPA. This impact would be less than significant under CEQA. Upon implementation of mitigation measures, the effects of noise on the Kern River Parkway would be negligible under NEPA due to the proximity of the HST to the park facilities. This impact would be less than significant under CEQA.

#### *Corcoran Bypass Alternative*

There are no park resources within the study area for the Corcoran Bypass Alternative and no effects would occur under NEPA. There would be no Project impacts under CEQA.

#### *Allensworth Bypass Alternative*

The Allensworth Bypass Alternative would not change the character of Allensworth State Historic Park or Allensworth Ecological Reserve and effects would be negligible under NEPA. Project impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

#### *Wasco-Shafter Bypass Alternative*

No existing parks would be affected by the Wasco-Shafter Bypass Alternative. Although the Orchard Park Specific Plan has been adopted by the City of Shafter and tentative and subdivision maps have been filed, there are no permits to construct land uses proposed in the Specific Plan, including Orchard Park (Forrest 2010, personal communication). Therefore, it would be speculative to assume that Orchard Park would exist at the time of HST operations. Therefore, there would be no effect from loss of access under NEPA and no impact under CEQA.

#### *Bakersfield South Alternative*

The Bakersfield South Alternative would pass over the Kern River Parkway on an elevated guideway. Although the parkway is located in the Kern River channel, it is crossed by streets and by SR 99/58 in the vicinity of the project. Therefore, the visual change to park character would not be unlike other areas along the parkway. The Bakersfield South would pass over the Kern River Parkway on an elevated guideway. Although the parkway is located in the Kern River channel, it is crossed by streets and by SR 99/58 in the vicinity of the project. Therefore, the visual change to park character would not be unlike other areas along the parkway and this change would not be substantial or significant. Upon implementation of mitigation measures, the

effects of noise on the Kern River Parkway would be negligible under NEPA due to the proximity of the HST to the park facilities. Impacts from noise would be less than significant under CEQA.

#### *Downtown Fresno Station*

Similar to the BNSF Alternative, there would be no impacts to the character of Chukchansi Park created by the Downtown Fresno Station. Although it is possible that Chukchansi Park may experience an increase in visitor use due to its proximity to the Downtown Fresno Station, it is not anticipated that an increase would be substantial enough to create physical deterioration of Chukchansi Park. Therefore, effects would be negligible under NEPA as there would be limited increase in use. Project impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

#### *Kings/Tulare Regional Station*

The proposed Kings County cross-county bike path is the only recreational resource located within the study area for the Kings/Tulare Regional Station. The Kings County cross-county bike path would be located in some areas along existing roads subject to traffic noise or within view of existing roads and urban areas. Therefore, the Kings/Tulare Regional Station would not create a change in park character to the Kings County cross-county bike path and effects would be negligible under NEPA. Project impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

#### *Downtown Bakersfield Station*

The Amtrak Station playground is located in an urbanized area, adjacent to an existing rail line; therefore, the Downtown Bakersfield Station would not create visual changes to park character. However, the Downtown Bakersfield Station would increase the number of people in the station area. This increase in people could result in an increase in use of the park by riders with children waiting for trains. This increase would be high enough that physical deterioration would occur or would be accelerated. Project effects to the Bakersfield Amtrak Station playground would be substantial under NEPA due to this increased use. Project impacts would be significant under CEQA.

#### *Heavy Maintenance Facility Alternatives*

No park resources lie within the study area of the Fresno Works or Hanford HMF; therefore, there would be no impacts to park resources from HMF operation. The Wasco HMF would be located more than 760 feet from Independence High and would not change the character of the park resources. Therefore, effects would be negligible under NEPA. Project impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

### **D. SECTION 4(F) AND 6(F) USES**

Federal legislation protects some of the parks and recreation resources in the project area. Chapter 4 of this EIR/EIS evaluates the use of parks and recreation resources in accordance with Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act (49 U.S.C. 303). The mitigation section of this Section 4(f) Evaluation notes specific avoidance and mitigation requirements related to these laws.

Chapter 4 also assesses potential impacts to any Section 6(f) properties, which are park properties that have been improved with funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant program.

### 3.15.6 Mitigation Measures

Since publication of the Statewide Program EIR/EIS (Authority and FRA 2005) and the Bay Area to Central Valley Program EIR/EIS (Authority and FRA [2008] 2010), planning refinements have minimized potential impacts on park and recreational resources. Many related impacts in other resource areas have mitigation measures that work to reduce further the likelihood for impacts on park resources. For example, Section 3.2.6 describes mitigation measures for impacts during construction for transportation and access; Section 3.3.6 describes measures for mitigating construction dust effects on air quality; Section 3.16.6 describes shielding staging areas during construction and avoiding visual degradation through the use of decorative barriers, landscaping, or architectural lighting; Section 3.11.5 addresses safety and security fencing; and Section 3.18.6 addresses incremental effects of growth. The project development team would continue to engage local jurisdictions in planning for and mitigating impacts to park and recreational resources using the optional mitigation measures below to reduce substantial, adverse environmental impacts resulting from implementing the HST project. Mitigation measures are listed first for construction, then for operation of the HST alternatives.

#### A. CONSTRUCTION PERIOD

**Park Construction (PC)-MM#1: Compensation for Staging in Park Property for Construction.** Respective jurisdictions would be consulted to establish appropriate compensation in terms of allowance or additional property to accommodate for displaced park use during construction. Options may include preparing a plan for alternative public recreation resources during the period of closure and preparing signs and newsletters describing the project, its schedule, and alternative public recreational opportunities. Alternative parks and recreational resources may include the installation of recreational facilities, trail, and landscaping on lands currently owned by the city but not already developed, or it may include temporary park development on open lands until the park can be re-opened.

#### B. PROJECT

**Park Project (PP)-MM#1: Acquisition of Park Property.** Mitigation may include providing financial compensation for purchase and development of replacement park property of at least equivalent value with the property acquired, or, where appropriate, enhancement of the existing facility. Where applicable, this process will be consistent with Section 6(f) requirements and provide park enhancement as appropriate.

**Park Project (PP)-MM#2: Avoidance of Allensworth State Historic Park.** Final design will continue to seek to minimize right-of-way impacts in Allensworth State Historic Park.

The mitigation measures would not result in secondary effects. The mitigation measures may involve further development in consultation with the owners and maintenance keepers of the park and recreational facilities. It is anticipated that, through further discussions with the owners, all impacts to park resources would be mitigated without residual impacts.

**Park Project (PP)-MM#3: Collect Additional Maintenance Funds.** Respective jurisdictions would be consulted to establish funding to provide additional maintenance, labor, and repairs for the existing Bakersfield Amtrak playground to remedy any potential degradation of existing facilities that may result from increased facility use.



### 3.15.7 NEPA Impacts Summary

Because local regulations generally require development of parkland for approval of residential projects, the No Project Alternative would have no direct or indirect impacts on existing parks, recreation, or open space.

Temporary construction effects, such as noise, dust, and visual degradation, are anticipated for the BNSF, Corcoran Elevated, and Bakersfield South alternatives. In cases where an HST alternative alignment would encroach into a park, the effects would be substantial under NEPA. Where the construction passes within 300 feet of a park, depending on the park resource, effects would be negligible to moderate under NEPA. Effects to parks located at a distance greater than 300 feet from an HST alternative would be negligible. Effects to Father Wyatt Park from noise and visual changes would be mitigated to negligible. Effects to Kern River Parkway from closure would be mitigated to negligible. Effects to Bakersfield High School facilities would remain substantial after mitigation.

Project operation effects for the BNSF alternative resulting from park property acquisition from Allensworth State Historic Park, would also be considered substantial. These effects would be reduced to negligible with mitigation. The BNSF alternative would create a substantial effect from the introduction of a modern feature to Allensworth State Historic Park that would remain substantial even with mitigation. Effects to the Bakersfield Amtrak Station playground would be reduced to negligible with mitigation.

### 3.15.8 CEQA Significance Conclusions

The Authority would continue to make efforts to minimize project construction impacts by avoiding or reducing impacts on parks, recreation, and open-space resources. Where impacts cannot be avoided, measures to reduce impacts would include the mitigation identified in Table 3.15-6. This table also identifies the mitigation measures described in the 2005 Final Program EIR/EIS for the Proposed California HST System (Authority and FRA 2005) and the CEQA level of significance before and after mitigation.

**Table 3.15-6**

Summary of Significant Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact	CEQA Level of Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	CEQA Level of Significance after Mitigation
<b>Construction Period</b>			
<b>PK#1 Father Wyatt Park.</b> Construction activities for the BNSF Alternative would create noise.	Significant	Mitigation Measures as outlined in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration	Less than Significant
<b>PK#2 Kern River Parkway.</b> Construction activities for the BNSF and Bakersfield South alternatives would create closures of some areas of parkway facilities, including bike and equestrian facilities.	Significant	PC-MM#1	Less than Significant

**Table 3.15-6**

Summary of Significant Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact	CEQA Level of Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	CEQA Level of Significance after Mitigation
<p><b>PK#3 Bakersfield High School.</b> Construction activities for the BNSF Alternative would create noise.</p>	Significant	Mitigation Measures as outlined in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration	Significant
<b>Operation</b>			
<p><b>PK#4 Allensworth State Historic Park.</b> The BNSF Alternative would require the acquisition of approximately 1.7 acres of parkland.</p>	Significant	PP-MM#1 and PP-MM#2	Less than Significant
<p><b>PK#5 Allensworth Ecological Reserve.</b> The BNSF Alternative would require the acquisition of approximately 7.3 acres of parkland.</p>	Significant	PP-MM#1	Less than Significant
<p><b>PK#6 Allensworth State Historic Park.</b> The BNSF Alternative would introduce a modern feature not consistent with the historic atmosphere of the park.</p>	Significant	Mitigation Measures as outlined in Section 3.16, Aesthetics and Visual Resources, and Section 3.17, Cultural and Paleontological Resources	Significant
<p><b>PK#7 Bakersfield Amtrak Station Playground.</b> The BNSF and Bakersfield South alternatives would create an increase in usage that would result in physical deterioration.</p>	Significant	PP-MM#3	Less than Significant