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 environmental consequences on parks, recreation, and open space.

The 2005 and 2008/2012 HST Program EIR/EIS documents identified project engineering and design elements to reduce or avoid potential parks, recreation, and open space impacts (Authority 2010; Authority and FRA 2005, 2008). During the period between the scoping meetings and preparation of this project EIR/EIS, the alternative analysis process identified those alignments and design options that would avoid or minimize potential impacts on parks, recreation, and open space; followed design practices that would minimize impacts on these resources; and engaged in construction practices that would reduce the impacts on these resources in areas where construction or operational impacts would be unavoidable. These Project Design Features to avoid or minimize potential adverse impacts are discussed in Section 3.15.5, Environmental Consequences, and will be implemented as part of the project.

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 3.18, Regional Growth provide additional information about issues related to potential parks, recreation, and open-space impacts. These sections describe mitigation measures that would reduce the significance of potential impacts on parks, recreation, and open space resources as they reduce the significance of impacts in the specified issue area. Relevant mitigation measures are summarized in Section 3.15.6, Mitigation Measures.

As discussed in Section 3.1.5 and the Executive Summary, the analysis in this chapter includes revisions based on design refinements and analytical refinements. Gray shading is used as a guide to help the reader navigate the revisions.

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 Federal Railroad Administration (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.

3.15.2.1 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, commonly known as Section 4(f), which applies to transportation projects that may receive federal funding and/or discretionary approvals protects parklands and other recreation areas (49 U.S.C. 303). In general, the FRA may not approve the use of a Section 4(f) property, which includes publicly owned land such as parks, recreational areas, and wildlife refuges and historic sites, unless it determines that 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). Chapter 4, Section 4(f)/6(f), evaluates the project's use of Section 4(f) properties, based on the impacts analyzed in this section and Section 3.17, Aesthetics, for historic properties.

Compliance with Section 4(f) is required for transportation projects that are undertaken by an operating administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation or that may receive federal funding and/or discretionary approvals. Section 4(f) protects publicly owned land of parks, recreational areas, and wildlife refuges. Section 4(f) also protects historic sites of national, state, or local significance located on public or private land. FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts (64 Federal Register [F.R.] 25445, May 26, 1999) contains FRA process and protocols for analyzing the potential use of Section 4(f) protected properties. Although not subject to the Title 23, Section 774 regulations regarding Section 4(f) for highway and transit projects, FRA uses these regulations as additional guidance regarding the requirements established in 49 U.S.C. 303.

FRA may not approve the use of a Section 4(f) property, as defined in 49 U.S.C. 303(c), unless it determines that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to avoid the use of the property and the action includes all possible planning to minimize harm resulting from such use *or* the project has a *de minimis* impact consistent with the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 303(d). An alternative is not feasible if it cannot be built as a matter of sound engineering judgment.

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

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.

Section 6(f) properties are recreation resources funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965. The purpose of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF Act) is to assist in preserving, developing, and ensuring accessibility to outdoor recreation resources so 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 NPS and substitution of other recreation properties of at least equal fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location.

Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act requires that no property acquired or developed with LWCF assistance will be converted to other than public outdoor recreation uses without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of the Interior (NPS is a service of the Department of the Interior), and only if the Secretary finds it to be in accord with the then Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), and only upon such conditions as the Secretary deems necessary to ensure the substitution of other recreation properties of at least equal fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location (36 C.F.R. Part 59).

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.

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

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

California Public Resources Code Section 5006.10

Public Resources Code Section 5006.10 and Assembly Bill 1077 (chaptered October 8, 2011) establish that the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) notify the State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) of any proposed development that may substantially impact the historical, cultural, or recreational significance of the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park. The Commission is required to hold a public hearing to receive public input regarding the potential impacts of the proposed development and then submit, in writing, a summary of its conclusions on potential park impacts caused by the proposed development for transmission by the DPR to the appropriate local government entities. The DPR, in consultation with the State Office of Historic Preservation, will study the feasibility of recommending that the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park be considered for designation as a National Historic Landmark.

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

Table 3.15-1
Plans and Policies of Local Jurisdictions

Jurisdiction	Document	Adoption/ Document Date
Fresno County	General Plan Open-Space and Conservation Element	October 2000
	Laton Community Plan	2012
	Fresno County Code of Ordinances	December 2013
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	June 2013
Kings County	County of Kings 2035 General Plan Open-Space Element	January 2004
	Armona Community Plan, Chapter 11 of the County of Kings 2035 General Plan	January 2004
	Kings County Zoning Ordinance	June 2012
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	August 2008
	Tulare County Zoning Ordinance	March 2010
Kern County	Kern County General Plan, Land Use/Conservation/Open-Space Element	September 2009
	Kern County Code of Ordinances	July 2012
City of Wasco	City of Wasco General Plan	October 2002
	City of Wasco Municipal Code	January 2014
City of Shafter	City of Shafter General Plan	April 2005
	City of Shafter Code of Ordinances	December 2013
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 Geographic Information System (GIS) data banks. The cities, counties, state and federal government agencies provided the boundaries for parks, recreation, and open-space properties

within 1,000 feet of the alignment, 0.5 mile of an HST station, 0.5 mile of a heavy maintenance facility (HMF) site, and 1,000 feet of any road construction required to implement the HST system in GIS data format and in their adopted plans.

Construction impacts are determined using the following methods:

- Geographic information system (GIS) spatial analysis to determine the distance of parks, recreation, and open-space facilities from the project; 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.

The project impacts of the proposed HST 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, and Section 3.18, Regional Growth, to determine if there would be any project increase or decrease in the use of parks, recreation, and open-space resources such that substantial physical deterioration of the resource would occur or be accelerated.

3.15.3.1 Methods for Evaluating Effects Under NEPA

Pursuant to NEPA regulations (40 C.F.R. 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 considerations. Beneficial effects are identified and described. When there is no measurable effect, an impact is found not to occur. The intensity of effects is the degree or magnitude of a potential effect, described as negligible, moderate, or

substantial. Context and intensity are considered together when determining whether an impact is significant under NEPA. Thus, it is possible that a significant effect may still exist when the intensity of the impact is determined to be negligible or even if the impact is beneficial.

For parks, recreation, and open space, impacts of *negligible* intensity are defined as indirect impacts that would be measurable but not perceptible to park users. Impacts of *moderate* intensity are defined as indirect impacts on parks that are perceptible to park users but would not change the overall character and/or setting. Impacts of *substantial* intensity result in one or more of the following impacts: a direct impact resulting from park acquisition; indirect impacts (i.e., noise and visual) that change the character and/or setting of the park; or closure of all or part of the park during construction.

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 impacts of moderate intensity under NEPA.

3.15.3.2 CEQA Significance Criteria

CEQA significance criteria define a project effect as significant if it:

- 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.

3.15.3.3 Study Area for Analysis

The study area for this resource—in Fresno, Corcoran, Wasco, Shafter, Bakersfield, and in Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and Kern counties—encompasses parks (including school recreational facilities), recreation facilities, and open space, all of 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 an alignment, and 0.5 mile around the HMFs, station areas, and support facilities (e.g., power substations) for the HST alternatives. In areas where an existing transportation corridor (e.g., State Route [SR] 43, the BNSF Railway [BNSF] right-of-way) separates parks, school recreational facilities (e.g., public playfields and playgrounds), recreational facilities, and open space from project components.

On-street bicycle routes, unless identified as a recreational facility by the official with jurisdiction, are not included in the analysis of Parks, Recreation, and Open Space, because they are

considered transportation facilities. Section 3.2, Transportation, covers the effects and impacts on these facilities.

3.15.4 Affected Environment

This section describes the parks, recreation, and open-space resources and school recreation facilities in the study area for the HST alternatives. The affected environment describes the context for evaluating the intensity of an effect and whether an effect is significant under NEPA and the level of significance of an impact under CEQA.

These resources are publicly 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 recreation facilities available for public use during non-school hours. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and DPR 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 in the study area for each alignment alternative.

Table 3.15-2 identifies the parks, recreation, and open-space resources potentially affected by the HST alternatives, and Table 3.15-3 identifies school district play areas and recreation facilities available for public use during non-school hours in the study area potentially affected by the HST alternatives. Tables 3.15-4 and 3.15-5 identify parks, recreation, open-space, and school district play areas and recreation resources in the study area for the Fresno Station and the Bakersfield Station alternatives, respectively. Ten park, recreation, and open-space resources and one school district play area and recreation facility lie within 300 feet or less of the HST alternatives and stations. No resources are within 300 feet of an HMF station site. Project construction and operation would have the most impacts on these parks, particularly those less than 100 feet from the project.

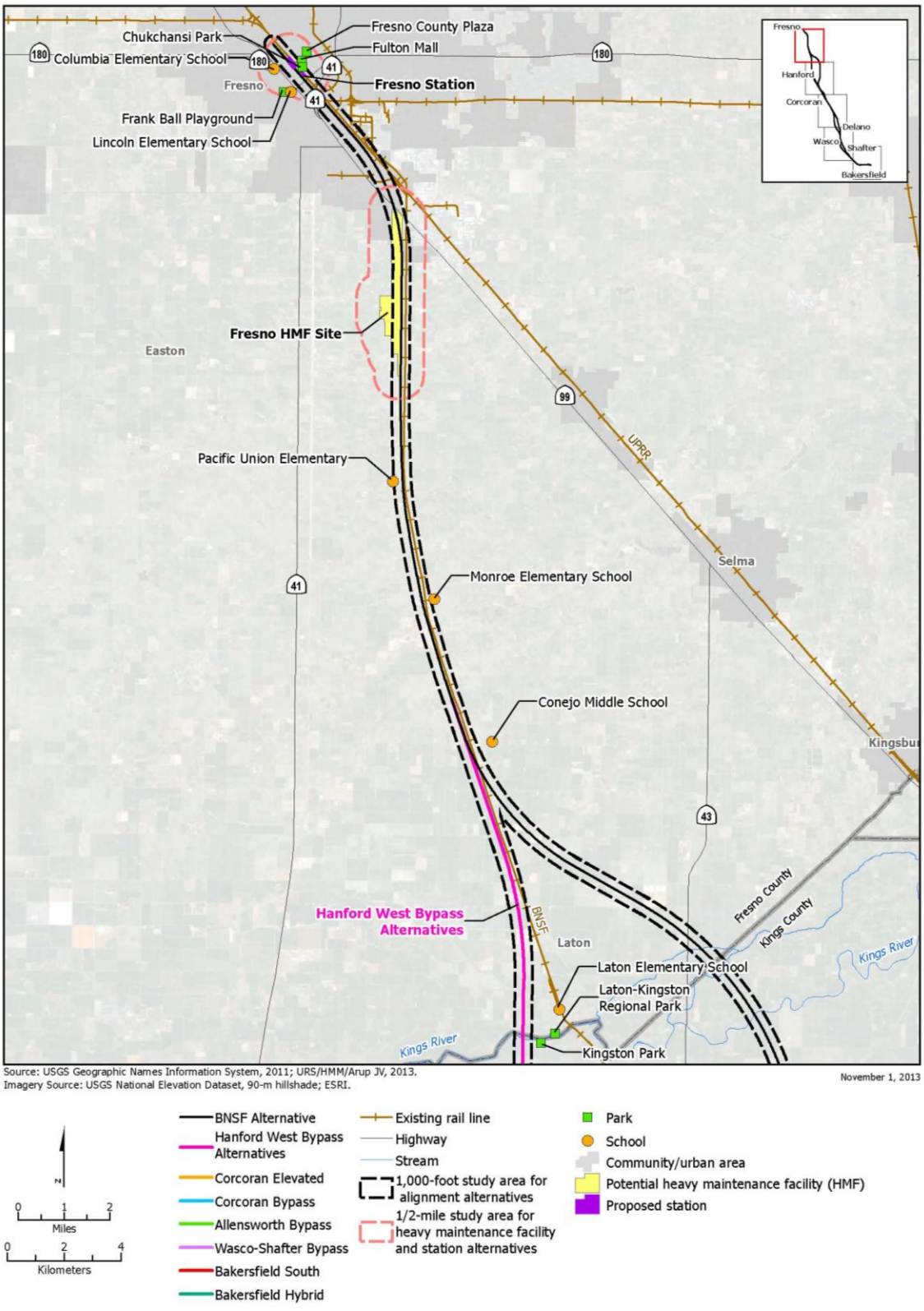

Figure 3.15-1
Fresno area: Parks, recreation, and open-space resources and school district play areas and recreation facilities in the project study areas

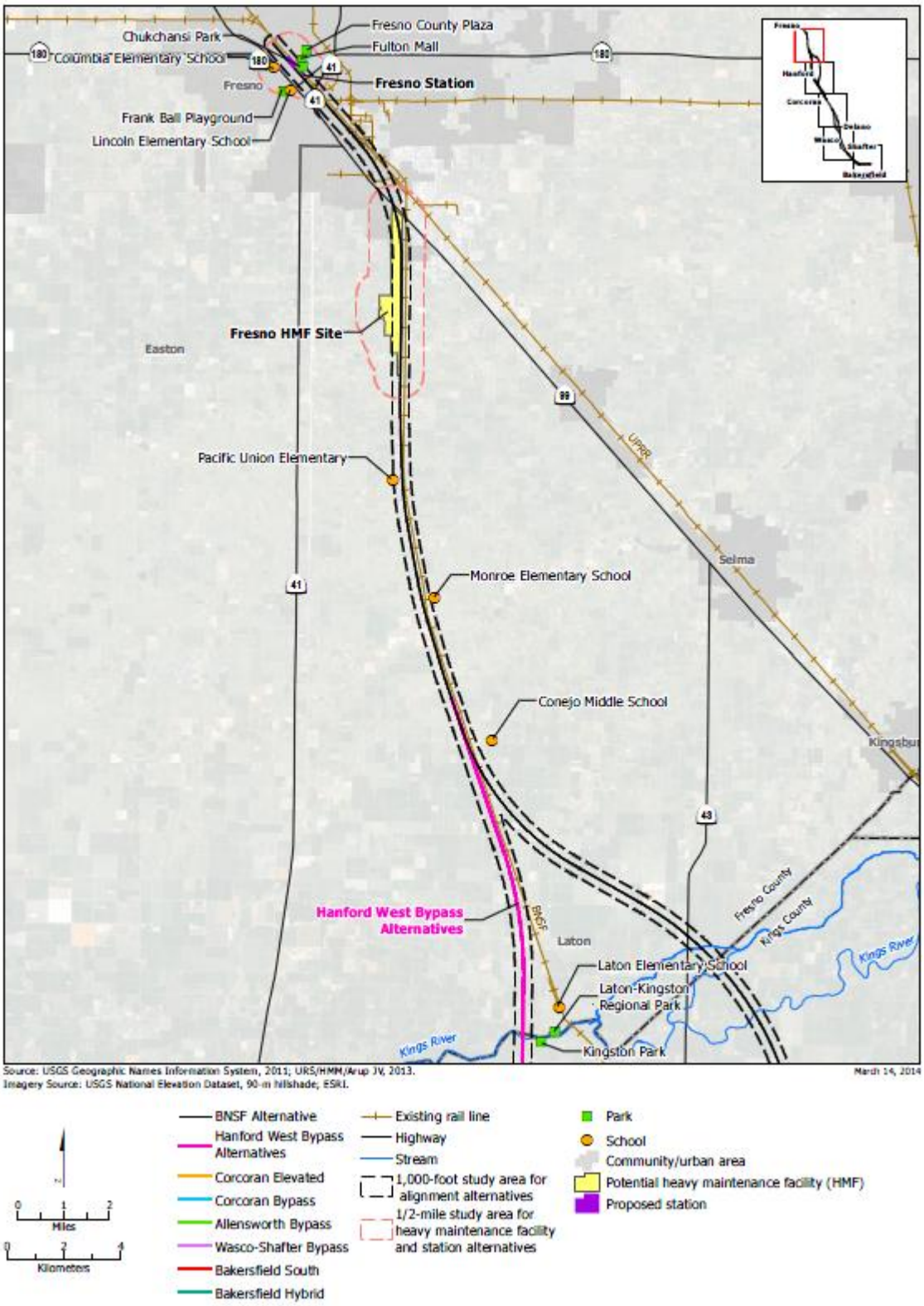

Figure 3.15-2
Hanford area: Parks, recreation, and open-space resources and school district play areas and recreation facilities in the project study areas

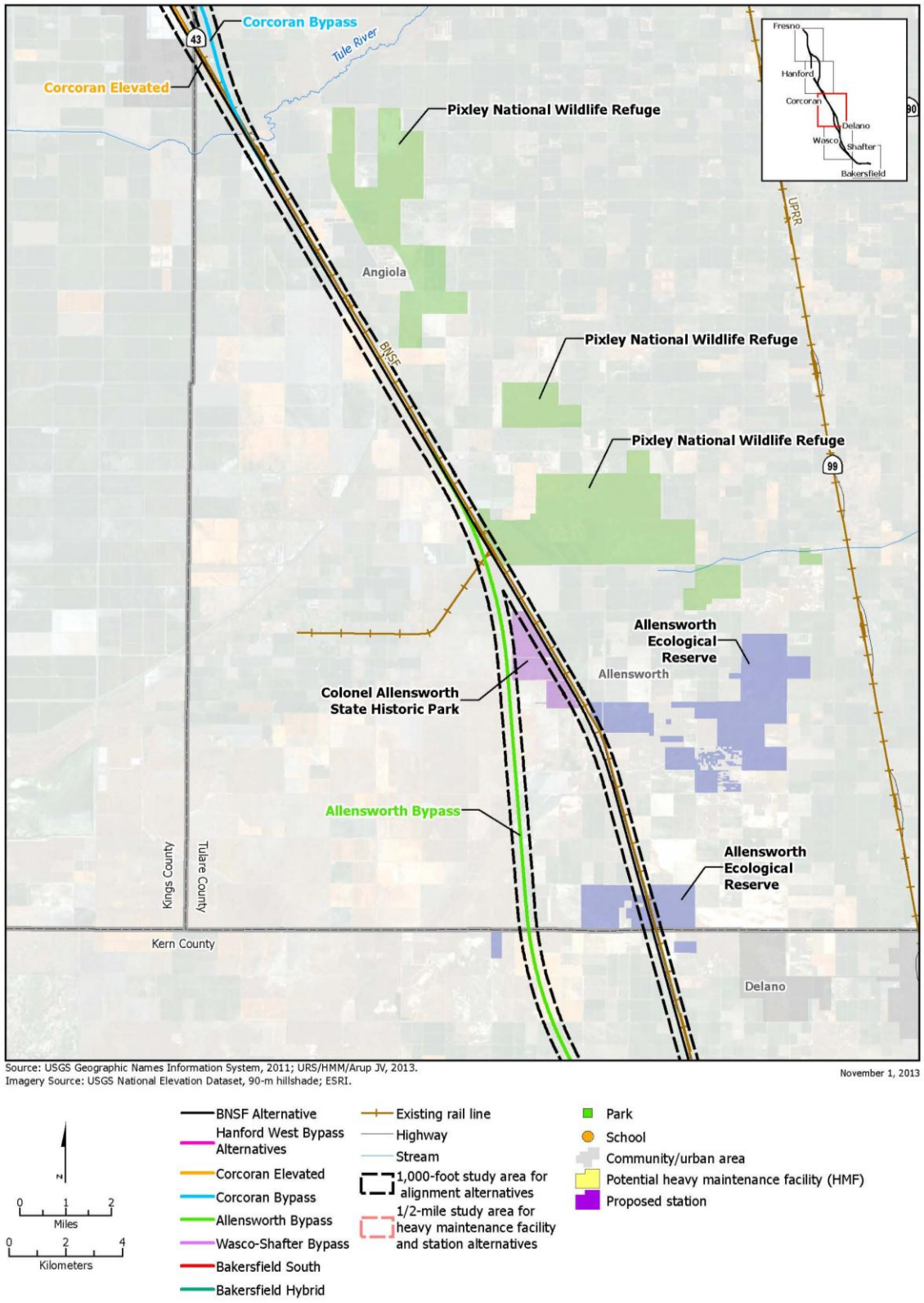

Figure 3.15-3
Corcoran area: Parks, recreation, and open-space resources and school district play areas and recreation facilities in the project study areas

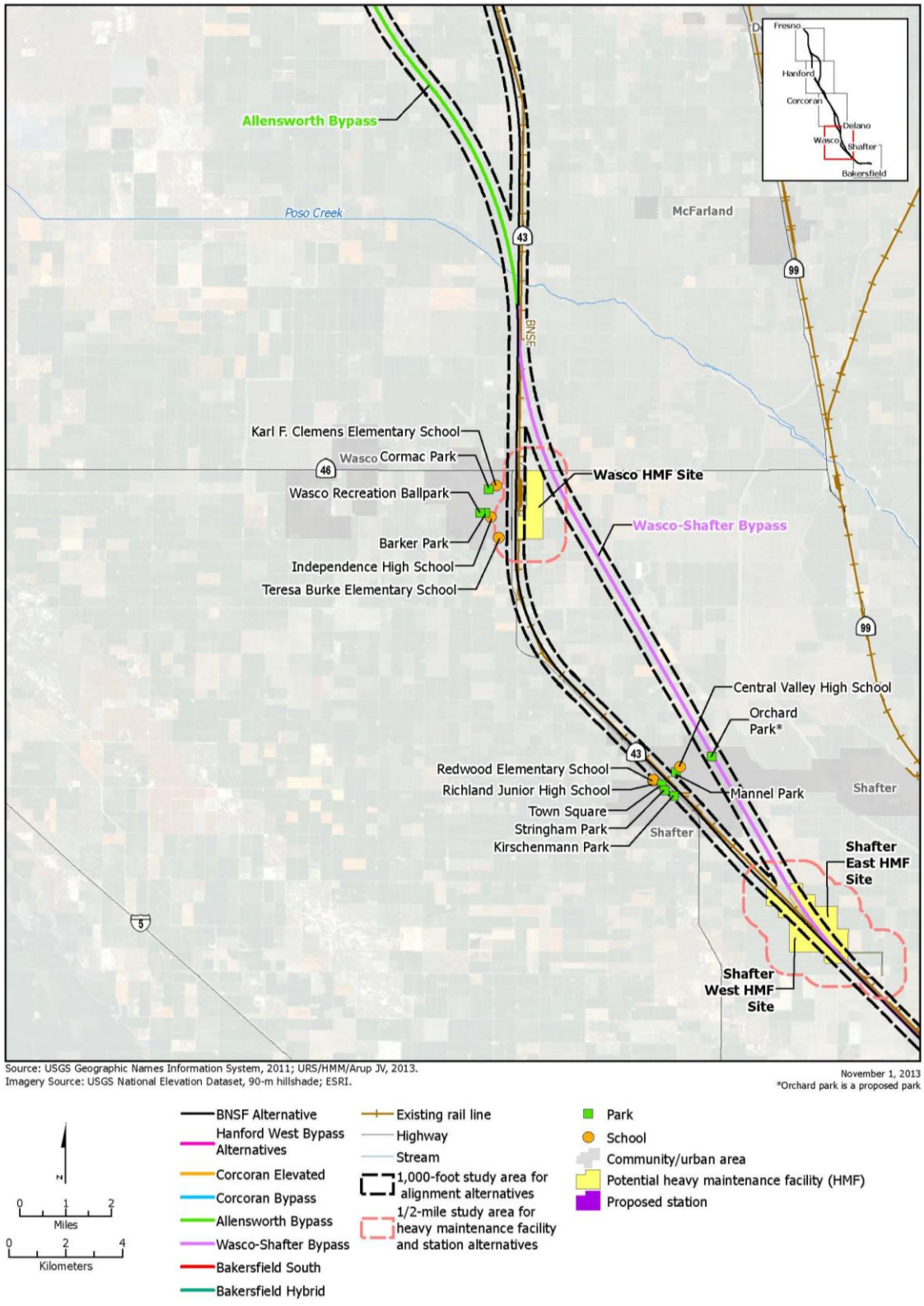

Figure 3.15-4
Wasco-Shafter area: Parks, recreation, and open-space resources and school district play areas and recreation facilities in the project study areas

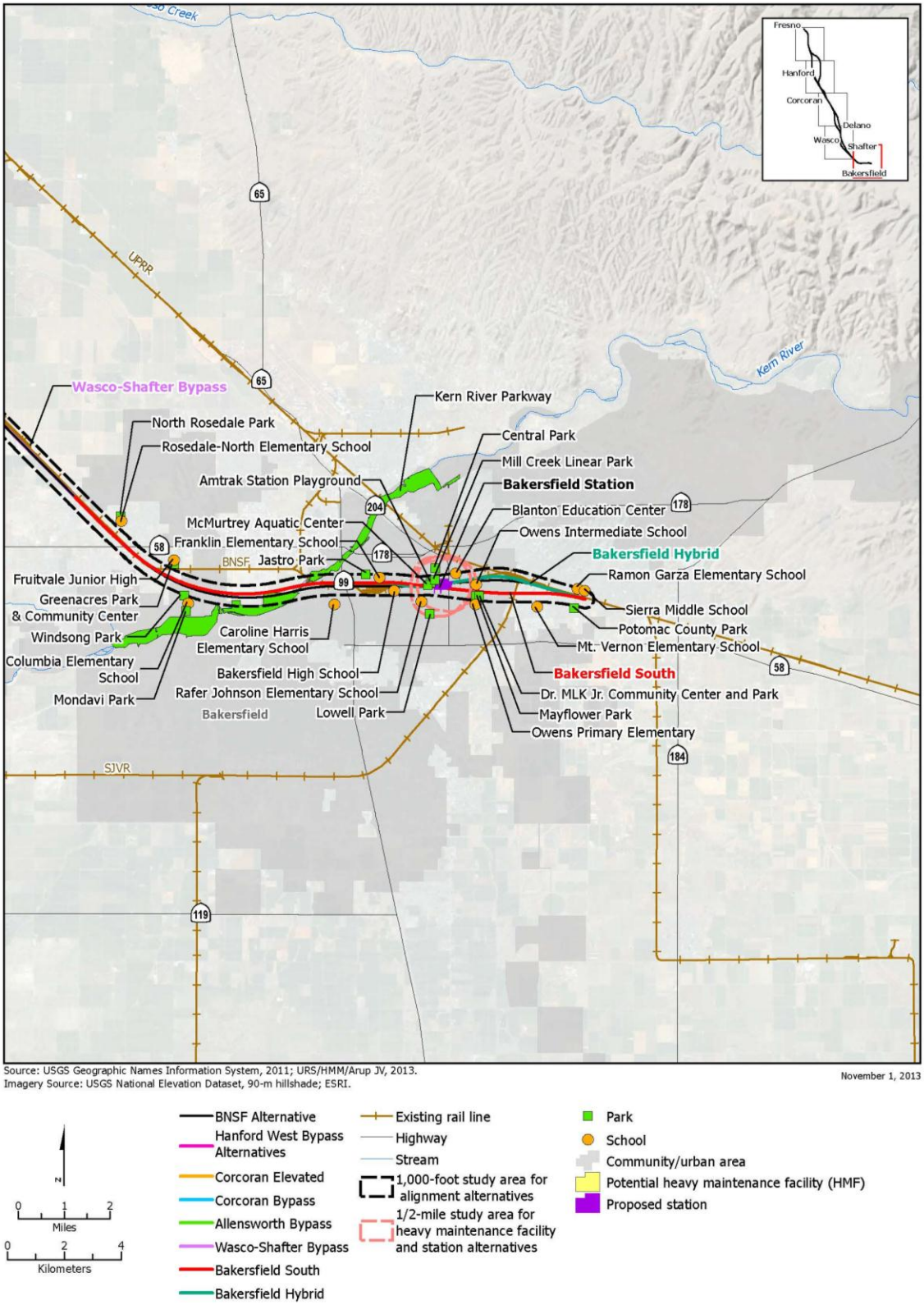

Figure 3.15-5
Bakersfield area: Parks, recreation, and open-space resources and school district play areas and recreation facilities in the project study areas

Table 3.15-2
Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources Potentially Affected by HST Alternatives

Resource Name	Owner	Amenities	HST Alternative								Size	Distance from Alignment/ Project Component
			BNSF	Hanford West Bypass 1 and 2*	Corcoran Elevated	Corcoran Bypass	Allensworth Bypass	Wasco-Shafter Bypass	Bakersfield South	Bakersfield Hybrid		
Chukchansi Park	City of Fresno	12,500-seat-capacity baseball stadium and event center	x								11 acres	70 feet
Fulton Mall	City of Fresno	Public open-space area with benches and pedestrian walkway	x								25 acres	450 feet
Father Stephen Wyatt Park	City of Corcoran	Playground area, covered arbor, picnic tables, and benches	x		x						1 acre	218 feet
Christmas Tree Park	City of Corcoran	Grass areas, picnic tables, and benches	x		x						0.5 acre	724 feet
Pixley National Wildlife Refuge	USFWS	Hiking trails and wildlife viewing areas	x				x				10,320 acres	195 feet
Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park	DPR	Visitor center, exhibits and programs, guided tours, picnic areas, and tent and RV campsites	x				x				924 acres	0 to 500 feet (from visitor areas)
Allensworth Ecological Reserve	CDFG	Trails and wildlife viewing areas	x								5,224 acres	0 feet
Orchard Park (proposed)	City of Shafter	Tot lot, picnic areas, open space						x			6 acres	0 feet

Table 3.15-2
Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources Potentially Affected by HST Alternatives

Resource Name	Owner	Amenities	HST Alternative								Size	Distance from Alignment/ Project Component
			BNSF	Hanford West Bypass 1 and 2*	Corcoran Elevated	Corcoran Bypass	Allensworth Bypass	Wasco-Shafter Bypass	Bakersfield South	Bakersfield Hybrid		
Town Square	City of Shafter	Grass areas, water fountain and special events stage.	x								0.78 acres	774 feet
Stringham Park	City of Shafter	Grass areas, playground , picnic tables, and benches	x								1.0 acres	991 feet
Kirschenmann Park	City of Shafter	Grass areas and baseball field.	x								4.8 acres	721 feet
Kern River Parkway	City of Bakersfield	32-mile linear community park with bike path, pedestrian and equestrian facilities, fishing pond, fitness par course, horseshoe pit, skate park, and picnic tables	x						x	x	1,138 acres	0 feet
Jastro Park	City of Bakersfield	Barbeque pits, picnic tables and shelter, amphitheater, 7 tennis courts, horseshoe pits, sandlot playgrounds, restrooms, and spray park							x	x	9 acres	560 feet

Table 3.15-2
Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources Potentially Affected by HST Alternatives

Resource Name	Owner	Amenities	HST Alternative								Size	Distance from Alignment/ Project Component
			BNSF	Hanford West Bypass 1 and 2*	Corcoran Elevated	Corcoran Bypass	Allensworth Bypass	Wasco-Shafter Bypass	Bakersfield South	Bakersfield Hybrid		
McMurtrey Aquatic Center	City of Bakersfield	Recreational and competition swimming pools, spray park, water slide	x						x	x	1.2 acres	37 feet
Bakersfield Amtrak Station Playground	City of Bakersfield	Tot lot with playground equipment	x						x	x	0.5 acre	199 feet
Mill Creek Linear Park	City of Bakersfield	1.5-mile linear community park with pedestrian path and benches.	x						x	x	8.0 acres	0 feet
Mayflower Park/Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center	City of 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 acres	435 feet
Total within 1,000 feet of project study area			14	0	2	0	2	1	6	5	NA	NA
Total within 300 feet of project study area			9	0	1	0	2	1	3	4	NA	NA
Total within 100 feet of project study area			6	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	NA	NA
* No parks, recreation, or open-space resources are potentially affected by the Hanford West Bypass 1 and Bypass 2 Modified alternatives.												

Table 3.15-3
School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities Potentially Affected by HST Alternatives

Resource Name	School District	Amenities	HST Alternative								Size	Distance from Alignment/ Project Component
			BNSF	Hanford West Bypass 1 and 2*	Corcoran Elevated	Corcoran Bypass	Allensworth Bypass	Wasco-Shafter Bypass	Bakersfield South	Bakersfield Hybrid		
College of the Sequoias/ Sierra Pacific High School	College of the Sequoias/ Hanford Joint Union High	Grass areas, benches, tables, football/soccer field, running track, baseball/softball fields, gym, tennis courts, outdoor basketball courts, and auditorium		x							1,970 acres	788 feet
Franklin Elementary	Bakersfield City Schools	Blacktop area with basketball courts, grass field area, and sandlot playground equipment							x	X	5 acres	579 feet
Bakersfield High	Kern High School	Football field, youth football and soccer fields, gym, tennis courts, outdoor basketball courts	x						x	X	26 acres	100 feet
Kelly F. Blanton Education Center	Kern County Superintendent of Schools	Grass areas, benches, tables, running track, and outdoor basketball courts	x							X	10 acres	957 feet

Table 3.15-3
School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities Potentially Affected by HST Alternatives

Resource Name	School District	Amenities	HST Alternative								Size	Distance from Alignment/ Project Component
			BNSF	Hanford West Bypass 1 and 2*	Corcoran Elevated	Corcoran Bypass	Allensworth Bypass	Wasco-Shafter Bypass	Bakersfield South	Bakersfield Hybrid		
Owens Intermediate School	Bakersfield City Schools	Track, football/baseball fields, basketball courts, and tot lot	x						x	x	7 acres	350 feet
Ramon Garza Elementary School	Bakersfield City Schools	Grass areas, benches, tables, football/soccer field, running track, outdoor basketball courts, and tot lot	x						x	x	13 acres	900 feet
Sierra Middle School	Bakersfield City Schools	Grass areas, benches, tables, football/soccer field, running track and outdoor basketball, tennis, and volleyball courts	x						x	x	12 acres	907 feet
Total within 1,000 feet of project study area			5	1	0	0	0	0	5	6	NA	NA
Total within 300 feet of project study area			1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA	NA
Total within 100 feet of project study area			1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA	NA

* No school district play areas and recreation facilities are potentially affected by the Hanford West Bypass 1 or Bypass 2 Modified Alternatives.

[1] Bakersfield High School's campus quadrangle and Harvey Auditorium have been determined to not be publicly available recreation facilities. These two resources are not mentioned as recreation facilities within any park or recreation plans.

Table 3.15-4
Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources and School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities in the Study Area for the Fresno Station

Resource Name	Amenities	Size	Distance from Station Alternatives
Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources			
Fresno County Plaza	Benches, ballroom for rent	2.4 acres	975 feet
Fulton Mall	Public open-space area with benches and pedestrian walkway	25.0 acres	450 feet
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 acres	2,080 feet
Chukchansi Park	12,500-seat-capacity baseball stadium and event center	11.0 acres	70 feet
School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities			
Columbia Elementary School	Blacktop play area with basketball courts, grass field areas, and sandlot playground equipment	12.0 acres	864 feet
Lincoln Elementary School	Blacktop play area with basketball courts, grass field areas, and sandlot playground equipment	7.0 acres	1,422 feet
Source: USGS 2012.			

Table 3.15-5
Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources and School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities in the Study Area for the Bakersfield Station Alternatives

Resource Name	Amenities	Size	Distance from Station Alternatives
Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources			
McMurtrey Aquatic Center	Recreational and competition swimming pools, spray park, water slide	1.2 acres	1,000 feet
Mill Creek Linear Park	1.5-mile linear community park with pedestrian path and benches	8.0 acres	839 feet
Central Park	Walkways and covered bridge for pedestrians	9.0 acres	1,296 feet
Lowell Park	Play area, lighted basketball court	6.0 acres	2,375 feet
Amtrak Station Playground	Tot lot and children's play area	0.5 acre	540 feet

Table 3.15-5
Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources and School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities in the Study Area for the Bakersfield Station Alternatives

Resource Name	Amenities	Size	Distance from Station Alternatives
School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities			
Rafer Johnson Elementary	Blacktop play area, grass field areas	2.0 acres	1,610 feet
Kelly F. Blanton Education Center	Grass areas, benches, tables, running track and outdoor basketball courts,	10 acres	797 Feet
Source: USGS 2012.			

3.15.4.1 BNSF Alternative

The parks, recreation, and open-space resources along the BNSF Alternative and the other alternatives are shown on Figures 3.15-1 through 3.15-5. Park resources include neighborhood and community centers and parks, school recreational facilities, the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge, the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park, the Allensworth Ecological Reserve, and the Kern River Parkway. School districts along the alternative alignments 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.

Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources

Table 3.15-2 shows 14 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.
- Three parks in Shafter.
- Four parks in Bakersfield.

Chukchansi Park in Fresno lies 70 feet from the BNSF Alternative construction footprint and approximately 70 feet from the Fresno Station; Chukchansi Park is a baseball stadium and event center privately managed on city property. Park use generally requires an entrance fee for events and a rental fee for event sponsors. Chukchansi Park lies approximately 70 feet from the proposed Downtown Fresno Station and has easy access for pedestrians and vehicles. Other parks in downtown Fresno include the Fulton Mall, a pedestrian mall utilizing on Fulton Street between Tuolumne Street and Inyo Street.

Within Corcoran, Father Stephen Wyatt Park is to the east of and separated from the BNSF Alternative by the existing BNSF right-of-way. Christmas Tree Park in Corcoran is 724 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 to 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 CDFW. 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.

Three city-owned parks are to the west of the BNSF Alternative in Shafter. The Town Square is on Central Avenue; this park provides shaded seating and a stage for special events. Stringham Park provides tables, benches, tot lots, and an open grass area. The main function of Kirschenmann Park is as a baseball field with stadium seating and night lighting, but this park also provides a large grass area for additional recreational activities. All three parks would be separated from the BNSF Alternative by the existing BNSF right-of-way and SR 43 (Central Valley Highway).

In the city of Bakersfield, the BNSF Alternative would cross over the Kern River Parkway, a 1,138-acre, 32-mile linear community park with bike path, pedestrian, and equestrian facilities. There are also other recreational facilities which include a fishing pond, fitness par course, horseshoe pit, skate park, and picnic tables. The park facility at the proposed crossing consists of an asphalt bike path located on top of an earthen levee and a pedestrian footpath. The parkway connects several city parks along the Kern River. The McMurtrey Aquatic Center is south of the BNSF Alternative; it offers swimming, diving, water slides, a spray park, and other water recreation amenities. A City of Bakersfield-owned parking lot located across 14th Street to the north of the McMurtrey Aquatic Center provides dedicated parking for the McMurtrey Aquatic Center and the San Joaquin Community Hospital Ice Center. The BNSF Alternative would cross the Mill Creek Linear Park, a 1.5-mile pedestrian pathway. The Mill Creek Linear Park runs along the banks of the Kern Island canal, between the BNSF right-of-way to California Avenue, and connects via sidewalk to the continuation of the Linear Park and Central Park to the north of the BNSF right-of-way. Although the parkway runs along the Kern Island canal, it is discontinuous because the park is undergrounded beneath the BNSF right-of-way, Truxtun Avenue, and the Amtrak Station in the vicinity of the HST. The Amtrak Station Playground is to the north of the BNSF Alternative and contains a tot lot and a spray park. All park resources in Bakersfield are to the west of the Bakersfield Station–North, Bakersfield Station–South, and Bakersfield Station–Hybrid alternatives. (These three station alternatives are analyzed in Section 3.15 as one alternative; they are collectively referred to as the "Bakersfield Station alternatives.")

School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities

Table 3.15-3 describes the five school district play areas and recreation facilities lying within 1,000 feet of the BNSF Alternative; all are in the city of Bakersfield. The Bakersfield High School is south of the BNSF Alternative and west of the Bakersfield Station alternatives and contains sports fields, a gym, tennis courts, and outdoor basketball courts. The Kelly F. Blanton Education Center, Owens Intermediate School, Ramon Garza Elementary School, and Sierra Middle School all have recreational resources that are within the BNSF Alternative study area, east of the Bakersfield Station alternatives. Facilities for these resources are grass or paved play areas and sports field.

Fresno Station

Table 3.15-4 describes the four parks, recreation, and open-space resources and two school district play areas and recreation facilities in the study area for the Fresno Station; this study area consists of the area within 0.5 mile of the station alternatives. 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 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.

Kings/Tulare Regional Station–East Alternative

No parks, recreation, or open-space resources occur in the study area for the Kings/Tulare Regional Station–East Alternative.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities occur in the study area for the Kings/Tulare Regional Station–East Alternative.

Bakersfield Station Alternatives

Table 3.15-5 describes the five parks, recreation, and open-space resources and two school district play areas and recreation facilities in the study area for the Bakersfield Station alternatives; this study area consists of the area within 0.5 mile of the station alternatives. Figure 3.15-5 shows the locations of these resources within that study area. All seven parks and recreation resources have easy pedestrian and vehicle access.

3.15.4.2 Hanford West Bypass 1 and 2 Alternatives

Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources

No parks, recreation, or open-space resources occur in the study area for the Hanford West Bypass 1 and 2 alternatives.

School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities

As shown on Figure 3.15-2, the Hanford West Bypass 1 and 2 alternatives are to the west of the shared campus of the College of the Sequoias Educational Center and the Sierra Pacific High School; only the western portions of the shared campus fall within the study area. The College of the Sequoias Educational Center contains grass areas and benches, and the Sierra Pacific High School contains grass areas, benches, tables, a football/soccer field, a running track, baseball and softball fields, a gym, tennis courts, and outdoor basketball courts. These resources are mostly located on the eastern portions of the campus, outside of the study area.

3.15.4.3 Hanford West Bypass 1 and Bypass 2 Modified Alternatives

Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources

No parks, recreation, or open-space resources occur in the study area for the Hanford West Bypass 1 and Bypass 2 Modified Alternatives.

School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities

No school district play areas or recreation facilities occur in the study area for the Hanford West Bypass 1 and Bypass 2 Modified Alternatives.

3.15.4.4 Kings/Tulare Regional Station–West Alternative

Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources

No parks, recreation, or open-space resources occur in the study area for the Kings/Tulare Regional Station—West Alternative.

School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities

No school district play areas or recreation facilities occur in the study area for the Kings/Tulare Regional Station–West Alternative.

3.15.4.5 Corcoran Elevated Alternative

Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources

Father Stephen Wyatt Park is in Corcoran, to the east of the Corcoran Elevated Alternative. Father Stephen Wyatt Park contains a playground area, a covered arbor, picnic tables, and benches, and can currently be accessed from streets on all sides of the park. Christmas Tree Park in Corcoran is separated from the Corcoran Elevated Alternative by the existing BNSF tracks.

School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities

No school district play areas or recreation facilities occur in the study area for the potential Corcoran Elevated Alternative.

3.15.4.6 Corcoran Bypass Alternative

Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources

No parks, recreation, or open-space resources occur in the study area for the Corcoran Bypass Alternative.

School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities

No school district play areas or recreation facilities occur in the study area for the Corcoran Bypass Alternative.

3.15.4.7 Allensworth Bypass Alternative

Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources

As shown on Figure 3.15-3, the Allensworth Bypass Alternative would be located to the west of Colonel 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.

School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities

No school district play areas or recreation facilities occur in the study area for the Allensworth Bypass Alternative.

3.15.4.8 Wasco-Shafter Bypass Alternative

Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources

One planned park resource is located within the study area of the Wasco-Shafter Bypass Alternative. Orchard Park is a 140-acre planned community that 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 6 acres, including a tot lot, picnic areas, and open-space turf areas for passive recreation. The Orchard Park Final Specific Plan is further discussed in Section 3.13.2.3 of Land Use, Stations Planning and Development.

School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities

No school district play areas or recreation facilities occur in the study area for the Wasco-Shafter Bypass Alternative.

3.15.4.9 Bakersfield South Alternative

Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources

As listed in Table 3.15-2, six parks, recreation, or open-space resources are within 1,000 feet of the Bakersfield South Alternative. The six parks, recreation, or open-space resources are the Kern River Parkway, Jastro Park, McMurtrey Aquatic Center, Amtrak Station Playground, Mill Creek Linear Park, and the Mayflower Park/Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center. The Mayflower Park/Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center is to the south of the Bakersfield South Alternative.

The Kern River Parkway, McMurtrey Aquatic Center, Amtrak Station Playground, and Mill Creek Linear Park are within the study areas for the Bakersfield South, Bakersfield Hybrid, and BNSF alternatives. Jastro Park is within the study areas for the Bakersfield South and Bakersfield Hybrid alternatives. The Mayflower Park/Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center is within study area of the Bakersfield South Alternative only.

School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities

As shown in Table 3.15-3, five school district play areas and recreation facilities are within 1,000 feet of the Bakersfield South Alternative. The five school district play areas and recreation facilities are Franklin Elementary, Bakersfield High School, Owens Intermediate School, Ramon Garza Elementary School, and Sierra Middle School. Franklin Elementary is located north of the BNSF Alternative and west of the Bakersfield Station alternatives, and contains a blacktop area with basketball courts, grass field area, and sandlot playground equipment. The Bakersfield High School is south of the BNSF Alternative and west of the Bakersfield Station alternatives, and contains sports fields, a gym, tennis courts, and outdoor basketball courts. Owens Intermediate School, Ramon Garza Elementary School, and Sierra Middle School all have recreation resources that are within the Bakersfield South Alternative study area, east of the Bakersfield Station alternatives.

Bakersfield High School, Owens Intermediate School, Ramon Garza Elementary School, and Sierra Middle School are within the study areas for the Bakersfield South, Bakersfield Hybrid, and BNSF alternatives. Franklin Elementary is within study areas of the Bakersfield South and Bakersfield Hybrid alternatives only.

Bakersfield Station Alternatives

The Bakersfield South Alternative includes the same park resources identified for the Downtown Bakersfield Station study area under the BNSF Alternative.

3.15.4.10 Bakersfield Hybrid Alternative

Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources

As shown in Table 3.15-2, five parks, recreation, or open-space resources are within 1,000 feet of the Bakersfield Hybrid Alternative. The five parks, recreation, or open-space resources are the Kern River Parkway, Jastro Park, McMurtrey Aquatic Center, Amtrak Station Playground, and Mill Creek Linear Park.

The Kern River Parkway, McMurtrey Aquatic Center, Amtrak Station Playground, and Mill Creek Linear Park are within the study area for the Bakersfield Hybrid, Bakersfield South, and BNSF alternatives. Jastro Park is within the study area for the Bakersfield South and Bakersfield Hybrid alternatives only.

School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities

As shown in Table 3.15-3, six school district play areas and recreation facilities are within 1,000 feet of the Bakersfield Hybrid Alternative. The six school district play areas and recreation facilities are Franklin Elementary, Bakersfield High School, Kelly F. Blanton Education Center, Owens Intermediate School, Ramon Garza Elementary School, and Sierra Middle School. Franklin Elementary is north of the BNSF Alternative and west of the Bakersfield Station alternatives. Bakersfield High School is south of the BNSF Alternative and west of the Bakersfield Station alternatives, and contains sports fields, a gym, tennis courts, and outdoor basketball courts. The Kelly F. Blanton Education Center, Owens Intermediate School, Ramon Garza Elementary School, and Sierra Middle School all have recreation resources that are within the Bakersfield Hybrid Alternative study area, east of the Bakersfield Station alternatives.

Bakersfield High School, Owens Intermediate School, Ramon Garza Elementary School, and Sierra Middle School are within the study area for the Bakersfield Hybrid, Bakersfield South, and BNSF alternatives. Franklin Elementary is within the study area for the Bakersfield Hybrid and Bakersfield South alternatives. The Kelly F. Blanton Education Center is within the study areas for the Bakersfield Hybrid and BNSF alternatives only.

Bakersfield Station Alternatives

The Bakersfield Hybrid Alternative includes the same park resources identified for the Downtown Bakersfield Station study area under the BNSF Alternative.

3.15.4.11 Heavy Maintenance Facility Site Alternatives

Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources

No parks, recreation, or open-space resources occur in the study areas for the Fresno Works–Fresno, Kings County–Hanford, Kern Council of Governments–Wasco, Kern Council of Governments–Shafter East, or Kern Council of Governments–Shafter West HMF sites.

School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities

No school district play areas and recreation facilities occur in the study areas for the Fresno Works–Fresno, Kings County–Hanford, Kern Council of Governments–Shafter East, or Kern Council of Governments–Shafter West HMF sites. One school district play area and recreation

facility resource, the Teresa Burke Elementary School, is approximately 1,886 feet to the west of the Kern Council of Governments–Wasco HMF Site. The school recreation facilities include paved play areas and courts, grass sports field, and tot lots.

3.15.5 Environmental Consequences

3.15.5.1 Overview of Project Impacts

This section describes the construction and project impacts associated with the HST alternatives as they relate to parks, recreation, and open space. Impacts to parks are considered in terms of physical changes to the park, and changes in park character that would affect park users.

Temporary and localized construction impacts, including access, noise, dust, and air quality and visual quality degradation, could affect as many as nine parks and one school for the BNSF Alternative, one park for the Corcoran Elevated Alternative, one park for the Allensworth Bypass Alternative, one proposed park for the Wasco-Shafter Bypass Alternative, three parks for the Bakersfield South Alternative, and four parks for the Bakersfield Hybrid Alternative. Construction within 300 feet of a park, recreation, or open-space resource or a school district play area and recreation facility would have the greatest noise impact, depending on the construction type and activity. Parks located farther than 300 feet from construction are generally sufficiently remote to remain comparatively unaffected for most activities.

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 an impact with moderate intensity under NEPA, and less than significant under CEQA, depending on the park's or school district facility's location and features. Full park resource closures during the construction period are considered impacts with substantial intensity under NEPA.

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 Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park and 7.3 acres of Allensworth Ecological Reserve for the BNSF Alternative. These permanent effects from acquisition, depending on the size of the acquisition, are considered to have a negligible to substantial intensity 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 and the project components required for it would extend through or over four parks: Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park, Allensworth Ecological Reserve, the Kern River Parkway and the Mill Creek Linear Park. The Wasco-Shafter Bypass would extend through the proposed Orchard Park. The Bakersfield South and Bakersfield Hybrid alternatives would extend over the Kern River Parkway and Mill Creek Linear Park. None of the other alternatives would affect existing parks lying within 100 feet of their alignments. These effects are considered as having a substantial intensity under NEPA, and a significant impact under CEQA, depending on the park resource and the effect or impact.

3.15.5.2 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 parks, recreational, or open-space 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. Otherwise, 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.

3.15.5.3 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

Impact PK #1 – Construction Impacts on Parks, Recreation, Open-Space and School District Recreation Facilities

Chapter 2, Alternatives, describes the duration of temporary construction activities, which would include pile driving, partial or total road and lane closures, detours (vehicular and pedestrian), partial/limited vehicle access on nearby roads, materials and equipment deliveries, and the potential establishment of one or more concrete batch plants where concrete would be prepared for use in nearby project construction. Large roadway overcrossings may be shorter in duration. Most of the staging sites would be adjacent to the proposed HST alignment in areas that are generally rural or industrial in nature. Equipment and earthmoving activities are not visually intrusive in these types of settings. In urban areas, staging areas would be largest at the HST stations. Both urban HST stations (Fresno Station and Bakersfield Station) would be adjacent to the BNSF right-of-way, where adjacent land uses are accustomed to freight and industrial movements.

Although the study area identified parks within 1,000 feet of the alignments and 0.5 mile of HMF sites, stations, and support facilities, for the purposes of identifying the potential indirect impacts this analysis focuses on those resources within 300 feet of the alignments and other facilities. The distance of 300 feet was chosen because it is consistent with the screening distances used to determine indirect impacts resulting from air quality, noise and vibration, and visual impacts, as described in Section 3.3, Air Quality and Global Climate Changes; Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration; and Section 3.16, Aesthetics and Visual Resources, respectively. Because receptors within this distance could experience indirect impacts from air quality, noise and vibration, and aesthetics resulting from the construction of the HST alternatives, they are analyzed further below with regard to potential indirect impacts on parks, recreation, and open space. In most cases where a resource is beyond 300 feet from the alignments or facilities, it is unlikely that construction would result in any indirect impacts; as a result, such resources are not described further below.

BNSF Alternative

Construction activities for the BNSF Alternative would pass within 1,000 feet of a total of 14 parks and within 300 feet of nine parks and would pass within 1,000 feet of a total of five schools and within 300 feet of one school. Parks and school district play areas 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 within 300 feet of the BNSF Alternative follows.

Christmas Tree Park, in the city of Corcoran, is over 700 feet from the BNSF Alternative and is separated from the BNSF Alternative by the existing BNSF right-of-way. Therefore, due the distance and separation by a major transportation corridor, effects from construction activities would have negligible intensity under NEPA, and impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

Three city-owned parks are to the west of the BNSF Alternative in Shafter. The Town Square is on Central Avenue, Stringham Park, and Kirschenmann Park. All three parks are at a distance greater than 700 feet from the BNSF Alternative and would also be separated from the BNSF Alternative by the existing BNSF right-of-way and SR 43 (Central Valley Highway). Therefore, due the distance and separation by a major transportation corridor, effects from construction activities would have negligible intensity under NEPA, and impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources

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 on Figure 3.15-6, Chukchansi Park is approximately 810 feet from the centerline of the BNSF right-of-way and less than 100 feet from the study area for a grade separation required for the BNSF Alternative. Indirect impacts would include noise, dust, and visual change, which could indirectly affect the stadium and users. However, these indirect impacts are not anticipated to substantially affect normal use because of the existing urban nature of the facility; therefore, the effects of the project would have negligible intensity under NEPA, and would be a less-than-significant impact under CEQA.

Father Stephen Wyatt Park (Corcoran). Father Stephen Wyatt Park would be separated from the HST by the existing BNSF right-of-way. However, construction of the HST project would create some indirect impacts on Father Stephen Wyatt Park property. Construction activities closer than 300 feet would generate increased noise exposure to users. Increased noise from project construction activities would create a barrier to the recreational use of portions of the park's grass play field; this would be an effect with moderate intensity from noise under NEPA. Impacts from noise would be significant under CEQA.

Trees that shield views of construction activities are located along the northern and western edges of Father Stephen Wyatt Park, closest to construction areas. Therefore, effects on Father Stephen Wyatt Park would have a negligible intensity under NEPA, because views of construction activities would be shielded. These 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 within 195 feet of Pixley National Wildlife Refuge lands. However, the recreational features of the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge are limited to a 1.5-mile walking trail with observation decks, and the closest portions of the walking trails are over 1,000 feet east of the BNSF Alternative. All other areas are closed to the public. Also, construction activities would be separated from the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge by SR 43, an existing transportation corridor. Therefore, the BNSF Alternative would not create any direct or

Figure 3.15-6
Chukchansi Park,
City of Fresno

indirect impacts. HST construction effects on Pixley National Wildlife Refuge as a recreation resource would have a negligible intensity under NEPA, and impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park (Tulare County). Construction of the HST on the BNSF Alternative would occur directly to the east of and within the park boundaries of the Colonel 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. The distance will create a barrier between park users and construction activities; therefore, construction noise would not create impacts to these more heavily visited areas of the park.

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 and the alignment would be at-grade, construction would be minimally visible. Effects on the park character of Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park from visual changes associated with construction of the HST would have negligible intensity under NEPA, and would be less than significant under CEQA, because construction activities would be only minimally visible.

Park access would be maintained during construction, and construction would not create a physical barrier to Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park.

Allensworth Ecological Reserve (Tulare County). The BNSF Alternative would require construction activities on approximately 7.3 acres of the Allensworth Ecological Reserve (see Figure 3.15-8). Allensworth Ecological Reserve lands, consisting of protected open space for sensitive species, 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 western side of the BNSF do not offer access to Allensworth Ecological Reserve and are not visited by the public, because the public does not have access to that area of the park. 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 have negligible intensity under NEPA, because they would occur in areas of the park that do not 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. The Kern River Parkway at this location consists of an asphalt bike path located on top of an earthen levee and an unimproved pedestrian footpath. Construction activities would require the temporary detour of the bike path and footpath. The detour would be needed for approximately 3 to 6 months. Temporary detours would be established to maintain connectivity during construction. After the completion of construction activities, the pathway would be restored to the condition it was in before project construction or better. The impact and duration of this effect on park access/use would have substantial intensity under NEPA and would be a significant impact under CEQA.

Construction activities would occur within the Kern River Parkway boundaries and generate an increase in noise exposure to cyclists, pedestrians, and other park users. However, the areas in close proximity to construction activities would be used for construction purposes, and thus limiting their use through temporary closures. There would be no indirect impact to park users, because use of portions of the park would be restricted during construction activities, creating a barrier between user and increased noise exposure.

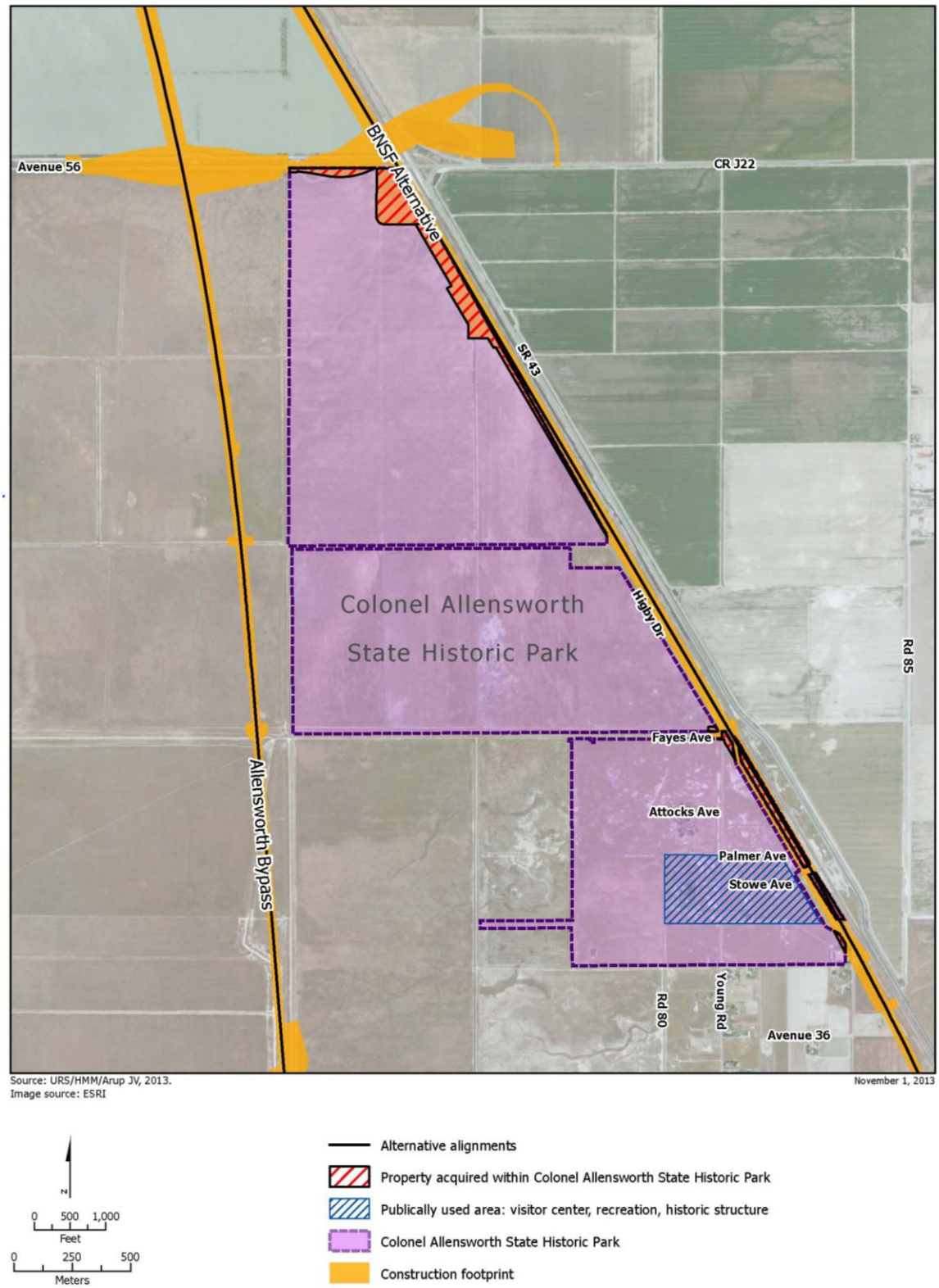

Figure 3.15-7
Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park,
Tulare County

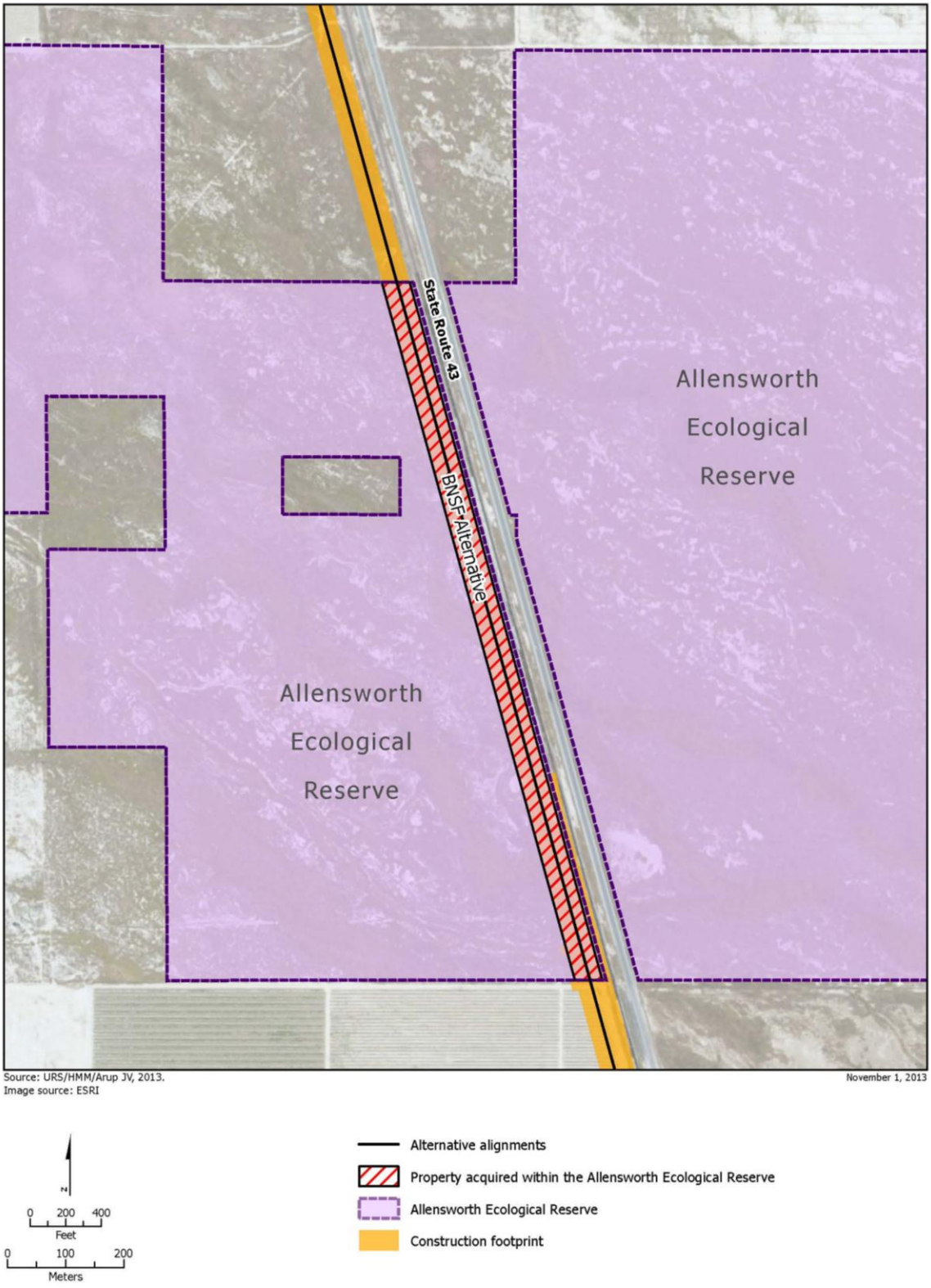

Figure 3.15-8
Allensworth Ecological Reserve,
Tulare County

McMurtrey Aquatic Center (Bakersfield). Construction activities for the BNSF Alternative would occur less than 100 feet from the swimming pool and water recreation facilities of the McMurtrey Aquatic Center. Construction activities closer than 300 feet would generate increased noise, dust, and vibration that would impact users of the water recreation facilities. Because construction activities would increase noise, dust, and vibration exposure to users of pools and facilities, McMurtrey Aquatic Center would experience effects with moderate intensity under NEPA. Impacts from noise would be significant under CEQA.

Construction of the BNSF Alternative would require temporary closure of portions of the parking lot located to the north of the McMurtrey Aquatic Center. Chapter 3.2, Transportation, provides an impact analysis of temporary construction easements (TCEs). TCEs may require the temporary closure of parking areas and pedestrian facilities. Any closure or removal of parking areas and pedestrian facilities during construction would be temporary, and every attempt would be made to minimize their removal or shorten the length of time that these facilities are inoperable. On completion of construction, all parking areas and pedestrian facilities would be restored.

Mill Creek Linear Park (Bakersfield). The BNSF Alternative would pass over the Mill Creek Linear Park on an elevated guideway. Noise, dust, visual changes, and temporary access restrictions from construction of the HST alignment would affect the portion of the park just south of the BNSF right-of-way; however, the remainder of Mill Creek Linear Park would be open during construction. Because a small portion of the park would be closed during construction for approximately 3 to 6 months, temporary detours would be established to maintain connectivity to the unaffected portions of the linear park. After completion of the construction activities, the park features would be restored to the condition it was before project construction or better. The impact and duration of this effect on park access/use would have moderate intensity under NEPA, and would be a significant impact under CEQA.

Due to proximity to the HST alignment, increases in noise and vibration exposure from project construction activities would occur. These impacts would be temporary and would occur only during construction near the park property. Under these conditions, potential noise effects would have moderate intensity under NEPA, and impacts would be significant, before mitigation, under CEQA.

Amtrak Station Playground (Bakersfield). The Amtrak Station Playground would be separated from the HST alignment by the existing BNSF and Amtrak rights-of-way. However, construction of the HST System would create some indirect impacts on the Amtrak Station Playground. Construction activities would be closer than 300 feet and would generate increased noise exposure to users. Due to proximity to the HST alignment, increases in noise and vibration exposure from project construction activities would create effects with moderate intensity under NEPA. Construction impacts from noise would be less than significant under CEQA.

School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities

Bakersfield High School (Bakersfield). Construction activities for the BNSF Alternative would occur less than 100 feet from the playfields and recreation facilities at Bakersfield High School. Construction activities would occur with within 300 feet of resources and generate increased noise exposure to facilities. Due to proximity to the HST alignment, increases in noise and vibration exposure from project construction activities would create effects with moderate intensity under NEPA. Construction impacts from noise would be significant under CEQA before mitigation.

Hanford West Bypass 1 and 2 Alternatives

No existing parks, recreation, or open-space resources or school district play areas and recreation facilities occur within 300 feet of construction activities for either of the Hanford West Bypass 1 or 2 alternatives.

As shown on Figure 3.15-2, the Hanford West Bypass 1 and 2 alternatives are to the west of the shared campus of the College of the Sequoias Educational Center and the Sierra Pacific High School, and only the western portions of the shared campus fall within the study area. The resource would be sufficiently remote that construction activities would not generate increased noise exposure to users. Construction noise effects would have negligible intensity under NEPA due to the distance of the park to construction activities. Construction impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

Hanford West Bypass 1 and Bypass 2 Modified Alternatives

No parks, recreation, or open-space resources occur in the study area for the Hanford West Bypass 1 and Bypass 2 Modified Alternatives. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities occur in the study area for Hanford West Bypass 1 and Bypass 2 Modified Alternatives. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

Corcoran Elevated Alternative

Father Stephen Wyatt Park is 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 Stephen Wyatt Park closest to the construction areas. However, because the alignment would be on an elevated guideway, views of construction in Father Stephen Wyatt Park would not be completely blocked. Thus, impacts to setting and visual character from construction would result in effects with moderate intensity under NEPA and significant impacts under CEQA.

Construction activities closer than 300 feet would generate increased noise exposure to users. Portions of Father Stephen Wyatt Park are as close as 218 feet from construction activities for the BNSF Alternative. Increased noise from project construction activities would create effects with moderate intensity from noise under NEPA. Impacts from noise would be significant under CEQA.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities occur in the study area for the Corcoran Elevated Alternative. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

Corcoran Bypass Alternative

No parks, recreation, or open-space resources occur in the study area for the Corcoran Bypass Alternative. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities occur in the study area for the Corcoran Bypass Alternative. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

Allensworth Bypass Alternative

As shown on Figures 3.15-3 and 3.15-7, the Allensworth Bypass Alternative would be located to the west of Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park; 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; 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 Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park and Allensworth Ecological Reserve would have negligible intensity under NEPA, because construction would not affect any visitor resources. Construction impacts to Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park and Allensworth Ecological Reserve from the Allensworth Bypass Alternative would be less than significant under CEQA.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities occur in the study area for the Allensworth Bypass Alternative. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

Wasco-Shafter Bypass Alternative

The proposed Orchard Park would be located within the study area of the Wasco-Shafter Bypass Alternative (Figures 3.15-4 and 3.15-9). Although the Orchard Park Specific Plan has been adopted by the City of Shafter and tentative subdivision maps have been filed, there are no plans to construct Orchard Park, and no permits have been issued (Forrest, personal communication, 2014). Because it cannot be known with any certainty that Orchard Park would be operational prior to construction of this section of the Wasco-Shafter Bypass Alternative, and that the project proponent for Orchard Park would have the opportunity to relocate the proposed park in the event that this alignment was constructed first, impacts to Orchard Park are considered too speculative for meaningful consideration.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities occur in the study area for the Wasco-Shafter Bypass Alternative. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

Bakersfield South Alternative

Kern River Parkway (Bakersfield). The Bakersfield South Alternative would pass over the Kern River Parkway on an elevated guideway. The Kern River Parkway at this location consists of an asphalt bike path located on top of an earthen levee and an unimproved pedestrian footpath. Construction activities would require the temporary detour of the bike path and footpath. The detour would be needed for approximately 3 to 6 months. Temporary detours would be established to maintain connectivity throughout construction. After the completion of construction activities, the pathway would be restored to the condition it was in before project construction or better. The impact and duration of this effect on park access/use would have substantial intensity under NEPA and would be a significant impact under CEQA.

Construction activities would occur within the Kern River Parkway boundaries, and generate an increase in noise exposure to users. However, the areas in close proximity to construction activities would be used for construction purposes, and therefore limit the use of these areas through temporary closures. There would be no direct impact to park users because use of portions of the park would be restricted during construction activities, creating a barrier between user and increased noise exposure.

McMurtrey Aquatic Center (Bakersfield). Construction activities for the Bakersfield South Alternative would occur less than 100 feet from the swimming pool and water recreation facilities of the McMurtrey Aquatic Center. Construction activities closer than 300 feet would generate increased noise that would impact users of the water recreation facilities. Because construction activities would increase noise exposure to users of pools and facilities, McMurtrey Aquatic Center would experience effects with moderate intensity under NEPA. Impacts from noise would be significant under CEQA.

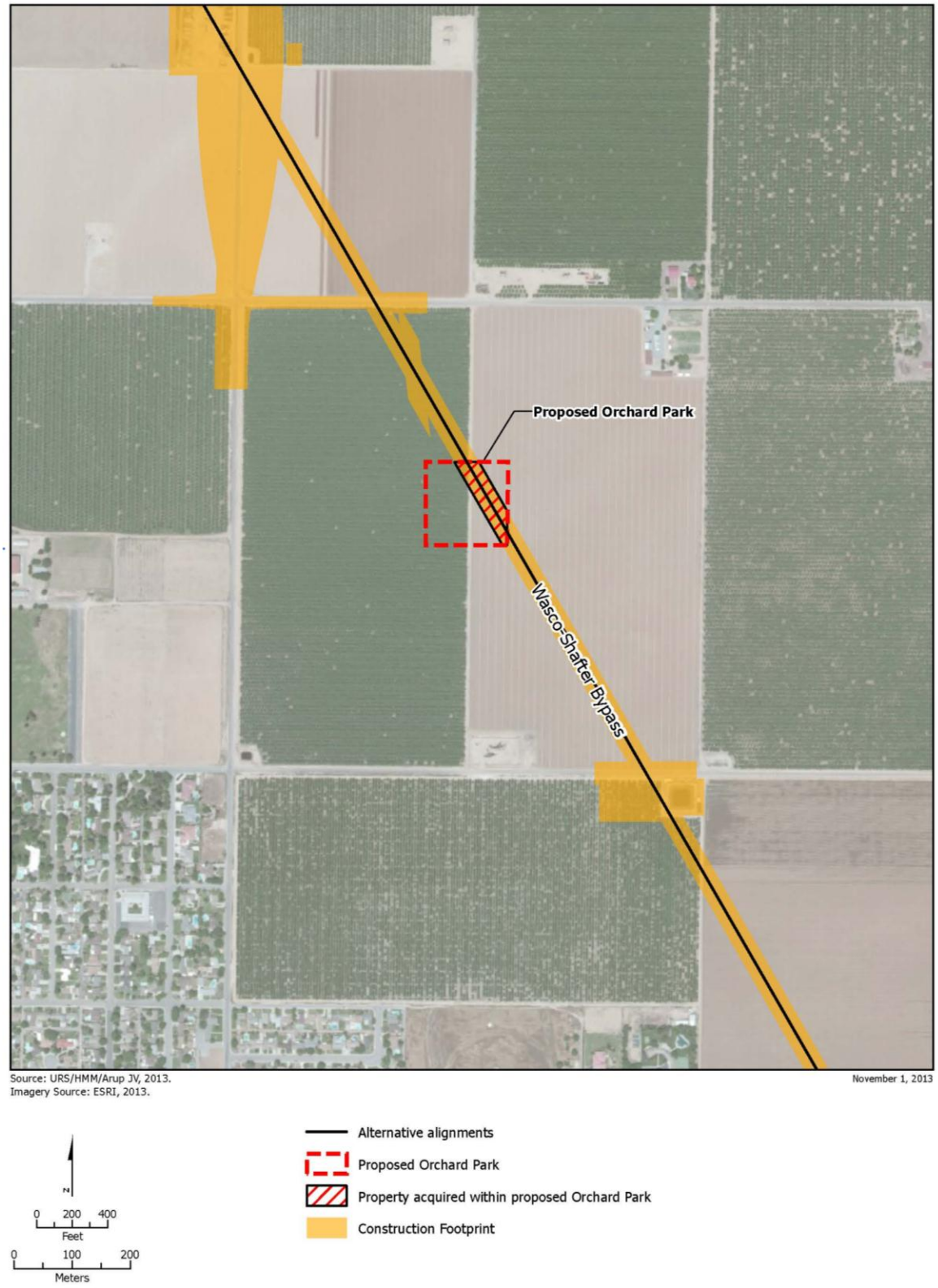

Figure 3.15-9
Proposed Orchard Park,
City of Shafter

Construction of the Bakersfield South Alternative would require temporary closure of portions of the parking lot that is north of the McMurtrey Aquatic Center. Chapter 3.2, Transportation, provides an impact analysis of TCEs.

Mill Creek Linear Park (Bakersfield). The Bakersfield South Alternative would pass over the Mill Creek Linear Park on an elevated guideway. Noise, dust, visual changes, and temporary access restrictions from construction of the HST alignment would affect the portion of the park just south of the BNSF right-of-way; however, the remainder of Mill Creek Linear Park would remain open during construction. Because portions of the park would be used during construction for approximately 3 to 6 months, temporary detours would be established to maintain connectivity to the unaffected portions of the linear park. After completion of construction activities, the park features would be restored to the condition it was before project construction or better. The impact and duration of this effect on park access/use would have moderate intensity under NEPA and would be a significant impact under CEQA.

Due to proximity to the HST alignment, increases in noise and vibration exposure from project construction activities would to create effects with moderate intensity under NEPA. Construction impacts from noise would significant under CEQA before mitigation.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities are within 300 feet of the Bakersfield South Alternative. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

Bakersfield Hybrid Alternative

Kern River Parkway (Bakersfield). The Bakersfield Hybrid Alternative would pass over the Kern River Parkway on an elevated guideway. Construction activities would create noise and visual changes. Construction activities would create temporary closures of some areas of the parkway, including the bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian facilities. Because a small portion of the park would be used during construction for approximately 3 to 6 months, temporary detours would be established to maintain connectivity to the unaffected portions of the linear park. After completion of the construction activities, the park features would be restored to the condition it was before project construction or better. The impact and duration of this effect on park access/use would have moderate intensity under NEPA and would be a significant impact under CEQA.

Construction activities would occur within the Kern River Parkway boundaries and generate an increase in noise exposure to users. However, the areas in close proximity to construction activities would be used for construction purposes, and therefore limit the use of these areas through temporary closures. There would be no direct impact to park users, because use of portions of the park would be restricted during construction activities, creating a barrier between user and increased noise exposure.

McMurtrey Aquatic Center (Bakersfield). Construction activities for the Bakersfield Hybrid Alternative would occur less than 100 feet from the swimming pool and water recreation facilities of the McMurtrey Aquatic Center. Construction activities closer than 300 feet would generate increased noise that would impact users of the water recreation facilities. Because construction activities would increase noise exposure to users of pools and facilities, McMurtrey Aquatic Center would experience effects with moderate intensity under NEPA. Impacts from noise would be significant under CEQA.

Construction of the Bakersfield Hybrid Alternative would require temporary closure of portions of the parking lot that is north of the McMurtrey Aquatic Center. Chapter 3.2, Transportation, provides an impact analysis of TCEs.

Mill Creek Linear Park (Bakersfield). The Bakersfield Hybrid Alternative would pass over the Mill Creek Linear Park on an elevated guideway. Noise, dust, visual changes, and temporary access restrictions from construction of the HST alignment would affect the portion of the park just south of the BNSF right-of-way; however, the remainder of Mill Creek Linear Park would remain open during construction. Because a portion of the park would be used during construction for approximately 3 to 6 months, temporary detours would be established to maintain connectivity to the unaffected portions of the linear park. After completion of construction activities, the park features would be restored to the condition it was before project construction or better. The impact and duration of this effect on park access/use would have moderate intensity under NEPA and would be a significant impact under CEQA.

Due to proximity to the HST alignment, increases in noise and vibration exposure from project construction activities would create effects with moderate intensity under NEPA. Construction impacts from noise would be less than significant under CEQA.

Bakersfield High School (Bakersfield). In regard to school district recreation facilities, construction activities for the Bakersfield Hybrid Alternative would occur less than 100 feet from the playfields and outdoor recreation facilities of Bakersfield High School. Construction activities closer than 300 feet would generate increased noise exposure to users. Because construction activities would occur less than 100 feet from the playfields and recreation facilities, Bakersfield High School would experience effects with moderate intensity under NEPA due to the increase in noise. Impacts from noise would be significant under CEQA.

Fresno Station

Because Chukchansi Park Stadium is within 70 feet of station construction, noise and visual change could affect the park. Impacts would be the same as those discussed for 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 no effect under NEPA. Impacts from station construction would be less than significant under CEQA.

Columbia Elementary, Fresno County Plaza, Frank Ball Playground and Community Center, and Lincoln Elementary School are approximately 875, 975, 2,500, 2,100, and 1,422 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 no effect under NEPA, because these resources are too distant to be significantly affected. Impacts from construction on these facilities would be less than significant under CEQA.

Kings/Tulare Regional Station–East Alternative

No parks, recreation, or open-space resources occur in the study area for the Kings/Tulare Regional Station–East Alternative. This station alternative would have no effect under NEPA, and no impact under CEQA.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities occur in the study area for the Kings/Tulare Regional Station–East Alternative. This station alternative would have no effect under NEPA, and no impact under CEQA.

Kings/Tulare Regional Station–West Alternative

No parks, recreation, or open-space resources occur in the study area for the Kings/Tulare Regional Station–West Alternative. This station alternative would have no effect under NEPA, and no impact under CEQA.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities occur in the study area for the Kings/Tulare Regional Station–West Alternative. This station alternative would have no effect under NEPA, and no impact under CEQA.

Bakersfield Station Alternatives

The Bakersfield Amtrak Station playground, Central Park, Lowell Park, McMurtrey Aquatic Center, and Mill Creek Linear Park recreation facilities would be distant enough, as provided in Table 3.15-5, from station construction that effects would have a negligible intensity under NEPA. Construction impacts on recreation facilities within the study area for the Bakersfield Station alternatives would be less than significant under CEQA.

The school district play areas and recreation facilities for Rafer Johnson Elementary School and Kelly F. Blanton Education Center School would be distant enough, as shown in Table 3.15-5, from station construction that the effects would have a negligible intensity under NEPA. Construction impacts within the study area for the Bakersfield Station alternatives would be less than significant under CEQA.

Heavy Maintenance Facility Site Alternatives

No park resources fall within the study areas for the Fresno Works–Fresno, Kings County–Hanford, Kern Council of Governments–Wasco, Kern Council of Governments–Shafter East, or Kern Council of Governments–Shafter West HMF sites; therefore, HMF construction would have no impacts on park resources.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities fall within the study areas for the Fresno Works–Fresno, Kings County–Hanford, Kern Council of Governments–Shafter East, or Kern Council of Governments–Shafter West HMF sites; therefore, HMF construction would have no impacts on school district play areas or recreation facilities.

One school district play area, the Teresa Burke Elementary School, would be approximately 1,886 feet from the Kern Council of Governments–Wasco HMF Site. This distance would preclude impacts from noise or visual changes from construction, so no construction effects would occur under NEPA, and no construction impacts would result under CEQA.

Project Impacts

Impacts on parks, recreation, and open-space resources and school district play areas and recreation facilities would include the direct impacts associated with acquisition of park resources, increased noise levels, changes in access, degradation of the visual setting, and changes in the surrounding land uses. Indirect impacts from HST operations depend on the distance between an HST alternative and the potentially affected park or recreation and open-space resource. (e.g., Bakersfield Station would have increased density compared to current land use).

Park users would most notice these direct 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 have a substantial intensity under NEPA. Direct impacts from land acquisition would be significant under CEQA.

Impact PK #2 – Project Acquisition of Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources

The BNSF Alternative is the only alternative that would result in the permanent acquisition of 9.0 acres of parkland. Parkland acquisition would only have a significant effect if the acquisition were to result in a diminished capacity to use that resource; substantially reduce the recreational value of that resource; or replacement acres cannot be obtained for the acquired parkland.

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 2010; Authority and FRA 2008). The BNSF Alternative would not require the acquisition of land from nearby parks, such as Chukchansi Park or Father Stephen Wyatt Park. The BNSF Alternative would require the acquisition of 1.7 acres of land at Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park and 7.3 acres of land from Allensworth Ecological Reserve. Permanent acquisition acreage for the alternative alignments is shown in Table 3.15-6. The effects of the land acquisition resulting from the BNSF Alternative would have a substantial intensity under NEPA. Impacts from land acquisition would be considered significant under CEQA.

Table 3.15-6
Permanent Acquisition Acreage of Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources by Alternative Alignment

Resource Name	Permanent Acquisition by HST Alternative (acres)								
	BNSF	Hanford West Bypass 1 and 2	Hanford West Bypass 1 and 2 Modified	Corcoran Elevated	Corcoran Bypass	Allensworth Bypass	Wasco-Shafter Bypass	Bakersfield South	Bakersfield Hybrid
Chukchansi Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Father Stephen Wyatt Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pixley National Wildlife Refuge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park	1.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Allensworth Ecological Reserve	7.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Acres Affected	**9.0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

The BNSF Alternative, the Bakersfield South Alternative, and the Bakersfield Hybrid Alternative would cross above areas of Kern River Parkway and Mill Creek Linear Park used by pedestrians and recreationists. The guideways would cross perpendicularly on an elevated structure above the Kern River Parkway bike path and the portion of the Mill Creek Linear Park that straddles Kern Island Canal south of the existing BNSF right-of-way. Footings for the columns that would support the guideway would be constructed within the Kern River Parkway and the Mill Creek Linear Park; however, the completed guideway would span the bike path of the Kern River Parkway and the Mill Creek Linear Park. Although no portion of the Kern River Parkway or the Mill Creek Linear Park would be purchased for the HST guideway and the park lands underneath the elevated guideways would remain available for park use in accordance with the Authority's policies, a permanent 90-foot-wide maintenance easement would need to be obtained for each resource. The footings for the columns within the Kern River Parkway, Mill Creek Linear Park, and maintenance easements would result in a permanent incorporation of the park resources. However, this impact would not substantially impair the features of the park and is therefore considered to have a moderate intensity under NEPA and be less than significant under CEQA. The BNSF, Bakersfield South, and Bakersfield Hybrid alternatives would result in the loss of parking spaces at the City of Bakersfield–owned parking lot that is north of (and used by) the McMurtrey Aquatic Center. Chapter 3.2, Transportation, provides an analysis of the loss of parking. Per the Program Management Team's "Access Control for High-Speed Rail Right-of-Way and Facilities," dated June 28, 2013, land uses benefiting the public will be allowed beneath HST aerial guideways, including surface parking spaces (Parsons Brinckerhoff 2013).

No acquisition of parkland would be required for any of the alternatives independent of the Allensworth area, for construction of the HST stations, or for the HMF alternatives.

Impact PK #3 – Project Acquisition of School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities

The BNSF Alternative would pass within approximately 100 feet of the school district play areas and recreational facilities on the Bakersfield High School campus and would require the acquisition of the Industrial Arts Building and a portion of the adjacent parking area. The BNSF Alternative would also pass within approximately 400 feet of the school district play areas and recreational facilities on the Owens Intermediate School campus, and would require the acquisition of a small portion (0.041 acre) of the parking area fronting on Eureka Street (Figure 3.15-10). However, the HST would not require the acquisition of any recreational facilities on the Bakersfield High School or the Owens Intermediate School campuses. The effects of the land acquisition resulting from the BNSF Alternative on recreation facilities would have a negligible intensity under NEPA. The impacts from land acquisition would be considered less than significant under CEQA.

No acquisition of school district play areas or recreational facilities would be required for any of the alternatives independent of the Bakersfield High School, construction of the HST stations, or for the HMF alternatives.

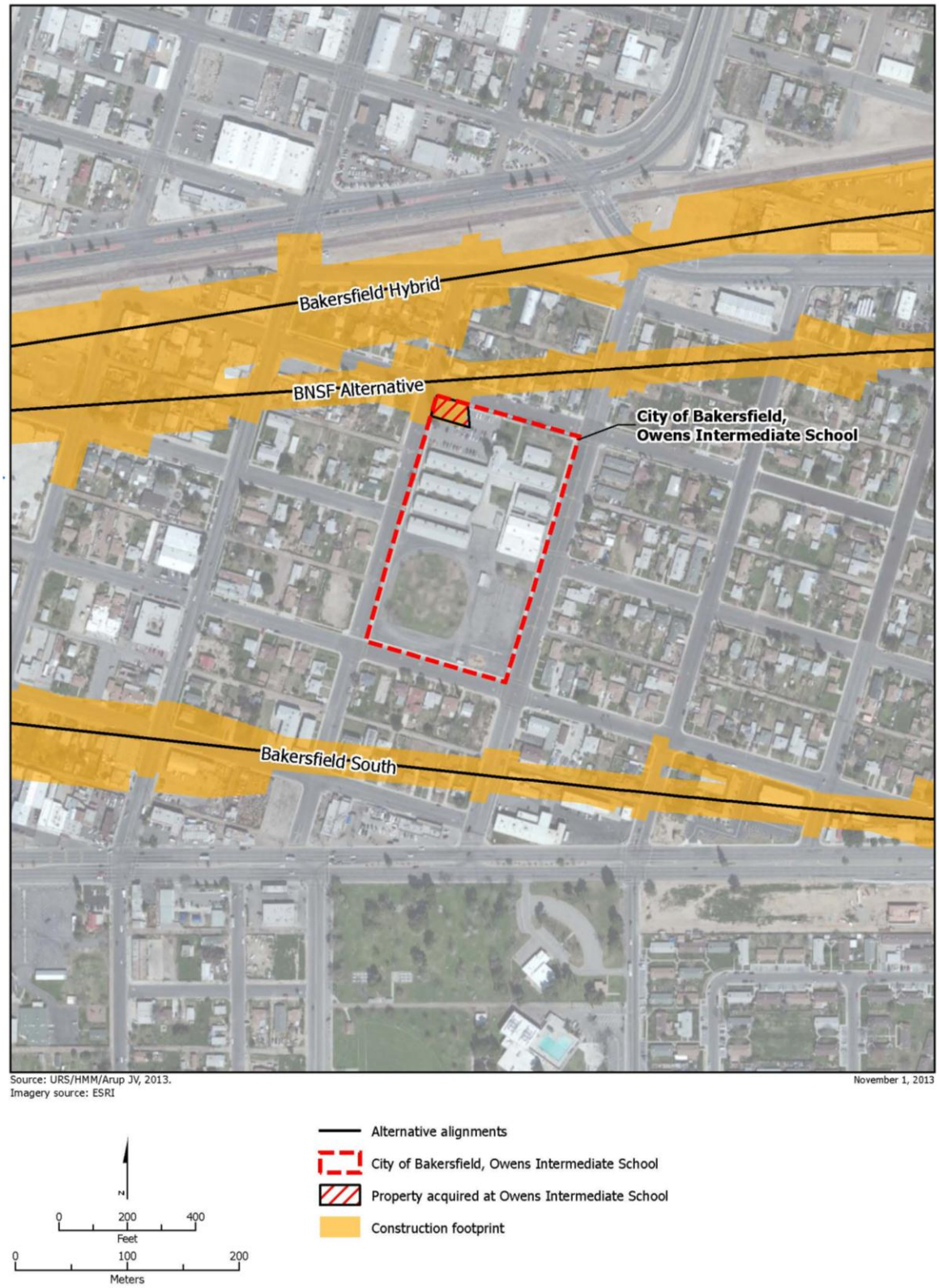

Figure 3.15-10
Owens Intermediate School,
City of Bakersfield

Impact PK #4 – Project Changes to Park Character

BNSF Alternative

Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources

Chukchansi Park (Fresno). Chukchansi Park is located with the downtown area of the City of Fresno, consisting of dense urban build-out and uses. Because of distance from the alignment (650 feet) and the urban setting 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 Fresno Station, it is not anticipated that this increase would be substantial enough to create physical deterioration of Chukchansi Park, and increased use is a benefit to the purpose facility and any effects on the facility will be dealt with by regular maintenance activities and paid for with increased revenue. Therefore, effects to park character resulting from the HST would have a negligible intensity under NEPA, because changes in visitation are expected to be minor. Impacts from changes to park character would be less than significant under CEQA.

Father Stephen Wyatt Park (Corcoran). No HST stations or stops are proposed in the vicinity of Father Stephen Wyatt Park; therefore, no increase in use is anticipated. Father Stephen Wyatt Park would be separated from the HST by the existing BNSF right-of-way. HST operational noise would be limited due to consistency with existing ambient noise from the BNSF trains operating within its right-of-way, and views of the HST project to the west from Father Stephen Wyatt Park in Corcoran would be shielded by tall trees growing along the park border with the BNSF right-of-way. Because of the separation of the alignment and resource by the existing BNSF, project effects to Father Stephen Wyatt Park's setting and visual character would have a negligible intensity under NEPA; and effects from noise and vibration would have a negligible intensity under NEPA. Project impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

Pixley National Wildlife Refuge (Tulare County). No HST stations or stops are proposed in the vicinity of Pixley National Wildlife Refuge; therefore, no increase in use is anticipated. Pixley National Wildlife Refuge is accessible to the public for hiking, photography, and wildlife viewing; however, these recreational features are limited to a 1.5-mile walking trail with observation decks, and the closest portion of the walking trail is over 1,000 feet east of the BNSF Alternative. All other area are closed to the public. The Pixley National Wildlife Refuge is also separated from the HST by SR 43, an existing transportation corridor, which provides a barrier to potential impacts on the park and recreation resources of the refuge. Therefore, there would be no project effects on Pixley National Wildlife Refuge recreational resources under NEPA due to the distances and separation from the BNSF Alternative. There would be no project impacts under CEQA.

Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park (Tulare County). No HST stations or stops are proposed in the vicinity of Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park; therefore, no increase in use is anticipated. At Colonel 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 Colonel 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. Effects to the setting and visual resources of Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park would have a substantial intensity under NEPA due to this change in character. Project impacts would be significant under CEQA.

HST alignment would be over 1,500 feet from areas of the park subject to extended periods of visitation, such as the visitor's center or campground. Therefore, operational noise would not create impacts to users of the park.

Allensworth Ecological Reserve (Tulare and Kern Counties). No HST stations or stops are proposed in the vicinity of Allensworth Ecological Reserve; therefore, no increase in use is anticipated. Portions of Allensworth Ecological Reserve are 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, because the HST alternative would be consistent with the existing visual and noise environment with SR 43 and BNSF. 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. Similarly, there would be no project impacts under CEQA.

Kern River Parkway (Bakersfield). No HST stations or stops are proposed in the vicinity of Kern River Parkway; therefore, no increase in use is anticipated. The BNSF Alternative would pass over the Kern River Parkway on an elevated guideway. Intactness and unity of views of the river and parkway would be strongly compromised by intrusion of the urban, industrial structure into the middle ground of views currently dominated by natural features. The HST would thus reduce the overall visual quality of views from within the parkway for users. The project would substantially degrade the existing visual character and quality of the site and its surroundings, and therefore the project would have an effect of moderate intensity under NEPA and a significant impact under CEQA.

Although the park is within an existing rail transport corridor, HST operational noise would increase noise exposure for users of the parkway and facilities. Operational noise impacts would have an effect of moderate intensity under NEPA and a significant impact under CEQA.

McMurtrey Aquatic Center (Bakersfield). The BNSF Alternative would be less than 100 feet from the swimming pool and water recreation facilities of the McMurtrey Aquatic Center. However, the McMurtrey Aquatic Center is located in downtown Bakersfield and along the existing BNSF and Amtrak rail transportation corridor. Because of the urban nature of the downtown Bakersfield setting and rail corridor, views of and noise from the BNSF Alternative would not create any changes to the existing park setting. Therefore, the visual change to park character would have a negligible effect under NEPA, and would be a less-than-significant impact under CEQA.

Although located within an existing urban area and in close proximity to an existing rail transport corridor, HST operational noise would increase noise exposure for users of the pools and facilities. Operational noise impacts would have an effect of moderate intensity under NEPA, and a significant impact under CEQA.

Mill Creek Linear Park (Bakersfield). The park is located within a highly urbanized transportation corridor, with existing views of the BNSF and Amtrak rights-of-way. The BNSF Alternative would pass over Mill Creek Linear Park on an elevated guideway. The guideway, without design mitigation, would have a moderate to strong adverse effect on the park setting's visual quality. The project would thus substantially degrade the existing visual character, and quality of the site and its surroundings; this result would potentially be an effect of substantial intensity under NEPA, and a significant impact under CEQA.

Although located within an existing urban area and in close proximity to an existing rail transport corridor, HST operational noise would increase noise exposure for the users of the facilities. Operational noise impacts would have an effect of moderate intensity under NEPA, and a significant impact under CEQA.

Amtrak Station Playground (Bakersfield). The Amtrak Station Playground would be separated from the HST System by the existing BNSF right-of-way. The Amtrak Station Playground is in downtown Bakersfield along the existing BNSF and Amtrak rail transportation corridor. The guideway, without design mitigation, would have a moderate to strong adverse effect on the park setting's visual quality. The project would thus substantially degrade the existing visual character and quality of the site and its surroundings; this result would potentially be an effect of substantial intensity under NEPA, and a significant impact under CEQA.

Although located within an existing urban area and in close proximity to an existing rail transport corridor, HST operational noise would increase noise exposure for the users of the facilities. Operational noise impacts would have an effect of moderate intensity under NEPA, and a significant impact under CEQA.

School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities

Bakersfield High School (Bakersfield). No HST stations or stops are proposed in the vicinity of Bakersfield High School; therefore, no increase in use is anticipated. The BNSF Alternative would be less than 100 feet from the playfields at Bakersfield High School. The HST on the BNSF Alternative would introduce a highly dominant structure of incompatible industrial character to the Bakersfield High School recreation facilities. The HST would replace the existing Industrial Arts Building with a 60-foot-tall guideway and an area of cleared land, and would expose views of rail yard and industrial development to the north. Therefore, the HST would substantially degrade the existing visual character and quality of the resource and its surroundings. Due to the strong adverse effect and high viewer sensitivity, this effect would be of substantial intensity under NEPA, and a significant impact under CEQA.

Although located within an existing urban area and in close proximity to an existing rail transport corridor, HST operational noise would increase noise exposure for the users of the facilities. Operational noise impacts would have an effect of moderate intensity under NEPA, and a significant impact under CEQA.

Hanford West Bypass 1 and 2 Alternatives

No park, recreation, or open-space resources occur within the study areas for the Hanford West Bypass 1 and 2 alternatives. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

Because of the distance between the HST project and the school's recreational facilities, the Hanford West Bypass 1 and 2 alternatives would not change the character of the shared campus of the College of the Sequoias Educational Center or the Sierra Pacific High School. No HST stations or stops are proposed in the vicinity of College of the Sequoias Educational Center or the Sierra Pacific High School; therefore, no increase in use is anticipated. Thus, project effects would have a negligible intensity under NEPA, and project impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

Hanford West Bypass 1 and Bypass 2 Modified Alternatives

No park resources occur within the study area for the Hanford West Bypass 1 and Bypass 2 Modified Alternatives. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities occur in the study area for Hanford West Bypass 1 and Bypass 2 Modified Alternatives. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

Corcoran Elevated Alternative

No HST stations or stops are proposed in the vicinity of Father Stephen Wyatt Park; therefore, no increase in use is anticipated. Father Stephen Wyatt Park is approximately 220 feet from construction areas for the Corcoran Elevated Alternative. Trees that shield views of the alignment are located along the edge of Father Stephen Wyatt Park closest to the alignment. However, because the alignment would be on an elevated guideway, views of the HST aerial structure would not be completely blocked and would thereby introduce a new physical structure into the view shed of users of Father Stephen Wyatt Park. Thus, impacts to setting and visual character from the alternative would result in effects with moderate intensity under NEPA and significant impacts under CEQA.

HST operations would occur closer than 300 feet from usable areas of the park and would increase noise exposure. Increased noise from project operations would create effects with moderate intensity from noise under NEPA. Impacts from noise would be significant under CEQA.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities are in the study area for the Corcoran Elevated Alternative. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

Corcoran Bypass Alternative

No park resources occur within the study area for the Corcoran Bypass Alternative. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities occur in the study area for the Corcoran Bypass Alternative. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

Allensworth Bypass Alternative

No HST stations or stops are proposed in the vicinity of Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park or Allensworth Ecological Reserve; therefore, no increase in use is anticipated. The Allensworth Bypass Alternative is located about 1 mile west from the users of Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park, and therefore would not change the character of Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park or Allensworth Ecological Reserve, which does not support park users. Therefore, effects would have a negligible intensity under NEPA, and project impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities are in the study area for the Allensworth Bypass Alternative. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur 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, personal communication, 2014). For this reason, it would be speculative to assume that Orchard Park would exist at the time of HST operations. Therefore, there would be no effects from loss of access under NEPA, and no impacts under CEQA.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities are in the study area for the Wasco-Shafter Bypass Alternative. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

Bakersfield South Alternative

No HST stations or stops are proposed in the vicinity of Kern River Parkway; therefore, no increase in use is anticipated. The Bakersfield South Alternative would pass over the Kern River Parkway, Mill Creek Linear Park, and Bakersfield Amtrak Station on an elevated guideway. The guideway, without design mitigation, would have a moderate to strong adverse effect on the park setting's visual quality. The project would thus substantially degrade the existing visual character and quality of the site and its surroundings; this result would potentially be an effect of substantial intensity under NEPA, and a significant impact under CEQA.

Although the Kern River Parkway, Mill Creek Linear Park, and McMurtrey Aquatic Center are located within an existing urban area and in close proximity to an existing rail transport corridor, HST operational noise would increase noise exposure for users of the facilities. Operational noise impacts would have an effect of moderate intensity under NEPA, and a significant impact under CEQA.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities would be within 300 feet of the Bakersfield South Alternative. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

Bakersfield Hybrid Alternative

No HST stations or stops are proposed in the vicinity of Kern River Parkway; therefore, no increase in use is anticipated. The Bakersfield Hybrid Alternative would pass over the Kern River Parkway, Mill Creek Linear Park, and Bakersfield Amtrak Station on an elevated guideway. The guideway, without design mitigation, would have a moderate to strong adverse effect on the park setting's visual quality. The project would thus substantially degrade the existing visual character and quality of the site and its surroundings; this result would potentially be an effect of substantial intensity under NEPA, and a significant impact under CEQA.

Although the Kern River Parkway, Mill Creek Linear Park, and McMurtrey Aquatic Center are located within an existing urban area and in close proximity to an existing rail transport corridor, HST operational noise would increase noise exposure for users of the facilities. Operational noise impacts would have an effect of moderate intensity under NEPA, and a significant impact under CEQA.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities would be within 300 feet of the Bakersfield Hybrid Alternative. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

Fresno Station

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

No school district play areas or recreation facilities would be within 300 feet of the Fresno Station. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

Kings/Tulare Regional Station–East Alternative

No park resources occur in the study area for the Kings/Tulare Regional Station–East Alternative. Thus, no effects would occur under NEPA, and no impacts would occur under CEQA.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities occur in the study area for the Kings/Tulare Regional Station–East Alternative. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

Kings/Tulare Regional Station–West Alternative

No park resources occur in the study area for the Kings/Tulare Regional Station–West Alternative. Thus, no effects would occur under NEPA, and no impacts would occur under CEQA.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities occur in the study area for the Kings/Tulare Regional Station–West Alternative. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

Bakersfield Station Alternatives

The Amtrak Station playground is located in an urbanized area, adjacent to an existing rail line; therefore, the Bakersfield Station alternatives would not create visual changes to park character. However, the Bakersfield Station alternatives 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 have a substantial intensity under NEPA due to this increased use. Project impacts would be significant under CEQA.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities would be within 300 feet of the Bakersfield Station alternatives. Thus, no project effects would occur under NEPA, and no project impacts would occur under CEQA.

Heavy Maintenance Facility Site Alternatives

No park resources lie within the study areas for the Fresno Works–Fresno, Kings County–Hanford, Kern Council of Governments–Wasco, Kern Council of Governments–Shafter East, or Kern Council of Governments–Shafter West HMF sites; therefore, there would be no impacts from these site alternatives on park resources.

No school district play areas or recreation facilities lie within the study areas for the Fresno Works–Fresno, Kings County–Hanford, Kern Council of Governments–Shafter East, or Kern Council of Governments–Shafter West HMF sites; therefore, these site alternatives would have no effects or impacts on school district play areas or recreation facilities. The Kern Council of Governments–Wasco HMF Site would be more than 1,886 feet from the Teresa Burke Elementary School play area and would not change the character of that resource. Therefore, project effects would have a negligible intensity under NEPA, and project impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

3.15.6 Project Design Features

The Authority and FRA have considered avoidance and minimization measures consistent with the 2005 Statewide Program EIR/EIS commitments. During project design and construction, the Authority and FRA would implement measures to reduce impacts on parks and recreation resources. For example, to minimize visual and aesthetic impacts to resources from the

introduction of aerial guideways, as stated within Section 3.16, Aesthetics and Visual Resources, Table 3.16-2 describes how, during final design of the elevated guideways, the Authority will coordinate with local jurisdictions on their design so that the elevated guideways will fit in appropriately with the visual context of the areas near them. The Authority will establish a process with the city or county with jurisdiction over the land along the elevated guideway to advance the final design through a collaborative, context-sensitive solutions approach. The working groups will meet on a regular basis to develop a consensus on the urban design elements to be incorporated into the final guideway designs. The process will include activities to solicit community input in the affected neighborhoods. Associated structures would be designed to be attractive architectural elements or features and would add visual interest to the streetscapes near them. Implementation of these measures would also reduce impacts to parks and recreation resources. The design standards applicable to the project that relate to park and recreation resources are summarized in Section 3.3.8, Project Design Features (Air Quality and Global Climate Change); Section 3.4.6, Project Design Features (Noise and Vibration); and Section 3.16.6, Project Design Features (Aesthetics and Visual Resources).

3.15.7 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 2010; Authority and FRA 2008), 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 3.4.6 describes measures for mitigating noise and vibration effects; 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. Mitigation measures are listed first for temporary construction impacts, then for project impacts for the HST alternatives.

3.15.7.1 Construction Period

Park Construction (PC)-MM#1: Provide Alternate Pedestrian and Bicycle Access During Temporary Closures of Portions of Park Property During Construction. Prior to temporary closures of linear park facilities, the Authority will ensure that connections to the unaffected park portions or nearby roadways are maintained. If a proposed linear park closure restricts connectivity, the Authority will provide alternative pedestrian and bicycle access via existing roadways or other public rights-of-way. The Authority will provide detour signage and lighting and will ensure that the alternative routes meet all public safety requirements.[1]

3.15.7.2 Project Period

Park Project (PP)-MM#1: Acquisition of Park Property. The Authority will provide financial compensation for purchase and development of replacement park property of at least equal fair market value, or, where appropriate, enhancement to ensure the park retains equivalent

[1] Text of Mitigation Measure (PC)-MM#1 was refined from the Revised DEIR/Supplemental DEIS to better align with the impacts it is associated with. The revised (PC)-MM#1 describes how to ensure that connectivity is maintained for linear parks during the construction period. The previous version of (PC)-MM#1 described compensation and replacement of displaced active park land (non-linear park) during construction, a scenario that does not occur within Fresno to Bakersfield Section.

usefulness.[2] Where applicable, this process will be consistent with Section 6(f) requirements and provide park enhancement as appropriate.

PP-MM#2: Avoidance of Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park. Final design will minimize right-of-way impacts in Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park.

PP-MM#3: Collect Additional Maintenance Funds. The Authority will consult with the City of Bakersfield and Amtrak to identify its share of 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. Prior to the opening of passenger service, the Authority will enter into an agreement with the city and Amtrak that establishes the funding share and describes the relative roles of the Authority, the City of Bakersfield, and Amtrak in providing continuous maintenance of the existing playground.

Impacts of Mitigation

Implementing PC-MM#1 will require installing detour signage and lighting for alternative pedestrian and bicycle routes; these activities will result in negligible impacts on the physical environment. The impacts of this mitigation measure would be less than significant under CEQA and the impact would have negligible intensity under NEPA.

The design features implemented as a result of PP-MM#2 will minimize impacts to the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park and occur prior to construction of the project. Therefore, this mitigation measure will not result in secondary effects.

The acquisition of replacement park property or furnishing park enhancements under PP-MM#1 could result in potential impacts on the physical environment as a consequence of construction activities, including emissions and fugitive dust from construction equipment, construction-related noise, visual impacts associated with new park structures, and impacts on biological and cultural resources that may be present on the new site. Any new park property and enhancements would be designed and constructed to be consistent with local land use plans, and would be subject to separate site-specific analysis under NEPA and CEQA.

The costs associated with the enhancements and maintenance described in PP-MM#1 and PP-MM#3 would not result in secondary impacts on the budgets of local jurisdictions because the Authority will provide funding for all necessary park enhancements and will contribute equitably to the maintenance costs of the Bakersfield Amtrak playground facilities.

3.15.8 NEPA Impacts Summary

This section summarizes impacts identified in Section 3.15.5, Environmental Consequences, and evaluates whether they are significant according to NEPA. Under NEPA, project effects are evaluated based on the criteria of context and intensity, which include consideration of the duration of the impact. The following NEPA effects were identified under the No Project Alternative and the HST project alternatives.

Because local regulations generally require creation of parkland for approval of new residential development, and because of ordinances, programs, and policies to protect existing park and recreational resources enacted by local, state, and federal agencies, the No Project Alternative would have no direct or indirect impact on existing parks, recreation, or open space.

[2] Text of Mitigation Measure (PP)-MM#1 was refined from the Revised DEIR/Supplemental DEIS, which stated "equivalent value with the property acquired or, where appropriate, enhancement of the existing facility."

All HST alternatives would have temporary impacts on parks and other recreational facilities in the study area related to lowered visual quality and new sources of light and glare during construction. These effects would be of negligible intensity, and because they are localized, temporary, and—with appropriate mitigation—minimized, they are therefore not significant under NEPA.

Temporary construction effects on recreational facilities from noise, dust, and vibration and to visual quality are anticipated for the BNSF, Corcoran Elevated, Bakersfield South, and Bakersfield Hybrid alternatives. Construction effects from temporary land encroachments on the Kern River Parkway and the Mill Creek Linear Park from the BNSF, Bakersfield South, and Bakersfield Hybrid alternatives would be mitigated from a moderate to a negligible intensity, because access to/through the parks would be maintained, or alternative access routes or temporary trail rerouting would be provided during construction, and the construction activities would not disrupt the recreational functions of the resources.

Noise, dust, and vibration created from construction activities on Father Stephen Wyatt Park, the McMurtrey Aquatic Center, Mill Creek Linear Park, and Bakersfield Amtrak Station from the BNSF alignment; to Father Stephen Wyatt Park from the Corcoran Elevated alignment; and to McMurtrey Aquatic Center and Mill Creek Linear Park from the Bakersfield South and Bakersfield Hybrid alternatives would have an effect of moderate intensity at the local level, because construction activities would have the potential to limit the use and quality of resources. The context of these park resources would be the urbanized area of Downtown Bakersfield along the existing BNSF/Amtrak rail corridor and the city of Corcoran along the existing BNSF corridor. The construction activities would be temporary, creating impacts with a duration of up to 6 months, and with the implementation of mitigation measures, impacts from construction activities would not be significant.

For school district play areas and recreation facilities, temporary construction effects, such as noise, dust, and vibration, are anticipated for the BNSF Alternative. The construction effects on Bakersfield High School would be of moderate intensity in the site-specific context from noise and vibration, because the construction activities would limit the use and quality of the Bakersfield High School recreation resources. The context of this recreation resource is the urbanized area of Downtown Bakersfield, along the existing BNSF/Amtrak rail corridor. The construction activities would be temporary, creating impacts with a duration of up to 6 months, and with the implementation of mitigation measures, impacts from construction activities would not be significant.

Long-term project effects, such as noise, acquisition of land, degradation of existing facilities, and visual degradation, are anticipated for the BNSF, Corcoran Elevated, Bakersfield South, and Bakersfield Hybrid alternatives.

The project effects for the BNSF Alternative that would result from park property acquisition in the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park and the Allensworth Ecological Reserve would be of substantial intensity in the site-specific, regional, and statewide contexts. These effects would be reduced to a negligible intensity with mitigation; the Allensworth Bypass Alternative would have no impact on the state historic park or the ecological reserve. Effects on the Bakersfield Amtrak Station Playground from increased use and feature deterioration as a result of the BNSF, Bakersfield South, and Bakersfield Hybrid alternatives would also be of substantial local intensity, but would be reduced to a negligible intensity with mitigation. The BNSF Alternative would create an effect of substantial intensity in the site-specific, regional, and statewide contexts from the introduction of a modern feature into the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park, a federally protected resource; the intensity of this effect would remain substantial even with mitigation, and therefore would be a significant impact under NEPA.

The BNSF, Bakersfield South, and Bakersfield Hybrid Alternatives would pass over the Kern River Parkway, Mill Creek Linear Park, and Bakersfield Amtrak Station on an elevated guideway. The guideway, without or with design mitigation, would have effects of moderate to substantial intensity on the visual quality of the parks' settings, because the project would degrade the existing visual character and quality of the sites and their surroundings; the intensity of this effect would remain substantial even with mitigation. The context of these park resources is the local urbanized area of Downtown Bakersfield, along the existing BNSF/Amtrak rail corridors. Therefore, the parks are already subject to noise and visual impacts consistent with the urbanized area and existing freight and passenger rail service. Considering both the intensity and context of the impacts on these recreational resources, the overall impact would not be significant.

Operational noise would have an effect of moderate intensity on the Father Stephen Wyatt Park from the Corcoran Elevated Alternative; on Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park from the BNSF Alternative; on the McMurtrey Aquatic Center from the BNSF, Bakersfield South, and Bakersfield Hybrid alternatives; on the Kern River Parkway and the Mill Creek Linear Park from the BNSF, Bakersfield South, and Bakersfield Hybrid alternatives; and on the Bakersfield Amtrak Station Playground from the BNSF Alternative. Implementation of mitigation measures (see Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration) would reduce effects to a negligible intensity under NEPA on all. The context of these park resources is along the existing BNSF corridor for the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park and along the BNSF or Amtrak rail corridors within an urbanized area for Father Stephen Wyatt Park, McMurtrey Aquatic Center, Kern River Parkway, Mill Creek Linear Park, and the Bakersfield Amtrak Station Playground. Given the intensity and context, the overall impact would not be significant.

For school district play areas and recreation facilities, operational effects, such as noise, dust, and vibration are anticipated for the Bakersfield High School recreation areas from the BNSF Alternative. The HST on the BNSF Alternative would introduce a highly dominant structure of incompatible industrial character to the Bakersfield High School recreation facilities. Due to the strong adverse effect and high viewer sensitivity, this effect would be of substantial intensity under NEPA. The intensity of the impacts would remain substantial after implementation of mitigation measures from the Aesthetics and Visual Resources Section. The context of the Bakersfield High School recreation areas is the urbanized area of downtown Bakersfield, along the existing BNSF/Amtrak rail corridor. Given the intensity and context, the overall impact would not be significant.

The Bakersfield High School recreation areas are within an existing urban area and adjacent to or in close proximity to an existing rail yard; therefore, HST operational noise would increase noise exposure for the users of the recreation facilities at Bakersfield High School. Operational noise impacts would have an effect of moderate intensity under NEPA. With implementation of noise mitigation measures, impacts would not be significant.

3.15.9 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 and school district play areas and recreation facilities. Where impacts cannot be avoided, measures to reduce impacts will include the mitigation identified in Table 3.15-7 (parks, recreation, and open-space resources) and Table 3.15-8 (school district play areas and recreation facilities). These tables also identify 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 3.15-7
Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures for Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources

Impact	CEQA Level of Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	CEQA Level of Significance after Mitigation
Construction Period			
PK#1 Common Aesthetics and Visual Quality Impacts. For all alternatives, construction activities would cause visual impacts to park, recreation, and open space resources.	Significant	Mitigation measures as outlined in Section 3.16, Aesthetics and Visual Resources: **AVR-MM#1a and AVR-MM#1b**	Less than Significant
PK#1 Father Stephen Wyatt Park. Construction activities for the BNSF Alternative and Corcoran Elevated Alternative would increase noise exposure.	Significant	Mitigation measures as outlined in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration: **N&V-MM#1** and **N&V-MM#2**	Less than Significant
PK#1 Kern River Parkway. Construction activities for the BNSF, Bakersfield South and Bakersfield Hybrid alternatives would create closures of some areas of parkway facilities, including bicycle, pedestrian and equestrian facilities.	Significant	**PC-MM#1**	Less than Significant
PK#1 McMurtrey Aquatic Center. Construction activities for the Bakersfield South and Bakersfield Hybrid alternatives would increase noise exposure.	Significant	Mitigation measures as outlined in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration: **N&V-MM#1 and N&V-MM#2**	Less than Significant
PK#1 Mill Creek Linear Park. Construction activities for the BNSF, Bakersfield South, and Bakersfield Hybrid alternatives would create closures of some areas of park facilities and increase noise exposure.	Significant	**PC-MM#1;** and Mitigation measures as outlined in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration: **N&V-MM#1 and N&V-MM#2**	Less than Significant
PK#1 Bakersfield Amtrak Station Playground. Construction activities for the BNSF alternative would increase noise exposure.	Significant	Mitigation measures as outlined in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration: **N&V-MM#1 and N&V-MM#2**	Less than Significant
Project Period			
PK#2 Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park. The BNSF Alternative would require the acquisition of approximately 1.7 acres of parkland.	Significant	**PP-MM#1** and **PP-MM#2**	Less than Significant

Table 3.15-7
Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures for Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources

Impact	CEQA Level of Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	CEQA Level of Significance after Mitigation
PK#2 Allensworth Ecological Reserve. The BNSF Alternative would require the acquisition of approximately 7.3 acres of parkland.	Significant	**PP-MM#1**	Less than Significant
PK#4 Father Stephen Wyatt Park. HST operation activities for the Corcoran Elevated Alternative would increase noise exposure.	Significant	Mitigation measure as outlined in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration: **N&V-MM#3**	Less than Significant
PK#4 Father Stephen Wyatt Park. HST operation for the Corcoran Elevated[1] would substantially degrade the existing visual character of the site and its surroundings.	Significant	Mitigation measures as outlined in Section 3.16, Aesthetics and Visual Resources: **AVR-MM#2a – #2f.**	Less than Significant
PK#4 Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park. The BNSF Alternative would introduce a modern feature not consistent with the historic atmosphere of the park.	Significant	Mitigation measures as outlined in Section 3.16, Aesthetics and Visual Resources: **AVR-MM#2a – #2f**, and Section 3.17, Cultural and Paleontological Resources.	Significant
PK#4 Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park. HST operation of the BNSF Alternative would increase noise exposure.	Significant	Mitigation measure as outlined in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration: **N&V-MM#3.**	Less than Significant
PK#4 Kern River Parkway. HST operation of the BNSF, Bakersfield South, and Bakersfield Hybrid Alternatives would increase noise exposure.	Significant	Mitigation measure as outlined in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration: **N&V-MM#3.**	Less than Significant
PK#4 Kern River Parkway. HST operation for the BNSF, Bakersfield South, and Bakersfield Hybrid Alternatives would substantially degrade the existing visual character of the site and its surroundings.	Significant	Mitigation measures as outlined in Section 3.16, Aesthetics and Visual Resources: **AVR-MM#2a - #2f.**	Significant
PK#4 McMurtrey Aquatic Center. HST operation of the Bakersfield South, and Bakersfield Hybrid Alternative would increase noise exposure.	Significant	Mitigation measure as outlined in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration: **N&V-MM#3.**	Less than Significant

Table 3.15-7
Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures for Parks, Recreation, and Open-Space Resources

Impact	CEQA Level of Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	CEQA Level of Significance after Mitigation
PK#4 Mill Creek Linear Park. HST operation of the BNSF, Bakersfield South, and Bakersfield Hybrid Alternatives would increase noise exposure.	Significant	Mitigation measure as outlined in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration: **N&V-MM#3.**	Less than Significant
PK#4 Mill Creek Linear Park. HST operation of the BNSF, Bakersfield South, and Bakersfield Hybrid Alternatives would substantially degrade the existing visual character of the site and its surroundings.	Significant	Mitigation measures as outlined in Section 3.16, Aesthetics and Visual Resources: **AVR-MM#2a - #2f.**	Significant
PK#4 Bakersfield Amtrak Station Playground. Bakersfield Station Alternatives would create an increase in use that would result in physical deterioration; HST operation of the BNSF Alternative would increase noise exposure.	Significant	**PP-MM#3;** and Mitigation measure as outlined in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration: **N&V-MM#3.**	Less than Significant
PK#4 Bakersfield Amtrak Station Playground. HST operation of the BNSF, Bakersfield South, and Bakersfield Hybrid Alternatives would substantially degrade the existing visual character of the site and its surroundings.	Significant	Mitigation measures as outlined in Section 3.16, Aesthetics and Visual Resources: **AVR-MM#2a – #2f.**	Significant

[1] In the Revised DEIR/Supplemental DEIS, this impact summary statement incorrectly referenced Impact PK#4 to Father Stephen Wyatt Park by the BNSF Alternative. This edit change corrects the table to state that Father Stephen Wyatt Park is impacted by the Corcoran Elevated Alternative, consistent with analysis provided for Impact PK #4 – Project Changes to Park Character.

Table 3.15-8
Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures for School District Play Areas and Recreation Facilities

Impact	CEQA Level of Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	CEQA Level of Significance after Mitigation
Construction Period			
PK#1 Common Aesthetics and Visual Quality Impacts. For all alternatives, construction activities would cause visual impacts to school district recreation facilities.	Significant	Mitigation measures as outlined in Section 3.16, Aesthetics and Visual Resources: **AVR-MM#1a and AVR-MM#1b.**	Less than Significant
PK#1 Bakersfield High School. Construction activities for the BNSF and Hybrid Alternatives would increase noise exposure.	Significant	Mitigation measures as outlined in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration: **N&V-MM#1** and **N&V-MM#2.**	Less than Significant
Project Period			
PK#4 Bakersfield High School. HST operation for the BNSF Alternative would increase noise exposure.	Significant	Mitigation measures as outlined in Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration: **N&V-MM#3.**	Less than Significant
PK#4 Bakersfield High School. HST operation for the BNSF Alternative would substantially degrade the existing visual setting of the recreation facilities.	Significant	Mitigation measures as outlined in Section 3.16, Aesthetics and Visual Resources: **AVR-MM#2a – #2f.**	Significant

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