

**FINAL**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**  
**SCH NO. 93012010**

**STORM WATER MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

**CITY OF VISALIA**

**OCTOBER, 1994**

## 8.0 INTRODUCTION

The City of Visalia prepared a Draft EIR (DEIR) for the adoption and implementation of the proposed update of the City's Storm Water Master Plan.

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the City provided a 45-day public review period for the DEIR that began on August 1, 1994. At the commencement of the public review period, copies of the DEIR were submitted to the State Clearinghouse (for distribution to State agencies), a number of local and regional public agencies, and the water districts and ditch companies that operate facilities in the Visalia area. Copies of the DEIR also were transmitted to the City's Park and Recreation Commission and Beautification Committee. Notice of the availability of the DEIR was published in the Visalia Times-Delta on two occasions during the public review period.

At the close of the public review period, the City had received written comments from the following public agencies:

- o Office of Planning and Research (State Clearinghouse)
- o State Department of Transportation (Caltrans),
- o State Department of Water Resources,
- o San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District,
- o City of Visalia Park and Recreation Commission, and
- o City of Visalia Planning staff.

A noticed public hearing was held before the Visalia Planning Commission on September 26, 1994, to accept public testimony on the DEIR. No testimony was given at the Planning Commission public hearing. In compliance with CEQA, the City evaluated the comments submitted by these agencies and prepared written responses to the comments.

This document contains the written comments and the City's responses to the comments. Also presented in this document are revisions to the DEIR that were made in response to the comments that were received by the City during review period. The material presented in this document, together with the DEIR constitute the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the updated Master Plan "project".

The revisions to the DEIR are presented in Section 9.0 of this document. The comment letters that were received by the City are presented in Section 10.0, while the City's responses to the comments are presented in Section 11.0. Section 12.0 presents the mitigation measures that the City will be expected to implement in order to reduce the significance of the identified potential adverse impacts that have been directly attributed to the project. A mitigation monitoring program is presented as an appendix to this document. Please note that in the interest of making this document compatible with the DEIR, this document begins with Section 8.0 (the DEIR ends with Section 7.0).

## 9.0 DRAFT EIR REVISIONS

Selected portions of the Draft EIR have been revised (in response to comments received during public review period) for the Final EIR. The principal revision is the elimination of a significant component of the proposed General Plan Amendment (GPA) described in Section 2.6 of the DEIR: the re-designation of eleven undeveloped sites that were designated for "Conservation" uses with the intent of reserving them for the storm water basins that were recommended in the City's 1987 Storm Drain Master Plan. This component of the proposed GPA has been eliminated from the "project" because staff believes that the proposed action warrants additional evaluation and environmental review. Staff intends to process the re-designation of the eleven sites in 1995.

Because the description of the proposed GPA presented in Section 2.6 has been revised, Section 2.1 (Overview) also has been modified. The replacement text for Sections 2.1 and 2.6 of the DEIR is presented in this section.

Other miscellaneous DEIR text revisions that were made in response to comments received during the public review period also are presented in this section.

\* \* \* \* \*

### 2.1 OVERVIEW

The City of Visalia is proposing to adopt and implement an update to the City's 1987 Storm Water Master Plan that identifies the improvements needed to serve the planned land uses of the City's updated Land Use Element (LUE). The master plan "project" also includes an amendment to the City's General Plan Land Use Element that is intended to facilitate the implementation of the update Master Plan and updating the LUE Map (with respect to storm water facilities). The improvements recommended in the updated Master Plan and components of the proposed GPA are summarized below. A detailed description of the Master Plan and GPA is provided in Section 2.6 of this document.

#### Updated Master Plan Improvements

- o "In-town" storage basins
- o "Terminal" storage basins
- o Channel widening
- o Pipelines

#### General Plan Amendment

- o Establish new land use categories for water storage facilities
- o Re-designate existing "Conservation" park/pond sites
- o Re-designate existing "Conservation" basin site
- o Add symbols to LUE Map to represent future water storage facilities

\* \* \* \* \*

## 26 GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

### Overview

The City of Visalia is proposing a General Plan Amendment (No. 94-31) that is intended to facilitate implementation of the updated Master Plan and update the LUE Map (with respect to existing storm drainage facilities). The proposed GPA consists of the following four components:

- 1) Establish three new land use categories: "Park-Basin" (under the "Open Space" designation), "Water Storage Basin" (under the "Community Facilities" designation), and "Storm Water Basin" (under the Community Facilities designation).
- 2) Re-designate seven (7) existing park/pond sites (that currently are designated for "Conservation" uses) for "Park-Basin" uses. This proposed re-designation is considered a "paper" change that is not expected to change the existing or planned uses of the sites.
- 3) Re-designate one (1) existing storm water basin (that currently is designated for "Conservation" uses) for "Water Storage Basin" uses. This proposed re-designation is considered a "paper" change that is not expected to change the existing or planned uses of the site.
- 4) Add "Storm Water Basins" symbols to the Land Use Element Map to represent the generalized location of future planned storm water facilities.

### New Land Use Categories

#### Park-Basin

The new "Park-Basin" designation will be applied to existing storm water storage sites with an established or planned park use.

#### Water Storage Basin

The new "Water Storage Basin" designation will be applied to existing basins that are used strictly for water storage purposes with no planned park uses.

#### Storm Water Basin

The new "Storm Water Basin" designation will be used to identify future planned storm water storage facilities. These future facilities could be developed either as park-basins that accommodate recreational uses or water storage basins that are used exclusively to store storm water runoff.

The GPA also will establish criteria for locating future storm water facilities. This locational criteria will be added to the LUE as Implementing Policy No. 5.1.16 (under Goal 5: Plan and develop an efficient public facilities and services system to serve as a framework for orderly urban development).

The proposed Policy 5.1.16 is as follows:

**5.1.16 Implement the Storm Water Master Plan through the following storm water basin locational criteria:**

1. Final designated basin locations shall be based on the following factors: hydraulic considerations, land costs, improvement costs, surrounding land costs, property owner cooperation, and the sequencing of development within the service area of the basin.
2. Unplanned basins not designated on the LUE Map may be constructed for temporary or permanent use provided that the basins serve as viable alternatives to the recommendations of the Storm Water Master Plan.
3. Upon completion of a new basin, the appropriate designation shall be delineated on the LUE Map through the General Plan amendment process.
4. Designations for unconstructed planned basins may be removed from the LUE Map through the General Plan amendment process upon a determination that the basins are not needed based on hydraulic, funding and land development considerations.

**Re-designation of Existing Park/Pond Sites**

The proposed GPA will re-designate seven (7) existing park/pond sites (that currently are designated for "Conservation" uses) for "Park-Basin" uses. This re-designation is considered a "paper" change that is not expected to change the existing or planned uses of the sites. The seven sites that will be re-designated are identified in Table 2-4.

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**TABLE 2-4**

**General Plan Amendment**

**Redesignation of Existing "Conservation" Park/Pond Sites  
for  
"Park-Basin" Uses**

<u>Site</u>	<u>Location</u>
Constitution Park	e/o Akers, n/o Tulare
Linwood Park	e/o Akers, s/o Whitendale
Stonebrook Park	w/o Giddings, n/o Caldwell
Edison Park	w/o Ben Maddox, n/o Tulare
Mill Creek Garden Park	e/o Lovers Lane, n/o Mill Creek
un-named	e/o McAuliff, s/o Tulare
un-named	e/o Roeben, s/o Whitendale

---

## Re-designation of an Existing Storm Water Facility

The proposed GPA will re-designate one (1) existing storm water facility, the Ruiz Park Annex, that currently is used strictly for water storage purposes with no planned park uses for "Water Storage Basin" uses. This site, which is located immediately east of Ruiz Park at the intersection of Burke and Margalo, currently is designated for "Conservation" uses. This proposed re-designation is considered a "paper" change that is not expected to change the existing or planned uses of the site.

## Addition of "Storm Water Basin" symbols to LUE Map

The proposed GPA will add "Storm Water Basin" (SWB) symbols to the Land Use Element Map to represent the generalized location of future planned storm water facilities. Refer to Figure 2.4 (a) and (b) of the DEIR for the location of the proposed LUE Map SWB symbols. Each symbol generally will be located within the boundaries of the area it is expected to ultimately serve. The final location of each symbolized basins will be established based on the criteria identified above.

It should be noted that while the intent of the proposed "Storm Water Basin" symbols is to represent the location of new planned basins, symbols also are used (on Figure 2-4) to denote the recommended expansion of two existing basins on the north side of Packwood Creek near Mooney Boulevard. These two basin expansions are "symbolized" because the recommended expansions consist of constructing significantly larger new basins south of Packwood Creek (opposite the existing basins). Existing development around the existing basins effectively precludes their expansion north of the channel. However, it also should be noted that the proposed Master Plan indicates that as an alternative to expanding these two basins, it appears that the flows that would be accommodated by the expansions could be discharged directly into the channel without being routed through the basins.

\* \* \* \* \*

## MISCELLANEOUS DEIR TEXT REVISIONS

**Table 2-2:** The revised Table 2-2 is presented on the following page. The revisions are underlined.

**Section 3.1:** The last sentence of the second paragraph of Section 3.1 of the EIR should read as follows:

"Therefore, it is understood the construction of specific Master Plan improvements shall be subject to further environmental review as improvement projects are defined in the future."

**Section 5.1:** The following sentence should be added at the end of Section 5.1:

"A "State of Overriding Considerations" was adopted with City of Visalia Resolution No. 91-105 with the LUE Update EIR for the cumulative updated LUE impacts that cannot be mitigated to a level of insignificance."

TABLE 2-2

Master Plan "In-Town" Water Storage Basins

<u>Drainage Area</u>	<u>Name/Location</u>	<u>New Area (ac)</u>	<u>Park Use</u>	<u>New Volume (ac-ft)</u>	<u>Status</u>
Packwood Cr.	McAuliff @ Tulare	0	WS	0	Exist.
	Blain Park	0	PP	1	Exist. w/ expansion
	Stonebrook	0	PP	0	Exist.
	PC e/o Mooney	6.4	NP	44	Exist. w/ expansion
	PC @ County Center	2.5	NP	11	Exist. w/ expansion
	PC @ Road 148	2.2	PP	6	Proposed
	@ Pinkham s/o Walnut	4.0	PP	15	Proposed
	@ Pinkham s/o K Road	4.6	PP	18	Proposed
	n/o Caldwell e/o Santa Fe	2.2	WS	21	Proposed
	s/o Walnut w/o Ben Maddox	0	WS	0	Exist.
	PC w/o Mooney	0	WS	0	Exist.
	Mill Creek	MC w/o Lovers Lane	3.2	CP	19
MC w/o Ben Maddox		5.8	WS	40	Proposed
w/o Akers s/o S.R. 198		3.6	WS	38	Proposed
<u>Mill Creek Garden Park</u>		0	PP	0	Exist.
<u>Willow Glen Park</u>		0	PP	4	Exist. w/ expansion
Constitution Park		0	PP	0	Exist.
Modoc Ditch	Peltzer Basin w/o Demaree	0	WS	0	Exist. <sup>1</sup>
	Shannon-Modoc Basin	0	WS	0	Exist. <sup>1</sup>
	<u>Fairview Village Park</u>	0	PP	0	Exist.
	MD e/o Court St.	4.5	PP	12	Const. in-progress
Goshen Drain	n/o Goshen w/o Demaree	6.3	WS	74	Proposed
	n/o Goshen e/o Shirk	9.4	NP	71	Proposed
Evans Ditch	ED @ Linwood Park	0	NP	25	Exist. w/ expansion
	ED @ Pinkham Park	1.8	NP	9	Exist. w/ expansion
	Edison Park n/o Tulare	0	PP	0	Exist.
	Lisendra Hts Park	2.5	NP	14	Const. in-progress
St Johns R.	Ruiz Park w/o Burke	0	PP	0	Exist.
	n/o Houston e/o McAuliff	4.2	NP	27	Const. in-progress
	n/o SJR w/o Ben Maddox	5.6	WS	64	Proposed
Persn.-Watson	w/o Roeben n/o Walnut	0	WS	0	Exist.
Cameron Cr	no "in-town" basins	0	n/a	0	n/a
Park Uses:	WS: Water Storage Basin				
	NP: Neighborhood Park				
	PP: Park-Pond				
	CP: <u>Community Park</u>				

<sup>1</sup> Owned by Modoc Ditch Company

## 10.0 DRAFT EIR COMMENTS

At the close of the public review period for the Draft EIR, the City had received written comments from the following public agencies:

- o State Office of Planning and Research (State Clearinghouse),
- o State Department of Transportation (Caltrans),
- o State Department of Water Resources,
- o San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District,
- o City of Visalia Park and Recreation Commission, and
- o City of Visalia Planning staff.

Copies of the written correspondence received by the City are presented following this page. The City's responses to these comments follow the correspondence in Section 11.0.



## GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF PLANNING AND RESEARCH

1400 TENTH STREET  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

September 19, 1994

JOHN DUTTON  
CITY OF VISALIA  
707 WEST ACEQUIA  
VISALIA, CA 93291

Subject: STORM WATER PLAN SCH #: 93012010

Dear JOHN DUTTON:

The State Clearinghouse has submitted the above named draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to selected state agencies for review. The review period is now closed and the comments from the responding agency(ies) is(are) enclosed. On the enclosed Notice of Completion form you will note that the Clearinghouse has checked the agencies that have commented. Please review the Notice of Completion to ensure that your comment package is complete. If the comment package is not in order, please notify the State Clearinghouse immediately. Remember to refer to the project's eight-digit State Clearinghouse number so that we may respond promptly.

Please note that Section 21104 of the California Public Resources Code required that:

"a responsible agency or other public agency shall only make substantive comments regarding those activities involved in a project which are within an area of expertise of the agency or which are required to be carried out or approved by the agency."

Commenting agencies are also required by this section to support their comments with specific documentation.

These comments are forwarded for your use in preparing your final EIR. Should you need more information or clarification, we recommend that you contact the commenting agency(ies).

This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. Please contact Kristen Derscheid at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Chiriatti, Jr.", written over a faint, larger signature.

Michael Chiriatti, Jr.  
Chief, State Clearinghouse

Enclosures

cc: Resources Agency

**NOTICE OF COMPLETION**

SCH No. 93012010

**PROJECT TITLE: STORM WATER MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

Lead Agency: City of Visalia  
 Street Address: 707 West Acequia  
 City: Visalia Zip: 93291

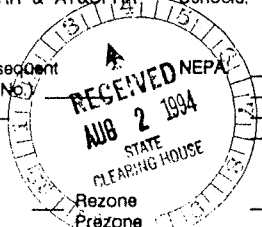
Contact Person: Mr. John S. Dutton  
 Phone: (209) 738-3345  
 County: Tulare

**PROJECT LOCATION**

County: Tulare City: Visalia Cross Streets: City-wide  
 Total Acres: 35,000 acres within UDB Assessor's Parcel No.: n/a  
 Section: many Twp: 18 & 19S Range: 24 & 25E Base: MDB&M  
 Within 2 Miles: State Hwy: 198 & 63 Waterways: Mill Cr, Packwood Cr, St Johns River & private irrig. ditches  
 Airports: Visalia Muni. Railways: SPRR & AT&SFRR Schools: various VUSD schools

**DOCUMENT TYPE**

CEQA:  NOP  Supplement/Subsequent  NOI  
 Early Cons  EIR (Prior SCH No.)  EA  
 Neg Dec  Other  Draft EIS  
 Draft EIR  FONSI



**LOCAL ACTION TYPE**

General Plan Update  Specific Plan  Rezone  Annexation  
 General Plan Amendment  Master Plan  Prezone  Redevelopment  
 General Plan Element  Planned Unit Development  Use Permit  Coastal Permit  
 Community Plan  Site Plan  Land Division  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**DEVELOPMENT TYPE**

Residential: Units \_\_\_\_\_ Acres \_\_\_\_\_  Water Facilities: Type \_\_\_\_\_ MGD \_\_\_\_\_  
 Office: Sq ft \_\_\_\_\_ Acres \_\_\_\_\_ Employees \_\_\_\_\_  Transportation: Type \_\_\_\_\_  
 Commercial: Sq ft \_\_\_\_\_ Acres \_\_\_\_\_ Employees \_\_\_\_\_  Mining: Mineral \_\_\_\_\_  
 Industrial: Sq ft \_\_\_\_\_ Acres \_\_\_\_\_ Employees \_\_\_\_\_  Power: Type \_\_\_\_\_  
 Educational: \_\_\_\_\_  Waste Treatment: Type \_\_\_\_\_  
 Recreational: \_\_\_\_\_  Hazardous Waste: Type \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other: Implementation of Master Plan

**PROJECT ISSUES DISCUSSED IN DOCUMENT**

Aesthetic/Visual  Flood Plain/Flooding  Schools  Water Quality  
 Agricultural Land  Forest Land/Fire Hazard  Septic Systems  Water Supply/Groundwater  
 Air Quality  Geologic Seismic  Sewer Capacity  Wetland/Riparian  
 Archeological/Historical  Minerals  Soil Erosion/Compaction  Wildlife  
 Coastal Zone  Noise  Solid Waste  Growth Including  
 Drainage/Absorption  Population/Housing  Toxic/Hazardous  Landuse  
 Economic/Jobs  Public Services/Facilities  Traffic/Circulation  Cumulative Effects  
 Fiscal  Recreation/Parks  Vegetation  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Present Land Use: Varies, generally agriculture  
 Zoning: Varies, generally zoned for urban development  
 General Plan Use: Varies, generally urban uses

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The City of Visalia is proposing to adopt and implement an update of the City's Storm Water Master Plan that identifies the improvements needed to serve the planned land uses of the City's recently adopted Land Use Element of the General Plan. The recommended improvements, which include storage basins in developing areas, are described in the document. The City also is proposing a General Plan Amendment that will establish a new Storm Water Basin land use category and re-designate selected sites that currently are designated for "Conservation" uses.

*John S. Dutton*  
 John S. Dutton, City Engineer

7/28/94  
 Date

**CLEARINGHOUSE CONTACT: MIKE CHIRIATTI**  
 (916) 445-0613

STATE REVIEW BEGAN: 8-3-94  
 DEPT REV TO AGENCY: 9-9  
 AGENCY REV TO SCH: 9-14  
 SCH COMPLIANCE: 9-16

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> State/Consumer Svcs
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conservation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARB
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fish & Game	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reg. WQCB # <u>5 FEB</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parks & Rec/Out	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NAHC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DWR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State Lands Comm
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caltrans # <u>6</u>	

**PLEASE NOTE SCH NUMBER ON ALL COMMENTS**  
**PLEASE FORWARD LATE COMMENTS DIRECTLY TO THE LEAD AGENCY ONLY**  
 QMD/APCD: 37 (Resources: 8/6)

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

1352 West Olive Avenue  
Post Office Box 12616  
Fresno, California 93778

(209) 488-4088  
TDD (209) 488-4066  
FAX (209) 488-4101



9/16  
(E)

August 30, 1994

2135-IGR/CEQA  
6-TUL-GEN  
Storm Water Master  
Plan Update  
SCH# 93012010

Mr. John Dutton  
City Engineer  
City of Visalia  
707 W. Acequia Avenue  
Visalia, CA 93291-6100


Dear Mr. Dutton:

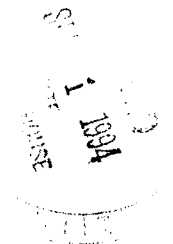
We have reviewed the above referenced project and have the following comments.

The Caltrans District 6 Hydraulics section recommends that the proposed Water Storage Basin, south of Route 198 and west of Akers Street, be constructed in the near future. This new facility would accommodate the proposed Route 198 freeway through Visalia, as the current freeway design involves utilizing the existing storm drain north of Route 198 on Akers Street. The Hydraulics section understands that this storm drain is at capacity now. This new Water Storage Basin would benefit both Caltrans and the City of Visalia if built soon.

Please contact Mr. Todd George, Caltrans Hydraulics Engineer, at (209) 488-4005 for further information on coordinating the storm drain project with the Route 198 freeway project.

Sincerely,

  
for MARC BIRNBAUM, Chief  
Office of System Planning



SCH

AUG 18 1994

1. Project Coordinator  
Resources Agency
2. Mr. John S. Dutton  
City of Visalia  
707 West Acequia  
Visalia, California 93291

9-16-94

SCH #93012010  
Draft Environmental Impact Report  
Storm Water Master Plan Update  
Tulare County

We have completed the review of the Draft Environmental Impact Report dated July 1994.

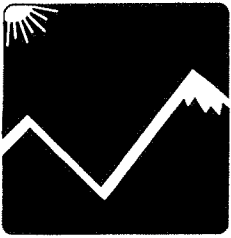
Based on the information provided in the report, we could not determine if the existing or proposed storage basins with capacities greater than 15 acre-feet are under State jurisdiction. Pursuant to Part 1 of Division 3 of the California Water Code, dams 25 feet or higher, having a reservoir storage capacity of more than 15 acre-feet, and dams higher than 6 feet, having a capacity of 50 acre-feet or more would fall under State jurisdiction. If any of the existing or proposed basins are under State jurisdiction, a construction application must be filed and all dam safety related issues resolved prior to approval of the application. Please provide us with the height dimensions of existing and proposed dams so we can determine if they fall under State jurisdiction.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report.

If you have any questions, please contact Field Engineer Mutaz Mihyar at (916) 323-1116 or Regional Engineer Richard Sanchez at (916) 322-6206.

Vernon H. Persson, Chief  
Division of Safety of Dams  
(916) 445-7606

MBMihyar:kh  
8/17/94 "Storm"



# San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District

September 13, 1994

John S. Dutton  
City Engineer  
CITY OF VISALIA  
707 W. Acequia Street  
Visalia, CA 93291

**Re: Storm Water Master Plan Update Draft EIR**

The San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District (District) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and has the following comments and suggestions.

The District is encouraged to see the degree of mitigations in the EIR related to short-term dust emissions and feels they are sufficient. The District also agrees that mitigations that relate to the operational phase of this project were dealt with satisfactorily in the 2020 Plan and the Land Use Element EIR.

The District appreciates the opportunity to comment on this Draft Environmental Impact Report. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (805) 861-3682.

Joe O'Bannon  
Environmental Planner, Southern Region

APCD Ref#: S940199

David L. Crow  
*Executive Director Air Pollution Control Officer*

1999 Tolumbe Street, Suite 200 • Fresno, CA 93721 • (209) 497-1000 • Fax: (209) 233-2057

RECEIVED  
SEP 19 1994

**Northern Region**

4280 • Orange Avenue, Suite 120 • Modesto, CA 95356  
(209) 545-7000 • Fax: (209) 545-8652

**Central Region**

1999 Tolumbe Street, Suite 200 • Fresno, CA 93721  
(209) 497-1000 • Fax: (209) 233-2057

**Southern Region**

2700 M Street, Suite 275 • Bakersfield, CA 93301  
(805) 861-3682 • Fax: (805) 861-2060



September 9, 1994

John Dutton, City Engineer  
Public Works Department  
City Of Visalia  
707 W. Acequia  
Visalia, CA 93291

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Report Review - Draft Storm Water  
Master Plan

The Park & Recreation Commission has completed our review of the Draft  
Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Storm Water Master Plan  
Update. Our review is based on:

1. The Commission's role as the City Council's advisory body on Visalia's  
park and recreation system as well as public landscaping projects like  
conservation areas.
2. Consistency with Visalia General Plan goals, objectives, and policies  
related to parks, recreation and conservation.
3. The DEIR's purpose as a public information document and eventually its  
use as the basis for implementing future storm water projects - some  
of which involve parks or conservation areas.

The following pages list-out our comments and are for your use in  
developing the final environmental impact report. We have shared most of  
these comments with you at our two planning sessions. Thanks for the time  
you and Walter Bricker have spent with us on this project.

Kay Truesdale, Vice-chair  
Visalia Park & Recreation Commission

copies: Donna Bailey, Community Facilities & Human Services Director  
Ray Forsyth, City Manager  
Roy Springmeyer, General Services Director  
Visalia Beautification Committee  
Visalia Environmental Committee

2.5 PROPOSED 1994 STORM WATER MASTER PLAN - "In-Town"  
Storage Basins

Page 2-7

The acreage ranges for each of the four basin types should be considered as guidelines or eliminated. They should not be considered standards. Several of the park-pond -- WSB facilities described in Table 2-2 and on Figure 2-3 exceed these acreage figures. (1)

The Water Storage Basin description should be changed to accommodate public access and recreation potential on a case by case basis. The reference to Water Storage Basins on Page 2-15 should also be modified to reflect this change. (2)

Page 2-8 - Table 2-2

Packwood Creek

The McAuliff @ Tulare WS facility has been targeted for limited recreation improvements (children's play equipment, picnic tables, etc.). This determination was made in 1993 when reviewing the need for a neighborhood park at SE McAuliff/Tulare. The Commission concluded that the proposed park could be deleted because the existing basin's central neighborhood location, size, and shape would accommodate recreation improvements. See Page 2-7 comment on modifying the WSB description to include public access and recreation potential. (3)

Three existing neighborhood parks (Blain, Willow Glen and Pinkham) and one proposed ('Linwood') park are listed as 'existing with expansion.' The three existing parks serve important outdoor recreation functions. Any modifications to increase storm water capacity could significantly impact the park's recreation space, aesthetics and maintenance. (4)

The proposed Linwood Park is already excavated and partially shaped. The Commission approved a concept design in 1993. There is great neighborhood need and expectation for this park. Any changes for increased capacity could significantly effect recreation and maintenance. (5)

The Commission does not support storm water expansions in any of these facilities. References to expanding these facilities on pages 3-5, 3-6, 3-30 and 3-31 should reflect Commission comments. (6)

Mill Creek

MC w/o Lovers Lane will be a 14-acre future community park - Coopman Park. (7)

MC w/o Ben Maddox is in the vicinity of the 'Hobo Jungle' a significant habitat area within the existing OS-Conservation designation. This area is surrounded by a BRP land use designation. The proposed neighborhood park basin is not desirable in this future office/conservation location. The future basin required in this area should be designed to accommodate storm water requirements and to complement the linear nature of the habitat area. (8)

MC e/o Lovers Lane is the existing Mill Creek Garden Park.

9

@ Willow Glen School is the existing Willow Glen Park.

10

Modoc Ditch

@ Fairview School is the existing Fairview Village Park.

11

Goshen Drain

Both of the Goshen Ave. area basins have the potential to become the future site of a northwest quadrant community park. Both basin sites should be considered for additional land acquisition to accommodate community-scale outdoor recreation. The n/o Goshen w/o Demaree basin, in the vicinity of Kabo-Karr property, could act as a dual use storm water basin and recreation facility as well as buffer existing residential development from industrial development. The proposed n/o Goshen e/o Shirk basin is in the area initially planned for the northwest quadrant's community park early in the Land Use Element update process.

12

St. Johns River

N/o Houston e/o McAuliff is illustrated in the Northeast Specific Plan (NESP) as an 8-acre park-pond. If the area is reduced, would this action be consistent with the NESP?

13

**2.6 GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT**

Pages 2-12/13 -- Figures 2-4(A) AND (B)

Page 2-17 -- Table 2-4 (Redesignation of Undeveloped Basin Sites)

1) w/o McAuliff s/o of Evans Ditch

Retain the General Plan's Land Use Element Map OS-Conservation designation over a 100'-wide corridor on the sites's north edge. This 100' wide area would buffer any new proposed residential development from the Mill Creek/Evans Ditch 'Jungle' (significant habitat area). This habitat is described in the Northeast Specific Plan's EIR and cited in General Plan (COSR&P and LUE).

14

6) w/o Ben Maddox n/o Mill Creek

Retain the General Plan's Land Use Element Map OS-Conservation designation over the 'Hobo Jungle' (significant habitat area) described in the General Plan (COSR&P and LUE). No formal survey has been made of this area. It consists of Valley Oak trees, elderberry and wild grape along both sides of the old Jennings Ditch (1,300'-long) segment and a 700'-long segment on the north side of Mill Creek. Valley Oaks range in age from 1 to 175 years old. The older trees have diameters up to 5' with 80'-wide canopies. The trees along Jennings Ditch do not appear to be as vigorous as those along Mill Creek because of water deprivation, soil compaction, discing (weed abatement) operations and fires.

15

10) e/o County Center s/o Packwood Creek

Reduce the 20-acre proposed LDR/MDR area to 15 acres and add 5 acres of OS-Parks for a neighborhood park site at SE County Center/'Caldwell By-Pass.'

16



11) e/o Demaree s/o Avenue 276  
Retain OS-Conservation land use designation

17

Page 2-18 -- Table 2-5 Redesignation of Existing Basin Sites

There are no City Council approved names for the proposed parks listed as 'Linwood', 'Stonebrook' or 'Edison.'

18

Change Mill Creek Park to Mill Creek Garden Park.

**3.0 EXISTING SETTING, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

**3.2 LAND USE**

Page 3-1

Any future master plan construction projects involving park and conservation issues should be coordinated with the Visalia Park & Recreation Commission.

19

The Land Use section does not include any reference to the existing OS-Conservation land use designation over Modoc Ditch, Mill Creek, Persian Ditch or Cameron Creek illustrated on the Land Use Element Map. This section deals only with land use designations for "in-town" and "terminal" basin sites.

20

This DEIR section should refer to General Plan goals, objectives, policies and standards related to community waterways and natural features. Briefly, seven waterways (St. Johns River; Mill, Packwood, and Cameron creeks; and Modoc, Evans, and Persian ditches) are identified where continuous corridors are to be created in order to preserve and enhance water-oriented plant and animal life, to maintain flood protection and irrigation functions, and where appropriate, to create recreation open space connections.

21

The General Plan, through a series of standards, specifies varying corridor development setbacks depending upon the type of waterway (river, natural channel, or ditch). The rationale for these waterway corridors is based on two points:

22

1. Use of a development setback along both sides of a waterway. This setback is to reduce potential negative impacts of urban development on the waterway and associated plants and wildlife. This is a commonly accepted way to protect habitat. It is the direct result of the Northeast Specific Plan's biotic survey along the St. Johns River. Further, the COSPR's negative declaration references these setbacks as mitigation measures to protect waterways from urban development.
2. Use of existing riparian trees like valley oaks, sycamores, cottonwoods, and willows to further define waterway corridor boundaries and to enhance habitat.

For more background see:

- o LUE Goal: 2, Objective 2.1, policies 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.4
- o COSR&P Goal:1, Objective 1.2, policies 1.2.1, 1.2.4, 1.2.8, 1.2.9, 1.2.10, 1.2.11 and standards 3 through 6; and Objective 1.4, policies 1.4.1, 1.4.4, 1.4.11

**Page 3-4 -- Table 3-2**

Do the 'Planned Uses' refer to existing General Plan land use designations? If so, should this table also indicate proposed Land Use Element Map amendments? For example, Table 2-2 cites Whitendale at Roeben proposed for Park-Basin. Table 3-2 cites Evans Ditch e/o Roeben s/o Whitendale as Conservation.

23

**Pages 3-5/10**

This DEIR section outlines environmental impacts of the proposed project on land uses with particular emphasis on farm land. The Commission would like some discussion on the proposed update's impacts on park land. What is the update's effect on land designated for OS-Parks and for park-ponds designated OS-Conservation? Please support the 'balanced' conclusion presented on page 3-7. There should be no net loss of park or park-pond land as a result of the proposed project. If there is a net loss, then mitigation measures should be detailed.

24

This section should note the previous discussion with Table 2-4 Redesignation of Undeveloped Basin Sites and the conclusion that redesignation should not result in any significant impacts (page 3-7). Site #1 would retain a 100'-wide OS-Conservation corridor on the site's north edge to buffer new residential development from the Mill Creek/Evans Ditch 'Jungle'. Site #6 retains the OS-Conservation land use designation over the Jennings Ditch and Mill Creek corridors to protect existing Valley Oak trees. Storm water basin requirements here need to complement the significant habitat area. If these measures are taken, then the draft's conclusion of no significant impacts to existing uses would be correct.

25

**3.6 WATER RESOURCES**

**Pages 3-20/27**

This section should discuss City General Services' crews now maintain a majority (approximately 40 miles) of the creek and ditch channels running through the City. This responsibility is the result of a series of agreements with the Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District and various irrigation districts/companies. Project impacts related to channel widening on Modoc and Persian ditches and Mill and Cameron creeks need to generally be outlined for City channel maintenance operations. For example, the proposed project states that portions of Modoc Ditch would be widened from a 6'- to 20'-wide channel. This would be a significant expansion. The DEIR needs to provide some general information now on project improvement impacts related to channel access, safety, etc.

26

27

Note, Water Conservation Ordinance - Stage 3 restrictions are in effect.

28

### 3.7 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Pages 3-27 through 3-34

This section does not refer to any of the General Plan's goals, objectives, policies or standards on community waterways and natural resources. See discussion under Land Use. The purpose of these OS-Conservation waterways is to not only protect existing riparian vegetation like Valley Oak trees; but, also enhance continuous riparian corridors. The proposed update's consistency with these General Plan provisions is not clear.

29

Once again, the DEIR should be a guide for subsequent master plan improvement projects like channel widening. Discussion should include references to Mill Creek's proximity to SH 198 and Caltrans' corridor landscaping plans for the 'Scenic Corridor'. Mitigation needs to be set out for future projects that include measures like: a) coordination with the Park & Recreation Commission and the Visalia Beautification Committee; b) use of Caltrans' SH 198 standards for Valley Oak tree replacement at a ratio of 20:1 for heritage trees greater than 30" in diameter, and c) analysis of the proposal's impact to existing community waterway provisions (i.e. Will greater channel widths warrant greater waterway setbacks? Will greater setback areas require additional land acquisition? Can setback maintenance be included with channel maintenance?).

30

### 4.0 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

Page 4 -2

The DEIR states that the LUE map illustrates the required amount of land to meet the General Plan's parkland to population ratio. It concludes that additional unplanned open space/park land is not needed to comply with this standard. This DEIR conclusion is not correct. Additional parkland will be required to meet parkland needs.

31

The General Plan's parkland to population ratio is 7.6 acres/1,000 population. This ratio is broken-down by three providers:

- o City parks - 4 acres/1,000
- o V.U.S.D. school yard space - 3 acres/1,000
- o Private residential park space - 0.6 acres/1,000

Year 2020 parkland acreage requirements by provider based on the LUE's estimated population of 165,600 are:

- o City parks - 662.4
- o V.U.S.D. school yard space - 496.8
- o private residential park space - 99.3

1,258.5

The LUE Map illustrates approximately 1,315 acres of land designated for OS-Parks by 2020. It must be noted that this figure includes non-City parkland like the 250-acre Valley Oaks Golf Course and expansion area,

Tulare County parks (Mooney Grove-150 acres and Cutler-100 acres), and private space like the Visalia Country Club and Sierra View Golf Course. In addition, a 20-acre proposed community park in the northwest quadrant was recently eliminated from the proposed inventory with no replacement. Further, several proposed neighborhood parks have been eliminated since the LUE was adopted because of new subdivision approvals.

September 8, 1994

City of Visalia

From: Andrew Chamberlain, Advanced Planning Division  
To: Walter Bricker, Engineering Division  
Subject: Planning Division review of Draft EIR for Storm Water Master Plan update for the City of Visalia, SCH No. 93012010.

In the review of the EIR, the following comments have been prepared. In general, the document is well prepared and addresses all of the potential effects of the "Master Plan".

Section      Comment  
Number

- 1.2 CEQA Section 15152.e requires that the location of a copy of the "Master EIR" be provided for any public interested in reviewing the document. The full name of the EIR should also be given. (1)
- 1.7 Does not tell where a copy of the "Master Plan" can be reviewed. (2)
- 2.0 The "OVERVIEW" of the project description needs to contain a concise list of all the actions that this EIR is intended to cover. (3)
  - a. Approval of SWMP Doc.
  - b. GPA - Addition of New Criteria and Policies to Land Use Element.
  - c. GPA - Addition of 3 new symbols to LUE - SWB WSB PB, and some type of boundary symbol for SWB service areas.
  - d. GPA - Addition of symbols to LUE Map
  - e. GPA - Redesignation of Existing Basins
  - f. GPA - Redesignation of 11 Conservation areas.
  - g. Change of Zones for above redesignations.
  - h. Terminal Basins
  - i. Creek/Ditch Widening
  - j. Pipelines
  - Actions "e" through "j" to undergo site specific CEQA review (Initial Study), which may or may-not result in additional mitigation measures.
- 2.5 Page 2-10, Estimated Cost Improvements categories are not explained well, this section is confusing. (4)
- 2.6 First paragraph should be expanded to include the addition of symbols to the LUE Map. (5)

Page 2-11, Last paragraph (Criteria) - Remove... "regardless of the underlying land use designation"..., it is not needed and indicates/infers an absolute power for developers to locate basins where they desire with little or no restrictions. (6)

Figure identification of pages 2-12 and 2-13 should be bigger, it is hard to know which figure you are viewing. (7)

Page 2-14 - New symbols should be added to this figure, also figure label needs to be bigger.

8

Page 2-15, Third paragraph - "The removal of basin symbols from the LUE Map shall be done administratively by City staff as part of the City's on-going Map update Process". What is the administrative process? Who is responsible for the determination and follow-through of symbol removal?

9

Is Table 2-5 referring to Existing Conservation Basin Sites? If so, the Table label should indicate that these are conservation designated sites.

10

3.1 Last sentence of paragraph 2 indicates that specific improvements may be subject to further environmental review. This should be changed to state that they shall be subject to further environmental review, which may or may-not result in additional documentation in accordance with CEQA, and additional mitigation measures if required.

11

3.2 Tables 3-1 and 3-2 are confusing, they should be combined or better detailed to show existing and proposed uses. Also the word "Planned" should be replaced with "Proposed", identify that the land uses are from the 2020 Plan.

12

In General for Section 3.2, some of the discussions of impacts seem to indicate that certain actions will occur as mitigation measures, yet those actions are not always listed under the "Mitigation Measures" part of the specific section. While the mitigation measures are discussed, it is not clear that they are to be used since they are not listed under "Mitigation Measures".

13

5.1 Third paragraph should include a reference to the LUE/EIR having a finding of overriding consideration for those potential effects which could not be mitigated.

14

■ A separate exhibit which contains all of the mitigation measures needs to be provided as an appendix, see LUE EIR for an example.

15

## 11.0 CITY OF VISALIA'S RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

The City's responses to the comment letters presented in Section 10.0 are provided below (with a summary of each comment).

### STATE OFFICE OF PLANNING AND RESEARCH (State Clearinghouse)

**Comment:** The letter submitted by the State Office of Planning and Research (OPR) is the standard notification that OPR provides to lead agencies at the close of the DEIR public review period. Any comment letters on the DEIR that were submitted by State agencies are transmitted with the OPR letter.

**Response:** No response is necessary.

### STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (Caltrans)

**Comment:** Caltrans recommends that the proposed water storage basin south of S.R. 198 and west of Akers be constructed in the near future to accommodate runoff from new frontage roads that will be constructed with the planned upgrading of S.R. 198. The existing drainage system, which includes the Willow Glen School basin, that Caltrans had intended to use to serve the frontage roads currently is at capacity.

**Response:** The City intends to evaluate the feasibility of accommodating frontage road runoff in the proposed basin at Akers and S.R. 198. Considerations include the storage volume that Caltrans requires and the degree to which Caltrans can participate in the funding of the acquisition and development of a basin site. The City will discuss these issues with Caltrans and attempt to develop an arrangement that is beneficial for both parties.

### STATE DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

**Comment:** DWR indicates that any water storage basin with a dam that is 25 feet or higher and more than 15 acre-feet of capacity or a dam that is 6 feet or higher and more than 50 acre-feet of capacity is under State jurisdiction. If any basin is under jurisdiction of the State, a construction application must be filed and all dam safety issues resolved prior to the approval of the application.

**Response:** Because the City's in-town basins are depressed below ground level (by excavation), they do not require a dam of any kind to storage water. Therefore, they are not under the jurisdiction of the State.

If the proposed Mill Creek "Terminal" basin is designed with raised levees and a storage volume that would place the facility under State jurisdiction, the City will submit a construction application and comply with relevant State requirements. Should the proposed expansion of existing "Terminal" basins be subject to State review, the City will comply with relevant State requirements.

## **SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT**

**Comment:** The District is pleased with the mitigation measures presented in the DEIR for the control of dust emissions during construction of Master Plan improvements. The District also agrees that the updated LUE and the LUE Update EIR deal satisfactorily with the mitigation of the long-term air quality impacts that will result from the development of the planned land uses of the updated LUE.

**Response:** No response necessary.

## **CITY OF VISALIA PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**Comment No. 1:** The Visalia Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) indicates that the areas presented for each of the four types of basins on page 2-7 should be considered guidelines or eliminated, but not standards. PRC also indicates that the basins described in Table 2-2 and Figure 2-3 exceed the areas presented on page 2-7 of the DEIR.

**Response:** The acreages presented for the three of four basin types on page 2-7 of the DEIR are considered guidelines and not absolute standards. It should be noted that acreage guidelines were not established for "Water Storage Basin" facilities. The acreage guidelines were developed based on input received from General Services Department staff that are involved with the planning and development of City parks. The "Park-Pond" and "Neighborhood Park" basins identified in Table 2-2 and Figure 2-3 generally appear to be consistent with these acreage guidelines. As discussed above, acreage guideline were not established for "Water Storage Basin" facilities.

**Comment No. 2:** The PRC indicates that the description of "Water Storage Basin" facilities on page 2-7 and page 2-15 should be changed to accommodate public access and recreation potential on a case by case basis.

**Response:** Pursuant to the proposed GPA, designated "Water Storage Basin" facilities will be used strictly for water storage purposes with no recreational uses. However, in the event that there is an interest in adding recreational uses to an existing WSB facility, the site can be re-designated for "Park-Basin" uses. This re-designation would permit recreational uses on the site.

**Comment No. 3:** The existing basin site at Tulare and McAuliff should accommodate public access and potential recreational uses.

**Response:** Because this basin site currently does not accommodate recreational uses, it was identified as a "water storage basin" in Table 2-2. However, because the City intends to develop a park with active recreational uses on the site in the future, it will be re-designated for "Park-Basin" uses with the proposed GPA (see Section 9.0 of this document). This re-designation will permit recreational uses on the site.



**Comment No. 4:** The recommended expansion of Blain, Willow Glen, and Pinkham parks could impact their recreation space, aesthetics and maintenance.

**Response:** In the event that the City expands any of these basins, measures will be incorporated into the design and construction of the expansion that attempt to mitigate potential impacts to the recreational use, aesthetics, and maintenance of the sites. However, it should be noted that as an alternative to expanding these basins, their pump discharge capacities can be increased. Prior to expanding these basins, the City intends to evaluate the feasibility of increasing their discharge capacities and the effect such increases would have on the flows in the channels that receive the discharges.

**Comment No. 5:** The recommended expansion of Linwood Park could impact the recreational use and maintenance of the site.

**Response:** As discussed in the response to Comment No. 4, in the event that the City expands Linwood Park, measures will be incorporated into the design and construction of the expansion that attempt to mitigate potential impacts to the recreational use, aesthetics, and maintenance of the site. However, as an alternative to expanding this basin, its pump discharge capacity can be increased. Prior to expanding this basin, the City intends to evaluate the feasibility of increasing its discharge capacity and the effect an increase would have on the flows in Evans Ditch.

**Comment No. 6:** PRC does not support the expansion of any of the existing basins that also serve as parks.

**Response:** See responses to Comment Nos. 4 and 5.

**Comment No. 7:** The proposed basin at Mill Creek west of Lovers Lane is identified in Table 2-2 as "Neighborhood Park". This park will be a 14-acre future community park (Coopman Park).

**Response:** Table 2-2 has been revised to identify this basin as a "Community Park" (see Section 9.0 of this document).

**Comment No. 8:** The proposed basin at Mill Creek west of Lovers Lane is identified in Table 2-2 as a "Neighborhood Park". This site is in the vicinity of "Hobo Jungle", a significant habitat area that is designated for "Conservation" uses. The site is surrounded by BRP uses and a neighborhood park is not desirable in this office/conservation location. The basin "should be designed to accommodate storm water requirements and to complement the linear nature of the habitat area".

**Response:** Table 2-2 has been revised to identify this basin as a "Water Storage Basin". The City will attempt to develop a basin that complements the linear nature of the habitat area within the constraints of the budget that is established for the project.

Comment No. 9: The existing basin at Mill Creek east of Lovers Lane should be identified in Table 2-2 as "Mill Creek Garden Park".

Response: Table 2-2 has been be revised accordingly.

Comment No. 10: The existing basin at Willow Glen School should be identified in Table 2-2 as "Willow Glen Park".

Response: Table 2-2 has been revised accordingly.

Comment No. 11: The existing basin at Fairview School should be identified in Table 2-2 as "Fairview Village Park".

Response: Table 2-2 has been revised accordingly.

Comment No. 12: Both of the proposed "Goshen Drain" basins identified in Table 2-2 have the potential to become the future site of a northwest quadrant community park. Both basin sites should be considered for additional land acquisition to accommodate community-scale outdoor recreation.

Response: The City intends to purchase the acreage that is needed to develop a basin that can accommodate the volume of storm water runoff that is tributary to the site with funds designated for Master Plan improvements. Any additional land that is needed to accommodate park and recreation uses will have to be funded with monies from other sources.

The site west of Demaree tentatively was identified as a "water storage basin" for the purposes of the Master Plan update, while the site east of Shirk was identified as a "neighborhood park". Should the planned park use of either recommended basin be changed prior to the development of the site, the configuration and acreage of the site may be modified to accommodate the new park use.

Comment No. 13: The proposed basin site located north of Houston and east of McAuliff is identified in Table 2-2 as a 4.2-acre "neighborhood park". The Visalia Northeast Specific Plan identifies this site as an 8-acre park-pond. If the area is reduced, would this action be consistent with the Specific Plan?

Response: The Master Plan indicates that 4.2 acres of land is needed to accommodate the runoff that will be generated within the service area of the basin (with a "neighborhood park" configuration). Any additional land that is needed to comply with the recommendations of the Specific Plan would not be acquired with funds designated for Master Plan improvements.

Comment No. 14: A component of the proposed GPA would eliminate the "Conservation" designation from a basin site that was recommended in the 1987 Master Plan west of McAuliff and south of Evans Ditch. PRC indicates that a 100-foot wide "Conservation" corridor should be retained along the north edge of the site to buffer development from the habitat at the split of Evans Ditch from Mill Creek.

**Response:** The Draft EIR states the proposed GPA includes a component that would re-designate eleven undeveloped basin sites that currently are designated for "Conservation" uses (including the site identified above). However, as discussed in Section 9.0, this component of the GPA has been eliminated from the "project" (for the Final EIR).

**Comment No. 15:** With respect to the component of the proposed GPA identified in Comment No. 14, the "Conservation" designation over the "Hobo Jungle" area at the junction of Jennings Ditch and Mill Creek should be retained.

**Response:** Again, as discussed in the response to Comment No. 14, this component of the GPA has been eliminated from the "project" (for the Final EIR).

**Comment No. 16:** With respect to the component of the proposed GPA identified in Comment No. 14, PRC indicates that the 20-acre site east of County Center and south of Packwood Creek, which the Draft EIR indicated would be re-designated for LDR and MDR uses, should be re-designated for 15 acres of LDR and MDR uses and 5 acres of "Park" uses. The 5 acre "Park" area would serve as a "neighborhood park" at the southeast corner of County Center and Caldwell By-Pass.

**Response:** Again, as discussed in the response to Comment No. 14, this component of the GPA has been eliminated from the "project" (for the Final EIR).

**Comment No. 17:** With respect to the component of the proposed GPA identified in Comment No. 14, PRC indicates that the "Conservation" designation should be retained at the site located east of Demaree and south of Avenue 276.

**Response:** Again, as discussed in the response to Comment No. 14, this component of the GPA has been eliminated from the "project" (for the Final EIR).

**Comment No. 18:** There are not City Council-approved names for the proposed parks listed as "Linwood", "Stonebrook", and "Edison" in Table 2-5. Mill Creek Park should be referred to as Mill Creek Garden Park in Table 2-5.

Staff acknowledges that the three proposed parks, which are established basins, were improperly identified in the Table 2-5 of the Draft EIR. This table has been revised accordingly. (Refer to Section 9.0 of this document - note that this table is identified as Table 2-4 in the revised Section 2.6).

**Comment No. 19:** Any future Master Plan construction projects involving park and conservation issues should be coordinated with the Visalia PRC.

**Response:** Staff intends to comply with this PRC request. All future Master Plan construction projects that involve park and conservation issues will be coordinated with the Commission.

Comment No. 20: PRC indicates that Section 3.2 of the Draft EIR, Land Use, does not include a reference to the existing "Conservation" designation along Modoc Ditch, Mill Creek, Persian Ditch, and Cameron Creek, as illustrated on the LUE Map.

Response: The Land Use Section of the Draft EIR did not include a discussion the waterway channel land use designations because the updated Master Plan recommended channel "improvements", which consist of widening specific channel reaches, were not expected to result in a significant change to the existing or planned uses of the channels. The recommended widening is intended to increase the capacity of the channels without significantly disturbing riparian habitat along the channels.

The recommended channel widening includes approximately three miles of a straight and sterile reach of Modoc Ditch, approximately two miles of Mill Creek west of Linwood Street, 700 feet of the Middle Branch of Persian Ditch immediately west of S.R. 99, and 3,500 feet of Cameron Creek upstream of Mooney Grove. As discussed in Section 3.7.2 of the Draft EIR, the proposed widening of Mill Creek, Persian Ditch and Cameron Creek potentially could impact mature valley oak trees and other riparian habitat along the channel. However, the City intends to conduct a pre-construction survey of the channels to establish the location of oaks and other significant habitat. With the survey data, the City will develop channel widening plans that accommodate existing mature oak trees to the greatest possible extent and reduce the impact to other significant habitat.

Following the development of the widening plans, the City will notify the State Department of Fish and Game (DFG) of its intention to widen the channels and incorporate mitigation measures identified by DFG into the widening projects.

Comment No. 21: PRC indicates that Section 3.2 of the Draft EIR should refer to General Plan goals, objectives, policies, and standards related to community waterways and natural features.

Response: Goal 2 of the City's updated LUE reads as follows:

"Improve the quality of air, land, water, and animal life in the Visalia planning area".

The following objective is under this Goal:

"Preserve and enhance natural and rural features such as waterways, valley oaks, and agriculture as significant assets and community resources.

There are a number of implementing policies under this Objective that relate to the preservation, enhancement, and utilization of these local resources.

With the mitigation measures identified in Section 12.0 of this document, the recommended improvements of the updated Master Plan are considered consistent with this aspect of the LUE in that the Plan recommends the use of the waterways in Visalia to dispose of storm water runoff and this use should not result in significant degradation of identified significant habitat in and near the waterways.

**Comment No. 22:** The General Plan specifies varying corridor development setbacks depending upon the type of waterway.

**Response:** The updated Master Plan and the proposed GPA, as currently defined, are not expected to result in development within the channel setbacks specified in the General Plan.

**Comment No. 23:** Do the "Planned Uses" in Table 3-2 refer to existing General Plan land use designations? If so, should this table also refer to the proposed LUE Map amendment?

**Response:** The "Planned Uses" in Table 3-2 do refer to current General Plan land use designations. With regard to refer to the proposed LUE Map amendment, the sites identified in Table 3-2 are for recommended undeveloped basins, while the proposed amendment (as described in the Draft EIR) involves the re-designation of "Conservation" designations that were intended to reserve sites for basins recommended in the 1987 Master Plan. However, as discussed above, this component of the GPA has been removed from the "project" for the purposes of the Final EIR.

**Comment No. 24:** What is the updated Master Plan's effect on land designated for "Open Space - Parks" and park-ponds designed for "Open Space - Conservation"? Please support the "balanced" conclusion presented on page 3-7. There should be no net loss of park or park-pond land as a result of the proposed project.

**Response:** As discussed in Section 3.2.2, in the interest of maintaining consistency with the 1987 Master Plan and updated LUE, eight of the remaining eleven undeveloped basins that were recommended in the 1987 Plan have been perpetuated in the updated Plan. While three of 1987 Plan basins were not recommended in the updated Plan, the updated Plan does recommend five new basins that were not included in the 1987 Plan. Therefore, the updated Plan will result in a net increase of two basins.

The proposed GPA, as defined in the Draft EIR, included the re-designation of eleven sites that currently are designated for "Conservation" use (based on the recommendations of the 1987 Master Plan). However, as discussed above, this component of the GPA has been removed from the "project" for the purposes of the Final EIR.

**Comment No. 25:** PRC refers to the mitigation measures that should be implemented with the re-designation of Site No. 1 (west of McAuliff and south of Mill Creek) of Site No. 6 (west of Ben Maddox and north of Mill Creek).

Response: Refer to the responses for Comment Nos. 8 and 14.

Comment No. 26: PRC indicates that because the City currently is responsible for maintaining most of the waterways in Visalia, the recommended channel widening could result in a significant increase in maintenance-related work.

Response: The City's General Services Department staff that maintain the channels indicated that a wider channel should not result in a significant increase in their work load. They also indicated that in some respects a wider channel actually will facilitate their maintenance operations. For example, many channel reaches have a bottom that is too narrow to accommodate maintenance vehicles and improvements or other barriers restrict access along their shoulders. A wider channel will allow City crews to operate their vehicles on the bottom of the channel.

Comment No. 27: The Draft EIR needs to provide some general information on project improvement impacts related to channel access, safety, etc.

Response: The recommended channel widening is not expected to result in increased public access to the waterways in Visalia or significant safety impacts. The widening, which generally is recommended in downstream reaches that are flanked by rural undeveloped lands, will not increase the depth of flow in the channels or significantly effect flow velocities in the channels.

Comment No. 28: Stage 3 water conservation restrictions currently are in effect.

Response: The DEIR indicates that Stage 2 restrictions currently are in effect. This mistake is acknowledged.

Comment No. 29: Section 3.7 of the Draft EIR, Biological Resources, does not refer to any of the General Plan's goals, objectives, policies or standard on community waterways and natural resources.

Response: Refer to the response to Comment No. 21.

Comment No. 30: The Draft EIR should be a guide for subsequent Master Plan improvement projects. Mitigation measures for future projects should be identified. These measures should include: 1) coordination with the PRC and Beautification Committee; 2) use of Caltrans S.R. 198 standards for oak tree replacement (20:1 for heritage trees greater than 30 inches in diameter; and 3) analysis of the impact of the recommended channel to existing community water provisions.

Response: AS discussed in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIR, this EIR is considered a "tiered" EIR, which provides a general evaluation of the impacts that are directly attributable to the construction of updated Master Plan improvements. Subsequent "second tier" environmental documents for future improvement projects (not defined at this time) will address project-specific issues that were not adequately addressed in this "first tier" document. There would be no need to repeat the discussion of issues that are adequately addressed in the "first tier" document.

Based on this tiered concept, specific impacts and the associated mitigation measures for future projects will be identified at the time the project is defined.

**Comment No. 31:** The Draft EIR states that the LUE map provides the acreage needed to meet the General Plan's park land to population ratio. This conclusion is not correct. Additional park land will be required to meet parkland needs.

**Response:** Staff acknowledges this comment, however, as discussed in the response to Comment No. 24, the updated Plan will result in a net increase of two basins on lands that currently are not designated for "Park" or "Conservation" uses. In this regard, the updated Master Plan will assist the City in its efforts to achieve the desired park land to population ratio. Furthermore, as discussed in the response to Comment No. 24, the updated Master Plan and the proposed GPA, as currently defined, will not result in the loss of any planned conservation or park land.

Therefore, although the Draft EIR may be incorrect with respect to the City's compliance with the General Plan park land to population ratio, the "project" will not adversely effect the City's efforts to reach the desired ratio. In fact, while the primary purpose of the Master Plan is to identify the improvements that are required to collect and dispose of storm water runoff, as an indirect benefit, it does result in the construction of basins that also serve as parks.

#### **CITY OF VISALIA PLANNING STAFF**

**Comment No. 1:** CEQA requires that the location of a copy of the LUE "Master" EIR be provided. The full name of this EIR also should be given.

**Response:** The Draft EIR did not indicate that copies of the LUE "Master" EIR are available at the Engineering and Planning Counter at City Hall. The full name of this document is Final Environmental Impact Report on the Visalia Land Use Element Update to the Visalia General Plan, State Clearinghouse Number 90020160.

**Comment No. 2:** The Draft EIR does not indicate where a copy of the updated Storm Water Master Plan can be reviewed.

**Response:** The Draft EIR should have stated that the updated Master Plan is available to the public to review at the Engineering and Planning Counter at City Hall.

**Comment No. 3:** The "Overview" section of the project description (Section 2.1) needs to contain a concise list of all the actions that the Master Plan Update EIR is intended to cover.

**Response:** The "Overview" section has been revised for the Final EIR. Refer to Section 9.0 of this document for the revised "Overview" section.

Comment No. 4: The estimated improvement cost categories on page 2-10 are not well explained.

Response: The improvement cost categories are explained below.

Existing Deficiencies: The updated Master Plan identified deficiencies in the existing drainage system (that serves existing development). The primary deficiency is Mill Creek, which receives flows (during the design event) that exceed its conveyance capacity. The updated Master Plan recommends the construction of several basins to detain water that currently is discharged directly into the channel.

Industrial Park: Although properties in the Industrial Park are required to retain storm water runoff on-site, the updated Master Plan recommended a system of improvements to drain the streets and frontage of these properties.

Urban Reserve Areas: This category includes the land that is designated "Urban Reserve" on the LUE Map. The "Urban Reserve" (UR) areas are outside of the 2010 Urban Development Boundary. The cost of the improvements needed to serve the UR areas was presented separately because the estimated costs cannot be allocated until the land is designated for specific urban uses.

Future (non-industrial) Development: This category includes all future non-industrial development within the City's 2020 Urban Development Boundary. For the purposes of the updating the Master Plan, it was assumed that this future development would be consistent with the designated land uses of the LUE Map. This category does not include existing urban development within the Visalia planning area.

Comment No. 5: The first paragraph of Section 2.6 should be expanded to include the addition of symbols to the LUE Map.

Response: This change has been made. As discussed above, Section 2.6 of the DEIR has been revised. Refer to Section 9.0 of this document for the revisions.

Comment No. 6: In the last paragraph on page 2-11, remove "...regardless of the underlying land use designation...". It is not needed and indicates/infers an absolute power for developer to located basins where they desire with little or no restrictions.

Response: This change to the basin location criteria has been made. As discussed above, Section 2.6 of the DEIR has been revised. Refer to Section 9.0 of this document for the revised criteria.

Comment No. 7: The identification of Figure 2-4 (a) and Figure 2-4 (b) should be larger.

Response: Although the lettering appears to be legible, in hindsight, larger lettering could have been use to identify the figures.



Comment No. 8: New proposed land use category symbols should be added to Figure 2-4 (c) on page 2-14. Also, the figure identification needs to be larger.

Response: The purpose of this figure is to provide a legend of the existing land use designations shown on the previous two pages. Therefore, the proposed new uses were not represented on this figure.

With regard to the figure identification, refer to the response to Comment No. 7.

Comment No. 9: In the third paragraph on page 2-15, what is the administrative process that is referred to?

Response: This portion of the basin location criteria has been revised. The reference to administrative changes to the LUE Map has been removed. Refer to Section 9.0 of this document for the revised criteria.

Comment No. 10: Is Table 2-5 referring to existing conservation basin sites? If so, the heading should indicate that these are conservation-designated sites.

Response: Table 2-5 in the Draft EIR does refer to existing basin sites that currently are designated for "Conservation" uses. This has been clarified in the revision to Section 2.6 of the Draft EIR. Refer to Section 9.0 of this document for the revision (Note that this table is identified as Table 2.4 in the revised Section 2.6).

Comment No. 11: The last sentence of the second paragraph of Section 3.1 indicates that specific improvements may be subject to further environmental review. This sentence should be changed to state that specific improvements shall be subject to further environmental review.

Response: Staff concurs with this comment. The last sentence of the second paragraph of Section 3.1 of the EIR should read as follows:

"Therefore, it is understood the construction of specific Master Plan improvements shall be subject to further environmental review as improvement projects are defined in the future."

Comment No. 12: Tables 3-1 and 3-2 are confusing. They should be combined or better detailed to show existing and proposed uses. The word "Planned" should be replaced with "Proposed" and indicate that the land uses are from the 2020 Plan.

Response: Table 3-1 presents the existing land uses are the "in-town" basin sites that were recommended in the updated Master Plan, as discussed on page 3-2. Table 3-2 presents the LUE designated land uses at these sites, as discussed on page 3-3.

Comment No. 13: Some of the discussions of impacts seem to indicate that certain actions will occur as mitigation measures, yet those action are not always listed under the "Mitigation Measures".

**Response:** In the discussion of impacts, actions are identified that effectively will mitigate identified potential impacts. However, because these actions are considered part of the City's standard operating procedures or it is fully expected that they will be incorporated into the project, they were not identified as mitigation measures.

**Comment No. 14:** The third paragraph of Section 5.1 should include a reference to the LUE Update EIR have a finding of overriding consideration for those potential effects which could not be mitigated.

**Response:** Staff concurs with this comment. The following sentence should be added at the end of Section 5.1:

"A "State of Overriding Considerations" was adopted with City of Visalia Resolution No. 91-105 with the LUE Update EIR for the cumulative updated LUE impacts that cannot be mitigated to a level of insignificance."

**Comment No. 15:** A separate exhibit which contains all of the mitigation measures needs to be provided as an appendix.

**Response:** The final mitigation measures for the "project" are identified in Section 12.0 of this document. These measures also are summarized in the attached "Mitigation Monitoring Report".

## 12.0 FINAL EIR MITIGATION MEASURES

This section presents the final mitigation measures that the City is expected to implement in order to reduce the five (5) identified potential environmental impacts that are directly attributed to the adoption and implementation of the City's updated Storm Water Master Plan to a level of insignificance. Mitigation measures for the cumulative impacts associated with implementation of the City's updated LUE, which are considered "indirect" impacts of the Master Plan project, are presented in the LUE Update EIR.

In addition to the five identified potentially significant impacts, the City is proposing mitigation measures for two potential impacts that are not considered significant. These impacts, which relate to the loss of farm land and growth inducing pressures, and the recommended mitigation measures also are described below.

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**Impact:** Deterioration of air quality during construction of improvements

See Section 3.0 of the DEIR for a discussion of the impact.

**Mitigation:** In order to mitigate the potential short-term impacts associated with the installation of Master Plan lines, the City shall ensure that the following dust control measures are implemented:

- 1) All material excavated or graded shall be sufficiently watered to prevent excessive dust generation. Watering shall occur at least twice a day, preferably in the late morning and at the end of the work day.
- 2) All clearing, grading and excavation activities shall cease when the wind speed exceeds 30 mph for one hour.
- 3) All material transported off-site shall be either sufficiently watered or securely covered to prevent excessive dust.
- 4) The area disturbed by clearing, grading, and excavation activities shall be minimized at all times.
- 5) On-site vehicles speeds shall not exceed 15 mph.
- 6) All internal combustion engines operating on the site shall be properly maintained and well tuned.

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**Impact:** Increased channel "seepage" losses during the irrigation season

See Section 3.0 of the DEIR for a discussion of the impact.

**Mitigation:** As mitigation for the expected increase in water losses in Modoc Ditch and Persian Ditch during the irrigation season, the City shall compensate the ditch companies in accordance with the terms of the recent agreements between the City and the ditch companies.

**Impact:** Disturbance of potential kit fox habitat

See Section 3.0 of the DEIR for a discussion of the impact.

**Mitigation:** The City shall conduct pre-construction biological surveys at the site of the proposed new Mill Creek basin and the sites of the existing basins that the Master Plan recommends expanding. If the survey results indicate that the sites provide habitat for kit fox or other sensitive species, the City shall consult with the Department of Fish and Game to develop plans to construct/expand the basins without adversely effecting the animals.

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**Impact:** Disturbance of valley oak trees and riparian habitat

See Section 3.0 of the DEIR for a discussion of the impact

**Mitigation:** The City shall conduct pre-construction biological surveys of the channel segments that the City intends to widen. Based on information obtained during the surveys, the City shall develop widening plans that accommodate mature oak trees to the greatest possible extent and reduce the impact to other significant habitat.

Prior to commencing construction, the City shall notify DFG of its intention to widen the channels and apply, as necessary, for a Stream Restoration Permit. During construction, the City shall comply with the measures identified in the Permit.

In the event that any oak trees are removed or severely damaged during the widening of the channels (or any other actions related to the implementation of the proposed Master Plan), the City should plant and maintain a minimum of three oak trees as mitigation for each tree that is removed or damaged.

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**Impact:** Accumulation of storm water runoff contaminants in storage basin soils

See Section 3.0 of the DEIR for a discussion of the impact.

**Mitigation:** The City shall establish a program to monitor the bottom soils in storm water basins to determine if unacceptable concentrations of contaminants are accumulating at the bottom of the basins. As necessary, the bottom soils shall be removed and disposed of in an environmentally sound manner. The recommended monitoring program shall be established and implemented within 12 months of the City's submittal of an application for coverage under the State's General Permit for municipal storm water discharges.

The following two mitigation measures are for potential impacts that are not considered significant. Nevertheless, the mitigation measures are recommended to focus attention on two local issues of concern; loss of farm land and growth inducing pressures.

**Impact:        Loss of farm land**

The proposed construction of new "in-town" basins, expansion of existing "in-town" basins, and "terminal" basin construction/expansion will result in the loss of approximately 175 acres of farm land, including 125 acres adjacent to "terminal" basin sites. However, as discussed in Section 3.2.2, this loss of farm land is not considered significant.

**Mitigation:** Although the loss of farm land that will occur as a result of the project is not considered significant, the City is proposing the following mitigation measure: When the City acquires farm land for the purpose of developing a future basin and the basin will not be constructed for a least one year following the acquisition, the City shall allow the property owner (or other interested individuals) to continue farming the site until such time as the basin is needed to serve surrounding development projects.

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**Impact:        Growth inducing pressures**

The proposed Master Plan generally is not expected to have significant potential growth-inducing impacts because most of the recommended improvements only will serve a relatively small area and there should not be pressures to construct the improvements until the land within the service area is ready to develop. Refer to Section 3.2.2 for further discussion of the potential growth inducing impacts of the project.

**Mitigation:** Although the growth inducing impacts of the project are not considered significant, the following mitigation measure is proposed: The City shall resist pressures to prematurely develop lands that can be served by installed Master Plan improvements by adhering to the growth phasing policies of the updated LUE. Refer to Section 3.2.3 for further discussion of the growth phasing policies contained in the LUE.

**APPENDIX**

**MITIGATION MONITORING PROGRAM**

In compliance with Section 21081.6 of the Public Resources Code, the City of Visalia prepared a mitigation monitoring program to ensure that the final mitigation measures presented in Section 12.0 of this document are implemented. The mitigation monitoring program is presented on the following page.

**UPDATED STORM WATER MASTER PLAN  
MITIGATION MONITORING PROGRAM**

The following measures were included in the Final EIR for the City's Updated Storm Water Master Plan to mitigate potentially significant environmental effects. As the lead agency, the City of Visalia is responsible for monitoring the performance of these mitigation measures. In accordance with Section 21081.6 of the Public Resources Code, the City shall complete this monitoring program to ensure that the mitigation measures are implemented.

<u>Potential Impact</u>	<u>Mitigation Measure</u>	<u>Implementation Period</u>	<u>Monitoring Milestone</u>	<u>Completion Verification</u> Name      Date      Remarks
1) Dust generation during construction	Dust suppression measures identified in the Final EIR.	During construction	On-going during construction	
2) Increased channel seepage losses (following widening of channels)	Compensate impacted ditch companies in accordance with the terms of the recent agreements between the City and ditch companies.	Following widening of channels	On-going (until increase in losses is diminished)	
3) Disturbance of potential kit fox habitat (during construction of terminal basins)	Conduct pre-construction surveys at "terminal" basin construction sites. If the survey indicates that habitat would be disturbed, City shall consult with State DF&G.	Prior to construction	On-going (until construction begins)	
4) Disturbance of oak trees and riparian habitat (during channel widening)	Conduct a "pre-construction" survey of channel reaches that are to be widened. Develop widening plans that accommodate oak trees to the greatest possible extent and reduce impact to other significant habitat. City shall consult with State DF&G.	Prior to construction	On-going (until construction begins)	
5) Accumulation of storm water runoff contaminants in storage basin soils	Establish a program to monitor the bottom soils in basins to determine if unacceptable concentrations of contaminants are accumulating at the bottom of the basins. As necessary, the soils shall be removed and disposed of in an environmental sound manner.	Following submittal of an application for coverage under the State's General Permit for municipal storm water discharges.	Within 12 months of submittal application	