

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**

MID-PACIFIC REGION

**SOUTH-CENTRAL CALIFORNIA AREA OFFICE
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA**

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

WESTSIDE PARKWAY BRIDGE

FONSI-07-115

Recommended by:

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Date: _____

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DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Westside Parkway Bridge

In accordance with section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the South-Central California Area Office of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has determined that the issuance of permits to the City of Bakersfield (City) to construct a bridge over the Friant-Kern Canal (FKC), replace FKC liner, and relocate sewer and gas lines and issuance of a permit to Shell Oil company to relocate their pipeline are not major federal actions that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment and an environmental impact statement is not required. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is supported by Reclamation's *Westside Parkway Bridge* Environmental Assessment as well as the Federal Highway Administration's EA/EIR entitled Tier 2 Environmental Assessment/Final Environmental Impact Report – Westside Parkway dated September 2006, and both are hereby incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND

The City proposes to construct a new east-west freeway referred to as the Westside Parkway. The freeway would be approximately 8.1 miles long and extend from approximately Heath Road to State Route 99 in the City and an unincorporated portion of Kern County. The Westside Parkway is needed to reduce congestion on existing east-west arterials in west Bakersfield and is planned for an ultimate 8-lane build out, although fewer lanes would be required initially. The City, Caltrans, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) prepared a joint Tier 2 Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report (EA/EIR) that evaluated impacts of this Project and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Final EIR for the Project in 2006.

The Westside Parkway would cross the Friant-Kern Canal (FKC) and Reclamation's 450-foot wide right-of-way (ROW) associated with the FKC. Because the planned clearance over the FKC would be insufficient to maintain the canal liner, Reclamation requested that the City reconstruct the canal liner beneath the Westside Parkway crossing. Project construction would necessitate relocation of utility lines including sewer, natural gas, and a Shell Oil line. The City requested permits from Reclamation for bridge and off-ramp crossings, canal liner replacement, and utility line relocation within Reclamation's ROW. Shell Oil will also require a permit from Reclamation to relocate their pipeline. Construction disturbances are expected to be about 2.6 acres. Reclamation's purpose and need for the EA are to document and delineate terms and conditions so no harm occurs to federally owned facilities.

FINDINGS

Following are the reasons why the impacts of the Proposed Action are not significant.

Water Quality: The Proposed Action would implement measures in accordance with the construction Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan that would result in minimal impacts to water quality. The construction activities related to the canal lining portion of the Proposed Action would be entirely within the prism of the canal and would occur during a scheduled dewatering of the canal. The canal lining is being done in anticipation of potential lining of the entire lower portions of the canal to alleviate conveyance constraints. With the overpass construction, easy access to the canal for lining and raising the height of the liner will be severely limited so the canal lining underneath the overpass will occur prior to overpass construction in the event relining the entire canal occurs. Currently there are no specific plans to reline the entire canal and increase capacity but the need has been recognized. The canal relining has also been designed to result in zero maintenance along this portion of the canal since the overpass height will

limit equipment access into the canal. The result of this project is no change to canal capacity since only a portion of the canal lining will be raised. Water deliveries will not be affected any more than would have occurred due to the scheduled canal dewatering. The use of Reclamation's ROW for the building of the overpass over the FKC will not impact water resources. Due to the relining efforts, the canal will not be impacted due to maintenance restrictions due to the overpass design. Therefore, the Proposed Action would have no effect on water resources.

Air Quality: The Proposed Action would implement measures in the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Regulation VIII during construction that would result in minimal impacts to air quality.

Land Uses: The Proposed Action would result in changes to the surrounding land uses consistent with land use plans and policy. The City of Bakersfield is replacing the canal access road lost due to the overpass within Reclamation's ROW and is relining the canal to eliminate the need for maintenance therefore the overpass will not change land use conditions within Reclamation's ROW. The Proposed Action would have no effect on land use.

Biological Resources: Very little, if any, habitat or biological resources of any kind are on the project site due traffic and maintenance of the area with herbicides. During the construction period, management practices shall be undertaken to avoid temporary impacts to SJKF. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) standardized recommendations for protection of the SJKF will be implemented prior to or during ground disturbance. The FWS issued a biological opinion (BO) entitled Endangered Species Formal Consultation on the Proposed Corridor for State Route 58 between State Route 99 and Interstate 5, Kern County, California dated March 22, 1999. Within this BO the FWS found that the San Joaquin kit fox travel corridors at the FKC crossing will not be obstructed. Reclamation has included BO mitigation measures and the standard avoidance measures in the EA.

Reclamation has determined that the Proposed Action will have no effect on Threaten and Endanger Species or on biological resources in general.

Cultural Resources: Caltrans submitted a Historic Property Survey Report to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in 2004 that concluded that the FKC was eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and the Westside Parkway Project would have no adverse effect on the FKC because of design and construction provisions. SHPO concurred with these findings and determination.

Indian Trust Assets: Since the action area is entirely situated on Reclamation land, there are no tribes possessing legal property interests held in trust by the United States in the action area for the Proposed Action. The nearest Indian trust assets to this action are located at the about 38 miles away. This action will have no adverse effect on Indian Trust Assets.

Socioeconomic Resources: The canal lining aspect of the Proposed Action is limited to a 250 foot length. No new conveyance capacity, and therefore potential water movement, will be effectuated by the limited canal lining. Reclamation's ROW provides no economic contribution to the surrounding area and therefore minor modifications to this ROW will have. The Proposed Action will have no effect on socioeconomic resources.

Environmental Justice: As the Proposed Action is limited to Reclamation's ROW and canal interior, implementing the Proposed Action would not disproportionately affect minorities or low-income populations and communities.

Cumulative Impacts: As the Proposed Action does not have any effects to any resources, it, when added to other past, present, and future actions does not result in additional diversions of water, or significantly impact biological, cultural, recreation or socioeconomic resources. Neither Indian Trust

Assets nor disadvantaged or minority populations would be impacted. Water quality would not be degraded as a result of construction activities. Overall there would be no cumulative impacts due to this Proposed Action.