

## = California State Route 198 =

State Route 198 ( SR 198 ) is an east - west state highway that begins at U.S. Route 101 ( US 101 ) south of King City and ends in Sequoia National Park . It connects the California Central Coast to the mid - Central Valley through Hanford and Visalia , although the most developed portion is in the Central Valley itself . SR 198 intersects the major north - south routes in the Central Valley , including Interstate 5 ( I - 5 ) , SR 33 , and SR 99 . The highway that would become SR 198 was approved for construction in the 1910s through three bond issues , and was added to the state highway system in 1934 . Parts of the highway were upgraded to freeway during the 1960s . Another portion is being converted to an expressway in between Hanford and Visalia , with completion scheduled for late 2012 .

## = = Route description = =

The road begins at a remote interchange with US 101 south of King City in the Salinas River Valley . Leaving US 101 , SR 198 passes through the Priest Valley , climbs the Diablo Range as a two - lane road and crosses over an unnamed pass . It then descends along Warthan Canyon to the town of Coalinga in the agricultural Central Valley , where it briefly runs concurrently with SR 33 . On both sides of Coalinga the road passes through the enormous Coalinga Oil Field .

SR 198 then intersects Interstate 5 ( I - 5 ) in Fresno County near the Harris Ranch Airport before becoming a freeway west of Lemoore . The landscape becomes a bit less rural as it goes through Hanford and passes near the Hanford Municipal Airport , where it continues as a four - lane expressway from the intersection with SR 43 until SR 198 encounters a freeway to - go interchange with SR 99 as it enters Visalia , the largest city it passes through , and goes by the Visalia Municipal Airport . It remains a freeway until east of Visalia , intersecting SR 65 and passing by College of the Sequoias . The road starts to climb the forested Sierra Nevada and ends at Sequoia National Park , near Lake Kaweah . This is one of the main routes providing access to Sequoia National Park , the other being SR 180 to the north .

SR 198 is part of the California Freeway and Expressway System and is eligible for the State Scenic Highway System as designated by the California State Legislature ; however , it is not a scenic highway as defined by Caltrans .

## = = History = =

All of SR 198 was added to the state highway system in the three bond issues floated to pay for the construction of the system . The first bond issue , approved by the state 's voters in 1910 , included the road from Visalia west to Hanford , connecting the two county seats with the central north - south highway ( Route 4 , now SR 99 ) . As part of the 1916 bond issue , the route was extended west from Hanford through Coalinga to the coast trunk highway ( Route 2 , now US 101 ) near San Lucas , and assigned it the Route 10 designation . The third bond issue , passed in 1919 , included a further extension east from Visalia to Sequoia National Park . The entire length of Route 10 was marked as Sign Route 198 in 1934 , and this number was adopted legislatively in the 1964 renumbering . The portion east of Interstate 5 near Coalinga was added to the California Freeway and Expressway System in 1959 , and parts of it have been built as such . The construction of the freeway east of Visalia to Road 192 was approved in January 1961 , with the remainder of the freeway unplanned at that time as contingent on the routing of SR 65 . The projected cost in 1958 of the entire freeway east of Visalia was \$ 13 million ( \$ 262 million in today 's dollars ) and was scheduled to be completed by 1964 . The freeway through Visalia was completed by 1965 , with an expressway connecting it to US 99 . Also completed was the expressway heading west out of Hanford , with part of it access - controlled west of Lemoore .

Construction began in November 2009 on a project to widen a two - lane , 10 - mile section of SR 198 between SR 43 and SR 99 into a four - lane expressway . The \$ 60 million project was completed in December 2012 .

= = Future = =

The Kings County Association of Governments has plans to improve the state highways within the county . Developers are interested in building distribution warehouses in Kings County because of its strategic location midway between the Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay areas , but they are currently turned off by the lack of freeway access . For SR 198 , the plan is to extend the freeway segment from Naval Air Station Lemoore to I @-@ 5 . However , Kings County voters have shown little interest in passing any transportation taxes to fund these projects .

= = Major intersections = =

Except where prefixed with a letter , postmiles were measured on the road as it was in 1964 , based on the alignment that existed at the time , and do not necessarily reflect current mileage . R reflects a realignment in the route since then , M indicates a second realignment , L refers an overlap due to a correction or change , and T indicates postmiles classified as temporary ( for a full list of prefixes , see the list of postmile definitions ) . Segments that remain unconstructed or have been relinquished to local control may be omitted . The numbers reset at county lines ; the start and end postmiles in each county are given in the county column .