County of Calaveras
Department of Planning

Peter N. Maurer ~ Planning Director
Phone (209) 754-6394 *Fax (209) 754-6540*
www.planning.calaverasgov.us

Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration
Review Period: March 13, 2020 through April 12, 2020

Initial Study ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

For: AT&T
ZA & AUP 2019-045
Assessor's Parcel No. 056-008-003

1. Project Title: 2019-045 – Zoning Amendment and Administrative Use Permit for AT&T

2. Lead Agency Name and Address: Calaveras County Planning Department
   891 Mountain Ranch Road
   San Andreas, CA 95249

3. Contact Person and Phone Number: Scott Speer, Planner II 209-754-6394

4. Project Location: 2103 Falcon Mine Rd. Murphys, CA

5. Project Sponsor's Name and Address: AT&T Mobility c/o Ashley Smith
   605 Coolidge Drive, Suite 100
   Folsom, CA 95630

6. General Plan Designation: Rural Transition B

7. Zoning: U (Unclassified)

8. Project Description: A zoning amendment to rezone the property from U (unclassified) to RR (rural residential) and an Administrative Use Permit to install a new telecommunications tower and supporting ground equipment.

   The subject property is located at 2103 Falcon Mine Rd. Murphys, CA. APN 056-008-003 is a 2.5 acre property in the NE ¼ of the SW ¼ of Section 01, T03N, R13E, MDB&M.

9. Surrounding land uses and setting:

Location	General Plan Designation	Zoning	Land Use
North	Rural Transition B	U (Unclassified)	Single-family residence
South	Working Lands	U (Unclassified)	Agriculture
East	Rural Transition B	U (Unclassified)	Single-family Residence
West	Working Lands	U (Unclassified)	Single-family Residence

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required: **NONE**

11. Have California Native American Tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code §21080.3.1?

    NO

    If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.? **NO**

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact", as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

☐ Aesthetics	☐ Agricultural and Forestry Resources	☐ Air Quality
☐ Biological Resources	☐ Cultural Resources	☐ Energy
☐ Geology/Soils	☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐ Hazards & Hazardous Materials
☐ Hydrology/Water Quality	☐ Land Use / Planning	☐ Mineral Resources
☐ Noise	☐ Population / Housing	☐ Public Services
☐ Recreation	☐ Transportation	☐ Tribal Cultural Resources
☐ Utilities/Service Systems	☐ Wildfire	☐ Mandatory Findings of Significance

DETERMINATION (To be completed by Lead Agency):

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

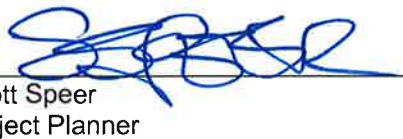
☐ I find that the proposed project **COULD NOT** have a significant effect on the environment and a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

☒ I find that, although the original scope of the proposed project **COULD** have had a potentially significant effect on the environment, there **WILL NOT** be a significant effect because revisions/mitigations to the project have been made by or agreed to by the applicant. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a potentially significant effect on the environment and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** or its functional equivalent will be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a potentially significant impact on the environment. However, at least one impact has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document, pursuant to applicable legal standards, and has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis, as described in the report's attachments. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required, but it must analyze only the impacts not sufficiently addressed in previous documents.

☐ I find that, although the proposed project could have had a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects have been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or Negative Declaration, pursuant to applicable standards, and have been avoided or mitigated, pursuant to an earlier EIR, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, all impacts have been avoided or mitigated to a less-than-significant level and no further action is required.



Scott Speer
Project Planner

3/10/2020
Date

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4. "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from "Earlier Analyses," as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).
5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
   a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
   b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
   c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
8. This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
9. The explanation of each issue should identify:
   a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
   b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance

Environmental Impact Analysis:

The proposed project is for a zoning amendment to rezone the property from U (unclassified) to RR (rural residential), and an Administrative Use Permit to install a new telecommunications tower and supporting ground equipment. The U zone is designated as an interim zone to be used until a suitable permanent zone can be established. Residential development is an allowed use in the U zone. Telecommunications facilities are not allowed in the U zone, but are allowed with an Administrative Use Permit in the RR zone. In the Rural Transition B General Plan land use designation, the compatible zones are RR and RA (residential agriculture).

Figure 1 – Location Map

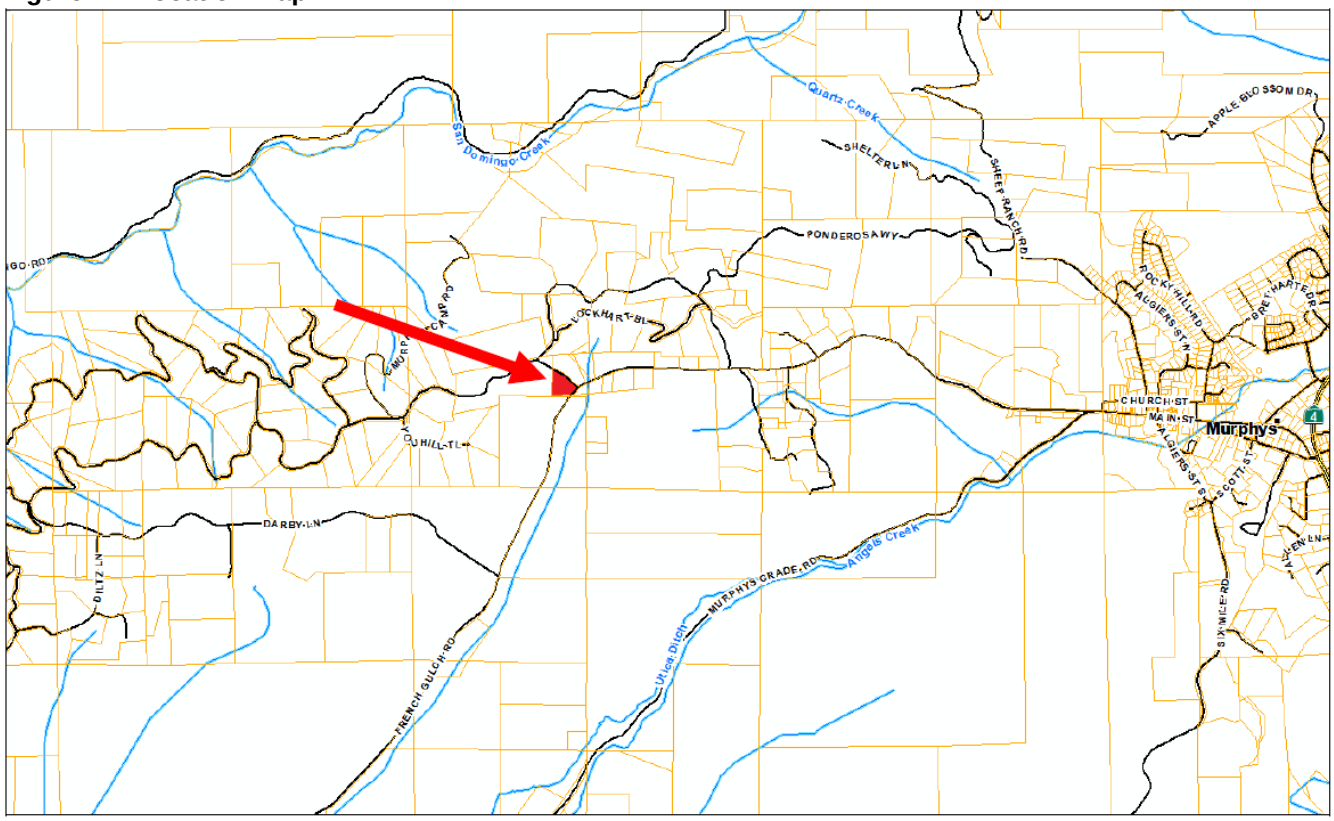
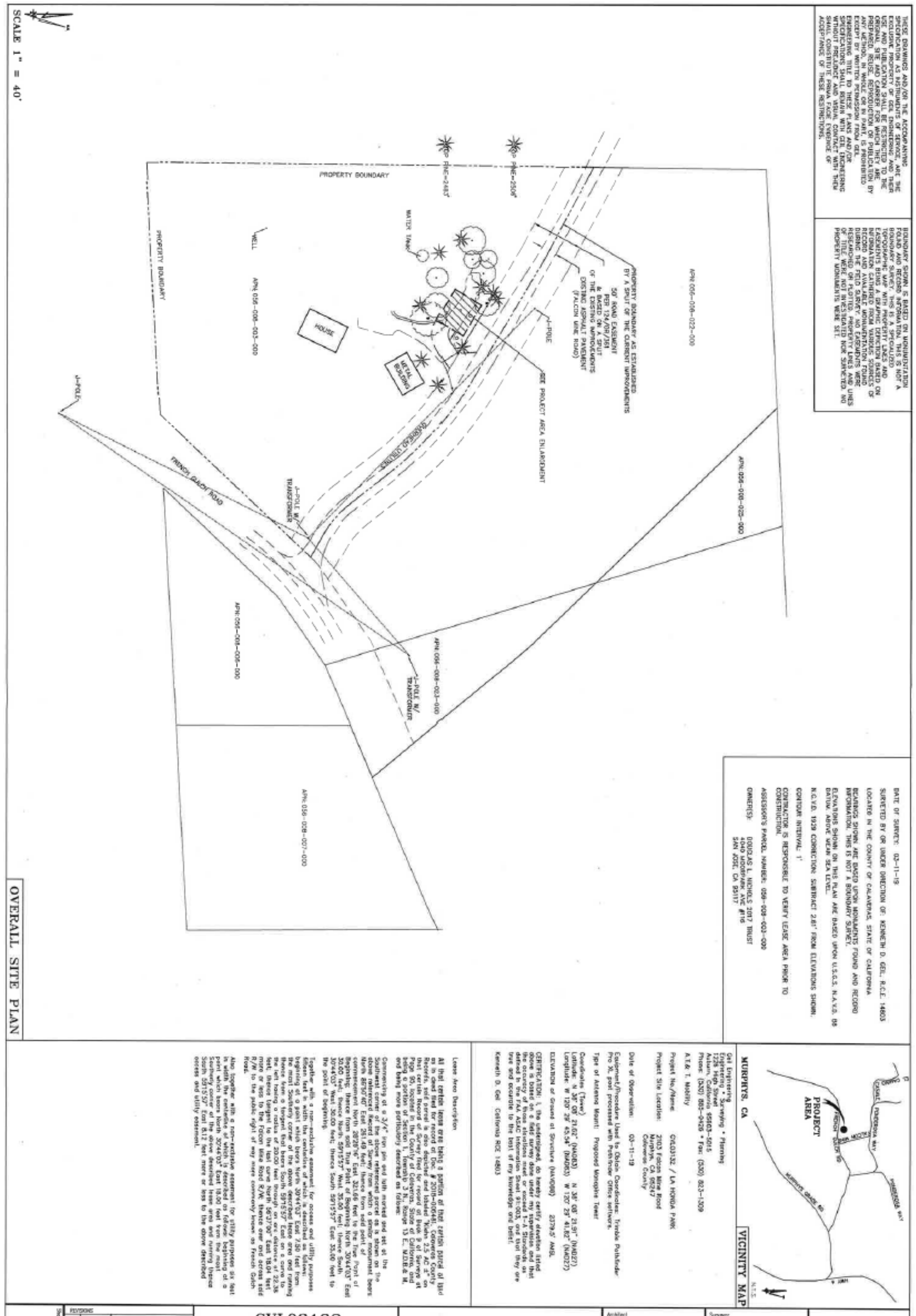


Figure 2 – Aerial photo designating location of proposed telecommunications facility



Figure 3 – Telecommunications facility site plan



SCALE 1" = 40'
OVERALL SITE PLAN
PROPERTY BOUNDARY
HOUSE
METAL BUILDING
FRENCH GULCH ROAD
VICINITY MAP
PROJECT AREA
MURPHYS, CA
CVL03132
LA HONDA PARK
2103 FALCON MINE RD.
MURPHYS, CA 95247
PLOT PLAN AND
SITE TOPOGRAPHY
at&t
MOBILITY
GEIL ENGINEERING
PRELIMINARY DRAWING
LEASE AREA PLACED
C-1

I. AESTHETICS

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
Except as provided in Public Resources Code §21099, would the project:	☐	☒	☐	☐
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publically accessible vantage points). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☐	☒

DISCUSSION

a. **Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation** – The Conservation and Open Space element of the Calaveras County General Plan[1] considers scenic vistas to include forests, rolling hills, ranches, agricultural land, historic landscapes, oak woodlands, rock formations and other unique topographical features, river corridors, lakes, and streams. The area surrounding the subject parcel is forested and is on a hill, with the project site being visible to the immediate area. Due to this, the proposed tower is utilizing stealth construction (being made to appear as a tree). Therefore, the proposed project will have a less than significant impact on the scenic vista.

b. **No Impact** – The project site is located approximately 2.1 miles away from the nearest state highway, Hwy 4. According to Caltrans[2], this portion of Highway 4 is not designated as a state scenic highway.

c. **Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation** – The subject parcel is developed with a single family residence and numerous trees. To maintain the area's character and aesthetic, the telecommunications tower will be constructed to appear as a tree to reduce long distance visibility, causing the site to be less noticeable and have a less than significant impact to views from publically accessible vantage points.

d. **No Impact** – Pursuant to Title 47 Section 17.21 of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) code of regulations, telecommunication towers that are less than 200 feet in height above the ground do not require lighting or painting. The project does not include any additional lighting.

Figure 4 – Simulation of Proposed Telecommunications Facility from French Gulch Rd

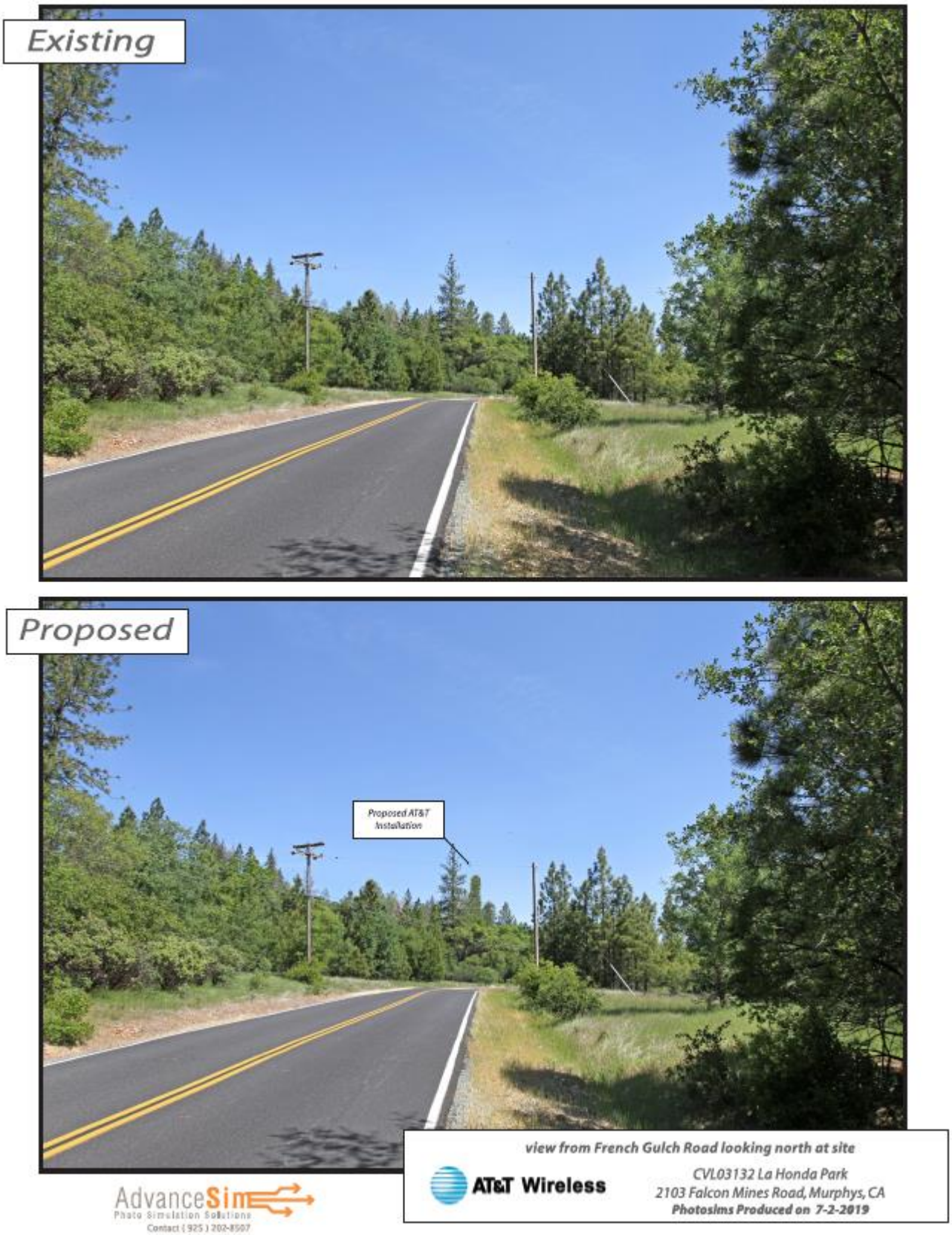
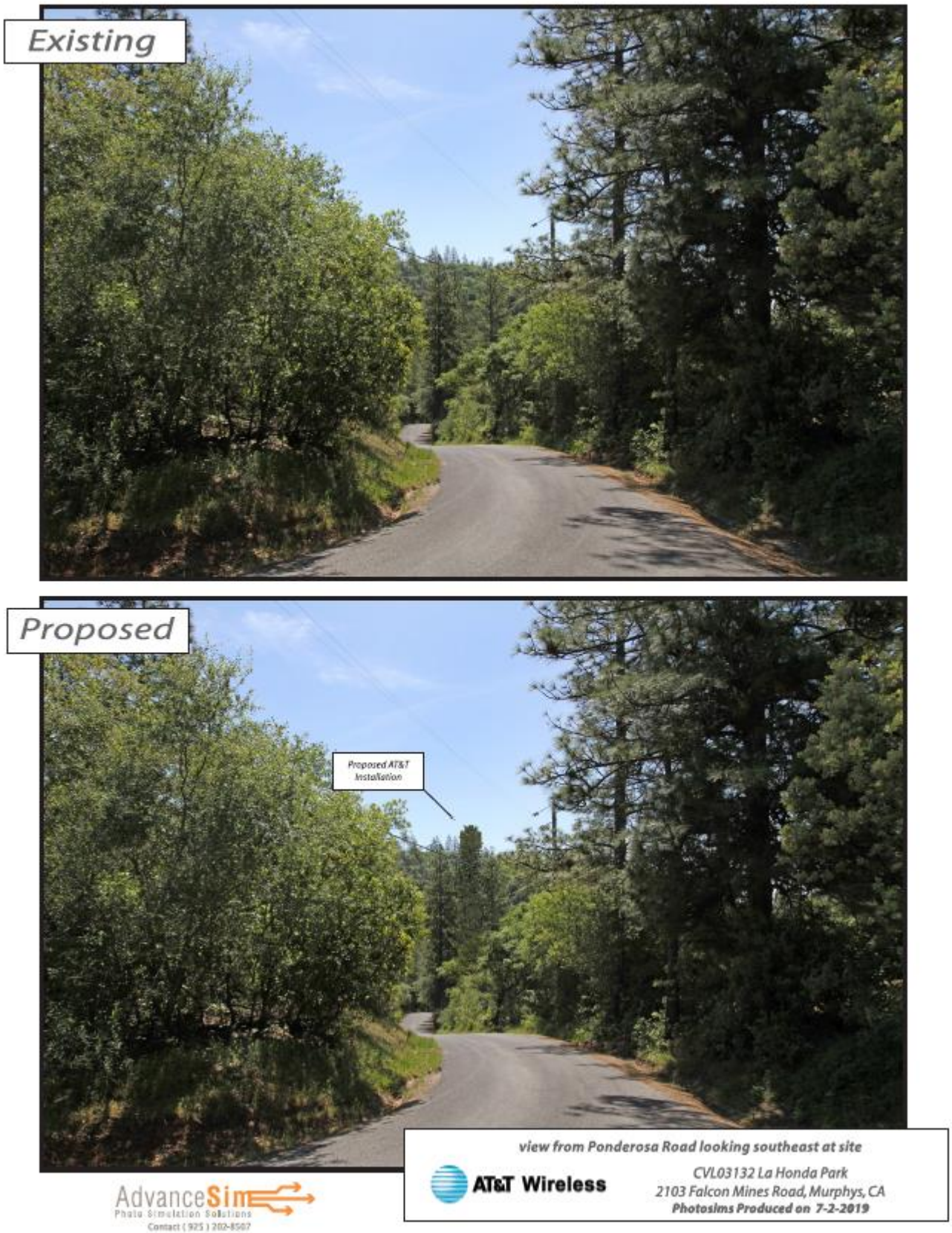


Figure 5 – Simulation of Proposed Telecommunications Facility from French Gulch Rd



Figure 6 – Simulation of Proposed Telecommunications Facility from Falcon Mine Rd



II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies my refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

DISCUSSION

a-e. No Impact – The property in question is not currently farmland nor forest land

III. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

DISCUSSION

The proposed project is located in Calaveras County, which is part of the Mountain Counties Air Basin (MCAB). Air quality within Calaveras County is under the jurisdiction of the Calaveras County Air Pollution Control District (CCAPCD). Although the County has experienced relatively good air quality, it has been classified as a non-attainment area for the State and Federal ozone standards (1-hour and 8-hour) and particulate matter standards (PM2.5 and PM10). To become designated as a non-attainment area for the State and/or Federal standards, there must be at least one monitored violation of the ambient pollutant standards within the area's boundaries (see Table 1). An area is designated in attainment of the State standard if concentrations for the specified pollutant are not exceeded. An area is designated in attainment for the federal standards if concentrations for the specified pollutant are not exceeded on average more than once per year.

The CCAPCD has not established thresholds of significance for use in CEQA analyses. Use of another jurisdiction's thresholds of significance and methodologies has been an accepted CEQA practice when the lead agency has not established its own CEQA significance thresholds. Due to the proximity and connection of the Mountain County and San Joaquin Valley air sheds, this analysis uses the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's (SJVAPCD) significance thresholds to determine whether the Proposed Project would generate a significant air quality impact.

Table 1. Recent Air Quality Monitoring Data[(a)]

Pollutant	2007	2008	2009
O_3 1 hour			
Maximum concentration	0.91	0.115	0.096
Days above State standards	0	8	0
Days above National standards	0	0	1
O_3 8 hour			
Maximum concentration	0.083	0.107	0.082
Days above National standards	6	16	9
PM_{10}	(2006)	(2007)	(2008)
Highest concentration (µg/m^3)	42	46	74
Days above state standard	0	0	1
Days above federal standard	0	0	0
$PM_{2.5}$	(2006)	(2007)	(2008)
Highest concentration (µg/m^3)	23	24.4	54.9
Days above federal standard	0	0	2
Carbon Monoxide			
Maximum concentration	0.67	1.06	0.59
Days above State standards	0	0	0
Days above National standards	0	0	0

Notes:
(a) Source: (CARB 2010) for San Andreas-Gold Strike Road monitoring station.

a-c. **Less Than Significant Impact** – Table 2 represents the established SJVAPCD thresholds[3].

Table 2. San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Thresholds and Project Emissions

	ROG	NOx	CO	PM10
Threshold of Significance	10 tons/year (55 lbs/day)	10 tons/year (55 lbs/day)	none	15 tons/year (82 lbs/day)

Table 3, below, represents a project that proposed 150 vehicle trips per day in addition to the project's construction and operational emissions. Proposed emissions were calculated using URBEMIS 2007 Version 9.2.4.

Table 3 – Proposed Project Emissions

Proposed Project Emissions (lbs/day)			
	ROG	NOx	PM10
Construction Emissions	2.4	17.6	10.8
Operational Emissions	5	5	6

As depicted above in Table 3, the project did not exceed the thresholds of significance identified for these air pollutants. As discussed in the Transportation section of this checklist, the proposal to amend the zoning of the currently developed 2.5 acre property from U to RR and to construct a telecommunications facility will generate approximately 2 additional vehicle trips per month. Considering the analyzed project at 150 vehicle trips per day fell so far below the thresholds, even with the addition of the HVAC equipment and emergency generator, this

project does not have the potential to increase the probable emissions to a level that would be considered significant.

d. **Less Than Significant Impact** – Odors and other emissions that could be created by the proposed project would result from activities associated with a single family residence. The parcel is located in a rural portion of the county near other similarly sized lots, many of which are developed with single family residences and zoned RR. Therefore, the proposed project will have a less than significant impact on the environment.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

DISCUSSION

a. **Less Than Significant Impact** – No candidate, sensitive, or special status species are known to be on or near the property in question. The property is currently developed. The proposed change in zoning will not increase the residential development potential of the property. The proposed telecommunications facility occupies a relatively small footprint and is to be constructed adjacent to the developed portion of the property.

b. **No Impact** – No riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service is known to be on or near the property in question.

c. **No Impact** – No state or federally protected wetlands exist on or near the property.

d. **Less Than Significant Impact** – No migratory wildlife corridors, or native wildlife nursery sites are known to exist on the property. The property is currently developed. The proposed change in zoning will not increase the residential development potential of the property. The proposed telecommunications facility occupies a relatively small footprint and is to be constructed adjacent to the developed portion of the property. This increase in development will not interfere with the local wildlife to a significant degree when compared to the existing baseline of the current residences and structures on the parcel and in the surrounding area.

e-f. **No Impact** – No policies, ordinances, or conservation plans are in effect within the area where the subject property is located.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	☐	☐	☐	☒

DISCUSSION

a-c. **No Impact** – A cultural resources investigation was conducted by Geist Engineering and Environmental Group, Inc. on May 8, 2019. The investigation found no significant cultural or historic resources within the "Direct Area of Potential Effects," meaning the area where the telecommunications facility and associated ground equipment will be located. Also investigated was the "Indirect Area of Potential Effects," the area within a ½ mile radius of

the proposed facility, encompassing the subject parcel and surrounding area. The only findings discussed are some stacked stones west of the location of the proposed tower. The preparer of the report determined that the stones are likely associated with Ponderosa Way, and does not suggest that they are associated with native or cultural resources. The stones are not located in any planed areas of disturbance.

VI. ENERGY

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
Would the project:				
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☒	☐

DISCUSSION

a. **Less Than Significant Impact** – The change of zoning from U to RR will not allow for additional residential development on the subject parcel. The proposed telecommunications facility will use electric power from the grid, and is equipped with an emergency generator in case its power supply is compromised. PG&E was notified of the proposed project and has no concerns regarding the ability to supply sufficient power to the facility. The telecommunications facility will be built to all applicable energy codes, to prevent energy waste and unnecessary consumption. The increased energy usage resulting from the addition of the telecommunications facility when compared to the existing baseline in the surrounding area is less than significant.

b. **Less Than Significant Impact** – Calaveras County has not adopted a local renewable energy or energy efficient plan. All new construction must comply with adopted State regulations.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
Would the project:				
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map	☐	☐	☐	☒

issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.				
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv. Landslides?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☐	☒

DISCUSSION

a. **Less Than Significant Impact** – Calaveras County lies within the Sierra Block, an area of historically low seismicity. Although ground shaking from earthquakes with epicenters located elsewhere have been felt, no major earthquakes have been recorded within the County. The closest known source of large earthquakes is the Sierra Frontal Fault System along the eastern margin of the Sierra Nevada, which includes the Carson Valley Fault. This fault is located east of the County, and has been evaluated as capable of generating earthquakes of up to the magnitude 7.0. However, the risk of surface rupture is not considered sufficient to restrict the development found in the County. Sites in Calaveras County with liquefaction potential would be those on alluvial deposits having groundwater and sand or silt layers of uniform grain sizes within about 30 feet of the surface. Such conditions are not found on the subject parcel and are generally not present in the County.

b-c. **Less Than Significant Impact** – The areas of particular landslide concern are those that include high elevations with steep ravines and gulches associated with river and stream channels. Located below 3,000 feet, the parcel has no ravines or gulches associated with rivers or stream channels. According to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service soils maps[4], the subject parcel contains soil classified as “Nedsgulch-Wallyhill-Arpatutu

complex, 15 to 30 percent slopes." This soil type has a K factor of 0.32, giving it a moderate susceptibility for erosion and runoff. The hill sides are vegetated which increases the stability of the soil creating less probability of erosion. The parcel is currently developed with a residence, and associated structures. The change from U to the RR zone will not increase the residential development potential of the parcel. If erosion of soils were to occur, the risk of loss, injury or death is low because the development potential is limited. Utilization of best management practices to reduce the risk of erosion is a requirement of all grading and building in the County.

d. **Less Than Significant Impact** – According to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Nedsgulch-Wallyhill-Arpatutu complex soils have a "moderately cemented" hardness, and therefore are not considered expansive soils.

e. **No Impact** – A well and on-site septic system currently exist on the subject parcel. The proposed change in zoning and the installation of a telecommunications facility will not create an increased need or use of this infrastructure.

f. **No Impact** – There are no known unique paleontological resources or sites or unique geologic features on or near the subject parcel.

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☒	☐

DISCUSSION

a. **Less Than Significant Impact** – The change in zoning from U to RR will not increase the ability of the landowner to develop the parcel with residential dwellings and structures. The addition of the telecommunications facility will increase the number of vehicle trips to the parcel by approximately 2 per month for routine maintenance of the site. The facility itself will be supplied power by the electric grid, with the onsite generator serving the facility only being in operation during power outages and for short periods during monthly maintenance. The increased energy usage resulting from the addition of the telecommunications facility when compared to the existing baseline in the surrounding area is less than significant.

b. **Less Than Significant Impact** – Calaveras County has not adopted a plan, policy, or regulations for the purposes of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. All new construction must comply with adopted State Regulations.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☒	☐

DISCUSSION

a-b. **Less Than Significant Impact** – The current single family residential use of the property – including its ability to utilize any hazardous materials – will not be altered by the change in zoning. For operation of the telecommunications facility to commence, the County Environmental Health Department requires a Hazardous Materials Business Plan to be put in place if hazardous materials are stored or handled in quantities that equal or exceed 55 gallons for liquid, 500 pounds for solids, or 200 cubic feet for gases. All applicable Federal,

State, and County regulations will apply to all hazardous materials that may be used or stored on the subject parcel in the future.

c. **No Impact** – The subject parcel is not within ¼ mile of an existing or proposed school.

d. **No Impact** – The subject parcel is not included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5

e. **No Impact** – The subject parcel is not located in an airport land use plan or within 2 miles of a public use airport.

f. **No Impact** – There is no adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan specifically involving the parcel in question. The proposed project does not impede any traffic or alter any roads.

g. **Less Than Significant Impact** – The project was routed to all applicable fire departments and agencies. There were no comments or concerns noted. The subject parcel is currently developed with a single family residence and accessory structures. The proposed telecommunications facility is near the road and an existing encroachment, allowing for access for fire equipment to the site. The potential to increase the risk for death and injury due to a wildfire is less than significant.

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:	☐	☐	☒	☐
(i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	☐	☐	☒	☐
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on or offsite;	☐	☐	☒	☐
	☐	☐	☒	☐

(iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	☐	☐	☐	☒
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?				
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

DISCUSSION

a. **No Impact** – The proposed zone change and telecommunications facility will not inherently cause any additional waste discharge or similar affluent that would cause a degradation of ground water quality. All construction and operation of uses on the parcel are subject to all applicable codes, policies, and regulations regarding waste discharge and water quality.

b. **No Impact** – The change in zoning will not increase the potential water usage on the subject parcel. The proposed telecommunications facility will not use water.

c. **Less Than Significant Impact** – A change in zoning from U to RR decreases the capacity to construct buildings on the subject parcel, as the maximum allowed lot coverage of structures will be reduced from 35% to 25%. The ability to add impervious surfaces that are not structures will remain the same. The addition of the telecommunications facility, as well as the construction of any built structure, could result in minimal runoff and small amounts of erosion. The most common way to deal with these types of issues is through the use of Best Management Practices (BMP's) during all construction related activities such as grading, excavating, etc. These BMP's are utilized and enforced by not only the Public Works department during grading activities, but also the Building Department during actual construction of a structure, resulting in a less than significant effect on the surrounding area.

d. **No Impact** – The subject parcel is not in a flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zone.

e. **No Impact** – There is no water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan for the area of the County in which the subject parcel is located.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Couse a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan,	☐	☐	☐	☒

policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

DISCUSSION

a. **No Impact** – The proposed zone change and telecommunications facility creates no barrier that would physically divide a community.

b. **No Impact** – No plan, policy, or regulation to avoid or mitigate an environmental effect currently exists on or adjacent to the subject parcel.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

DISCUSSION

a-b. **No Impact** – There are no known mineral resources on the subject parcel.

XII. NOISE

Would the project result in:	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
a) Generation of a substantial, temporary, or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project	☐	☐	☐	☒

expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

DISCUSSION

a-b. **Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation** – Chapter 9.02 of the Calaveras County Code[5] provides stationary noise level standards. In a residential land use, the permitted decibel levels from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. are 60 dB and 50 dB from 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

The proposed change in zoning does not exempt a permitted use from the Calaveras County Noise Ordinance. Any uses allowed by right in the RR zone will be required to comply with said Ordinance.

The Proposed telecommunications facility includes the installation of HVAC units to cool necessary electrical components in the equipment shelter and an emergency generator in case of a loss of electric power. An acoustical analysis was conducted on May 13, 2019 by Waterford Consultants LLC[6] to determine if this equipment will comply with the noise ordinance. Due to the potential nighttime hours of operation, the acoustical analysis focused on the restrictive 50 dB noise level standard. The results of the analysis relied on sound dampening being installed on the fence surrounding the equipment, and the generator being housed within a level-2 acoustic enclosure. With these noise control elements in place, the analysis found that – assuming both the HVAC unit and the generator are in operation at the same time – the anticipated noise generated will be 48 decibels at the closest property line at 70 feet, complying with Calaveras County Code.

c. **No Impact** – The subject parcel is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

DISCUSSION

a. **No Impact** – The proposed project does not change the allowed density of housing, and is not extending any roads or other infrastructure that would enable further development.

b. **No Impact** – The proposed project will not result in the displacement or demolition of any existing housing.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

DISCUSSION

a. **Less than Significant Impact** – The proposed zoning change does not significantly increase the need for any services, as the current zone (u) allows for residential development and structures. The addition of a cellular facility on site may increase the need for fire protection due to the existence of a generator and electrical components, however, due to the proposed site being adjacent to the road, this possible need does not reach to a level of significance.

XVI. RECREATION

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

DISCUSSION

a-b. **No Impact** – The zoning change and the addition of a cellular facility will not have any impact on parks or recreation areas. No new housing or infrastructure is proposed that could result in an increase of park use.

XVII. TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
a) Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines §15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☐	☒

DISCUSSION

a. **No Impact** – The proposed zoning change and the addition of a telecommunications facility utilize the existing infrastructure and do not conflict with any plans, ordinances, or policies in regards to transportation.

b. **Less Than Significant Impact** – The property is currently developed with a single family residence, which is a primary use in both the U and RR zones. The change in zoning will not result in an increase of vehicle trips from the existing residence. A single family residence generates an average of ten (10) vehicle trips per day. The addition of the telecommunications facility will increase the number of vehicle trips to the parcel by approximately 2 per month for routine maintenance of the site, comprising a less than significant increase.

c. **No Impact** – The proposed development of the telecommunications facility will be adjacent to a current driveway, over 200 feet from the nearest intersection at French Gulch Road. Falcon Mine Road receives little traffic, and the site adjacent to the subject parcel is not known to have any hazardous design features.

d. **No Impact** – The existing residence and proposed telecommunications facility gain access from Falcon Mine Road. Local emergency services, including the fire district, have been notified of the project and had no concerns regarding access to the parcel.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☐	☐	☒	☐

DISCUSSION

a-b. Less Than Significant Impact – A cultural resources investigation was conducted by Geist Engineering and Environmental Group, Inc. on May 8, 2019. The investigation found no significant cultural or historic resources within the direct area of potential effects. The only findings discussed are some stacked stones west of the location of the proposed tower. The preparer of the report determined that the stones are likely associated with Ponderosa Way, and does not suggest that they are associated with native or cultural resources. The stones are not located in any planed areas of disturbance.

The proposed zone change and telecommunications facility was circulated to all local tribes, who had no comments or recommendations.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒

DISCUSSION

a-e. **No Impact** – The proposed project will not require the construction of additional infrastructure beyond the telecommunications facility itself. There is adequate power to the site and sufficient drainage. No new gas, water, or wastewater is proposed nor will be needed.

XX. WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Require the installation of maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines, or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	☒	☐

DISCUSSION

a. **No Impact** – There is no adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan specifically involving the parcel in question.

b. **Less Than Significant Impact** – The subject parcel is currently developed with a single family residence and accessory structures. The proposed telecommunications facility is near the road and utilizes an existing encroachment, allowing for access to the site. The project was routed to all applicable fire departments and agencies. There were no comments or concerns noted.

c. **No Impact** – The proposed project does not require the installation of any roads, nor does it alter any existing roads or impede traffic. The telecommunications facility will utilize an existing encroachment, which will be improved to allow access for maintenance vehicles for the monthly servicing of the facility.

d. **Less Than Significant Impact** – The parcel in question is not in a flood zone, nor is the site – as discussed in the Geology and Soils section of this checklist – have a significant risk of erosion or runoff. Notified fire agencies had no concerns in this regard. The change in zoning and installation of a telecommunications facility will not negatively alter any risk that may or may not currently exist on the subject parcel.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION	LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	NO IMPACT
a) Does the project have the potential to Substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the	☐	☐	☒	☐

habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?				
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☒	☐

DISCUSSION

a. **Less Than Significant Impact** – There is no known habitat or species that will be impacted by the proposed project. The subject parcel is currently developed with a single family residence and associated accessory structures. The site of the proposed telecommunications facility is adjacent to the road and an existing driveway, and as such will have a minimal impact on the surrounding environment.

b. **No Impact** – The rezoning of the parcel from U to RR does not significantly raise the development potential of the subject property. The addition of the telecommunications facility does not create a need for more development. The intention of additional antennae to be installed on the tower in the future alleviates the need for additional towers to be erected in the immediate vicinity to serve other cellular carriers.

c. **Less Than Significant Impact** – The analysis of environmental issues contained in this Initial Study indicate that the project is not expected to have substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly. Proposed mitigation, best management practices, compliance with standard regulations, and conditions of approval will reduce any impacts to a level of less than significant.

REFERENCES

1. Calaveras County General Plan (CCGP), adopted November 12, 2019

2. California Department of Transportation. California Scenic Highway Mapping System. http://dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/

3. San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. CEQA Project Analysis Levels https://www.valleyair.org/transportation/ceqaanalysislevels.htm

4. United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. Web Soil Survey. https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx

5. Calaveras County Code. Ordinance 3013. September 25, 2012

6. Noise Compliance Report, prepared by Waterford Consultants LLC, May 13, 2019