Proposed
Mitigated Negative Declaration

Publication Date:	August 4, 2021
Public Review Period:	8/4/2021 to 9/4/2021
State Clearinghouse Number:	#####
Permit Sonoma File Number:	**MNS19-0010**
Prepared by:	Lauren Scott
Phone:	(510) 845-7549

Pursuant to Section 15071 of the State CEQA Guidelines, this proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and the attached Initial Study, including the identified mitigation measures and monitoring program, constitute the environmental review conducted by the County of Sonoma as lead agency for the proposed project described below:

Project Name:	**MNS19-0010 Maturi Minor Subdivision**
Project Applicant/Operator:	Mohan Maturi
Project Location/Address:	7200 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa
APN:	055-150-001
General Plan Land Use Designation:	Diverse Agriculture (DA)
Zoning Designation:	Diverse Agriculture (DA) B6 20, Riparian Corridor (RC 50/50), Scenic Resources – Scenic Landscape Unit (SR), Valley Oak Habitat Combining District (VOH)
Decision Making Body:	Sonoma County Project Review and Advisory Committee
Appeal Body:	Sonoma County Planning Commission
Project Description:	See Item III, below

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" or "Less than Significant with Mitigation" as indicated in the attached Initial Study and in the summary table below.

Table 1. Summary of Topic Areas

Topic Area	Abbreviation	Yes	No
Aesthetics	VIS	X	
Agricultural & Forestry	AG		X
Air Quality	AIR	X	
Biological Resources	BIO	X	
Cultural Resources	CUL	X	
Energy	ENE		X
Geology and Soils	GEO		X
Greenhouse Gas Emission	GHG		X
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	HAZ		X
Hydrology and Water Quality	HYDRO		X
Land Use and Planning	LU		X
Mineral Resources	MIN		X
Noise	NOISE	X	
Population and Housing	POP		X
Public Services	PS		X
Recreation	REC		X
Transportation	TRAF		X
Tribal Cultural Resources	TCR	X	
Utility and Service Systems	UTL		X
Wildfire	WILD		X

RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

The following lists other public agencies whose approval is required for the project, or who have jurisdiction over resources potentially affected by the project.

Table 2. Agencies and Permits Required

Agency	Activity	Authorization
Regional Water Quality Control Board (North Coast or San Francisco Bay)	Discharge or potential discharge to waters of the state	California Clean Water Act (Porter Cologne) – Waste Discharge requirements, general permit or waiver
State Water Resources Control Board	Generating stormwater (construction, industrial, or municipal)	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requires submittal of NOI
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Lake and streambed alteration agreement for creek bridge crossings	Fish and Game Code, Section 1600
Army Corps of Engineers	Bridge crossing construction	Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. δ1344 et seq.
Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD)	Stationary air emissions	BAAQMD Rules and Regulations (Regulation 2, Rule 1 – General Requirements; Regulation 2, Rule 2 – New Source Review; Regulation 9 – Rule 8 – NOx and CO from Stationary Internal Combustion Engines; and other BAAQMD administered Statewide Air Toxics Control Measures (ATCM) for stationary diesel engines

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDING:

Based on the evaluation in the attached Initial Study, I find that the project described above will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment, provided that the mitigation measures identified in the Initial Study are included as conditions of approval for the project and a Mitigated Negative Declaration is proposed. The applicant has agreed in writing to incorporate identified mitigation measures into the project plans.

_____

Prepared by: Lauren Scott Date:

Initial Study

I. INTRODUCTION

Mohan Maturi, with the assistance of Munselle Civil Engineering, is applying for a Minor Subdivision Permit to subdivide an existing parcel to create four (4) total parcels at 7200 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa, California. The project site is an existing 80-acre agricultural parcel (APN 055-150-001) located at the end of Kirch Road. Land uses surrounding the project site consist of vineyards with occupied residences to the south and west, vineyards to the north, and pasture/vacant land with accessory improvements to the east. Approximately 50 acres of the project site is vineyards. The northern portion of the parcel developed with vineyards is relatively flat with several small slopes while the undeveloped southern portion of the lot contains an unnamed blue-line stream and slopes up towards at low ridge.

The proposed 80-acre, four-parcel subdivision would consist of the following: parcel 1 at 10.16 acres, parcel 2 at 10.36 acres, parcel 3 at 10.77 acres, and parcel 4 at 49.09 acres. A paved private road would be developed to provide access to the new lots and would include two clear span bridge crossings and turnouts and turnarounds meeting fire safe standards. The project does not include construction of any structures; however, future residential development on the proposed lots consistent with the zoning code can be expected.

A referral letter was sent to the appropriate local, state, and interest groups who may wish to comment on the project.

This report is the Initial Study required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The report was prepared by Lauren Scott, Contract Project Planner with MIG. Information on the project was provided by the project applicant, Mohan Maturi and Munselle Civil Engineering. Other reports, documents, maps, and studies referred to in this document are available for review at the Permit and Resources Management Department (Permit Sonoma).

Please contact Lauren Scott, Contract Project Planner, at (510) 845-7549 ext. 2550 for more information.

II. SITE LOCATION AND SETTING

The proposed minor subdivision would be located at 7200 Bennett Valley Road (Figures 1 and 2). The site is currently developed with approximately 50 acres of irrigated vineyards, a well, and onsite access roads. The 80-acre parcel has a zoning designation of Diverse Agriculture (DA) and 20-acre density combining district (B6 20). The project setting is a mix of rural residential and agricultural, located in Bennett Valley approximately seven miles from downtown Santa Rosa. The project site is served by an existing private well. The property is served by Sonoma County Fire District.

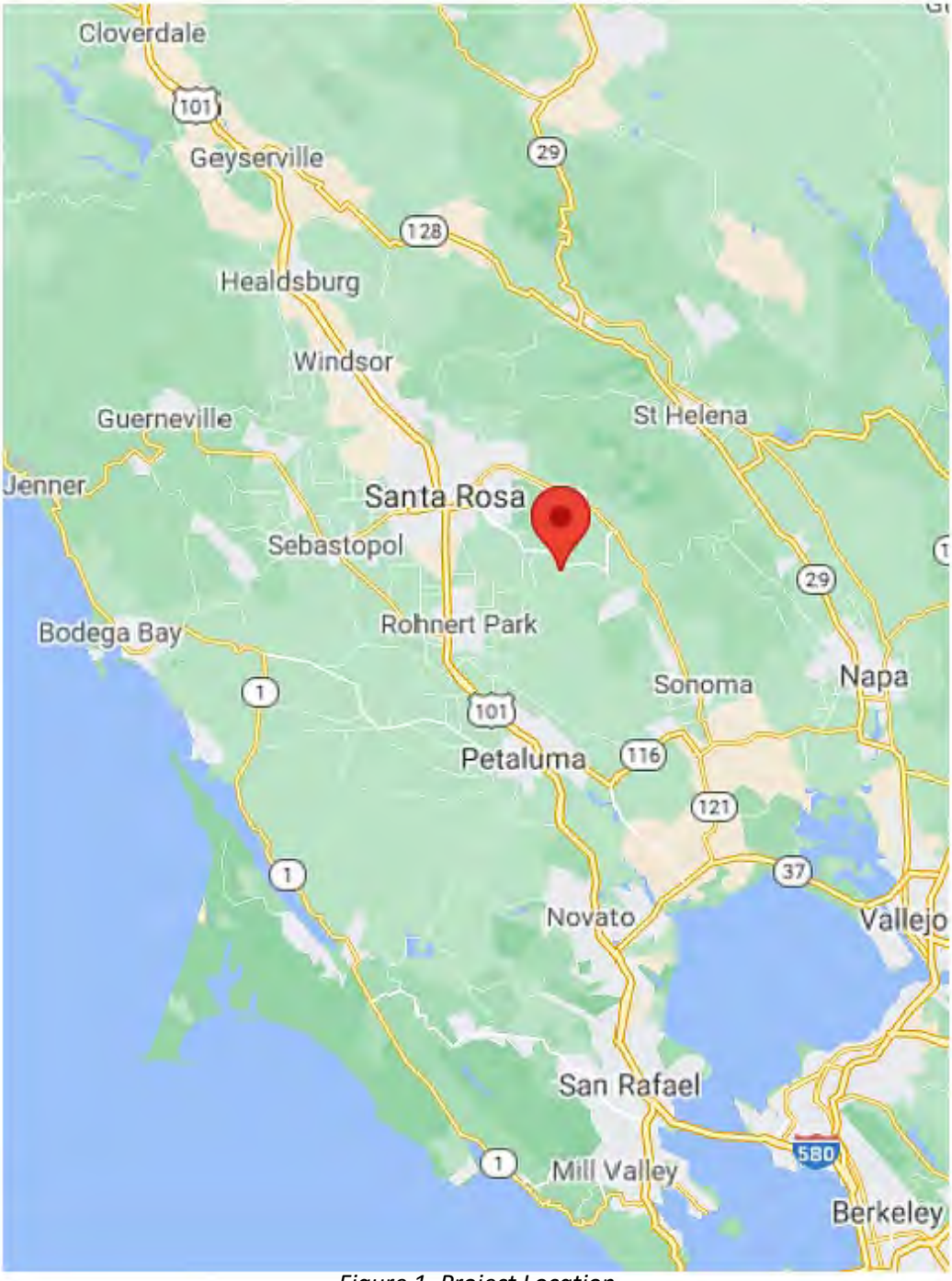
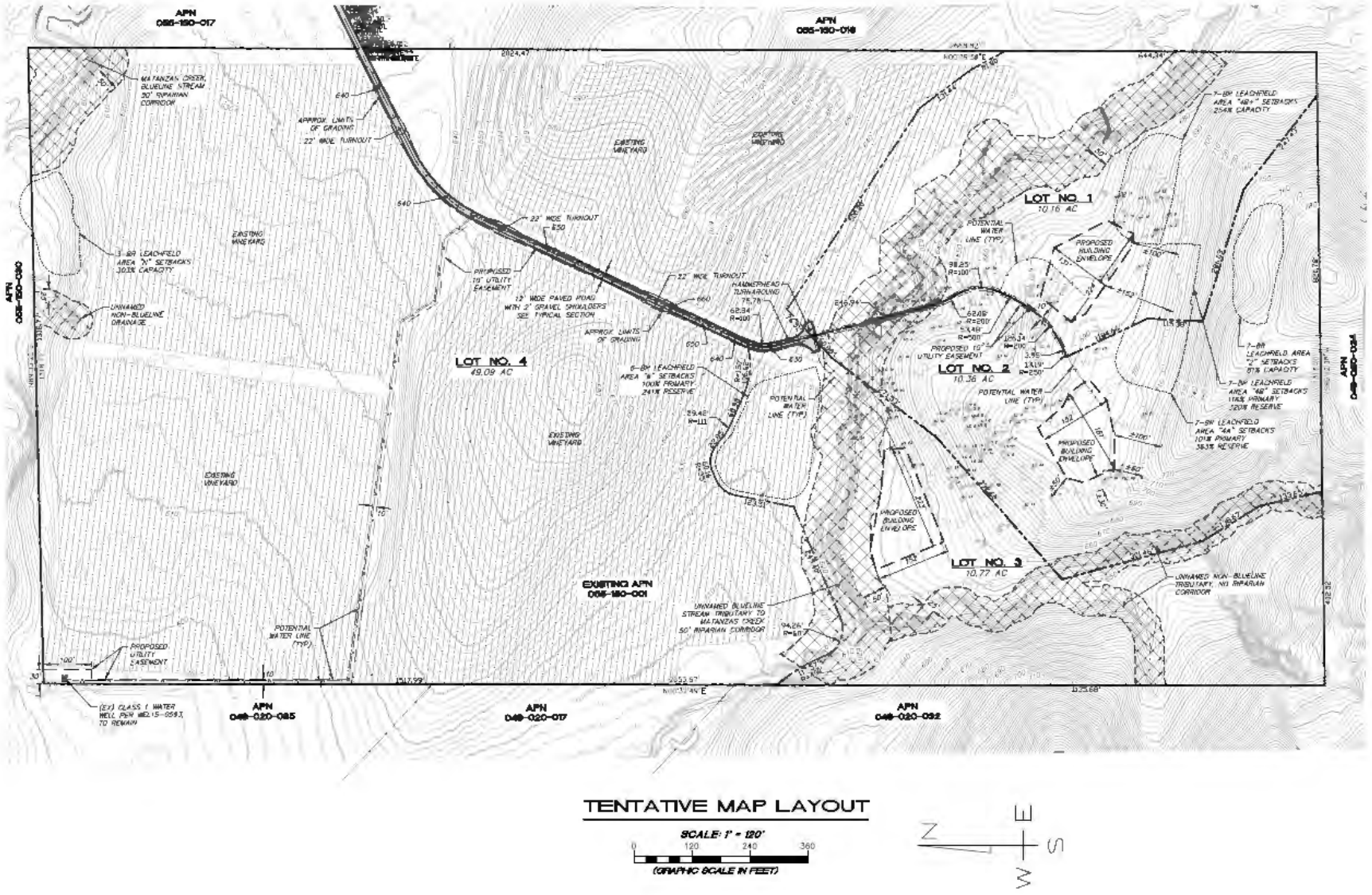


Figure 1. Project Location
(Google Maps, 2021)

Figure 2. Project Site Vicinity
(Permit Sonoma Active Map Viewer, 2021)



TENTATIVE MAP LAYOUT

SCALE: 1" = 120'

0 120 240 360

(GRAPHIC SCALE IN FEET)

N E S W

Figure 3. Tentative Map
(Munselle Civil Engineering, 2021)

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Mohan Maturi proposes a minor subdivision to turn one existing 80-acre parcel into four separate parcels located at 7200 Bennett Valley Road, in Santa Rosa, California. The proposed four-parcel subdivision would consist of the following: parcel 1 at 10.16 acres, parcel 2 at 10.36 acres, parcel 3 at 10.77 acres, and parcel 4 at 49.09 acres. The project site is located within the boundaries of the Bennett Valley Area Plan. Based on the potential building envelopes shown in Figure 3, the proposed improvements associated with the project and future anticipated residential construction could cover an area up to approximately 71,705 square feet. The project construction would include earthwork, grading, paving, bridge construction, and installation of utilities. The site improvements include a maximum cut of 190 cubic yards (CY) and maximum fill of 190 CY. Future development is anticipated on the newly created parcels. One new primary residence and potential residential accessory structures will be constructed within the building footprints on each of the parcels 1, 2, and 3 as identified in Figure 3. The project does not include further development of parcel 4; the existing vineyards will be maintained. The project has the potential to create approximately 1.65 acres of impervious surface area, including access improvements as well as the anticipated future building footprints. Parcels 1, 2, and 3 do not have existing utilities and would require new water lines to connect to one existing well on parcel 4.

Currently, access to the site is via Bennett Valley Road through a private, paved road (labeled Kirch Road on some maps) that connects to the project site's driveway and onsite vineyard access roads. The project would include the construction of a 12-foot-wide paved private road with two-foot gravel shoulders and several 22-foot-wide turnouts, and four hammerhead turnarounds spaced approximately 300 feet intervals or as approved by the Sonoma County Fire Marshal. A 25-foot wide right of way shall also be provided for cleared space for safe access for emergency vehicles and concurrent civilian evacuation. The proposed private road is approximately 2,000 feet in length and would connect the newly created parcels to Kirch Road (private road). The private road would include two clear span bridge crossings over a blue-line stream that bisects the project parcel. A vehicle turnaround is proposed to the north of the stream crossings, abutting parcel 4.

Existing Uses: The project site is comprised of one single lot. The existing parcel currently contains approximately 50 acres of vineyards that occupy the northern portion of the parcel.

Topography: Elevations at the project site range from approximately 570 to 790 feet above sea level. The ascending hillsides in the southern area of the parcel comprise the steepest portions of the site. The northern area of the site contains relatively level topography. In the areas proposed for development and within the building envelopes on parcels 1, 2, and 3, slopes average 20%.

Drainage: Site drainage consists primarily of sheet flow and surface infiltration, which generally flows from the higher elevations at the southern portion of the site to the lower northern areas. There are two primary drainage courses at the project site. The first is a deeply incised drainage swale that borders the site to the west and discharges to an unnamed tributary of Matanzas Creek. The second drainage is the unnamed tributary, a blue line stream, which bisects the project parcel. The stream flows west off-site for approximately a mile then enters Matanzas Creek.

Vegetation: Approximately 50 acres of the existing 80-acre parcel are developed with vineyards and access roads. The rest of the parcel contains approximately 7.4 acres of non-native grasslands, 12.02 acres of Oregon white oak woodland, 10.13 acres of coast live oak woodland, 0.93 acres of native grassland, 0.32 acres of Coyote bush scrub, and 0.32 acres of Blue gum grove. Approximately 12 trees, including five oak woodland/native trees protected under the Sonoma County Tree Ordinance, would be removed to accommodate building envelopes and the subdivision road. Two trees would be removed for the upgrade/installation of the subdivision road. An additional ten trees may be removed if the residential and septic building envelopes are fully developed as currently proposed. The project includes a habitat mitigation and management plan for native grassland and Oregon white oak woodland habitat that details on-site restoration activities designed to replace and mitigate grassland and woodland habitats potentially impacted by the project.

Proposed Buildings and Uses: The project does not propose any buildings. It is anticipated that parcels 1, 2, and 3 will each be developed with single-family homes in the future.

Parking: All parking for the newly created lots will be located within each parcel. There shall not be less than one covered off-street parking space for each primary dwelling unit. The project does not propose construction of a new parking lot.

Access: All access and egress for vehicles would occur via Kirch Road, an existing private road that connects to Bennett Valley Road. The project includes construction of a 12-foot-wide paved road with 20 feet of clearance that would connect the new parcels to Kirch Road. Two clear span bridges would be constructed over the unnamed blue line stream to provide access to parcels 1, 2, and 3. Turnouts and four fire turnarounds would be constructed along the private road with a 25 foot right of way to meet Board of Forestry Fire Safety Regulations.

Wastewater Disposal: Sanitary waste disposal for parcels 1, 2, and 3 will be provided by new septic systems with a seven-bedroom capacity area.

Storm Water Management: A stormwater management system has been designed to meet a 100% volume capture for the project area. Stormwater treatment will be provided by existing vegetation between the proposed improvements and downhill drainage courses and streams. Runoff will be allowed to flow over the existing vegetated buffer areas and into infiltration trenches.

Water Supply: Water for each lot will be provided via new water lines connected to an existing Class I water well on parcel 4.

Landscaping: There is no proposed landscaping plan nor are landscaping improvements currently anticipated. Mitigation measures will require the applicant to depict the restoration areas on the Parcel Map prior to map recordation. A deed restriction will be recorded on the subject parcel requiring the property owner of the said Lot shall agree to fully implement over time the Native Grassland & Oregon White Oak Woodland Habitat Mitigation & Management Plan (HMMP), prepared by WRA, dated March 2021.

Grading and Earthwork: project improvements would involve a maximum cut of 190 CY and maximum fill of 190 CY.

Construction: No construction of residences is proposed as part of this project. The construction schedule of the access road and supporting utilities has not been determined but will need to occur within 18 months after approval of the tentative map (Sec. 25-46). Alternatively, the property owner may enter into a subdivision improvement agreement and construct the access road and supporting utilities within a period of two years following the filing of the final map (Sec. 26-50).

IV. ISSUES RAISED BY THE PUBLIC OR AGENCIES

A referral packet was drafted and circulated on July 26, 2019, to inform and solicit comments from selected relevant local and state agencies, and to special interest groups who were anticipated to take an interest in the project.

As of July 8, 2021, the project planner has received responses to the referral from the following Permit Sonoma departments and agencies: Permit Sonoma Natural Resources Geologist, Permit Sonoma Project Review Health Specialist, Permit Sonoma Fire Prevention Division , Permit Sonoma Survey & Land Development, Permit Sonoma Engineering and Water Resources, Sonoma County Department of Transportation & Public Works, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the Northwest Information Center (NWIC), Cloverdale Rancheria, Middletown Rancheria, Lytton Rancheria, and the Stewarts Point Rancheria Band of Kashia Pomo Indians. No tribal entities requested further consultation. The referral responses included several project subdivision permit conditions of approval.

A neighborhood notification letter was sent on June 7, 2019, to each owner of record within 300 feet of the subject property. The project planner has received one public comment requestion application materials on the proposed project and raising concerns related to development impacts on the existing character of the surrounding area.

V. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

This section analyzes the potential environmental impacts of this project based on the criteria set forth in the State CEQA Guidelines and the County's implementing ordinances and guidelines. For each item, one of four responses are given:

> **No Impact:** The project would not have the impact described. The project may have a beneficial effect, but there is no potential for the project to create or add increment to the impact described.
>
> **Less Than Significant Impact**: The project would have the impact described, but the impact would not be significant. Mitigation is not required, although the project applicant may choose to modify the project to avoid the impacts.
>
> **Potentially Significant Unless Mitigated:** The project would have the impact described, and the impact could be significant. One or more mitigation measures have been identified that will reduce the impact to a less than significant level.
>
> **Potentially Significant Impact:** The project would have the impact described, and the impact could be significant. The impact cannot be reduced to less than significant by incorporating mitigation measures. An environmental impact report must be prepared for this project.

Each question was answered by evaluating the project as proposed; that is, without considering the effect of any added mitigation measures. The Initial Study includes a discussion of the potential impacts and identifies mitigation measures to substantially reduce those impacts to a level of insignificance where feasible. All references and sources used in this Initial Study are listed in the Reference section at the end of this report and are incorporated herein by reference.

Mohan Maturi, the Project Applicant, has agreed to accept all mitigation measures listed in this Initial Study as conditions of approval for the proposed project, and to obtain all necessary permits, notify all contractors, agents and employees involved in project implementation and any new owners should the property be transferred to ensure compliance with the mitigation measures.

1. AESTHETICS

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Comment:
The project would be located in an area designated Scenic Landscape Unit[1], which, as described by the Sonoma County Zoning Regulations and Sonoma County General Plan, is visually sensitive. This designation is applied to properties to preserve the visual character and scenic resources of the land and to implement Section 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 of the General Plan Open Space Element. That Element includes Goal OSRC-6, which states development should: "Preserve the unique rural and natural character of Sonoma County for residents, businesses, visitors and future generations." General Plan Policy OSRC-6a includes design principles related to how consideration and treatment of landscaping, paved areas, and exterior lighting and signage can be applied to help new structures "blend in with the surrounding landscape." (p. OS-23)

Article 64 of the Sonoma County Zoning Ordinance also lists specific requirements for properties within a Scenic Landscape Unit for the purpose of "preserv[ing] the visual character and scenic resources of lands in the county and to implement the provisions of Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 of the general plan open space element." The project would be consistent with the provisions in Article 64 Scenic Landscape Unit Requirements (Sec. 26-64-020) because:

(1) Structures shall be sited below exposed ridgelines;

Explanation: The project site contains a ridgeline to the south of the future building envelopes. All three building envelopes are located below the ridgeline and the future residential development would not encroach on or change the existing ridgeline.

(2) Structures shall use natural landforms and existing vegetation to screen them from public roads. On exposed sites, screening with native, fire resistant plants may be required;

Explanation: The building envelopes for future residential development utilize the natural landform and existing vegetation of the site as they are placed behind low hills at the north of the site and in front of a ridgeline at the south of the site (see Figure 4). Existing trees further screen the site from view and the building envelopes are surrounded by trees, thereby reducing and softening future residential development at the site.

[1] Sonoma County. General Plan 2020 Scenic Corridors, "Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation & Open Space District," https://www.sonomaopenspace.org/wp-content/uploads/Scenic_ANSI_D_05152017.pdf accessed 11/9/20.

Figure 4. Schematic Aerial Overlay Looking South at Future Residential Development (Zimmerman + Associates, 2020)[2]

[2] Zimmerman + Associates, "Subdivision_7200 Bennett Valley," August 5, 2020.

(3) Cut and fills are discouraged, and where practical, driveways are screened from public view;
Explanation: The project proposes a minimal cut of 190 cubic yards and a fill of 190 cubic yards. The driveways and subdivision road would largely be screened from public viewpoints due to topography and existing vegetation.

(4) Utilities are placed underground where economically practical.

Explanation: Utilities would be placed underground to the extent practical.

As discussed above, the project proposes design features that would generally be consistent with County Zoning Regulation Article 64 (SR Scenic Resource Combining District) which are intended to reduce impacts to scenic resources. The project's design features would generally be consistent with County Zoning Regulations related to visual characteristics of projects. Impacts to scenic resources would be less than significant.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

Comment:
The project site is not visible from a state scenic highway. The nearest state scenic highway is State Route 12 (SR 12), approximately 3.5 miles to the east of the project site.[3]

Significance Level: No Impact

c) 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 publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

Comment:
The proposed project would result in a four-lot subdivision and enable future development of three single-family residential homes. The project is consistent with the land use designation and zoning for the site. The purpose of the Diverse Agriculture zone is to "*enhance and protect those land areas where soil, climate and water conditions support farming but where small acreage intensive farming and part-time farming activities are predominant, but where farming may not be the principal occupation of the farmer; and to implement the provisions of the diverse agriculture land use category of the General Plan and the policies of the Agricultural Resource Element*." Residential uses are also permitted within the Diverse Agriculture zone and the future residential development would be consistent with the siting and design standards for development in the zone. As discussed

[3] Caltrans. Map Viewer website, "California Scenic Highways," https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?layers=f0259b1ad0fe4093a5604c9b838a486a, accessed 1/12/2021.

in section 1.a above, the project is also consistent with the Scenic Resources – Scenic Landscape Unit zoning designation.

Due to the Scenic Landscape Unit designation photo renderings and visual analysis were prepared for the project by Zimmerman + Associates.[4] This analysis included determining where the project site was visible from public vantage points and adding schematic design overlays to those viewpoints to determine the visual prominence of the future residential development. The topography and existing vegetation screen much of the site from view along Bennett Valley Road. Glimpses of the site can be seen from Bennett Valley Road and from Bardy Road, however, the future building envelopes are sighted below the ridgeline to the south and would be surrounded by mature vegetation, reducing the visual dominance of future residential development on the three lots (see Figures 5 and 6). The ridgeline screens the project site from view to the south.

Figure 5. Photo Rendering with Schematic Design Overlaid from Bardy Road (Zimmerman + Associates, 2020)

[4] Zimmerman + Associates, "Subdivision_7200 Bennett Valley," August 5, 2020.

Figure 6. Photo Rendering with Schematic Design Overlaid from Bennett Valley Road (Zimmerman + Associates, 2020)

Given the projected visibility of future on-site residences from Bennett Valley Road and Bardy Road, highly reflective or brightly colored building materials would present a noticeable contrast to the site's existing scenic resources. While it is currently unknown whether the future residences would be designed with highly reflective or brightly colored materials, given the site's location in a designated Scenic Landscape Unit and the potential for these building materials to be used, the project would be subject to County Administrative Design Review (ADR).[5] ADR is standard County procedure for proposed single-family residential projects on sites that have the Scenic Resources (SR) or Scenic Design (SD) zoning designation. ADR of each of the proposed single-family residences would occur prior to construction of the residences. According to Permit Sonoma, ADR ensures that, "proposed structures are screened from view from public roads by existing topography and vegetation to the maximum extent practicable." County ADR approval would ensure the future residences incorporate building materials that would not significantly impact the visual character of or public views of the project site.

Following County Visual Assessment Guidelines, public viewpoints were considered for determining the project's visibility to the public. Based on the Visual Assessment Guidelines, Table 1: Site Sensitivity, the project location would be considered "Maximum" because:

"The site or any portion thereof is within a land use or zoning designation protecting scenic resources, such as General Plan designated scenic landscape units, coastal zone, community separators, or scenic corridors. The site vicinity is generally characterized by the natural setting and forms a scenic backdrop for a designated scenic corridor. This category includes building or

[5] Sonoma County, 2021. Permit Sonoma. "Design Review Instructions & Forms," https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Instructions-and-Forms/Design-Review/, accessed 6/24/2021.

construction sites within the scenic resource designation on or near prominent ridgelines, visible slopes greater than 40 percent or where there are significant natural features of aesthetic value that are visible from a designated scenic corridor." [6]

Based on County Visual Assessment Guidelines, Table 2: Visual Dominance, the project would be considered inevident because:

> *"Project is generally not visible from public view because of intervening natural land forms or vegetation."*

The project's visual effect on the visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings was determined based on County Visual Assessment Guidelines, Table 3: Thresholds of Significance for Visual Impact Analysis.

Table 3. Thresholds of Significance for Visual Impact Analysis

Sensitivity	Visual Dominance			
	Dominant	***Co-Dominant***	***Subordinate***	***Inevident***
Maximum	Significant	Significant	Significant	**Less than significant**
High	Significant	Significant	Less than significant	Less than significant
Moderate	Significant	Less than significant	Less than significant	Less than significant
Low	Less than significant	Less than significant	Less than significant	Less than significant

Considering the project site's "Maximum" sensitivity and the project's "Inevident" visual dominance, the project would be considered to have a less-than-significant effect on the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime view in the area?

Comment:

[6] Sonoma County. "Visual Assessment Guidelines and Procedure," https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Environmental-Review-Guidelines/Visual-Assessment-Guidelines/, accessed 1/12/2021.

The project does not propose any structures, but at future buildout, residential structures will introduce new sources of light and glare. Lighting on future development will be required to be Dark Sky compliant or a similar certification.

Significance Level: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation
Mitigation Measure VIS-1: Prior to issuance of building permits, an exterior lighting plan shall be submitted review. Exterior lighting shall be low mounted, downward casting and fully shielded to prevent glare. Lighting shall not wash out structures or any portions of the site. Light fixtures shall not be located at the periphery of the property and shall not spill over onto adjacent properties or into the night sky. Flood lights are not permitted. Lighting shall shut of automatically after closing and security lighting shall be motion sensor activated.

Mitigation Monitoring
Mitigation Monitoring VIS-1: Permit Sonoma shall not issue the Building Permit until an exterior night lighting plan has been submitted that is consistent with the approved plans and County standards. Permit Sonoma shall not sign off final occupancy on the Building Permit until it is demonstrated that improvements have been installed according to the approved plans and conditions. If light and glare complaints are received, Permit Sonoma shall conduct a site inspection and require the property be brought into compliance or initiate procedures to revoke or modify the permit.

2. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department 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.

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?

Comment:
The project parcel has designations of farmland of local importance, farmland of statewide importance, unique farmland, and grazing land under the California Department of Conservation

Division of Land Resource Protection Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.[7] The southern half of the project parcel where lots 1, 2, and 3 and the new residences would be located is designated as farmland of local importance and grazing land. The existing 50 acres of vineyards which are located on farmland of statewide importance and unique farmland would not be disturbed or reduced as a result of this project. The road for the new lots follows the existing onsite access road and therefore no prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of statewide importance would be converted to a non-agricultural use as a result of this project.

Significance Level: No Impact

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or Williamson Act Contract?

Comment:
The project site is zoned DA 20 (Diverse Agriculture), which allows for single family residential development and lots a minimum of 10 acres in size and requires a residential density of 20 acres minimum per unit. As a condition of approval for the project, the B7 (Frozen Lot Size) combining district will be added to lot 4 to limit further division of this lot. A portion of the site is currently in agricultural use and is developed with vineyards. The new lots would be created at the southern end of the existing parcel that are not developed with vineyards and would not displace the existing agricultural use. The project site is not subject to a Williamson Act Contract. Therefore, the project is not expected to conflict with the zoning for agricultural use.

Significance Level: No Impact

c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 4526) or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g)?

Comment:
The project site is not in a Timberland Production zoning district as designated by the Permit Sonoma GIS Site Evaluation Tool.[8] The project would not cause a rezoning of forest land.

Significance Level: No Impact

d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

Comment:
The project site is not designated as forest land, and the project would not convert forest land to non-forest land use. Approximately 12 trees will be removed to accommodate building envelopes and the subdivision road. Two trees would be removed for the upgrade/installation of the

[7] California Department of Conservation, 2020. *Sonoma County Important Farmland,* ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/FMMP/pdf/2016/son16.pdf, accessed on 3/2/2021.
[8] Sonoma County. Permit Sonoma GIS. "Zoning and Land Use," https://sonomacounty.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=06ac7fe1b8554171b4682dc141293962, accessed 11/9/2020.

subdivision road. An additional ten trees may be removed if the residential and septic building envelopes are fully developed as currently proposed. However, project related tree removal does not constitute loss or conversion of forest land.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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?

Comment:
The project does not involve other changes in the environment that could result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use of forest land to a non-forest use.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact

3. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. The methodologies and assumptions used in preparation of this section follow the CEQA Guidelines developed by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), as revised in May 2017 (BAAQMD 2017). Information on existing air quality conditions, federal and state ambient air quality standards, and pollutants of concern was obtained from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), California Air Resources Board (CARB), and BAAQMD.

Would the project:

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Comment:
The project is within the jurisdiction of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), which is currently designated as a nonattainment area for state and federal ozone standards, the state PM_{10} standard, and the state and federal $PM_{2.5}$ standard. The District has adopted an Ozone Attainment Plan and a Clean Air Plan in compliance with Federal and State Clean Air Acts. These plans include measures to achieve compliance with both ozone standards. The plans deal primarily with emissions of ozone precursors (nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds, also referred to as Reactive Organic Gases (ROG)).

The project would create four parcels and enable construction of three single-family homes. As described in Sections 3.b and 8.a, below, the proposed project would not result in a significant impact related to air quality or greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, as described below, the project would implement conditions and measures to reduce air quality emissions during construction. The proposed project would not hinder or disrupt implementation of any control measures from the Clean Air Plan. Implementation of the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact related to implementation of an applicable air quality plan.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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?

Comment:
As described in the BAAQMD CEQA Guidelines,[9] the BAAQMD has developed screening criteria to provide lead agencies and project applicants with a conservative indication of whether the proposed project could result in potentially significant air quality impacts. If all of the screening criteria are met by a proposed project, then the lead agency or applicant would not need to perform a detailed air quality assessment of their project's air pollutant emissions.

If the project meets the screening criteria in Table 3-1 (Operational-Related Criteria Air Pollutant and Precursor Screening Level Sizes) of the BAAQMND CEQA Guidelines, the project will not result in the generation of operational-related criteria air pollutants and/or precursors that exceed the Thresholds of Significance shown in Table 2-2 of the BAAQMD CEQA Guidelines. Additionally, operation of the proposed project would also result in a less-than-significant cumulative impact to air quality from criteria air pollutant and precursor emissions.

Based on its size, the proposed project is below the single-family land use construction-related screening size (114 dwelling units) and the operation criteria pollutant screening size (325 dwelling units). Following use of the screening criteria for ROG and NOx, found in the BAAQMD Air Quality Guidelines (Table 3-1), a detailed air quality study is not required, and emissions of criteria pollutants from the project would be less than significant. Furthermore, as the project would not result in a significant air quality impact, it would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to regional air quality impacts.

The project would not have a cumulative effect on ozone because it would not generate substantial traffic which would result in substantial emissions of ozone precursors (ROG and NOx). The project would have no long-term effect on $PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10}, because all surfaces would be paved gravel, landscaped or otherwise treated to stabilize bare soils, and dust generation would be minimal. However, there could be a significant short-term emission of dust (which would include $PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10}) during construction. Mitigation Measure AIR-1 would reduce this potential impact to less than significant.

Although the project would generate some ozone precursors from new vehicle trips, the size of the project is small, and the project would not have a cumulative effect on ozone because it will not generate substantial traffic resulting in significant new emissions of ozone precursors (ROG and NOx).

Wood smoke from fireplaces and wood stoves are sources of fine particulate matter. Wood smoke is a major contributor to reduced visibility and reduced air quality on winter evenings in both urban

[9] Bay Area Air Quality Management District, 2017. California Environmental Quality Act, Air Quality Guidelines, May 2017.

and rural areas. Sonoma County building regulations limit fireplaces to natural gas fireplaces, pellet stoves and EPA-Certified wood burning fireplaces or stoves. With the restriction on fireplace design, fine particulate emissions from this project would be a less than significant impact.

Construction activities would generate dust, particulates, and emissions from construction related vehicles. However, Mitigation Measures below would address these impacts.

Significance Level: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measure AIR-1:

The following dust control measures shall be included in the project:

(a) Water or alternative dust control method shall be sprayed to control dust on construction areas, soil stockpiles, and staging areas during construction as directed by the County.
(b) Trucks hauling soil, sand and other loose materials over public roads shall cover the loads, or will keep the loads at least two feet below the level of the sides of the container, or shall wet the load sufficiently to prevent dust emissions.
(c) Paved roads shall be swept as needed to remove soil that has been carried onto them from the project site.

In addition, the following BAAQMD BMPs shall be included in the project:

(a) Water all exposed surfaces (e.g., parking areas, staging areas, soil piles, graded areas, and unpaved access roads) two times per day during construction to limit visible dust emissions.
(b) Cover all haul trucks transporting soil, sand, or other loose materials off the project site.
(c) Vehicle speeds on unpaved roads/areas shall not exceed 15 miles per hour.
(d) Complete all areas to be paved as soon as possible and lay building pads as soon as possible after grading unless seeding or soil binders are used.
(e) Minimize idling time of diesel-power construction equipment to five minutes and post signs reminding workers of this idling restriction at all access points and equipment staging areas during construction of the proposed project.
(f) Maintain and properly tune all construction equipment in accordance with manufacturer's specifications and have a CARB-certified visible emissions evaluator check equipment prior to use at the site.
(g) Post a publicly visible sign with the name and telephone number of the construction contractor and County staff person to contact regarding dust complaints. This person shall respond and take corrective action within 48 hours. The publicly visible sign shall also include the contact phone number for the BAAQMD to ensure compliance with applicable regulations.

Mitigation Monitoring:

Mitigation Monitoring AIR-1

County staff shall ensure that these construction period air quality measures are listed on all site alternation, grading, building, or improvement plans prior to issuance or grading or building permits.

With implementation of the above mitigation measure, the proposed project would not violate any air quality standards or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation.

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Comment:
Sensitive receptors include hospitals, schools, convalescent facilities, and residential areas. The project site is located in an area with rural residential and agricultural uses. As described above in section 3.b, due to the limited size of the project (a four-parcel subdivision and construction and occupation of three single-family homes), the project would not contribute to a significant impact related to construction or operational air quality impacts.

Although there would be no long-term increase in emissions, during construction there could be significant short term dust emissions that would affect nearby residents. Dust emissions would be reduced to less than significant by the mitigation measure described in item 3.b above.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors adversely affecting a substantial number of people)?

Comment:
The project is not an odor generating use, nor located near an odor generating source that may affect the use and would have no odor impact. Construction equipment may generate odors during project construction. The impact would be less than significant as it would be a short-term impact that ceases upon completion of the project.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

This section of the MND provides an analysis of potential impacts to biological resources on the project site, including sensitive habitats, special-status plant and wildlife species, and protected tree species. A Biological Resources Assessment Report was prepared by WRA Environmental Consultants (WRA) in August 2020.[10] The report provides an overview of the biological resources on the project site, including special-status plan and wildlife species and sensitive habitats. A Native Grassland & Oregon White Oak Woodland Habitat Mitigation and Management Plan[11] was also prepared for the project by WRA in March 2021. This plan details onsite management and restoration activities designed to replace potentially impacted grassland and woodland habitats associated with the proposed project and future construction of three single-family residences. WRA biologists also conducted visits to the project site

[10] WRA Environmental Consultants (WRA), "Biological Resources Assessment Report," August 2020.
[11] WRA, "Native Grassland & Oregon White Oak Woodland Habitat Mitigation and Management Plan," March 2021.

which consisted of an August 3, 2018, visit focusing on broad land cover mapping and a summer floristic survey; a November 3, 2020 visit focusing on grassland and woodland mapping; and an April 7, 2021 visit that consisted of a spring floristic survey[12] for special status plants. Based on information and data collected and analyzed, mitigation measures are provided herein to minimize and/or avoid potential biological resource impacts in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines.

Would the project:

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?

Regulatory Framework:
The following discussion identifies federal, state, and local environmental regulations that serve to protect sensitive biological resources and are relevant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process.

Federal
Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA)
FESA establishes a broad public and federal interest in identifying, protecting, and providing for the recovery of threatened or endangered species. The Secretary of Interior and the Secretary of Commerce are designated in FESA as responsible for identifying endangered and threatened species and their critical habitat, carrying out programs for the conservation of these species, and rendering opinions regarding the impact of proposed federal actions on listed species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) are charged with implementing and enforcing the FESA. USFWS has authority over terrestrial and continental aquatic species, and NOAA Fisheries has authority over species that spend all or part of their life cycle at sea, such as salmonids.

Section 9 of FESA prohibits the unlawful "take" of any listed fish or wildlife species. Take, as defined by FESA, means "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such action." USFWS's regulations define harm to mean "an act which actually kills or injures wildlife." Such an act "may include "significant habitat modification or degradation where it actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding or sheltering" (50 CFR § 17.3). Take can be permitted under FESA pursuant to sections 7 and 10. Section 7 provides a process for take permits for federal projects or projects subject to a federal permit, and Section 10 provides a process for incidental take permits for projects without a federal nexus. FESA does not extend the take prohibition to federally listed plants on private land, other than prohibiting the removal, damage, or destruction of such species in violation of state law.

Critical Habitat
Critical habitat is a term defined in the ESA as a specific geographic area that contains features

[12] WRA, "Special-status Plant Survey at 7200 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa, California. APN: 055-150-001," April 15, 2021.

essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that may require special management and protection. The ESA requires federal agencies to consult with USFWS to conserve listed species on their lands and to ensure that any activities or projects they fund, authorize, or carry out will not jeopardize the survival of a threatened or endangered species. In consultation for those species with critical habitat, federal agencies must also ensure that their activities or projects do not adversely modify critical habitat to the point that it will no longer aid in the species' recovery, whether or not those lands are occupied by the subject species. In many cases, this level of protection is similar to that already provided to species by the ESA jeopardy standard (which is applied to ensure that a federal action would not jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat).

Essential Fish Habitat

Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) is regulated through the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), a division of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Protection of Essential Fish Habitat is mandated through changes implemented in 1996 to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) to protect the loss of habitat necessary to maintain sustainable fisheries in the United States. The Magnuson-Stevens Act defines EFH as "those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity" [16 USC 1802(10)]. NMFS further defines EFH as areas that "contain habitat essential to the long-term survival and health of our nation's fisheries" EFH can include the water column, certain bottom types such as sandy or rocky bottoms, vegetation such as eelgrass or kelp, or structurally complex coral or oyster reefs. Under regulatory guidelines issued by NMFS, any federal agency that authorizes, funds, or undertakes action that may affect EFH is required to consult with NMFS (50 CFR 600.920).

Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA)

The Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) (16 USC. 703 et seq.), Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 10, prohibits taking, killing, possessing, transporting, and importing of migratory birds, parts of migratory birds, and their eggs and nests, except when specifically authorized by the Department of the Interior. As used in the act, the term "take" is defined as meaning, "to pursue, hunt, capture, collect, kill or attempt to pursue, hunt, shoot, capture, collect or kill, unless the context otherwise requires." With a few exceptions, most birds are considered migratory under the MBTA. Disturbances that cause nest abandonment and/or loss of reproductive effort or loss of habitat upon which these birds depend would be in violation of the MBTA.

State

California Endangered Species Act (CESA)

Provisions of the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) protect state-listed threatened and endangered species. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is charged with establishing a list of endangered and threatened species. CDFW regulates activities that may result in "take" of individuals (i.e., "hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill"). Habitat degradation or modification is not expressly included in the definition of "take" under the California Fish and Game Code (CFGC), but CDFW has interpreted "take" to include the killing of a member of a species which is the proximate result of habitat modification.

California Fully Protected Species and Species of Special Concern

The classification of "fully protected" was the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW's) initial effort to identify and provide additional protection to those animals that were rare or faced possible extinction. Lists were created for fish, amphibians and reptiles, birds, and mammals. Most of the species on these lists have subsequently been listed under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) and/or Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA). The Fish and Game Code sections (fish at §5515, amphibians and reptiles at §5050, birds at §3503 and §3511, and mammals at §4150 and §4700) dealing with "fully protected" species state that these species "…may not be taken or possessed at any time and no provision of this code or any other law shall be construed to authorize the issuance of permits or licenses to take any fully protected species," although take may be authorized for necessary scientific research. This language makes the "fully protected" designation the strongest and most restrictive regarding the "take" of these species. In 2003, the code sections dealing with "fully protected" species were amended to allow the CDFW to authorize take resulting from recovery activities for state-listed species.

California Species of Special Concern (CSC) are broadly defined as animals not listed under the FESA or CESA, but which are nonetheless of concern to the CDFW because they are declining at a rate that could result in listing or because they historically occurred in low numbers and known threats to their persistence currently exist. This designation is intended to result in special consideration for these animals by the CDFW, land managers, consulting biologists, and others, and is intended to focus attention on the species to help avert the need for costly listing under FESA and CESA and cumbersome recovery efforts that might ultimately be required. This designation also is intended to stimulate collection of additional information on the biology, distribution, and status of poorly known at-risk species, and focus research and management attention on them. Although these species generally have no special legal status, they are given special consideration under the CEQA during project review.

Nesting Birds

Nesting birds, including raptors, are protected under California Fish and Game Code (CFGC) Section 3503, which reads, "It is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation made pursuant thereto." In addition, under CFGC Section 3503.5, "it is unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds in the orders Falconiformes or Strigiformes (birds-of-prey) or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation adopted pursuant thereto". Passerines and non-passerine land birds are further protected under CFGC 3513. As such, CDFW typically recommends surveys for nesting birds that could potentially be directly (e.g., actual removal of trees/vegetation) or indirectly (e.g., noise disturbance) impacted by project-related activities. Disturbance during the breeding season could result in the incidental loss of fertile eggs or nestlings, or otherwise lead to nest abandonment. Disturbance that causes nest abandonment and/or loss of reproductive effort is considered "take" by CDFW.

Non-Game Mammals

Sections 4150-4155 of the California Fish and Game Code (CFGC) protects non-game mammals, including bats. Section 4150 states "A mammal occurring naturally in California that is not a game mammal, fully protected mammal, or fur-bearing mammal is a nongame mammal. A non-game mammal may not be taken or possessed except as provided in this code or in accordance with regulations adopted by the commission". The non-game mammals that may be taken or possessed

are primarily those that cause crop or property damage. Bats are classified as a non-game mammal and are protected under the CFGC.

Other Special-Status Plants – California Native Plant Society
The California Native Plant Society (CNPS), a non-profit plant conservation organization, publishes and maintains an Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California in both hard copy and electronic version (http://www.cnps.org/cnps/rareplants/inventory/).

The Inventory employs the California Rare Plant Ranking (CRPR) to assign plants to the following categories:

1A Presumed extinct in California
1B Rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere
2 Rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere
3 Plants for which more information is needed – A review list
4 Plants of limited distribution – A watch list

Additional endangerment codes are assigned to each taxon as follows:

1 Seriously endangered in California (over 80% of occurrences threatened/high degree of immediacy of threat)
2 Fairly endangered in California (20-80% occurrences threatened)
3 Not very endangered in California (<20% of occurrences threatened, or no current threats known)

CRPR 1A, 1B, and 2 plants consist of individuals that may qualify for listing by state and federal agencies. As part of the CEQA process, such species should be fully considered, as they meet the definition of threatened or endangered under the NPPA and Sections 2062 and 2067 of the CFGC. CRPR 3 and 4 species are considered to be plants about which more information is needed or are uncommon enough that their status should be regularly monitored. Such plants may be eligible or may become eligible for state listing, and CNPS and CDFW recommend that these species be evaluated for consideration during the preparation of CEQA documents.

Local

The Sonoma County General Plan 2020 (Sonoma County 2008): Land Use Element and Open Space and Resource Conservation Element both contain policies to protect natural resource lands including, but not limited to, watershed, fish and wildlife habitat, biotic areas, and habitat connectivity corridors. Policy OSRC-8b establishes streamside conservation areas along designated riparian corridors. The policies below provide for protection of biotic habitats both within and outside the designated areas. Following are the types of biotic habitat addressed by the policies in this section that are pertinent to the proposed project:

Special-Status Species Habitat: Special-status species are plant and animals which are listed or candidate species under the Federal or State Endangered Species Acts and other species considered rare enough to warrant special consideration. Reported occurrences of special-status species are compiled by the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB) of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and are routinely updated as new information becomes available. Detailed surveys are typically necessary to confirm the presence or absence of special-status species.

Comment:
According to the Native Grassland & Oregon White Oak Woodland Habitat Mitigation and Management Plan prepared by WRA dated March 2021, the project site contains eight land cover types: 49.37 acres of vineyards, 0.93 acres of native-dominated grasslands, 7.39 acres on non-native dominated grasslands, 0.32 acres of coyote brush scrub, 0.32 acres of blue gum grove, 12.02 acres of Oregon white oak woodland, and 10.13 acres of coast live oak woodland.

Special Status Plant Species
Special-status plants are defined here to include: (1) plants that are federal- or state-listed as rare, threatened, or endangered, (2) federal and state candidates for listing, (3) plants assigned a Rank of 1 through 4 by the CNPS Inventory, and (4) plants that qualify under the definition of "rare" in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15380 (Endangered, Rare, or Threatened Species).

Based upon database searches, including a CNDDB search, performed by WRA as part of their biological assessments, 84 special-status plant species have been documented in the vicinity of the project site. Eleven of these plants have the potential to occur at the project site; they include Franciscan onion (*Allium peninsulare* var. *fraciscanum*), Napa false indigo (*Amorpha californica var. napensis*), bent flowered fiddleneck (*Amsinckia lunaris*), big-scale balsamroot (Balsamorhiza macrolepis), narrow anthered brodiaea (*Brodiaea leptandra*), streamside daisy (*Erigeron biolettii*), fragrant fritillary (*Fritillaria liliacea*), Hayfield tarplant (*Hemizonia congesta ssp. congesta*), Colusa layia (*Layia septentrionalis*), Jepson's leptosiphon (*Leptosiphon jepsonii*), and orval-leaved viburnum (*Viburnum ellipticum*). The remaining species documented from the greater vicinity were determined to have an unlikely or no potential to occur. A WRA botanist conducted site surveys on August 3, 2018, November 3, 2020, and April 7, 2021. The 2018 site visit included broad land cover mapping and a summer floristic survey, the 2020 visit included grassland and woodland mapping, and the 2021 site visit included a spring floristic survey where the entire special-status plant survey area was traversed on foot and all plants identified toa taxonomic level to determine rarity. The surveys were performed in accordance with those outlined by resource experts and agencies (CNPS 2001, CDFW 2018). Plants were identified using The Jepson Manual, 2nd Edition (Baldwin et. al. 2012), Jepson Flora Project (eFlora 2021), and/or A Flora of Sonoma County (Best et al. 1996) to the taxonomic level necessary to determine whether or not they were sensitive. None of the eleven special-status species with the potential to occur or any other special-status plant species were observed during any of the three site surveys when plants were either easily identifiable and/or blooming. Based on the database review and results of the site surveys, the project would not impact special status plant species.

Special Status Wildlife Species
Special-status wildlife species include those species listed as endangered or threatened under the FESA or CESA; candidates for listing by the USFWS or CDFW; California fully protected and species of special concern; non-game mammals protected by Sections 4150-4155 of the CFGC; and nesting birds protected by the CDFW under CFGC Sections 3503 and 3513.

Based on a review of the USFWS, CNDDB, CNPS, NOAA Fisheries, and University of California databases, the biologists' knowledge of sensitive species within Sonoma County, and an assessment

of the types of habitats on the project site, it was determined that nine special status wildlife species have a moderate potential to occur at or near the project site.[13] These species include: American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), Pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), Fringed Myotis (*Myotis thysanodes*), Long-legged myotis (*Myotis volans*), Yuma myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*), Long-eared owl (*Asio otus*), White-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*), Western pond turtle (*Emys marmorata*), and Foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylii*). This determination took into consideration the presence of essential habitat requirements for the species, the presence of known occurrences within five miles of the project site, and/or the project site's location within the species' known range of distribution.

Mammals

American badger (Taxidea taxus). CDFW Species of Special Concern. Moderate Potential. The American badger is a large, semi-fossorial member of the Mustelidae (weasel family). It is found uncommonly within the region in drier open stages of most scrub, forest, and herbaceous habitats where friable soils and prey populations are present. Badgers are typically solitary and nocturnal, digging burrows to provide refuge during daylight hours. Burrow entrances are usually elliptical (rather than round), and each burrow generally has only one entrance. Home ranges for this species to be large, depending on the habitat available; population density averages one badger per square mile in prime open country (Long 1973). There were no burrows or dens of a size and shape characteristic of American badger within the project site; therefore, this species is considered absent from the project site.

Nesting Birds and Bats

Pallid Bat (Antrozous pallidus). CDFW Species of Special Concern, WBWG High Priority. Moderate Potential. Pallid bats are distributed from southern British Columbia and Montana to central Mexico, and east to Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas. This species occurs in a number of habitats ranging from rocky arid deserts to grasslands, and into higher elevation coniferous forests. They are most abundant in the arid Sonoran life zones below 6,000 feet but have been found up to 10,000 feet in the Sierra Nevada. Pallid bats often roost in colonies of between 20 and several hundred individuals. Roosts are typically in rock crevices, tree hollows, mines, caves, and a variety of man-made structures, including vacant and occupied buildings. Tree roosting has been documented in large conifer snags (e.g., ponderosa pine), inside basal hollows of redwoods and giant sequoias, and within bole cavities in oak trees (WBWG 2020). A focused bat habitat survey was not conducted during the site visit; therefore, presence of this and/or other bat species is unknown.

Fringed Myotis (Myotis thysanodes). WBWG High Priority. Moderate Potential (Presence Unknown). Fringed Myotis ranges through much of western North America from southern British Columbia, Canada, south to Chiapas, Mexico and from Santa Cruz Island in California, east to the Black Hills of South Dakota. This species is found in desert scrubland, grassland, sage-grass steppe, old-growth forest, and subalpine coniferous and mixed deciduous forest. Oak and pinyon-juniper woodlands are most commonly used. Fringed Myotis roosts in colonies e from 10 to 2,000 individuals, although large colonies are rare. Caves, buildings, underground mines, rock crevices in cliff faces, and bridges are used for maternity and night roosts, while hibernation has only been documented in buildings and underground mines. Tree-roosting has also been documented in Oregon, New Mexico, and California (WBWG 2020).

[13] WRA, August 2020, p. 16.

Long-legged myotis (Myotis volans). WBWG High Priority. Moderate Potential. Longlegged Myotis ranges across western North America from southeastern Alaska to Baja California and east to the Great Plains and central Texas. This species is usually found in coniferous forests, but also occurs seasonally in riparian and desert habitats. They use abandoned buildings, cracks in the ground, cliff crevices, exfoliating tree bark and hollows within snags as summer day roosts. Caves and mines are used as hibernation roosts. Long-legged Myotis forage in and around the forest canopy and feed on moths and other soft-bodies insects (WBWG 2020).

Yuma myotis (Myotis yumanensis). WBWG Low Priority. Moderate Potential. The Yuma myotis is found throughout most of California at lower elevations in a wide variety of habitats. Day roosts are found in buildings, trees, mines, caves, bridges, and rock crevices. Night roosts are usually associated with buildings, bridges or other man-made structures (Philpott 1996).

Long-eared owl (Asio otus). CDFW Species of Special Concern. Moderate Potential. Nesting long-eared owls range from coastal lowlands to interior deserts and seem to prefer riparian groves, planted woodlots, and belts of live oaks paralleling streams (Shuford 1993). Generally, this owl frequents dense, riparian and live oak thickets near meadow edges, and nearby woodland and forest habitats (Zeiner, et al. 1990).

White-tailed kite (Elanus leucurus). State Fully Protected. Moderate Potential. Kites occur in low elevation grassland, agricultural, wetland, oak woodland, and savannah habitats. Riparian zones adjacent to open areas are also used. Vegetative structure and prey availability seem to be more important than specific associations with plant species or vegetative communities. Lightly grazed or ungrazed fields generally support large prey populations and are often preferred to other habitats. Kites primarily feed on small mammals, although, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and insects are also taken. Nest trees range from single isolated trees to trees within large contiguous forests. Preferred nest trees are extremely variable, ranging from small shrubs (less than 10 feet) to large trees (Greater than 150 feet). (Dunk 1995).

With construction of the road, bridge crossings, and tree removal, there is a potential impact to nesting birds and bats. Implementation of mitigation measures BIO-2 (Nesting Bird Avoidance and Pre-Construction Surveys) and BIO-3 (Conduct Pre-Construction Bat Surveys) would reduce potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

<u>Amphibians and Reptiles</u>

Western pond turtle (Emys marmorata). CDFW Species of Special Concern. Moderate Potential. The western pond turtle (WPT) is the only freshwater turtle native to most of California and occurs throughout much of the state. This species is highly aquatic, typically inhabiting perennial waters including lakes, ponds/reservoirs, rivers, streams, and canals that provide submerged cover and suitable exposed basking structures such as rocks, logs and mats of emergent vegetation. Nesting usually occurs in spring to early summer, with eggs hatching in the fall; nests are excavated in upland areas with friable soil, usually on unshaded slopes within approximately 300 feet of water (Thomson et al. 2016). Hatchlings require shallow water with relatively dense emergent and aquatic vegetation to provide forage (aquatic invertebrates; Thomson et al. 2016). The project site and

nearby Matanzas Creek provides perennial aquatic habitat that includes aquatic vegetation, various basking substrates, and presumably forage (invertebrate, vegetation). Year-round residency and nesting is unlikely due to perennial stillwaters (e.g., ponds, lakes) being greater than 500 feet distant from the project parcel.

Foothill yellow-legged frog (Rana boylii). State Candidate (Threatened), CDFW Species of Special Concern. Moderate Potential. The foothill yellow-legged frog (FYLF) historically occurred in coastal and mountain streams from southern Oregon to Los Angeles County, but has declined in many parts of this range. This species is strongly associated with rivers and perennial creeks, and prefers shallow, flowing water with a rocky substrate. FYLF individuals do not typically move overland and are rarely observed far from a source of permanent water (typically less than ten feet). Aquatic breeding sites are in-stream, often near confluences, with eggs typically deposited behind or sometimes under rocks in low-flow areas with cobble and/or gravel (Thomson et al. 2016). Metamorphosis takes at least 15 weeks. The lower reach of the intermittent stream within the project site provides a rocky substrate and may be occupied when the stream is flowing; any individuals present would presumably retreat downstream when flow ceases. Breeding within the stream is unlikely given the limited water depth and intermittent nature of the flow.

Implementation of mitigation measures BIO-1 (Conduct Worker Awareness Training) and BIO-4 (Conduct Pre-Construction Herptile Surveys) would be implemented to avoid inadvertent take and reduce potential impacts to WPT and FYLF to a less-that-significant level.

Level of Significance: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation:

Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Conduct Environmental Awareness Training for Construction Employees.

NOTE ON MAP:
Prior to beginning construction activities (including, but not limited to, mobilization and staging, clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal, fence installation, demolition, and grading), a qualified biologist[14] shall develop and conduct an environmental awareness training program for crew members who are involved in project construction. The training shall describe the importance of sensitive biological resources, including potential FYLF (Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog) and WPT (Western Pond Turtle) dispersal habitat, songbird and/or raptor nest sites, bat roost sites, and nearby state and federal jurisdictional habitats. The biologist shall also explain the importance of other responsibilities related to the protection of wildlife during construction, such as inspecting open trenches and looking under vehicles and machinery prior to moving them to ensure there are

[14] A qualified biologist is an individual who possesses, at a minimum, a bachelor's or advanced degree, from an accredited university, with a major in biology, zoology, wildlife biology, natural resources science, or a closely related scientific discipline, at least two years of field experience in the biology and natural history of local plant, fish, and wildlife resources present at the project site, and knowledge of state and federal laws regarding the protection of sensitive and endangered species.

no lizards, snakes, small mammals, or other wildlife that could become trapped, injured, or killed in construction areas or under equipment.

The environmental awareness program shall be provided to all construction personnel to describe the life history of special-status species on or adjacent to the project site, the need to avoid impacts to sensitive biological resources, any terms and conditions required by state and federal agencies, and the penalties for not complying with biological mitigation requirements. If new construction workers are added to the project, the contractor and/or their project manager(s) shall ensure that all personnel receive the mandatory training before starting work. An environmental awareness handout that describes and illustrates sensitive resources to be avoided during project construction and identifies all relevant permit conditions shall be provided to each construction worker.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2: Nesting Bird Avoidance or Conduct Pre-construction Surveys.

NOTE ON MAP:
The following measures shall be taken to avoid potential inadvertent destruction or disturbance of nesting birds on and near the project site as a result of construction-related vegetation removal and site disturbance:

(a) To avoid impacts to nesting birds, all construction-related activities (including but not limited to mobilization and staging, clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal, fence installation, demolition, and grading) shall occur outside the avian nesting season (generally prior to February 1 or after August 31). Active nesting is present if a bird is sitting in a nest, a nest has eggs or chicks in it, or adults are observed carrying food to the nest.

(b) If construction-related activities are scheduled to occur during the nesting season (generally February 1 through August 31), a qualified biologist shall conduct a habitat assessment and preconstruction nesting survey for nesting bird species no more than seven (7) days prior to initiation of work. In addition, the qualified biologist conducting the surveys shall be familiar with the breeding behaviors and nest structures of birds known to nest on the project site. Surveys shall be conducted at the appropriate times of day during periods of peak activity (e.g., early morning or dusk) and shall be of sufficient duration to observe movement patterns. Surveys shall be conducted on the project site and within 100 feet of the construction limits for nesting non-raptors and 500 feet for nesting raptors, as feasible. If the survey area is found to be absent of nesting birds, no further mitigation would be required. However, if project activities are delayed by more than seven (7) days, an additional nesting bird survey shall be performed.

(c) If pre-construction nesting bird surveys result in the location of active nests, no site disturbance (including but not limited to equipment staging, fence installation, clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal, fence installation, demolition, and grading), shall take place within 100 feet of non- raptor nests and 500 feet of raptor nests. Monitoring by a qualified biologist shall be required to ensure compliance with the relevant California Fish and Game Code requirements. Monitoring dates and findings shall be documented. Active nests found inside the limits of the buffer zones or nests within the vicinity of the project site showing signs of distress from project construction activity, as determined by the qualified biologist, shall be monitored daily during the duration of project construction for changes in breeding

behavior. If changes in behavior are observed (e.g., distress, disruptions), the buffer shall be immediately adjusted by the qualified biologist until no further interruptions to breeding behavior are detected. The nest protection buffers may be reduced if the qualified biologist determines in coordination with CDFW that construction activities would not be likely to adversely affect the nest. If buffers are reduced, twice-weekly monitoring may need to be conducted to confirm that construction activity is not resulting in detectable adverse effects on nesting birds or their young. The qualified biologist and CDFW may agree upon an alternative monitoring schedule depending on the construction activity, season, and species potentially subject to impact. Construction shall not commence within the prescribed buffer areas until a qualified biologist has determined that the young have fledged or the nest site is otherwise no longer in use. Following completion of pre-construction nesting bird surveys (if required), a report of the findings shall be prepared by a qualified biologist and submitted to the County prior to the initiation of construction related activities that have the potential to disturb any active nests during the nesting season.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3: Conduct Pre-Construction Bat Roost Surveys.

NOTE ON MAP:
A qualified wildlife biologist (as defined under Mitigation Measure BIO-2) shall conduct a preconstruction bat survey of all trees located within 50 feet of the construction area (where access is feasible) to determine if the trees provide suitable roost habitat (e.g., snags, large trees, trees with cavities or flaking bark, leafy trees) and to search for evidence of bat use (e.g., guano, urine staining, smells associated with bats, sounds indicating bat presence). The survey shall be conducted at dawn or dusk and no more than 30 days prior the initiation of construction-related activities (including but not limited to mobilization and staging, clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal, and grading). If no evidence of bat roosts is found, then no further action is required. If evidence of bat use is found, then nighttime acoustic surveys shall be conducted to determine whether a site is occupied. The survey shall determine if the roost is a maternity roost (if construction work is being performed during the bat maternity season, which is typically May 1 through August 31), hibernacula, or day roost. If a maternity roost is present, delay of the construction may be necessary until after the roost is vacated, or a disturbance exclusion buffer of at least 50 feet would be established around the maternity roost, or as determined by a qualified biologist in coordination with CDFW. If non-maternity bat roosts are detected/observed within trees to be removed as a result of project construction, impact avoidance measures shall be undertaken to clear the bats prior to tree removal activities in consultation with CDFW. Measures to exclude bats from occupied roosts may include, but are not limited to: disturbance to roosting individuals through introduction of light and/or noise to create an undesirable setting and to encourage the bats to vacate the roost. Access points shall be sealed to prevent re-entry of bat species. Project construction may commence upon final approval by CDFW and the County.

Mitigation Measure BIO-4: Conduct Pre-Construction Herptile Surveys.

NOTE ON MAP:
“Due to the proximity of the project site to Matanzas Creek and the onsite unnamed blue-line stream that is a tributary to Matanzas Creek, the project site has potential to provide dispersal

habitat for special-status herptile species (amphibians and reptiles) FYLF (Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog) and WPT (Western Pond Turtle), especially following precipitation. To avoid impacting these species, the following measures shall be implemented:

(a) If surface water is present within 500 feet of the work area, at least two preliminary surveys should be performed along the intermittent and ephemeral streams at least 14 days prior to project initiation. Survey areas (streams) will be systematically walked upstream, zig-zagging between the bank and the thalweg in wide areas, and bank-to-bank in narrow areas. All areas along the streams that could support frogs will be searched, including rocks, ledges, woody debris, overhanging vegetation, etc. as well as accessible natural cover within 50 feet of the wetted perimeter where frogs could be present. Surveyors will use binoculars to reduce disturbing frogs and flashlights for searching darkened crevices and shaded areas. Slow-moving and/or still waters will be closely inspected for the presence of tadpoles. If FYLF (Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog) are found during the pre-construction survey, the qualified biologist shall immediately inform the construction manager that work shall not be initiated until the FYLF has dispersed from the work area. The qualified biologist shall then consult with CDFW immediately and provide a short description of observations, including a count of individuals and the life stage(s), conditions at the site, and other aquatic species observed (if applicable). Unless explicitly authorized by CDFW (e.g., through issuance of an Incidental Take Permit [ITP] or other means), FYLF shall not be relocated if encountered on the project site. If they do not disperse on their own volition, the qualified biologist shall monitor the FYLF and consult with CDFW to determine the appropriate course of action, which may include obtaining an ITP.

(b) If FYLF (Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog) are determined to be present in the vicinity of the Project Area in the preliminary surveys, a preconstruction survey is proposed to be completed within 48 hours of project initiation. If FYLF are or will likely be present at the time of ground-breaking, protective measures should be employed. Such measures include: (1) installation of exclusion fencing, (2) presence of on-site biologist during ground disturbance activities, and (3) implementation of a worker education program. Exclusion fencing shall be installed, with an on-site biologist present, around the footprint of the work area in a manner that minimizes disturbance of the banks, such as use of sand bags to secure the toe of the fence rather than trenching. Once the work area is encircled with exclusion fence, no biologist will be required to be on-site unless the integrity of the fence is compromised. In this case, the work area shall be re-surveyed and the biologist will verify that the fence has been repaired such that no FYLF can enter.

(c) In the event that WPT (Western Pond Turtle) are found on the project site during preconstruction surveys, it shall be left alone to move out of the area on its own. If it does not move on its own, the qualified biologist shall notify CDFW and relocate the individual(s) to Matanzas Creek and at least 250 feet away from the construction location. Relocation areas shall be of suitable habitat, on shallow banks with slow moving water, and shall be far enough away so as not to be affected by construction activities.

(d) The applicant shall not resume construction activities until CDFW has provided written approval of the proposed avoidance measures or issued an ITP for FYLF (Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog),if applicable.

(e) Work shall be avoided if precipitation has been recorded at the project site within a 24-hour window. The NOAA weather forecast may be utilized to plan project work accordingly."

Mitigation Monitoring:

Mitigation Monitoring BIO-1 through BIO-4:
If FYLF (Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog) are found during the pre-construction surveys, then a copy of CDFW's written concurrence with proposed impact avoidance measures or a copy of CDFW's 2018 Incidental Take Permit (ITP) shall be provided to Sonoma County prior to the commencement of grading on the project site. In addition, prior to issuance of any grading permit(s), the County shall review and approve the results of all pre-construction surveys and any measures recommended by the biologist to avoid sensitive species (i.e., active nest and/or roost protection buffers) which shall be noted on the final project plans. The County shall not issue a grading permit until the applicant has submitted evidence to the County that Mitigation Measures BIO-2, BIO-3, BIO-4, and BIO-5 have been completed to USFWS and/or CDFW satisfaction (if agency involvement is required).

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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Regulatory Framework:

California Fish and Game Code Sections 1600-1603

Streams, lakes, and riparian vegetation, as habitat for fish and other wildlife species, are subject to jurisdiction by CDFW under Sections 1600-1603 of the CFGC. Any activity that will do one or more of the following - (1) substantially obstruct or divert the natural flow of a river, stream, or lake; (2) substantially change or use any material from the bed, channel, or bank of a river, stream, or lake; or (3) deposit or dispose of debris, waste, or other material containing crumbled, flaked, or ground pavement where it can pass into a river, stream, or lake - generally requires a 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSAA). The term "stream," which includes creeks and rivers, is defined in the California Code of Regulations (CCR) as follows: "a body of water that flows at least periodically or intermittently through a bed or channel having banks and supports fish or other aquatic life." This includes watercourses having a surface or subsurface flow that supports or has supported riparian vegetation" (14 CCR 1.72). In addition, the term "stream" can include ephemeral streams, dry washes, watercourses with subsurface flows, canals, aqueducts, irrigation ditches, and other means of water conveyance if they support aquatic life, riparian vegetation, or stream-dependent terrestrial wildlife (CDFW 1994). Riparian vegetation is defined as "vegetation which occurs in and/or adjacent to a stream and is dependent on, and occurs because of, the stream itself" (CDFW 1994). In addition to impacts to jurisdictional streambeds, removal of riparian vegetation also requires a Section 1602 LSAA from CDFW.

Sensitive Natural Communities

Sensitive natural communities are vegetation communities and habitats that are either unique in constituent components, of relatively limited distribution in the region, or of particularly high wildlife value. These communities may or may not necessarily contain special-status species. Sensitive natural communities are usually identified in local or regional plans, policies or regulations,

or by CDFW (e.g., California Natural Diversity Database - CNDDB) or the USFWS. The CNDDB identifies a number of natural communities as rare, which are given the highest inventory priority. Impacts to sensitive natural communities and habitats must be considered and evaluated under the CEQA Guidelines.

California Oak Woodland Statute

In September 2004, State Bill 1334 was passed and added to the State Public Resources Code as Statute 21083.4, requiring Counties to determine in their CEQA documents whether a project in its jurisdiction may result in a conversion of oak woodlands that would have a significant effect on the environment. In addition, if the County determines that a project may result in a significant impact to oak woodlands, the County shall require one or more of the following mitigation alternatives to mitigate for the impact:

(1) Conserving oak woodlands through the use of conservation easements.
(2) Plant an appropriate number of trees, including maintaining the plantings and replacing dead or diseased trees. Required maintenance of trees terminates seven years after the trees are planted. This type of mitigation shall not fulfill more than half of the mitigation requirement for the project. This type of mitigation may also be used to restore former oak woodlands.
(3) Contribute funds to the Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund.
(4) Other mitigation measures developed by the County.

The CFGC (Section 1361) defines oak woodland habitat as "an oak stand with a greater than 10 percent canopy cover or that may have historically supported greater than 10 percent canopy cover."

Comment:

Sensitive vegetation communities include riparian habitats or other sensitive natural communities identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or designated by the USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, or CDFW. The project site contains an intermittent stream that is designated as a Riparian Corridor with a 50-foot setback by Sonoma County. Two clear span bridges would be constructed across the stream to access lots 1, 2, and 3.

Streams with associated woody vegetation were assessed by WRA biologists to determine if these areas would be considered riparian habitat by the CDFW following A Field Guide to Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreements, Section 1600-1607, California Fish and Game Code (CDFG 1994). Based on the determination of WRA biologists following site visits and surveys, there is no distinctly riparian vegetation associated with the intermittent stream or any onsite drainages. The surface flows of the stream and drainages are insufficient to support riparian shrubs and trees. Several species of shrub and tree that are typically associated with riparian habitats are located sporadically along the intermittent stream; however, it does not support a contiguous, closed riparian habitat. Vegetation at or around the top-of-bank of the stream and other onsite drainages is similar to that in the surrounding upland stands.

In order to ensure compliance with Section 1600-1603 of the California Fish and Game Code, the project applicant will need to prepare and submit an LSAA Notification Package to seek formal authorization to perform work on and below the banks of the intermittent stream to construct the

bridge crossings. The project applicant would be responsible for conducting all project activities in accordance with the LSAA, including the implementation of jurisdictional habitat and special-status species impact avoidance and minimization measures. Implementation of mitigation measure BIO-5 would reduce potential impacts of the crossing construction to less-than-significant.

While oak woodland is not recognized as a "high priority" habitat type by CNDDB, this community is protected by state law (Public Resources Code Section 21083.4). The project area contains 12.02 acres of Oregon white oak woodland and 10.13 acres of Coast live oak woodland. A Native Grassland and Oregon White Oak Woodland Habitat Mitigation and Management Plan (HMMP) dated March 2021 was prepared by WRA. The HMMP details on-site management and restoration activities designed to replace the 0.07 acres of grassland and 0.07 acres of woodland habitat that could be potentially impacted by the project and future residential development.

Proposed management activities include post-restoration monitoring and management, and invasive plant management. The amount of restored native grassland will be 1.54 acres and the Oregon white oak woodland will be 0.49 acres. The restoration and management program represents a replacement ratio of 22:1 for potential impacts to native dominated grasslands and a replacement ratio of 7:1 for potential impacts to Oregon white oak woodland. Five restoration areas are proposed, located in areas dominated by non-native grasses, with similar aspect, slope, and soil type to that of existing patches of native grasses, and entirely outside of areas of project construction and disturbance (Figure 7).

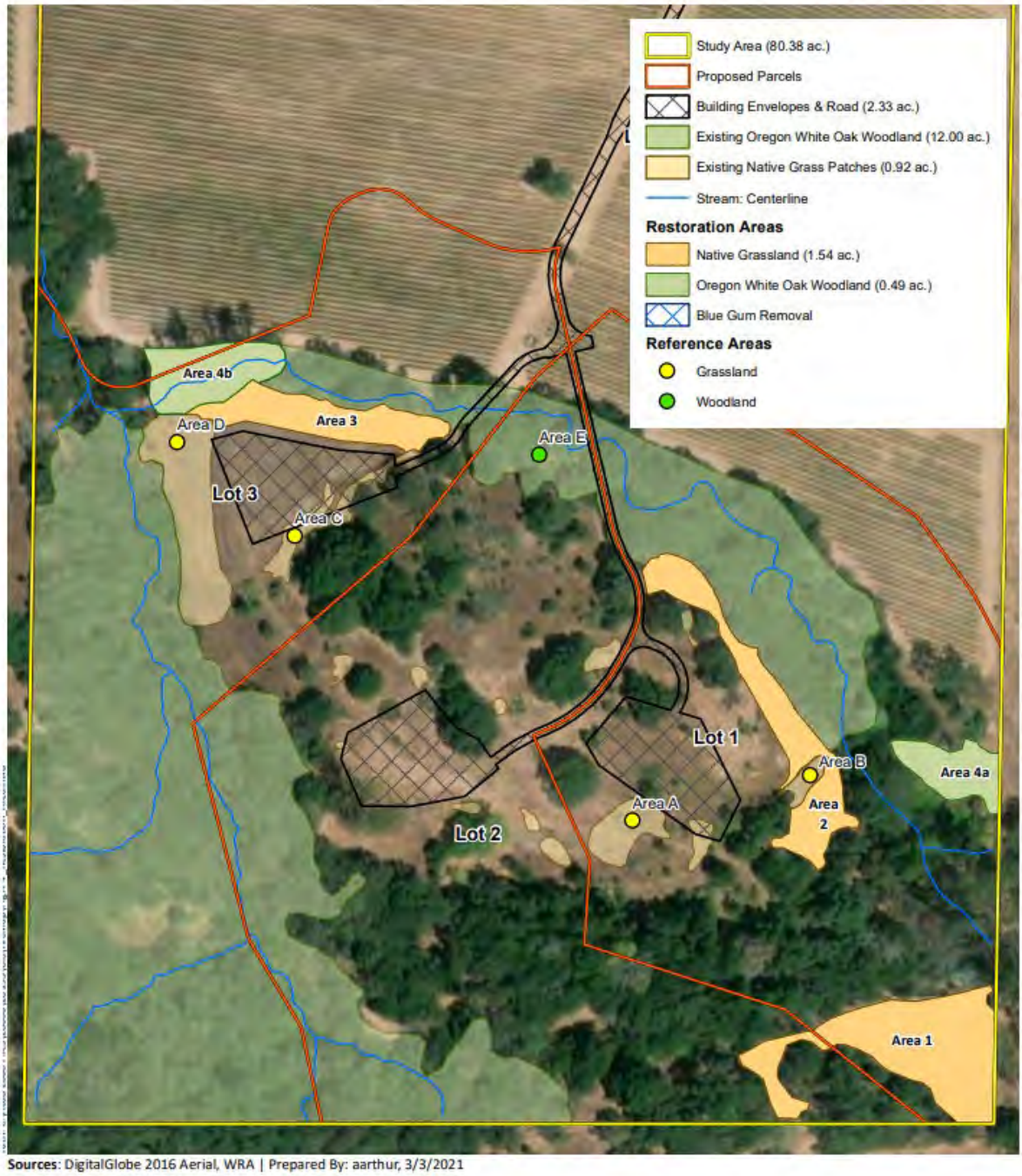


Figure A-4. Proposed Restoration Areas

Maturi Property
7200 Bennett Valley Road
Sonoma County, CA

0 250 500 Feet

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wra ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

Figure 7. Proposed Restoration Areas (WRA, 2021)

Both the grassland and woodland restoration areas will be pre-treated to reduce existing live, standing dead, and thatched vegetation; pre-treatment would likely include mechanical removal of non-native species (e.g., mowing of grasses, total removal of blue gum trees), followed by herbicide treatment. Native grass, acorns, and other tree seeds would be collected at a volume to sufficiently cover the restoration areas as well as to grow out in a nursery setting to provide supplemental plantings. Seeds would be broadcast across the restoration areas following the first substantial rainfall, with the remainder grown in pots to be planted one to two years after germination. Pre-treatment, restoration installation, and the collection of baseline data will be completed prior to any grading or building permit issuance.

Monitoring methods will include quantitative vegetation data to determine ecological performance, photo documentation, and individual tree survivorship in the Oregon white oak woodland restoration area. A brief report outlining the as-built conditions of the restoration areas will be prepared and submitted to Permit Sonoma, property owners, and the landscape contractor within 90 days of restoration area pretreatment and seeding/planting activities. Full annual reports (Year 0, 1, 3, 5) will be provided to Permit Sonoma for each monitoring year. Qualitative narrative reports (Years 2, 4) will be submitted describing any management activities undertaken and the general progress of the restoration. A qualified biologist with experience in vegetation monitoring will supervise the report preparation. These reports will assess progress in meeting success criteria and identify any problems with erosion, sedimentation, vandalism, and/or other general causes of poor survival or degradation. If necessary, recommendations or improvements based on adaptive management will be made to ensure the success criteria are met during the monitoring period.

Implementation of the HMMP would occur through mitigation measures BIO-5, BIO-6, BIO-7 and BIO-8 would reduce potential impacts to sensitive natural communities to less-than-significant.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measure BIO-5:

NOTE ON MAP:
"The Applicant shall obtain all required permits for working in and/or near Waters of the U.S. and Waters of the State prior to construction of the crossing of the unnamed blue-line stream. Those permits are likely to include Section 404 Nationwide Permit with the Corps, Section 401 Water Quality Certification with the RWQCB, and Section 1600 Lake and Streambed Agreement with the CDFW. Any mitigation measures or BMPs recommended by resource agencies as part of that permitting shall be followed.

Grading shall occur during the dry season (April 1 through October 15) and should be suspended during unseasonable rainfalls of greater than one-half inch over a 24-hour period. If rainfall is in the forecast, standard erosion control measures (e.g., straw waddles, bales) should be deployed within the active working area.

Construction personnel should be informed of the location of the site's aquatic resources with high-visibility flagging or staking prior to construction. No materials or equipment shall be lain down in or

near the aquatic resources, and spill prevention materials shall be deployed for all construction equipment."

Mitigation Monitoring BIO-5: Prior to issuance by Permit Sonoma of a grading and/or building permit, Permit Sonoma shall ensure all recommended measures by applicable resource agencies are followed. All protection measures shall be noted on the final project plans.

Mitigation Measure BIO-6: Prior to recordation of the Parcel Map, the Parcel Map shall depict theareas of land designated as the Restoration Areas as shown in Figure A-4 of the Native Grassland & Oregon White Oak Woodland Habitat Mitigation & Management Plan (referred to as HMMP), prepared by WRA (the "Plan"), dated March 2021. The Restoration Areas shall consist of:

(a) 1.54 acres of on-site native grassland; and
(b) 0.49 acres of on-site Oregon white oak woodland. Distances for the Restoration Areas shallbe measured from the closest property line boundaries for Lot 1, 2, and 3 as shown on Parcel Map 19-0010 (PERMIT SONOMA File No. MNS19-0010).

Mitigation Monitoring BIO-6: Prior to recordation of the Parcel Map, Permit Sonoma Project Review staff shall review Parcel Map19-0010 (Permit Sonoma File No. MNS19-0010) to ensure the designated Restoration Areas have been accurately measured and depicted on the Parcel Map and are consistent with the areas of land designated in the Restoration Areas as shown in Figure A-4 of the Native Grassland & Oregon White Oak Woodland Habitat Mitigation & Management Plan (HMMP) prepared by WRA (the "Plan"), dated March 2021.

Mitigation Measure BIO-7 Prior to recordation of the Parcel Map, a Deed Restriction shall be prepared and recorded on the subject parcel that requires prior to issuance by Permit Sonoma of agrading permit and/or building permit (whichever issuance occurs first) for Lot 1, 2, or 3, the property owner of the said Lot shall agree to fully implement over time the Native Grassland & Oregon White Oak Woodland Habitat Mitigation & Management Plan (HMMP), prepared by WRA, dated March 2021. This includes, but is not limited to, granting full access onto the said Lot by biologists, landscape architects, or contractors, and government staff; and paying for all costs and expenses associated with implementation of the Plan, such as surveying, preparing, fencing, planting, irrigating, and monitoring the Restoration Areas located on such owner's Lot in accordancewith the 2021 WRA's HMMP Plan.

In addition, the Deed Restriction shall require prior to issuance by Permit Sonoma of a certificate of occupancy (final occupancy) of any structure(s) on Lot 1, 2, or 3, the property owner of the said Lot to be issued certificate of occupancy (final occupancy) shall agree to follow and implement the Monitoring Program and the Maintenance and Long-Term Management Plan as outlined in the March 2021 WRA HMMP Plan, or as modified by WRA Biologist, for the Restoration Areas located onsuch owner's Lot.

Mitigation Monitoring BIO-7: Prior to recordation of the Deed Restriction, the Permit Sonoma Project Review staff shall review the Deed Restriction to ensure the required language listed aboveis included.

Mitigation Measure BIO-8:

NOTE ON MAP: The following notes shall be placed on the Parcel Map:

(1) Prior to issuance by Permit Sonoma of a grading permit and/or building permit (whichever issuance occurs first) for Lot 1, 2, or 3, the property owner of the said Lot shall agree to fullyimplement over time the Native Grassland & Oregon White Oak Woodland Habitat Mitigation & Management Plan prepared by WRA (the "HMMP"), dated March 2021. This includes, but is not limited to, granting full access onto the said Lot by biologists, landscape architect, or contractors, and government staff; and paying for all costs and expenses associated with implementation of the Plan, such as: surveying, preparing, fencing, planting,irrigating, and monitoring the Restoration Areas located on such owner's Lot in accordance with the March 2021 WRA HMMP.
(2) In addition, the Deed Restriction shall require prior to issuance by Permit Sonoma of a certificate of occupancy (final occupancy) of any structure(s) on Lot 1, 2, or 3, the property owner of the said Lot to be issued the certificate of occupancy (final occupancy) shall agree to follow and implement over time the Monitoring Program and the Maintenance and Long-Term Management Plan as outlined in the March 2021 WRA HMMP, or as modified by WRA Biologist, for the Restoration Areas located on such owner's Lot.

Mitigation Monitoring BIO-8: Permit Sonoma Project Review staff shall ensure the Note on the Parcel Map and Improvement Plans listed above have been placed on the Parcel Map prior to recordation and listed on the Improvement Plans prior to issuance by Permit Sonoma.

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?

Regulatory Framework:

Federal

The Clean Water Act (CWA)

The CWA is the primary federal law regulating water quality. The implementation of the CWA is the responsibility of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). However, the EPA depends on other agencies, such as the individual states and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), to assist in implementing the CWA. The objective of the CWA is to "restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters." Sections 404 and 401 of the CWA apply to activities that would impact waters of the U.S. The USACE enforces Section 404 of the CWA, and the California State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) enforces Section 401.

Section 404. As part of its mandate under Section 404 of the CWA, the EPA regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into "waters of the U.S." "Waters of the U.S." include territorial seas, tidal waters, and non-tidal waters in addition to wetlands and drainages that support wetland vegetation, exhibit ponding or scouring, show obvious signs of channeling, or have discernible banks and

highwater marks. Wetlands are defined as those areas "that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions" (33 CFR 328.3(b)). The discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. is prohibited under the CWA except when it is in compliance with Section 404 of the CWA. Enforcement authority for Section 404 was given to the USACE, which it accomplishes under its regulatory branch. The EPA has veto authority over the USACE's administration of the Section 404 program and may override a USACE decision with respect to permitting. A Water Quality Certification or waiver pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA is required for Section 404 permit actions (see below).

Section 401. Any applicant for a federal permit to impact waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the CWA, including Nationwide Permits where pre-construction notification is required, must also provide to the USACE a certification or waiver from the State of California. The "401 Certification" is provided by the State Water Board through the local Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The RWQCB issues and enforces permits for discharge of treated water, landfills, storm water runoff, filling of any surface waters or wetlands, dredging, agricultural activities, and wastewater recycling. The RWQCB recommends the "401 Certification" application be made at the same time that any applications are provided to other agencies, such as the USACE, USFWS, or NOAA Fisheries. The application is not final until completion of environmental review under CEQA. The application to the RWQCB is similar to the pre-construction notification that is required by the USACE. It must include a description of the habitat that is being impacted, a description of how the impact is proposed to be minimized, and proposed mitigation measures with goals, schedules, and performance standards. Mitigation must include a replacement of functions and values, and replacement of wetland at a minimum ratio of 2:1, or twice as many acres of wetlands provided as are removed. The RWQCB looks for mitigation that is on site and in-kind, with functions and values as good as or better than the water-based habitat that is being removed.

State:

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act (Porter-Cologne Act) (California Water Code § 13260) requires "any person discharging waste, or proposing to discharge waste, within any region that could affect the "waters of the State" to file a report of discharge with the RWQCB through an application for waste discharge. "Waters of the State" are defined by the Porter-Cologne Act as "any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters, within the boundaries of the state." The RWQCB protects all waters in its regulatory scope but has special responsibility for isolated wetlands and headwaters. These water bodies have high resource value, are vulnerable to filling, and may not be regulated by other programs, such as Section 404 of the CWA. If a project does not require a federal permit, but does involve dredge or fill activities that may result in a discharge to Waters of the State, the Water Board has the option to regulate the dredge and fill activities under its state authority through its Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) program.

Comment:

The proposed project would not fill any wetlands. While a formal wetland delineation was not conducted as part of the WRA site visits, site surveys looked for superficial indicators of wetlands

such as hydrophytic vegetation (i.e., plant communities dominated by wetland species), evidence of inundation or flowing water, saturated soils and seepage, and/or topographic depressions/swales. WRA biologists with 40-hour Corps wetland delineation training did not detect any indicators of wetlands at the project site.[15]

Significance Level: No Impact

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?

Comment:
Wildlife corridors are linear and/or regional habitats that provide connectivity between or to other naturally vegetated open spaces. Wildlife corridors can consist of a sequence of stepping-stones across the landscape (e.g., discontinuous areas of habitat such as isolated wetlands), continuous lineal strips of vegetation and habitat (e.g., riparian strips and ridge lines), or they may be parts of larger habitat areas selected for their known or likely importance to local wildlife. Providing functional habitat connectivity between natural areas is essential to sustaining healthy wildlife populations and allowing for the continued dispersal of native plant and animal species. The regional movement and migration of wildlife species has been substantially altered due to habitat fragmentation over the past century. This fragmentation is most commonly caused by development of open areas, which can result in large patches of land becoming inaccessible and forming a virtual barrier between undeveloped areas. Roads associated with development, although narrow, may result in barriers to smaller or less mobile wildlife species. Habitat fragmentation results in isolated islands of habitat, which affects wildlife behavior, foraging activity, reproductive patterns, immigration and emigration or dispersal capabilities, and survivability.

Although the habitats on project site may serve as local travel routes for resident wildlife species in the vicinity of the site as they move within their home ranges in search of food, cover, and other needs, project construction and operation would not substantially interfere with regional wildlife movement or wildlife migration patterns. The site is located within a much large tract of rural developed areas, agricultural/viticultural, and open pastureland within a rural portion of Sonoma County. While common wildlife species presumably utilize the site to some degree for movement at a local scale, the project site itself does not provide corridor functions beyond connecting similar land parcels in surrounding areas.[16]

Significance Level: Less than Significant

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as tree preservation policy or ordinance?

Regulatory Framework:
Sonoma County General Plan

[15] WRA, August 2020, p. 9.
[16] WRA, August 2020, p. 19.

The Sonoma County General Plan 2020 (Sonoma County 2008) Land Use Element and Open Space & Resource Conservation Element both contain goals, objectives, and policies to protect natural resource lands including, but not limited to, biotic areas, special-status species habitat, marshes and wetlands, sensitive natural communities, and habitat connectivity corridors, as summarized below.

Riparian Corridors
Sonoma County General Plan Policies OSRC-8a through 8n protect streamside conservation areas along designated riparian corridors. Areas along streams that naturally support native vegetation and wetlands are referred to as "Riparian Corridors." Specifically, Policy OSRC-8b establishes the following streamside conservation areas along both sides of designated Riparian Corridors as follows, measured from the top of the higher bank on each side of the stream as determined by PRMD:

1. Russian River Riparian Corridor: 200'
2. Flatland Riparian Corridors: 100'
3. Other Riparian Corridors: 50'

Sonoma County Ordinances
Riparian Corridor (RC) Combining Zone
The RC combining zone is established to protect biotic resource communities, including critical habitat areas within and along riparian corridors, for their habitat and environmental value, and to implement the provisions of the General Plan Open Space & Resource Conservation Element and Water Resources Element. These provisions are intended to protect and enhance riparian corridors and functions along designated streams, balancing the need for agricultural production, urban development, timber and mining operations, and other land uses with the preservation of riparian vegetation, protection of water resources, floodplain management, wildlife habitat and movement, stream shade, fisheries, water quality, channel stability, groundwater recharge, opportunities for recreation, education and aesthetic appreciation, and other riparian functions and values.

Protection of Watercourses
Construction grading and drainage within, adjacent to, or involving the alteration of watercourses shall comply with the provisions of Ordinance Number 5819 (Sonoma County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 23, Article II, Sec. 11.16.110), any necessary state and federal permits, approvals, or authorizations, and the following requirements.

a) Flood carrying capacity. The flood carrying capacity of any altered or relocated portion of a watercourse shall be maintained.
b) Obstruction of watercourses. Watercourses shall not be obstructed unless an alternate drainage facility complying with Section 11.14.040.B is installed.
c) Fills within watercourses. Fills placed within watercourses shall have protection against erosion.
d) Streams in closed conduits. Except for stream crossings, streams shall not be placed in closed conduits. Stream crossings shall be limited to the minimum width necessary to cross the stream.
e) Heavy equipment. Heavy equipment shall not cross or disturb channels of actively flowing streams unless best management practices referenced or detailed in the department's best management practices for construction grading and drainage are in place.

f) Materials storage. Materials that could contribute to pollution shall not be deposited or stored in or adjacent to a watercourse. (Ord. No. 6219, § I (Exh. A), 12-19-2017)

Valley Oak Habitat (VOH) Combining District

The VOH combining district is established to protect and enhance valley oaks and valley oak woodlands and to implement the provisions of Sonoma County General Plan 2020 Resource Conservation Element Section 5.1. Design review approval may be required for projects in the VOH, which would include measures to protect and enhance valley oaks on the project site, such as requiring that valley oaks shall comprise a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the required landscape trees for the development project.

Tree Protection

The Sonoma County Tree Protection Ordinance (Sonoma County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 26, Article 88, Sec. 26-88-010 [m]) establishes policies for protected tree species in Sonoma County. Projects shall be designed to minimize the destruction of protected trees. With development permits, a site plan shall be submitted that depicts the location of all protected trees greater than nine inches (9") in circumference and their protected perimeters in areas that will be impacted by the proposed development, such as the building envelopes, access roads, and leachfields. Protected trees are defined (Chapter 26, Article 02, Sec. 26- 02-140) as the following species: big leaf maple (Acer macrophyllum), black oak (Quercus kelloggii), blue oak (Quercus douglasii), coast live oak (Quercus agrifolia), interior live oak (Quercus wislizenii), madrone (Arbutus menziesii), oracle oak (Quercus morehus), Oregon oak (Quercus garryana), redwood (Sequoia sempervirens), valley oak (Quercus lobata), California bay (Umbellularia california), and their hybrids. Lot line adjustments, zoning permits, and agricultural uses are exempt from this requirement.

Removal of Trees and Other Vegetation

Construction grading and drainage shall not remove or disturb trees and other vegetation except in compliance with the department's best management practices for construction grading and drainage and the approved plans and specifications. Construction grading and drainage shall be conducted in compliance with the following requirements.

(1) The limits of work-related ground disturbance shall be clearly identified and delineated on the approved plans and specifications and defined and marked on the site to prevent damage to surrounding trees and other vegetation.

(2) Trees and other vegetation within the limits of work-related ground disturbance that are to be retained shall be identified and protected from damage by marking, fencing, or other measures. (Ord. No. 6219, § I (Exh. A), 12-19-2017)

Comment:

With implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-8, the project would be consistent with Sonoma County General Plan 2020 Land Use Element and Open Space & Resource Conservation Element goals, policies, and objectives to protect natural resources and lands including, but not limited to, watershed, fish and wildlife habitat, biotic areas, and habitat connectivity corridors.

The project is located within Sonoma County a Riparian Corridor Combining Zone 50/50 (RC 50/50), and Valley Oak Habitat Combining District (VOH). Project implementation would be consistent with the County's policies for projects located in the VOH district. The project site does contain oak woodland and native trees protected under the Sonoma County Tree Ordinance (Sonoma County Municipal Code Chapter 26). Five of these trees will be removed as part of the project, including two valley oaks. The VOH Combining District permits the removal of valley oaks within the District with uniformly applied mitigation requirements (Section 26-67-030). The Sonoma County Tree Protection Ordinance allows the following forms of mitigation for tree removal: (1) on-site planting, (2) payment of an in-lieu fee, or (3) analysis of arboreal value comparative to remaining trees. Implementation of mitigation measure BIO-9 would reduce impacts from removal of protected trees and valley oaks to a less-than-significant level.

Pursuant to Sonoma County ordinance and General Plan policies pertaining to riparian corridor protection, the unnamed intermittent stream has a 50-foot development setback requirement. The bridge crossings and portions of the subdivision road would be constructed within the 50-foot development setback requirement. Section 26-65-040(f) permits road and utility line crossings in compliance with county road construction standards and maintenance. The project will be required to obtain permits from CDFW and the ACOE for the bridge crossings. Construction of the clear span crossings would comply with standard agency BMPs and implementation of mitigation measure BIO-5 would reduce potential impacts to the riparian corridor to a less-than-significant level.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measure:
Mitigation Measure BIO-1 through BIO-8.

Mitigation Measure BIO-9: Compensate for Loss of Protected Trees.

NOTE ON MAP:
"The proposed project shall be required to adhere to all general provisions, tree protection methods during construction, and compensatory mitigation requirements of the Sonoma County Tree Protection Ordinance (Sonoma County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 26, Article 88, Sec. 26-88-010 [m]). The applicant may be required to plant replacement trees or prepare and/or issue payment of in-lieu fees that may be used to acquire and protect stands of native trees in preserves or place trees on public lands. Furthermore, only the minimum amount of vegetation shall be pruned or removed that is necessary to construct the project. Where possible, vegetation shall be tied back in lieu of cutting. Native vegetation that must be removed shall be cut at or above grade to facilitate re-growth. Any pruning that is done, including for utility line clearance, shall conform to the American National Standard for Tree Care Operation Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Maintenance Standard Practices, Pruning (ANSI A300 Part 1)-2008 Pruning), and the companion publication Best Management Practices: Tree pruning (ISA 2008). Roots shall only be unearthed when necessary."

Mitigation Monitoring:
Mitigation Monitoring BIO-1 through BIO-8.

Mitigation Monitoring BIO-9: Prior to the issuance of any grading permit, the County shall review and approve the applicant's demonstration of compliance with all provisions of the Sonoma County Tree Protection 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?

Comment:
Habitat Conservation Plans and natural community conservation plans are site-specific plans to address effects on sensitive species of plants and animals. The project site is not located in an area subject to a habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

Significance Level: No Impact

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES

An archaeological resources report was prepared for the project site by William Roop, M.A., RPA, of Archaeological Resource Service on October 3, 2019.[17] The report reviewed information on file with the Regional Office of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS); determined the presence or absence of previously recorded cultural resources; reviewed historic resource references to evaluate the potential for historic era archaeological deposits; contacted the Native American Heritage Commission to determine the presence or absence of Sacred Lands on the project site; contacted Native American organizations designated under the Native American Heritage Commission; conducted a surface reconnaissance of the project site to locate any visible signs of potentially significant historic or prehistoric cultural deposits; and described all work accomplished and make recommendations for possible further action. The following cultural resources analysis is based on information taken from that report.

Would the project:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?

Comment:
As per Title 14, California Code of Regulations Section 15064.5, historical resources are those that are:

- Listed in, or eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historic Resources (Public Resources Code 5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4850 et. seq.);
- Listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places (CRHR);
- Included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in an historical resource survey meeting the requirements of Section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resource Code; or

[17] Archaeological Resources Service, "An Evaluation of a Proposed Subdivision within 7200 Bennett Valley Road, Sonoma County, California," William Roop, October 3, 2019.

- Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California, provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record.

There is one previously recorded historic resource that lies outside of the project area near the entrance to the property. This resource was recorded as CA-SON-1536h and consists of a redwood cottage, some outbuildings, two scatters of old refuse, and some other features. This site is entirely confined to the neighboring parcel and would not be affected by project implementation or construction. There are no other recorded historic resources at the project site.

Significance Level: Less than Significant

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?

Comment:
On July 26, 2019, Permit Sonoma staff referred the project application to Native American Tribes within Sonoma County to request consultation under AB-52 (the request for consultation period ended August 26, 2019). No requests for consultation were received.

A "unique archaeological resource" has been defined in CEQA as an archaeological artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:

1. Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstratable public interest in that information,
2. Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type, or
3. Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

The Archaeological Resource Service Report prepared for the project found the project site contains a known archaeological site. The report recommended measures to reduce the project's potential impacts on this archaeological site.[18] See section 18, Tribal Cultural Resources, for a summary of the report's findings and mitigation measures associated with the archaeological site. Implementation of mitigation measures and monitoring TCR-1 and TCR-2 would reduce the project's potentially significant impacts on on-site archaeological resources, both known and unknown, to less than significant.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

[18] Archaeological Resource Service. 2019. An Evaluation of a Proposed Subdivision within 7200 Bennett Valley Road, Sonoma County, California. October 3, 2019.

Mitigation Measure:
Mitigation Measure TCR-1, Mitigation Measure TCR-2

Mitigation Monitoring:
Mitigation Monitoring TCR-1, Mitigation Monitoring TCR-2

c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?

Comment:
According to the archaeological resources evaluation, no cemeteries or burial sites have been identified on the project site. The site would be disturbed by grading and construction activities. While the potential for the discovery of human remains during ground disturbing activities was determined unlikely, implementation of mitigation measure TCR-2 would reduce potential impacts to less than significant.

If human remains are encountered, work in the immediate vicinity shall be halted and the project proponent shall notify PRMD and the Sonoma County Coroner immediately. At the same time, the operator shall be responsible for the cost to have a qualified archaeologist under contract to evaluate the discovery. If the human remains are determined to be of Native American origin, the County Coroner must notify the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours of this identification so that a Most Likely Descendant can be designated, and the appropriate measures implemented in compliance with the California Government Code and Public Resources Code.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measure
Mitigation Measure TCR-2

Mitigation Monitoring
Mitigation Monitoring TCR-2

6. ENERGY

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?

Comment:
As the project would include the subdivision of the project site into four parcels, and the eventual development of three single-family homes the proposed project would increase electricity and natural gas consumption. In accordance with California Energy Code Title 24, the proposed project would not use energy in a wasteful manner. Minimum efficiency standards for household appliances, water and space heating and cooling equipment and insulation for doors, pipes, walls and ceilings would ensure that the proposed project would not use energy in a wasteful manner.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact

b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

Comment:
Construction of the proposed project, due to its scale, would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

Significance Level: No Impact

7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

A Geological Investigation was prepared for the project on November 7, 2019 by PJC & Associates, Inc., the project geological consultants.[19] Information within this section is taken from that report.

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.

Comment:
The project is not within a fault hazard zone, as defined by the Alquist-Priolo fault maps.[20] It is a possible fault branch of the Bennett Valley Fault Zone, which transects the site, generally along the southern border of the proposed lot 4. However, according to USGS Quaternary Fault Map, the fault is not considered Holocene active.

Significance Level: No Impact

ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?

Comment:
All of Sonoma County is subject to seismic shaking that would result from earthquakes along the San Andreas, Healdsburg-Rodgers Creek, and other faults.

[19] PJC & Associates, Inc. "Supplemental Geological Investigation, Proposed 3-Lot Subdivision, 7200 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa", November 7, 2019.
[20] California Geologic Survey. California Department of Conservation, "Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation Map," https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/EQZApp/app/, accessed 10/8/2021.

The Rodgers Creek fault is located two miles to the southwest of the project site. The Napa fault is located 13 miles to the east, the Maacama fault is located 14 miles to the northwest, the San Andreas fault is located 21 miles to the southwest and the Hunting Creek fault is located 22 miles northeast of the site.

Predicting seismic events is not possible, nor is providing mitigation that can entirely reduce the potential for injury and damage that can occur during a seismic event. However, using accepted geotechnical evaluation techniques and appropriate engineering practices potential injury and damage can be diminished, thereby exposing fewer people and less property to the effects of a major damaging earthquake. The design and construction of future dwellings on new parcels are subject to load and strength standards of the California Building Code (CBC) and/or California Residential Code (CRC), which takes seismic shaking into account. Project conditions of approval require that building permits be obtained for all construction and that all construction activities, including earthwork, grading, trenching, backfilling and compaction operations, shall be conducted in accordance with Sonoma County Code Chapter 11 to ensure that the project meets standard seismic and soil test/compaction requirements. As a matter of practice and state law, all construction activities would be required to meet the California Building Code regulations for seismic safety, including designing all earthwork, cuts and fills, drainage, pavements, utilities, foundations and structural components in conformance with the specifications and criteria contained in the project final geotechnical report, which shall be completed and submitted to Permit Sonoma for review prior to project approval. Standard County development procedures include review and approval of construction plans prior to the issuance of a building/grading permit.

In addition, as required by the building code, the geotechnical engineer would be required to submit an approval letter from Permit Sonoma for the engineered grading plans prior to issuance of the grading permit; prior to final issuance of the grading permit, the geotechnical engineer would be required to inspect the construction work and certify to Permit Sonoma, prior to the acceptance of the improvements or issuance of a certificate of occupancy, that the improvements have been constructed in accordance with the geotechnical specifications. All work would be subject to inspection by Permit Sonoma for conformance with all applicable code requirements and approved improvement plans.

Based on this uniformly applied regulatory process, the project would not expose people to substantial risk of injury.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Comment:
Strong ground shaking can result in liquefaction, the sudden loss of sheer strength in saturated sandy material, resulting in ground failure. Subsurface conditions for lots 1, 2, and 3, where future residential development would occur, were explored as part of the geologic investigation conducted by PJC & Associates, Inc. These lots are underlain by shallow bedrock and not considered to be susceptible to seismically induced soil liquefaction.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

iv. Landslides?

Comment:
Steep slopes characterize much of Sonoma County, particularly the northern and eastern portion of the County. Where these areas are underlain by weak or unconsolidated earth materials landslides are a hazard. PJC & Associates, Inc. determined that while the terrain of the project site suggests previous slope movement, the landslide feature appeared to be an ancient remnant feature which most likely has reached a stable state of equilibrium based on detailed geologic mapping and eight exploratory test pits that were excavated on December 5, 2018.

All structures are required to meet building permit requirements, including seismic safety standards and soil test/compaction requirements. The design and construction of new structures are subject to engineering standards of the California Building Code (CBC), which take into account soil properties, seismic shaking and foundation type. Project conditions of approval require that building and grading permits be obtained for all construction and that the project meet all standard seismic and soil test/compaction requirements, therefore potential impacts from landslides are reduced to less than significant.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Comment:
The project includes grading, cuts and fills to accommodate the new driveway for the subdivision and would require a grading permit. The project proposes a maximum cut of 190 CY and a maximum fill of 190 CY. Although grading would be necessary for future construction of the three residences, because no application have been submitted, exact grading estimates are not currently available.

Erosion and sediment control provisions of the Drainage and Storm Water Management Ordinance (Chapter 11, Sonoma County Code) and Building Ordinance (Chapter 7, Sonoma County Code) requires implementation of flow control best management practices to reduce runoff. The Ordinance requires treatment of runoff from the two-year storm event. Required inspection by Permit Sonoma staff would ensure that all grading and erosion control measures are constructed according to the approved plans. These ordinance requirements and adopted best management practices are designed to maintain potential water quantity impacts at a less than significant level during and post construction.

In regards to water quality impacts, County grading ordinance design requirements, adopted County grading standards and best management practices (such as silt fencing, straw wattles, construction entrances to control soil discharges, primary and secondary containment areas for petroleum products, paints, lime and other materials of concern, etc.), mandated limitations on work in wet weather, and standard County grading inspection requirements, are specifically designed to maintain potential water quality impacts at a less than significant level during project construction.

For post construction water quality impacts, adopted grading permit standards and best management practices may require control of storm water through detention/retention and/or infiltration methods. Other adopted water quality best management practices include storm water treatment devices based on filtering, settling, or removing pollutants. These construction standards are designed to maintain potential water quality grading impacts at a less than significant level post construction.

The County adopted grading ordinances and standards and related conditions of approval also require compliance with all standards and regulations adopted by the State and Regional Water Quality Control Board, such as the Standard Urban Storm water Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) requirements, Low Impact Development and any other adopted best management practices. Therefore, no significant adverse soil erosion or related soil erosion water quality impacts are expected given the mandated conditions and standards that need to be met. For further discussion of related issues (such as maintenance of required post construction water quality facilities), please refer to section 10, Hydrology and Water Quality.

In addition, as a condition of project approval, the applicant would be required to submit an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan prepared by a registered professional engineer as an integral part of the grading plan. The plan would be required to contain all applicable items in the Grading Permit Required Application Contents (GRD-004) handout, and would be required to show best management practices (BMPs) to be implemented, limits of disturbed areas/total work, vegetated areas to be preserved, and pertinent details, notes, and specifications to prevent damages or minimize adverse impacts to the surrounding properties and the environment, such as temporary erosion control measures to be used during construction of cut and fill slopes, excavation for foundations, and other grading operations at the site to prevent discharge of sediment and contaminants into the drainage system.

The Erosion and Sediment Control Plan would also be required to include the following measures, as applicable, which shall be printed on applicable building, grading, and improvement plans:

a) Throughout the construction process, ground disturbance shall be minimized, and existing vegetation shall be retained to the extent possible to reduce soil erosion. All construction and grading activities, including short-term needs (equipment staging areas, storage areas and field office locations) shall minimize the amount of land area disturbed. Whenever possible, existing disturbed areas shall be used for such purposes.
b) All drainage ways, wetland areas and creek channels shall be protected from silt and sediment in storm runoff through the use of silt fences, diversion berms and check dams. Fill slopes shall be compacted to stabilize. All exposed surface areas shall be mulched and

reseeded and all cut and fill slopes shall be protected with hay mulch and /or erosion control blankets as appropriate.

c) All erosion control measures shall be installed according to the approved plans prior to the onset of the rainy season but no later than October 15th. Erosion control measures shall remain in place until the end of the rainy season, but may not be removed before April 15th. The applicant shall be responsible for notifying construction contractors about erosion control requirement.

The Erosion and Sediment Control Plan would be subject to review and approval of Permit Sonoma prior to the issuance of a grading permit. The Applicant would be required to inspect all storm water BMPs annually and submit the results to Permit Sonoma annually (including but not limited to the Inspection and Maintenance Checklists, photo evidence of BMP existing conditions, and a report of any maintenance activity, remediation, or replacement of BMP features). Application of these conditions of approval would reduce risk of erosion resulting from the project and project construction, and therefore project erosion impacts would be less than significant.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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?

Comment:
The project site would be subject to seismic shaking and other geologic hazards as described in items 7.a.ii, iii, and iv, above. However, as described in those sections, standard County Code and building requirements, combined with conformance with standard CBC and other applicable State and local regulations (all of which shall be required as conditions of approval for the project), would reduce potential soil stability impacts to less than significant. Additionally, site specific geologic investigations will be conducted through the site development permitting process, which require construction techniques that account for site specific conditions.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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?

Comment:
Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code is an index of the relative expansive characteristics of soil as determined through laboratory testing. As detailed under the geologic investigation report by PJC & Associates, Inc., the surface soils at the site have a low to moderate expansion potential while the near surface sandy clay soils are considered highly expansive. Before issuance of a building permit for possible new residences, a final geotechnical report would be required as part of standard County development procedures (see item 7.a.ii) and would include an analysis of expansive soil hazards and recommended stabilization measures. With implementation of measures of the County development procedures and Uniform Building Code, combined with conformance with standard CBC and other applicable State and local regulations (all of which shall be required as conditions of approval for the project), potential hazards from expansive soils would be less than significant.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

Comment:
Preliminary documentation provided by the applicant and reviewed by the Permit Sonoma Project Review Health Specialist indicates that the soils on site could support a septic system and the required expansion area for each proposed lot.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Comment:
Paleontological resources include fossil remains, as well as fossil localities and rock or soil formations that have produced fossil material. During the surface reconnaissance that was conducted by Archaeological Resource Service for the archaeological resource evaluation dated October 3, 2019, all accessible parts of the project area were observed and no unique paleontological or geologic features were identified. Also see section 18, Tribal Cultural Resources, for a discussion of the standard conditions of approval and mitigation measure TCR-2 related to accidental discovery of paleontological resources. Implementation of these conditions would reduce the impact of construction activities on unknown paleontological resources to a less than significant level by prescribing the necessary handling and notification procedures in case of the accidental discovery of unanticipated buried resources.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Comment:
Construction activities, such as site preparation and site grading, and motor vehicles transporting equipment, materials, and the construction crew would produce combustion emissions. During construction of the project, greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) would be emitted through the operation of construction equipment and from worker and builder supply vendor vehicles, each of which typically use fossil-based fuels to operate. The BAAQMD does not have a quantitative threshold of significance for construction related GHG emissions.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) CEQA Guidelines provides suggestions for screening potential air quality impacts for different land uses. The Air District developed screening criteria to provide lead agencies and project applicants with a conservative indication of whether the proposed project could result in potentially significant air quality impacts. If all of the screening criteria are met by a proposed project, then the lead agency or applicant would not need to perform a detailed air quality assessment of their project's air pollutant emissions. Projects below the applicable screening criteria shown in Table 3-1 of the BAAQMD CEQA Guidelines would not exceed the 1,100 MT of CO2e/yr GHG threshold of significance for projects other than permitted stationary sources.

Based on its size, the proposed project is below the operational GHG single-family screening size (56 dwelling units). Given this, the project would not be anticipated to generate significant GHG emissions; this impact would be considered less than significant.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Comment:
The County does not have an adopted Climate Action Plan but has established GHG reduction goals and adopted a Climate Change Action resolution (May 8, 2018) "to support a county-wide framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and to pursue local actions that support the identified goals therein."16 As a response to litigation against the County's proposed Climate Action Plan and subsequent decision not to appeal the court's ruling, the County's resolution demonstrates commitment to working towards the RCPA's countywide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets: 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

The resolution includes the following goals:

- Increase building energy efficiency
- Increase renewable energy use
- Switch equipment from fossil fuel to electricity
- Reduce travel demand through focused growth
- Encourage a shift toward low-carbon transportation options
- Increase vehicle and equipment fuel efficiency
- Encourage a shift toward low-carbon fuels in vehicles and equipment
- Reduce idling
- Increase solid waste diversion
- Increase capture and use of methane from landfills
- Reduce water consumption
- Increase recycled water and graywater use
- Increase water and waste-water infrastructure efficiency
- Increase use of renewable energy in water and wastewater systems
- Reduce emissions from livestock operations

- Reduce emissions from fertilizer use
- Protect and enhance the value of open and working lands
- Promote sustainable agriculture
- Increase carbon sequestration
- Reduce emissions from the consumption of goods and services

In addition, Sonoma County has the goal of increasing resilience by pursuing local actions that support the following goals:

- Promote healthy, safe communities
- Protect water resources
- Promote as sustainable, climate-resilient economy
- Mainstream the use of climate projections

The project, by implementing current county codes would be consistent with local or state plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Comment:
The project is proposing to subdivide land into four parcels and develop three single-family homes. The property is currently developed with vineyards. During construction and operation at the project site, small amounts of potentially hazardous materials would likely be used on this project such as fuel, lubricants, and cleaning materials. Proper use of materials in accordance with local, state, and federal requirements, and as required in the construction documents, would minimize the potential for accidental releases or emissions from hazardous materials. In addition, as standard County procedure, project construction contracts would be required to comply with Sonoma County Fire Code regulations for storage of flammable liquids and Sonoma County Municipal Code regulations related to hazardous materials management (protection of surface waters pursuant to Caltrans Standard Specifications, or functional equivalent). Project construction contracts would also be required to specify procedures in the event of a spill of hazardous materials (i.e., Contractor responsible for immediately calling emergency number 9-1-1 to report spill, taking appropriate actions to contain spill to prevent further migration of hazardous materials, contacting County to verify appropriate clean-up procedures). With existing General Plan policies and Federal, State, and Local Regulation and oversight of hazardous materials, the potential threat to public health and safety for the environment from hazardous materials transport, use or disposal would represent a less-than-significant impact.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact

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?

Comment:
See Section 9.a, above.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact

c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

Comment:
The project site is not located within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. The nearest school is Kenwood Elementary, approximately 3.5 miles from the project site.

Significance Level: No Impact

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?

Comment:
There are no known hazardous material sites within or adjacent to the project limits, based on review of the following databases on March 4, 2021.

1. The State Water Resources Control Board Geotracker database,[21]
2. The Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor database,[22] and
3. The California Integrated Waste Management Board Solid Waste Information System (SWIS).[23]

Significance Level: No Impact

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?

Comment:

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[21] State Water Resources Control Board. "Geotracker Database," http://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/, accessed on 3/4/2021.
[22] The Department of Toxic Substances Control. "EnviroStor Database," http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/, accessed on 3/4/2021.
[23] Cal Recycle. "Waste Information System (SWIS) Facility/Site Search," https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/swfacilities/Directory/, accessed on 3/4/2021.

The project site is not within two miles of a public airport or public use airport and is not within the Airport Referral Area as designated by the Sonoma County Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan.

Significance Level: No Impact

f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Comment:
The project would not impair implementation of, or physically interfere with the County's adopted emergency operations plan. There is no separate emergency evacuation plan for the County. In any case, the project would not change existing circulation patterns significantly, and would have no effect outside the area. See section 17, Transportation and Traffic, for discussion of emergency access.

Significance Level: No Impact

g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

Comment:
According to the Sonoma County General Plan (Figure PS-1g, Wildland Fire Hazard Areas), the proposed project area is located within a State Responsibility Area (SRA). The northern half of the project parcel is designated as a Moderate fire hazard severity zone and the south half of the project parcel is designated as a High fire hazard severity zone.[24] As noted in the General Plan Public Safety Element (p. PS-14), *"The Moderate Hazard Severity Zone includes: a) wildland areas of low fire frequency supporting modest fire behavior; and b) developed/urbanized areas with a very high density of non-burnable surfaces and low vegetation cover that is highly fragmented and low in flammability."* and *"The High Fire Hazard Severity Zone includes a) wildland areas supporting medium to high fire behavior and roughly average burn probabilities; and b) developed/urbanized areas with more limited non-burnable surfaces and moderate vegetation cover."*

As part of the County's planning referral process, the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Fire Prevention Division provided conditions of approval to manage wildland fire risks. Construction of the project would be required to comply with applicable requirements included in the Board of Forestry Fire Safe Regulations as well as the California Fire Code with local amendments as adopted in Sonoma County Code Chapter 13, including but not limited to fire sprinklers, emergency vehicle access, and water supply making the impact from risk of wildfire less than significant. Other required standards relate to fuel modification, defensible space, road naming, and addressing. Applicant has submitted an Exceptions to Standards to the Board of Forestry Fire Safety Regulations that demonstrates safe access for emergency vehicles concurrently with civilian evacuation and unobstructed traffic circulation in the event of a wildfire emergency as determined by the Sonoma County Fire Marshal. The Exceptions to Standards was submitted to CAL FIRE in July 2021.

[24] Sonoma County FHSZ Map, http://www.fire.ca.gov/fire_prevention/fhsz_maps_sonoma, accessed 1/23/2021.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?

Comment:
The proposed project includes two spans across an intermittent stream. The bridges will be constructed during the dry season and in accordance with federal and state permits which include Section 404 Nationwide Permit with the Corps, Section 401 Water Quality Certification with the RWQCB, and Section 1600 Lake and Streambed Agreement with the CDFW. Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be implemented as required to prevent erosion and the discharge of sediment and pollutants during project activities.

Permit Sonoma requires the project applicant to prepare a grading and drainage plan in conformance with Chapter 11 Grading and Drainage Ordinance) and Chapter 11a (Storm Water Quality Ordinance) of the Sonoma County Code and the Sonoma County Storm Water Low Impact Development Guide, all of which include performance standards and Best Management Practices for pre-construction, construction, and post-construction to prevent and/or minimize the discharge of pollutants, including sediment, from the project site. Permit Sonoma requires projects implementing Low Impact Development (LID) techniques to employ a site design strategy of BMPs that mimics the pre-development site hydrology through features that promote storm water infiltration, interception, reuse, and evapotranspiration. LID techniques include use of small scale landscape based BMPs such as vegetated natural filters and bioretention areas (e.g., vegetated swales and rain gardens) to treat and filter storm water runoff. LID also requires preservation and protection of sensitive environmental features such as riparian buffers, wetlands, woodlands, steep slopes, native vegetation, valuable trees, flood plains, and permeable soils.

Sonoma County also requires the project applicant to prepare a grading and drainage plan (Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control Plan) in conformance with Chapter 11 Grading and Drainage Ordinance) and Chapter 11a (Storm Water Quality Ordinance) of the Sonoma County Code and the Sonoma County Storm Water Low Impact Development Guide, all of which include performance standards and Best Management Practices for pre-construction, construction, and post-construction to prevent and/or minimize the discharge of pollutants, including sediment, from the project site. Section 7.b (Geology and Soils) above describes the Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control Plan requirements.

All of the above requirements and adopted best management practices are specifically designed to maintain potential water quality impacts at a less than significant level during and post construction.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

Comment:
The project parcel is in a Class 3 groundwater area defined by County of Sonoma as having marginal groundwater availability. The project parcel is not located in a priority groundwater basin. Sonoma County General Plan Policy WR-2e requires groundwater studies that demonstrate adequate groundwater supply for projects in Class 3 and 4 areas. A hydrogeologic report titled "7200 Bennett Valley Road (APN 055-150-001) Groundwater Report" dated November 21, 2019 was prepared for the project by O'Connor Environmental, Inc. (OEI).[25] The OEI report was prepared consistent with General Plan Policy WR-2e and County guidelines.

There are two existing wells on the project parcel, both in the northwest corner. Well #1 has an estimated yield of 250 gallons per minute (gpm) by a 24-hour pump test and a static water level of 41. Well #2 has an estimated yield of 100 gpm by an 8-hour airlift test and a static water level of 25 feet.

The total proposed groundwater use for the project impact area is estimated to be 75.4-acre feet/year, 24.5-acre feet/year of which is from the project parcel. The OEI report estimated the groundwater storage 4,479-acre feet and average recharge of 267.7-acre feet/year to be substantially greater than the proposed water demand of 94.8-acre feet at full build-out.

The OEI report concluded that given the magnitude of surplus recharge (estimated recharge less groundwater demand), the incremental increase in groundwater use proposed by the project is unlikely to result in significant reductions in groundwater levels or depletion of groundwater resources over time.

The nearest surface waterbody is Matanzas Creek, which is located approximately 250 feet northeast of the two project wells. Based on well data and the Sonoma County LIDAR derived hydro-enforced digital elevation model, there is a limited degree of connectivity between the project site wells and Matanzas Creek.

Potential effects of the project on surface flows in Matanzas Creek may be affected by the source of additional water required for the project. The project owner has indicated it is likely that a new well(s) would be drilled to supply the proposed residences; this would be expected to shift the location of groundwater withdrawal about 1,000 ft or more to the south of the existing project wells where the likelihood of effects on flows in Matanzas Creek would be minimal. If the additional groundwater is obtained from the existing wells, the proposed 3.6 acre-ft increase in annual water use represents an increase of about 7% in annual groundwater withdrawals. This would be expected to have only an incremental effect on the existing potential to affect surface flows in Matanzas Creek.

[25] O'Connor Environmental Inc. (OEI), "7200 Bennett Valley Road (APN 055-150-001) Groundwater Report", November 21, 2019.

The Permit Sonoma Natural Resources Geologist reviewed the OEI report on March 19, 2020. The Natural Resources Geologist found the OEI report's analysis is well documented and of appropriate detail and effort to support the findings that there is available groundwater to support the proposed use and there is little potential for the project to negatively impact groundwater resources, water levels in neighboring wells, and surface waters. The Natural Resources Geologist did not recommend any conditions of approval related to groundwater supply or monitoring.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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

i. would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

Comment:
See sections 7.b and 10.a for further discussion of potential erosion impacts and reduction measures. The County grading ordinance design requirements, adopted County grading standards and best management practices (such as silt fencing, straw wattles, construction entrances to control soil discharges, primary and secondary containment areas for petroleum products, paints, lime and other materials of concern, etc.), mandated limitations on work in wet weather, and standard County grading inspection requirements, are specifically designed to maintain potential water quality impacts at a less than significant level during project construction, Therefore, construction activities associated with the proposed project are not anticipated to alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area in a way that would result in downstream erosion and/or sedimentation. All construction activities are required to adhere to Sonoma County Code Sections 11-14-040 requiring that BMPs be incorporated in project activity to control surface water runoff.

As discussed in Sections 7.b and 10.a, prior to beginning grading or construction, the applicant is required to prepare an erosion and sediment control plan and storm water low impact development submittal, including BMPs for erosion control during and after construction and permanent drainage and erosion control measures, pursuant to Chapter 11 of the County Code.

In accordance with Section 11-14-040 of the County Code, drainage facilities and systems are required to prevent or minimize soil loss through the use of storm drain culverts (pipes), storm drain inlets and outlets, storm drain outfalls, energy dissipators, flow dispersion, check dams, rolling dips, critical dips, proper location and sizing of culverts, revegetation of exposed or disturbed slopes, minimizing cross drains through road outsloping, minimizing the use of artificial slopes, and other BMPs referenced or detailed in the County's BMPs for construction grading and drainage.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

ii. substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;

Comment:

The parcel is not in the 100-year flood zone based on the online Sonoma County GIS tool According to FEMA, the project is not within a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) which is an, "area that will be inundated by the flood event having a 1- percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year." These areas are also depicted on the zoning maps with the F1- Flood Zone and F2 – Flood Plain Combining Zones (General Plan 2020 PS-1e). Because the project site is not in 100-year floodplain and there is no other potential source of flood water in the project vicinity, the project would not result in onsite or offsite flooding.

In addition, the project would not significantly increase the rate or amount of surface runoff because of project compliance with County Code, which as discussed in sections 7.b and 10.a, requires the applicant to develop storm water low impact development (SWLID) submittals and adhere to construction and operational Best Management Practices. The Best Management Practices would prevent the alteration of site drainage or increase in surface runoff and avoid flooding. Project Low Impact Development techniques would include limiting impervious surfaces, dispersing development over larger areas, and creation of storm water detainment areas. Post construction storm water Best Management Practices include filtering, settling, or removing pollutants.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact.

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

Comment:
Storm water treatment Best Management Practices will address potential for water quality impacts and shall also address water quantity through storm water flow control Best Management Practices. Storm water treatment Best Management Practices shall be designed to treat storm events and associated runoff to the 85-percentile storm event in accordance with County standards. Storm water treatment Best Management Practices shall be designed to treat storm events and associated runoff to the channel forming discharge storm event which is commonly referred to as the two-year 24-hour storm event.

The location of the storm water Best Management Practices are site specific and depend on details of future development. The type and approximate size of the selected storm water Best Management Practices would be in accordance with the adopted Sonoma County Best Management Practice Guide.

As discussed above and in Section 7, Geology and Soils, at the time of submitting of a grading, drainage, or building permit application for future development on the project site, a final drainage report for each parcel would need to be submitted for review. A typical drainage report would include a project narrative, on- and off-site hydrology maps, hydrologic calculations, hydraulic calculations, pre- and post-development analysis for all existing and proposed drainage facilities. The drainage report shall abide by County drainage standards. This standard County development procedure would ensure that project runoff effects would be less than significant.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

iv. impede or redirect flood flows?

Comment:
Elevations at the site range from approximately 570 to 790 feet above sea level. The site contains one intermittent stream, however project construction of two clear-span bridges would not impede or redirect flood flows. The parcel is not in the 100-year flood zone or Special Flood hazard Area (SFHA) [26] (i.e., the area that would be inundated by the flood event having a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year). Refer to responses 10.c.ii and 10.c.iii above for discussion of hydrological impacts.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

Comment:
According to Sonoma General Plan Figure PS-1f[27], the project site is not located in an area that would be subject to flooding as a result of levee or dam failure. The parcel is not in the 100-year flood zone or Special Flood hazard Area (SFHA) (i.e., the area that will be inundated by the flood event having a 1-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year). The project site is not located in an area subject to seiche or tsunami.

Significance Level: No Impact

e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

Comment:
The project is subject to Chapter 11 (Construction Grading and Drainage Ordinance) and Chapter 11A (Storm Water Quality Ordinance) of the Sonoma County Code and the Sonoma County Storm Water Low Impact Development Guide, all of which include performance standards and Best Management Practices for pre-construction, construction, and post-construction to prevent and/or minimize the discharge of pollutants, including sediment, from the project site. The site is not located in a priority groundwater basin. The project will not impede or conflict with implementation of the Sonoma County Storm Water Low Impact Development Guidelines or the goals of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, as discussed in Sections 7(b), and 10(a) through (d).

The project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.

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[26] Sonoma County. General Plan 2020 Public Safety Element. "Flood Hazard Areas Fig. PS-1e," https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Long-Range-Plans/General-Plan/Public-Safety-Flood-Hazard-Areas/, accessed 1/14/2021.
[27] Sonoma County. General Plan 2020 Safety Element. "Dam Failure Inundation Hazard Areas, Figure PS-1f," https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147542633, accessed 1/14/2021.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

11. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

a) Physically divide an established community?

Comment:
The project would not physically divide the community. It does not involve construction of a large physical structure (such as a major transportation facility) or removal of a primary access route (such as a road or bridge) that could impair mobility within an established community or between a community and outlying areas. No impact would occur.

Significance Level: No Impact

b) Cause 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?

Comment:
The project would not conflict with any applicable land use plan adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental effect, including the Sonoma County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

The General Plan Land Use designation for the parcel is Diverse Agriculture with a 20-acre density. Residential densities in areas designated Diverse Agriculture must be between 10 and 60 acres per residential unit, with a 10-acre minimum lot size. As part of the project, the B7 (Frozen Lot Size) combining district will be added to lot 4 to limit further division of this lot. The proposed project would be consistent with the residential densities and lot size requirements established for the Diverse Agriculture zone.
The project would be consistent with the following goals, policies, and objectives in the Sonoma County General Plan:

- Preservation of biotic and scenic resources (General Plan Goal LU-10, Objective LU-10.1,
- Goal OSRC-2, Objective OSRC-2.1, Objective OSRC-2.2, Objective OSRC-2.3, Policy OSC2d, Goal OSCR-3, Policy OSRC-3a, Policy OSRC-3b, Policy OSRC-3c, Goal OSRC-6, Objective OSRC-6.1, and Policy OSRC-6a): The project would be consistent with regulations pertaining to avoiding biotic resources and would also be largely consistent with regulations designed to maintain the scenic qualities of the area. (See Section 1, Aesthetics, and Section 4, Biological Resources for further discussion).
- Wastewater (General Plan Policy LU0-8a): The project would comply with regional waste discharge requirements and County regulations to minimize storm water, surface water and groundwater pollution.

- Protection of Water Resources (General Plan Goal LU-8, Objective LU-8.1, Goal, Policy LU8a): The project would be consistent with regulations pertaining to protecting Sonoma County's water resources and would also be largely consistent with regulations designed to avoid long term declines in available groundwater resources or water quality.
- Noise (General Plan Goal NE-1): Project construction and operations would not exceed the general plan noise standards Table NE-2 (See Section 12, Noise, for further discussion).

The project is also located within the Bennett Valley Area Plan and would be consistent with the following goals, policies, and objectives in the Bennett Valley Area Plan[28]:

- Land Use (Land Use Goals 1, 3, and 6): The residential density proposed by the project reflects the constraints, suitability, and sensitivities of the area. The project would not result in significant impacts to the ability to provide public services as it would not introduce a significant population to the area. The project also clusters residential development, leaving approximately 50 acres for a large agricultural parcel.
- Conservation (Conservation Goals 1, 2, and 3): The existing agricultural use on the parcel would be preserved under this project. The project would not significantly impact unique scenic, visually and environmentally sensitive, and historic resources as it complies with scenic resource policies and would adopt BMPs and implement mitigation measures to ensure potential impacts to environmental and historic resources are less than significant.
- Open Space (Open Space Goal 2): The building envelopes for the three future residences are located below the ridgeline and compatible with the existing topography and vegetation to the maximum extent practicable.
- Public Safety (Public Safety Goals 1 and 2): The project proposes future residential development in an area that is outside of flood areas and not located in a geologically unsuitable area. Future development would comply with all applicable standards and regulations designed to mitigate fire hazards.
- Circulation (Circulation Goals 1, 2, and 3): The project would not affect the existing character of the public road system and the building envelopes for future residential development are screened from public view on Bennett Valley Road by existing topography and vegetation.

By implementing the mitigation measures identified in this document, the project would not conflict with any applicable land use plan adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect, including in the Sonoma County General Plan and zoning ordinance.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

12. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

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?

[28] Sonoma County, Bennett Valley Area Plan (adopted 1979 including modifications through September 30, 2011), https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147555115, accessed 9/25/2020.

Comment:
According to online Sonoma County GIS data, the project site is not located within a known mineral resource deposit area. Sonoma County has adopted the Aggregate Resources Management Plan that identifies aggregate resources of statewide or regional significance (areas classified as MRZ-2 by the State Geologist).[29] According to the State, the project is classified as MRZ-1, which includes "Areas where available geologic information indicates that little likelihood exists for the presence of significant mineral resources."[30]

Significance Level: No Impact

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?

Comment:
The project site is not located within an area of locally important mineral resource recovery site and the site is not zoned MR (Mineral Resources) (Sonoma County Aggregate Resources Management Plan, as amended 2010 and Sonoma County Zoning Code). No locally important mineral resources are known to occur at the site.

Significance Level: No Impact

13. NOISE

Would the project result in:

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?

Comment:
The proposed project, a four-parcel subdivision and future development of three new single-family homes, would generate noise levels similar to or less than the current noise levels at the site, which currently supports a 50-acre vineyard. No substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project is anticipated with the potential future addition of the three single-family homes.

Short-term construction activities would periodically increase ambient noise levels at the project site and vicinity but would subside once construction is completed. Mitigation Measure NOISE-1 would reduce construction period noise impacts to a less than significant level.

[29] Sonoma County Aggregate Resources Management Plan, http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PERMIT SONOMA/LongRange-Plans/Aggregate-Resource-Management/, accessed 11/18/2020.
[30] California Geologic Survey Special Report 205, Update of Mineral Land Classification: Aggregate Materials in the North San Francisco Bay Production-consumption region, Sonoma, Napa, Marin, and Southwestern Solano Counties, California (California Geological Survey, 2013); Plate 1A, Plate 1B, and Plate 1C.

Significance Level: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measure NOISE-1:

NOTE ON MAP: All plans and specifications or construction plans shall include the following notes:

"All internal combustion engines used during construction of this project will be operated with mufflers that meet the requirements of the State Resources Code, and, where applicable, the Vehicle Code. Equipment shall be properly maintained and turned off when not in use.

(a) Except for actions taken to prevent an emergency, or to deal with an existing emergency, all construction activities shall be restricted to the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. (use this if no nearby receptors, or 5:00 pm if nearby receptors) on weekdays and 9:00 a.m. and 7:00
(b) p.m. (same note as above) on weekends and holidays. If work outside the times specified above becomes necessary, the applicant shall notify the PERMIT SONOMA Project Review Division as soon as practical.
(c) There will be no start up of machines nor equipment prior to 7:00 a.m., Monday through Friday or 9:00 am on weekends and holidays; no delivery of materials or equipment prior to 7:00 a.m. nor past 7:00 p.m., (same note as above) Monday through Friday or prior to 9:00
(d) a.m. nor past 7:00 p.m. on weekends and holidays and no servicing of equipment past 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, or weekends and holidays. A sign(s) shall be posted on the site regarding the allowable hours of construction, and including the developer- and contractors mobile phone number for public contact 24 hours a day or during the hours outside of the restricted hours.
(e) Pile driving activities shall be limited to 7:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. weekdays only.
(f) Construction maintenance, storage and staging areas for construction equipment shall avoid proximity to residential areas to the maximum extent practicable. Stationary construction equipment, such as compressors, mixers, etc., shall be placed away from residential areas and/or provided with acoustical shielding. Quiet construction equipment shall be used when possible.
(g) The developer shall designate a Project Manager with authority to implement the mitigation prior to issuance of a building/grading permit. The Project Managers 24-hour mobile phone number shall be conspicuously posted at the construction site. The Project Manager shall determine the cause of noise complaints (e.g. starting too early, faulty muffler, etc.) and shall take prompt action to correct the problem."

Mitigation Monitoring:

Mitigation Monitoring NOISE-1: Permit Sonoma Project Review staff shall ensure the Note is on the Map prior to recordation, and that the measures are listed on all site alteration, grading, building or improvement plans, prior to issuance of grading or building permits. Permit Sonoma staff shall inspect the site prior to construction to assure that the signs are in place and the applicable phone numbers are correct. Any noise complaints will be investigated by Permit Sonoma staff. If violations are found, Permit Sonoma shall seek voluntary compliance from the permit holder, or may require a noise consultant to

evaluate the problem and recommend corrective actions, and thereafter may initiate an enforcement action and/or revocation or modification proceedings, as appropriate.

b) Generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels?

Comment
The project includes construction activities that may generate minor ground borne vibration and noise. These levels would not be significant because they would be short-term and temporary, and would be limited to daytime hours. There are no other activities or uses associated with the project that would expose persons to or generate excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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?

Comment:
The site is not within an airport land use plan as designated by Sonoma County.

Significance Level: No Impact

14. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

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)?

Comment:
The proposed project would create a four-parcel subdivision, with three new single-family residences on the new lots. These three new residences would not represent a substantial amount of homes and therefore would not induce population growth. As a condition of approval, a zoning overlay would be placed on Lot 4 to restrict further subdividing of that parcel. The project is within the projected population growth of the county's General Plan and is consistent with the applicable land use designation (Diverse Agriculture) and zoning classification (Diverse Agriculture) for residential densities and development.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

Comment:
No existing people or housing would be displaced by the project and no replacement housing is proposed to be constructed.

Significance Level: No Impact

15. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project:

a) 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:

i. Fire protection?

Comment:
The project is located within the State Responsibility Area (SRA), under CAL FIRE jurisdiction. CAL FIRE would continue to serve this area in coordination with the Sonoma Fire District for fire protection and emergency response services. Existing fire protection facilities are anticipated to be adequate. The parcel is located less than a half mile from the nearest fire station in the Sonoma Fire District to ensure a rapid response time in the event of an emergency

The County Fire Marshal reviewed the project description and plans and provided conditions of approval to comply with California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection fire safety regulations 14 California Code of Regulations §§1270 et seq (Board of Forestry Fire Safety Regulations) as well as the California Fire Code, adopted with local amendments in the Sonoma County Code Chapter 13 including fire protection methods related to emergency water supply, setbacks, fuel modification and defensible space, road naming, and road access. The Applicant submitted a request for Exception to Standards to the Board of Forestry Fire Safety Regulations to provide four turnarounds and multiple turnouts along the existing private road to ensure safe access for emergency vehicles concurrently with civilian evacuation as well as unobstructed traffic circulation in the event of a wildfire emergency. The Fire Marshal has accepted the Exception to Standards and submitted it to CAL FIRE in July 2021.

When the residences are constructed, the property owners will contribute Sonoma Fire District's fire development impact fee to offset the impacts to the fire protection infrastructure and capital facilities required to support the emergency response for this project. Because none of the conditions and/or requirements requires construction of new or expanded fire protection/EMS facilities, project impacts on fire protection/EMS would be less than significant.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact

ii. Police?

Comment:
The Sonoma County Sheriff would continue to serve this area. There would be no increased need for police protection resulting from the project.

The proposed project would create part-time jobs for the construction work of the proposed minor subdivision (e.g., driveway construction, utility undergrounding, culvert expansion) and potential construction work for the two future residences anticipated to be developed. The three future single-family houses would not constitute a substantial amount of new housing and would not induce substantial population growth. Existing police protection facilities would be adequate to serve the project and additional Sheriff's Department facilities would not be needed.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact

iii. Schools?

Comment:
Development fees to offset potential impacts to public services, including school impact mitigation fees, are required by Sonoma County Code and state law for new subdivisions and residential developments. Although three future residences are anticipated as a result of the project, the number of school-aged children from these residences would not be substantially large enough to require the construction of new or altered schools.

Significance Level: No Impact

iv. Parks?

Comment:
Construction of the project would not involve substantial adverse physical impacts associated with parks. The project would not alter or impede any existing or future park plans as the project does not propose a substantial increase in housing or population.
In addition, Sonoma County Code Chapter 20 provides for payment of parkland mitigation fees from all new residential development to meet General Plan Objective OSRC-17.1: "provide for adequate parkland and trails primarily in locations that are convenient to urban areas to meet the outdoor recreation needs of the population…" Development fees collected by Sonoma County are used to offset potential impacts to public services including park mitigation fees. Each of the three future residences would be responsible individually for paying the required park development fee.

Significance Level: No Impact

v. Other public facilities?

Comment:
The project would not be served by public sewer or water facilities. Expansion or construction of additional types of public facilities, such as community centers, libraries, or other municipal centers, is not anticipated as a result of the development of this project.

Significance Level: No Impact

16. RECREATION

Would the project:

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?

Comment:
The proposed project would allow for the future development of three single-family homes, which would not result in activities that would cause or accelerate substantial physical deterioration of parks or recreation facilities. Although these three future residences could increase visitation of neighborhood and regional park facilities, the increase would not represent a significant increase, and project impacts on existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities would be minimal.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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?

Comment:
The project does not involve construction of recreational facilities. See item 16.a above.

Significance Level: No Impact

17. TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:

a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

Comment:
A traffic study was not prepared for the project, however, the Trip Generation Rates form the 8th Edition ITE Trip Generation Report were used to estimate that 3 single-family homes would result in

an average of 29 trips per day.[31] Average traffic volume counts for Bennett Valley Road have been recorded in the County of Sonoma Traffic Volume GIS; the most recent traffic study conducted from January 13-15, 2020 determined an average traffic volume of 4,001 trips per day[32]. The relatively small increase in average daily traffic per day because of the project would not result in a substantial increase in traffic.

Bennet Valley Road is a rural residential and agricultural road with no shoulders, fencing, or other physical separation from surroundings. Public Works reviewed the project description and plans on August 15, 2019 and offered standard conditions including paying a Traffic Mitigation Fee and construction of proper intersections of roads and driveways. Because the conditions are standard practice of the Department of Transpiration and Public Works, the project would not conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance, or policy.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities – Currently there are no designated bicycle facilities in the project vicinity. The Sonoma County 2010 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan[33] includes a proposed Class II bikeway extending east on Bennett Valley Road until Grange Road and a Class III bikeway on Bennett Valley Road extending past the project site and east until Warm Springs Road. As the proposed project

Development of the project and increased use of Kirsch Road and the extended access drive would not impede pedestrian access to sidewalks, public transit stations, or pedestrian circulation as there are no existing or planned pedestrian facilities on Bennett Valley Road and project traffic would be minimal. Therefore, pedestrian and bicycle facilities would not be impacted by the project.

Transit Stops – The project site vicinity is not served by any public transit. The closest bus or transit stops are located within the City of Santa Rosa approximately 7.9 miles away from the project site or on CA Hwy 12, 5.7 miles away.

The project is not proposing a significant increase in traffic, and traffic resulting from the project would not be expected to substantially affect existing traffic operations. As discussed below in section 17.c, the applicant would be required by County Transportation and Public Works to ensure that the sightlines, road material, and width for both the existing and proposed driveways meet American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and County design standards. Therefore, because project operations and design would not interfere with bicycle, pedestrian, or transit facilities, the proposed project would not conflict with any program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadways, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. In addition, the County would require the project, as a condition of approval, to pay a development fee (Traffic Mitigation Fee), per Chapter 26, Article 98 of the County Code.

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[31] Trip Generation Rates from the 8th Edition ITE Trip Generation Report, http://www.fdot.gov/planning/systems/programs/SM/tripgen/trip-generation-9th-ed-vs-8th-edition-analysis%20(1).xls, accessed on 11/10/2020.

[32] Transportation & Public Works, County of Sonoma Traffic Volume GIS Tool, https://sonomacounty.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=5c2f8748449c4dcea7619b723d3463b1 accessed 9/25/2020.

[33] Sonoma County, Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, Bikeways Map, https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Long-Range-Plans/Bicycle-and-Pedestrian-Plan/Bikeways-Map/ accessed 9/25/2020.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

Comment:
Traffic impacts under CEQA have traditionally been assessed based on increases in intersection delay measured by Level of Service (LOS). However, with the passage of SB 743, transportation impacts under CEQA are now to be measured based on the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) generated by a project (effective July 1, 2020).

Sonoma County has not yet adopted a VMT standard, nor has the County adopted a policy or threshold of significance regarding VMT. As with other cities and counties throughout the state that have not established VMT standards and thresholds, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) "Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA" (2018) is used in the interim to determine if the project's VMT may or may not cause a transportation impact. According to the guidelines, the screening threshold indicates that projects that generate or attract fewer than 110 trips per day "generally may be assumed to cause a less-than-significant transportation impact."

As discussed earlier in Section 17.a, the proposed project is anticipated to generate approximately 29 average daily vehicle trips using the industry accepted standard generation rate methodology from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). Because the project is anticipated to generate an average daily trip count below the 110 average daily trip threshold, it is reasonable to conclude that the project will have a less-than-significant impact on VMT. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the addition of 110 or fewer trips could be considered not to lead to a significant impact.[34]

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

c) Substantially increase hazards due to geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

Comment:
The project would be served by Kirch Road, which connects the project site access road to Bennett Valley Road. The project proposes to extend the onsite access road 689 feet to the south to serve the three new lots. Kirsch Road, the existing onsite access road, and the proposed new onsite access sections are at least 12 feet wide. The Applicant has submitted a request for Exception to Standards to the Board of Forestry regulations. The Applicant's Exception to Standards includes a Civil Engineering map demonstrating four turnarounds and multiple turnouts on the existing private road spaced at approximately 300 feet intervals or as approved by the Sonoma County Fire Marshal. In addition, the Fire Marshal has required a 25 foot wide right of way for cleared space to ensure emergency response vehicle access. These mitigation measures provide safe access for emergency vehicle access and civilian evacuation concurrently and unobstructed traffic circulation in the event

[34] OPR, "Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA," April 2020. Accessed on September 23, 2020.

of a wildfire emergency as approved by the County Fire Marshal. The Exceptions to Standards have been submitted to CAL FIRE in July 2021. The existing intersection of Kirsch Road and Bennett Valley Road includes four Sonoma County Fire Safe Turnarounds and meets minimum AASHTO requirements.

The existing shared road (Kirch Road), is 12 feet wide with shoulder widths that vary from 2 to 3.8 feet to provide an overall roadbed of roughly 17 feet. The paved portion of Kirch Road is 800 feet long and has a fire standard hammerhead turnaround at the beginning of the road and at the end. No changes to the first 800 feet of the road are proposed for this project. From there to the project parcel, a paved 12 foot wide road with a total road bed of 15-16 feet would be constructed. Four additional turnouts paved at 22 feet with 2 foot shoulders on each side and two additional turnarounds would be provided. Starting at the property line of the subject parcel, a 12 foot wide paved road with 3 foot shoulders on either side would be constructed, providing a total roadbed width of 18 feet. Two full 22 foot wide paved turnouts and a fire turnaround at the terminus of the subdivision road would be constructed. As it cuts through Lot 4, the subdivision road would have roughly 40 feet of clearance due to the separation of the road and existing vineyards; there are no trees along the subdivision road within proposed Lot 4.

Sonoma County Code requires that all roadway bridges having only one traffic lane shall be constructed to provide a minimum unobstructed width of 12 feet and shall have turnouts at both ends.. The Applicant has submitted a request for Exception to Standards to the Board of Forestry's Fire Safety Regulations. The Applicant has proposed construction of four turnarounds and multiple turnouts along the private road to provide safe access for emergency vehicle access concurrently with civilian evacuation and unobstructed traffic circulation in the event of a wildfire emergency. The Fire Marshal has reviewed the Exceptions to Standards and approved that it has the same practical effect. The Fire Marshal has submitted the Exception to Standards to CAL FIRE in July 2021. In addition, the California Fire Code with local amendments as adopted in Sonoma County Code Chapter 13 requires that all driveways exceeding 150 feet shall have a turnout constructed approximately at the midpoint of the driveway and a turnaround constructed within 50 feet of residential buildings that the driveway serves. The project as designed meets both of these requirements.

The proposed subdivision would result in additional residential uses and traffic that are compatible with the project vicinity, a rural residential and agricultural area. Temporary construction activities could potentially increase hazards to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. However, these potential impacts are reduced to less than significant levels due to the required AASHTO standards for driveway intersections and number of turnouts and turnarounds required between Bennett Valley Road and the new subdivision lots.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Comment:
The project site is located at the end of Kirch Road, a short, private road segment that connects to Bennett Valley Road, a County-maintained road. The project is less than two and a half miles from a

fire station operated by Sonoma Fire District. As discussed in 17.c the project would include paving the existing unpaved portion of Kirch Road resulting in a paved 12-foot-wide road with a total road bed of 15-16 feet extending to the project parcel line. Starting at the property line of the subject parcel, a 12-foot-wide paved road with 3 foot shoulders on either side would be constructed, providing a total roadbed width of 18 feet. The project includes the construction of 22-foot-wide paved turnouts and additional fire hammerhead turnarounds. As discussed in section 17.c and section 20, County review and approval of the subdivision road, turnouts, and turnarounds would be required to ensure compliance with the Board of Forestry Fire Safety Regulations and approval of project compliance with these standards by the Sonoma County Fire Marshal would ensure adequate emergency access. The Applicant has submitted a request for Exception to Standards to the Board of Forestry's Fire Safety Regulations. The Applicant has proposed construction of four turnarounds and multiple turnouts along the private road to provide safe access for emergency vehicle access concurrently with civilian evacuation and unobstructed traffic circulation in the event of a wildfire emergency. The Fire Marshal has reviewed the Exceptions to Standards and approved that it has the same practical effect. The Fire Marshal has submitted the Exception to Standards to CAL FIRE in July 2021.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

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 5030.1(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 § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Comment:
Some Native American artifacts may not be considered unique archaeological resources under the CEQA guidelines (i.e., if there is not a demonstrable public interest in that information, it does not possess a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type, and it is not directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric event or person). However, it is possible for a lead agency to determine that an artifact is considered significant to a local tribe, and therefore be considered a significant resource under CEQA.

As discussed in section 5.a, Archaeological Resource Service conducted a cultural resources evaluation of the project site. The four-lot subdivision and access road were examined for signs of

archaeological features as part of the archaeological resources report. The project site was examined by walking a series of parallel transects across the property, with divergences for trees and other obstructions. The access road was examined by a team of two individuals, each examining one side of the road. The investigation duplicated a previous evaluation conducted in 1999 in which an archaeological site was observed on-site.

The archaeological site consists of a prehistoric quarry/workshop where tool stone was collected from places where it had been concentrated by natural forces. The archaeological resources report determined that the archaeological site is significant for its potential to increase knowledge of aboriginal quarrying and processing.

The observed archaeological site has already been damaged by previous on-site activities. The Archaeological Resource Service report determined project activities have the potential to further damage the archaeological site if measures are not taken to protect the site. The report provided recommended mitigation measures would enhance the preservation of the remaining archaeological site and reduce the potential for discovery of significant features during construction activities associated with the project. The project will implement the report's recommended measures to avoid or minimize impacts to the archaeological site per mitigation measure TCR-1.

To further reduce potential impacts to the known archaeological site, as further outlined in mitigation measure TCR-2, cultural resource awareness training shall be provided to construction or site workers by a qualified archaeologist and Native American monitor. Archaeological monitoring shall occur during all project excavation work. In addition to monitoring of the observed archaeological site, a potential exists for the discovery of additional resources. If undiscovered archaeological resources may still be accidentally encountered during project construction, Section 11-14-050 of the Sonoma County Grading Ordinance establishes uniformly applied development standards to reduce the potential for impact to cultural resources to a less than significant level by requiring that all work be halted in the vicinity where human remains or archaeological resources are discovered during construction and the appropriate actions as further described under TCR-2 are undertaken.

Mitigation measures TCR-1 and TCR-2 will reduce potential impacts to the known archaeological site as well as previously unknown resources to less than significant.

Significance Level: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

Mitigation:

Mitigation Measure TCR-1

The project shall implement the following recommended measures contained within the project cultural resources evaluation report, dated October 3, 2019, related to surfaces that would be built up, rather than graded down, for the protection of the existing prehistoric quarry/workshop site:

- Improve the areas to be disturbed by building the surface up from the existing level and not by grading down.
- The present surface can be smoothed, geocloth spread underneath, and the subgrade and pavement placed on the prepared surface. By building up instead of digging down, the preservation of the remaining site will be enhanced and the potential for discovery of significant features during construction will be reduced.

Prior to ground-disturbing activities and project construction, the County shall review and approve the plans for the construction of areas that are required to be built up, rather than graded, per the project cultural resources evaluation report.

Mitigation Measure TCR-2

All building and/or grading permits shall have the following note printed on plan sheets:

NOTE ON MAP:

(a) On the first day of scheduled earth disturbing operations (grading, scraping, grubbing, vegetation stripping, trenching, or other site preparation), the work crew should meet with the project archaeologist and the Native American monitor for an explanation of the contingency plan for encountering historic properties, and the appropriate actions for them to take. The meeting will include a description of the indicators of an archaeological deposit and distribution of brochures describing the appropriate actions to take if anything is encountered.

(b) Monitoring shall consist of direct observation the major excavation process. Monitoring shall occur during all project ground-disturbing activities involving grading and/or excavation up to a depth of five feet, unless the monitoring archaeologist determines that additional monitoring is required. Spot checks shall consist of partial monitoring of the progress of excavation over the course of the project. During spot checks all spoils material, open excavations, recently grubbed areas, and other soil disturbances shall be inspected. The frequency and duration of spot checks shall be based on the relative sensitivity of the exposed soils and active work areas, as determined by the monitoring archaeologist.

(c) In the event that paleontological resources or prehistoric, historic, or tribal cultural resources are discovered at any time during grading, scraping, excavation, or other ground disturbing activity within the property, all work should be halted in the vicinity of the find and the operator must immediately notify the Permit and Resource Management Department (Permit Sonoma) – Project Review Staff of the find. Paleontological resources include fossils of animals, plants or other organisms. Prehistoric resources include humanly modified stone, shell, or bones, hearths, firepits,obsidian and chert flaked-stone tools (e.g., projectile points, knives, choppers), midden (culturally darkened soil containing heat-affected rock, artifacts, animal bone, or shellfish remains), stone milling equipment, such as mortars and pestles, and certain sites features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe. Historic resources include all byproducts of human use greater than fifty (50) years of age

including,backfilled privies, wells, and refuse pits; concrete, stone, or wood structural elements or foundations; and concentrations of metal, glass, and ceramic refuse. Permit Sonoma Staff should consult with the appropriate tribal representative(s) from the tribes known to Permit Sonoma to have interests in the area to determine if the resources qualify as Tribal Cultural Resources (as defined in Public Resource Code § 21074). If determined to be a Tribal Cultural Resource, Permit Sonoma would further consult with the appropriate tribal representative(s) and project proponentsin order to develop and coordinate proper protection/mitigation measures required for the discovery. Permit Sonoma may refer the mitigation/protection plan to designated tribal representatives for review and comment. No work shall commence until a protection/mitigation plan is reviewed and approved by Permit Sonoma - Project Review Staff. Mitigations may include avoidance, removal, preservation and/or recordation in accordance with California law. The operator shall be responsible for the cost to have a qualified paleontologist, archaeologist, or tribal cultural resource specialist under contract to evaluate the find and make recommendations to protect the resource in a report to Permit Sonoma."

(d) If human remains are encountered, work in the immediate vicinity shall be halted and the operator shall notify Permit Sonoma and the Sonoma County Coroner immediately. At the same time, the operator shall be responsible for the cost to have a qualified archaeologist under contract to evaluate the discovery. If the human remains are determined to be of Native American origin, the Coroner must notify the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours of this identificationso that a Most Likely Descendant can be designated, and the appropriate measures implemented incompliance with the California Government Code and Public Resources Code.

Mitigation Monitoring:

Mitigation Monitoring TCR-1

Action: Submit for County approval plans to build up, rather than grade, the surfaces identified in the project cultural resource evaluation report. Conduct ground-disturbing activities in these areas per the approved plans.

Implementing Party: Project Applicant

Timing: Prior to and during ground-disturbing activities and project construction

Monitoring Party: Permit Sonoma

Mitigation Monitoring TCR-2

Action: Conduct cultural resource awareness training prior to any ground disturbance. A qualified archaeologist shall monitor excavation work. Stop work if any artifacts or human remains are encountered; include notes on all site plans.

Implementing Party: Project Applicant

Timing: Prior to and during ground disturbing activities and project construction

Monitoring Party: Permit Sonoma

Failure by the Permit-Holder to comply with these requirements shall be considered a violation of the Permit and may result in the modification or revocation proceedings of the said Permit.

19. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

Comment:
The project would not contribute to the need for construction of new water or expanded wastewater treatment facilities, other than construction of new septic systems.

The project would incorporate bioretention facilities to capture and treat storm water runoff resulting from creation of new impervious surfaces. The design of these project features would only be permitted after County review and approval of project storm water provisions, and would be part of the project, whose construction impacts have been analyzed in this initial study. Any design or modifications to the existing water system and/or wastewater system would need to be submitted for County review and approval. Construction impacts were analyzed in section 3, Air Quality; section 4, Biological Resources; section 5, Cultural Resources; section 7, Geology and Soils; and section 10, Hydrology and Water Quality of this document.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact

b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

Comment:
Sufficient water would be provided by on-site wells which will be located in a Class 3 groundwater area. See section 10.b for a discussion of impacts to groundwater supply.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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?

Comment:
New septic systems would be constructed for residential development. There would be no sewage treatment by an off-site provider.

Significance Level: No Impact

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?

Comment:
Sonoma County has a solid waste management program in place that provides solid waste collection and disposal services for the entire County. The program can accommodate the permitted collection and disposal of the waste that would result from the proposed project. The addition of a few single-family residences would not create solid waste in excess of the capacity of the County's solid waste system.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact

e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Comment:
Sonoma County has a solid waste management program in place that provides solid waste collection and disposal services for the entire County. The program can accommodate the permitted collection and disposal of the waste that would result from the proposed project.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

20. WILDFIRE

The proposed project is located within a state responsibility area so the below discussion applies. The project site is located in a Moderate and High Fire Severity Zone.

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire severity zones, would the project:

a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Comment:
There is no adopted emergency response or evacuation plan for this area. The proposed project includes access improvements that comply with Board of Forestry Fire Safety Regulations to ensure safe access for emergency vehicles concurrently with civilian evacuation, and unobstructed traffic circulation in the event of a wildfire emergency. In addition, when the residences are constructed, the property owners would be required to pay the fire development impact fees to support the Sonoma Fire District. This will support emergency services response to proposed home sites and

that will support evacuation in the event of an emergency.

As discussed in section 17.d, the project site is served by Bennett Valley Road. The project is located less than two and a half miles from the nearest fire station operated by Sonoma Fire District. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, 14 California Code of Regulations § 1273.00, require developments in the State Responsibility Area to provide for safe access for emergency wildfire equipment and civilian evacuation concurrently. The applicant requested an Exceptions to Standards to provide the same practical effect pursuant to 14 California Code of Regulations §1270.06 due to environmental conditions and physical site limitations. The existing shared road (Kirch Road), is 12 feet wide with shoulder widths that vary from 2 to 3.8 feet to provide an overall roadbed of roughly 17 feet. The paved portion of Kirch Road is 800 feet long and has a fire standard hammerhead turnaround at the beginning of the road and a fire standard hammerhead turnaround at the end of the road. No changes to the first 800 feet of the road are proposed for this project. From there to the project parcel, a paved 12 foot wide road with a total road bed of 15-16 feet would be constructed. Four additional turnouts paved at 22 feet with 2 foot shoulders on each side would be constructed along the road. In addition, two additional turnarounds would be provided. Starting at the property line of the subject parcel, a 12 foot wide paved road with 3 foot shoulders on either side would be constructed, providing a total roadbed width of 18 feet. Two full 22 foot wide paved turnouts and a fire turnaround at the terminus of the subdivision road would be constructed. As it cuts through Lot 4, the subdivision road would have roughly 40 feet of clearance due to the separation of the road and existing vineyards; there are no trees along the subdivision road within proposed Lot 4. In addition, the Fire Marshal has required a 25 foot wide right of way for cleared space for fire emergency access. The Sonoma County Fire Marshal has reviewed the Exception to Standards and determined that it provides safe access for emergency wildfire equipment and civilian evacuation concurrently, as well as unobstructed traffic circulation in the event of a wildfire emergency. The Sonoma County Fire Marshal has submitted the Exception to Standards to CAL FIRE in July 2021.

The project would be required to comply with the applicable standards identified in Board of Forestry Fire Safety Regulations, the California Fire Code as modified by local amendments in Sonoma County Code and to conform to State Building Code requirements as outlined in section 9.g above. These requirements include emergency access, minimum emergency water supply, fuel modification and defensible space, sprinklers and road naming and addressing. Project compliance with the California Fire Code and approval of project compliance with these standards by the Sonoma County Fire Marshal would ensure the project would have a less than significant impact related to emergency response and evacuation planning.

In addition, when the residences are constructed, the property owners will pay fire development impact fees to offset any impacts to the Sonoma Fire District for serving the emergency response needs for those new homes.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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?

Comment:
As discussed in section 9, the project site is in a designated Moderate and High Fire Hazard Severity Zone in a State Responsibility Area. Topography, weather, and fuel (vegetation or structures) contribute to wildfire risk and behavior.

The overall topography of the project site is gently to sloped with a slight southerly, easterly, and northerly aspect, and elevations range from approximately 570 to 790 feet above sea level. The proposed project site contains slopes of 15% and greater. This geographic feature could contribute to and/or augment fire intensity including other geographic features such as steep inclines, gulches, and canyons typical of hills.

As a project condition of approval, new construction, including grading on the project site must conform to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regulations, 14 CCR §§1270 et seq. , Sonoma County Code Chapter 13A defensible space requirements as well as the California Fire Code adopted with local amendments in Sonoma County Chapter 13, including but not limited to, emergency vehicle access, and water supply making the impact from risk of wildland fire less than significant. These establish minimum fire safe standards to ensure that all new development within the unincorporated area of the county would provide a basic level of fire protection around itself making it easier and safer for fire fighters to fight wildland and structure fires. Potential wildfire fuel sources include grasslands, trees, vegetation, and structures (residential). As discussed in section 9, application of County and State standards, including requirements related to vegetation management and defensible space, will offset any increased wildfire risk presented by prevailing winds or onsite fuel to a less than significant level.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk of that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?

Comment:
The project does not include plans for construction. Certain access improvements must be constructed prior to recordation of the final parcel map, which have been discussed in section 17. In the future, the parcels may be developed with residential structures, which would necessitate the construction of emergency water sources and other utilities, in accordance with Sonoma County Code and state law. Infrastructure improvements for future site development will require building permits, which impose certain standards related to fire safety and are reviewed by Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department Fire Prevention Division. The project will comply with California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regulations, 14 CCR §§1270 et seq., as well as the California Fire Code adopted with local amendments in Sonoma County Chapter 13 for emergency water supply and storage for fire protection; future infrastructure for the proposed residential parcels will have a less than significant impact on fire risk.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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?

Comment:
As discussed in section 19.a (Utilities) and section 7 (Geology and Soils) the existing and proposed site conditions would not expose people or structures to significant risks involving downslope or downstream flooding, landslides, runoff, post-fire instability, or drainage changes. The project is not located in a flood zone, will adhere to County standards and BMPs to minimize erosion, and is not in a landslide prone area.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

21. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

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?

Comment:
Potential project impacts on special-status plant and fish/wildlife species and habitat are addressed in Section 4. Implementation of the required mitigation measures (Mitigation Measures BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-3, BIO-4, BIO-5, BIO-6, BIO-7, BIO-8, and BIO-9) would reduce these potential impacts to a less-than-significant level. Potential adverse project impacts to cultural resources are addressed in Section 18. Implementation of the required mitigation measures (Mitigation Measure TCR-1 and TCR-2) would reduce these potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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)?

Comment:
No project impacts have been identified in this Initial Study that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable. The project would contribute to cumulative impacts related to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, and noise, but mitigation measures included in this Initial Study would reduce the project's contribution to these cumulative impacts to less than significant levels (i.e., not cumulatively considerable).

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Comment:
Proposed project operations have the potential to cause substantial adverse impacts on human beings, both directly and indirectly. However, all potential impact and adverse effects on human beings (resulting from air quality, noise, traffic, aesthetics, geology and soils, wildfire) were analyzed, and would be less than significant with the mitigations identified in the Initial Study and would be incorporated into the project.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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