Initial Study

Verizon Wireless McCourtney Road Communication Tower Use Permit

Nevada County, California

To:

CEO – Alison Lehman	Nevada County Consolidated Fire
Assistant CEO/CFO – Erin Mettler	Northern Sierra Air Quality Management Dist.
COB – Jeff Thorsby	Gold Country Broadband Consortium
Supervisor Hoek – District 4	Nevada Irrigation District
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Native American Heritage Commission
Principal Planner	North Central Information Center
Assessor – Rolf Kleinhans	Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe
Building Department – Nick McBurney	Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians
Community Development Agency Director– Trisha Tillotson	T'si Akim Maidu Tribal Council
County Counsel's Office – Doug Johnson/Sims Ely	United Auburn Indian Community
Economic Development – Kimberly Parker	Pacific Gas & Electric
Economic Resource Council	Federal Communication Commission - Wireless Communications
Environmental Health – Nicole Johnson	Keep Nevada County Rural
Fire Marshal – Dan Collins	Forest Springs, LLC
Public Works Department – Engineering	Bear Yuba Land Trust
Nevada County Ag Commissioner – Luci Wilson	General Plan Defense Fund
Friends of Nevada City/Rural Quality Coalition	Kevin Johnston
Laborers Pacific Southwest Region	

Date: November 14, 2024

Prepared by: David Nicholas, Associate Planner
Nevada County Planning Department

950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 170
P.O. Box 599002
Nevada City, CA 95959
(530) 265-1257
Email: david.nicholas@nevadacountyca.gov

File Number(s): PLN23-0193, CUP23-0017, EIS23-0013

Assessor's Parcel Number: 007-360-044

Applicant/Representative: Madison LaScalza, Sequoia Deployment Services Inc.
1 Spectrum Pointe
Lake Forest, CA 92630
Telephone: (949) 326-3232

Property Owner: Landmark Missionary Baptist Church
11962 McCourtney Road
Grass Valley, California 95949

Zoning District(s): Residential Agricultural - 3 (RA-3)

General Plan: Estate (EST)

Project Location: The project is located at 11962 McCourtney Road, Grass Valley, CA 95945, 0.2 miles west of the City of Grass Valley City limits, 0.5 miles south of California State Highway 20, near the Nevada County Fairgrounds.

Project Site and Surrounding Land Uses:

The proposed communication facility would be located in a 30-foot-by-30-foot lease area slightly northeast of the middle of an approximately 4.01-acre parcel. The parcel is located approximately 0.2 miles west of the City of Grass Valley City limits, 0.5 miles south of California State Highway 20, near the Nevada County Fairgrounds at 11962 McCourtney Road, Grass Valley, CA 95945. The subject parcel (APN: 007-360-044) is zoned Residential Agricultural (RA-3) with a General Plan designation of Estate (EST). The subject parcel is developed with a church that was permitted under U82-020, U82-021, U89-003 and constructed under building permit 91031880.

The adjacent parcels are also zoned Residential Agriculture with a minimum parcel size of 3-acres (RA-3) and have General Plan designations of Estate (EST). Adjacent parcels and several parcels in the area range in size from approximately 0.78 acres to approximately 6.56 acres. Figure 1 shows the project parcel, surrounding properties, and the zoning of the area. Figure 2, below shows an aerial photo of the project parcel.

The project parcel is surrounded by dispersed rural-residential development and ranch/agricultural uses. The proposed communication facility lease area would be located 170 feet from the nearest residence on the adjacent parcel to the west. The proposed communication facility would be surrounded by relatively open foothill oak-pine woodlands and would be situated in a flat field of mowed grassland that is vegetated by yellow star-thistle, Himalayan blackberry, and other species.

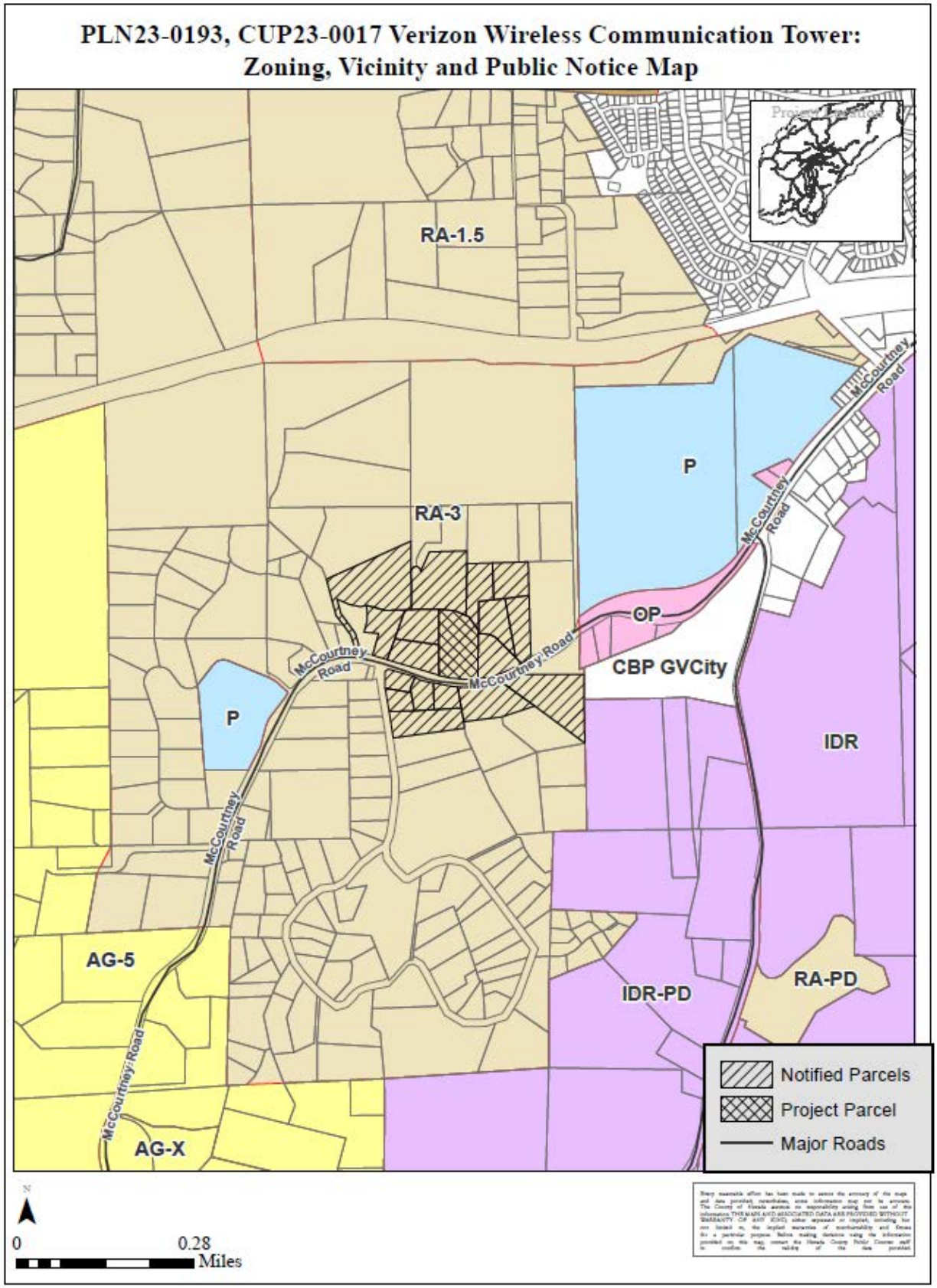

Figure 1 - Project Vicinity and Zoning

Figure 2 - Project Aerial Photo

Project Description:

The project is an application for a Conditional Use Permit for a proposed new telecommunication facility at 11962 McCourtney Road, Grass Valley, CA 95949. The proposed facility will be designed as a one-hundred fifty foot (150') faux pine tree (monopine) with antennas at a tip height of one-hundred forty-five feet (145'). All brackets, antennas and RRUs will be painted green to match the faux pine -tree. Associated equipment cabinets will be placed at the base of the pole within a new eight-foot (8') wood fence enclosure occupying 900 square feet (referred to as the lease area). The lease area will contain three equipment cabinets and a diesel generator. The project will also include a PG&E transformer and approximately 388 feet of underground power and fiber cables proposed to be trenched beneath the existing parking lot from the lease area to a utility pole and fiber point of connection. The site will be accessed by an existing dirt access road that is approximately 50 feet long.

(See Figures 3, 4, and 5 below.)

Figure 3, below, shows the site plan showing the location of the proposed lease area on the subject parcel, the existing dirt access driveway, and the existing church on the parcel. The location for the proposed wireless communication facility project was selected as the most optimal over two (2) potential site locations for its ability to provide radio frequency propagation to address the capacity gap in Verizon's network. In addition, Verizon considered the ability to obtain a land lease from the property owner, the accessibility of the site, and the available electrical and telephone utilities. The site selected for the proposed project was determined by Verizon to be the least intrusive means to service an identified significant gap in cellular coverage and is believed to have the least impacts to the community while meeting the networks coverage needs.

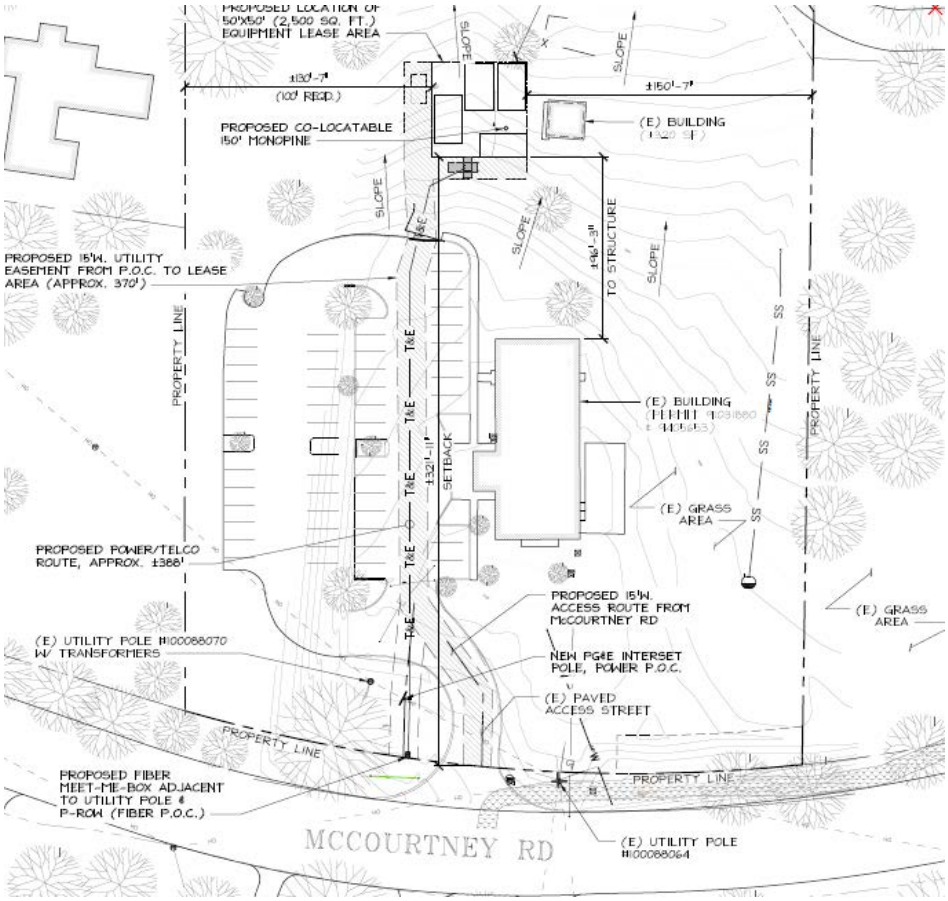

Figure 3 - Overall Site Plan

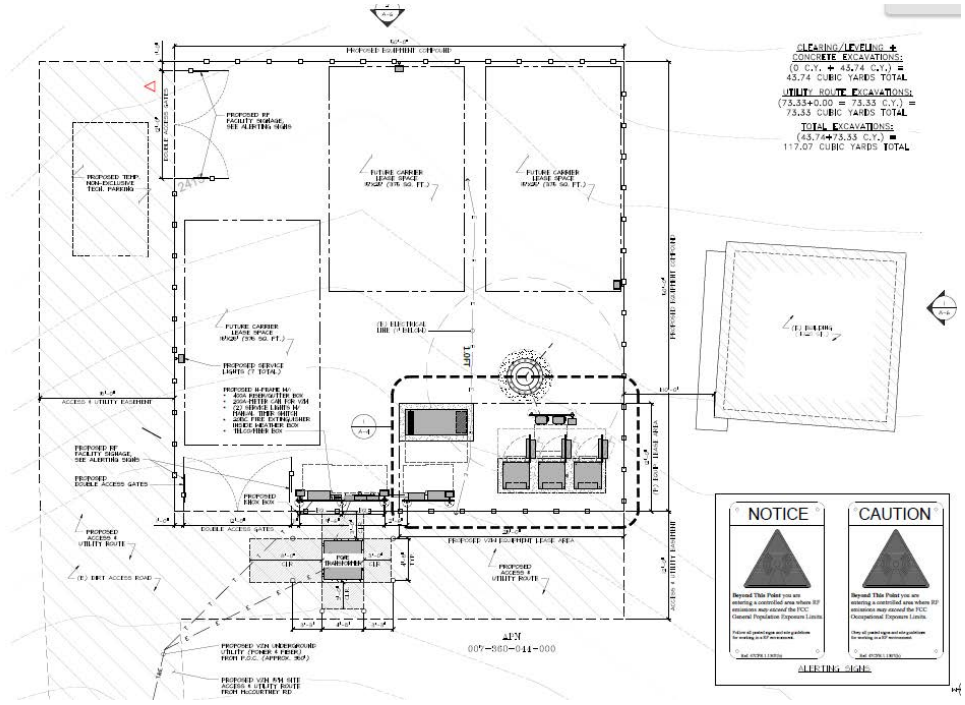

Figure 4 - Enlarged Site Plan

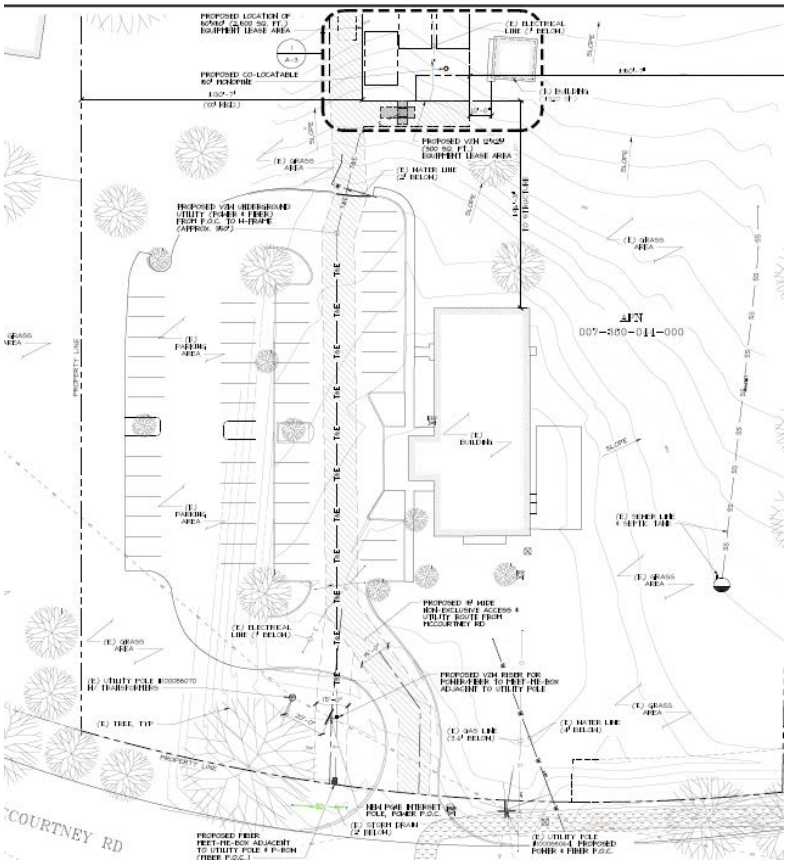

Figure 5 - Proposed Utility Easements and Locations

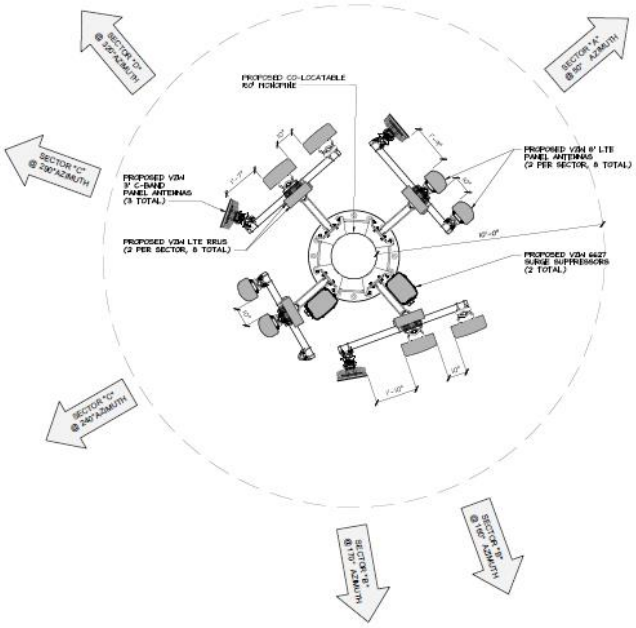

Figure 6 - Proposed Antenna Layout Plan

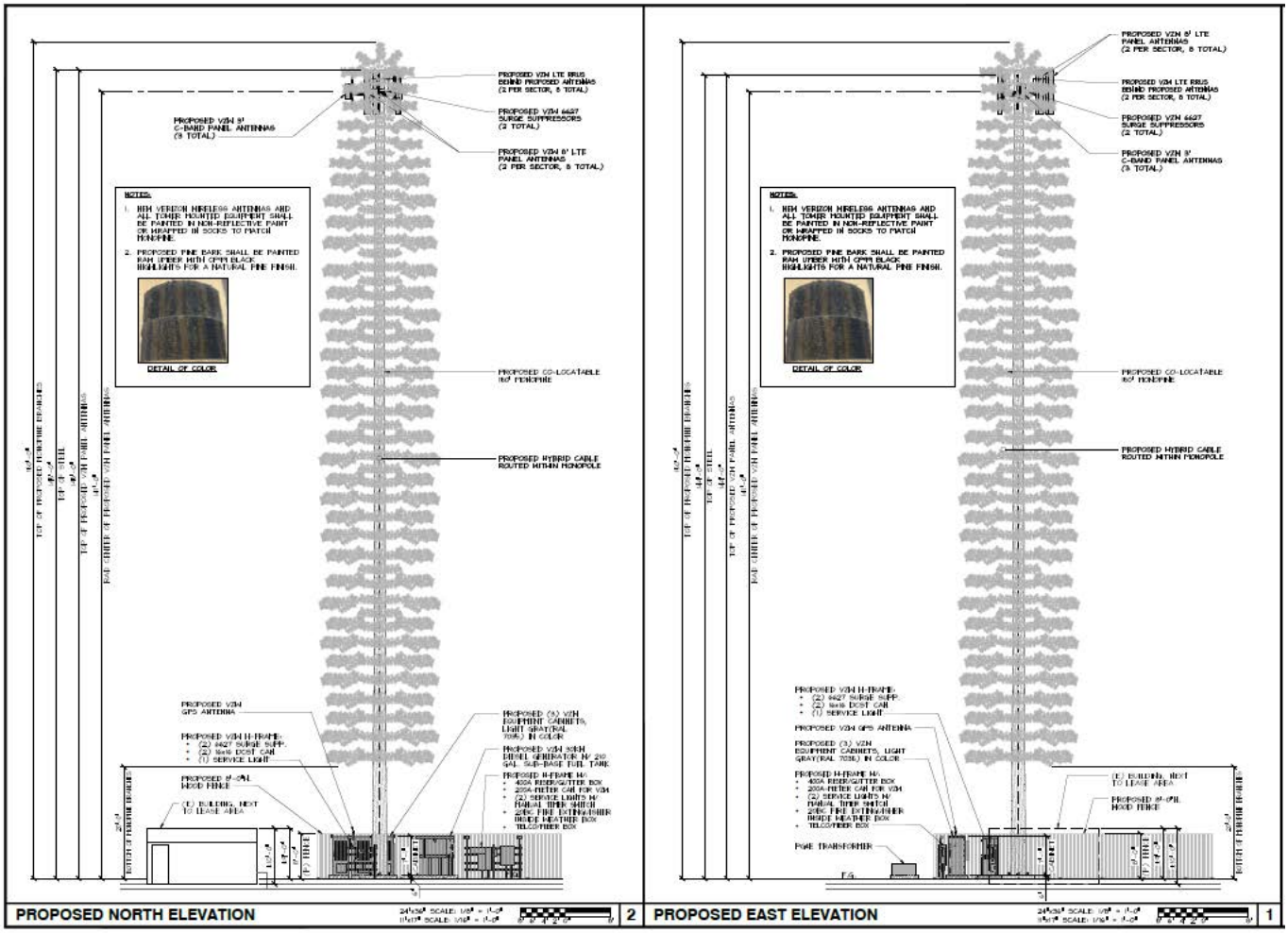

Figure 7 - Proposed Monopine Elevations

Other Permits, Which May Be Necessary:

Based on initial comments received, the following permits may be required from the designated agencies:

1. Building Permits – Nevada County Grading/Building Department
2. Hazardous Materials Storage Permit- Nevada County Environmental Health Department
3. Authority to Construct Permit- Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District

Relationship to Other Projects:

The subject project site is developed with an existing church built in 1994. Building Department Records show that the church has benefitted from maintenance conducted and inspected through a Building Permit for a new roof and new siding.

Tribal Consultation:

The project was routed to several tribal organizations including the Native American Heritage Commission, United Auburn Indian Community, the Shingle Springs Bank of Miwok Indians, and the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe. None of the entities contacted requesting consultation.

SUMMARY OF IMPACTS and PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected:

All of the following environmental factors have been considered. Those environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is "Less Than Significant with Mitigation" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

✓	1. Aesthetics	—	2. Agriculture / Forestry Resources	✓	3. Air Quality
✓	4. Biological Resources	✓	5. Cultural Resources	—	6. Energy
—	7. Geology / Soils	—	8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions	✓	9. Hazards / Hazardous Materials
—	10. Hydrology / Water Quality	—	11. Land Use / Planning	—	12. Mineral Resources
✓	13. Noise	—	14. Population / Housing	—	15. Public Services
—	16. Recreation	—	17. Transportation	✓	18. Tribal Cultural Resources
✓	19. Utilities / Service Systems	—	20. Wildfire	✓	21. Mandatory Findings of Significance

Impacts and Recommended Mitigation Measures:

The following measures shall be implemented and included as notes on construction plans as outlined in each.

AESTHETICS:

Mitigation Measure 1A: Installation of Solid Wood Fencing Around Lease Area: Improvement plans shall reflect that solid wood fencing will be installed around the lease-area perimeter. The solid fencing shall be installed at the project site prior to final inspection from the Planning Department.
Timing: *Prior to issuance and final of building permit*
Reporting: *Agency approval of permits or plans and site inspection*
Responsible Agency: *Planning Department*

AIR QUALITY:

Mitigation Measure 3A: Authority to Construct Permit from the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District. Building, altering, replacing, or operating any source of air contaminants, whether portable or stationary (but not mobile), may require an Authority to Construct permit from the Air Pollution Control Officer, unless the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD) determines that such equipment is exempt from permitting or unless such equipment is currently registered with California Air Resources Board under the Portable Equipment Registration Program. The applicant shall contact NSAQMD in order to determine whether or not a future generator's engine requires permitting from the NSAQMD. The results of that contact shall be documented and provided to the Planning Department prior to issuance of any improvement permits, and an Authority to Construct permit obtained if applicable.
Timing: *Prior to building/grading permit issuance*
Reporting: *Agency approval of permits or plans*
Responsible Agency: *Planning Department and Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District*

Mitigation Measure 3B: Mitigate any asbestos discovered during construction. Prior to issuance of grading permits or improvement plans, all plans shall incorporate, at a minimum, the following asbestos control measures, which shall be implemented in the field: If serpentine, ultramafic rock or naturally occurring asbestos are discovered during construction or grading, the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District shall be notified within 24 hours, and specific requirements contained in Section 93105 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations must be strictly complied with.
Timing: *Prior to building/grading permit issuance and during construction*
Reporting: *Agency approval of permits or plans*
Responsible Agency: *Planning Department and Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District*

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES:

Mitigation Measure 4A. Avoid Impacts to Nesting Birds. If construction occurs during the active bird nesting season (i.e., March 1 to July 31) a qualified biologist should perform a pre-construction nesting bird survey to ensure that no active bird nests are disturbed or destroyed. If, however, construction occurs before March 1 or after July 31 no mitigation would be required.

Timing*: Prior to building/grading permit issuance and during construction*
Reporting*: Agency approval of permits or plans*
Responsible Agency*: Planning Department*

Mitigation Measure 4B. Avoidance of Noxious Weeds. If straw bales are used for erosion control, or if straw is broadcast over seeded areas, only certified weed-free straw or rice straw shall be utilized to minimize the risk of introducing or spreading noxious weeds such as Scotch broom, yellow star thistle, or Italian thistle. Inspect all construction equipment to ensure that they do not transport noxious weeds into the project area.

Timing*: Prior to building permit/grading issuance and during construction*
Reporting*: Agency approval of permits or plans*
Responsible Agency*: Planning Department*

Mitigation Measure 4C. Provide Copies of Mitigation Measures to Contractors. To ensure the proper and timely implementation of all mitigation measures contained in this report, as well as

the terms and conditions of any other required permits, the applicant shall distribute copies of these mitigation measures and any other permit requirements to the contractors prior to grading and construction.

***Timing**: Prior to building/grading permit issuance and during construction*
***Reporting**: Agency approval of permits or plans*
***Responsible Agency**: Planning Department*

Mitigation Measure 4D: Western bumblebee. The following note shall be added to all improvement/grading/construction plans:

a. Avoidance. If feasible, construction will be completed entirely outside the flying season, or between September 1 and February 28. If this mitigation measure is implemented, no other measures for western bumblebees are required.
b. Surveys. Within 1 year prior to vegetation removal and/or the initiation of construction, a qualified entomologist familiar with western bumble bee behavior and life history shall conduct surveys to determine the presence/absence of the species. Surveys should be conducted during flying season when the species is most likely to be detected above ground, between approximately March 1 to September 1. Survey results including negative findings shall be submitted to the CDFW upon completion.
c. Permitting. Should any active nests be discovered in or near proposed construction zones, the applicant shall receive a CESA Section 2080 Incidental Take Permit from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, if required.

Timing: Prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits and throughout construction.
Reporting: Approval of future grading/improvement permit
***Responsible Agency:** California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Planning Department and Building Department*

CULTURAL RESOURCES:

Mitigation Measure 5A: Halt Work and Contact the Appropriate Agencies if Cultural Resources are Discovered during Project Construction. All grading and construction plans shall include a Note outlining the requirements provided below to ensure that any cultural resources discovered during project construction are properly managed. These requirements including the following: All equipment operators and employees involved in any form of ground disturbance shall be trained to recognize potential archeological resources and advised of the remote possibility of encountering subsurface cultural resources during grading activities. If such resources are encountered or suspected, work within 200 feet shall be halted immediately and the Nevada County Planning Department shall be contacted. A professional archaeologist shall be retained by the developer and consulted to access any discoveries and develop appropriate management recommendations for archaeological resource treatment. If bones are encountered and appear to be human, California Law requires that the Nevada County Coroner be contacted. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission, and the procedures outlined in California Environmental Quality Act Sections 15064.5(d) and (e) shall be followed. If Native American resources are involved, Native American Organizations and individuals recognized by the County shall be notified and consulted about any plans for treatment.
***Timing**: Prior to building permit/grading issuance and during construction*
***Reporting**: Agency approval of permits or plans*
***Responsible Agency**: Planning Department*

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:

Mitigation Measure 9A: **Submission of a 7460-1 Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration application.**
Prior to issuance of the Building Permit or Grading Permit, the applicant shall submit a 7460-1 application for approval from the Federal Aviation Administration of the evaluation of the proposed wireless telecommunication facility, which is in compliance with Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 77. The applicant shall demonstrate that the proposed monopine has been evaluated by the Federal Aviation Administration through the submission of the results of the evaluation to the Planning Department.
***Timing**: Prior to building permit/grading issuance*
***Reporting**: Agency approval of permits or plans*
***Responsible Agency**: Planning Department*

NOISE:

Mitigation Measure 13A: Limit construction activities to reduce noise impacts. Hours of operation for construction activities shall be limited to the hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. These limited hours of operation shall be noted on project plans, which shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Department prior to permit issuance.
***Timing**: Prior to building permit/grading issuance and during construction*
***Reporting**: Agency approval of permits or plans*
***Responsible Agency**: Planning Department*

Mitigation Measure 13B: Installation of Sound Enclosure. The generator shall be configured with a Level 2 sound attenuated enclosure. This requirement shall be noted on the site plan and documentation verifying the Level 2 sound attenuated enclosure shall be provided to the Planning Department prior to final of the building permit.
Timing: Prior to building permit issuance/final
Reporting: Agency approval of permits or plans
Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Mitigation Measure 13C: Prohibition of Nighttime Generator Testing. The generator shall only be operated for non-emergency functions such and maintenance and testing between the hours of 9 AM and 2 PM. If the generator is programmed to run automatically, the start-up schedule shall be provided to the Planning Department. This requirement shall be noted on the site plan.
Timing: Prior to building permit issuance/final
Reporting: Agency approval of permits or plans
Responsible Agency: Planning Department

TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES:

Mitigation Measure 18A: Unanticipated Tribal Cultural Resources. The following mitigation measures shall be required and shall be included as notes on all future site plans: If any suspected Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs) are discovered during ground disturbing construction activities, all work shall cease within 100 feet of the find, or an agreed upon distance based on the project area and nature of the find. A Tribal Representative from a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with a geographic area shall be immediately

notified and shall determine if the find is a TCR (PRC §21074). The Tribal Representative will make recommendations for further evaluation and treatment as necessary.

When avoidance is infeasible, preservation in place is the preferred option for mitigation of TCRs under CEQA and UAIC protocols, and every effort shall be made to preserve the resources in place, including through project redesign, if feasible. Culturally appropriate treatment may be, but is not limited to, processing materials for reburial, minimizing handling of cultural objects, leaving objects in place within the landscape, or returning objects to a location within the project area where they will not be subject to future impacts. Permanent curation of TCRs will not take place unless approved in writing by UAIC or by the California Native American Tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area.

The contractor shall implement any measures deemed by the CEQA lead agency to be necessary and feasible to preserve in place, avoid, or minimize impacts to the resource, including, but not limited to, facilitating the appropriate tribal treatment of the find, as necessary. Treatment that preserves or restores the cultural character and integrity of a TCR may include Tribal Monitoring, culturally appropriate recovery of cultural objects, and reburial of cultural objects or cultural soil. Work at the discovery location cannot resume until all necessary investigation and evaluation of the discovery under the requirements of the CEQA, including AB52, have been satisfied.

Timing: *Prior to Issuance of grading/improvement/building permits and throughout construction*
Reporting: *Planning Department Approval of Grading and Construction Permits*
Responsible Agency: *Planning Department*

UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS:

Mitigation Measure 19A: Appropriately Dispose of Vegetative and Toxic Waste. Neither stumps nor industrial toxic waste (petroleum and other chemical products) are accepted at the McCourtney Road transfer station and if encountered, shall be properly disposed of in compliance with existing regulations and facilities.
Timing*: Prior to building permit/grading issuance and during construction*
Reporting*: Agency approval of permits or plans*
Responsible Agency*: Planning Department*

MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFIGANCE

See all Mitigation Measures listed above.

Mitigation Monitoring Matrix:

MITIGATION MEASURE	MONITORING AUTHORITY	IMPLEMENTATION TIMING
1A	Planning Department	Prior to issuance/final of building permit
3A	Planning Department / Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District	Prior to building/grading permit issuance.
3B	Planning Department / Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District	Prior to building/grading permit issuance and during construction
4A	Planning Department	Prior to building/grading permit issuance and during construction

4B	Planning Department	Prior to Building Permit or Grading Permit issuance and during construction
4C	Planning Department	Prior to building/grading permit issuance and during construction
4D	Planning Department/CDFW	Prior to Building Permit or Grading Permit issuance and during construction
5A	Planning Department	Prior to building permit issuance and during construction
9A	Planning Department	Prior to building/grading permit issuance
13A	Planning Department	Prior to building permit issuance and during construction
13B	Planning Department	Prior to building permit issuance/final
13C	Planning Department	Prior to building permit issuance/final
18A	Planning Department	Prior to Issuance of grading/improvement/building permits and throughout construction
19A	Planning Department	Prior to building permit issuance and during construction

INITIAL STUDY AND CHECKLIST

Introduction:

This checklist is to be completed for all projects that are not exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The information, analysis and conclusions contained in the checklist are the basis for deciding whether an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or Negative Declaration (ND) is to be prepared. If an EIR is determined to be necessary based on the conclusions of the Initial Study, the checklist is used to focus the EIR on the effects determined to be potentially significant.

This Initial Study uses the following terms to describe the level of significance of adverse impacts. These terms are defined as follows:

- **No Impact:** An impact that would result in no adverse changes to the environment.
- **Less than Significant Impact:** An impact that is potentially adverse but does not exceed the thresholds of significance as identified in the impact discussions. Less than significant impacts do not require mitigation.
- **Less than Significant with Mitigation:** An environmental effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the environment without mitigation, but which is reduced to a level that is less than significant with mitigation identified in the Initial Study.

- **Potentially Significant Impact:** An environmental effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the environment; either additional information is needed regarding the extent of the impact to make the significance determination, or the impact would or could cause a substantial adverse change in the environment. A finding of a potentially significant impact would result in the determination to prepare an EIR.

1. Aesthetics:

Existing Setting: The adjacent parcels are zoned Residential Agriculture with a minimum parcel size of 3-acres (RA-3) and have General Plan designations of Estate (EST). Figure 1 shows the project parcel, surrounding properties, and the zoning of the area. Figure 2, above shows an aerial photo of the project parcel. Many of the surrounding parcels range in size from approximately 0.78 acres to approximately 6.56 acres and contain single-family residences and/or agricultural components. The proposed lease area would be located in a disturbed, and recently mowed grassland on the church property which has a large, paved parking lot, the existing church, and two sheds. The project parcel is surrounded by relatively open foothill oak-pine woodland, areas of annual grasslands, dispersed rural-residential development, and the Nevada County Fairgrounds. Other than lighting, which is typical to that of a rural church, there are no other sources of lights or glare, which exist on the subject parcel. The elevation of the proposed lease area is approximately 2,425 feet above mean sea level.

Except as provide in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the proposed project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?		✓			A,L
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?				✓	A, 28
c. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from 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?		✓			A
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?				✓	A

Impact Discussion:

1a,c. Pursuant to the submitted site plans and visual simulations, the proposed 150-foot tall monopine wireless communication facility is designed to look like a pine tree to minimize aesthetic impacts. Although the monopine tower of the facility is designed to not result in a negative impact to aesthetics, the location of the proposed monopine diminishes the natural and rural residential aesthetic of the project area. To a typical person, any utility is not aesthetically pleasing, and communication towers are no different even when disguised as a pine tree.

Although the scenic quality of the area is decreased, a disturbed field behind a church is not typically considered a scenic vista. Therefore, the proposed communication facility will have a **less than significant** impact on a scenic vista.

Although the proposed tower creates a scenic impact from public views of the site on adjacent roads, the design is anticipated to prevent significant degradation to the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. The cellular tower as proposed would be a monopine with faux branches/foliage and faux bark materials which are designed to blend in with the surrounding pines to the greatest extent possible. The branches of the monopine would help to camouflage the brackets, antennas, and Remote Radio Units (RRU's) and as proposed would be located within the branches and covered with faux pine needle socks; painted to match the tree. The lease area will include a generator, transformer, and equipment cabinets which would have aesthetic impacts due to the mechanical appearance conflicting with the surrounding rural land use. Therefore, in addition to the camouflaged design of the monopine mitigation measure 1A is proposed to require a solid wood fence around the base of the lease area to provide screening of the equipment. With the proposed mitigation measure and the monopine design of the tower, the impact to the character and quality of public views is **less than significant with mitigation**.

1b. The proposed project is not located along a State Scenic Highway nor is it located within a Historic District. As designed, it is not anticipated that the proposed project would result in an impact to any trees, rock outcroppings or historic buildings. Although some vegetation thinning is required for fire safety, the thinning will primarily remove ladder fuels and lighter fuels and will not remove scenic trees. Thus, the project is anticipated to result in a ***less than significant impact***.

1d. The applicant proposes to install six LED service lights that will be downcast and used during maintenance activities only. The lights will normally be off and will be controlled by a 4-hour twist-timer switch. The site is surrounded by trees which will provide screening of the tower and lighting. A standard condition of approval would require the lighting be installed in compliance with Nevada County Code Section 12.04.108 which requires lights to be turned off between 11 p.m and sunrise and be fully shielded and down-facing so as not to result in glare that could adversely affect day or nighttime views. With the application of a standard condition of approval requiring compliance with County lighting standards, the project is not anticipated to result in substantial light or glare; therefore, ***no impact*** is anticipated to day or nighttime views due to lighting.

Mitigation Measures:

To mitigate potential aesthetic impacts associated with the project, the following mitigation measure shall be required:

Mitigation Measure 1A: Installation of Solid Wood Fencing Around Lease Area: Improvement plans shall reflect that solid wood fencing will be installed around the lease-area perimeter. The solid fencing shall be installed at the project site prior to final inspection from the Planning Department.
Timing: *Prior to issuance and final of building permit*
Reporting: *Agency approval of permits or plans and site inspection*
Responsible Agency: *Planning Department*

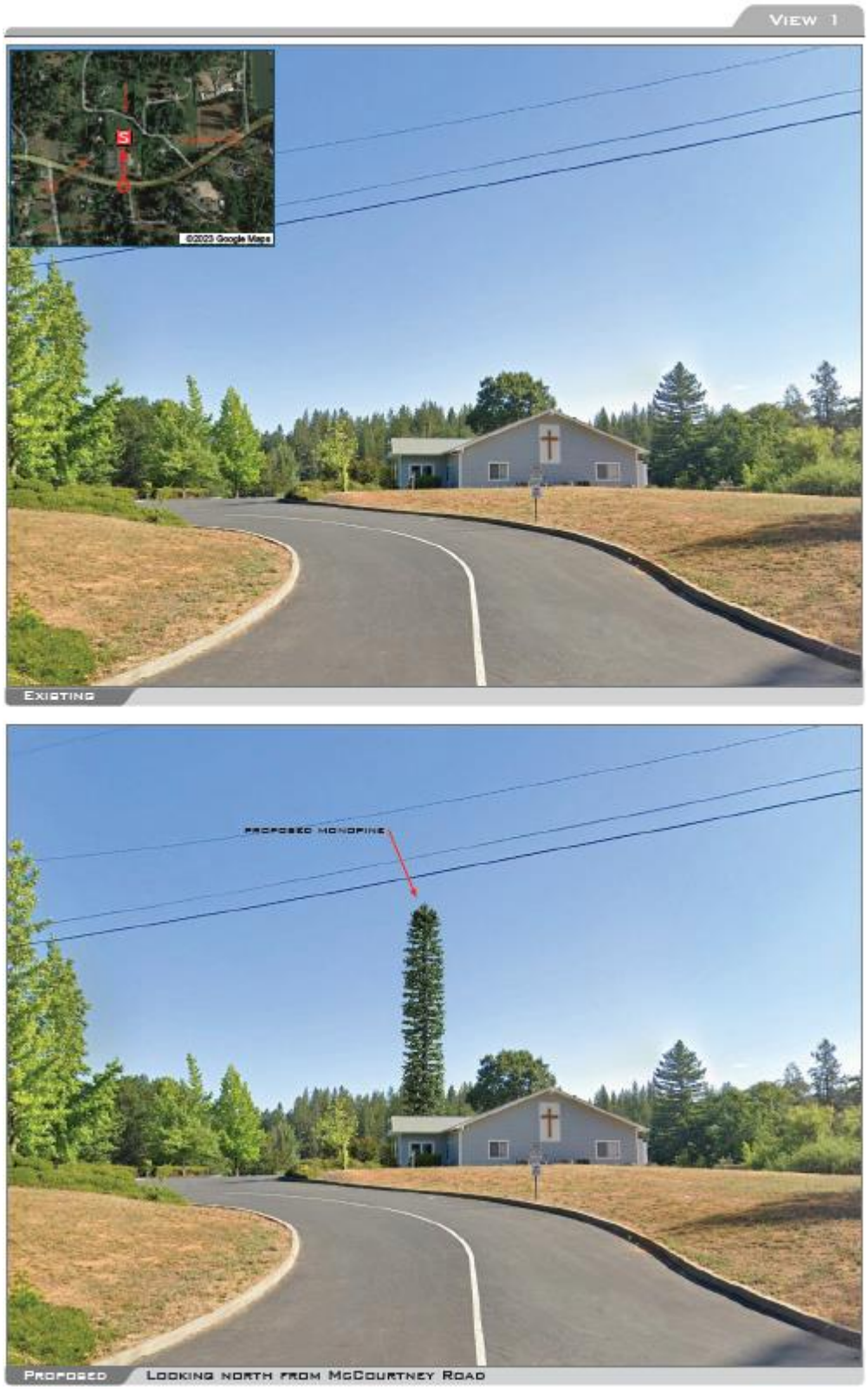

Figure 8 - Photo Simulation of proposed monopine looking north from McCourtney Road

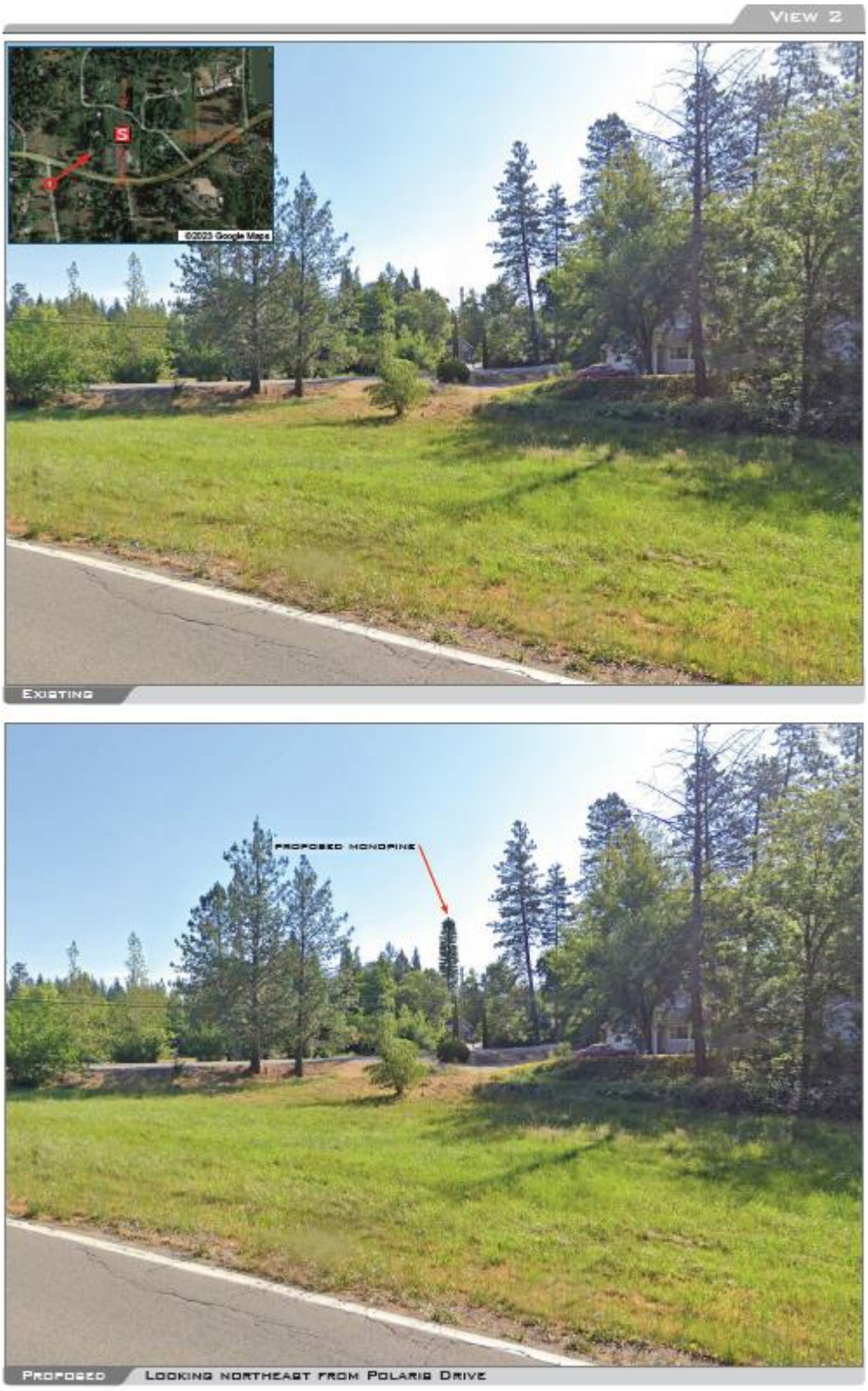

Figure 9 - Photo Simulation of proposed monopine looking northeast from Polaris Drive

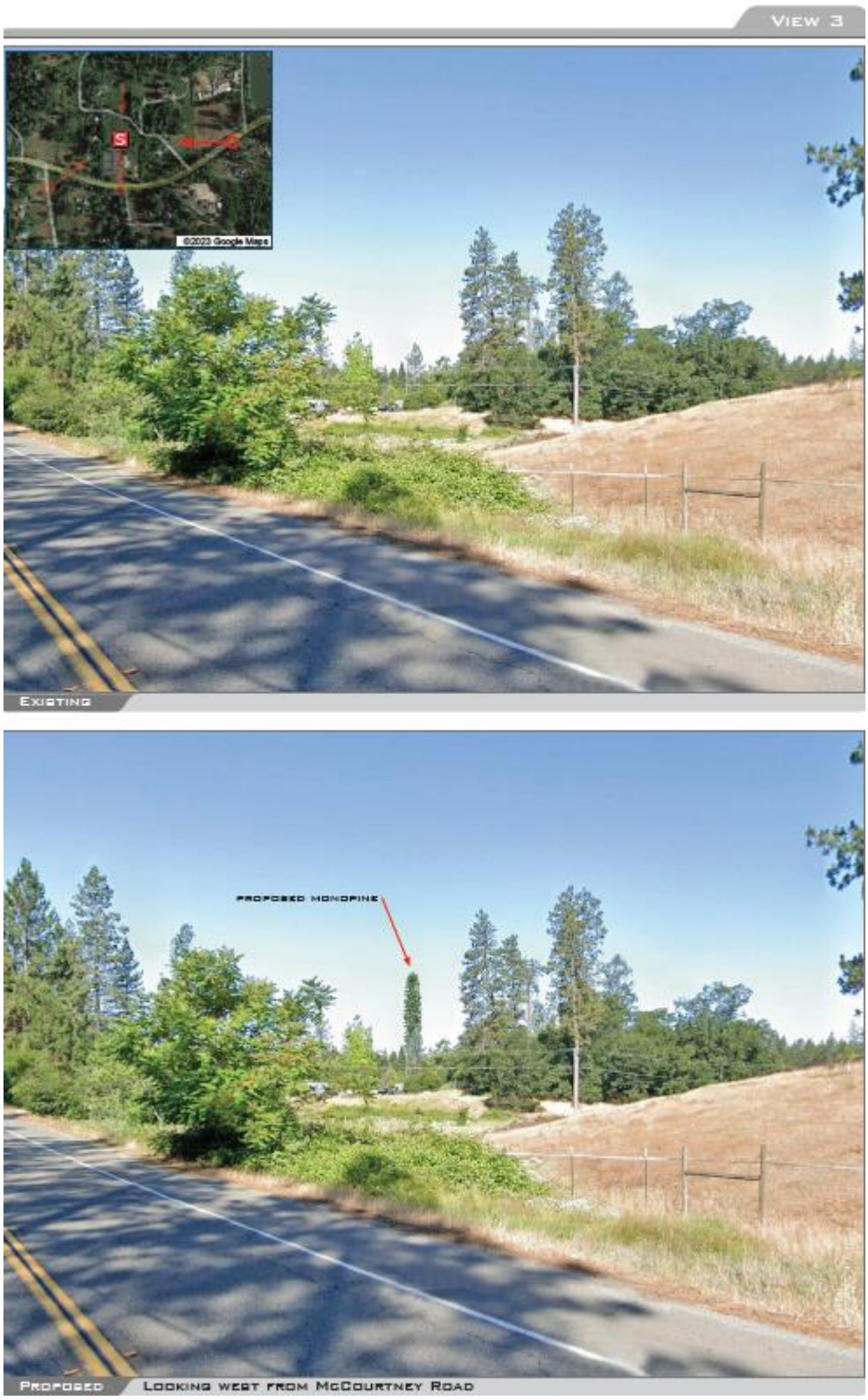

Figure 10 - Photo Simulation of proposed monopine looking west from McCourtney Road

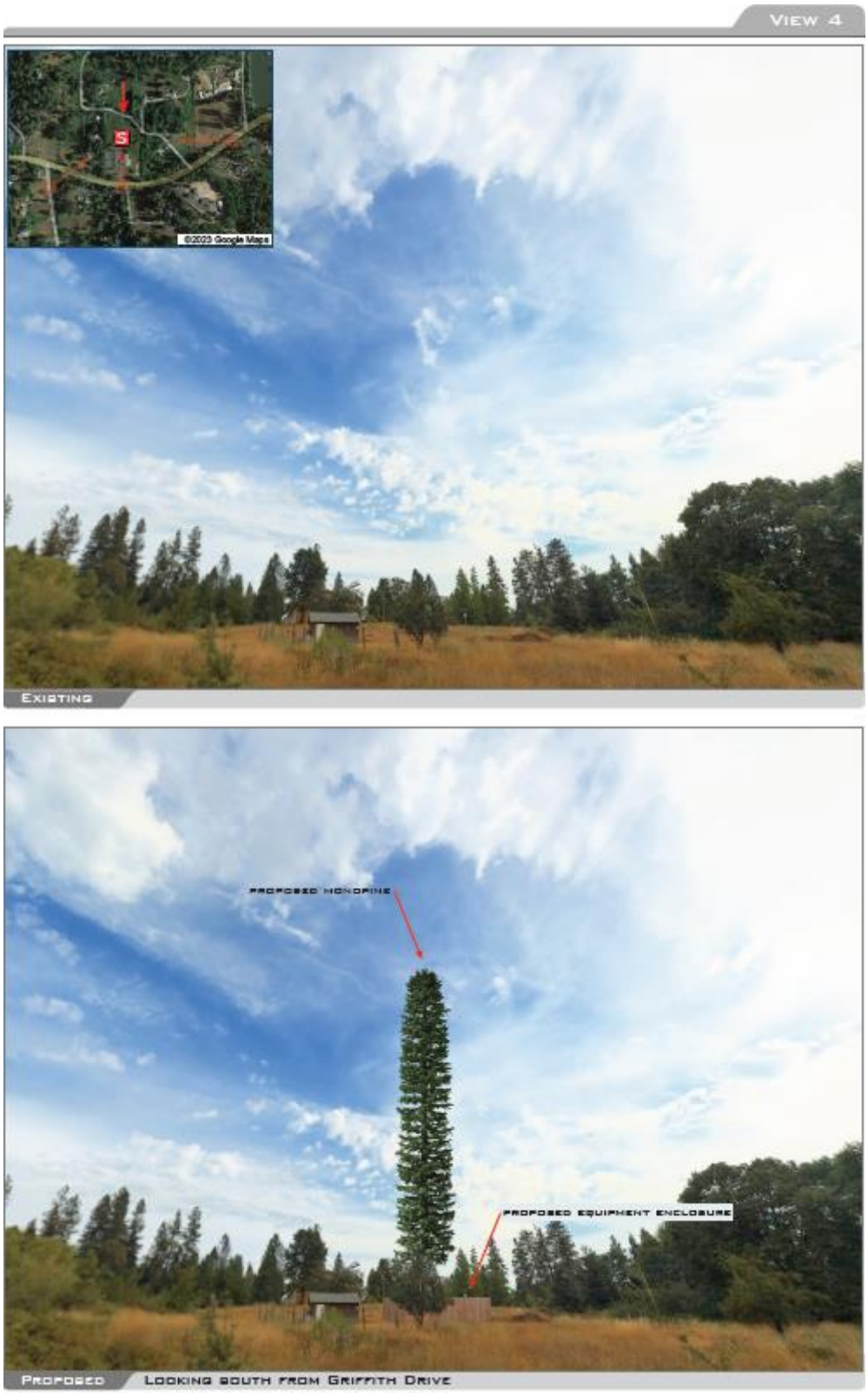

Figure 10 - Photo Simulation of proposed monopine looking south from Griffith Drive

2. AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY RESOURCES:

Existing Setting: The farmland designation of the project site is mapped as Urban and Built Up Land and Other Land by the California Department of Conservation (2020). The site nor any neighboring sites have been determined to contain any Important Farmlands. The parcel and the surrounding area is zoned for Residential Agriculture and many of the surrounding parcels are developed with single family dwellings and include ranch or agricultural uses.

The project site does not contain any land within a Williamson Act contract, nor is the parcel within a Timberland Production Zone.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
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 Department of Conservation's Division of Land Resource Protection, to non-agricultural use?				✓	A,L,7
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or conflict with a Williamson Act contract?				✓	A,L,18
c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resource Code section 12220(g)), timberland zoned Timberland Production Zone (per Section L-II 2.3.C of the Nevada County Land Use and Development Code)?				✓	A,L,18
d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				✓	A,L,18
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?				✓	A,L,7

Impact Discussion:

2a-e. The subject parcel is located within an area designated by the California Department of Conservation as Urban and Built Up Land and Other Land and is not considered Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. The subject parcel is zoned Residential Agriculture (RA-5) which does allow for agriculture uses. According to the biological inventory, there are a few fruit trees on the parcel, but this is not an agricultural operation. The development of the telecommunication tower on the 900 square foot lease area would not substantially further constraints on agricultural operations. The subject parcel is not part of a Williamson Act Contract nor is part of a Timberland Production Zone. The proposed project would not directly or indirectly

impact agricultural uses on or off-site. Therefore, the project is anticipated to have ***no impact*** to Farmland, Forest, or Williamson Act lands.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

3. AIR QUALITY:

Existing Setting: Nevada County is located in the Mountain Counties Air Basin (MCAB). The MCAB includes the central and northern Sierra Nevada mountain range with elevations ranging from several hundred feet in the foothills to over 6,000 feet above mean sea level along the Sierra Crest. The MCAB generally experiences warm, dry summers and wet winters. Ambient air quality in the air basin is generally determined by climatological conditions, the topography of the air basin, and the type and amount of pollutants emitted. The Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District has responsibility for controlling air pollution emissions including "criteria air pollutants" and "toxic air pollutants" from direct sources (such as factories) and indirect sources (such as land-use projects) to improve air quality within Nevada County. To do so, the District adopts rules, regulations, policies, and programs to manage the air pollutant emissions from various sources, and also must enforce certain statewide and federal rules, regulations and laws. The Federal Clean Air Act of 1971 established national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS). These standards are divided into primary and secondary standards. Primary standards are designed to protect public health and secondary standards are designed to protect plants, forests, crops, and materials. Because of the health-based criteria identified in setting the NAAQS, the air pollutants are termed "criteria" pollutants. California has adopted its own ambient air quality standards (CAAQS). Criteria air pollutants include ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, lead, and particulate matter. CAAQS include the NAAQS pollutants, in addition to visibility reducing particles, sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, and vinyl chloride. A nonattainment area is an area where a criteria air pollutant's concentration is above either the federal and/or state ambient air quality standards. Depending on the level of severity, a classification will be designated to a nonattainment area. Failure of a state to reach attainment of the NAAQS by the target date can trigger penalties, including withholding of federal highway funds. Table 1 shows the current attainment/nonattainment status for the federal and state air quality standards in Nevada County.

Nevada County has two federally recognized air monitoring sites: The Litton Building in Grass Valley (fine particulate matter, also called PM2.5, and ozone) and the fire station in downtown Truckee (PM2.5 only). For eight-hour average ozone concentrations, Nevada County is serious nonattainment for both the 2008 and 2015 state and federal ozone standards of 75 and 70 parts per billion, respectively (Table 1). Unlike other pollutants, ozone is not typically released directly into the atmosphere from any sources. Ozone is created by the interaction of Nitrogen Oxides and Reactive Organic Gases (also known as Volatile Organic Compounds) in the presence of sunlight, especially when the temperature is high. The major sources of Nitrogen Oxides and Reactive Organic Gases, known as ozone precursors, are combustion sources such as factories, automobiles and evaporation of solvents and fuels. Ozone is mainly a summertime problem, with the highest concentrations generally observed in July and August, when the days are longest, especially in the late afternoon and evening hours. Ozone is considered by the California Air Resources Board to be overwhelmingly transported to Nevada County from the Sacramento Metropolitan area and, to a lesser extent, the San Francisco Bay Area. This recognition of overwhelming transport relieves Nevada County of CAAQS-related requirements, including the development of CAAQS attainment plan with a "no-net-increase" permitting program or an "all feasible measures" demonstration. For particulate matter, ambient air quality standards have been established for both PM10 and PM2.5. California has standards for average PM10 concentrations over 24-hour

periods and over the course of an entire year, which are 50 and 20 µg/m^3, respectively. (The notation "µg/m^3" means micrograms of pollutant per cubic meter of ambient air.) For PM2.5, California only has a standard for average PM2.5 concentrations over a year, set at 12 µg/m^3, with no 24-hour-average standard. Nevada County is in compliance with all of the federal particulate matter standards, but like most California counties it is out of compliance with the state PM10 standards. Particulate-matter is identified by the maximum particle size in microns as either PM2.5 or PM10. PM2.5, is mostly smoke and aerosol particles resulting from woodstoves and fireplaces, vehicle engines, wildfires, and open burning. PM-10 is a mixture of dust, combustion particles (smoke) and aerosols from sources such as surface disturbances, road sand, vehicle tires, and leaf blowers.

Table 1: Attainment Status by Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District of State and Federal Air Quality Standards. In addition, the entire district is either Attainment or Unclassified for all State and Federal NO_2, SO_2, Pb, H_2S, visibility reducing particles, sulfates, and vinyl chloride standards.

Pollutant	State Designation	Federal Designation
Ozone (O_3)	Nevada County: Non-attainment (due to overwhelming transport)	2008 O_3 Standard (75 ppb) Western Nevada County: Serious Non-attainment;
		2015 O_3 Standard (70 ppb) Western Nevada County: Serious Non-attainment;
PM_{10}	Nevada County: Non-attainment	Unclassified
PM2.5	Nevada County: Unclassified	2012 Annual Standard (12µg/m^3) Nevada County: Unclassifiable/Attainment
		2012 24-hour Standard (35µg/m^3) Unclassifiable/Attainment
CO	Nevada: Unclassified	Unclassifiable/Attainment

Ultramafic rock and its altered form, serpentine rock (or serpentinite), both typically contain asbestos, a cancer-causing agent. Ultramafic rock and serpentine are likely to exist in several areas of western Nevada County. The area of the project site is not mapped as an area that is likely to contain ultramafic rock, but it is adjacent to an ultramafic rock unit (California Department of Conservation, 2000). Natural occurrences of asbestos are more likely to be encountered in, and immediately adjacent to areas of ultramafic rock.

An evaluation of project impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions is provided in Section 8 of this Initial Study.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan.				✓	A,G
b. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?			✓		A,G,21
c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?			✓		A,G,L
d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?		✓			A,G, 27

Impact Discussion:

3a. The proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of an applicable air quality plan; therefore, ***no impact*** is anticipated on the potential adoption or implementation of an air quality plan.

3b. Western Nevada County is in non-attainment for the Federal 8-hour ozone standard, and the entirety of Nevada County is in non-attainment for the State 1- and 8-hour ozone standards and PM10 standards. While most of the ozone in the County is transported from urban areas to the southwest, PM10 sources primarily come from within the County. PM10 violations in winter are largely due to wood smoke from the use of woodstoves and fireplaces, while summer and fall violations often occur during forest fires or periods of open burning. The proposed project would result in a temporary but incrementally small net increase in pollutants due to vehicle and equipment emissions. Therefore, this impact is ***less than significant***.

3c. The project proposes a standby generator for the event of a power outage. The operation of the generator would be used for maintenance and testing, and for use during power outages at the site. A generator would not cause substantial air pollutant emissions or objectionable smoke, ash, or odors because it would be required to meet modern emission standards of the Federal EPA and California Air Resources Board. The facility would be unmanned, with minimal traffic generated by technicians that would service equipment at the site. The communication facility is proposed on the same parcel as a church which is a sensitive receptor and the nearest residence is about 170 feet away from the generator. Although receptors are close to the proposed communication facility, the generator is certified by the Federal EPA and will only be operated in emergencies and during normal testing and maintenance. Due to the infrequent use of a single modern generator that is 170 feet away from the nearest residences and near a church that is only open during limited periods, is unlikely to expose these receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. Therefore, impacts to exposing sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations are anticipated to be ***less than significant.***

3d. The proposed wireless telecommunication facility project includes the installation of a 30-kilowatt emergency backup generator. 30 kilowatts is equivalent to about 40 horsepower. Pursuant to the NSAQMD, generators which are less than 50 horsepower, typically are recognized as producing emissions low enough that they do not require permitting though the District. However, if additional wireless telecommunication carries co-locate at the project site and if they

request to install emergency backup generators, the total combined emissions produced, could exceed the 50-horsepower threshold. Thus, given the potential for future co-location, a permit from the NSAQMD may be required. Therefore, Mitigation Measure 3A, requiring the applicant to contact NSAQMD to determine permitting requirements is included. With the addition of Mitigation Measure 3A, impacts to air quality standards would be ***less than significant with mitigation***.

Additionally, the construction phase of this project will entail some ground disturbance. Serpentine soils or ultramafic rock are not mapped on the project site, although there is still potential for these materials to be encountered during construction. The NSAQMD requires notification in the event that ground disturbance yields serpentine, ultramafic rock or naturally occurring asbestos, as outlined in Mitigation Measure 3B. Therefore, with the addition of Mitigation Measure 3B, impacts from emissions would be ***less than significant with mitigation***.

NSAQMD Rule 226 requires a Dust Control Plan when site disturbance will meet or exceed one acre. This project includes disturbance within the 900 square foot lease area and 388 feet of trenching. With a very conservative estimate that the disturbance for the trenching for utilities is the entire width of the 15-foot easement, total site disturbance would be 5,820 square feet. Therefore, a dust control plan from the NSAMD is not required and the potential adverse impact on the generation of substantial dust would be ***less than significant.***

Mitigation Measures:

To mitigate potential air quality impacts associated with the project construction activities, the following mitigation measure shall be required:

Mitigation Measure 3A: Authority to Construct Permit from the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District. Building, altering, replacing, or operating any source of air contaminants, whether portable or stationary (but not mobile), may require an Authority to Construct permit from the Air Pollution Control Officer, unless the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD) determines that such equipment is exempt from permitting or unless such equipment is currently registered with California Air Resources Board under the Portable Equipment Registration Program. The applicant shall contact NSAQMD in order to determine whether or not a future generator's engine requires permitting from the NSAQMD. The results of that contact shall be documented and provided to the Planning Department prior to issuance of any improvement permits, and an Authority to Construct permit obtained if applicable.
Timing: *Prior to building/grading permit issuance*
Reporting: *Agency approval of permits or plans*
Responsible Agency: *Planning Department and Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District*

Mitigation Measure 3B: Mitigate any asbestos discovered during construction. Prior to issuance of grading permits or improvement plans, all plans shall incorporate, at a minimum, the following asbestos control measures, which shall be implemented in the field: If serpentine, ultramafic rock or naturally occurring asbestos are discovered during construction or grading, the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District shall be notified within 24 hours, and specific requirements contained in Section 93105 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations must be strictly complied with.
Timing: *Prior to building/grading permit issuance and during construction*
Reporting: *Agency approval of permits or plans*
Responsible Agency: *Planning Department and Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District*

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES:

Existing Setting: The proposed project area is situated in a disturbed, and recently-mowed grassland on a church property which has a large, paved parking lot, the existing church, and two small sheds. It is surrounded by relatively open foothill oak-pine woodland, dispersed rural-residential development, and the Nevada County Fairgrounds. The proposed communication facility would be situated in the mowed grassland, adjacent to an existing building on the church property. According to the biological inventory, no landmark hard wood trees (Diameter at Breast Height greater than 36 inches) or landmark groves (continuous forest with canopy coverage of >33%) exist in or near the project area. No Waters of the United States/Wetlands exist in or near the project area, but the Allison Ranch Canal runs along the southern portion of the subject parcel. No state or federally-listed or other special-status plants or animals were observed or are expected to occur in the project area, and no suitable habitat for other special-status species was observed during the field survey.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
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 Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?		✓			A,K,19
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 Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?		✓			A,K,10,19
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?				✓	A,K,10,19
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?		✓			A,L,19
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?			✓		A,16,19
f Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other				✓	A,18,19,33

Would the proposed project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?					

Impact Discussion:

4a. In compliance with Nevada County Code Section 12.04.212, the project area was surveyed by a Nevada County qualified biologist, Edward Beedy, PhD, and biologist Randi Honeycutt on July 17, 2024 (Beedy, 2024). The Inventory evaluated the potential for Special Status plants and wildlife, landmark trees or oak groves, and Waters of the U.S. to occur on or adjacent to the project site, as well as reviewed the property for locally protected resources per the requirements of Nevada County General Plan.

The project area is within the range of a number of special-status animal species that are of concern to USFWS and CDFW including the California Red-legged Frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), Foothill Yellow-legged Frog (*Rana boylii*), Western Pond Turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*), and California Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus*). However, the biologist determined that no suitable habitat exists in or near the project area to support listed and other special-status animals known from the region. According to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's BIOS tool, the subject parcel is within the historical range of the Western Bumble Bee, which is a candidate species under the California Endangered Species Act. The project biologist did not observe any bees during his site visit, but noted that the species is a generalist forager on a wide variety of flowering plants and crops. The biologist does not anticipate the development of the 900 square foot facility would have any adverse effects on bees, but due to the site being within the historic range of the Western Bumble Bee and due to the plants that exist onsite that could potentially be foraged by the bee, Mitigation Measure 4D is proposed to require either construction outside of the bee's flying season, or require pre-construction surveys.

The project area is within the range of a number of special-status plant species that are of concern to USFWS and CDFW including the Scadden Flat checkerbloom (*Sidalcea stipularis*), Stebbins' morning-glory (*Calystegia stebbinsii*), and Pine Hill flannelbush (*Fremontodendron decumbens*). No suitable habitat is present within the project area to support the listed plants known from the region. The latter two species are endemic to gabbro soils in the Secca and Rescue soil series, or serpentine-derived soils, which are not present in the project area. Scadden flat checkerbloom, a state endangered species, occurs on the drier fringe of a cattail marsh west of Grass Valley, approximately two miles from the project area. No suitable habitat is present within the project boundaries.

Therefore, project impacts on on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species will be ***less than significant with mitigation.***

4b,c The project biologist, Edward Beedy, determined that there are no Waters of the U.S. or Wetlands present in the project area as defined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Additionally, a biological resources report from Trileaf, determined that no Waters of the United States/Wetlands exist in or near the project area, which aligns with the waterbodies and courses identified on a United States Geological Survey Map. Therefore, there will be ***no impact*** on riparian habitat and wetlands.

The proposed 900 square foot communication tower lease area includes a vegetation management component as required by the Nevada County Office of the Fire Marshal and the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District to reduce vegetation which provides fuel for wildfires. Nevada County Consolidated Fire District is requiring that all hazardous vegetation be cleared out to 100 feet from the facility and the Nevada County Fire Marshal is requiring that all flammable vegetation within 50 feet of the facility is cleared. The project area is within an oak-pine woodland, but only oak woodlands with 33% canopy are considered a sensitive natural community by the Nevada County Land Use and Development Code. The project biologist, Ted Beedy, assessed the project and determined it will not impact the oak woodlands due to oak woodlands not occurring on the parcel. Additionally, the site is a disturbed mowed field so impacts to sensitive habitats is unlikely. However, construction activities and soil disturbance from the proposed project could result in the introduction and spread of noxious weeds into areas that are currently not infested, as well as the potential spread of existing infestations into new areas. Therefore, Mitigation Measure 4.B is proposed to control the spread of noxious weeds. Based on the information above, the impacts to sensitive natural habitats, including oak woodlands will be ***less than significant with mitigation.***

4d The proposed communication tower will not impact migratory fish because there are no waterways on the project parcel. The Nevada County GIS portal shows the parcel has a resident herd deer area which is not one of the major deer habitats defined by 12.04.207 of the County Code. Additionally, the 30 foot by 30 foot lease area is not anticipated to impact the migrations of deer and other wildlife because the relatively small footprint of the lease area is not substantial enough to impact the way wildlife moves compared to existing conditions. Like much of the Western United States, the proposed Site is located within the Pacific Flyway. Although, no nests or nesting activity were observed during the biological assessment field survey, it is still possible that bird nests could be built within the area after the biological survey and prior to construction. Therefore, Mitigation Measure 4A is proposed to reduce impacts to nesting birds and Mitigation Measure 4C is proposed to inform workers of the Mitigation Measures. California Fish and Wildlife classifies the area has having conservation planning linkages, but due to the size of the tower lease area being only 900 square feet and the project area not being defined as an irreplaceable and essential corridor, impacts on the movement of wildlife species is anticipated to be ***less than significant with mitigation.***

4e. Nevada County has a number of local policies and ordinances that protect biological resources, including deer habitat; rare, threatened, and endangered species and their habitats; timber resources; and watercourses, wetlands, and riparian areas. According to the project biologist and a United States Geological Survey map, there are no watercourses, wetlands, or riparian areas near the vicinity of the project area. The project is within the range of a number of special status species, but none of these species have been recorded within or near the project site and there is no potential habitat to support them. The Nevada County GIS portal shows the parcel has a resident herd deer area which is not one of the major deer habitats defined by 12.04.207 of the County Code. Additionally, the 30 foot by 30 foot lease area is not anticipated to impact the migrations of deer and other wildlife because the 900 square foot facility is small relative to the low density development in the area and is unlikely to result in any modification to animal migration. No landmark oak trees or landmark oak groves exist on the project parcel so protected oaks would be affected by the proposed project. Therefore, impacts to local ordinances or policies protecting biological resources will be ***less than significant.***

4f. The project site is not part of a Habitat Conservation Plan or any other adopted conservation plans; therefore, there project would have ***no impacts*** or conflicts with adopted conservation plans.

Mitigation Measures:

To reduce potential impacts to sensitive biological resources, the following mitigation is required to be outlined on project construction plans for implementation during project construction:

Mitigation Measure 4A. Avoid Impacts to Nesting Birds. If construction occurs during the active bird nesting season (i.e., March 1 to July 31) a qualified biologist should perform a pre-construction nesting bird survey to ensure that no active bird nests are disturbed or destroyed. If, however, construction occurs before March 1 or after July 31 no mitigation would be required.

***Timing**: Prior to building/grading permit issuance and during construction*
***Reporting**: Agency approval of permits or plans*
***Responsible Agency**: Planning Department*

Mitigation Measure 4B. Avoidance of Noxious Weeds. If straw bales are used for erosion control, or if straw is broadcast over seeded areas, only certified weed-free straw or rice straw shall be utilized to minimize the risk of introducing or spreading noxious weeds such as Scotch broom, yellow star thistle, or Italian thistle. Inspect all construction equipment to ensure that they do not transport noxious weeds into the project area.

***Timing**: Prior to building permit/grading issuance and during construction*
***Reporting**: Agency approval of permits or plans*
***Responsible Agency**: Planning Department*

Mitigation Measure 4C. Provide Copies of Mitigation Measures to Contractors. To ensure the proper and timely implementation of all mitigation measures contained in this report, as well as the terms and conditions of any other required permits, the applicant shall distribute copies of these mitigation measures and any other permit requirements to the contractors prior to grading and construction.

***Timing**: Prior to building/grading permit issuance and during construction*
***Reporting**: Agency approval of permits or plans*
***Responsible Agency**: Planning Department*

Mitigation Measure 4D: Western bumblebee. The following note shall be added to all improvement/grading/construction plans:

d. Avoidance. If feasible, construction will be completed entirely outside the flying season, or between September 1 and February 28. If this mitigation measure is implemented, no other measures for western bumblebees are required.
e. Surveys. Within 1 year prior to vegetation removal and/or the initiation of construction, a qualified entomologist familiar with western bumble bee behavior and life history shall conduct surveys to determine the presence/absence of the species. Surveys should be conducted during flying season when the species is most likely to be detected above ground, between approximately March 1 to September 1. Survey results including negative findings shall be submitted to the CDFW upon completion.
f. Permitting. Should any active nests be discovered in or near proposed construction zones, the applicant shall receive a CESA Section 2080 Incidental Take Permit from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, if required.

Timing: Prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits and throughout construction.
Reporting: Approval of future grading/improvement permit

Responsible Agency: *California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Planning Department and Building Department*

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES:

Existing Setting: The subject parcel is located in Western Nevada County, with the proposed lease area being located at an elevation of approximately 2,425 feet above mean sea level. This region is known as the ethnographic-period territory of the Nisenan, also called the Southern Maidu. The Nisenan maintained permanent settlements along major rivers in the Sacramento Valley and foothills; they also periodically traveled to higher elevations.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines?		✓			A,J,22
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines?		✓			A,J,22
c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?		✓			A,J,22

Impact Discussion:

5a-c. A records search at the North Central Information Center (CSU-Sacramento) has been prepared for this project site. The results of that search indicated there are 0 recorded indigenous-period/ethnographic-period cultural resources and 0 recorded historic-period cultural resources.

Outside of the proposed project area, but within the 1/4 -mile radius, the broader search area does not contain any evidence of indigenous-period/ethnographic-period cultural resources or historic-period cultural resources. Given the extent of known cultural resources and the environmental setting, there is low potential for locating indigenous-period/ethnographic-period cultural resources within the proposed project area. This conclusion is based on the extent of known cultural resources and patterns of local history for the area.

Given the extent of known cultural routes and patterns of local history, there is moderate potential for locating historic-period cultural resources within the proposed project area. Given that there is some amount of ground disturbance required for this project, there is a potential for unanticipated discovery of cultural resources, including historic, prehistoric, and paleontological resources, during project construction. Consistent with Nevada County Code Section 12.04.206.C.5., the Conditional Use Permit is required to include the following:

Any person who, in the process of project activities, discovers any cultural resources and/or human remains within the project area shall cease from all project activities within at least 200 feet of the discovery. A qualified professional shall be notified to assess any discoveries and develop

appropriate management recommendations for cultural resource treatment. In the event that human remains are encountered, the sheriff-coroner shall be notified immediately upon discovery. In the event that Native American human remains are encountered, the Native American Heritage Commission or the most likely descendants of the buried individual(s) who are qualified to represent Native American interests shall be contacted. Specific treatment of Native American human remains shall occur consistent with State law.

Mitigation Measure 5A is proposed to require construction to be halted in the event that there is a discovery of cultural resources, including historic, prehistoric, tribal, and paleontological resources. With the inclusion of proposed Mitigation Measure 5A and 18A, impacts to these resources will be ***less than significant with mitigation***.

Mitigation Measure:

To mitigate potentially adverse cultural or historical resources impacts associated with the proposed activities on site, the following mitigation measure shall be required:

Mitigation Measure 5A: Halt Work and Contact the Appropriate Agencies if Cultural Resources are Discovered during Project Construction. All grading and construction plans shall include a Note outlining the requirements provided below to ensure that any cultural resources discovered during project construction are properly managed. These requirements including the following: All equipment operators and employees involved in any form of ground disturbance shall be trained to recognize potential archeological resources and advised of the remote possibility of encountering subsurface cultural resources during grading activities. If such resources are encountered or suspected, work within 200 feet shall be halted immediately and the Nevada County Planning Department shall be contacted. A professional archaeologist shall be retained by the developer and consulted to access any discoveries and develop appropriate management recommendations for archaeological resource treatment. If bones are encountered and appear to be human, California Law requires that the Nevada County Coroner be contacted. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission, and the procedures outlined in California Environmental Quality Act Sections 15064.5(d) and (e) shall be followed. If Native American resources are involved, Native American Organizations and individuals recognized by the County shall be notified and consulted about any plans for treatment.
Timing*: Prior to building permit/grading issuance and during construction*
Reporting*: Agency approval of permits or plans*
Responsible Agency*: Planning Department*

6. ENERGY:

Existing Setting:

The project site is developed with a church, a parking lot, and two sheds. There is a utility pole for electrical service south of the project parcel, located along McCourtney Road.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during			✓		A

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
construction or operation?					
b. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?				✓	A,D

Impact Discussion:

6a. The proposed telecommunication tower and equipment facility would be unmanned. Technicians would only be on-site for testing and maintenance of equipment. A 30-kilowatt stand-by generator would be installed for emergency use during power outages. The development area is fairly small, at about 900 square feet plus the driveway and utility trenching. It is not anticipated that this will be an energy intensive construction project. The project does not require energy resources beyond what is required to operate the telecommunications tower and facility. The site would be powered by electric service that is already established in the area. Due to the scale of the project, the use of energy resources would not be excessive and therefore, the project would have a ***less than significant impact.***

6b. The telecommunications tower and equipment facility would not conflict with any state or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Building permits would be required in order to construct the project. As part of the building permit review, all equipment and structures would be required to meet energy standards identified in the California Building Code. Likewise, the project would not obstruct or prevent plans for renewable energy or efficiency. Therefore, the project would have ***no impact*** to state or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

Mitigation:

None Required.

7. GEOLOGY / SOILS:

Existing Setting: The proposed lease area and subject monopine lie at a ground elevation of approximately 2,425 feet above mean sea level (AMSL). The lease area is in mostly flat mowed grassland near an existing church.

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act was adopted in 1972 to prevent the construction of buildings in areas where active faults have surface expression. Ground or fault rupture is generally defined as the displacement that occurs along the surface of a fault during an earthquake. The project site is not within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone and is approximately 0.5 miles west of a pre-quaternary fault, which is a fault that is older than 1.6 million years or a fault without recognized Quaternary displacement. The project site is located within Seismic Zone I-II—the Low Intensity Zone of the Modified Mercalli scale—meaning the site has a low risk for strong ground motion (Nevada County, 1991). Very high landslide hazards are not identified on the project parcel by the California Geological Survey.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey, the project area of the parcel is 100% Sites very stony loam, 2 to 15 percent slopes. On Sites very stony loam (2-15%), runoff is medium and hazard of erosion is slight to moderate.

Would the proposed project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including risk of loss, injury or death involving: i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42. ii. Strong seismic ground shaking? iii. Seismic-related ground failure including liquefaction? iv. Landslides?			✓		A,L,12,16 ,31, 32
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?			✓		A, D, 11, 26
c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?			✓		D,L,12,16 , 32
d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?			✓		A,D, 11, 26
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?				✓	A
f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?		✓			A,L

Impact Discussion:

7a-d. The topography of the lease area and dirt access road is generally flat. Development of the lease area would not require extensive grading and no improvements are required for the existing dirt access to the lease area. Project disturbance would be less than one acre, not triggering the requirement for a Dust Control Plan from NSAQMD. Project development would require issuance of a County Building Permit, which would require all structures, including the tower and the equipment cabinets, to comply with all California Building Code (CBC) and Nevada County Land Use and Development Code requirements to ensure protection during seismic events and would require typical erosion and dust control measures.

As part of the project improvements and site inspections by the Building Department, soil compaction testing would be required for any grading at the site where the telecommunications tower would be installed. Therefore, as required by the Nevada County Building Department and General Plan Policy GH – 10.2.2, the project would be conditioned to require the submission of 2 sets of wet stamped/signed final geotechnical evaluation reports at the time of the submission of the Building Permit. The purpose of the geotechnical report is to ensure that the proposed project complies with all soil stability requirements of the California Building Code. Drainage calculations to ensure offsite drainage is not impacted would also be required at the time of building permit submittal. Due to the lease area being generally flat, the erosion hazard is anticipated to be slight and no expansive soils are noted in the soil descriptions of the 1993 Nevada County Area Soil Survey. As proposed, it is anticipated that the monopine and supporting structure would meet all structural design requirements of the California Building Code and the Nevada County Land Use and Development Code. Furthermore, the project area is not in an area that is mapped with high landslide activity (California Geological Survey Map, Sheet 58, 2011). Therefore, given the above condition of approval requirement it is anticipated that project impacts to geologic and seismic hazards would be ***less than significant***.

No specific potential hazards have been identified for the project site. According to the California Department of Conservation (2010), Nevada County is not in an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. There may be some minor ground vibrations caused by the construction activities at the project site, but ground shaking is not expected to be substantial. Due to the project site and standard building permit requirements, impacts associated with unstable earth conditions are expected to be ***less than significant***.

7e. The proposed facility would be unstaffed with only infrequent short maintenance visits by technicians; it does not include a restroom or other facility requiring wastewater disposal; therefore, there would be ***no impact*** related to wastewater disposal.

7f. There are no known paleontological resources or unique geological features in or around the project site. Being that there will be ground disturbance for grading and the installation of the telecommunications tower and equipment facility, Mitigation Measure 5A would require work to halt in the event that there is an unanticipated discovery of paleontological resources. Direct or indirect damage to paleontological resources is anticipated to be ***less than significant with mitigation.***

Mitigation:
See Mitigation Measure 5A.

8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS:

Existing Setting: Global climate change refers to changes in average climatic conditions on the earth as a whole, including temperature, wind patterns, precipitation and storms. Global warming, a related concept, is the observed increase in the average temperature of the earth's surface and atmosphere. One identified cause of global warming is an increase of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere. Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are those gases that trap heat in the atmosphere. GHGs are emitted by natural and industrial processes, and the accumulation of GHGs in the atmosphere regulates the earth's temperature. Events and activities, such as the industrial revolution and the increased combustion of fossil fuels (e.g. gasoline, diesel, coal, etc.), are believed to have contributed to the increase in atmospheric levels of GHGs. GHGs that are regulated by the State and/or EPA are carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6) and

nitrous oxide (NO_2). Emission inventories typically focus on GHG emissions due to human activities only, and compile data to estimate emissions from industrial, commercial, transportation, domestic, forestry, and agriculture activities. CO_2 emissions are largely from fossil fuel combustion and electricity generation. Agriculture is a major source of both methane and NO_2, with additional methane coming primarily from landfills. Most HFC emissions come from refrigerants, solvents, propellant agents, and industrial processes, and persist in the atmosphere for longer periods of time and have greater effects at lower concentrations compared to CO_2. Global warming adversely impacts air quality, water supply, ecosystem balance, sea level rise (flooding), fire hazards, and causes an increase in health-related problems.

To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, the California Legislature enacted AB 32 (Núñez and Pavley), which is referred to as the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (September 27, 2006). AB 32 provided initial direction on creating a comprehensive, multiyear program to limit California's GHG emissions at 1990 levels by 2020, and initiate the transformations required to achieve the state's long-range climate objectives. In April 2015, the California Air Resources Board issued Executive Order B-30-15 to set an interim target goal of reducing GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 to keep California on its trajectory toward meeting or exceeding the long-term goal of reducing GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 as set forth in EO S-3-05. SB 32, enacted in 2016, codified the 2030 the emissions reduction goal of CARB Executive Order B-30-15.

In addition, the Governor signed Senate Bill 97 in 2007 directing the California Office of Planning and Research to develop guidelines for the analysis and mitigation of the effects of greenhouse gas emissions and mandating that GHG impacts be evaluated in CEQA documents. CEQA Guidelines Amendments for GHG Emissions were adopted by OPR on December 30, 2009. The Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD) has prepared a guidance document, *Guidelines for Assessing Air Quality Impacts of Land Use Projects,* which includes mitigations for general air quality impacts that can be used to mitigate GHG emissions when necessary. Continuing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is critical for the protection of all areas of the state, but especially for the state's most disadvantaged communities, as those communities are affected first, and, most frequently, by the adverse impacts of climate change, including an increased frequency of extreme weather events, such as drought, heat, and flooding.

Would the proposed project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?			✓		A,F,20
b. Conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?			✓		A,F,20

Impact Discussion:

8a-b. California is divided geographically into air basins for the purpose of managing the air resources of the State on a regional basis. An air basin generally has similar meteorological and geographic conditions throughout. Nevada County and Placer County are both within the Mountain Counties Air Basin. Nevada County is within the jurisdiction of the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District, but the NSAQMD has not adopted thresholds of significance for greenhouse gases. However, Placer County Air Pollution Control District has adopted thresholds of significance for

greenhouse gases. Due to greenhouse gas emissions being not only a regional but also a global concern, and the similarities between the neighboring air districts, it was determined that the Placer APCD thresholds are relevant standard for the determination of significance.

The California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) does not provide adequate inputs for unstaffed communication tower facilities. Use of default inputs generally results in a gross overestimation of emissions. For this reason and because the project is relatively small and would result in a very short construction period with very few operational vehicle trips, CalEEMod was not used for this study.

Carbon dioxide (CO2) is the main component of greenhouse gases. Placer County AQMD's bright-line CO^2 equivalent threshold is equivalent to a project size of approximately 646 single-family dwelling units, or a 323,955 square feet commercial building. The proposed project facility would be unstaffed and would not contribute substantially to more vehicle trips than existing conditions. The project proposes the installation of an SD030 30 kW diesel backup generator to power the facility if electrical service is lost. The proposed generator is an EPA certified stationary emergency generator that would only be used for testing, maintenance, and emergencies. As part of the project Conditions of Approval, any backup generators would be required to meet permit requirements by the Nevada County Building Department and the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District, and would also be designated for limited use. Given the limited use of EPA certified generator and intermittent visits by service vehicles, greenhouse gas emissions associated with the 150-foot tall monopine would be ***less than significant*** because the project is substantially less intensive than the Placer County AQMD bright-line CO^2 equivalent threshold.

Mitigation Measures:

None required

9. HAZARDS / HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:

Existing Setting: The property is not within or adjacent to any hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (Department of Toxic Substances Control 2010). The project area is in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone as designated by Cal-Fire. The project is not located within ¼ mile of an existing or proposed school.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?			✓		C, 29
b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?			✓		C, 29
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle				✓	C,L

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?					
d. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				✓	C,25
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 for people residing or working in the project area?		✓			A,L
f. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				✓	H,M
g. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?			✓		A,M

Impact Discussion

9a-b. The standby generator would require the transport of diesel fuel to a 210-gallon storage tank and the storage of 2.34 gallons for Sulfuric Acid for lead-acid batteries. Hazardous material storage must comply with the California Health and Safety Code Chapter 6.95, and the applicant would have to file a chemical business plan and inventory with the Nevada County Environmental Health Department within 30 days of triggering threshold quantities. Consistent with Nevada County Department of Environmental Health requirements, the applicant would have to apply for and obtain a permit for the storage of hazardous materials from the Nevada County Department of Environmental Health, Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA). The operator would be required to secure and annually renew the permit for this facility within 30 days of becoming subject to applicable regulations. The applicant would be required to adhere to all applicable codes and regulations regarding the storage of hazardous materials and the generation of hazardous wastes set forth in California Health and Safety Code Section 25500 – 25519 and 25100 – 25258.2 including the electronic reporting requirement to the California Environmental Reporting System.

Small quantities of hazardous materials would be stored, used, and handled during construction. The hazardous materials anticipated for use are small volumes of petroleum hydrocarbons and their derivatives (e.g., gasoline, oils, lubricants, and solvents) required to operate the construction equipment. These relatively small quantities would be below reporting requirements for hazardous materials business plans and would not pose substantial public health and safety hazards through release of emissions or risk of upset. Safety risks to construction workers for

the proposed project would be reduced by compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is the government agency responsible for the authorization and licensing of facilities such as cellular towers that generate RF radiation. Radiofrequency (RF) radiation emanates from antenna on cellular towers and is generated by the movement of electrical charges in the antenna. The energy levels it generates are not great enough to ionize, or break down, atoms and molecules, so it is known as "non-ionizing" radiation. For guidance in health and safety issues related to RF radiation, the FCC relies on other agencies and organizations for guidance, including the EPA, FDA, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and OSHA, which have all been involved in monitoring and investigating issues related to RF exposure. The FCC has developed and adopted guidelines for human exposure to RF radiation using the recommendations of the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements (NCRP) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), with the support of the EPA, FDA, OSHA and NIOSH. According to the FCC, both the NCRP exposure criteria and the IEEE standard were developed by expert scientists and engineers after extensive reviews of the scientific literature related to RF biological effects. The exposure guidelines are based on thresholds for known adverse effects, and they incorporate wide safety margins. Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) the FCC is required to evaluate transmitters and facilities for significant impacts on the environment, including human exposure to RF radiation. When an application is submitted to the FCC for construction or modification of a transmitting facility or renewal of a license, the FCC evaluates it for compliance with the RF exposure guidelines, which were previously evaluated under NEPA. Failure to show compliance with the FCC's RF exposure guidelines in the application process could lead to the additional environmental review and eventual rejection of an application. The Radio Frequency – Electromagnetic Fields Exposure Report prepared by Dtech communications, predicted that for a person standing in accessible areas on the ground, the proposed Verizon site has exposure levels below the FCC's most stringent General Population MPE limits. For an elevation of 30 feet, the report also shows the FCC General Population MPE limits will not be exceeded. At 137 feet above ground level, close to the height of the antennas, the FCC General Population MPE limits are exceeded, but access to this height is not feasible for a member of the general public. If additional carriers were to seek co-location on this tower, they would be subject to the FCC permitting and compliance.

Lastly, it should be noted that Section 704 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 states that, "No State or local government or instrumentality thereof may regulate the placement, construction, and modification of personal wireless service facilities on the basis of the environmental effects of radio frequency emissions to the extent that such facilities comply with the Commission's regulations concerning such emissions". Because the proposed facility would operate under federally mandated limits on RF radiation for cellular towers and is regulated by the FCC in this respect, the County may not regulate the placement or construction of this facility based on the RF emissions. Therefore, impacts related to hazardous materials released from or generated by this project are anticipated to be ***less than significant.***

9c. The project site is not located adjacent to, or within a quarter mile of, any schools. Therefore, the project would have ***no impact*** relative to the handing or emitting of hazardous materials in close proximity to a school.

9d. The cellular telecommunication tower facility is not proposed on or near a property that is on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5; there

would be ***no impact*** relative to creating a significant hazard to the public or the environment due to the project site**.**

9e. The project site is not located within an airport land use plan and is approximately 2.6 miles from the compatibility zone of the nearest airport –the Nevada County Airport. While it is not anticipated that the FAA would consider the proposed monopine an obstruction, the requirement of the submission of the FAA's findings will ensure that the proposed project would not result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area or for operating aircraft and would result in the project impacts being ***less than significant with mitigation*** which is proposed herein as Mitigation Measure 9A.

9f. There is currently no adopted emergency response plan for the project area. However, Nevada County has a Wildfire Evacuation Plan, a Basic Emergency Plan, and a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. It is not anticipated that these plans would be adversely impacted by the communication tower. It is likely that increased cellular coverage would help with the issuance of emergency alerts. Due to the project being an unstaffed cellular tower facility that would not have full-time occupants and the lack of an adopted emergency response plan in the area, the project would not impair implementation of, or physically interfere with, adopted emergency response plans, and ***no impact*** on any emergency response plan would occur as a result of the project.

9g. The County Office of the Fire Marshal and Nevada County Consolidated Fire District reviewed the project and did not express any concerns about the construction and operation of the telecommunication tower. The Office of the Fire Marshal is requiring as a Condition of Approval that the applicant provide a 50-foot radius of defensible space around all communication equipment and the tower itself. This defensible space will be required to be verified though an inspection. Nevada County Consolidated Fire District is requiring that a 2A:20BC fire extinguisher is kept within the lease area and is requiring the clearance of all hazardous vegetation from around the facility to 100 feet out. Due to the tower being unmanned and the vegetation clearance, the proposed project would not expose people or structures to wildland fires, and therefore would have a ***less than significant impact***.

Mitigation Measures:
To mitigate potentially adverse impacts associated with hazards and hazardous materials, the following mitigation measures shall be required:

Mitigation Measure 9A: **Submission of a 7460-1 Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration application.**
Prior to issuance of the Building Permit or Grading Permit, the applicant shall submit a 7460-1 application for approval from the Federal Aviation Administration of the evaluation of the proposed wireless telecommunication facility, which is in compliance with Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 77. The applicant shall demonstrate that the proposed monopine has been evaluated by the Federal Aviation Administration through the submission of the results of the evaluation to the Planning Department.
Timing*: Prior to building permit/grading issuance*
Reporting*: Agency approval of permits or plans*
Responsible Agency*: Planning Department*

10. HYDROLOGY / WATER QUALITY:

Existing Setting: The United States Geological Survey Map identifies the Allison Ranch Canal on the southern edge of the parcel. The Trileaf/Beedy Environmental Consulting biological inventory determined that no Waters of the United Sates or Wetlands, as they are defined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers exist within the project area. There is a pond about 450 feet to the north of the proposed project area.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?			✓		A,C,I,20
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?				✓	C
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would: i. result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; ii. substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite; iii. create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or iv. impede or redirect flood flows?			✓		A,D,9,19
d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?				✓	A,9
e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?				✓	A,D,19

Impact Discussion:

10a,c. The project, as proposed is consistent with all water quality standards and waste discharge requirements. Grading for the project is minimal and will not significantly modify topography nor affect existing drainage patterns. The proposed project will include about 130 square feet of

concrete pads for equipment and the rest of the surfacing within the 900 square foot lease area will be gravel. This addition of 130 square feet of impervious surface is not anticipated to alter the existing drainage pattern of the site area due to the relatively minor size. Access to the proposed site would come from an existing dirt road which is located off the existing church parking lot which is adjacent to McCourtney Road. The Nevada County Development of Public Works reviewed the project and determined that road or driveway improvements are not necessary.

Project improvements would not substantially increase the overall surface water runoff. The project Conditions of Approval from the Building Department require complete erosion control, drainage, construction, and utility plans to be submitted for review at time of building/grading permit submittal. All additional drainage caused by the project will be required to be kept on site, without causing additional net stormwater runoff or concentrated flows that that would impact off-site properties. The drainage design is required to be designed and certified by a registered civil engineer, and it will be reviewed by the Building Department prior to improvement permits being issued. Additionally, as noted in Section 6 *Geology/Soils*, all projects must implement erosion control during construction under Land Use and Development Code Section V, Article 13. With implementation of the standard requirements, the project would not violate any water quality standards or substantially degrade water quality. Therefore, impacts related to drainage, erosion, and mudflow would be ***less than significant***.

10b. The proposed communication tower facility is unstaffed and does not have any water need. The proposed project will therefore have ***no impact*** on the existing wells on this or any of the adjacent parcels.

10d,e. There is no flood hazard or designated flood zone on the project site. Furthermore, the project is not in a tsunami or seiche zone, and it does not include housing, or conflict with or obstruct the implementation of a water quality control plan. It does not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam. Therefore, there would be ***no impact*** associated with the placement of the telecommunications tower and equipment facility on flood zones or water quality control plans.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

11. LAND USE / PLANNING:

Existing Setting: The proposed wireless telecommunication facility is proposed in Western Nevada County on a 4.01-acre parcel with a Residential Agriculture (RA-3) zoning designation. The property has a 3-acre minimum parcel size and an Estate (EST) General Plan designation.

The nearest residence would be located on the adjacent parcel to the west and would be located approximately 170 feet from the proposed communication facility lease area. The adjacent parcels are zoned Residential Agriculture with minimum parcel sizes of 3-acres (RA-3) and have General Plan designations of Estate (EST). Adjacent parcels and several parcels in the area range in size from approximately 0.78 acres to approximately 6.56 acres and contain single-family residences and/or agricultural components.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Physically divide an established community?				✓	A,17,18
b. Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?			✓		A,B,18,19

Impact Discussion:

11a. The project is located in a rural area and it would not physically divide an established community. The project is proposed on a 4.01-acre parcel with a total lease area of 900 square feet for the telecommunications tower site and facility; therefore, there would be ***no impact*** to the physical divide of a community from this project.

11b. The Communication tower is proposed within a Residential Agriculture zoning district and communication towers are an allowable use with an approved Use Permit in RA zoning districts. The development of the tower and facility would not interfere with future agricultural or residential uses on the site or the surrounding area. As discussed in the Aesthetics section of this Initial Study, solid fencing would be required which would screen mechanical equipment, as required by Section 12.04.111 of the Nevada County Code. The tower would be disguised as a pine tree meeting the camouflaging requirements of Section 12.03.080 of the Nevada County Code.

The proposed facility would be approximately 150 feet from the nearest property lines (east and west) and it would be over 200 feet from the north and south property lines, which provides for a large buffer to other land uses. The proposed tower is consistent with all required setbacks of the RA zoning district. There are no adopted area plans for the project location. The project supports Nevada County General Plan Policy 1.7.18 which seeks to "encourage and support a sustainable and technologically current high-speed broadband transmission system…". Potential conflicts with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations that could result in physical impacts are identified within this Initial Study and are found to be less than significant. Therefore, impacts related to land use policy inconsistency and land use incompatibility are considered ***less than significant***.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

12. MINERAL RESOURCES:

Existing Setting: The project area is not mapped within a significant Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ) or area of known valuable mineral deposits (*Nevada County 2017*).

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
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?				✓	A,L,1
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?				✓	A,L,1

Impact Discussion:

12a-b. The proposed project is not mapped within a known mineral resource area or MRZ and would not change existing or potential land uses on the project site, therefore there would be ***no impact*** to mineral resources.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

13. NOISE:

Existing Setting: The project site is located within an Estate General Plan land use designation and is zoned Residential Agriculture (RA-3). Adjacent land uses are primarily developed with single family homes and ranch/agricultural uses. The closest residence would be located west on the adjacent parcel at approximately 170 feet from the proposed lease area. Other than natural noises, ambient noise sources include the occasional vehicle traveling past. Nevada County Code Section 12.04.070 establishes noise standards for Residential land use categories at the following average levels:

- 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. – 55 dB Leq and maximum 75 dB Lmax
- 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. – 50 dB Leq and 65 dB Lmax
- 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. – 45 dB Leq and 60 dB Lmax

Nevada County Code 12.04.070.D.8., states that the above standards shall not apply to those activities associated with the actual construction of a project or to those projects with the provision of emergency services or functions.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
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?		✓			A,17,18, 24, 34
b. Generation of excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels?		✓			A,18,24

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
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.				✓	A,18,24

Impact Discussion:

13a. The project as proposed would incorporate a 30kW emergency back-up generator for use during extended power outages. The noise of the proposed generator was estimated at the nearest property line using the manufacturer noise specification sheet and an online noise calculator. The nearest property line from the generator is 150 feet away. At 23 feet away, the Generac sound data show the generator within a level 2 sound attenuated enclosure will emit 62 decibels at full-load towards that property line based on how the generator is oriented on the site plan. According to the Omni Distance Attenuation Calculator, this would result in 45.71 decibels at the western property line. This would exceed the County nighttime (10 pm – 7 am) noise energy equivalent level, defined as the average sound level on the basis of sound energy, of 45 decibels. None of the other county noise standards would be exceeded.

However, the generator would only be used in the case of an emergency power outage. Pursuant to Section 12.04.070 of the Nevada County Code, the noise standards do not apply to those activities associated with the actual construction of a project or to those projects associated with the provision of emergency services or functions. Communication is important during an emergency and the use of a generator to maintain the operation of the communication tower during an emergency is considered to be part of an emergency function. Mitigation Measure 13B is proposed to require that the generator be installed with a Level 2 sound enclosure due to the analysis of this section being based on sound data for a generator within a level 2 attenuated enclosure, which was provided by the applicant.

It is assumed that the generator will be maintained and tested weekly or bi-weekly. Due to the noise of the generator exceeding the nighttime noise standards, Mitigation Measure 13C is proposed to require that testing and maintenance only occurs during daytime hours. Therefore, the noise impacts for this project, including potential additional carriers for co-location, would be ***less than significant with mitigation.***

13b. Construction noise and any potential ground vibration during the construction activities could impact nearby residents. This impact would be less than significant with mitigation as recommended in Mitigation Measure 13A, below, which limits construction activity hours to between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. After the completion of the tower construction project, the ongoing operation of the facility would be less than significant as noted above. With Mitigation Measure 13A, any construction noise impacts would be reduced to a level that is ***less than significant with mitigation.***

13c. The proposed project is an unstaffed communication facility located 2.6-miles from the closest airport, the Nevada County Airport. The site is unmanned and not within the vicinity of an airport.

Therefore, the project would not expose any future occupants to excessive airport noise levels. There would be ***no impacts*** related to airport noise.

Mitigation Measure:

To reduce potentially significant impacts associated with construction noise, the following mitigation measure shall be noted on project plans:

Mitigation Measure 13A: Limit construction activities to reduce noise impacts. Hours of operation for construction activities shall be limited to the hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. These limited hours of operation shall be noted on project plans, which shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Department prior to permit issuance.
Timing*: Prior to building permit/grading issuance and during construction*
Reporting*: Agency approval of permits or plans*
Responsible Agency*: Planning Department*

Mitigation Measure 13B: Installation of Sound Enclosure. The generator shall be configured with a Level 2 sound attenuated enclosure. This requirement shall be noted on the site plan and documentation verifying the Level 2 sound attenuated enclosure shall be provided to the Planning Department prior to final of the building permit.
Timing: Prior to building permit issuance/final
Reporting: Agency approval of permits or plans
Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Mitigation Measure 13C: Prohibition of Nighttime Generator Testing. The generator shall only be operated for non-emergency functions such and maintenance and testing between the hours of 9 AM and 2 PM. If the generator is programmed to run automatically, the start-up schedule shall be provided to the Planning Department. This requirement shall be noted on the site plan.
Timing: Prior to building permit issuance/final
Reporting: Agency approval of permits or plans
Responsible Agency: Planning Department

14. POPULATION / HOUSING:

Existing Setting: The subject property is currently developed with a church, an associated parking lot, and two sheds. The project site is zoned RA-3. Residential uses are allowed but at one unit per 3 acres for new subdivisions.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Induce substantial 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)?				✓	A,17,18
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				✓	A,17,18

Impact Discussion:

14a,b. The proposed project would continue the same general type of land use currently developed and designated for this site and would not result in population growth or displacement of housing or people. Therefore, the proposed project would have ***no impact*** related to these issues.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

15. PUBLIC SERVICES:

Existing Setting: The following public services are provided to this site:

Fire: Nevada County Consolidated provides fire protection services to this site.
Police: The Nevada County Sheriff provides law enforcement services.
Schools: Nevada Joint Union High School District and Grass Valley School District provides school services to this site.
Parks: Grass Valley and Nevada City provides recreation facilities and opportunities.
Water & Sewer: There is no public water or sewer service available in this area.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of or 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 following the public services:					
1) Fire protection?			✓		H,M
2) Police protection?				✓	A
3) Schools?				✓	A,L,P
4) Parks?				✓	A,L
5) Other public services or facilities?				✓	A,B,L

Impact Discussion:

15a.1 The project is not anticipated to have significant impacts on fire protection services. It would include the installation of electrical services to the project site, equipment, and batteries. As discussed in Section 9 *Hazards/Hazardous Materials,* defensible space would be required to reduce fire fuels around the project site. There would not be any alterations required for fire protection facilities and no new facilities are proposed. It is likely that the additional cellular coverage provided by the tower would increase capacity to issue emergency alerts to citizens. Given that there could be a possible need for fire protection services, but no need for alteration or addition of fire facilities, the impact is considered to be ***less than significant***.

15a.2-5 The project facility is unstaffed and not anticipated to impact law enforcement services, schools, public recreational facilities, or public services. As noted in Section 14 *Population/Housing* above, the project would not result in a permanent or substantial temporary increase in population that could impact these services. The project would not impact sewer services or water services because the project does not require these services. The shelter and tower would utilize PG&E electrical service. Utility lines would be trenched and connected to an existing utility pole on the northern side of McCourtney Road. No comments have been received from PG&E regarding this project. ***No impacts*** are anticipated for police protection, schools, parks, and public utility services.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

16. RECREATION:

Existing Setting: The Nevada County Fairground is to the east of the proposed project site. There are no other recreation facilities in the project vicinity. The project is located in the Grass Valley/Nevada City Recreation benefit zone.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
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?				✓	A
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?				✓	A

Impact Discussion:

16a,b. The project would not adversely affect recreation facilities because the facility would be unstaffed and would therefore not create demand for recreational services or increase the use of existing recreational facilities. Therefore, the proposed project would have ***no impact*** related to these issues.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

17. TRANSPORTATION / CIRCULATION:

Existing Setting: The project parcel is located off of McCourtney Road, which is maintained by the County of Nevada and classified as a major collector. A collector is a street connecting

arterials to local roads. The proposed communication tower would be accessed by a 50 foot long dirt access within a 15 foot wide easement.

Would the proposed project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?				✓	A,B
b. Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?			✓		A,B
c. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?			✓		A,B
d. Result in inadequate emergency access?			✓		A,B,H,M

Impact Discussion:

17a. The site would not conflict with any policies regarding transit, roadway, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities. The Nevada County Connects has a bus route that passes by the parcel of the proposed project, but the unmanned communication tower would not impact the bus route. The There are no other existing transit service are available in this area and would not be affected by the project. The project would have ***no impact*** regarding these policies or services.

17b. CEQA Section 15064.3 - Determining the Significance of Transportation Impacts describes specific considerations for evaluating a project's transportation impacts. Generally, vehicle miles traveled is the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. For the purposes of this section, "vehicle miles traveled" refers to the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project.

According to the Senate Bill 743 Vehicle Miles Traveled Implementation, adopted by the Nevada County Transportation Commission, a project's or plan's VMT impact may be considered less than significant if "the project or plan total weekday VMT per service population is equal to or less than "X" percent below the subarea mean under baseline conditions" and "the project or plan is consistent with the jurisdiction's general plan and the Nevada County Regional Transportation Plan."

A specific reduction "X" below subarea baseline VMT may be selected by each jurisdiction based on key factors such as the setting (as noted in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(b)(1)), evidence related to VMT performance, and policies related to VMT reduction.)

However, analysis of smaller, less complex projects can be simplified by using screening criteria. The Office of Planning and Research suggests that screening thresholds may be used to identify when land use projects should be expected to cause a less than-significant impact without conducting a detailed study. Screening thresholds identified by the Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) Senate Bill 743 Vehicle Miles Traveled Implementation document include:

- Projects in western Nevada County consistent with a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) or General Plan that generate less than 630 VMT per day. This value is based on the CEQA exemptions allowed for projects up to 10,000 square feet as described in CEQA Guidelines

Sections 15303. The specific VMT estimate relies on the vehicle trip generation rate contained in the OPR Technical Advisory for small project screening and average vehicle trip lengths for western Nevada County using the travel forecasting model.

A technician for each carrier is expected to travel to the site once a month for service. If three more carriers are added to the site, the most vehicle miles traveled would be for four roundtrip traffic trips to the site per month, which is substantially below the screening criteria of 630 VMT per day. Additional vehicle trips during the construction phase of the tower are anticipated as well, but these impacts will be temporary and unlikely to exceed the screening criteria.

The Nevada County Department of Public Works reviewed the project and did not require a traffic study because it determined the project is unlikely to create substantial draw and thus, would only have minimal impacts related to VMT's. Further, the project is consistent with the General Plan and Zoning intensities for the project site and surrounding area. Thus, given the above discussions, the proposed project is anticipated to have ***less than a significant impact*** on CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b).

17c,d The proposed project would take access from a private dirt road at the north end of an existing parking lot that is off of McCourtney Road. McCourtney Road is county-maintained mileage and the Department of Public Works determined that the dirt access road to the communication facility does not require improvements. The project will not impact McCourtney Road and any work within the Right of Way would require and encroachment permit from the Department of Public Works. The Office of the Fire Marshal and Nevada County Consolidated Fire District reviewed the proposed project and did not require any access or road improvements, but did require vegetation clearance for defensible space. Due to the limited traffic generated by the project and the access that is deemed adequate with the fuel management, impacts to traffic hazards and emergency access are anticipated to be ***less than significant***.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES:

Existing Setting: Assembly Bill 52 (Chapter 532, Statutes 2014) required an update to Appendix G (Initial Study Checklist) of the CEQA Guidelines to include questions related to impacts to tribal cultural resources. Changes to Appendix G were approved by the Office of Administrative Law on September 27, 2016. Tribal Cultural Resources include sites, features, and places with cultural or sacred value to California Native American Tribes. This region is known as the ethnographic-period territory of the Nisenan, also called the Southern Maidu. The Nisenan maintained permanent settlements along major rivers in the Sacramento Valley and foothills; they also periodically traveled to higher elevations. The proposed project area is situated in the Sierra Nevada foothills and is not near any intermittent streams or waterbodies.

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a) 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: i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or		✓			J,22
ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.		✓			J,22

Impact Discussion:

18a.i-ii Nevada County Staff sent an invitation to the United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC), the Shingle Springs Bank of Miwok Indians, T'si Akim Maidu, and the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe to begin AB 52 consultation for the project because the monopine cellular telecommunication facility is located in the Western portion of Nevada County. A letter from the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians stating they are unaware of any known cultural resources on the site was provided. No correspondence has been received from the other tribes at this time.

As discussed in Section 5, a records search of the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) was conducted by the North Central Information Center (NCIC) on December 8, 2023, for cultural resource site records and survey reports within a quarter of a mile radius of the proposed project area. The results of that search indicated there are 0 recorded indigenous-period/ethnographic-period cultural resources and 0 recorded historic-period cultural resources on the project site or within a quarter mile of the project site. The North Central Information Center determined there is low potential for locating indigenous-period/ethnographic-period cultural resources within the proposed project area. It is also determined that there is moderate potential for locating historic period cultural resources.

Therefore, Mitigation Measure 5A is proposed that would require construction to be halted and local tribes to be notified in the event that there is a discovery of cultural resources, including historic, prehistoric, tribal, and paleontological resources. Additionally, Mitigation Measure 18A is proposed which would require that a Tribal Representative from a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area be immediately notified if any suspected Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs) are discovered during ground disturbing construction activities. All work shall cease within 100 feet of the find, or an agreed upon distance based on the project area and nature of the find. With these protections in place, impacts to Tribal Cultural Resources would be ***less than significant with mitigation***.

Mitigation Measures:

To offset potentially adverse impacts related to Tribal Cultural Resources, the following mitigation measure shall be required:

Mitigation Measure 18A: Unanticipated Tribal Cultural Resources. The following mitigation measures shall be required and shall be included as notes on all future site plans: If any suspected Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs) are discovered during ground disturbing construction activities, all work shall cease within 100 feet of the find, or an agreed upon distance based on the project area and nature of the find. A Tribal Representative from a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with a geographic area shall be immediately notified and shall determine if the find is a TCR (PRC §21074). The Tribal Representative will make recommendations for further evaluation and treatment as necessary.

When avoidance is infeasible, preservation in place is the preferred option for mitigation of TCRs under CEQA and UAIC protocols, and every effort shall be made to preserve the resources in place, including through project redesign, if feasible. Culturally appropriate treatment may be, but is not limited to, processing materials for reburial, minimizing handling of cultural objects, leaving objects in place within the landscape, or returning objects to a location within the project area where they will not be subject to future impacts. Permanent curation of TCRs will not take place unless approved in writing by UAIC or by the California Native American Tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area.

The contractor shall implement any measures deemed by the CEQA lead agency to be necessary and feasible to preserve in place, avoid, or minimize impacts to the resource, including, but not limited to, facilitating the appropriate tribal treatment of the find, as necessary. Treatment that preserves or restores the cultural character and integrity of a TCR may include Tribal Monitoring, culturally appropriate recovery of cultural objects, and reburial of cultural objects or cultural soil. Work at the discovery location cannot resume until all necessary investigation and evaluation of the discovery under the requirements of the CEQA, including AB52, have been satisfied.

Timing: *Prior to Issuance of grading/improvement/building permits and throughout construction*
Reporting: *Planning Department Approval of Grading and Construction Permits*
Responsible Agency: *Planning Department*

19. UTILITIES / SERVICE SYSTEMS:

Existing Setting: The lease area is currently undeveloped and not served by any utilities. The existing church on the parcel is served by a well and septic system. Power is provided by Pacific Gas and Electric.

Would the proposed project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
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?			✓		A,D
b. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years?				✓	A
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?				✓	C
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?		✓			A,C
e. Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				✓	B

Impact Discussion:

19a. The proposed project would not create a need for new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, storm water drainage, or natural gas facilities. Any additional storm drainage runoff generated by the project would be required to be kept on site and would not affect any off-site drainage facilities. The project would require extensions of electrical power and communication systems to the equipment facility. Electrical and conduit would be brought to the project site from an existing utility pole on the northern side of McCourtney Road through a utility easement. This electrical and conduit expansion would involve about 388 feet of trenching so that the conduit can be installed underground. The project itself is an extension of communication systems and all impacts from that extension are evaluated within this Initial Study. Therefore, there would be a ***less than significant impact*** related to these issues.

19b,c. The project would not require water or wastewater treatment service and therefore, would have ***no impact*** on sufficient water supplies or adequate wastewater treatment capacity to serve the project.

19d. The operational phase of the proposed project would not result in an increase of solid waste. While not anticipated, construction activities, could potentially produce solid waste in the form of construction materials or industrial waste like glues, paint, and petroleum products, resulting in potentially adverse landfill and solid waste disposal impacts with the primary lease area construction and/or the development of the future lease area. Impacts would be ***less than***

significant with mitigation as identified in Mitigation Measure 19A below which requires proper disposal of waste not accepted by the regional landfill.

19e. The development and operation of the proposed cellular telecommunication facility is not anticipated to result in significant amounts of solid waste; however, any waste generated would be required to comply with federal, state and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste and therefore, project related impacts to these regulations are anticipated to have ***no impact***.

Mitigation Measures:

To offset potentially adverse impacts related to construction waste, this mitigation measure shall be included as a note on all construction plans, which shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Department prior to permit issuance.

Mitigation Measure 19A: Appropriately Dispose of Vegetative and Toxic Waste. Neither stumps nor industrial toxic waste (petroleum and other chemical products) are accepted at the McCourtney Road transfer station and if encountered, shall be properly disposed of in compliance with existing regulations and facilities.
Timing: *Prior to building permit issuance and during construction*
Reporting: *Agency approval of permits or plans*
Responsible Agency: *Nevada County Planning Department*

20. WILDFIRE:

Existing Setting: The project parcel is in the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District and is in a very high fire severity zone. The project site is located approximately 1.5 driving miles away from Grass Valley Station 1, which is located on Brighton Street. The subject lease area for the project would be accessed from McCourtney Road in the unincorporated area of Western Nevada County.

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire severity hazard zones, would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				✓	A,H,M,23
b. Due to slope, prevailing winds, or other factor, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrollable spread of wildfire?			✓		A,B,H,M, 18
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 or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?			✓		A,H,M
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			✓		A,H,M,12 , 32

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire severity hazard zones, would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**	**Reference Source (Appendix A)**
changes?					

Impact Discussion

20a. The Safety Element of the Nevada County General Plan addresses wildfire hazards in Nevada County and has several policies to improve fire safety. The Safety Element discusses the importance of ingress and egress by roadways, and Policy FP-10.7.3 requires that a condition of development is to maintain private roads, including the roadside vegetation. Proposed conditions of approval require fuel modification and due to the proposed towers close proximity to the paved church parking lot, no driveway improvements were required. Nevada County has also adopted a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) that was updated in August 2017. Objective 3.6 of the LHMP is to improve communities' capabilities to prevent/mitigate hazards by increasing the use of technologies. Goal 4 of the LHMP is to reduce fire severity and intensity, with Objective 4.4 to promote the implementation of fuel management on private and public lands.

The proposed telecommunications tower and facility would increase technology and provide more coverage for communication in the rural area. The proposed project complies with adopted plans for emergencies and does not pose conflicts; therefore, the project would have ***no impact*** on impairing emergency plans.

20b. The installation of the telecommunications tower and facility would not expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations or wildfire due to the project being unmanned during typical operation. Therefore, the project would have a ***less than significant impact*** on exposing project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrollable spread of wildfire.

20c. The electric service and telecommunication lines that would be brought to the project site from the existing utility pole would be installed underground, instead of by overhead power lines. The project includes a 210-gallon diesel storage tank, which contains hazardous material which will be required to be stored in accordance with applicable State Codes as discussed in Section 9 of this Initial Study. The diesel within the tank is flammable and could exacerbate wildfire risk, but the project was reviewed by the Office of the Fire Marshal and Nevada County Consolidated Fire District and will be conditioned to include 100 feet of fuel modification. The fuel modification is anticipated to prevent the transmission of fire to the diesel storage tank. The biological impacts of the fuel modification are discussed in Section 4 of this Initial Study. All improvements would require building permits and conformance with Chapter V of the LUDC for building and grading standards. The dirt access road is already existing and the maintenance of the vegetation clearance around the communication facility would not significantly impact the environment. The project has been reviewed and approved by the Office of the Fire Marshal and the Department of Public Works and emergency water sources were not required. Therefore, the project would have a ***less than significant impact*** on the spread of wildfire and fire risks.

20d. The project would require building permits for the grading and site improvements, which would require compliance with the Nevada County grading standards outlined in Land Use and

Development Code Section V, Article 13. The building permits would require grading and erosion control plans for the soil disturbance, and a drainage analysis to ensure no additional runoff leaves the project site. As part of the project improvements and site inspections by the Building Department, soil compaction testing would be required for the grading where the telecommunications tower would be installed. Furthermore, the project area is not in an area that is mapped with high landslide activity (U.S. Geological Service, 1970). With the soil compaction testing, erosion control measures, the area not having high landslide activity, and no waterways being in the project area, the project would have a ***less than significant impact*** on flooding, landslides, runoff, and slope instability.

Mitigation:

None required.

21. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Does the project have the potential to 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, 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?		✓			A,19,33
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)?			✓		A
c. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?		✓			A

Impact Discussion:

21a,c. As discussed in Sections 1 through 20 above, development of the proposed project would comply with all local, state, and federal laws governing general welfare and environmental protection. Project implementation during construction and operation could result in potentially adverse impacts to aesthetics, air quality, biological, and cultural resources, geology/soils, hazards/hazardous materials, noise, tribal cultural resources, and possible impacts to utilities/services. Each of those impacts is mitigated to levels that are ***less than significant with mitigation*** as outlined in each section.

21b. A project's cumulative impacts are considered significant when the incremental effects of the project are "cumulatively considerable," meaning that the project's incremental effects are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects. Reasonably foreseeable projects that could have similar impacts to the proposed project include other anticipated projects within the project vicinity that could be constructed or operated within the same timeframe as the project. All the proposed project's impacts, including operational impacts, can be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of the mitigation measures identified in this Initial Study and compliance with existing federal, state, and local regulations. Therefore, the proposed project would have **less than significant** environmental effects that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable.

Mitigation Measures:

To offset potentially adverse impacts to aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology/soils, hazards/hazardous materials, noise, tribal cultural resources, and utilities/services, see Mitigation Measures 1A, 3A-3B, 4A – 4D, 5A, 9A, 13A-C, 18A and 19A.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE PROJECT PLANNER:

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

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

__X__ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

_____ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

_____ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or a "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

_____ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

_____ _____

David Nicholas, Associate Planner Date

APPENDIX A – REFERENCE SOURCES

A. Planning Department
B. Department of Public Works
C. Environmental Health Department
D. Building Department
E. Nevada Irrigation District
F. Natural Resource Conservation Service/Resource Conservation District
G. Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District
H. North San Juan Fire District
I. Regional Water Quality Control Board *(Central Valley* Region)
J. North Central Information Service, Anthropology Department, CSU Sacramento
K. California Department of Fish & Wildlife
L. Nevada County Geographic Information Systems
M. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire)
N. Nevada County Transportation Commission
O. Nevada County Agricultural Advisor Commission
P. Grass Valley/ Nevada Joint Union School District

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8. State Dept. of Forestry & Fire Protection. Nevada County Hardwood Rangelands, 1993.
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25. California Department of Toxic Substances Control. Accessed October 31, 2024: http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/
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