



Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration

Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department

2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

(707) 565-1900 FAX (707) 565-1103

Publication Date: December 6, 2024
Public Review Period: December 6, 2024 – January 6, 2025
State Clearinghouse Number:
Permit Sonoma File Number: **PLP16-0046**
Prepared by: Derik Michaelson
Phone: (707) 565-3095

PROJECT DATA

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

Project: Fremont Ranch Winery
Applicant: Fremont Ranch, LLC
Location: 4310 Fremont Drive, Sonoma
APNs: 126-111-022, and 126-111-015 (well site)

General Plan: LIA 60 (Land Intensive Agriculture, 60-acre density)
Zoning: LIA B6 60 (Land Intensive Agriculture, 60-acre density); Z (Accessory Dwelling Exclusion), LG/MTN (Local Guidelines, Taylor/Sonoma/Mayacamas Mountains), RC 50/50 (Riparian Corridor, 50-foot development and Agricultural setbacks), SR (Scenic Resource, Landscape Unit and Corridor), VOH (Valley Oak Habitat)

Decision Body: Board of Zoning Adjustments. Decision appealable within 10 calendar days.
Appeal Body: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Description: Use Permit and Design Review application to establish and operate a 61,993-square-foot winery facility with an annual production capacity of 30,000 cases, including public tasting rooms, wine cave storage, and 28 agricultural promotional and industry-related annual events for up to 50, 100, and 200 guests on 58.65 acres, including 20.47 acres currently approved for vineyard development, located on State Highway 12/121 and Napa Road (former Stonetta Creamery site) at 4310 Fremont Drive, Sonoma.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

This project potentially affects the following environmental factors as discussed within the attached Initial Study. Those checked under "Yes" involve at least one impact identified as either "Potentially Significant" or "Less than Significant with Mitigation". Those checked under "No" are determined "Less than Significant" or involving "No Impact".

| Environmental Factors | | Abbreviation | Yes | No |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|-----|----|
| 1. | Aesthetics | VIS | | X |
| 2. | Agricultural & Forest Resources | AGR | | X |
| 3. | Air Quality | AIR | X | |
| 4. | Biological Resources | BIO | X | |
| 5. | Cultural Resources | CUL | X | |
| 6. | Energy | ENG | | X |

| Environmental Factors (continued) | | Abbreviation | Yes | No |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|-----|----|
| 7. | Geology and Soils | GEO | X | |
| 8. | Greenhouse Gas Emission | GHG | | X |
| 9. | Hazards and Hazardous Materials | HAZ | | X |
| 10. | Hydrology and Water Quality | HYD | | X |
| 11. | Land Use and Planning | LUP | | X |
| 12. | Mineral Resources | MIN | | X |
| 13. | Noise | NOI | | |
| 14. | Population and Housing | POP | | X |
| 15. | Public Services | PUB | | X |
| 16. | Recreation | REC | | X |
| 17. | Transportation and Traffic | TRA | | X |
| 18. | Tribal Cultural Resources | TCR | X | |
| 19. | Utility and Service Systems | UTL | | X |
| 20. | Wildfire | FIRE | | X |
| 21. | Mandatory Findings of Significance | MFS | X | |

RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

The following table lists the other public agencies whose approval may be required to construct and/or operate the project, or who have jurisdiction over resources potentially affected by the project.

| Agency | Activity | Authorization |
|---|--|---|
| U. S. Army Corps of Engineers | Dredge or fill potential on US waters / wetlands | Clean Water Act, Section 401 |
| Regional Water Quality Control Board (San Francisco Bay) | Discharge potential into State waters / wetlands | California Clean Water Act (Porter Cologen) |
| Regional Water Quality Control Board (San Francisco) | Dredge or fill potential on State waters / wetlands | Clean Water Act, Section 404 |
| State Water Resources Control Board | Generating stormwater | National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) |
| California Department of Fish and Wildlife | Lake or streambed alteration agreement | Fish and Game Code, Section 1600 |
| Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) | Stationary air emissions | |
| Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District (NSCAPCD) | Stationary air emissions | |
| Valley of the Moon Water District | Public water connection | |
| U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and or National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) | Incidental take permit for listed plant and animal species | Endangered Species Act |
| State Division of Aeronautics | Construction in airport safety zone | FAA Form 7460 letter of compliance |

| Agency (Continued) | Activity | Authorization |
|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Caltrans Encroachment | Activities within a state highway | |
| California Coastal Commission | Development within the Coastal Zone | California Coastal Act |
| State Lands Commission | Activities in State Lands Commission jurisdiction | Lease required |
| Native American Heritage Commission | | |
| State Historic Preservation Office | | |

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDING

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



Prepared by:
Derik Michaelson, Project Planner

December 6, 2024

Date



December 6, 2024

I. INTRODUCTION

Fremont Ranch, LLC, has filed a Use Permit and Design Review application for the construction and operation of 61,993-square-foot winery facility with an annual production capacity of 30,000 cases, plus public tasting amenities, wine cave storage, and the annual hosting of 28 agricultural promotional and industry-related events located on 58.65 acres along the frontage of State Highway 12/121 and Napa Road at 4310 Fremont Drive.

This report is the Initial Study required for the project by the California Environment al Quality Act (CEQA). The report was prepared by Land Logistics planning consultants on behalf of the Planning Division for the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department.

Information on the project as been provided by Fremont Ranch Winery LLC. Technical studies were provided by qualified consultants of the applicant, including Backen & Backen, NorCal Civil Engineering, Summit Engineering, Geosyntec, LRICO, MacNair Landscape Architects, O'Connor Environmental, and W-Trans. This initial study provides analysis and conclusions based on technical studies submitted as part of the project. The referenced studies are available for review and listed with appropriate website and file download locations under Section VI (Document Sources) below.

A referral letter addressed to appropriate local, state and federal agencies and interest groups with potential interest in commenting on the project was sent prior to the original circulation of this environmental document. Copies of the agency referral comments are also available for review as noted within the Document Sources section.

For general inquiries, please contact the Project Planner, Derik Michaelson, at derik.michaelson@sonoma-county.org.

II. EXISTING FACILITY

The site is comprised of a 58.65-acre parcel situated at the southwest corner of Napa Road and SR 12/121. The 58.65-acre site was formally operated as the Stornetta Dairy and for animal grazing. The parcel is under a Type II Williamson Act contract. The project site is currently used for animal grazing, but the dairy operation no longer occurs.

Multiple buildings and barn structures on the south end of the property, fronting SR 12/121, were destroyed in the 2017 Sonoma Nuns fire. Remnants of the dairy use include concrete slabs, pavement, portions of building exterior walls, a well pump house, and former wastewater pond on the southwest corner of the property, adjacent to SR 12/121. The property has otherwise remained primarily undeveloped, except for an existing 90,000-gallon fire protection and potable water storage tank, a 28,000-gallon treated process wastewater storage tank, and a small accessory storage building to be removed.

The project site is zoned LIA B6 60 (Land Intensive Agriculture, 60-acre density), Accessory Dwelling Unit Exclusion (Z), Local Guidelines – Taylor/Sonoma/Mayacamas Mountains (LG/MTN), RC 50/50 (Riparian Corridor with 50-foot setbacks), SR (Scenic Resources), and VOH (Valley Oak Habitat).



III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The winery project proposes 61,993 square-feet of development and improvements for construction and operation of a new winery facility on 58.65 acres situated along the frontage of State Highway 12/121 and Napa Road in Sonoma County. The property is the former site of Stonetta Creamery which is no longer in operation. The dairy buildings of the former operation were destroyed in the 2017 Sonoma Nuns fire. The site remains mostly vacant.

On-site Agriculture

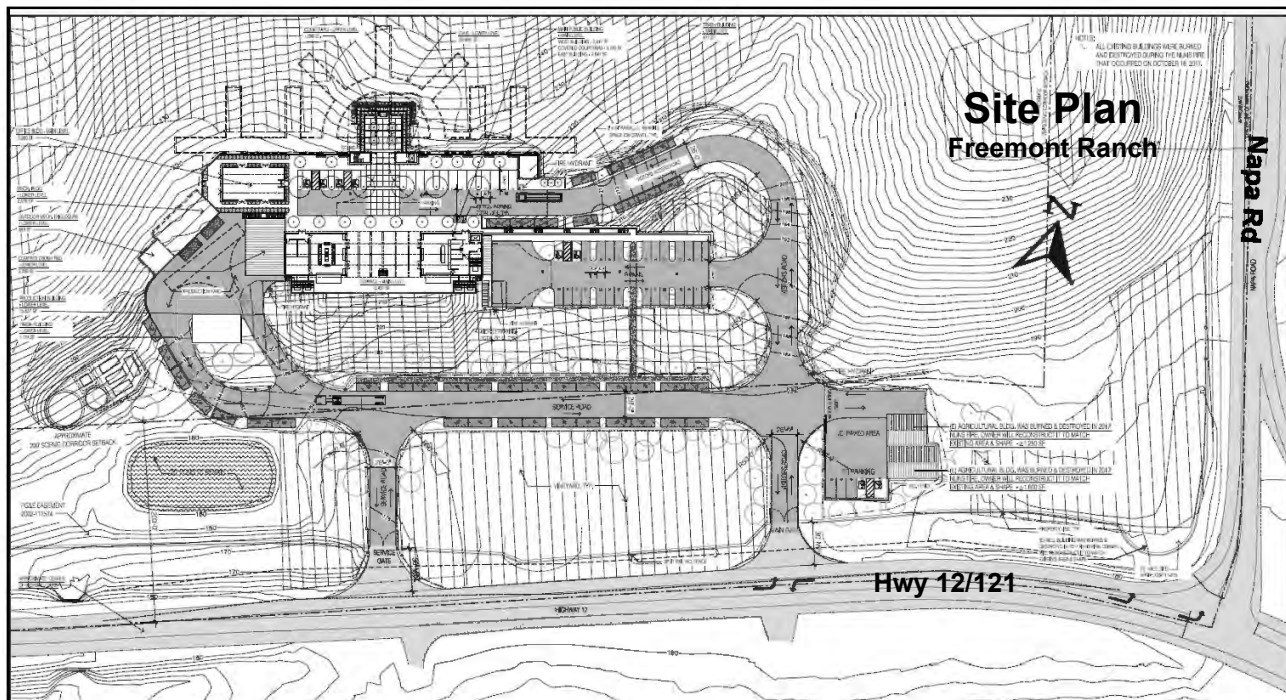
The winery will process winegrapes grown on-site from a 20-acre vineyard previously approved (though not yet planted) by Sonoma County in 2017 (ACO17-0161), as well as other vineyards located in Sonoma County and neighboring areas. At least 51% of the grapes processed on-site will come from Sonoma County. The applicant will also continue to use portions of the site for grazing. The previously entitled vineyard and grazing uses are permitted agricultural uses.

Proposed Operations

The winery facility and tasting room will be open seven days per week. Regular winery production hours of operation will be from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm. Hours of operation for the winery facility during harvest will be as needed. Public tastings, wine and food pairings, and events are a critical function of how wine is sold today, and the proposed use will allow visitors to see how and where the wine is made, and learn about the local agricultural practices that make the wine and food possible. In addition to featuring wine and wine related merchandise, the tasting room may also offer local agricultural related products grown or produced in Sonoma County. The project would have 15 year-round, full-time employees.

Daily Tasting & Tours

Daily tours and tastings will occur from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm and will include food and wine pairings. This will consist of an average of 65 visitors daily and a maximum capacity of 135 visitors. The site will hold no more than two tours per day with a maximum attendance of 10 guests per tour (included in the 135 max above). All tours will include a wine tasting with an optional food pairing. The tour will include a portion of the winemaking facility and the outdoor terraces. A small commercial kitchen is proposed for food preparation for these limited activities. No cooked to order food is proposed. Daily tastings were reduced from a maximum capacity of 200 guests to a maximum of 135 guests per day under the revised project proposal.



Winery Events

The project proposes 28 private Agricultural Promotional & Industry Events on an annual basis. Events will occur between the operating hours of 10:00 AM and 10:00 PM. Large events with up to 200 guests will be limited to Fridays and weekends. Smaller and medium-size events for up to 50 and 100 guests may occur both during the week and on weekends. No more than one event on a single day is proposed. The typical annual event schedule is shown below:

| Event | Schedule | Hours | Guests | Per Year |
|--------|--------------------------|-------------|--------|----------|
| Small | Monday thru Sunday | 10am - 10pm | 50 | 15 |
| Medium | Monday thru Sunday | 10am - 10pm | 100 | 9 |
| Large | Friday, Saturday, Sunday | 10am - 10pm | 200 | 4 |

28

The smaller 50-person events are by invitation only and will support industry and trade-related activities such as winemaker dinners, lunches, and food and wine pairings for customers, clients, wholesalers, distributors, and other members of the trade. A small commercial kitchen is proposed for food preparation for these limited activities. No cooked to order food is proposed. The applicant anticipates participating in industry events as part of the winery's general public tasting room operations, which may include industry promoted activities such as Savor Sonoma Valley, April in Carneros, etc.

Music

While the winery has few residential neighbors, to reduce potential noise impacts, the project does not propose amplified music in outdoor areas. Acoustic music may occur on the outdoor courtyard and terrace areas immediately adjacent to the tasting rooms. Amplified music is proposed for the indoor areas of the winery and tasting room buildings. All music would conclude by 9:00 p.



Winery Development and Site Improvements

The applicant proposes 61,993 square-feet of development and improvements to establish a new winery facility with a 30,000-case annual production capacity located on 58.68 acres. The main winery building is a 26,825-square-foot two-story structure. The 18,097-square-foot lower production level is built into the hillside screening roughly 70 percent of the overall structure from public view.

The visible upper level is 8,728 square-feet and includes two tasting rooms on opposite sides of a covered courtyard area. Behind the the upper tasting room level is a rear terrace area, a detached office building, and a detached trash building. The proposed lower level includes the winery production floor and covered crush pad, plus additional accessory buildings for trash and mechanical equipment. The proposed underground wine cave is 23,464 square-feet and will be built entirely into the rear hillside of the property. The project also includes reconstruction of two agricultural buildings destroyed in 2017 Sonoma Nuns fire totaling 2,850 square-feet.

Design

The architectural style of the winery and outbuildings is intended to recognize the County's agrarian heritage of large barns and small outbuildings. The design focuses on vernacular forms and traditional materials, such as white stained wood horizontal and vertical board and batten siding with dark corrugated metal roofing.

| Proposed Buildings and Use | Sq. Ft. | Proposed Buildings and Use | Sq. Ft. |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|--|---------------|
| Two-Story Winery Building | 26,825 | Upper-Level Accessory Buildings | 4,968 |
| <i>Upper Level:</i> | <i>(8,728)</i> | Rear Terrace | 2,431 |
| East Tasting Building | 2,541 | Office Building | 2,060 |
| Central Covered Courtyard | 3,150 | Upper Trash Building | 477 |
| West Tasting Building | 2,541 | Lower-Level Accessory Buildings | 3,886 |
| Stairs & Elevator Towers | 496 | Outdoor Mechanical Enclosure | 683 |
| <i>Lower Level:</i> | <i>(18,097)</i> | Lower Trash Building | 1,124 |
| Production Floor | 15,837 | Mechanical Building | 2,079 |
| Covered Crush Pad | 2,260 | Additional Accessory Buildings | 2,850 |
| Wine Cave | 23,464 | | |
| | | TOTAL FACILITY | 61,993 |

Circulation and Parking

The project site benefits from being on a major transportation corridor as a result of its location on SR 12/121. Traffic and Circulation consultant, W-Trans, prepared an addendum to the previous traffic study to reflect the revised project and analyze vehicle miles traveled to the project site. Due to lack of new development projects within the vicinity of the site and more people working from home, W-Trans concluded that traffic counts would not be substantially different than its previous traffic counts from 2016.

Based on W-Trans' review, the revised project will result in an annual average of less than 110 daily trips. The site currently has four existing driveways from SR 12/121 for vehicle access. The project will eliminate two of these driveways and improve the two others for primary site access. The first driveway will be for

guest and staff access to the property. The second driveway to the west will be for service and truck access. There is an existing center turning lane along SR 12/121 in front of the site providing left turn access for eastbound traffic.

In addition to the driveways along SR 12/121, the site currently has two existing driveways that front Napa Road. The applicant intends to retain both for agricultural access. All driveways will have gates; the main entry gate would be open during business hours.

The site plan includes 90 parking spaces for guests and staff, as well as for overflow and events, in compliance with County parking standards. Truck loading zones, trash enclosures, and traffic circulation is reflected on the site plan. Parking designations for ADA-accessible locations have been labeled in accordance with applicable code. The applicant also plans to include bicycle parking. There will be sufficient parking on-site for all public tasting and events. The primary winery signage would consist of an identification monument sign placed at the main entry driveway from SR 12/121, consistent with County sign standards. Low-level post and panel signs will be used on-site to direct visitors and winery related areas and for event. For certain scheduled events, a sign will also be posted indicating that "the winery is closed for private event."

Landscaping

The design of the winery structures is intended to blend with the surrounding hillside topography and utilize extensive landscaping, including the planting of 136 24-inch box trees, including use of coast live oak, valley oak, Chinese pistache and Armstrong maple, to provide visual screening of the winery structure and related improvements. Over 170 5-gallon shrubs, including harmony manzanita, would also be planted, in addition to use of decorative groundcover. Trees would be planted along the entry driveway, adjacent to driveway and parking areas, and strategically placed by structures and site improvements to provide maximum screening effect from the SR 12/121 roadway.

Water Supply

The project will receive water from two sources: groundwater and recycled water from the treated process wastewater system. The project includes a new sustainable wastewater system that will allow the winery to treat that water so it can be used for irrigation (as discussed in greater detail below). In order to provide the County and State required 50-foot well seal, the project will replace the existing well to serve domestic uses. Hydrologist, O'Connor Environmental Inc., prepared a Ground Water Report, which is enclosed with the revised project description.

Waste Disposal

A Wastewater Feasibility Study has been prepared by NorCal Civil and submitted with this revised project description to address disposal of sanitary sewage and winery process wastewater. Sanitary sewage will be collected into septic tanks, treated to appropriate discharge levels via an engineered package treatment system and dispersed via a subsurface drip irrigation septic system in the area receiving percolation test approval from Sonoma County PRMD.

Winery process wastewater will be treated to acceptable irrigation levels by a separate package treatment system. Treated winery process wastewater will be stored in a pond or storage tank during periods of seasonal rain and saturation, when irrigation cannot occur. The project will be able to utilize its treated process wastewater for vineyard irrigation and winery landscaping to reduce any impact to groundwater supply. A wastewater site plan is provided with this revised project description to assist with review of the wastewater feasibility study and these project components.

Grape pomace generated by the winemaking operations will be collected in dumpsters onsite and routinely transported offsite for conversion into compost by a County approved composting operation. No onsite composting of grape pomace is currently planned.

Drainage and Grading

The project site has undulating terrain, with a paved, flat pad alongside the SR 12/121 frontage (at elevation of approximately 180 ft above MSL), with upslope areas and rolling hills extending to the

west (with a high elevation of approximately 350 ft). In addition to flat pad by the property frontage, slopes vary from the flat, previously graded and developed lower pads adjacent to the highway to approximately 30% on the steeper hillside areas. The area of proposed development is primarily along the flat pad by the property frontage and the adjoining east-facing slope. The project also includes excavation of a 23,464 sq ft wine cave and barrel storage area in the hillside directly behind the winery production building and below the upper terrace areas.

The Preliminary Grading and Drainage Plans submitted with the project application shows site drainage complies with the Sonoma County Grading Ordinance, which includes the use of storm water treatment and infiltration in site design.

There is an existing pond onsite which was formally used for collection and storage of dairy runoff. Existing drainage onsite consists of surface sheet flow in the grasslands with concentrated flow and eroded flow channels forming in steeper concave areas. At the south of the parcel, there are some existing drainage systems which direct flow to the existing grass-lined roadside ditch inside the State Caltrans Right of Way. The existing onsite drainage features will either be maintained or abandoned in place and flow redirected elsewhere onsite.

All drainage features will discharge to undeveloped grass areas downhill of the project site and all flows are returned to sheet flow by riprap dissipators. The native vegetation and humus layer will act as a 'Vegetated Buffer Strip' and will be maintained by this project to provide the required treatment control of storm drain runoff.

This design utilizes the Best Management Practices outlined and discussed in the BASMAA manual in order to limit post-development stormwater levels and pollutant discharges in compliance with Permit Sonoma's BMP guides. The proposed bioretention stormwater treatment features will provide a level of stormwater treatment that did not exist at this site as it was previously developed. Flows which previously came down the hillside, across the gravel work/parking area, and into the public storm drain system, will now be collected and piped to reduce the potential for polluted runoff entering waterways. All runoff from roofs and proposed impervious surfaces will be collected and conveyed to the multiple stormwater treatment features across the site. Erosion control measures proposed in the Grading and Drainage Plans include sediment fences and fiber wattles which will protect the pond and existing drainage system from runoff during construction practices. The pre- and post-development point of discharge from this property will ultimately see a reduction in flows, as this development will provide for a higher overall Time of Concentration for stormwater flows, as surface flows are directed through grassy swales and via the storm drain network into stormwater treatment features. These features will provide retention space in the gravel layer to hold flows and allow infiltration into the existing soils, while reducing the volume and speed of water exiting the site.

This increased time of concentration will directly correlate to a lower storm intensity, and thus smaller volume of stormwater runoff.

IV. ISSUES RAISED BY THE PUBLIC OR AGENCIES.

Permit Sonoma has prepared two referral packets to inform and solicit comments from selected relevant local, state and federal agencies; and to special interest groups that were anticipated to take interest in the project. The 2018 referral addressed the prior proposal involving a larger scope of development and winery production for a 60,000-case winery operation. The 2023 referral is for the current 30,000-case proposal.

Citizens Advisory Committee

On July 25, 2018, the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Committee (SVCAC) reviewed the original use permit application for an annual 60,000-case winery. The SVCAC did not support the project due to its size, in particular related to the volume of wine production, the number of visitors and proposed events, and related water usage from those activities. The applicant has submitted the current

reduced-scope proposal in response to the SVCAC's concerns, including reduction in the size of the winery and tasting room buildings, and reduction in the number of annual events. On September 9, 2023, the SVCAC reviewed the current revised proposal. Comments forwarded by the SVCAC indicate its general support for the overall development scale and design of the project while maintaining concerns over potential traffic congestions resulting from proposed events. The Transportation analysis contained in this study addresses traffic related impacts based on the proposed event scope. The analysis concludes the traffic related impacts are less than significant and do not require project specific mitigation measures.

Native American Consultation

Assembly Bill 52, which went into effect in July 2015, is an amendment to CEQA Section 5097.94 of the Public Resources Code. AB52 established a consultation process with all California Native American tribes identified by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) with cultural ties to an area and created a new class of resources under CEQA known as Tribal Cultural Resource. The County of Sonoma, as the Lead Agency under CEQA, is responsible for complying with the requirements of CEQA Section 5097.94 of the Public Resources Code.

On February 14, 2018, Permit Sonoma sent consultation letters to tribal groups associated with the project area to solicit their input or concerns regarding the project. On February 14, 2018, Tomaras & Ogas LLP on behalf of the Lytton Rancheria Tribe, responded to request consultation under AB52. On February 26, 2018, the Tribal Heritage Preservation Officer for the Federated Tribes of Graton Rancheria responded to formally request consultation for this project. To date, no other responses or communications have been received from the native community regarding this project.

On November 14, 2018, Lytton Rancheria concluded consultation requesting that a condition of approval be applied to require on-site archaeological monitoring of ground disturbance in native soils during construction activities.

On July 24, 2024, Permit Sonoma met with representatives of the Federated Tribes of Graton Rancheria for consultation on the resubmitted project under AB52. Permit Sonoma proposes mitigation measures recommended by the applicant's archaeological consultant to ensure avoidance of potential adverse impacts to cultural resources. The Tribe has reserved the right to further review the recommended mitigations during the required 30-day public review period following publication of this Initial Study.

V. INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

This checklist is taken from Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. For each item, one of four responses is given.

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

Each question on the checklist was answered by evaluating the project as proposed, that is, without considering the effect of any added mitigation measures. The checklist includes a discussion of the impacts and mitigation measures that have been identified.

VI. SOURCE DOCUMENTS

The following documents were referenced or developed in preparation of the Initial Study checklist, and are hereby incorporated as part of this publication. Items 1 through 4 may be downloaded from the link location referenced below. All other documents are available by reference at the Permit and Resource Management Department via PermitSonoma.org, or as listed on the website of the Individual public agency referenced below.

Available for download at: <https://share.sonoma-county.org/link/mqUjjbhdojs/>

1. Project Proposal Statement and Design Plans
2. Project Technical Reports:
 - a. Site Stability Report, 4310 Fremont Drive, Sonoma, PJC & Associates, September 7, 2017
 - b. Habitat Assessment, Fremont Ranch Winery, Wildlife Research Associates and Jane Valerius Environmental Consulting, July 2023.
 - c. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Air Quality Site Specific Study, Fremont Ranch Winery, Geosyntec Consultants, March 2023.
 - d. Storm Drain Report, Use Permit Application, Fremont Ranch Winery; NorCal Civil Engineering, Inc., February 3, 2023.
 - e. Groundwater Report, 4310 Fremont Drive, Sonoma, O'Connor Environmental, Inc., March 2023
 - f. Wastewater Feasibility Study – Use Permit Application for Fremont Ranch Winery, NorCal Civil Engineering, Inc., February 3, 2023.
 - g. Transportation Impact Study, Fremont Ranch Winery and Tasting Room, W-Trans, December 2, 2024.
 - h. Confidential Reports (not available to public):
 - (1) Archaeological Survey and Updated Historic Resource Evaluation Report, Alta Archaeological Consulting, April 27, 2018.

Available by reference on Permit Sonoma website: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Permit-Sonoma/>

3. Sonoma County General Plan and EIR
4. Sonoma County Zoning Ordinance
5. Tree Protection Ordinance (Ord. No. 6478); Sonoma County.
6. Oak Woodland and Valley Oak Habitat Combining Districts (Ord. No. 6469).
7. Sonoma County Aggregate Resources Management Plan and Program EIR, 1994
8. Riparian Corridor requirements and Use Permit submittal guide

Available by reference on Public Agency website

9. Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zones; State of California; 1983.
www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/alquist-priolo
10. BAAQMD CEQA Guidelines; Bay Area Air Quality Management District
www.arb.ca.gov/
11. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
http://www.califaep.org/docs/2024_ceqa_book.pdf
12. California Environmental Protection Agency
www.calepa.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/corteseList/default.htm;
13. California Regional Water Quality Control Board
geotracker.swrcb.ca.gov/;
14. California Department of Toxic Substances Control Management Board
<https://dtsc.ca.gov/dtscs-cortese-list/>
15. North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
<https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/>
16. Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), September 2014.
<https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/SGMA-Groundwater-Management>
17. Santa Rosa Plain Watershed Groundwater Management Plan, Advisory Panel, 2014
https://rpcity.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=4&clip_id=518&meta_id=43080

1. AESTHETICS:

Would the project:

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

Comment:

Pursuant to the County's Visual Assessment Guidelines, the project site ranks "High" in visual sensitivity due to the Scenic Resources designation and project location along the SR 12/121 corridor, while the Visual Dominance of the site is considered "Co-Dominant" due to the overall prominence of the site combined with other visual landscape features in the area, including rolling hillsides to the north and west. Co-Dominant visual settings apply when project elements are moderate – they can be prominent within the setting, but attract attention equally with other landscape features, and when project form, line, color, texture, and night lighting are compatible with their surroundings.

The applicant assessed the original proposed winery building design based upon the comments received from the SVCAC and has reduced the proposed winery facility square footage by 18%, from 43,318 sq ft to approximately 35,679 sq ft.

The design focuses on vernacular forms and traditional materials, such as white stained wood board and batten vertical and horizontal siding with dark corrugated metal roofing, black sash steel doors and window trim, with the project architecture intended to reflect an agricultural-based design and function. The main winery and tasting building will be built into the hillside facing the south and include wine caves built into the hillside. This building layout and inclusion of caves will help decrease energy requirements from a conditioning perspective since the hillside will help regulate any fluctuations in temperature. Accessory structures (office building, trash/pomace structures) would utilize similar design themes as the main structures of the project.

All structures located within scenic corridors established outside of the urban service area boundaries are subject to the setbacks of thirty percent (30%) of the depth of the lot to a maximum of two hundred feet (200 feet) from the centerline of the road (Sec. 26-64-030(a)). New winery structures will be located outside of the 200-foot scenic corridors from Highway 12/121 and Napa Road, in compliance with this County Code standard and consistent with the General Plan's Open Space policies regulating location of structures in designated Scenic Corridors. The project would also reconstruct two burned agricultural buildings, approximately 1,600 SF and 1,250 sq ft in size, that were destroyed during the 2017 Sonoma Nuns wildfire; these buildings are located within the 200-foot scenic corridor, with the footprint of the closest of the two buildings approximately 80-feet from the edge of the highway. Reconstruction of the buildings in this location is permitted by County regulations.

Existing paved parking areas surrounding the Sonoma reconstructed agricultural buildings will also be improved and remain as part of the site. Additionally, planting of trees and shrubs along the project frontage of SR 12/121 and in parking areas would provide screening from the highway and minimize impacts on the winery structures located behind them and to help integrate the project with the existing visual setting.

On December 20, 2023, the Design Review Committee (DRC) reviewed and commented on the current design plans for the project. The DRC conveyed its general support for the preliminary project design and suggested certain clarifications to help better demonstrate the site planning and architectural relationship of the project with the existing site conditions and topography, including additional building sections and renderings, and consideration of addition of trellis work and landscaping to soften vertical relief to the east façade.

On March 28, 2024, the applicant submitted the updated plan details in response to the DRC comments. The current plan set includes the DRC's requested sections, renderings and lighting specifications. There was no expansion of the proposed building or site plan from the previous submittal, with the key plan change being modification in roof pitches from 10:12 to 8.5:12, providing accentuated gables, while overall building heights have been reduced by approximately 2-feet, with roof ridge elevations of 237 ft. The updated plans are included as part of this Initial Study and project analysis. It was agreed that the BZA would take final jurisdiction in review of the project design. The DRC review and plan changes and site renderings provided by the applicant as a result of the DRC's comments also further establish consistency with the County's Design and Visual Assessment Guidelines applicable to the site, as further discussed below.

The project complies with maximum allowed building height of 35 ft in the main winery building, measured from existing grade. The building would be partially set into the existing hillside on the lower finished floor, and with construction of the underground wine cave. The detached winery office building would be approximately 18 feet tall, while the trash/pomace building would be 16 feet tall. Reconstruction of the agricultural buildings also will comply with the 50-ft maximum height applicable to agricultural-use buildings, with the proposed reconstruction of the two structures not exceeding 18 feet.

Zoning standards also provide for a 5% or 85,000 sq ft lot (building) coverage, whichever is greater; in this instance, with the lot size being over 58 acres, the maximum allowable coverage would be approximately 127,630 sq ft. The project would comply as the total lot coverage would be approximately 26,000 sq ft. The project would also meet zoning setback standards, including a minimum 30-foot front yard setback from SR 12/121 and from Napa Road, as well as complying with the required 200-ft setback per the County's scenic resource requirements. Pursuant to County Code Section 26-90-120, the project site is also subject to compliance with design guidelines for Taylor, Sonoma, and Mayacamas Mountains, applicable to areas visible from public roads. While agricultural use building are exempt from the Guidelines (pertaining to the reconstruction of the agricultural buildings destroyed in the 2017 Sonoma Nuns fire), the winery-related buildings and improvements are required to demonstrate compliance with the Guidelines. The Guidelines address a wide range of design and site planning issues, summarized below, followed by a response regarding project compliance with the Guidelines.

- To the extent feasible, new development is to be located such that it is substantially screened when viewed from public roads. If not feasible, based on the factors of fire, safety, on-site sewage disposal, drainage, geologic, and other constraints, development shall be in the least visible location on the parcel and shall be subject to the architectural and landscaping standards specified in the Guidelines.

Comment: The proposed location of the winery and related structures is largely in the same area as the previous dairy use of the site and would utilize existing driveway access connections to SR 12/121. The design of the winery structures is intended to blend with the surrounding hillside topography and utilize extensive landscaping, including the planting of 136 24-inch box trees to provide visual screening of the winery structure and related improvements. Additionally, no winery structures would be located within the required 200-ft setback scenic resource setback area along SR 12/121.

- Existing vegetation or existing topographic features shall be used, where feasible, to substantially screen site development as seen from public roads, with grading and tree removals minimized. Where existing topography and vegetation will not screen structures from view from public roads, landscaping shall be installed consisting of native vegetation in natural groupings that fit with the character of the area in order to substantially screen structures from view.

Comment: The design of the winery structures is intended to blend with the surrounding hillside topography and utilize extensive landscaping, including the planting of 136 24-inch box trees to

provide visual screening of the winery structure and related improvements. Over 170 5-gallon shrubs would also be planted, in addition to use of decorative groundcover, to complete the landscape palette.

- On hills and ridges, no portion of a structure shall appear against the sky when viewed from public roads.

Comment: The winery structures would comply with the 35-foot maximum height limit applicable to the project site and would include portions of the first floor of the winery building stepped into the hillside, reducing overall visible height of the structure as seen from SR 12/121 to the south. The highest point of the winery roof would be at approximately 237 ft elevation, while the top of the hillside ridge behind (north) the winery ranges from approximately 320 to 350 ft. With this difference in elevation, combined with the viewing distance of the winery building from the roadway exceeding 200 ft, no significant impact is expected. Noted is that there would be no substantial views of the winery structures from Napa Road due to the presence of a spur ridgeline that runs between the roadway and the winery site, with the winery only being visible near the Napa Road/SR 12/121 intersection.

- Grading and landscaping shall blend with the natural topography. Landscaping necessary to accomplish substantial screening shall be of sufficient size and density to screen the structure within ten (10) years following installation.

Comment: As noted above, the design of the winery structures is intended to blend with the surrounding hillside topography and utilize extensive landscaping, including the planting of 136 24-inch box trees to provide visual screening of the winery structure and related improvements. Over 170 5-gallon shrubs would also be planted, in addition to use of decorative groundcover, to complete the landscape palette. The use of the larger tree sizes at installation will provide substantial visual screening soon after installation, with more substantial tree canopy coverage and screening effect within ten years.

- All new structures shall be designed to respect the rural character of the surrounding environment, and the architectural form of the structure(s) and site development shall utilize appropriate form and massing to reduce the visual impact and blend with the environmental setting.

Comment: The winery structures would utilize an agrarian theme, with use of white stained wood vertical and horizontal board and batten siding, black sash steel doors and window trim, and with dark corrugated metal roofing, and would blend in with the agricultural theme of the area.

- The exterior colors of the structure shall be local earth tones blending with the natural environment of the site and have a low reflectivity value, and building materials (e.g., bricks, natural wood, or stone) may be considered, provided the material used is an appropriate color and has a low reflectivity value.

Comment: The buildings would utilize white stained wood vertical board and batten siding, black sash steel doors and window trim, and with dark corrugated metal roofing.

- Exterior lighting shall be downward facing, fully shielded, and located at the lowest possible point to the ground to prevent glare and light pollution. Light fixtures shall not be located at the periphery of the property and shall not spill over onto adjacent properties or into the night sky. Luminaires shall have a maximum output of 1000 lumens per fixture., and total illuminance beyond the property line created by simultaneous operation of all exterior lighting shall not exceed 1.0 lux.

Comment: All exterior lighting will be installed consistent with County design requirements,

including installation of shielded lighting to ensure no significant light spillage to the adjoining roadways or area properties. The applicant has provided lighting plan details for exterior lighting, including courtyard, exterior façade, parking area and exterior stair lighting, demonstrating use of shielded lights.

Based on the above analysis:

- design plans and selected use of construction materials textures and colors and architectural designs are consistent with and complementary to the rolling hillside setting of the project;
- applicant has provided building section overlays with site section across the 300 ft elevation contour which demonstrate the proposed site improvements respond to the hillside setting by appropriately locating and stepping the building, driveway, parking areas and related improvements in response to site topography;
- reduction of building roof ridgeline heights by nearly two feet in response to DRC comments;
- provision of architectural renderings showing the visual relationship of the proposed project improvements to SR 12, and avoidance of building silhouetting above the site ridgeline to the west and north;
- enhancement of gable-end roofs with change in roof pitch;
- use of shielded lighting on building exteriors, courtyard, parking and driveway areas;
- proposed use of extensive landscaping around the proposed buildings, driveways, parking areas and related site improvements to soften the appearance of the proposed development from the SR 12 corridor;

The project design complies with the County's Visual Assessment Guidelines and Co-Dominant visual significance of the site based on the building design and site design elements, as well as being consistent with the Taylor, Sonoma, and Mayacamas Mountains Design Guidelines demonstrated through the proposed architectural, site improvement and landscape plan designs, and will therefore have a less than significant impact on a scenic vista.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant

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

SR 12/121 is a designated state scenic highway. As discussed above under item 1.a, the project design would utilize agrarian-themes and with buildings situated to avoid creation of a significant visual impact to the adjoining highway. Combined with the structure setbacks of at least 200 feet from the edge of the highway, along with use of site landscaping (trees and shrubs), there would no significant impact to the visual resources of the State highway. Additionally, no trees would be removed as part of the project, and there are no rock outcroppings present.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant

c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

See discussion above and findings under item 1.a. Based on project plans, the proposed buildings, landscape and lightings plans are in compliance with the Taylor, Sonoma, and Mayacamas Mountain Design Guidelines.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant

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

The project will add new structures to the site and therefore introduce new sources of light and glare. The County's standard development regulations, combined with provisions for commercial lighting under the Taylor, Sonoma, and Mayacamas Mountain Design Guidelines, minimizes the impact of new development by ensuring that exterior lighting is designed to prevent glare, and preclude the trespass of light on to adjoining properties and into the night sky. In response to DRC comments, the applicant has provided lighting plan details for exterior lighting, including courtyard, exterior façade, parking area and exterior stair lighting, demonstrating use of shielded lights.

Additionally, a standard condition of approval will be required: "Prior to issuance of the Building Permit, an exterior lighting plan shall be submitted to the Design Review Committee for review and approval. Exterior lighting is required to be fully shielded, and directed downward to prevent "wash out" onto adjacent properties. Generally fixtures should accept sodium vapor lamps and not be located at the periphery of the property. Flood lights are not allowed. The lighting shall be installed in accordance with the approved lighting plan during the construction phase."

The project will also require exterior lighting as necessary to comply with the California Building Code. A standard condition of approval requires new exterior lighting to be dark sky compliant, low mounted, downward casting and fully shielded to prevent glare. Lighting shall not wash out structures or any portions of the site. Light fixtures shall not be located at the periphery of the property and shall not spill over onto adjacent properties or into the night sky. Flood lights are not permitted. Lighting will be designed to shut off automatically after closing, and with security lighting motion-sensor activated. Prior to final occupancy of the project, the applicant is required to demonstrate compliance with exterior lighting requirements by providing PRMD photograph documentation of all exterior light fixtures installed. By incorporating standard conditions of approval, the project will not result in a new source of substantial light or glare with would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Significance Level:
Less than Significant

2. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES:

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

Would the project:

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

The entirety of the 58.65-acre project site is designated as Grazing Land/Other Land/Unique Farmland, with the winery improvements to be located on lands designated as Other Land and

Grazing Land. The project would not result in conversion of Prime or Unique agricultural lands or farmland of statewide importance to non-agricultural uses.

The California Department of Conservation identifies approximately 50.89 acres of the 58.65-acre project site as farmland for grazing. The project proposes development and operation of a new winery that supports continued agricultural use of the land. On August 22, 2024, the Sonoma County Agricultural Commission Department issued an Agricultural Development Permit for construction of new vineyard on a 20.47-acre portion of the grazing farmland area. Upon establishment of the vineyard, the existing agricultural use of the land will change from grazing on 50.89 acres to vineyard production on 20.47 acres. The thirty-plus acres of remaining grazing farmland is not part of the winery development area and the project does not therefore preclude availability of this portion of land for continued grazing use. The applicant will be required as a condition of project approval to rescind the existing Land Conservation Act contract for Non-Prime grazing and replace it with a new Prime contract for the vineyard production and compatible uses. The proposed winery development and operation does not therefore convert to non-agricultural use existing Farmland designated as Unique or of State Wide Importance.

Significance Level:
Less Than Significant

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

The project site is under a Type II Williamson Act contract (Ag Preserve 2-528-74 2864/44). The owner is currently leasing the property for grazing, consistent with contract requirements under the Sonoma County Uniform Rules for Agricultural Preserves and Farmland Security Zones. The Williamson Act program is designed to protect agricultural land for continued commercial agricultural use primarily for the production of food and fiber and other lands devoted to open-space and recreational uses.

The proposed winery use will not significantly compromise the long-term productive agricultural capability of the subject contracted parcel or parcels, nor will the proposed winery operation adversely impact the site's agricultural standing or status of the Williamson Act contract applicable to the site as winery uses are considered "Agricultural Support Uses" under Sonoma County's Uniform Rules for Agricultural Preserves and Farmland Security Zones.

The proposed winery will process winegrapes grown on-site. On August 22, 2024, the Sonoma County Agricultural Commission Department issued an Agricultural Development Permit for construction of new vineyard on a 20.47-acre portion of the 58.65-acre site. Upon establishment of the vineyard, the existing agricultural use of the land will change from 50.89 acres of Non-Prime grazing use to 20.47 acres of Prime vineyard production. The proposed winery operation and promotional tasting room and event activities are allowed as compatible uses under the County's Uniform Rules and the 61,993 square-feet of proposed site development and improvements is within the 5-acre maximum limitation for compatible use area. The applicant will be required to apply for a new Land Conservation Act contract to rescind the existing non-prime contract for grazing and replace it with a new Prime contract for vineyard production operation and compatible winery uses.

The project site is zoned LIA and supports Land Intensive Agriculture uses. Sonoma County Zoning Code Section 26-06.030 allows for agricultural processing, including wine production, while the tasting room and related events use are subject to approval of a use permit

Significance Level:
Less Than Significant

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

The subject property is zoned LEIA (Land Intensive Agriculture) and contains no forest land or timberland zoned for Timberland Production with which or for which construction of a new winery facility may otherwise conflict or require rezoning.

Significance Level:

No Impact

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

The project site is primarily grazing lands, with remnants of the former dairy production operation (foundations, small accessory structures, pads) still in place. There are no forest lands on the project site, nor would the project result in the conversion of forest land to non-forest uses.

Significance Level:

No Impact

- e) **Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?**

No conversion of existing farmland to non-agricultural use or of existing forest land to non-forest use is proposed. The California Department of Conservation identifies approximately 50.89 acres of the 58.65-acre project site as farmland for grazing. The project proposes development and operation of a new winery that supports continued agricultural use of the farmland. On August 22, 2024, the Sonoma County Agricultural Commission Department issued an Agricultural Development Permit for construction of new vineyard on a 20.47-acre portion of the current farmland area. Upon establishment of the vineyard, the existing agricultural use of the land will change from grazing on 50.89 acres to vineyard production on 20.47 acres. The thirty-plus acres of remaining grazing farmland is not proposed for winery development and the project does not therefore preclude continued grazing use of this portion of land. The applicant will be required to apply for a new Land Conservation Act contract to replace the existing conservation plan for grazing to a new Prime contract for the vineyard operation and compatible winery uses.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

3. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations.

Would the project:

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

Comment:

The main purpose of an air quality plan is to bring an area into compliance with the requirements of federal and State air quality standards. Air quality plans describe air pollution control strategies to be implemented by a city, county, or region. The project site is under the jurisdiction of the Bay Area Air

Quality Management District (BAAQMD). The BAAQMD is in attainment for all criteria pollutants and does not have an adopted air quality plan. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict or obstruct an applicable plan.

The Sonoma County General Plan Resource Conservation Element addresses pollutants from mobile sources (e.g., transportation sources). The project will create traffic, therefore the following goal would be relevant to the proposed project:

Goal RC-13: Preserve and maintain good air quality and provide for an air quality standard that will protect human health and preclude crop, plant, and property damage in accordance with requirements of the federal and State CAA's (Clean Air Act).

State and Federal standards have been established for the "criteria pollutants": ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, and particulate (PM10 and PM2.5). To determine whether standards for any of these pollutants would be violated, the emissions from both stationary and mobile sources must be considered. Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) adopted CEQA thresholds of significance were used to evaluate the significance of criteria air pollutants.

Geosyntec consultants (March 2023) used the California Emissions Estimator Model, Version 2020.4.0 (CalEEMod) to predict construction emissions from the project in the form of CO₂e. CalEEMod is a computer model developed by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) with cooperation of other California Air Districts to estimate air pollutant and GHG emissions from land use development projects. This model also predicts emissions associated with construction activities from land use projects. The model is recommended by the BAAQMD for use in estimating emissions from land use development projects.

Air pollutant emissions are based on the CalEEMod modeling that predicts air pollutant emissions in the form of ozone precursors (i.e., reactive organic gases [ROG] and nitrogen oxides [NO_x]) along with respirable particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10 micrometers or less (PM10) and fine particulate matter that has an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5 micrometers or less (PM2.5). The results of the CalEEMod modeling are provided in section 3.b below, which demonstrates the project will comply with General Plan policy.

Operational and construction-related criteria pollutant emissions resulting from the proposed project would not exceed BAAQMD significance thresholds, it would not conflict with the County's efforts to meet federal and state air quality standards. The proposed project will be required to comply with all applicable rules and regulations applying to GHG emissions and air quality as set forth by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), the State of California, and BAAQMD, are further discussed below.

Additionally, the proposed Project must comply with the California Office of Planning and Research (OPR) CEQA Guidelines (OPR 2022) for the analysis and mitigation, as necessary, of GHG and criteria pollutant emissions.

Overall, the project's air quality/GHG emission analysis found that all potential GHG emissions and air quality impacts resulting from the proposed project would be less than significant, and compliance with all USEPA, California, and BAAQMD rules and regulations regarding GHG emissions and air quality is expected.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

- b) **Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable Federal or State ambient air quality standard?**

Comment:

None of the analyzed criteria pollutants would exceed BAAQMD's regional emissions thresholds during construction or operations of the proposed Project. Thus, the Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any non-attainment criteria pollutant, and its impact would be less than significant.

The construction activities for the proposed project are anticipated to include site preparation, grading, building construction, architectural coating, and paving of parking lots and other areas. The project construction emissions, presented below, were estimated to determine regional air quality impacts to the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin.

Construction-Related Air Quality Impacts

CalEEMod was used to calculate the construction-related regional emissions from the proposed project. No emissions mitigation measures were accounted for in this analysis; thus emissions estimates reflect the worst-case unmitigated emissions scenario. The worst-case daily criteria pollutant emissions resulting from each phase of construction for the proposed project are shown below.

Construction-Related Criteria Pollutant Emissions

| Construction Phase | Criteria Pollutant Emissions ^{1, 2} (lb/day) | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| | ROG | NOX | Exhaust PM10 | Exhaust PM2.5 |
| Site Preparation | 1.27 | 13.1 | 0.50 | 0.46 |
| Grading | 1.52 | 23.6 | 0.64 | 0.59 |
| Building Construction | 1.75 | 13.6 | 0.54 | 0.52 |
| Paving | 1.06 | 8.13 | 0.40 | 0.37 |
| Architectural Coating | 33.5 | 1.23 | 0.061 | 0.061 |
| Maximum Daily Emissions | 33.5 | 23.6 | 0.64 | 0.59 |
| BAAQMD Threshold ³ | 54 | 54 | 82 | 54 |
| Exceeds Threshold? | No | No | No | No |

Notes:

¹ Emissions calculated using CalEEMod 2020.4.0.

² PM10 and PM2.5 exhaust emissions.

³ Source: BAAQMD California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Air Quality Guidelines (2017)

The above table shows that none of the analyzed criteria pollutants would exceed BAAQMD's regional maximum daily emissions thresholds during any phase of construction.

The ongoing operations of the proposed project would result in a long-term increase in airborne criteria pollutant emissions. This increase would be due to vehicle emissions resulting from visitor, employee, and shipping trips, as well as emissions associated with energy usage and the operation of equipment used in winery processes. This section provides an analysis of potential long-term regional air quality impacts associated with ongoing operations of the proposed project.

Operations-Related Regional Air Quality Impacts

Regional air quality impacts resulting from the operational phase of the proposed project were analyzed using CalEEMod emissions modeling software. The input parameters utilized in this

analysis are detailed in Section 6.1. Emissions of ROG, NO_x, CO, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} associated with the project were estimated using CalEEMod, and compared to the BAAQMD daily significance thresholds presented in their *Air Quality CEQA Guidelines* (BAAQMD 2017) in assessing the project's potential impacts on air quality. Criteria pollutant emissions that would be generated during the proposed project's long-term operations are summarized below.

Operational-Related Criteria Pollutant Emissions

| Activity | Criteria Pollutant Emissions ¹ (lb/day) | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | ROG | NOX | CO | PM10 | PM2.5 |
| Area Sources | 1.30 | < 0.01 | 0.015 | < 0.01 | < 0.01 |
| Energy Usage | 0.023 | 0.21 | 0.18 | 0.016 | 0.016 |
| Mobile Sources | 1.12 | 1.41 | 10.0 | 2.24 | 0.61 |
| Total Emissions | 2.44 | 1.62 | 10.2 | 2.25 | 0.63 |
| BAAQMD Threshold ² | 54 | 54 | — | 82 | 54 |
| Exceeds Threshold? | No | No | NA | No | No |

Notes:

¹ Emissions calculated using CalEEMod 2020.4.0.

² Source: BAAQMD California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Air Quality Guidelines (2017)

The table shows that the proposed project's combined daily emissions of criteria pollutants due to winery operations would not exceed any of the BAAQMD daily maximum threshold, and would therefore not significantly affect regional air quality in the SFBAAB.

Local CO Impacts from Project-Generated Vehicular Trips

CO is the pollutant of major concern along roadways because motor vehicle emissions are the primary source of CO. For this reason, concentrations of CO generated by a roadway network are usually indicative of the local air quality and are thus used as an indicator of potential local air quality impacts. Local air quality impacts can be assessed by comparing future air quality scenarios with and without project CO emissions to the state and federal CO concentration standards (CAAQS and NAAQS) of 20 ppm as a one-hour average, and 9 ppm as an eight-hour average.

Project-specific mobile source emissions would result from additional traffic associated with employee and visitor travel, as determined by annual days of winery operations and frequency of special events. As discussed in Section 6.1, the average and peak daily traffic volumes were conservatively estimated based on an average of 65 visitors per day, for 365 days per year, with a maximum number of 135 visitors on any given day, an additional 200 maximum additional visitors on 28 days of the year attending special events, and the daily commutes of 15 full-time employees.

Certain types of projects, including small projects which OPR identifies as generating fewer than 110 new vehicle trips per day, are unlikely to have a VMT impact and can therefore be screened from further VMT analysis. The proposed Project was thus screened as part of the Traffic Impact Study (W-Trans 2023), and based on the calculated final ADT volume of 103 average daily trips, which assumes an average of 2.5 occupants per vehicle for guests and event attendees, and single-occupancy employee commutes, the increase in average daily traffic volumes due to project operations was below the screening threshold. Therefore, no further VMT analysis was conducted.

Given the proposed project's status as a small project for considerations of traffic impacts based on OPR's screening threshold, we can conclude that BAAQMD's 44,000 vehicles per hour screening level would not be exceeded at any intersections. There would thus be no potential for a CO hot spot or exceedance of state or federal CO ambient air quality standards. The increase in

traffic activity associated with the proposed project's ongoing operations is thus not anticipated to significantly affect local air quality.

In addition to the construction period thresholds of significance, the BAAQMD requires the implementation of Basic Construction Mitigation Measures to reduce construction fugitive dust impacts to a less-than-significant level. Implementation of Regulatory Control Mitigation Measure AIR-1 would ensure that the proposed project incorporates the Basic Construction Mitigation Measures and ensures that short-term construction period air quality impacts would be less than significant.

Significance Level:

Less than significant with Mitigation

Mitigation:

AIR-1 Mitigation: Project applicant shall implement during construction the following Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) Standard Construction Mitigation Measures:

- a. All exposed surfaces (e.g., parking areas, staging areas, soil piles, graded areas, and unpaved access roads) shall be watered two times per day.
- b. All haul trucks transporting soil, sand, or other loose material off site shall be covered.
- c. All visible mud or dirt tracked-out onto adjacent public roads shall be removed using wet power vacuum street sweepers at least once per day. The use of dry power sweeping is prohibited.
- d. All vehicle speeds on unpaved roads shall be limited to 15 miles per hour.
- e. All roadways, driveways, and sidewalks to be paved shall be completed as soon as possible.
- f. Building pads shall be laid as soon as possible after grading unless seeding or soil binders are used.
- g. Idling times shall be minimized either by shutting equipment off when not in use or reducing the maximum idling time to 5 minutes (as required by the California Airborne Toxics Control Measure Title 13, Section 2485 of California Code of Regulations [CCR]). Clear signage shall be provided for construction workers at all access points.
- h. All construction equipment shall be maintained and properly tuned in accordance with manufacturers' specifications. All equipment shall be checked by a certified mechanic and determined to be running in proper condition prior to operation.
- i. A publicly-visible sign shall be posted with the telephone number and person to contact at Sonoma County regarding dust complaints. This person shall respond and take corrective action within 48 hours. The BAAQMD's phone number shall also be visible to ensure compliance with applicable regulations.

AIR-1 Monitoring: Permit Sonoma staff shall verify that the AIR-1 measures are included on all site alteration, grading, building or improvement plans prior to issuance of grading or building permits. The applicant shall submit documentation to Permit Sonoma staff that a Construction Coordinator has been designated and that appropriate signage has been posted including the Coordinator's phone number. Documentation may include photographic evidence or a site inspection, at the discretion of Permit Sonoma staff.

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Comment:

Due to several factors, including the remote location of the Site and relatively short construction duration, the proposed Project would not pose a substantial health risk to nearby sensitive receptors.

The proposed project would result in the short-term emissions of diesel particulate matter (DPM) in the exhaust of off-road, heavy-duty diesel equipment used during the construction phase. Additionally, during the Project's operational phase, DPM emissions would be present in the exhaust of diesel-fueled shipping and delivery trucks used on-site.

When determining the potential health risks associated with a project due to TAC exposure, the primary factors of concern are the concentration of TACs to which receptors are exposed and the long-term duration of exposure. Health risks estimated for an exposed individual are typically higher if the concentration of TACs is high and the exposure occurs over a long period of time, typically an average lifetime of 70 years.

Construction activities associated with the proposed project will occur for approximately one year and will utilize relatively few pieces of off-road diesel equipment. Project operations will utilize a limited fleet of delivery and shipping trucks as necessary for the relatively small facility and will not involve the regular use of diesel-fueled stationary sources. Thus, both DPM concentrations and exposure durations would be limited. Additionally, the remote site location, scarcity of nearby receptors, and the highly dispersive properties of DPM would further reduce the likelihood of significant TAC exposures. Therefore, the proposed project would not pose a substantial health risk to nearby sensitive receptors.

The project is located more than 300 feet from the nearest off-site residence and is not located near any other sensitive receptor or population (school, hospital, nursing facility, etc.). The project will not emit a substantial pollutant concentration based on the analysis under Section 3 b. above.

Significance Level:
No Impact

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

Comment:

Any odor impacts resulting from the proposed project would be short-term and would not be objectionable to a substantial number of people. Though the project does include agricultural and food processing land uses, they would not result in unfamiliar odors that substantially differ from those already produced by existing land uses in the vicinity and thus odors associated with winery operations would not be considered significant.

Project construction equipment and activities may generate odors. Primary construction odor sources include diesel exhaust emissions from equipment operating on site. There may be situations where construction activity odors would be noticeable by the few nearby residents, but these odors would not be unfamiliar or necessarily objectionable. Additionally, the odors would be temporary and would dissipate rapidly from the source with an increase in distance.

Significance Level:
No impact

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES:

Would the project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Comment:

The project site was previously developed and operated as a dairy and contains areas that have been previously disturbed. Several buildings associated with the dairy were destroyed during the Nuns Fire in 2017 and removed from the site. Since that time, the site has remained vacant with

little activity occurring and natural regrowth of local vegetation taking place.

Wildlife Research Associates and Jane Valerius Environmental Consulting have evaluated the project's potential impacts on identified special status plant and wildlife species and natural communities. The team presents its conclusions for the project in its June 28, 2023, *Habitat Assessment*. The assessment evaluates potential affects of project proposed site improvements and associated disturbances on several special status species known to occur in the local area, including 44 plant species and 64 wildlife species. The study also evaluates the suitability of existing site vegetation for supporting potential bird habitat.

Information on Special Status plant species was compiled through a review of the literature and database search. Database searches for known occurrences of Special Status species focused on the Sonoma, Sears Point, Napa and Cuttings Wharf U.S. Geologic Service 7.5-minute topographic quadrangles, which provided a five-mile radius around the proposed project area. The following sources were reviewed to determine which Special Status plant and wildlife species have been documented in the vicinity of the project site:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information on Planning and Conservation (IPaC) (USFWS 2023)
- USFWS list of Special Status animals for Sonoma County (USFWS 2023)
- California Natural Diversity Database records (CNDDB) (CDFW 2023)
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Special Animals List (CDFW 2023),
- State and Federally Listed Endangered and Threatened Animals of California (CDFW 2023)
- California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Electronic Inventory records (CNPS 2023)
- California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) publication "California's Wildlife, Volumes I-III" (Zeiner, *et al.* 1990)

As required by CDFW protocols, the entire site was walked and all plant species identifiable at the time of the site visit were recorded. The site was also evaluated for small mammal burrows and surveyed for suitable potential habitat for nesting birds and roosting bat habitat, noting presence of cavities, old bird nests and squirrel nests in trees. The reconnaissance-level site visit was intended only as an evaluation of on-site and adjacent habitat types, and no special status animal species surveys were conducted as part of this effort. The discussion below summarizes the findings of the report and the recommended measures to address potential impacts to identified species.

California Red-legged Frog

California red-legged frogs breed primarily in ponds, but will also breed in slow moving streams, or deep pools in intermittent streams. Inhabited ponds are typically permanent, at least 2 feet (0.6 meters) in depth, and contain emergent and shoreline vegetation. Sufficient pond depth and shoreline cover are both critical, because they provide means of escape from predators of the frogs (Stebbins 2003, Tatarian 2008). Non-breeding CRF have been found in both aquatic and upland habitats. Although the majority of individuals prefer dense, shrubby or emergent vegetation, closely associated with deep (>0.7 meters) still, or slow moving water, some individuals use habitats that are removed from aquatic habitats (Tatarian 2008).

Although the site is within the range of the species and there is aquatic habitat on the site, the nearest reported presence occurs more than three miles west of the project area. In addition, the aquatic habitat is insufficient to provide breeding or non-breeding habitat based on the dense presence of the water fern creating shallow conditions and no open water in the pond. No impact is anticipated.

Western Pond Turtle

The Western Pond Turtle is a Federal Special Concern Species and California Species of Special Concern. Primary habitats for this medium sized turtle include permanent water sources such as

ponds, streams and rivers. It is often seen basking on logs, mud banks or mats of vegetation. Although it is an aquatic species with webbed feet, it can move across land in response to fluctuating water levels, an apparent adaptation to the variable rainfall and unpredictable flows that occur in many coastal California drainage basins. In addition, it can over-winter on land or in water or remain active in the winter, depending on environmental conditions. Females travel from aquatic sites into open, grassy areas to lay eggs in a shallow nest. Nests have been reported from 2- 400 meters or more away from water bodies (Thomson et al. 2016).

This species was not observed within the pond. This species has been reported to occur less than one mile west of the study area. The aquatic habitat is insufficient to provide breeding or non-breeding habitat based on the dense presence of the water fern creating shallow conditions and no open water in the pond despite a heavy winter rain of 2022-2023. No impact is anticipated.

Nesting Birds

Passerines (perching birds) are a special status species of bird known to build nests in grasslands and buildings in the vicinity of the site. Species in this section include loggerhead shrike, western meadowlark, song sparrow, and black phoebe. The assessment team observed several on-site occurrences of the species during its field study, including song sparrow in grassland areas and black phoebes in remaining buildings.

Birds play important roles in the ecosystem, including pollinators, dispersers, scavengers, and predators. As early as February, passerines begin courtship and once paired, they begin nest building, often around the beginning of March. Nest structures vary in shapes, sizes and composition and can include stick nests, mud nests, matted reeds and cavity nests. For example, black phoebes may build a stick nest under the eaves of a building. Depending on environmental conditions, young birds may fledge from the nest as early as May and, if the prey base is large, the adults may lay a second clutch of eggs. Nesting bird surveys were not conducted as part of this habitat assessment.

Disturbance during the nesting season (February 15- August 15) may result in the potential nest abandonment and mortality of young, which is considered a “take” of an individual and if not sufficiently addressed, may result in a potentially significant impact under CEQA. To avoid nesting disturbance and therefore reduce impact potential to less than significant levels for this species, adequate mitigation measures are identified under BIO-1 below.

Roosting Bats

Bat species typically found using buildings in this region include pallid bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, big brown bat, California myotis, western long-eared myotis (*Myotis evotis*), fringed myotis (*Myotis thysanodes*), long-legged myotis (*Myotis volans*), Yuma myotis and Mexican free-tailed bat.

The project includes the demolition of existing buildings onsite leftover from the previous use. Demolition of these buildings may cause direct mortality of roosting bats that use the structures, if the structures are removed during seasonal periods of inactivity (maternity season or winter), or without first conducting humane bat eviction or partial dismantling under supervision of a qualified bat biologist experienced with bats using man-made roosts.

In the case of buildings to be demolished for redevelopment, there are only two effective methods for getting bats, if present, out of the structure. The first, utilized mainly when the building is in good condition or will not be demolished, and the work is feasible, is “humane eviction”, or “bat exclusion”, which relies on the bats’ ability to fly out of the roost. In this method, all potential, but currently unused entry points into the structure are sealed. The active entry points are fitted with one-way exits, which are left in place 7-10 days to allow all bats to emerge normally during nightly feeding flights. The one-way exits are then removed and the remaining openings sealed until demolition if it will occur more than 30 days after demolition. If the interval between successful eviction and demolition will be short (less than 4 weeks), the one-way exits may often be left in

place until demolition. This work must be conducted by, or under direct supervision or instruction by a bat biologist qualified in humane bat eviction methods and materials. A bat habitat assessment of the buildings was not conducted for this report. Refer to mitigation measures identified for details on avoidance measures of these roosting bat species.

This project would not 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 by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), with incorporation of mitigation measures identified below.

Significance Level:

Less than significant with Mitigation

Mitigation:

BIO-1 Mitigation: The following mitigation measures shall be implemented to reduce potential impacts on nesting passerines to a less than significant level:

- A. Habitat Removal. Potential nesting habitat (grasslands and buildings) shall be removed during the non-nesting season between February 1 and August 31. Removal activities shall be conducted following best management practices as published in Wildlife Research Associates and Jane Valerius Environmental Consulting's June 28, 2023, *Habitat Assessment*.
- B. Pre-Construction Survey. If removal between September 1 and January 31 is infeasible and removal must occur within the nesting season, a pre-construction nesting bird survey of the habitats shall be performed by a qualified biologist within 7 days of groundbreaking. If no nesting birds are observed no further action is required and habitat removal shall occur within one week of the survey to prevent "take" of individual birds that could begin nesting after the survey.
- C. Buffer Zone. If active bird nests are observed during the pre-construction survey, a disturbance-free buffer zone shall be established around the nest habitat(s) until the young have fledged, as determined by a qualified biologist.
 - 1) The radius of the required buffer zone can vary depending on the species, (i.e., 75-100 feet for passerines), with the dimensions of any required buffer zones to be determined by a qualified biologist in consultation with CDFW.
 - 2) To delineate the buffer zone around a nesting habitat, orange construction fencing shall be placed at the specified radius from the base of the structure that supports the nest within which no machinery or workers shall intrude.
 - 3) After the fencing is in place there will be no restrictions on grading or construction activities outside the prescribed buffer zones.

BIO-1 Monitoring: Permit Sonoma shall include this mitigation measure in the conditions of approval for any planning, grading and building permits. Permit Sonoma staff shall ensure pre-construction surveys have been completed, with notification provided to CDFW if active bird nests are identified, and ensure placement of protective fencing.

BIO-2 Mitigation: The following mitigation measures shall be implemented to reduce potential impacts on roosting bats to a less than significant level:

- A. Habitat Assessment. To ensure no take of roosting bats which may be present, a bat habitat assessment shall be conducted by a qualified bat biologist. This assessment should be conducted six months in advance of site disturbance and structure removals. The qualified bat biologist shall provide the details and methods to utilize for preventing take of any

present bats.

- B. Habitat Removal. Based on the habitat assessment, potential bat nesting habitat (grasslands and buildings) may be removed in Spring (between March 1 and April 15, or after evening temperatures rise above 45F and/or no more than ½" of rainfall occurs within 24 hours) or in Fall (between September 1 and October 15, or before evening temperatures fall below 45F and/or more than ½" of rainfall occurs within 24 hours). Removal activities shall be conducted following best management practices as published in Wildlife Research Associates and Jane Valerius Environmental Consulting's June 28, 2023, *Habitat Assessment*.
- C. Pre-Construction Survey. To be based on habitat assessment.
- D. Buffer Zone. If active roosting bats are observed during the pre-construction survey, a disturbance-free buffer zone shall be established around the bat roosting habitat(s) for a period of time to be determined by a qualified biologist.
 - 1) The radius of the required bat roosting buffer shall be 100 feet or more for roosting bats.
 - 2) To delineate the buffer zone around roosting bat habitat, orange construction fencing shall be placed at the specified radius from the base of the structure that supports the nest within which no machinery or workers shall intrude.
 - 3) After the fencing is in place there will be no restrictions on grading or construction activities outside the prescribed buffer zone.

BIO-2 Monitoring: Permit Sonoma shall include this mitigation measure in the conditions of approval for any planning, grading and building permits. Permit Sonoma staff shall ensure the results of the bat habitat assessment have been submitted to CDFW for written acceptance prior to commencing project activities, and bat protection measures enacted prior to site disturbance and structure removals.

b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Comment:

The project area is located within the Bay Delta Province (CDFW 2015). This province has two subregions: the San Francisco Bay Area and the Delta. The San Francisco Bay Area subregion consists of the low-lying baylands, aquatic environments, and watersheds that drain into San Francisco Bay, surrounded by low coastal mountains. The region receives 90 percent of its surface water from the Sierra Nevada via major Central Valley creeks and rivers that feed the Delta. Other rivers draining into the Bay include the Napa, Petaluma, and Guadalupe rivers and Sonoma, Petaluma, Alameda, and Coyote creeks. The shorelines contain coastal salt marsh, coastal scrub, tidal mudflats, and salt ponds. Upland areas support a mixture of grasslands, chamise chaparral, and live oak and blue oak woodlands. The proposed project site is located within the southeastern portion of the Sonoma topographic quadrangle, in the unsectioned portion of the Huichica Rancheria. The site is located west of Huichica Creek and east of Schell Creek, with all drainages in the area draining south into the San Pablo Bay. Topographically, the parcel is located on a south-facing slope, between 230 feet in elevation in the north and 170 feet in elevation in the south.

The Habitat Assessment prepared for the project evaluated the potential for impacts to special status plants and natural communities as part of the project. Special status plant species are those species that are legally protected under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) and/or the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) as listed or proposed for listing as threatened or

endangered, as well as species that are considered rare by the scientific community. The assessment identified two vegetation communities present on the 7.25-acre site, Wild Oat Grassland and Freshwater Emergent Marsh. Additionally, a total of 44 special status plant species were considered for their potential to occur within the project boundaries.

The non-native grassland (Wild Oat Grassland) habitat occurring on the site is relatively dense consisting of non-native wild oats and Harding grass along with other non-native grasses. The grassland area contains a mix of other non-native grasses including bromes, hare barley, ryegrass, rattail fescue, prickly lettuce, and other species. The only native plants noted were coyote brush and willow herb. and dominated by invasive species including mustard and thistle.

The site contains an formerly used wastewater pond that was associated with the previous dairy use. The pond was observed with shallow standing water during the inspection that supports emergent freshwater marsh wetland vegetation around the pond's edges along with floating aquatic vegetation. Plant species found along the pond edges include broadleaf cattail, spikerush, curly dock, rabbitsfoot grass, dallis grass, cocklebur, and mosquito fern. Based on these conditions, the pond and marsh habitat does not provide suitable conditions for any of the special status species known to occur in the vicinity.

Many species were considered to have no potential to occur on the project site either because these species are restricted to areas with serpentinite, volcanic or rocky substrates which are lacking within the study area, or the species occurs in habitats not present within the study area such as chaparral, lower montane coniferous forest, closed-cone coniferous forest, North Coast coniferous forest, bogs and fens, marshes and swamps, coastal bluff scrub, coastal prairie, coastal scrub and vernal pools. The site also does not support any manzanita or Ceanothus shrub species. No special status plant species or communities were observed present on the project site during the site inspection. Due to the lack of special status species present on the site and unlikely to occur, this project would not 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 CDFW or USFWS.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

- c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?**

Comment:

Wetlands are generally considered to be areas that are periodically or permanently inundated by surface or groundwater, and support vegetation adapted to life in saturated soil. Wetlands are recognized as important features on a regional and national level due to their high inherent value to fish and wildlife, use as storage areas for storm and flood waters, and water recharge, filtration, and purification functions. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), CDFW, and Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) have jurisdiction over modifications to stream channels, river banks, lakes, and other wetland features. The USACE's jurisdiction is established through the provisions of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which prohibits the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. without a permit, including certain wetlands and unvegetated "other waters of the U.S." The jurisdictional authority of the RWQCB is established pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, which typically requires a water quality certification when an individual or nationwide permit is issued by the USACE. The RWQCB also has jurisdiction over waters of the State under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act.

The majority of the site does not contain wetland features or waters of the U.S., however two areas on the site have been identified as potential areas that fall under this category. The onsite pond is both a wetland and a waters of the U.S. and State. The site also features a ditch parallel to the SR 12/121 frontage within the project area which does support some limited wetland vegetation, such as rabbits foot grass and may potentially qualify as a water of the U.S. by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and as a waters of the state by the state RWQCB. This drainage does not

appear as blue-line drainage on the USGS topographic quadrangle.

A formal delineation was not conducted for the site. However, no mitigation is required as the project will avoid the ditch and pond; consequently, there will be no impacts associated with the proposed project with incorporation of standard water quality permitting. Additionally, there will be a 15-foot wide buffer between the development and the pond. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be developed for the site along with a required State Construction General Permit, which will provide for monitoring and reporting requirements to ensure that water quality regulations will be met. Further, stormwater pollution prevention measures will be implemented where any runoff from the development will be diverted around the pond through bioswales.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

Comment:

The open grasslands on the parcel allow for unimpeded movement. Full buildout of this site is not expected as the site will incorporate onsite vineyards to support the proposed winery. Wildlife connectivity of this site to other open lands in the area occurs within the grasslands located to the north of the existing and proposed buildings. Smaller animals may use the drainage located parallel to SR 12/121 and cross under the highway through the culvert on the southwest side of the parcel. As a result, no impacts to movement corridors for wildlife will occur. Additionally, no trees will be removed, and approximately 170 new trees will be planted as part of the project (which are not considered desirable nesting sites for migratory birds).

Significance Level:

Less than significant

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

Comment:

This project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance. Tree removal or timber conversions within Sonoma County require approval of a use permit. County Code Section 26D (Heritage or Landmark Trees) provides regulations on tree preservation and removal within the County. While the project is subject to this tree preservation ordinance, no heritage trees are proposed for removal. While no trees are proposed for removal, the project will add approximately 100 24-inch box trees per the conceptual landscape planting plan. In addition to the tree preservation ordinance, the County has adopted the following General Plan policies relative to tree protection.

- Goal OSRC-7: Protect and enhance the County's natural habitats and diverse plant and animal communities.
- Objective OSRC-7.5: Maintain connectivity between natural habitat areas.
- Objective OSRC-7.6: Establish standards and programs to protect native trees and plant communities.
- Objective OSRC-7.8: Encourage voluntary efforts to restore and enhance biotic habitat.

As previously mentioned, the project will not result in the removal of any heritage trees identified by local ordinance, and will improve the site with new tree plantings as part of the landscaping improvements of the winery. The development will continue to allow natural habitat areas to maintain connectivity around the site and to adjoining properties. The site will be developed with a relatively low use urban intensity in relation to the scale of the site and the proposed vineyard use

on the balance of the vacant land to remain.

Significance Level:
No Impact

f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state Habitat Conservation Plan?

Comment:

Habitat conservation plans and natural community conservation plans are site specific plans to address effects on sensitive species of plants and animals. The project site is not located in an area subject to a habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. As a result, no impact is anticipated.

Significance Level:
No Impact

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES:

Would the project:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?

Comment:

Alta Archaeological Consulting, LLC has prepared for the project a cultural resources inventory satisfying the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, and the responsibilities codified in Public Resource Code sections 5097, and it's implementing guidelines 21082 and 21083.2. ALTA conducted its archaeological field survey of the subject property on February 19, 2018. The survey entailed a cultural resources inventory of the area of potential effect (APE) within the property parcels (58.65 acres), site recordation, and historic resource evaluation. Ground surface visibility was poor due to low lying grass. No prehistoric artifacts, features or sites were observed.

A previously identified cultural resource (P-49-4222) and a National Register District (P-49-4219), consisting of the Stornetta Brothers Dairy are present within the project area. In October 2017, the buildings associated with this site were destroyed by the Altas wildfire. Consequently, these resources lack integrity and are no longer eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places nor the California Register of Historic Resources. Currently, no significant historic resources are present within the project area. The project, as presently designed, is not anticipated to have an adverse effect on historic resources

Significance Level:
Less than significant

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

Comment:

No prehistoric artifacts, features or sites were observed based on site investigation. See mitigation below, for application of the County's standard condition of approval to ensure that any cultural or archaeological resources which may be discovered on the project site during development are protected if unearthed during ground disturbing activities.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant with Mitigation.

Mitigation:

CUL-1 Mitigation: The following NOTE shall be printed on all grading and building permit plan sheets:

“In the event historic or cultural resources are discovered during construction activities, Project personnel shall halt all activities in the immediate area and notify a qualified archaeologist to determine the appropriate course of action.”

“The final disposition of archaeological, historical, and paleontological resources recovered on State lands under the jurisdiction of the California State Lands Commission must be approved by the Commission.”

CUL-1 Monitoring: Prior to issuance of grading and building permits, the Project Planner will verify the note is printed on all grading and building permit plan sheets.

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

Comment:

There are no known archaeological resources on the site, but the project could uncover such materials during construction. In the event that human remains are unearthed during construction, state law requires that the County Coroner be contacted in accordance with Section 7050.5 of the State Health and Safety Code to investigate the nature and circumstances of the discovery. If the remains were determined to be Native American interment, the Coroner will follow the procedure outlined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15065.5(e).

A standard condition of approval requires the following language be printed on the grading and building plans:

NOTES ON PLANS: “If human remains are encountered, all work must stop in the immediate vicinity of the discovered remains and PRMD staff, County Coroner and a qualified archaeologist must be notified immediately so that an evaluation can be performed. If the remains are deemed to be Native American and prehistoric, the Native American Heritage Commission must be contacted by the Coroner so that a “Most Likely Descendant” can be designated.””

In order to ensure that no cultural or archaeological resources are unearthed during ground disturbing activities, standard project conditions of approval require the following cultural resources note be printed on plan sheets.”

“During construction activities, if archaeological remains are uncovered, work at the place of discovery should be halted immediately until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the finds pursuant to Government Code Section 15064.5. If archaeological materials such as pottery, arrowheads or midden are found, all work shall cease and PRMD staff shall be notified so that the find can be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist (i.e., an archaeologist registered with the Society of Professional Archaeologists). Artifacts associated with prehistoric sites include humanly modified stone, shell, bone or other cultural materials such as charcoal, ash and burned rock indicative of food procurement or processing activities. Prehistoric domestic features include hearths, fire pits, or house floor depressions whereas typical mortuary features are represented by human skeletal remains. Historic artifacts potentially include all by-products of human land use greater than 50 years of age including trash pits older than fifty years of age. The developer shall designate a Project Manager with authority to implement the mitigation prior to issuance of a building/grading permit.

When contacted, a member of PRMD Project Review staff and the archaeologist shall visit the site to determine the extent of the resources and to develop proper procedures required for the discovery. No work shall commence until a protection plan is completed and implemented subject to the review and approval of the archaeologist and Project Review staff. Mitigation may include avoidance, removal, preservation and/or recordation in accordance with accepted professional archaeological practice.”

“There are no known archaeological resources on the site, but the project could uncover such materials during construction. In the event that human remains are unearthed during construction, state law requires that the County Coroner be contacted in accordance with Section 7050.5 of the State Health and Safety Code to investigate the nature and circumstances of the discovery. If the remains were determined to be Native American interment, the Coroner will follow the procedure outlined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15065.5(e).”

Significance Level:
Less than significant

6. ENERGY:

Would the project:

- a) **Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?**

Comment:

The project will not result in significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation. Standard construction practices will be used. The project includes efficient use of land, orienting buildings to capture solar energy to the extent feasible, use of renewable and energy efficient building materials and systems, and reduced reliance on non-renewable resources.

Significance Level:
No Impact

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

Comment:

There is no state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. However, the new buildings will use renewable and energy efficient building materials and systems, and will have reduced reliance on non-renewable resources.

Significance Level:
No Impact

7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS:

Would the project:

- a) **Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:**

- i. **Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.**

Comment:

The site is not located in an Alquist-Priolo fault zone or on a known fault based on the Safety Maps in the Sonoma County General Plan. The closest known active fault is the Eastside Fault, located approximately one-quarter mile to the East, the Carneros and Napa Faults, located approximately two to three miles to the east, and the Rogers Fault, located approximately six miles to the west.

The Uniform Building Code has been developed to address seismic events in California and development which complies with the Code will result in buildings which should withstand the most severe reasonably anticipated seismic event.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

- ii. **Strong seismic ground shaking?**

Comment:

All of Sonoma County is subject to seismic shaking that would result from earthquakes along the San Andreas, Healdsburg-Rodgers Creek, and other faults. Predicting seismic events is not possible, nor is providing mitigation that can entirely reduce the potential for injury and damage that can occur during a seismic event. However, using accepted geotechnical evaluation techniques and appropriate engineering practices, potential injury and damage can be diminished, thereby exposing fewer people and less property to the effects of a major damaging earthquake.

Geotechnical considerations in design and construction of the project will include:

1. The presence of weak and compressible artificial fill.
2. Soil compaction considerations.
3. Foundation designs and related construction issues, including wine cave construction.
4. The potential of seismically induced settlement from liquefaction and soil densification.
5. The potential of seismically induced earth slumps and lateral spreading.

These are to be incorporated into project design, and addressed here as a project mitigation measure.

The design and construction of the new winery structures are subject to load and strength standards of the California Building Code as adopted and amended by the County of Sonoma (CBC), which take seismic shaking into account. Project conditions of approval require that building permits be obtained for all construction and that the project meet all standard seismic and soil test/compaction requirements.

The project would therefore meet seismic standards in the CBC and would not expose people to substantial risk of injury from seismic shaking.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

- iii. **Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?**

Comment:

The California Building Code (CBC) and the codes and policies of Sonoma County have been developed to address seismic hazards to the most reasonable extent possible. The development will have to comply with the design and construction in compliance with the seismic design requirement of the CBC, above.

Significance Level:
Less than significant

iv. Landslides?

Comment:

The area of the proposed winery development is located in an area of relatively unstable rock and soil units on slopes greater than 15%, and with landslides present north of south of the ridgeline on the property, pursuant to the Geology for Planning in Sonoma County Special Report 120 Slope Stability or per the California Landslides Inventory map at <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/maps-data>. Slope stability is addressed above.

A Site Stability Analysis was performed for the site by PJC & Associates in 2017. The analysis was conducted as part of the proposed vineyard development of the site. The analysis included surface reconnaissance, along with subsurface exploration conducted via excavation of 17 test pits, geologic mapping of the site, and review of geologic literature applicable to the site.

The analysis found presence of two active landslides on the project site, including a larger landslide area south of the ridgeline which may affect portions of the area for the proposed winery and tasting room development. The development has the potential to reactivate or enlarge this landslide area. The Site Stability Assessment recommended repair of the landslide area using a buttress fill; this Initial Study recommends that a project-specific design for the proposed winery and tasting room development be prepared based on the findings of the 2017 Site Stability Assessment. This is addressed below as a Mitigation Measure. Repair of this landslide area prior to site development would reduce the landslide hazard to less than significant. (Noted is that a smaller, second landslide area was identified onsite, though located further to the north and away from proposed development area. No action was recommended for this landslide.)

Significance Level:
Less than significant with Mitigation

Mitigation:

GEO-1 Mitigation: The active landslide located on the south-facing slope of the project site as depicted in the Site Stability Analysis prepared by PJC & Associates (September 17, 2017) shall be repaired utilizing a buttress fill or other method of repair to be based on a design to be prepared by a licensed geotechnical engineer.

GEO-1 Monitoring: Prior to grading or building permit issuance, Permit Sonoma shall review landslide mitigation plans submitted by a licensed geotechnical engineer. Once the plans have been approved, Permit Sonoma shall ensure inclusion of the landslide repair with the project grading plans, and completion of the landslide repair prior to issuance of any building permits.

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

Comment:

The project includes grading, cuts and fills which require the issuance of a grading permit. Unregulated grading, both during and post construction, has the potential to increase the volume of runoff from a site which could have adverse downstream flooding and further erosion impacts, and increase soil erosion on and off site which could adversely impact downstream water quality. County grading ordinance design requirements, adopted County grading standards and best management practices (such as silt fencing, straw wattles, construction entrances to control soil discharges, primary and secondary containment areas for petroleum products, paints, lime and other materials of concern, etc.), mandated limitations on work in wet weather, and standard grading inspection requirements, will be applied to the project, and are specifically designed to prevent soil erosion and loss of topsoil.

The County adopted grading ordinances and standards and related conditions of approval which enforce them are specific, and also require compliance with all standards and regulations adopted by the State and Regional Water Quality Control Board, such as the Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) requirements, Low Impact Development (LID) and any other adopted best management practices. Therefore, no significant adverse soil erosion or related soil erosion water quality impacts are expected given the mandated conditions and standards that need to be met.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

- c) **Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?**

Comment:

The flatter portions of the site closer to SR 12/121, primarily in the area of the historic dairy operations, consist of Holocene-era alluvium, deposited on fans, terraces, or basins, and is composed of sand, gravel, silt, and clay that are poorly sorted. The upslope area adjacent to this, where some of the winery and tasting room structures would be located are located in the Huichica Formation (early Pleistocene and Pliocene). These lands consist of gravel, sand, reworked tuff and clay. Sediments here are derived mostly from the Sonoma Volcanics, though there are common Franciscan clasts, with lesser amounts of clasts from the Great Valley Sequence and Tertiary marine formations.

Requirements to obtain grading permits, along with compliance with Mitigation Measures GEO-1 and GEO-2, above, will ensure that any potential instability related to the construction of driveways, parking lots, the wine cave and structures will be reviewed and methods implemented so that no on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse occurs. Soil and slope stability shall be further addressed in a project preliminary geotechnical study, and addressed in section 7 above as a project mitigation measure.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

- 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?**

Comment:

Potential impacts will be addressed through appropriate structural design and construction standards. Soil stability shall be further addressed in a project preliminary geotechnical study to confirm that soils on the project site are not considered expansive. The project will also be conditioned to require building permits to be approved in compliance with Building Code standards.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

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

Comment:

Sanitary sewage will be collected into septic tanks, treated to appropriate discharge levels via an engineered package treatment system and dispersed via a subsurface drip irrigation septic system in the area receiving percolation test approval from Sonoma County PRMD. A Wastewater

Feasibility Study has been prepared by NorCal Civil and submitted with the project application to PRMD addressing disposal of sanitary sewage and winery process wastewater. There is sufficient area available to disperse of the proposed sanitary wastewater from the project at acceptable application rates.

Winery process wastewater will be treated to acceptable irrigation levels by a separate package treatment system. Treated winery process wastewater will be stored in a pond or storage tank during periods of seasonal rain and saturation, when irrigation cannot occur. The project will be able to utilize its treated process wastewater for vineyard irrigation and winery landscaping to reduce any impact to groundwater supply. A wastewater site plan was provided with the project application to assist with review of the wastewater feasibility study and these project components. The project will be able to fully comply with County septic tank design and waste disposal.

Additionally, grape pomace generated by the winemaking operations will be collected in dumpsters onsite and routinely transported offsite for conversion into compost by a County approved composting operation. No onsite composting of grape pomace is currently planned.

Significance Level:
Less than significant

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

Comment:

There are no unique geological features which exist on the property. The geology of the site and the nature of the project make it unlikely that paleontological resources would be encountered or destroyed.

Significance Level:
No Impact

8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS:

Regulatory Setting

Executive Order S-3-05

The Governor announced on June 1, 2005, through Executive Order S-3-05, the following GHG emission reduction targets:

- By 2010, California shall reduce GHG emissions to 2000 levels;
- By 2020, California shall reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels; and
- By 2050, California shall reduce GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels.

Executive Order B-30-15

On April 29, 2015, Governor Brown issued Executive Order B-30-15. Therein, the Governor directed the following:

- Established a new interim statewide reduction target to reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.
- Ordered all state agencies with jurisdiction over sources of GHG emissions to implement measures to achieve reductions of GHG emissions to meet the 2030 and 2050 reduction targets.

- Directed CARB to update the Climate Change Scoping Plan to express the 2030 target in terms of million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent.

California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32)

In 2006, the California State Legislature adopted Assembly Bill (AB) 32 (codified in the California Health and Safety Code [HSC], Division 25.5 – California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006), which focuses on reducing GHG emissions in California to 1990 levels by 2020. HSC Division 25.5 defines GHGs as CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, HFCs, PFCs, and SF₆ and represents the first enforceable statewide program to limit emissions of these GHGs from all major industries with penalties for noncompliance. The law further requires that reduction measures be technologically feasible and cost effective. Under HSC Division 25.5, CARB has the primary responsibility for reducing GHG emissions. CARB is required to adopt rules and regulations directing state actions that would achieve GHG emissions reductions equivalent to 1990 statewide levels by 2020.

A specific requirement of AB 32 was to prepare a Climate Change Scoping Plan for achieving the maximum technologically feasible and cost-effective GHG emission reduction by 2020. CARB developed and approved the initial Scoping Plan in 2008, outlining the regulations, market-based approaches, voluntary measures, policies, and other emission reduction programs that would be needed to meet the 2020 statewide GHG emission limit and initiate the transformations needed to achieve the State's long-range climate objectives.

The First Update to the Scoping Plan was approved by CARB in May 2014 and built upon the initial Scoping Plan with new strategies and recommendations. In 2014, CARB revised the target using the GWP values from the IPCC AR4 and determined that the 1990 GHG emissions inventory and 2020 GHG emissions limit is 431 MMTCO₂e. CARB also updated the State's BAU 2020 emissions estimate to account for the effect of the 2007–2009 economic recession, new estimates for future fuel and energy demand, and the reductions required by regulation that were adopted for motor vehicles and renewable energy.

Senate Bill 97

SB 97, enacted in 2007, directed OPR to develop California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (*CEQA Guidelines*) “for the mitigation of GHG emissions or the effects of GHG emissions.” In December 2009, OPR adopted amendments to the *CEQA Guidelines*, Appendix G Environmental Checklist, which created a new resource section for GHG emissions and indicated criteria that may be used to establish significance of GHG emissions. Appendix F of the *CEQA Guidelines* states that, in order to ensure that energy implications are considered in project decisions, the potential energy implications of a project shall be considered in an EIR, to the extent relevant and applicable to the project. Appendix F of the *CEQA Guidelines* further states that a project's energy consumption and proposed conservation measures may be addressed, as relevant and applicable, in the Project Description, Environmental Setting, and Impact Analysis portions of technical sections, as well as through mitigation measures and alternatives.

Senate Bill 32 and Assembly Bill 197

In 2016, Senate Bill (SB) 32 and its companion bill AB 197, amended HSC Division 25.5 and established a new climate pollution reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, while including provisions to ensure the benefits of state climate policies reach into disadvantaged communities.

2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan Update

In response to SB 32 and the 2030 GHG reduction target, CARB approved the 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan Update (2017 Scoping Plan Update) in December 2017. The 2017 Scoping Plan Update outlines the proposed framework of action for achieving the 2030 GHG target of 40 percent reduction in GHG emissions relative to 1990 levels (CARB, 2017). CARB determined that the target Statewide 2030 emissions limit is 260 MMTCO₂e, and that further commitments will need to be made to achieve an additional reduction of 50 MMTCO₂e beyond current policies and programs. The cornerstone of the 2017 Scoping Plan Update is an expansion of the Cap-and-

Trade program to meet the aggressive 2030 GHG emissions goal and ensure achievement of the 2030 limit set forth by Executive Order B-30-15.

In the Update, CARB recommends statewide targets of no more than six metric tons CO₂e per capita by 2030 and no more than two metric tons CO₂e per capita by 2050. CARB acknowledges that since the statewide per capita targets are based on the statewide GHG emissions inventory that includes all emissions sectors in the State, it is appropriate for local jurisdictions to derive evidence-based local per-capita goals based on local emissions sectors and growth projections. To demonstrate how a local jurisdiction can achieve their long-term GHG goals at the community plan level, CARB recommends developing a geographically-specific GHG reduction plan (i.e., climate action plan) consistent with the requirements of CEQA Section 15183.5(b). A so-called “CEQA qualified” GHG reduction plan, once adopted, can provide local governments with a streamlining tool for project-level environmental review of GHG emissions, provided there are adequate performance metrics for determining project consistency with the plan.

Sonoma County Regional Climate Action Plan

Climate Action 2020 and Beyond (CA2020) was the regional climate action plan for Sonoma County, adopted by the Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA) on July 11, 2016. CA2020 was not adopted as a qualified GHG reduction plan due to legal challenges and subsequent court decision. However, the underlying GHG emissions analysis and GHG inventory provides the basis for deriving a GHG threshold of significance.

California CEQA Guidelines

State CEQA Guidelines section 15064.4 specifically addresses the significance of GHG emissions, requiring a lead agency to make a “good faith effort” to “describe, calculate or estimate” GHG emissions in CEQA environmental documents. Section 15064.4 further states that the analysis of GHG impacts should include consideration of (1) the extent to which the project may increase or reduce GHG emissions, (2) whether the project emissions would exceed a locally applicable threshold of significance, and (3) the extent to which the project would comply with “regulations or requirements adopted to implement a statewide, regional, or local plan for the reduction or mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions.”

The CEQA Guidelines do not require or recommend a specific analytical methodology or provide quantitative criteria for determining the significance of GHG emissions, nor do they set a numerical threshold of significance for GHG emissions. The 2009 amendments also include a new Subdivision 15064.7(c) which clarifies that in developing thresholds of significance, a lead agency may appropriately review thresholds developed by other public agencies, or recommended by other experts, provided the decision of the lead agency to adopt such thresholds is supported by substantial evidence.

The California Natural Resources Agency has also clarified that the amended CEQA Guidelines focus on the effects of GHG emissions as cumulative impacts, and that they should be analyzed in the context of CEQA’s requirements for cumulative impact analysis (see Section 15064(h)(3)). CEQA Guidelines section 15126.4(c) includes the following direction on measures to mitigate GHG emissions, when such emissions are found to be significant:

Consistent with Section 15126.4(a), lead agencies shall consider feasible means, supported by substantial evidence and subject to monitoring or reporting, of mitigating the significant effects of greenhouse gas emissions. Measures to mitigate the significant effects of greenhouse gas emissions may include, among others:

- (1) Measures in an existing plan or mitigation program for the reduction of emissions that are required as part of a lead agency’s decision;*
- (2) Reductions in emissions resulting from a project through implementation of project features, project design, or other measures;*
- (3) Off-site measures, including offsets that are not otherwise required to mitigate a*

- project's emissions;*
(4) *Measures that sequester greenhouse gases;*

Would the project:

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

Comment:

Greenhouse gases are naturally occurring gases that moderate global temperatures by trapping heat in the thin atmospheric layer surrounding the Earth and thus maintaining the planet's habitability.

GHGs allow high-energy solar radiation into the Earth's atmosphere, but prevent much of the radiative heat that is reflected back towards space from the planetary surface from escaping, thus warming the atmosphere. These gases are commonly referred to as "greenhouse gases" because they function like a greenhouse, letting light in but preventing heat from escaping. GHGs are vital for maintaining a habitable climate on Earth, but excess anthropogenic GHG emissions have resulted in rapid global warming and climate change. To combat excessive global warming, GHG regulations exist on federal, state, and regional/local levels and emissions are closely monitored. Common GHGs emitted in the atmosphere include carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), and fluorinated gases such as hydrofluorocarbons and perfluorocarbons. Natural sources of GHGs include the decomposition of organic matter; respiration of bacteria, plants, animals, and fungi; evaporation from oceans; and volcanic outgassing. Anthropogenic sources of GHG emissions include fossil fuel combustion during off-road equipment operation, electricity generation, industrial activities, motorized transport, and manufacturing processes; deforestation and biomass burning; agricultural activity; and solid waste decomposition.

The proposed project will result in GHG emissions from both construction and operation of the facility. The GHG of most concern during the construction phase is CO₂ from diesel-powered construction equipment exhaust, such as fossil fuel combustion emissions. The GHGs of potential concern during the operational phase are CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O from energy use and fossil fuel combustion in mobile sources associated with the proposed project.

The Climate Action 2020 Plan developed by the Sonoma County Regional Climate Plan Authority (RCPA) in 2016 was unable to be formally adopted due to litigation. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors-adopted May 8, 2018 Climate Change Action Resolution acknowledged the Climate Action 2020 Plan and resolved to "...work towards the RCPA's countywide target to reduce GHG emissions by 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050", consistent with SB32 and AB197 climate pollution reduction targets, as well as adopting twenty goals for reducing GHG emissions including increasing carbon sequestration, increasing renewable energy use, and reducing emissions from the consumption of goods and services. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) has published greenhouse gas significance thresholds for use by local governments in the report titled *California Environmental Quality Act Air Quality Guidelines May 2017*. For projects other than stationary sources, the greenhouse gas significance threshold is 1,100 metric tons per year of CO₂e or 4.6 metric tons of CO₂e per service population (residents and employees) per year.

In making CEQA significance determinations, Sonoma County defers to BAAQMD's *CEQA Air Quality Guidelines* ("CEQA Guidelines," BAAQMD 2017) and *Justification Report: CEQA Thresholds for Evaluating the Significance of Climate Impacts From Land Use Projects and Plans* ("Justification Report," BAAQMD 2022), in evaluating the impacts of GHG emissions associated with projects and plans, and guiding land developers and municipalities in addressing potential impacts projects may have on climate change. As supported by substantial evidence presented in their CEQA Guidelines and Justification Report, BAAQMD recommends that if a project's

GHG impacts are determined to not be significant per the criteria discussed in these documents, and the project aligns with the tenets of California's most recent Climate Change Scoping Plan Update (i.e., CARB 2017, CARB 2022), the project would not be expected to have a significant impact on climate change.

To assess potential greenhouse gas emissions related to the project, air quality modeling was performed using the CalEEMod Version. The applicant provided an analysis of projected greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (Geosyntec consultants, March 2023). The analysis determined that GHG emissions would be emitted directly and indirectly by the project. Sources of these emissions would include traffic, direct emissions from natural gas usage, and indirect emissions from electricity usage. Included in the indirect emissions are those associated with the conveyance of water and wastewater, and handling and storage of solid waste. The majority of emissions for the project are expected to come from traffic and energy usage.

The parameters used in the model for the proposed project include a site location within Sonoma County (climate zone 4), an estimated one-year construction period starting January 2, 2024, specific equipment used per phase of construction, 2025 as the year operations will commence, and Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) as the energy resource provider. To estimate mobile source emissions associated with the operational phase of the proposed project, the increases in vehicle trip rates of visitors, employees, and guests attending special events, as presented in the W-Trans Traffic Impact Study for the project (W-Trans 2023), were used, along with CalEEMod default values, as necessary. To estimate the mobile source emissions associated with construction, default CalEEMod values based on the scope of the project, number of workers, and construction phase durations, were used.

Note that BAAQMD Regulation 2-1-117.10 provides an exemption from air permitting for wine fermentation tanks, therefore emissions associated with wine fermentation were not considered in estimating the total emissions associated with the proposed project.

The Project will also be designed to meet current Title 24 standards related to energy efficiency, in accordance with the requirements of Title 24, Part 6, *Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Nonresidential Buildings*. Specific features that will be incorporated into the proposed project design to increase energy efficiency may include:

- Installing ceiling, attic, and wall insulation.
- Installing window glazing.
- Obtaining third-party verification of installation of all heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) units (e.g. ENERGY STAR Verified HVAC Installation, ESVI).
- Incorporating roof anchors and pre-wiring to facilitate the installation of solar energy systems.

The proposed project will be designed to meet current Title 24 standards related to water conservation. In accordance with Title 24, Part 11, *California Green Building Standards Code* (CalGreen 2019). Specific features that will be incorporated into the proposed project design to conserve water may include:

- Installing low-flow hose nozzles.
- Installing low-flow bathroom fixtures as required for new construction.
- Installing water-efficient or low-flow appliances and plumbing fixtures, as required for new construction.

Additionally, specific features to be incorporated into the proposed project design to reduce solid waste:

- Installing trash, recycling, and green waste bins within the trash enclosure area.
- Providing designated areas for storage and collection of recyclables and green waste.

The following table shows the project's annual GHG construction and operations emissions.

Proposed Project Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions

| Category | GHG Emissions ¹ (Metric Tons per Year) | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|-------------|--------------|------------|
| | CO2 | CH4 | N2O | CO2e |
| Construction | | | | |
| 2024 Construction | 371 | 0.058 | 0.017 | 378 |
| Operations | | | | |
| Area Sources | < 0.01 | < 0.01 | < 0.01 | < 0.01 |
| Energy Usage | 78.4 | < 0.01 | < 0.01 | 79.0 |
| Mobile Sources | 104 | < 0.01 | < 0.01 | 106 |
| Solid Waste | 11.4 | 0.68 | < 0.01 | 28.3 |
| Water and Wastewater | 10.0 | 0.39 | < 0.01 | 22.4 |
| Total Operational Emissions | 204 | 1.08 | 0.016 | 236 |

Notes:

¹ Emissions calculated using CalEEMod 2020.4.0.

While quantitative GHG thresholds are no longer used by BAAQMD to assess the significance of climate change impacts under CEQA, the modeling results presented in the above table demonstrate that the project would not result in excessive operational or construction-related GHG emissions.

The first option for demonstrating that a project's impact on climate change would be less-than-significant is to incorporate energy efficiency features into the project design such that it would not result in any wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary energy usage, affirm that the project will not include any natural gas appliances or plumbing, and ensure that the project will be consistent with meeting the local VMT target requirements of SB 743.

The proposed project would be consistent with the County's Regional Climate Protection Agency (RCPA) GHG reduction goals, which include reducing County GHG emissions to at 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 (County of Sonoma 2018).

Implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with any applicable state or regional plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. Nor would the proposed project conflict with Sonoma County's local GHG reduction strategies, as detailed in its 2018 Resolution of Intent. By implementing, to the extent feasible, energy efficiency and/or green building standards, as discussed above in Section 8.1, the proposed project would be consistent with the County's GHG reduction goals, as well as those of the state detailed in the 2022 Scoping Plan Update, and the proposed project would thus meet the requirements of BAAQMD's second option presented above for demonstrating that a project's GHG emissions would not have a significant impact on climate change.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

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

Comment:

The proposed project would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs.

The County's adopted goals and policies include GP Policy OSRCI 4.4 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 25% below 1990 levels by 2015. Sonoma County emissions in 2015 were 9% below 1990 levels, while the countywide population grew 4%. In May 2018, the Board of Supervisors adopted a Resolution of Intent to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions that included adoption of the Regional Climate Protection Agency's goal to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and by 80% below 1990 levels by 2050, consistent with SB32 and AB197 climate pollution reduction targets. The Resolution of Intent included specific measures that can further reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Significance Level:
Less than significant

9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:

Would the project:

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

Comment:

The project uses do not involve the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. However, it is possible that improper handling or storage could result in minor spills or drips of hazardous materials such as oil, fuel or paint during or after construction. To address this possibility, the project is required to comply with all applicable hazardous materials handling and storage requirements and would use qualified contractors for construction.

Significance Level:
No Impact

- b) **Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?**

Comment:

There are no aspects of the proposed winery and tasting room use which would generate or produce substantial quantities of hazardous materials or unsafe conditions. However, it is possible that improper handling or storage could result in minor spills or drips of hazardous materials such as oil, fuel or paint during or after construction. To address this possibility, the project is required to comply with all applicable hazardous materials handling and storage requirements, and the project operator would use qualified contractors for construction.

Significance Level:
No Impact

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

Comment:

There is not an existing or proposed school within one-quarter mile of the project. The project uses do not involve the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.

Significance Level:

No Impact

- d) **Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?**

Comment:

The project is not located on any list of sites containing hazardous materials.

Significance Level:

No Impact

- e) **For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?**

Comment:

The project is located within the vicinity of an airport (Sonoma Skypark, located approximately 1.8 miles to the west). However, the project would not result in creation of a safety hazard nor expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels, given distance from the airport and limited number of employees at the project site.

Significance Level:

No Impact

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

Comment:

There is no separate emergency evacuation plan for the County. Furthermore, the project would not cause an interference with emergency evacuations. The Fire Marshall will review the building plans to insure that the winery and tasting room buildings will have adequate fire protection. The primary entrance off of SR 12/121 includes a looped driveway system to provide for emergency vehicle ingress and egress.

Significance Level:

No Impact

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

Comment:

According to the Safety Element of the General Plan, the project site is not located in a high wildland fire hazard area. The construction of new structures in accordance with current building standards would decrease the fire risk to structures on the project parcel. The County Fire Marshall's fire safe requirements require that new structures be installed with fire sprinklers with the intent to contain or prevent fires from spreading. In addition, standard conditions of approval include that the facility operator shall develop an emergency response plan consistent with Chapter 4 of the 2013 California Fire Code with safety plans, emergency procedures, and employee training programs; shall provide for safe access for emergency fire apparatus and civilian evacuation concurrently, and shall provide unobstructed traffic circulation during an emergency; shall provide emergency water supply for fire protection available and accessible in locations, quantities and delivery rates as specified in the California Fire Code; and establish defensible space.

All of the fire safe conditions of approval will ensure that the project would reduce the exposure

of people and property to fire hazards to a degree the risk of injury or damage is less than significant. The project would not expose people to significant risk from wildland fires.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY:

Would the project:

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

Comment:

The project proposes on- site sewage disposal systems, which will be constructed and operated consistent with County and state water quality and waste discharge standards.

In addition, the County Grading Ordinance and adopted Best Management Practices (BMPs) require that storm water facilities be engineered to treat storm events and associated runoff to the 85 percentile storm event. Adopted flow control best management practices must be designed to treat storm events and associated runoff to the channel forming discharge storm event, which is commonly referred to at the two-year storm event. Required County inspection ensures that all work is constructed according to the approved plans. These ordinance requirements and adopted best management practices are specifically designed to maintain potential project water quantity impacts at a less than significant level during and post construction.

Drainage improvements to the site as well as erosion/sediment control measures will be required during construction to handle any increases in storm runoff. The project plans include proposed use of bio- swales as part of the filtration storm drainage system. Final drainage improvements will be designed so that the post-development flows do not exceed the pre-development flows. Therefore, with the application of the Low Impact Development (LID) and other adopted best management practices to the project, no significant adverse soil erosion or related soil erosion water quality impacts are expected given the mandated conditions and standards that need to be met.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

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

Comment:

The project will receive water from two sources: groundwater and recycled water from the treated process wastewater system. The project includes a new sustainable wastewater system that will allow the winery to treat that water so it can be used for irrigation (as discussed in greater detail below). In order to provide the County and State required 50-foot well seal, the project will replace the existing well to serve domestic uses. Hydrologist, O'Connor Environmental Inc., prepared a Ground Water Report, which is enclosed with this revised project description. As indicated by the Ground Water Report (further addressed below), there is sufficient groundwater available to supply this project. Further, the project will require significantly less water compared to the previous iteration reviewed by SVCAC. See additional discussion under Utilities, below.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

- c) **Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river including the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:**

- a. **result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?**

Comment:

Project development will require a grading permit, as well as the appropriate building and sewer permits. A condition of approval requires the applicant to submit an erosion prevention/sediment control plan which clearly shows best management practices to be implemented, limits of disturbed areas, vegetated areas to be preserved, pertinent details, notes, and specifications to prevent damages and minimize adverse impacts to the environment in the grading and improvement plans. Tracking of soil or construction debris into the public right-of-way, including SR 12/121, shall be prohibited. Runoff containing concrete waste or by-products shall not be allowed to drain to the storm drain system, waterways, or adjacent lands. The erosion prevention/sediment control plan shall abide by and contain all applicable items in the Grading Permit.

Use of bio-swales is proposed to provide additional filtration treatment. A final drainage study is required to be submitted with the grading permit application or with improvement plans, and is subject to review and approval by Permit Sonoma prior to the issuance of any grading or building permits. Post construction storm water measures must be installed per approved plans and specifications, and working properly prior to finalizing the grading permit and associated building permits. Overall, based on the large project site, and requirements under the Grading Ordinance and permit process, the project would not result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

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

Comment:

As discussed in subparagraph (a) above, the project will not create or contribute additional runoff water.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

- c. **create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or**

Comment:

As discussed in subparagraph (a) above, the project will not create or contribute additional runoff water. On-site drainage systems are proposed as project.

Significance Level:

No Impact

- d. **Impede or redirect flood flows?**

Comment:

The 100-year flood zone or Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) is defined as the area that will be inundated by the flood event having a 1-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any

given year. The project site is not located within a 100-year flood hazard area, as per the General Plan's Public Safety Element, Figure PS-1e.

The most-current FEMA map for the area (Community Panel No. 06097C0944E, effective on 12/02/2008), indicates that the entire project site is located outside of any flood hazard zones. The project therefore would not impede or redirect flood flows.

Significance Level:
Less than significant

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

Comment:

The project site is not located within a 100-year flood hazard area, as per the General Plan's Public Safety Element, Figure PS-1e. Additionally, the most-current FEMA map for the area (Community Panel No. 06097C0944E, effective on 12/02/2008), indicates that the entire project site is located outside of any flood hazard zones.

The project site is located more than 10 miles from the Pacific Ocean and not susceptible to tsunami, mudflow or seiche.

Significance Level:
No Impact

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

Comment:

The project would not obstruct any water quality control plan. The project will utilize a series of on-site water quality/runoff control measures, including use Best Management Practices for water runoff and winery wastewater disposal. County Grading Ordinance requirements and adopted BMPs are specifically designed to maintain potential project water quantity impacts at a less than significant level during and post construction.

Drainage improvements to the site as well as erosion/sediment control measures will be required during construction to handle any increases in storm water runoff. The project plans include proposed use of bio-swales as part of the filtration storm drainage system. Final drainage improvements will be designed so that the post-development flows do not exceed the pre-development flows.

The project site is located in County-designated Zone 3, Marginal Groundwater basin area. The project will receive water from two sources: groundwater and recycled water from the treated process wastewater system. The project includes a new sustainable wastewater system that will allow the winery to treat that water so it can be used for irrigation. In order to provide the County and State required 50-foot well seal, the project will replace the existing well to serve domestic uses. Hydrologist, O'Connor Environmental Inc., prepared a Ground Water Report. As indicated by the Ground Water Report, there is sufficient groundwater available to supply this project, and would not conflict with County sustainable groundwater management plans and policies.

Significance Level:
Less than significant

11. LAND USE AND PLANNING:

Would the project:

a) Physically divide an established community?

Comment:

The project site is located within a rural, unincorporated area southeast of the community of Sonoma, along SR 12/121. It would not block or otherwise physically divide the Sonoma or areas adjacent to it. The project includes connections to public transit, bikeways and trails.

Significance Level:

Less No Impact

b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

Comment:

The Sonoma County General Plan designates the project site as LIA 60 (Land Intensive Agriculture, 60-acre density).

This land use category provides for enhancing and protecting lands capable of and generally used for animal husbandry and the production of food, fiber, and plant materials, with uses including agricultural production, agricultural support uses, and visitor serving uses as provided in the Agricultural Resources Element (ARE).

The latter specifies, in ARE Section 2.6, "...Activities such as special events attract customers, build a customer base, market products, and build customer loyalty. However, the economic benefits of agricultural tourism must be balanced against associated impacts such as increased traffic, particularly in areas such as in Sonoma Valley or along routes where multiple visitor serving uses may be hosting events at the same time."

Other key applicable ARE goals and policies include:

Goal AR-6: "Allow new visitor serving uses and facilities in some agricultural areas but limit them in scale and location. These uses must be beneficial to the agricultural industry and farm operators and compatible with long term agricultural use of the land."

Policy AR-6a: Permit visitor serving uses in agricultural categories that promote agricultural production in the County, such as tasting rooms, sales and promotion of products grown or processed in the County, educational activities and tours, incidental sales of items related to local area agricultural products, and promotional events that support and are secondary and incidental to local agricultural production. Limit recreational uses to the "Land Extensive Agriculture" and "Diverse Agriculture" categories, specifically to bed and breakfast inns and campgrounds of 30 or fewer sites.

Policy AR-6d: Follow these guidelines for approval of visitor serving uses in agricultural areas: (1) The use promotes and markets only agricultural products grown or processed in the local area. (2) The use is compatible with and secondary and incidental to agricultural production activities in the area. (3) The use will not require the extension of sewer and water. (4) The use is compatible with existing uses in the area. (5) Hotels, motels, resorts, and similar lodging are not allowed. (6) Activities that promote and market agricultural products such as tasting rooms, sales and promotion of products grown or processed in the County, educational activities and tours, incidental sales of items related to local area agricultural products are allowed. (7) Special events on agricultural lands or agriculture related events on other lands in the Sonoma Valley Planning Area will be subject to a pilot event coordination program which includes tracking and monitoring of visitor serving activities and schedule management, as necessary, to reduce cumulative impacts.

Policy AR-6f: Local concentrations of visitor serving and recreational uses, and agricultural support uses as defined in Goal AR-5, even if related to surrounding agricultural activities, are

detrimental to the primary use of the land for the production of food, fiber and plant materials and may constitute grounds for denial of such uses. In determining whether or not the approval of such uses would constitute a detrimental concentration of such uses, consider all the following factors: (1) Whether the above uses would result in joint road access conflicts, or in traffic levels that exceed the Circulation and Transit Element's objectives for level of service on a site specific and cumulative basis. (2) Whether the above uses would draw water from the same aquifer and be located within the zone of influence of area wells. (3) Whether the above uses would be detrimental to the rural character of the area.

The proposed project meets these applicable General Plan goals and policies, as discussed below.

- In 2018, the applicant submitted a use permit application for an annual 60,000-case winery at the project site that was considered by the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Committee (SVCAC). SVCAC did not support the project due to its size, in particular the volume of wine production, the number of visitors and events, and related water usage from those activities. The revised project proposal consists of a 30,000-case winery and public tasting room, with reduced number of annual events.
- The winery will be able to process winegrapes grown on-site from a 20-acre vineyard previously approved (though not yet planted) by Sonoma County in 2017 (ACO17-0161), as well as other vineyards located in Sonoma County and neighboring areas.
- At least 51% of the grapes processed on-site will come from Sonoma County. The applicant will also continue to use portions of the site for grazing.
- In addition to featuring wine and wine related merchandise, the tasting room may also offer local agricultural related products grown or produced in Sonoma County.
- Since the fire, the project site has been idle.
- The scale and operation of the proposed winery and tasting room, along with design of the project buildings will maintain the area's rural and agricultural character, and consistent with the historical agricultural uses on the property.
- There is no lodging proposed as part of the project.
- Traffic from the project has been analyzed in detail by W-Trans, with their updated 2023 traffic analysis determining that the project, including with respect to events, would not result in creation of significant impacts to locals roadways.
- Water and wastewater studies have been performed, addressing use of on-site water and wastewater systems. This included analysis of potential impacts to groundwater and area wells, finding that the project would not create an adverse impact on area groundwater resources or to area wells. Similarly, wastewater analysis was performed addressing proposed use of septic tank/leachfield systems and wastewater disposal, with the analysis determining that the project site is suitable to support the proposed systems.

The project site is zoned LIA B6 60 (Land Intensive Agriculture, 60-acre density), Accessory Dwelling Unit Exclusion (Z), Local Guidelines – Taylor/Sonoma/Mayacamas Mountains (LG/MTN), RC 50/50 (Riparian Corridor with 50-foot setbacks), SR (Scenic Resources), and VOH (Valley Oak Habitat).

Sonoma County Zoning Code Section 26-06-030 allows for agricultural production uses, with the proposed winery/tasting room subject to approval of a use permit from the Board of Zoning Adjustments.

The proposed 35-foot building height will comply with LIA zoning standards, as will the proposed building coverage of approximately 26,000 sq ft, below the maximum allowable of 85,000 sq ft. The project would also meet zoning setback standards, including a minimum 200 feet from the SR 12/121 property frontage for new winery and tasting room structures.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

12. MINERAL RESOURCES:

Would the project:

- a) **Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?**

Comment:

There is no known mineral resource of value to the region and the residents of the state located on the property. The site is not zoned MR (Mineral Resources). The project will not result in the loss of a known mineral resource.

Significance Level:

No Impact

- b) **Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?**

Comment:

There is no locally-important mineral resource recovery site located on the property that is delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan.

Significance Level:

No Impact

13. NOISE:

Would the project:

- a) **Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?**

Comment:

Existing (ambient) noise environment at the site results primarily from vehicular traffic along SR 12/121 with secondary noise stemming from vehicle traffic along Napa Road. Local traffic along the other nearby roadways also contributes to the ambient noise environment. The future noise environment at the project site would continue to result primarily from traffic along SR 12/121 and Napa Road.

Construction of site improvements, including the driveway and parking areas, site grading, building and wine cave construction, and installation of water and wastewater systems, would result in construction noise, but would not result in new potentially significant impacts provided mitigation is implemented.

Mitigation will require proper mufflers on heavy equipment and limitations on construction hours would continue to apply to new construction.

The closest off-site residence is located approximately 300 ft west from the proposed outdoor patio area and winery building, across from SR 12/121. Ambient noise at this location includes vehicle traffic from the highway, as well as from Napa Road and area agricultural operations. Noise associated with driveway/parking lot noise for the winery/tasting room uses, including events, is not expected to exceed the County's daytime or nighttime NE-2 noise standard at this residence.

The project proposes 28 agricultural promotional & industry-related events on an annual basis, including:

- 4 large events with a maximum capacity of 200 attendees.
- 9 medium-size events with a maximum capacity of 100 attendees.
- 15 small events with a maximum capacity of 50 attendees.

All events will be private and focused on education of Sonoma's regional agriculture. All events shall conclude no later than 9:00 PM and clean-up activities will end by 10:00 PM. Events will occur throughout the year.

The applicant anticipates that the smaller events with 50 guests will consist of winemaker dinners, lunches, and other food and wine pairings for customers, clients, wholesalers, distributors, and other members of the trade. These smaller events will be by invitation only. A small commercial kitchen is proposed for food preparation for these limited activities. No cooked to order food is proposed. The applicant anticipates participating in industry events as part of the winery's general public tasting room operations, which may include industry promoted activities such as Savor Sonoma Valley, April in Carneros, etc.

Requirement of a Mitigation Measure, below, will also prohibit use of amplified sound outdoors, along with prohibition of the use of very loud musical instruments in outdoor patio areas, further reducing potential for significant noise generation from the winery and tasting room uses. In addition, there will be short-term noise impacts from the construction activities, including grading, use of heavy equipment and building construction. Regulation of the hours of construction, as well as regulation of the arrival and operation of heavy equipment and the delivery of construction material, are necessary as Best Management standard conditions of approval to protect the health and safety of persons, promote the general welfare of the community, and maintain the quality of life.

The County requires that construction crews adhere to best management practices as a standard condition to reduce construction noise levels emanating from the site and minimize disruption and annoyance of existing sensitive-noise receptors in the project vicinity. Since the noise sources relating to project construction are temporary, limited in frequency and limited to daytime hours, they are not considered significant due to the implementation of standard Best Management Practices. Conditions of approval limit hours for site grading and construction to reduce any potentially significant impacts to less than significant. Additionally, by implementing the mitigation measures outlined below, noise impacts would be reduced to less than significant.

Significance Level:

Less than significant with Mitigation

Mitigation:

NOI-1 Mitigation: The project shall be subject to the following limitations regarding use of amplified sound:

- a. Amplified speech and amplified music shall not be allowed outdoors at the site. This mitigation applies to all special events, such as corporate events or meetings, receptions and similar gatherings.
- b. Amplified sound and acoustical musical instruments which tend to be very loud (such as horns, drums and cymbals) are not permitted outdoors. The quieter, non-amplified musical instruments (such as piano, stringed instruments, woodwinds, flute, etc.) are allowed outdoors when in compliance with the Noise Element of the Sonoma County General Plan.
- c. If noise complaints are received from nearby residents, and they appear to be valid complaints in PRMD's opinion, then the applicant shall conduct a Noise Study to determine if the current operations meet noise standards and identify any additional noise Mitigation Measures if necessary. A copy of the Noise Study shall be submitted to the Project Review Health Specialist within sixty days of notification from Permit Sonoma that a noise complaint has

been received.

- d. The owner/operator shall implement any additional Mitigation Measures needed to meet noise standards.

NOI-1 Monitoring: Permit Sonoma shall ensure the limitations on use of outdoor amplified sound are enforced.

b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Comment:

The project includes construction activities that may generate ground-borne vibration and noise. These noise levels would not be significant because they would be short-term and temporary, and would be limited to daytime hours. Per the Environmental Noise and Vibration Assessment, construction activities would include site preparation work, foundation work, and new building framing and finishing. Typically, these types of projects do not require pile driving, and pile driving is not expected for this project. This is a less-than- significant impact.

Construction activities are also regulated by County Codes and conditions of the project would also limit construction hours.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

Comment:

The project is located within the vicinity of an airport (Sonoma Skypark, located approximately 1.8 miles to the west). However, the project would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels, given distance from the airport and limited number of employees at the project site.

Significance Level:

No Impact

14. POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Would the project:

- a) **Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?**

Comment:

The project does not include construction of homes. The project would create an expected 15 new permanent jobs related to the winery and tasting room operations, potentially attracting some new residents to the area. However, the number of new jobs is relatively low, and therefore would not be expected to induce substantial unplanned population growth.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

- b) **Displace substantial numbers of existing housing necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?**

Comment:

The project site does not contain any housing units. The project would not displace a substantial number of people necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere in the County.

Significance Level:

No Impact

15. PUBLIC SERVICES:

Would the project:

- a) **Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service rations, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:**

i. Fire protection?

Comment:

Fire protection services are provided by the Schell-Vista Fire Protection District. The County Fire Marshal requires that the project comply with Fire Safe Standards, including fire protection methods such as sprinklers in buildings, alarm systems, extinguishers, vegetation management, hazardous materials management and management of flammable or combustible liquids and gases.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

ii. Police?

Comment:

The Sonoma County Sheriff provides police protection services to the project area.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

iii. Schools?

Comment:

The project is not expected to generate a significant impact to schools as it does not include residential units.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

iv. Parks?

Comment:

The project would include recreational amenities for tasting room guests, including indoor and outdoor seating and plaza areas. The project is not expected to generate a demand for public recreational amenities.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

v. Other public facilities?

Comment:

The project is not expected to generate a significant demand for other public facilities, including area restaurants. A small commercial kitchen is proposed for food preparation for some event activities, though no cooked to order food is proposed.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

16. RECREATION:

Would the project:

- a) **Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?**

Comment:

The project would include recreational amenities for winery tasting room visitors, including indoor and outdoor seating and plaza areas. The project is not expected to generate a demand for or impact upon existing neighborhood or regional park facilities.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

- b) **Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?**

Comment:

The proposed project would not involve activities that would cause or accelerate substantial physical deterioration of parks or recreational facilities. The project includes recreational amenities for tasting room visitors, including indoor and outdoor seating and plaza areas. The project is not expected to generate a demand for public recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of new recreational facilities.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

17. TRANSPORTATION:

Would the project:

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

Comment:

Three transportation-related plans have been adopted in Sonoma County: the Sonoma County

General Plan 2020 Circulation Element, the Sonoma County Transportation Authority Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2009), and the Sonoma County Bikeways Plan. The project will not conflict with any of these plans.

The project site is located along a major transportation corridor on SR 12/121. Traffic and Circulation consultant, W-Trans, prepared a February 27, 2024, Traffic Impact Study for the project analyzing the proposed project.

Trip Generation: The proposed project would have 15 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, which would be expected to generate 45 trips on a daily basis, assuming each employee would generate an average of 3 trips per day. For the purposes of this calculation, the traffic analysis assumed that 15 FTE employees would be on-site 7 days a week year-round. There would be 11 daily truck trips during harvest, with 3 truck trips averaged over the course of one year. Lastly, the project is requesting 28 events annually with between 50 and 200 visitors each. These events would generate 2,380 trips per year using the same vehicle occupancy rate as the tasting room for guests and solo occupancy for staff, or an annualized average of 6 trips per day.

The project is expected to generate 179 daily trips during peak harvest activities with 11 trips during the weekday a.m. peak hour, 17 trips during the weekday p.m. peak hour, and 21 trips during the Saturday peak hour. Additionally, the proposed project would be expected to result in up to 348 trips on a peak day and with a 200-person event, but with an average of 106 trips when taking into consideration weekly and seasonal variations. Noted is that the traffic analysis found that the proposed parking supply of 90 on-site spaces would have a shortfall of 2 parking spaces for the expected demand during a 200-person event; this need for two additional spaces to be shown on the final site plan will be addressed as a condition by the County.

Site Access: The site currently has four existing driveways from SR 12/121 for vehicle access. The project will eliminate two of these driveways and improve the two others, historically used for the dairy operation at the site, for primary site access. The first driveway will be for guest and staff access to the property. The second driveway to the west will be for service and truck access. There is an existing center turning lane along SR 12/ 121 in front of the site providing left turn access for eastbound traffic.

In addition to the driveways along SR 12/121, the site currently has two existing driveways that front Napa Road. The applicant intends to retain both for agricultural access only. All driveways will have gates; the main entry gate would be open during business hours.

Vehicle Queuing: Vehicle queuing needs were also addressed as part of the W-Trans study. As identified in the 2018 TIS, the existing storage length of the two-way left-turn lane (TWLTL) on SR 12/121 along the project frontage would be adequate to accommodate the maximum anticipated queue during winery operations with events with 200 attendees. The County has updated their policy relative to determining queuing impacts. The policy reads as follows.

Vehicle Queues – An impact on projected 95th percentile queues shall be considered significant when any of the following occur:

- A. The projected queue can be accommodated within the available stacking in a dedicated turn lane (defined as the length of the channelized turn pocket together plus 8 feet in length) but would exceed the available stacking upon adding project-generated traffic. Where a left-turn lane transitions into a two-way left-turn lane, the center turn lane is to be considered part of the available stacking space.*
- B. There is adequate sight distance between the end of the queue and following traffic without the project, and the addition of project traffic increases the queue to a point where sight lines are no longer adequate to meet stopping sight distance criteria.*

Any addition to a queue that already exceeds the available storage length would not be considered an impact unless the increased queueing would extend into a visually restricted area or a downstream intersection with the project but not without it.

The W-Trans queueing analysis was prepared with respect to the County's current policy. The analysis found while queues would exceed available storage without project trips in left turn lanes at Napa Road/8th Street East, SR 121/SR 116, and SR 121/SR 12 under Future Conditions, the addition of project trips would increase the queues by less than one vehicle length and adequate following sight distance would be available approaching the queues, so the project's impact is therefore considered less than significant.

Study Area Intersections: The study intersections are expected to continue operating acceptably upon the addition of project generated traffic during harvest to existing volumes, except for SR 121/SR 116 which would continue to operate at LOS E and LOS F during the weekday p.m. and Saturday peak hours respectively. However, project traffic would add less than five seconds to the overall delay at the intersection so the project's effect would be considered acceptable under the County's criteria.

Additionally, with no changes to the existing lane configurations or controls, all study intersections except for SR 121/SR 116 and SR 121-121/8th Street East are expected to operate acceptably during all peak hours under the anticipated future volumes projected by the SCTA model. With the addition of harvest project trips, the study intersections would continue to operate at the same Levels of Service as without project trips and the intersections that would operate deficiently would experience a less than five second increase in delay; therefore, the project's long-range effect on operations would be considered acceptable.

With the addition of traffic associated with 200-person events to Future plus Project volumes, and without planned roundabout improvements, delay would increase by more than five seconds at SR 121/SR 116 during the Saturday peak hour, translating to an adverse effect. Similarly, traffic associated with 50-, 100-, and 200-person events would increase the minor street delays at SR 12-121/8th Street East by more than five seconds during both peak hours translating to adverse effects. While the planned roundabout improvements were not assumed to be in place for the purposes of the traffic analysis since they are not yet fully funded, they are expected to be in place by the future horizon year, so these adverse effects are not expected to materialize.

As noted, the study intersections would continue to operate acceptably during the weekday p.m. peak hour upon the addition of traffic associated with all proposed events to Existing plus Project volumes, except for SR 121/SR 116 which would continue to operate at LOS E; however, the project would add less than five seconds of delay to the intersection so its effect would be considered acceptable under County policy. During the Saturday peak hour, 200-person events would increase the delay at SR 121/SR 116 by more than five seconds so this would be considered an adverse effect. The W-Trans study recommends In order to reduce the potential adverse effect at SR 121/SR 116 during the Saturday peak hour, the tasting room be closed during 200-person events, or events of this size be scheduled to begin after 4:00 p.m. to avoid generating trips during the peak period which occurs from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. This would only apply until the planned roundabout is constructed. This will be addressed as a condition by the County.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access: With respect to pedestrian access, as identified in the W-Trans analysis, the lack of existing pedestrian facilities in the surrounding vicinity is adequate given the rural context and nature of the project. Further, all of the proposed vehicle and bicycle parking would be located on the same side of SR 12/121 as the project, so there would be no need for pedestrians to cross the highway. The project would therefore not have a significant impact with regarding pedestrian access.

For bicycle facilities, there are no existing bike lanes in the vicinity of the site so the project is not expected to generate a substantial amount of bicycle trips in the near term; however, upon completion of the planned Class II bike lanes on SR 12/121 the site would be readily accessible by bicycle. The frontage improvements planned as part of the project include the consolidation of four driveways into two, resulting in fewer potential points of conflict with bicycle traffic. The project site plan also identifies the provision of 18 bicycle parking spaces, in addition to 90 vehicle parking spaces, which would be adequate for the project.

The project is, therefore, not expected to result in significant impacts related to transportation plans or policies, or to circulation systems in the area.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

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

Comment:

Based upon the recommendations in the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) Technical Advisory for Evaluation VMT, W-Trans evaluated project potential for creation of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) impacts. Senate Bill (SB) 743 established VMT as the metric to be applied in determining transportation impacts associated with development projects. As of the date of this analysis, the County of Sonoma has not yet adopted a policy or thresholds of significance regarding VMT so the project-related VMT impacts were assessed based on guidance provided by the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) in the publication *Transportation Impacts (SB 743) CEQA Guidelines Update and Technical Advisory*, 2018.

The OPR Technical Advisory identifies several criteria that may be used by jurisdictions to identify certain types of projects that are unlikely to have a significant VMT impact and can be "screened" out from further analysis. This includes small projects, which OPR identifies as generating fewer than 110 new vehicle trips per day, which are unlikely to have a significant VMT impact and can therefore be "screened" from further VMT analysis.

The W-Trans analysis found that the proposed project would be expected to generate 106 trips, fewer than the 110 daily trips VMT threshold, when averaged over the course of an entire year when considering project employees, tasting room visitors and proposed events, with VMT impacts generated by the project therefore anticipated to be less than significant.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

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

Comment:

The proposed project would not increase hazards due to design features or incompatible uses. The project would utilize and further improve existing driveway encroachments onto SR 12/121 that were developed and in use for the on-site dairy operations, which ceased after the 2017 Sonoma Nuns fire.

Sight distances along SR 12-121 at the project driveways were evaluated by W-Trans based on sight distance criteria contained in the *Highway Design Manual* (HDM) published by Caltrans. For the posted speed limit of 55 mph, the recommended corner sight distance is 605 feet for left turns and 525 feet for right turns. The measured sight distance at the eastern driveway (main gate) extends approximately 620 feet to the east (for right turns) through the intersection of SR 12-121/Napa Road and approximately 900 feet to the west (for left turns) to the horizontal curve west of the project site. Adequate sight distance is therefore available at both of the proposed project driveway locations to accommodate all turns inbound and outbound. The analysis also found that the existing 10-foot shoulder along the site frontage would provide adequate space for motorists making right-turn movements with minimal impact to through traffic.

The Preliminary Landscape Plan indicates use of 5-gallon size harmony manzanita shrubs alongside the main entry driveway, the closest of which would be located approximately 25 back from the location of vehicles exiting driveway onto SR 12. Standard maintenance of the shrubs will also ensure that adequate sight lines are maintained at the main entry driveway.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Comment:

Emergency access and site distances are adequate. Dual driveway access points exist off of SR 12/121 into the project site. Site distances for these existing driveways are adequate along SR 12/121 and the signalized intersection of Napa Road/SR 12/121, as noted above in Section 17.c. As designed, all driveways and internal access roads would be of sufficient width to accommodate emergency response vehicles. Emergency response vehicles would be able to use the service road and turnaround in the loading area where a standard size Sonoma County hammerhead turnaround would be provided. The fact that the project would have two access points would be a benefit in terms of emergency access because emergency responders could use the other driveway to reach the property should one be compromised in an emergency. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in inadequate emergency access.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES:

Would the project:

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

Comment:

Alta Archaeological Consulting, LLC has prepared for the project a cultural resources inventory satisfying the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, and the responsibilities codified in Public Resource Code sections 5097, and it's implementing guidelines 21082 and 21083.2. ALTA conducted its archaeological field survey of the subject property on February 19, 2018. The survey entailed a cultural resources inventory of the area of potential effect (APE) within the property parcels (58.65 acres), site recordation, and historic resource evaluation. Ground surface visibility was poor due to low lying grass. No prehistoric artifacts, features or sites were observed. The ALTA report concludes that the project as presently designed is not expected to have an adverse effect on significant cultural resources with the recommended mitigation measures incorporated to ensure that cultural resources are not adversely affected by the proposed project.

A previously identified cultural resource (P-49-4222) and a National Register District (P-49-4219), consisting of the Stornetta Brothers Dairy are present within the project area. In

October 2017, the buildings associated with this site were destroyed by the Atlas wildfire. Consequently, these resources lack integrity and are no longer eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places nor the California Register of Historic Resources. Currently, no significant historic resources are present within the project area. The project, as presently designed, is not anticipated to have an adverse effect on historic resources. The recommended mitigation measures are identified below.

In addition to the recommended mitigations, Permit Sonoma imposes a standard condition of approval ensuring that no cultural or archaeological resources are unearthed during ground disturbing activities for all development projects, as follows:

NOTE ON PLANS: "During construction activities, if archaeological remains are uncovered, work at the place of discovery should be halted immediately until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the finds pursuant to Government Code Section 15064.5. If archaeological materials such as pottery, arrowheads or midden are found, all work shall cease and PRMD staff shall be notified so that the find can be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist (i.e., an archaeologist registered with the Society of Professional Archaeologists). Artifacts associated with prehistoric sites include humanly modified stone, shell, bone or other cultural materials such as charcoal, ash and burned rock indicative of food procurement or processing activities. Prehistoric domestic features include hearths, fire pits, or house floor depressions whereas typical mortuary features are represented by human skeletal remains. Historic artifacts potentially include all by-products of human land use greater than 50 years of age including trash pits older than fifty years of age. The developer shall designate a Project Manager with authority to implement the mitigation prior to issuance of a building/grading permit. When contacted, a member of PRMD Project Review staff and the archaeologist shall visit the site to determine the extent of the resources and to develop proper procedures required for the discovery. No work shall commence until a protection plan is completed and implemented subject to the review and approval of the archaeologist and Project Review staff. Mitigation may include avoidance, removal, preservation and/or recordation in accordance with accepted professional archaeological practice."

Accidental discovery conditions will also be added to the project in the event that archaeological or historical resources or human remains are found at the site. Standard conditions of approval will ensure that a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource will not occur. See section 5.c above.

Assembly Bill 52, which went into effect in July 2015, is an amendment to CEQA Section 5097.94 of the Public Resources Code. AB52 established a consultation process with all California Native American tribes identified by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) with cultural ties to an area and created a new class of resources under CEQA known as Tribal Cultural Resource. The County of Sonoma, as the Lead Agency under CEQA, is responsible for complying with the requirements of CEQA Section 5097.94 of the Public Resources Code.

On February 14, 2018, Permit Sonoma sent consultation letters to tribal groups associated with the project area to solicit their input or concerns regarding the project. On February 14, 2018, Tomaras & Ogas LLP on behalf of the Lytton Rancheria Tribe, responded to request consultation under AB52. On February 26, 2018, the Tribal Heritage Preservation Officer for the Federated Tribes of Graton Rancheria responded to formally request consultation for this project. To date, no other responses or communications have been received from the native community regarding this project.

On November 14, 2018, Lytton Rancheria concluded consultation requesting that a condition of approval be applied to require on-site archaeological monitoring of ground disturbance in native soils during construction activities. Lytton's request is addressed under the mitigation below.

On July 24, 2024, Permit Sonoma met with representatives of the Federated Tribes of Graton Rancheria for consultation on the resubmitted project under AB52. The Tribe has reserved the right to

further review the recommended mitigations during the required 30-day public review period following publication of this Initial Study.

Significance Level:

Less than significant with Mitigation

Mitigation:

Mitigation TCR-1: *Unanticipated Discovery of Cultural Resources.* If previously unidentified cultural resources are encountered during project implementation, avoid altering the materials and their stratigraphic context. A qualified professional archaeologist should be contacted to evaluate the situation. Project personnel should not collect cultural resources. Prehistoric resources include, but are not limited to, chert or obsidian flakes, projectile points, mortars, pestles, and dark friable soil containing shell and bone dietary debris, heat-affected rock, or human burials. Historic resources include stone or abode foundations or walls; structures and remains with square nails; and refuse deposits or bottle dumps, often located in old wells or privies.

Monitoring TCR-1: Permit Sonoma shall verify the above mitigation language is printed on all permit plans involving ground disturbing activities prior to issuance of a grading or building permit, whichever occurs first.

Mitigation TCR-2: *Encountering Native American Remains.* Although unlikely, if human remains are encountered, all work must stop in the immediate vicinity of the discovered remains and the County Coroner and a qualified archaeologist must be notified immediately so that an evaluation can be performed. If the remains are deemed to be Native American and prehistoric, the Native American Heritage Commission must be contacted by the Coroner so that a "Most Likely Descendant" can be designated and further recommendations regarding treatment of the remains is provided.

Monitoring TCR-2: Permit Sonoma shall verify the above mitigation language is printed on all permit plans involving ground disturbing activities prior to issuance of a grading or building permit, whichever occurs first.

19. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS:

Would the project:

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

Comment:

The project will receive water from two sources: groundwater and recycled water from the treated process wastewater system. The project includes a new sustainable wastewater system that will allow the winery to treat that water so it can be used for irrigation (as discussed in greater detail below). In order to provide the County and State required 50-foot well seal, the project will replace the existing well to serve domestic uses. Hydrologist, O'Connor Environmental Inc., prepared a Ground Water Report, which is enclosed with this revised project description. As indicated by the Ground Water Report (further addressed below), there is sufficient groundwater available to supply this project. Further, the project will require significantly less water compared to the previous iteration reviewed by SVCAC.

There are two proposed project stormwater treatment features which treat and retain the runoff from all proposed pervious and impervious surfaces. All drainage features will discharge to undeveloped grass areas downhill of the project site and all flows are returned to sheet flow by riprap dissipators.

The native vegetation and humus layer will act as a 'vegetated buffer strip' and will be maintained by this project to provide the required treatment control of storm drain runoff. If construction activities result in disturbance of soil which produces less than 15' of buffer strip, then sufficient hydroseeding will be provided to maintain the buffer strip.

This design utilizes the Best Management Practices (BMPs) outlined and discussed in the BASMAA manual in order to limit post-development stormwater levels and pollutant discharges in compliance with Permit Sonoma's BMP guides. The proposed bioretention stormwater treatment features will provide a level of stormwater treatment that did not exist at this site when previously developed and in use as a dairy. Flows which previously came down the hillside, across the gravel work/parking area and into the public storm drain system, will now be collected and piped to reduce the potential for polluted runoff entering waterways. All runoff from roofs and proposed impervious surfaces will be collected and conveyed to the multiple stormwater treatment features across the site.

Additionally, erosion control measures proposed in the Grading and Drainage Plans include sediment fences and fiber wattles, which will protect the existing on-site pond and existing drainage system from runoff during construction practices. The pre- and post-development point of discharge from this property will ultimately see a reduction in flows, as the development will provide for a higher overall time of concentration for stormwater flows, as surface flows will be directed through grassy swales and via the storm drain network into stormwater treatment features. These features will provide retention space in the gravel layer to hold flows and allow infiltration into the existing soils, while reducing the volume and speed of water exiting the site. This increased time of concentration will directly correlate to a lower storm intensity, and thus smaller volume of stormwater runoff.

The project will require the construction of a new wastewater treatment systems, however, this facility will not result in a significant environmental impact. The project applicant had an analysis prepared (Wastewater Feasibility Study – Use Permit Application for Fremont Ranch Winery, NorCal Civil Engineering, Inc., February 3, 2023), which addresses existing septic soil testing conditions, proposed sanitary sewage and winery process wastewater design flows, proposed septic system capacity and layout, and proposed winery process wastewater treatment and irrigation reuse dispersal for the project. Additionally, a site evaluation was performed by Ben Monroe, P.E. of Always Engineering and Mario Kalson of Sonoma County PRMD on February 8, 2016, and wet weather soil percolation testing on February 24, 2016 to establish application rates for a septic system.

A new sanitary sewage on-site septic system is proposed to accommodate the winery employees, visitors, and events. A new process waste treatment system consisting of an aerated pond or packaged treatment system is proposed to accommodate winery production wastewater.

Employee, tasting room and event wastewater flows were examined to determine on-site wastewater (septic system) needs for the project, with the peak day wastewater flow estimated from the project projected to be 1,720 gpd. This value will be used to size the leachfield areas and with two new 5,000-gallon sanitary sewer septic tanks proposed for solids removal.

For process wastewater (PW), the proposed PW system for the project will be a package, pre-engineered treatment system with irrigation dispersal of treated effluent. A tank is required for storage of treated PW effluent during periods of rain and soil saturated. The design flow proposed to the treatment system is 3,818 gpd, and a 4,000 gallon PW septic tank is proposed for solids removal. A total of one acre of landscape is proposed for dispersal of effluent to avoid ponding and concentration, as well as maintain 2' freeboard in the storage tank without irrigating during the months of December through February, when there is very little irrigation demand.

In order to maintain flexibility in buildout of the site, two PW treatment options were evaluated; a worm bed biofiltration system and a membrane bioreactor (MBR), with final determination of which system to be used to be done as part of construction. Therefore, both options were evaluated. A minimum 24,000-gallon storage tank will be provided for storage of treated effluent during periods when irrigation cannot occur. This volume is sufficient to eliminate the need to irrigate when soils may be saturated. A slightly larger tank may be required if 2' freeboard in the tank is required.

With the project wastewater treatment and disposal plans, the project will have a less than significant impact.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

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

Comment:

The project parcel is located southeast of the City of Sonoma near the headwaters of an unnamed tributary that flows southwest to Steamboat Slough and then to Sonoma Creek. The project parcel is classified as a Class 3 Marginal Groundwater Availability area as defined by the County, and is also located within Sonoma Valley Groundwater Basin.

A hydrogeologic report was prepared by O'Connor Environmental, Inc., originally in 2016, and updated in March 2023. The report was prepared consistent with Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Division (PRMD) pursuant to General Plan Policy WR-2e and Procedure and Policy 8-1-14. The hydrogeologic analysis includes estimates of existing and proposed water use within the project impact area, compilation of well completion reports (drillers' logs) from the area and characterization of local hydrogeologic conditions, estimates of annual groundwater recharge and existing and proposed groundwater use, and the potential for well interference between the project well and neighboring wells. The analysis was revised from the original report to evaluate the reduced project size and to incorporate an updated estimate of groundwater recharge for the project recharge/impact area based on a county driller's logs (from Well Completion Reports) for wells on and around the project parcel were obtained from the California Department of Water Resources.

The project site contains a well located near the southeast corner of the property. The project analysis shows that the nearest known well is located over 1,000 ft from the project-site well, and well interference during well operation is unlikely. There are no streams or surface waters of significance near the project site and it is unlikely that operation of a well for this project would significantly affect surface waters.

The available data regarding groundwater conditions in the vicinity of the project site from the SVGB do not have significant indications of groundwater overdraft or other threats to sustainability of the groundwater resource.

Per the SVGB GSP, Section 3.2.6-Groundwater-Quality Conditions and Trends, there are not any significant water quality issues documented near the project site. To the northwest of the project site in the vicinity of the City of Sonoma and to the south and southwest of the project site in areas adjacent nearer San Pablo Bay, there are a variety of water quality concerns. The upland location of the project site and the confined aquifer conditions are believed to isolate the project site from significant water quality concerns.

Proposed uses consist of existing uses plus an additional 8.19 ac-ft/yr for 20.47 acres of permitted vineyard and an additional 1.8 ac-ft/yr for a new proposed 30,000 cases per year winery with employee, event and tasting room visitor use, as well as 0.64 ac-ft/yr for winery landscaping of 1 acre. Included in the winery use is 1.33 ac-ft/yr of winery production wastewater that will be diverted from the facility wastewater treatment system and will be treated to a level suitable for irrigation use. Accounting for this recycling, net annual project water demand is 9.30 ac-ft/yr, bringing total proposed use in the recharge area to of 31.94 ac-ft/yr.

Per applicant's information obtained from the prior dairy operation on the property, "the average number of cattle on the project site was 350 (and) that the average dairy cow consumes 40 gallons a day". Based on a 2012 study from Michigan State, assuming 6.3 gals water per cow for cleaning, this equates to approximately 18.15 ac-ft of water annually. Notably, this estimate of water use demand is about twice that of the proposed project.

Groundwater recharge was simulated for Water Year 2010 which was selected because annual

precipitation was close to the 30-year average for much of Sonoma County. During the simulated water year, precipitation averaged 24.0 inches across the project recharge/impact area and actual evapotranspiration (AET) averaged 15.2 inches. Groundwater recharge varied across the project impact area with a spatially averaged recharge of 4.7 inches. Groundwater recharge estimates can also be expressed as a total volume by multiplying the calculated recharge by the area of project impact area (109.5 acres). This calculation yields an estimated mean annual recharge of 42.8 acre-ft/yr.

The total proposed groundwater use for the project recharge area is estimated to be 32.9 acft/ yr. Estimated existing use is 22.64 ac-ft/yr, mostly for the Nicholson vineyard (19.17 acft/yr) and winery (1.22 ac-ft/yr), with

2.25 ac-ft/yr for existing residences. The proposed project use totals 9.30 ac-ft/yr with wastewater irrigation consideration, of which 8.19 ac-ft/yr is for 20.47 acres of vineyard, 0.64 ac-ft/yr for surrounding landscaping, and with 1.8 ac-ft/yr for a 30,000 case per year winery and tasting room. Under proposed project conditions, groundwater use represents 75% of estimated annual groundwater recharge for average water year conditions, with a less than significant impact upon area groundwater recharge.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant

- c) **Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has inadequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?**

Comment:

The project will utilize on-site wastewater treatment improvements to adequately address generation of wastewater. A new sanitary sewage on-site septic system is proposed to accommodate the winery employees, visitors, and events. A new process waste treatment system consisting of an aerated pond or packaged treatment system is proposed to accommodate winery production wastewater. For process wastewater (PW), the proposed PW system for the project will be a package, pre-engineered treatment system with irrigation dispersal of treated effluent.

With use of the project wastewater design plans, the project will have on adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand, and will not create an impact on a wastewater service provider.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

- d) **Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?**

Comment:

The project will not generate excess solid waste.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

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

Comment:

he project has been conditioned to comply with the County's solid waste requirements. . Trash enclosures and recycling areas will be reviewed and approved by PRMD's Environmental Health Specialist and the Building Plan Check Section. Trash trucks must have at least a 32-foot turning radius at the trash enclosure must have 16 feet of overhead clearance. The outside perimeter of the trash enclosure shall be graded to prevent storm water from draining into the sanitary sewer system.

The trash enclosure shall be covered with a roof or awning. A condition of approval will require that all garbage and refuse on this site shall accumulate or be stored for no more than seven calendar days, and shall be properly disposed of at a County Transfer Station or County Landfill before the end of the seventh day. The project will comply with applicable solid waste management and reduction requirements.

Significance Level:
Less than significant

20. WILDFIRE

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

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

Comment:

The project would not result in creation of new residential units, and is approximately four miles from the Schell Vista Fire Department, ensuring adequate response times in the event of an emergency. To facilitate locating an emergency and to avoid delays in emergency response, the project has been conditioned to require the project to provide for safe access for emergency fire apparatus and evacuation concurrently, and unobstructed traffic circulation during an emergency. Additionally, There is no separate emergency evacuation plan for the County. Furthermore, the project would not cause an interference with emergency evacuations. The Fire Marshall will review the building plans to insure that the winery and tasting room will have adequate fire protection. The two primary entrances off of SR 12/121 includes a looped driveway system to provide for emergency vehicle ingress and egress.

Significance Level:
Less than significant

b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

Comment:

According to the Safety Element of the General Plan, the project site is not located in a high wildland fire hazard area.

The project is located in a State Responsibility Area and is designated as being in a moderate fire hazard severity zone, and as such is located outside of the wildland high and very high fire hazard zones mapped by Wildland Fire Hazard Areas Figure PS 1-g of the Sonoma County General Plan 2020.

The project is located in an area with rolling hillside terrain with varying slopes, characterized by grasslands, rangelands, vineyards and rural residential uses. The project has no residential units, and would not expose people to pollutant concentrations from wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire. As noted above, the project site has two points of access onto SR 12, and is situated at the corner of SR 12/Napa Rd, providing viable access to and from the site in the event of an emergency.

Significance Level:
Less than significant

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

The Project proposes construction of paved access driveways, with two points of ingress/egress to SR 12 in the event of an emergency. The project includes water storage onsite, including an existing pond (to remain as part of the project) and water storage tanks to provide emergency water sources. Other utility installations, including use of underground power lines to the proposed buildings, will reduce potential for power disruption during a wildfire. Project plans also include the use of defensible wildfire space (vineyards) around buildings.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

- d) **Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?**

As noted above in Sections 7 (Geology and Soils) and 10 (Hydrology), the project site is not located in a flood zone. Appropriate foundation and grading design will be utilized to ensure there are no significant impacts related to slope stability and landslide hazards, and the project plans include drainage is provided onsite, reducing any potential for offsite impacts related to possible post-wildfire impacts. Additionally, with the incorporation of multiple BMP's into the overall project's design, the project will not significantly alter drainage patterns on-site or in the general area, nor will it result in on- or off-site flooding. The project does not include any work or alteration of a course of a stream or river.

Significance Level:

Less than significant

21. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 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?**

Comment:

Potential project impacts on special status plant and fish/wildlife species and habitat are addressed in Section 4. Implementation of the required mitigation measures (Mitigation Measures BIO-1 and BIO-2) would reduce these potential impacts to a less-than-significant level. Potential adverse project impacts to cultural resources are addressed in Section 5. A standard condition of approval to ensure that cultural or archaeological resources are protected if unearthed during ground disturbing activities is provided in Section 18a. Implementation of this standard condition of approval would reduce any potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Significance Level:

Less than significant with Mitigation

(See Mitigations BIO-1, BIO-2, CUL-1, CUL-2, GEO-1, GEO-2, TCR-1, TCR-2)

- b) **Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?**

Comment:

No project impacts have been identified in this Initial Study that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable. The project would contribute to impacts related to biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, and tribal cultural resources, which may be cumulative off-site, but, where appropriate in response to potentially significant impacts, mitigations have been identified which would reduce project impacts to less-than-significant levels.

Significance Level:

Less than significant with mitigation

(See Mitigations BIO-1, BIO-2, CUL-1, CUL-2, GEO-1, GEO-2, TCR-1, TCR-2)

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

Comment:

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

Significance Level:

Less than significant with mitigation

(See Mitigations BIO-1, BIO-2, CUL-1, CUL-2, GEO-1, GEO-2, TCR-1, TCR-2)