

Trinity County General Plan Update

Draft Environmental Impact Report

SCH #2026010191

prepared by

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July 2026

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AADT	annual average daily traffic
AB	Assembly Bill
ADT	average daily traffic
AFY	acre-feet per year
ALUCP	Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan
ATP	Active Transportation Plan
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BMP	Best Management Practice
Btu	British thermal unit
°C	Celsius
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CAFE	Corporate Average Fuel Economy
cal BP	calibrated Before Present
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CalEPA	California Environmental Protection Agency
CalGEM	California Department of Conservation Geologic Energy Management
CALGreen	California Green Building Standards Code
Cal/OSHA	California Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Occupational Safety and Health Administration
CalRecycle	California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery
CAO	Cleanup and Abatement Order
CARB	California Air Resources Board
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CBC	California Building Code
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CDO	Cease and Desist Order
CDPH	California Department of Public Health
CEC	California Energy Commission
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act

CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CFC	California Fire Code
CFGC	California Fish and Game Code
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CGS	California Geological Survey
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO	carbon monoxide
CO_2	carbon dioxide
CH_4	methane
County	County of Trinity
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
CRPR	California Rare Plant Ranks
CSD	Community Services District
CUPA	Certified Unified Program Agency
CVP	Central Valley Project
CWA	Clean Water Act
CWPP	Community Wildfire Protection Plan
dB	decibel
dBA	A-weighted sound pressure level
DOC	Department of Conservation
DOF	Department of Finance
DPM	diesel particulate matter
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
EIA	United States Energy Information Administration
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EO	Executive Order
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
EV	electric vehicle
°F	Fahrenheit
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
FESA	Federal Endangered Species Act
FHSZ	Fire Hazard Severity Zone

FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FMMP	Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FPD	Fire Protection District
FPMS	Fossil Prediction Map System
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GHG	greenhouse gas
GWP	global warming potential
HAZWOPER	Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response
HMBP	Hazardous Materials Business Plan
HMP	Hazard Mitigation Plan
HVAC	heating, ventilation, and air conditioning
Hz	hertz
IEPR	Integrated Energy Policy Report
in/sec	inches per second
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISO	Insurance Services Office
LAFCo	Local Agency Formation Commission
L_{dn}	day-night average level
L_{eq}	equivalent continuous sound level
L_{eq}(1-hr)	1-hour equivalent sound level
L_{eq}(8-hr)	8-hour equivalent sound level
L_{eq}(24-hr)	24-hour equivalent sound level
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
LHMP	Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
LRA	Local Responsibility Area
LUST	leaking underground storage tank
MCAQMD	Mendocino County Air Quality Management District
MLD	most likely descendant
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MMBtu	million British thermal units
MS4	municipal separate storm sewer system
MT	metric tons
MY	model year
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission

NCAB	North Coast Air Basin
NCUAQMD	North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District
NHTSA	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
NOD	Notice of Determination
NOP	Notice of Preparation
NO_X	nitrogen oxide
NO_2	nitrogen dioxide
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPPA	Native Plant Protection Act
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWL	natural and working lands
O_3	ozone
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Pb	lead
PDF	Project Design Feature
PG&E	Pacific Gas and Electric Company
$PM_{2.5}$	particulate matter with diameters of up to 2.5 microns
PM_{10}	particulate matter with diameters of up to 10 microns
pph	persons per household
PPV	peak particle velocity
PRC	Public Resources Code
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
ROG	reactive organic gas
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SAA	Streambed Alteration Agreement
SAFE	Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient
SARA	Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act
SB	Senate Bill
SDC	Seismic Design Category
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SHMP	State Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SMARA	Surface Mining and Reclamation Act
SNC	Sensitive Natural Communities
SO_2	sulfur dioxide

SR	State Route
SRA	State Responsibility Area
SVP	Society of Vertebrate Paleontology
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAC	toxic air contaminant
TCR	tribal cultural resource
TCSO	Trinity County Sheriff's Office
TCT	Trinity County Transit
TCTC	Trinity County Transportation Commission
TCWD	Trinity County Waterworks District
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
TPZs	timberland production zones
Trinity PUD	Trinity Public Utilities District
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USC	United States Code
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFS	United States Forest Service
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
UST	underground storage tank
UWMP	Urban Water Management Plan
VFD	volunteer fire department or volunteer fire district
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
VOC	volatile organic compound
WCSD	Weaverville Community Services District
WMA	Watershed Management Area
WSA	Water Supply Assessment
WSD	Weaverville Sanitary District
WUI	Wildland-Urban Interface

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Executive Summary

This section summarizes the characteristics, alternatives, as well as the environmental impacts and mitigation measures associated with the Trinity County General Plan Update (proposed project).

Project Synopsis

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Project Location

Trinity County is located in the northwestern mountains of California. The County includes no incorporated cities and is primarily made up of federal and state-owned land, which includes a large section of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest and the Trinity Alps Wilderness. Trinity County is bordered by Siskiyou County on the north, Shasta and Tehama counties on the east, Mendocino County on the south, and Humboldt County on the west.

Project Description

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared to examine the potential environmental effects of the Trinity County General Plan Update. The following is a summary of the full project description, which can be found in Chapter 2, *Project Description*.

The General Plan Update is a comprehensive update of the County's current General Plan. The Trinity County General Plan is made up of ten elements: Land Use; Community Plans; Economic Development; Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure; Conservation and Open Space; Circulation; Housing; Community Health; Hazards and Safety Element; and Noise. The Land Use Element describes the general distribution, location, and extent of various land uses.

The General Plan designates land uses defining the type of development that can occur throughout the county through the planning horizon year of 2050 (over approximately 24 years). The proposed project anticipates development under the General Plan to occur in existing unincorporated communities. The proposed project is intended to provide room for population, housing, and employment growth in the county through 2050. Based on a modest buildout assumption, the General Plan Update would result in up to 7,420 new residents in Trinity County in 2050. When combined with the existing 2025 population of 15,884, the total population of Trinity County in 2050 would be 23,304 persons.

Guiding Principles and Project Objectives

The Introduction chapter of the General Plan includes the following vision statement:

> Trinity County is a place where people can experience a fulfilling life in a peaceful, rural setting while allowing for existing and new development to thrive in appropriate ways and locations. It is a place where employment, housing, world class recreation, and cultural and natural resources opportunities

are abundant; where there is a strong sense of community and family, neighbors support neighbors, and residents feel safe and secure.

The Introduction chapter further provides the following guiding principles:

1. **Hazards and Safety**. Provide for safe communities through resilient infrastructure, communitywide education and preparation, effective coordination with state and federal agencies, and hazard planning that includes managing lands to reduce the impacts of climate-related, natural, and human-caused disasters including wildland fires, flooding, and geological events.
2. **Community Health and Health Services**. Promote economic, social, and physical health and wellness by investing in infrastructure and services that promote physical activity and access to local healthy foods; help reduce health disparities; and integrate public health into public policies and the community.
3. **Land Use, Housing, and Zoning**. Identify additional land for future development while ensuring the compatibility of adjoining land uses; incentivizing new development; returning vacant and abandoned properties to active use; increasing affordable housing options; improving resiliency to wildfire through defensible space, home hardening, and fuel management; and emphasizing collaborative approaches to housing challenges.
4. **Mobility and Infrastructure**. Invest in and develop an efficient and safe multimodal transportation network with infrastructure and services that meet the needs of residents and businesses; maintain and enhance law enforcement and fire protection services to protect residents and property; and enhance availability and reliability of communications infrastructure to residents and businesses.
5. **Watersheds and Natural Resources**. Sustainably manage, conserve, and develop the county's open spaces and natural resources with expanded opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the county's heritage and natural setting. Promote the availability and accessibility of recreation sites, entertainment opportunities, waterways, and state and federal lands to all residents and visitors.
6. **Economic Development.** Maintain a high level of coordination and collaboration within the local business community to incentivize business development and employment opportunities, encourage economic growth, and retain capital within the community; strategically distribute resources for economic development throughout all communities in the county; and expand educational and workforce development opportunities, to provide a broad range of jobs across diverse industries.

In addition, as stated in the published Notice of Preparation for this EIR, the objectives of the General Plan Update include:

- Express the community's vision for Trinity County's future
- Provide a balance between growth and conservation that meets community needs and protects Trinity County's quality of life
- Inform residents, developers, and decision makers of the ground rules that guide development
- Ensure that development occurs in an efficient, orderly manner that minimizes costs to taxpayers
- Engage in a comprehensive and inclusive outreach process

Required Approvals

With recommendations from the County's Planning Commission, Trinity County Board of Supervisors will need to take the following discretionary actions in conjunction with the proposed project:

- Certification of the Final EIR
- Adoption of the proposed General Plan Update

The updated Hazards and Safety Element will also be subject to review and approval from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and Board of Forestry, prior to adoption of the updated Hazards and Safety Element by the County.

Additionally, at a later date, the County will finalize and implement revisions to the Zoning Code to bring the Code into compliance with the proposed General Plan. The timing of this approval is currently unknown.

Alternatives

As required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this EIR examines alternatives to the proposed project. Studied alternatives include the following two alternatives:

- Alternative 1: No Project/Existing General Plan
- Alternative 2: 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency

Alternative 1 assumes that future buildout in the county would continue to be guided by existing General Plan elements and community plans, as well as existing zoning. Alternative 2 assumes that, in addition to adoption of the proposed General Plan, all development facilitated by this alternative would be required to have all-electric building systems and would not include the use of propane or natural gas for space heating, water heating, cooking, or other building energy needs, consistent with building electrification and decarbonization strategies identified in the 2022 Scoping Plan.

Based on the alternatives analysis, the No Project Alternative was determined to be the environmentally superior alternative. The No Project Alternative would result in reduced impacts to several environmental resource areas compared to the proposed project, generally because it would involve less development than the proposed project and fewer physical changes to the environment.

If the No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, CEQA requires that an environmentally superior alternative among the remaining alternatives be identified (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6[e]). Based on this consideration, the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative. Alternative 2 would reduce the severity of impact to air quality and avoid significant and unavoidable impacts to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions therefore, making Alternative 2 the environmentally superior “build” alternative.

Refer to Chapter 6, *Alternatives*, for the complete alternatives analysis.

Areas of Known Controversy

The EIR scoping process did not identify any areas of known controversy for the proposed project. Responses to the Notice of Preparation of a Draft EIR and input received at the EIR scoping meeting held by the County are summarized in Chapter 1, *Introduction*.

The County is aware of public controversy and concerns related to cannabis cultivation, wildfire severity, and the expansion of uses allowed by right which might reduce the potential for conservation of natural resources and open space.

Issues to be Resolved

The proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable GHG emission and construction noise impacts, despite the implementation of mitigation measures GHG-1 (Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions), NOI-1a (Project-Specific Construction Noise Study), and NOI-1b (Measures to Reduce Construction Noise). Additionally, the proposed project requires mitigation measures AQ-2a (Construction Health Risk Assessment), AQ-2b (Implement Diesel Engine Exhaust Control Measures and Use of Alternative Fuels), AQ-3 (Odor Control Plan), BIO-1 (Revise Proposed Policy COS 3.6), CUL-2

(Revise Proposed Policy COS 8.4), and NOI-2 (Construction Vibration Control Plan) to avoid potential environmental impacts related to toxic air contaminants, odors, special-status species, archaeological resources, paleontological resources, and construction vibration.

Additionally, this EIR presents two potential project alternatives intended to reduce the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project. The No Project Alternative would worsen identified significant and unavoidable impacts related to GHG emissions and construction noise. The 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative would eliminate the significant and unavoidable impact related to GHG emissions, but would not reduce or avoid significant and unavoidable construction noise impacts.

Issues Not Studied in Detail in the EIR

As noted in Section 1.6, *Scope and Content*, all issues from the environmental checklist were addressed in this EIR.

Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Table ES-1 summarizes the environmental impacts of the proposed project, proposed mitigation measures, and residual impacts (the impact after application of mitigation, if required). Impacts are categorized as follows:

- **Significant and Unavoidable.** An impact that cannot be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires a Statement of Overriding Considerations to be issued if the project is approved per Section 15093 of the CEQA Guidelines.
- **Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** An impact that can be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires findings under Section 15091 of the CEQA Guidelines.
- **Less than Significant.** An impact that may be adverse, but does not exceed the threshold levels and does not require mitigation measures. However, mitigation measures that could further lessen the environmental effect may be suggested if readily available and easily achievable.
- **No Impact:** The proposed project would have no effect on environmental conditions or would reduce existing environmental problems or hazards.

Table ES-1 Summary of Environmental Impacts, Mitigation Measures, and Residual Impacts

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
Aesthetics		
Impact AES-1. The proposed project would facilitate growth that may lead to intensified development in Trinity County. Proposed General Plan policies and development standards would regulate development in areas with scenic vistas, reducing potential impacts. Impacts to scenic vistas would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact AES-2. The proposed project would facilitate growth that may lead to intensified development in Trinity County near eligible state scenic highways and scenic byways. Proposed General Plan policies and adherence to the County Code of Ordinances would regulate development in areas near eligible scenic highways and scenic byways, reducing potential impacts. Impact to scenic roadways would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact AES-3. The proposed General Plan would create land use patterns that are generally consistent with existing land use patterns. Future development would be subject to development standards and County Code requirements intended to ensure consistent development and preservation of character within the county. Impacts related to visual character and public views would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact AES-4. Development facilitated by the project could increase light and glare effects on sensitive receptors, such as residential uses. However, new development would be subject to existing regulations in the County's Zoning Code. Therefore, impacts to light and glare would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Agriculture and Forestry Resources		
Impact AG-1. There is no mapped Farmland in the Planning Area, and the proposed General Plan includes policies protective of agricultural resources. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact AG-2. Development facilitated by the project would not result in conflicts to existing zoning for agricultural uses or Williamson Act contracts. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
Impact AG-3. The proposed project would encourage the continued operation of existing timber production within the Planning Area. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact AG-4. The proposed project would not result in the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or forest land to non-forest use. This impact would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Air Quality		
Impact AQ-1. Development facilitated by the project would generate short-term and long-term emissions of criteria pollutants. However, development facilitated by the project would be consistent with current air quality plan control measures and the rate of increase in vehicle miles traveled under the proposed project would not exceed the rate of population growth. Therefore, the project would not conflict with North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District's PM_{10} Attainment Plan and would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the North Coast Air Basin is in nonattainment. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact AQ-2. Development facilitated by the project would not increase carbon monoxide concentrations such that it would create carbon monoxide hotspots. Project emissions within 1,000 feet of a sensitive receptor could expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. However, despite the implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-2a and AQ-2b, toxic air contaminant emissions would be significant and unavoidable.	**AQ-2a Construction Health Risk Assessment.** The County shall require, as a standard condition of approval, preparation of a construction health risk assessment to estimate health risk using air dispersion modeling. This new condition of approval would be required if development facilitated by the project meets the following criteria: • Individual project active construction duration is greater than 6 months; and • Individual project construction is within 1,000 feet of sensitive receptors (e.g., residential, schools, childcare facilities, senior living facilities). • Mitigation Measure AQ-2b is implemented. **AQ-2b Implement Diesel Engine Exhaust Control Measures and Use of Alternative Fuels.** Prior to issuance of grading permits, the County shall confirm that the grading plan, building plans, and specifications stipulate that the following measures shall be implemented: • All diesel-powered off-road equipment used in construction shall meet the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Tier 4 emission standards as defined in 40 Code of Federal Regulations 1039 and comply with the	Significant and unavoidable

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
	exhaust emission test procedures and provisions of 40 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 1065 and 1068. Tier 3 models with Level 3 diesel particulate filters can be used if a Tier 4 version of the equipment type is not available. This measure can also be achieved by using battery-electric off-road equipment as it becomes available. Implementation of this measure shall be required in the contract the project applicant establishes with its construction contractors. • Alternative fuel (natural gas, propane, electric, etc.) construction equipment shall be incorporated where available or necessary to reduce toxic air contaminant emissions. These requirements shall be incorporated into the contract agreement with the construction contractor. A copy of the equipment's certification or model year specifications shall be available upon request for all equipment on-site. • Electricity shall be supplied to the site from the existing power grid to support the electric construction equipment. If connection to the grid is determined to be infeasible for portions of the project, a non-diesel fueled generator shall be used.	
Impact AQ-3. Implementation of the project would expose sensitive receptors to objectionable odors. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-3, an odor plan would be developed to reduce objectionable odors. Therefore, impacts related to odors would be less than significant with mitigation.	**AQ-3 Odor Control Plan.** The County shall require the preparation of an odor control plan prior to individual project approval to reduce nuisance odor impacts. Outdoor and indoor cannabis land uses shall retain a qualified odor control consultant prior to approval of the project to evaluate how odors disperse, identify sensitive receptors affected, and develop odor mitigation measures for areas with elevated odor emissions. The County shall require the project applicant to implement all recommended mitigation measures identified in the odor control plan as a condition of the cannabis-related use permit. The odor control plan shall contain the following, as appropriate, for each proposed cannabis use: • Identify and describe odor emitting activities and the nature and characteristics of the emissions. • Identify the location and distance of sensitive receptors from the site. This may include the preparation of a wind pattern evaluation. • Identify the odor measurement that would constitute a nuisance at sensitive receptor locations. • Demonstrate whether the cannabis site's distance to receptors, wind direction, and local topographic conditions would result in detection	Less than significant with mitigation

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
	of cannabis odors by off site sensitive receptors that would create a nuisance. • Provide a description of the air treatment system, odor control devices, or other best management practices that will be implemented to prevent cannabis odors from being detected at sensitive receptor locations. This may include, but is not limited to: mechanical ventilation controls, carbon filtration, ozone generation, bi-polar ionization, high-pressure misting systems, fogging systems, aerosol-type handlers, and companion planting, such as plants with strong fragrances. • Identify corrective actions to address County verified off site odor complaints. This shall include an initial assessment of odor measurements at the sensitive receptor and/or complaint location(s) to determine if the odor constitutes a nuisance as defined in the plan. This may include immediate and complete harvest of the cannabis plants or identification of other methods to be applied as part of the current harvest or the next to minimize off site odor impacts so that they do not conflict with other applicable standards of the County Cannabis Program or state licensing requirements.	
Biological Resources		
Impact BIO-1. Development facilitated by the project would be required to comply with proposed General Plan policies protective of special-status species and their associated habitats. Impacts to special-status species would be less than significant with mitigation.	**BIO-1 Revise Proposed Policy COS 3.6.** The County shall include the following revision to General Plan Policy COS 3.6 (Biological Resource Assessment) prior to adoption of the General Plan (revision shown with <u>underlined</u> text): • **Policy COS 3.6 Biological Resource Assessment**. If determined necessary based on preliminary review conducted by County staff, require new development proposed in an area of potentially high biological sensitivity to prepare a Biological Resource Assessment that include<u>s</u> measures for mitigating any potentially sensitive impacts to biological resources to the greatest extent feasible. <u>The County shall require the preparation of a Biological Resource Assessment for any non-infill (as defined by PRC Section 21061.3) project that would remove native or naturalized vegetation communities. The Biological Resource Assessment shall be conducted by a qualified biologist approved by the County. The qualified biologist shall assess habitat suitability of the proposed development area for all special-status plants, wildlife species, jurisdictional waters, and sensitive habitats having documented occurrences within the proposed development's USGS quadrangle map and surrounding eight quadrangle maps, as appropriate.</u>	Less than significant with mitigation

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
	The County shall require the implementation of mitigation measures recommended in BRAs prepared pursuant to Policy COS 3.6 as conditions of approval on individual development projects.	
Impact BIO-2. Development facilitated by the project could adversely impact riparian habitat, other sensitive natural communities, or protected wetlands in the Planning Area. However, federal, state, and local regulations, as well as proposed General Plan goals and policies would ensure riparian habitat, sensitive natural communities, and wetlands are not substantially impacted. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact BIO-3. Development facilitated by the project would conserve open space throughout the Planning Area, as directed by policies in the proposed General Plan. Impacts to wildlife movement corridors and wildlife nursery sites would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact BIO-4. Development facilitated by the project would be required to comply with applicable local policies and ordinances protecting biological resources. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact BIO-5. The proposed project would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. This impact would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Cultural Resources		
Impact CUL-1. Development facilitated by the project has the potential to impact built-environment historical resources. Proposed General Plan policies would reduce this impact. Impacts would be less than significant**.**	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact CUL-2. Development facilitated by the project has the potential to impact archaeological resources. Proposed General Plan policies would reduce this impact. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.	**CUL-2 Revise Proposed Policy COS 8.4.** The County shall include the following revision to General Plan Policy COS 8.4 (Cultural and Paleontological Resource Assessment) prior to adoption of the General Plan (revision shown with <u>underlined</u> text): • **Policy COS 8.4 Cultural and Paleontological Resource Assessment**. If determined necessary based on preliminary review conducted by County staff, require new development be assessed for potential cultural and paleontological resources by a qualified professional, and be designed to avoid impacts	Less than significant with mitigation

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
	to these resources whenever possible to the maximum extent feasible. The County shall require that any cultural resource assessment specifically include a records search at the corresponding information center, a Native American Heritage Commission Sacred Lands Files search, and a desktop geoarchaeological assessment of buried site sensitivity. In addition, site records shall be prepared in accordance with the Office of Historic Preservation standards and guidance for any resources identified. Impacts, whenever possible, should be reduced to a less than significant level through appropriate mitigation. The County shall require the implementation of mitigation measures recommended in cultural and paleontological resource assessments prepared pursuant to Policy COS 8.4 as conditions of approval on individual development projects.	
Impact CUL-3. Ground-disturbing activities associated with development facilitated by the project could unearth human remains. However, compliance with existing regulations and proposed General Plan policies would ensure this impact is less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Energy		
Impact E-1. Development facilitated by the project would not result in the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during construction or operation. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact E-2. Construction and operation of development facilitated by the project would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. No impact would occur.	No mitigation is required.	No impact
Geology and Soils		
Impact GEO-1. Construction and occupancy of development facilitated by the project could result in exposure of people or structures to a risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, strong seismic ground shaking, seismic-related ground failure, liquefaction, or landslides. However, required adherence to the California Building Code (CBC) and Trinity County Code of Ordinances, and implementation of the goals and policies of the proposed General Plan, would reduce the potential for loss, injury, or death following a seismic event to a less than significant level.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
Impact GEO-2. Construction of development facilitated by the project would require ground disturbance such as excavation and grading that could result in loose or exposed soil. This disturbed soil could be eroded by wind or during a storm event, which would result in the loss of topsoil. Compliance with applicable regulations, including the Clean Water Act, and implementation of the policies in the proposed General Plan would minimize the potential for erosion and the loss of topsoil and would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact GEO-3. Development facilitated by the project could result in the construction of structures on expansive soils, which could create a substantial risk to life or property. However, new development would be required to comply with the standards of the CBC pertaining to expansive soils. Compliance with the requirements of the CBC, the Trinity County Code of Ordinances, and polices in the proposed General Plan would reduce impacts related to expansive soils to a less-than-significant level.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact GEO-4. Development facilitated by the project would lead to the installation of septic tanks and onsite sewage disposal systems. Portions of the county may contain areas with soils not suitable for wastewater treatment. Such systems must be sited, designed, and constructed in accordance with applicable local requirements. Compliance with the requirements of the CBC, the Trinity County Code of Ordinances, and policies in the proposed General Plan would reduce impacts related to septic tanks and alternative wastewater disposal systems to a less-than-significant level.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact GEO-5. Development facilitated by the project could impact paleontological resources in areas with low, moderate, or unknown paleontological sensitivity. Compliance with the requirements of the CBC, the Trinity County Code of Ordinances, policies in the proposed General Plan, and Mitigation Measure CUL-2 would reduce impacts related to paleontological resources to a less-than-significant level.	Implement Mitigation Measure CUL-2 (Revise Proposed Policy COS 8.4); provided above.	Less than significant with mitigation

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
Greenhouse Gas Emissions		
Impact GHG-1. Construction and operation facilitated by the project would generate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and the project would incorporate features that align with the goals of the applicable plans, policies, and regulations related to the reduction of GHG emissions. However, even with the implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1, individual projects could face challenges that hinder their ability to implement Mitigation Measure GHG-1 and thus may not be consistent with the 2022 Scoping Plan. Therefore, impacts would be significant and unavoidable.	**GHG-1 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions.** Development facilitated by the project shall incorporate GHG emissions reduction actions to demonstrate consistency with the 2022 Scoping Plan for residential and mixed-use developments. Specifically, individual projects shall incorporate the following design features, which shall be verified by the County prior to issuing a building permit for an individual project: a. Future residential and mixed-use developments shall implement a combination of on-site and/or off-site renewable energy generation sufficient to fully offset the GHG emissions associated with the use of natural gas appliances incorporated into the project. Compliance shall be verified by County staff on building plans prior to granting building permits. b. Provide electric vehicle charging infrastructure that, at minimum, meets California Green Building Standards Code Tier 2 voluntary measures at the time of project approval.	Significant and unavoidable
Hazards and Hazardous Materials		
Impact HAZ-1. Development facilitated by the project could result in an incremental increase in the overall routine transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials in the Planning Area. However, compliance with applicable regulations related to hazardous materials and compliance with proposed General Plan policies would minimize the risk related to the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact HAZ-2. Demolition, grading, or excavation associated with development facilitated by the project could uncover contaminated soils or result in accidental release of hazardous materials. However, compliance with applicable regulations related to hazardous materials and implementation of proposed General Plan policies would minimize the risk of hazards to the public or environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
Impact HAZ-3. Development facilitated by the project could result in hazardous emissions or handling of hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 miles of an existing or proposed school. Compliance with existing regulatory requirements would minimize risks to schools and students, resulting in a less than significant impact.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact HAZ-4. Development facilitated by the project could result in development on sites contaminated with hazardous materials. However, compliance with applicable regulations relating to site cleanup and proposed General Plan policies would minimize impacts from development on contaminated sites. This impact would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact HAZ-5. Several public and private airports are located within Trinity County. Compliance with the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan and implementation of proposed General Plan goals and policies would ensure development facilitated by the project would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact HAZ-6. Proposed General Plan policies address maintenance of a county-wide Hazard Mitigation Plan and emergency access implementation. Therefore, development facilitated by the project would not result in interference with these types of adopted plans. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact HAZ-7. Development facilitated by the project could expose people or structures to wildland fire hazards. Adherence to policies and goals in the proposed General Plan would ensure that this impact would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Hydrology and Water Quality		
Impact HYD-1. Development facilitated by the project would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, or otherwise substantially degrade surface water or groundwater quality. Future individual development projects would be required to comply with state and local water quality regulations and permit requirements for both construction and operation. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
Impact HYD-2. Development facilitated by the project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge through compliance with applicable groundwater and recharge policies contained in the Conservation and Open Space Element. The proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a sustainable groundwater management plan. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact HYD-3. Development facilitated by the project could alter site-specific drainage patterns and introduce new impervious surface areas. Compliance with applicable regulations, including the regulations contained in the Clean Water Act and proposed General Plan policies would ensure that this impact would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact HYD-4. Development facilitated by the project could risk release of pollutants due to project inundation. Compliance with applicable regulations and implementation of the proposed General Plan goals and policies would minimize the potential for adverse effects related to flood hazards and would ensure this impact would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact HYD-5. The Planning Area is not subject to a sustainable groundwater management plan. Adherence to state and local regulations would ensure development under the proposed project would not interfere with the objectives and goals of the Basin Plan. This impact would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Land Use and Planning		
Impact LU-1. Development facilitated by the project would not physically divide an established community. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact LU-2. Development facilitated by the project would be consistent with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted to avoid or mitigate environmental effects. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Mineral Resources		
Impact MIN-1. The project would not modify the land use designation of mineral extraction sites in the county. There would be no impact.	No mitigation is required.	No impact

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
Noise		
Impact NOI-1. Construction of development facilitated by the project would temporarily generate noise in the vicinity of individual development sites. Depending on the scope of individual developments, construction may involve long durations, substantial soil movement, use of large, heavy-duty equipment, and/or pile driving near noise-sensitive land uses, which may produce noise levels exceeding applicable construction noise thresholds. Implementation of Mitigation Measures NOI-1a and NOI-1b would reduce construction noise levels; however, because details of future project-specific construction are unknown at this time, temporary construction noise impacts would remain significant and unavoidable. Operation of development facilitated by the proposed project would introduce noise from new stationary and transportation noise sources. Noise levels associated with new stationary noise sources would not exceed applicable noise standards and operational noise impacts would be less than significant. Noise levels associated with an increase in on-road traffic would exceed applicable noise standards; however, no feasible mitigation measures exist, and traffic-related noise impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.	**NOI-1a Project-Specific Construction Noise Study.** The County shall require, as a standard condition of approval, the preparation of a Construction Noise Study, prepared by a qualified noise expert to meet the requirements herein, for development projects that are located within 500 feet of noise-sensitive land uses identified in the County's General Plan Noise Element (e.g., residential development, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, churches, and libraries) and have one or more of the following characteristics: • Construction durations of 18 months or more (excluding interior finishing); • Use of large, heavy-duty equipment rated at 300 horsepower or greater; • The potential for pile driving; or • Located within 1,000 feet of other construction projects with overlapping construction schedules. The Construction Noise Study shall characterize sources of construction noise, quantify noise levels at noise-sensitive uses (e.g., residential development, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, churches, and libraries) and identify measures to reduce noise exposure during the construction period. The Construction Noise Study shall identify reasonably available noise reduction devices or techniques to reduce noise levels to acceptable levels and/or durations including through reliance on any relevant federal, state, or local standards or guidelines or accepted industry practices. Noise reduction devices or techniques may include but not be limited to silencers, enclosures, sound barriers, and/or placement of restrictions on equipment or construction techniques (e.g., alternative installation methods to pile driving such as cast-in-place systems or pile cushioning). Each measure in the Construction Noise Study shall identify anticipated noise reductions at noise-sensitive land uses. **NOI-1b Measures to Reduce Construction Noise.** If the results of the Project-Specific Construction Noise Study described in Mitigation Measure NOI-1a show that noise levels associated with an individual project are expected to exceed applicable thresholds, the County shall require construction contractors to implement as many of the following measures as feasible prior to issuance of a demolition, grading, and/or building permit: • **Shielding and Silencing.** Power construction equipment (including combustion engines), fixed or mobile, shall be equipped with noise shielding and silencing devices consistent with manufacturer's standards or the Best Available	Significant and unavoidable

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
	Control Technology. Equipment shall be properly maintained, and the project applicant or owner shall require any construction contractor to keep documentation on-site during any earthwork or construction activities demonstrating that the equipment has been maintained in accordance with manufacturer's specifications. • **Enclosures and Screening.** All outdoor fixed mechanical equipment shall be enclosed or screened from off-site noise-sensitive uses. The equipment enclosure or screen shall be impermeable (e.g., solid material with minimum weight of 2 pounds per square foot) and break the line-of-sight from the equipment and off-site noise-sensitive uses. • **Construction Staging Areas.** Construction staging areas shall be located as far from noise-sensitive uses as reasonably possible and feasible in consideration of site boundaries, topography, intervening roads and uses, and operational constraints. • **Smart Back-Up Alarms.** Mobile construction equipment shall have smart back-up alarms that automatically adjust the sound level of the alarm in response to ambient noise levels. Alternatively, back-up alarms shall be disabled and replaced with human spotters to ensure safety when mobile construction equipment is moving in the reverse direction. • **Equipment Idling.** Construction vehicles and equipment shall not be left idling for longer than five minutes when not in use. • **Workers' Radios.** All noise from workers' radios, including any on-site music, shall be controlled such that they are not audible at off-site noise-sensitive uses. • **Use of Driven Pile Systems.** Driven (impact), sonic, or vibratory pile drivers shall not be used, except in locations where the underlying geology renders alternative methods infeasible, as determined by a soils or geotechnical engineer and documented in a soils report. • **Temporary Noise Barriers.** Temporary noise barriers, such as walls or sound blankets, shall be positioned between construction activities and noise-sensitive uses when modeled noise levels from construction equipment exceed applicable standards and have a direct line of sight with noise sensitive receivers. Placement, orientation, size, and density of acoustical barriers shall be specified by a qualified acoustical consultant. • **Noise Complaint Response.** Project applicants shall designate an on-site construction project manager who shall be responsible for responding to any complaints about construction noise. This	

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
	person shall be responsible for responding to concerns of neighboring properties about construction noise disturbance and shall be available for responding to any construction noise complaints during the hours that construction is to take place. They shall also be responsible for determining the cause of the noise complaint (e.g., bad silencer) and shall require that reasonable measures be implemented to correct the problem. A toll-free telephone number and email address shall be posted in a highly visible manner on the construction site at all times and provided in all notices (mailed, online website, and construction site postings) for receiving questions or complaints during construction and shall also include procedures requiring that the on-site construction manager respond to callers and email messages. The on-site construction project manager shall be required to track complaints pertaining to construction noise, ongoing throughout demolition, grading, and/or construction and shall notify the County's Community Development Department of each complaint occurrence. Project applicants shall also be required to implement any additional requirements identified and recommended by the Project-Specific Construction Noise Study prepared under Mitigation Measure NOI-1a, and shall maintain proof that notice of, as well as compliance with, the identified measures have been included in contractor agreements.	

Impact NOI-2. Construction of development facilitated by the project could temporarily generate levels of groundborne vibration exceeding applicable vibration thresholds at nearby structures; however, implementation of Mitigation Measure NOI-2 would reduce construction vibration impacts to less-than-significant levels.	**NOI-2 Construction Vibration Control Plan.** Prior to issuance of grading or building permits, the County shall require the project applicant to prepare a groundborne vibration analysis to assess and mitigate potential vibration impacts associated with construction activities that include:
	• Use of a pile driver within:
	  ○ 135 feet of fragile/historic structures
	  ○ 100 feet of non-engineered timber and masonry buildings (e.g., most residential buildings)
	  ○ 75 feet of engineered concrete and masonry (no plaster)
	• Use of a vibratory roller within:
	  ○ 40 feet of fragile/historic structures
	  ○ 25 feet of any other structure (residential, commercial, or industrial)
	• Use of a dozer or other large earthmoving equipment within:
	  ○ 20 feet of fragile/historic structures
	  ○ 15 feet of any other structure (residential, commercial, or industrial)
		Less than significant with mitigation

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
	The vibration analysis shall be conducted by a qualified and experienced acoustical consultant or engineer. The vibration levels generated by construction equipment shall not exceed applicable Federal Transit Administration vibration thresholds for architectural damage (i.e., 0.12 inches per second peak particle velocity [in/sec PPV] at fragile/historic structures, 0.2 in/sec PPV at non-engineered timber and masonry buildings, and 0.3 in/sec PPV for engineered concrete and masonry structures). If vibration levels were to exceed these thresholds, alternative methods and equipment, such as drilling piles as opposed to pile driving, use of static rollers as opposed to vibratory rollers, and use of lower horsepower equipment as applicable, shall be employed. If necessary, such as when high-vibration equipment may be used within close proximity to a fragile/historic structure, construction vibration monitoring shall be conducted to ensure the applicable vibration thresholds are not exceeded at nearby structures.	
Impact NOI-3. The proposed project would not expose people residing or working in the Planning Area to excessive airport-related noise levels. Airport-related noise impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Population and Housing		
Impact POP-1. The proposed project would facilitate the construction of new housing in the Planning Area. The proposed project would accommodate and plan for population growth and includes policies to manage growth and development. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact POP-2. Development facilitated by the project would not result in the displacement of substantial numbers of housing or people. The proposed project would facilitate the development of new housing, while preserving existing residential neighborhoods. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Public Services and Recreation		
Impact PSR-1. Implementation of the proposed project would facilitate increased population, generating additional need for fire protection services. Proposed General Plan policies would reduce impacts associated with the provision of fire protection services, and new facilities would be located in developed areas. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
Impact PSR-2. Implementation of the proposed project would facilitate increased population, generating additional demand for police services. Proposed General Plan policies would reduce impacts, and new facilities would be located in developed areas. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact PSR-3. Development facilitated by the project may add school aged children to the county's population. However, existing school facilities have adequate capacity and new development would be required to pay impact fees. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact PSR-4. Development facilitated by the project would result in an increase in the county's population. This would increase demand for parks and recreation facilities and potentially create the need for new park and recreation facilities. Compliance with the policies in the proposed General Plan would reduce impacts to parks and recreation, and impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact PSR-5. Development facilitated by the project would increase the county's population and the use of existing public facilities. However, adherence to proposed General Plan policies and payment of property taxes related to new development would contribute to new or expanded public facilities as needed to reduce any impacts. Impacts related to the provision of new or physically altered public facilities would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Transportation		
Impact TRA-1. Implementation of the proposed project would be consistent with the California Transportation Plan, the Trinity County Transportation Commission 2022-2042 Regional Transportation Plan, and the Trinity County Active Transportation Plan. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact TRA-2. The proposed project would result in a decrease in vehicles miles traveled per capita from baseline (2024) countywide conditions to horizon year (2050) conditions. While the proposed project is a programmatic document that does not approve specific development projects, it directs growth toward existing communities while maintaining low-density rural	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
development patterns. As a result, vehicle miles traveled impacts from implementation of the proposed project would be less than significant.		
Impact TRA-3. Implementation of the proposed project would not substantially increase hazards due to geometric design features or incompatible uses. Rather, the proposed goals and policies would enhance roadways safety. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact TRA-4. The proposed project would not result in inadequate emergency access. Rather, the proposed goals and policies would improve emergency response and facilitate more effective emergency evacuation. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Tribal Cultural Resources		
Impact TCR-1. Implementation of the project has the potential to impact tribal cultural resources. However, impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Utilities and Service Systems		
Impact UTL-1. Development facilitated by the project would require new connections to existing utility systems and facilities and may require new facilities such as project-specific groundwater supply wells to accommodate future growth. Future development would be consistent with goals and policies in the proposed General Plan which help to reduce impacts. Although the specific locations and extent of future utility improvements are not known, compliance with adopted regulations and General Plan policies would ensure adequate utility service and avoid adverse effects. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact UTL-2. Sufficient water may not be available from existing sources to meet the increased demands of General Plan buildout. However, water supply would be protected from over-use through the issuance of will serve letters and permits to construct and operate groundwater wells. All new development would comply with proposed General Plan policies including for water conservation and the protection of local supply sources. Impacts on water supply availability would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
Impact UTL-3. Development facilitated by the project would increase wastewater generation in Trinity County and existing small community systems do not have sufficient capacity to accommodate future projected growth. However, development would be required to be consistent with proposed goals and policies in the General Plan and applicable regulations. Impacts related to wastewater treatment capacity would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact UTL-4. Development facilitated by the project has the potential to increase solid waste generation in Trinity County. However, because the County relies on a transfer station system and exports most solid waste to out-of-county regional facilities with substantially larger permitted capacities, solid waste generated by anticipated growth would not exceed available disposal capacity. Future development would comply with applicable state and local solid waste regulations and the proposed General Plan goals and policies. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Wildfire		
Impact W-1. The proposed General Plan includes policies which ensure emergency access, response, and preparation. Therefore, the proposed project would not impair an emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact W-2. The proposed project would facilitate development in areas within or near Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones in State Responsibility Areas which could be affected by downslope wind. However, existing regulations such as the CBC, California Fire Code, and proposed General Plan policies would reduce the risk of wildfire ignition and therefore reduce the risk of uncontrollable spread of pollutants from a wildfire or spread of wildfire itself. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant
Impact W-3. The proposed project would facilitate growth primarily in developed areas of the county where infrastructure and roads currently exist. Compliance with existing CBC and California Fire Code regulations as well as proposed	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Residual Impact
General Plan policies would reduce the risk of wildfire ignition associated with installation or maintenance of infrastructure. Impacts would be less than significant.		
Impact W-4. The proposed project would facilitate development in areas within or near Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones in State Responsibility Areas which could be affected by post-fire instability, downstream flooding, or landslides. However, existing regulations such as the CBC, California Fire Code, and proposed General Plan policies would reduce the risk of wildfire ignition and therefore reduce the risk of post-fire instability, downstream flooding, or landslides. Impacts would be less than significant.	No mitigation is required.	Less than significant

1 Introduction

This document is an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Trinity County General Plan Update (proposed project), which constitutes a comprehensive update to the County of Trinity's (County) General Plan. Trinity County is both the project proponent and the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the proposed project.

This section discusses (1) the purpose and type of EIR; (2) the format of the EIR; (3) the existing conditions and baseline for analysis; (4) a summary of public participation during the Notice of Preparation (NOP) scoping process; (5) the scope and content of the EIR; (6) the lead, responsible, and trustee agencies; and (7) the environmental review process required under CEQA. The proposed project is described in detail in Chapter 2, *Project Description*.

1.1 Statement of Purpose

This EIR has been prepared in compliance with the CEQA Statutes (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.) and the *CEQA Guidelines* (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.). In general, the purpose of an EIR is to:

- Analyze the potential environmental effects of the adoption and implementation of the project;
- Inform decision-makers, responsible and trustee agencies and members of the public as to the range of the environmental impacts of the project;
- Recommend a set of measures to mitigate potentially significant adverse impacts; and
- Analyze a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project.

As the lead agency for preparing this EIR, the County will rely on the EIR analysis of environmental effects in its review and consideration of the proposed project prior to approval.

1.2 Type of Environmental Document

This document is a Program EIR. *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15168(a) states that:

> A Program EIR is an EIR which may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either: (1) geographically; (2) as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions; (3) in connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program; or (4) as individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways.

As a programmatic document, this EIR presents a countywide assessment of the impacts of the proposed project. Analysis of site-specific impacts of individual projects is not required in a Program EIR, unless components of the program are known in great detail. Many specific projects are not currently defined to the level that would allow for such an analysis. Individual specific environmental analysis of any subsequent future projects would be performed as necessary by the County prior to each project being considered for approval. This EIR serves as a first-tier CEQA environmental document supporting second-tier environmental documents, if required, for development facilitated by the project within the project area.

Project applicants implementing subsequent projects may be required to undertake future environmental review depending on the results of the analysis in this EIR and requirements of the mitigation measures. If project applicants are required to prepare subsequent environmental documents, they may incorporate by reference the appropriate information from this EIR regarding secondary effects, cumulative impacts, broad alternatives and other relevant factors. If the County finds that implementation of a later discretionary project or activity would have no new effects and that no new mitigation measures would be required, that activity would require no additional CEQA review and a consistency finding would be prepared. Where subsequent environmental review is required, such review would focus on significant effects specific to the project, or its site, that have not been considered in this EIR (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15168).

CEQA Guidelines Section 15151 provides the following standards related to the adequacy of an EIR:

> An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision-makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among experts. The courts have looked not for perfection, but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15146 further provides the following additional standards related to the adequacy of an EIR:

> The degree of specificity required in an EIR will correspond to the degree of specificity involved in the underlying activity which is described in the EIR.
>
> (a) An EIR on a construction project will necessarily be more detailed in the specific effects of the project than will be an EIR on the adoption of a local general plan or comprehensive zoning code because the effects of the construction can be predicted with greater accuracy.
>
> (b) An EIR on a project such as the adoption or amendment of a comprehensive zoning code or a local general plan should focus on the secondary effects that can be expected to follow from the adoption, or amendment, but the EIR need not be as detailed as an EIR on the specific construction projects that might follow.

1.2.1 Prior Environmental Documentation

In December 2020, the County certified a Program EIR for the Trinity County Cannabis Program (State Clearinghouse Number 2018122049; referred to herein as "2020 EIR"). The 2020 EIR analyzed the environmental impacts of establishing a commercial cannabis cultivation and operations program in the unincorporated county and identified mitigation measures applicable to cannabis-related land uses.

Pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15150, this EIR incorporates the 2020 EIR by reference. The 2020 EIR is available for review at the Trinity County Community Development Department, 530 Main Street, Weaverville, CA 96093, or online at: https://www.trinitycounty.org/246/Environmental-Review. Incorporation by reference does not limit the scope of this EIR's independent analysis. The cannabis-related policies and programs in the proposed project are analyzed as components of the comprehensive new General Plan program, and the environmental analysis in this EIR is independent of and supplementary to the 2020 EIR.

Where relevant, this EIR identifies mitigation measures from the 2020 EIR and explains whether such measures are carried forward, revised, or addressed through policies, programs, standards, or mitigation adopted as part of the proposed project and associated implementation measures. This discussion is provided in the relevant technical sections of this EIR and in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, as applicable.

1.2.2 CEQA Streamlining

The intent of this EIR is to enable development facilitated by the project to use *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15183 to streamline future CEQA compliance. Projects that are consistent with County regulations, including zoning, would require no additional CEQA review unless there are project-specific significant effects that are peculiar to a specific project, but applicants would be responsible for implementing applicable mitigation measures. The recommended mitigation measures, once adopted by the Board of Supervisors, would be applied to projects as applicable at the project review and permitting stage.

1.2.3 Other Tiering Opportunities

For all other types of projects proposed to be carried out or approved by a lead agency within the region, the lead agency may use a Program EIR for the purposes of other allowed CEQA tiering (PRC Sections 21068.5, 21093-21094, *CEQA Guidelines* 15152, 15385). Tiering is the process by which general matters and environmental effects in an EIR prepared for a policy, plan, program, or ordinance are relied upon by a narrower second-tier or site-specific EIR (PRC Section 21068.5). Moreover, by tiering from this EIR (once certified by the County Board of Supervisors), a later tiered EIR would not be required to examine effects that (1) were mitigated or avoided in this EIR, (2) were examined at a sufficient level of detail in this EIR to enable those effects to be mitigated or avoided by site specific revisions, the imposition of conditions, or by other means in connection with the approval of the later project (PRC Section 21094).

1.3 EIR Format

This document includes discussions of environmental impacts related to several issue areas. The analysis of environmental impacts identifies impacts by category: significant and unavoidable, significant but mitigable, less than significant, and no impact or beneficial. It proposes mitigation measures, where feasible, for identified significant environmental impacts to reduce project generated impacts. The responsible agency for each mitigation measure is also identified. It is the responsibility of the lead agency implementing specific projects to conduct the necessary environmental review consistent with CEQA and where applicable, incorporate mitigation measures provided herein and developed specifically for the project to minimize environmental impacts and/or reduce impacts to less than significant.

This EIR has been organized into seven chapters. These include:

1. **Introduction.** Provides the project background, description of the type of environmental document and CEQA streamlining opportunities, and information about the EIR content, format, and public review process.
2. **Project Description.** Presents and discusses the project objectives, project location and specific project characteristics.
3. **Environmental Setting.** Provides a description of the existing physical setting of the project area and an overview of the progress in project implementation.
4. **Analysis of Environmental Issues.** Describes existing conditions found in the project area and assesses potential environmental impacts that may be generated by implementing the proposed project, including cumulative development in the region. These potential project impacts are compared to “thresholds of significance” to determine the nature and severity of the direct and indirect impacts. Mitigation measures, intended to reduce adverse, significant impacts below threshold levels, are proposed where feasible. Impacts that cannot be eliminated or mitigated to less than significant levels are also identified.
5. **Other CEQA Required Discussions.** Identifies growth inducing impacts that may result from implementation of the proposed project, as well as long-term effects of the project and significant irreversible environmental changes.

6. **Alternatives.** Describes alternatives to the proposed project and compares each alternative's environmental impacts to the proposed project.
7. **References.** Lists all published materials, federal, state, and local agencies, and other organizations and individuals consulted during the preparation of this EIR. It also lists the EIR preparers.

1.4 Existing Conditions and Baseline

As outlined by *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15125, an EIR must include a description of the physical environmental conditions in the project vicinity. This environmental setting will normally constitute the baseline physical conditions by which a lead agency determines whether an impact is significant. The description of the environmental setting shall be no longer than is necessary to provide an understanding of the significant effects of the proposed project and its alternatives. The purpose of this requirement is to give the public and decision-makers the most accurate and understandable picture practically possible of the project's likely near-term and long-term impacts. Generally, the lead agency should describe physical environmental conditions as they exist at the time the NOP is published. For purposes of this EIR, the baseline was established on January 7, 2026, when the County published the NOP. Physical conditions that may have changed after this day have been included for informational purposes only.

1.5 Public Review and Participation Process

The County distributed an NOP of the EIR for a 30-day agency and public review period starting on January 7, 2026 and ending on February 6, 2026. Since publication of the NOP, the Trinity County Board of Supervisors provided direction to de-couple the Zoning Code updates from the proposed General Plan on June 16, 2026. While this constitutes a change to the project description provided in the NOP, this EIR still acknowledges the future need for the Zoning Code update for mandatory compliance with the proposed General Plan. Please refer to Chapter 2, *Project Description*, for a complete description of the proposed project that is analyzed herein.

In addition, the County held two EIR Scoping Meetings, the first on January 20, 2026, during the County Board of Supervisors' regular meeting, and the second on January 22, 2026, during the County Planning Commission's regular meeting. Both EIR scoping meetings were jointly held in person and online via zoom. The EIR scoping meetings were aimed at providing information about the proposed project to members of public agencies, interested stakeholders and residents/community members. The County received letters from two agencies, and one individual in response to the NOP during the public review period, as well as various verbal comments during the EIR Scoping Meetings. The NOP is presented in Appendix A of this EIR, along with NOP comment letters received. Table 1-1 summarizes the content of the letters and verbal comments and where the issues raised are addressed in the EIR.

Table 1-1 NOP Comments and EIR Response

Commenter	Comment/Request	How and Where It Was Addressed
Comment Letters		
Native American Heritage Commission	Advises that the proposed project is subject to the tribal consultation requirements of Assembly Bill 52 and Senate Bill 18. Recommends early, good-faith consultation with California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area to identify and address potential impacts to tribal cultural resources and to avoid inadvertent discovery of Native American human remains. Recommends conducting an archaeological records search; conducting an archaeological inventory survey and preparing a professional report; conducting a Sacred Lands File search; and including provisions in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for identification, treatment, and disposition of inadvertently discovered cultural resources and Native American human remains.	On December 4, 2025, pursuant to Senate Bill 18, and on December 10, 2025, pursuant to Assembly Bill 52, the County sent via certified mail notification letters to 13 California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area. The letters were sent to representatives of the Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria, the Grindstone Rancheria of Wintun-Wailaki, the Hoopa Valley Tribe, the Nor-Rel-Muk Wintu Nation, the Noyo River Indian Community, the Redding Rancheria, the Round Valley Reservation/Covelo Indian Community, the Scotts Valley Band of Pomo, the Shasta Indian Nation, the Shasta Nation, the Tsnungwe Council, the Winnemum Wintu Tribe, and the Wintu Tribe of California. Impacts to tribal cultural resources and historical resources, including Native American human remains, are addressed in Sections 4.5, *Cultural Resources*, and 4.17, *Tribal Cultural Resources*. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program will be made available with the Final EIR.
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)	CDFW submitted comments as both a Trustee Agency and Responsible Agency under CEQA. Key issues raised include: • Requests a comprehensive biological resources assessment including habitat mapping, 162+ potential state special-status species, sensitive natural communities, Chinook and Coho salmon, steelhead, northern spotted owl, and endemic plant species associated with serpentine soils. • Requests analysis of impacts on Essential Connectivity Areas, fish passage barriers, habitat fragmentation, deer winter range, and seasonal migration corridors. • Requests evaluation of impacts to the Trinity River and tributaries, riparian setback policies, and Fish and Game Code Section 1602 notification requirements for future projects. • Requests analysis of impacts on the Wild and Scenic designations of the Trinity River and its North and South Forks and New River under both the California and federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Acts.	CDFW's comments are addressed in Chapter 4, *Environmental Impact Analysis*, of this EIR; in particular, the following sections address the noted specific topics: • Section 4.4, *Biological Resources*: Special-status species, sensitive natural communities, wildlife corridors, deer winter range, jurisdictional waters, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and habitat connectivity. • Section 4.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*: Sedimentation from roads and utility activities, riparian setbacks, and drainage impacts. • Section 4.11, *Land Use and Planning*: Open space designation compatibility and statewide conservation strategies. • Section 4.18, *Utilities and Service Systems*: Solid waste management and illegal dumping.

Commenter	Comment/Request	How and Where It Was Addressed
	• Notes plan gaps regarding County-operated projects (road maintenance, vegetation removal, encampment clearing), open space use conflicts, roads and sedimentation, wildlife-vehicle collisions, illegal dumping, and utility infrastructure disturbances in sensitive areas. • Notes that future project implementation may require California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permits and Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreements; recommends early consultation with CDFW. Recommends alignment with Safeguarding California Plan, California State Wildlife Action Plan, 2030 Natural and Working Lands Plan, and 30x30 California.	
Gail Goodyear	Ms. Goodyear submitted comments as a private landowner. Key issues raised include: • Contends that preparation of an EIR is premature while the General Plan remains unapproved and subject to unresolved questions about community needs and insurance requirements over a 25-year horizon. • Parking requirements and building setbacks. • Road connectivity between perimeter communities (e.g., Weaverville and Hayfork), which is needed for fire safety, daily traffic, and emergency access. • The absence of sidewalk provisions for multi-family low-income housing. • Expresses concern that the General Plan favors parcel map (piecemeal) development over formal subdivisions, which better address roads, safety, and cumulative infrastructure impacts.	Comments regarding the timing of the EIR are noted. Under CEQA, a Program EIR may be prepared for a general plan update prior to formal adoption, as the EIR is an informational document intended to inform decision-making (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15168). The project description and General Plan have been made available for public review at trinity2050.com. Issues related to parking, setbacks, road connectivity, sidewalks, and subdivision design are addressed in Chapter 4, *Environmental Impact Analysis*, of this EIR; in particular, the following sections address the noted specific topics: • Section 4.16, *Transportation*: Road connectivity, fire access, circulation safety, and active transportation infrastructure including sidewalks. • Section 4.11, *Land Use and Planning*: Development patterns including the distinction between parcel map and formal subdivision development. • Section 4.14, *Population and Housing*: Housing density. • Section 4.18, *Utilities and Service Systems*: Infrastructure demands.
Public Hearing Comments		
Board of Supervisors Hearing (January 20, 2026)	Public comments included concerns related to radiation and health risks.	Potential impacts related to health risk concerns are addressed in Section 4.3, *Air Quality*, and Section 4.9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*.

Commenter	Comment/Request	How and Where It Was Addressed
Planning Commission Hearing (January 22, 2026)	Public comments included concerns related to: • Aesthetics at Weaver Basin, in forested areas, and of natural resources. • Geologic stability of roadways, including impacts to public services and transportation. • Invasive species spread due to wildfire and post-fire conditions. • Wild and scenic rivers and byways. • Water resources and fish species. • Access to parks, trails, and recreation areas. • Programs for healthy food and the importance of a healthy lifestyle.	Potential impacts related to aesthetics, geologic stability, public services, natural resources, water resources, and parks and recreation are addressed in Sections 4.1, *Aesthetics*, 4.7, *Geology and Soils*, 4.15, *Public Services and Recreation*, 4.4, *Biological Resources*, 4.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, and 4.15, *Public Services and Recreation*, respectively. Health food and lifestyle programs are addressed in the Draft General Plan, available at trinity2050.com.

1.6 Scope and Content

An NOP was prepared and circulated (Appendix A), and responses received on the NOP were considered when setting the scope and content of the environmental information in this EIR. Sections 4.1 through 4.19 address the resource areas outlined in the bullet points below. Chapter 5, *Other CEQA Required Discussions*, covers topics including growth-inducing effects, irreversible environmental effects, and significant and unavoidable impacts. Environmental topic areas that are addressed in detail in this EIR include:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire
- Cumulative Effects
- Growth-Inducing Effects

In preparing the EIR, use was made of pertinent County policies and guidelines, certified EIRs and adopted CEQA documents, and other background documents. A full reference list is contained in Chapter 7, *References*.

The alternatives chapter of the EIR (Chapter 6) was prepared in accordance with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6 and focuses on alternatives that are capable of eliminating or reducing significant adverse effects associated with the project while feasibly attaining most of the basic project objectives. In addition, the alternatives chapter identifies the “environmentally superior” alternative among the alternatives assessed. The alternatives evaluated include the CEQA-required “No Project” alternative and a range of alternatives to the proposed project.

1.7 Lead, Responsible, and Trustee Agencies

The *CEQA Guidelines* define lead, responsible and trustee agencies. The County is the lead agency for the project because it holds principal responsibility for carrying out or approving the project.

A responsible agency refers to a public agency other than the lead agency that has discretionary approval over the project. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is a responsible agency for this project, as implementation of General Plan policies may require discretionary approvals from CDFW, including Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreements under Fish and Game Code Section 1602 and, if applicable, Incidental Take Permits under the California Endangered Species Act.

A trustee agency refers to a state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources held in trust for the people of the state of California that are affected by a project. CDFW is also a trustee agency for this project by virtue of its statutory authority over fish, wildlife, native plants, and their habitats throughout the county. CDFW submitted comments on the NOP as both a responsible and trustee agency, and those comments are summarized in Table 1-1.

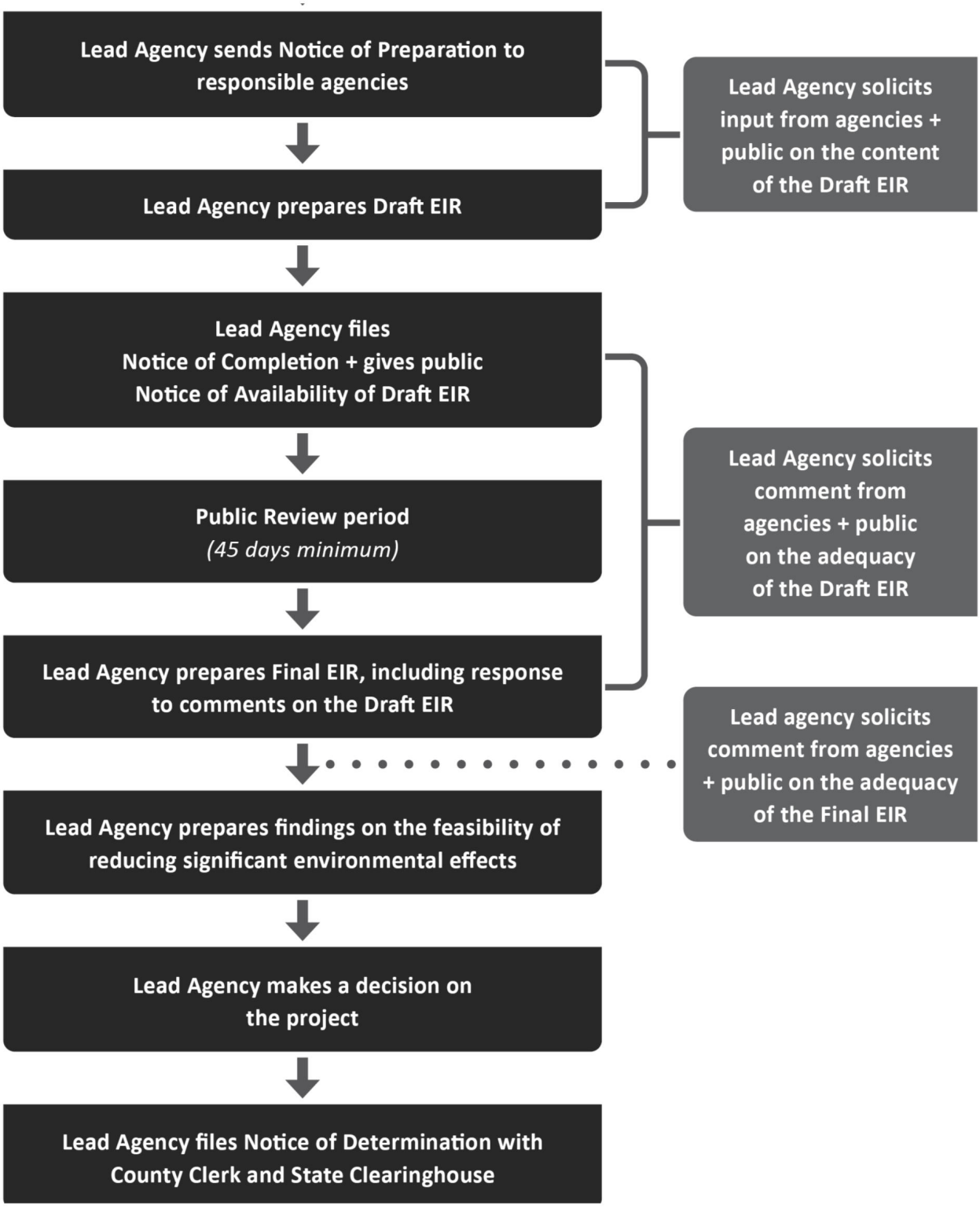
1.8 Environmental Review Process

The environmental impact review process, as required under CEQA, is summarized below and illustrated in Figure 1-1. The steps are presented in sequential order.

1. **Notice of Preparation**. After deciding that an EIR is required, the lead agency (the County) must file a NOP soliciting input on the EIR scope to the State Clearinghouse, other concerned agencies, and parties previously requesting notice in writing (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15082; PRC Section 21092.2). The NOP must be posted in the County Clerk's office for 30 days.
2. **Draft EIR Prepared.** The Draft EIR must contain: a) table of contents or index; b) summary; c) project description; d) environmental setting; e) discussion of significant impacts (direct, indirect, cumulative, growth-inducing and unavoidable impacts); f) a discussion of alternatives; g) mitigation measures; and h) discussion of irreversible changes.
3. **Notice of Completion and Notice of Availability.** The lead agency must file a Notice of Completion with the State Clearinghouse when it completes a Draft EIR. The lead agency must place the Notice of Availability in the County Clerk's office for 30 days (PRC Section 21092) and send a copy of the Notice of Availability to anyone requesting it (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15087). Additionally, public notice of Draft EIR availability must be given through at least one of the following procedures: a) publication in a newspaper of general circulation; b) posting on and off the project site; and c) direct mailing to owners and occupants of contiguous properties (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15087). The lead agency must solicit input from other agencies and the public and respond in writing to all comments received (PRC Section 21092.5). The minimum public review period for a Draft EIR is 30 days. When a project involves a state agency approval or is of sufficient statewide, regional, or areawide significance, the public review period must be 45 days (PRC Section 21091).
4. **Final EIR.** A Final EIR must include: a) the Draft EIR; b) copies of comments received during public review; c) list of persons and entities commenting; and d) responses to comments.
5. **Certification of Final EIR.** Prior to making a decision on a proposed project, the lead agency must certify that: a) the Final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA; b) the Final EIR was presented to the decision-making body of the lead agency; and c) the decision-making body reviewed and considered the information in the Final EIR prior to approving a project (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15090).
6. **Lead Agency Project Decision.** The lead agency may a) disapprove the project because of its significant environmental effects; b) require changes to the project to reduce or avoid significant environmental effects; or c) approve the project despite its significant environmental effects, if the proper findings and statement of overriding considerations are adopted (*CEQA Guidelines* Sections 15042 and 15043).

7. **Findings/Statement of Overriding Considerations**. For each significant impact of the project identified in the EIR, the lead agency must find, based on substantial evidence, that either: a) the project has been changed to avoid or substantially reduce the magnitude of the impact; b) changes to the project are within another agency's jurisdiction and such changes have or should be adopted; or c) specific economic, social, or other considerations make the mitigation measures or project alternatives infeasible (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15091). If an agency approves a project with unavoidable significant environmental effects, it must prepare a written Statement of Overriding Considerations that sets forth the specific social, economic, or other reasons supporting the agency's decision (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15093).
8. **Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Program.** When the lead agency makes findings on significant effects identified in the EIR, it must adopt a reporting or monitoring program for mitigation measures that were adopted or made conditions of project approval to mitigate significant effects (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15097).
9. **Notice of Determination.** The lead agency must file a Notice of Determination (NOD) after deciding to approve a project for which an EIR is prepared (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15094, PRC Sections 21108 and 21152). A local agency must file the NOD with the County Clerk and State Clearinghouse. If the lead agency is a state agency, it only needs to file the NOD with the State Clearinghouse. The NOD must be posted for 30 days and sent to anyone previously requesting notice. Posting of the NOD starts a 30-day statute of limitations on CEQA legal challenges (PRC Section 21167[c]).

Figure 1-1 Environmental Review Process



2 Project Description

The proposed project involves the adoption of the Trinity County General Plan Update (proposed project). This chapter of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) describes the key characteristics of the proposed project, including the project proponent/lead agency, the geographic extent of the Planning Area, project objectives, required approvals and types and extent of revisions and changes to the General Plan Policy Document.

2.1 Project Applicant

The County of Trinity (County) is both the project proponent and the California Environmental Quality Act lead agency for the proposed project. The County's Community Development Department Planning Division, located at 530 Main Street, Weaverville, California, 96063, directed preparation of this EIR with the assistance of Rincon Consultants.

2.2 Project Location

Trinity County covers approximately 3,222 square miles located in the northwestern mountains of California with high mountain peaks, heavily forested areas, and deep river canyons. The county includes a large section of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest and the Trinity Alps Wilderness, the second largest wilderness area in California. The rugged terrain is sparsely populated with no incorporated cities. A vast majority of the land within the county is federally or state owned.

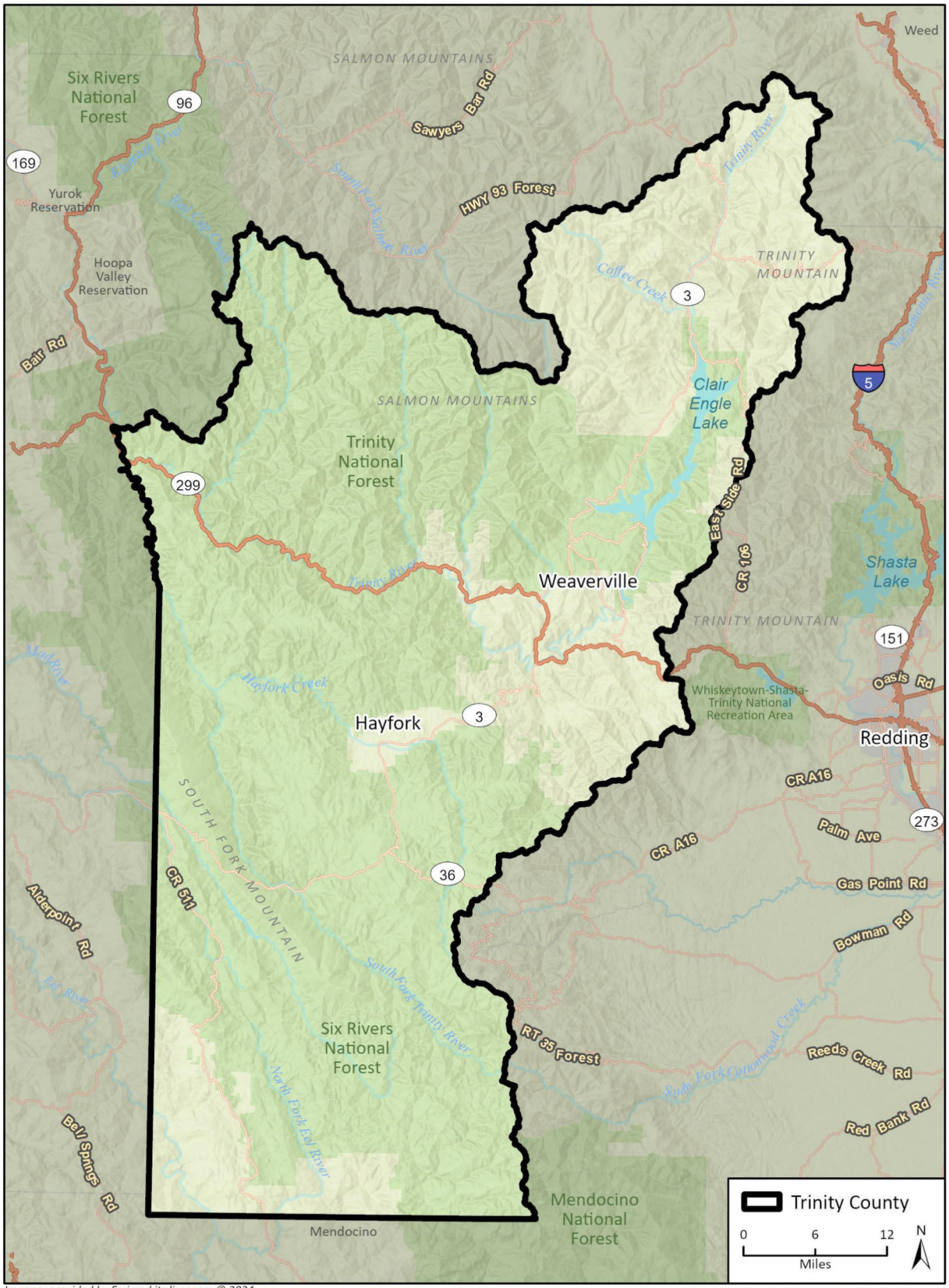
Trinity County includes an area of 2,051,988 acres in northwestern California. It is bounded on the north by Siskiyou County, on the east by Shasta and Tehama counties, on the south by Mendocino County, and on the west by Humboldt County.

Reservoirs and rivers make up a large portion of the county. The Trinity River is the largest tributary to the Klamath River and flows for 165 miles through mountains and valleys starting in the Trinity Alps and Scott Mountains until meeting up with the Klamath River at Weitchpec. The Trinity Dam, located in the southeastern Klamath Mountains, is a large storage reservoir with over 140 miles of shoreline. The Lewiston Dam, which controls the water released into the Trinity River, forms the Trinity and Lewiston Lake Reservoirs which are major recreation areas.

Although not an incorporated city, Weaverville acts as the County seat and is home to most local government buildings, many of which provide or facilitate countywide services. To aid in the preparation of this General Plan, Trinity County has designated community planning boundaries within the county, including Douglas City, Hayfork, Hyampom, Junction City, Lewiston, Post Mountain, Trinity Center, and Weaverville, although several additional smaller communities exist within its jurisdiction.

For the purposes of this EIR, the Planning Area is defined as unincorporated Trinity County as shown in Figure 2-1, and is the land over which the County has land use authority and where the policies, goals, and regulations proposed in the proposed project are applicable.

Figure 2-1 Plan Area



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Additional data provided by USFS, 2017.

Figure 6.3 National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in Trinity County

2.3 Trinity County General Plan Update

California law requires that every county and city adopt a general plan "for the physical development of the county or city, and of any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency's judgment bears relation to its planning" (Government Code Section 65300). A general plan serves as the jurisdiction's long-term "constitution" or "blueprint" for future growth and development decisions concerning a variety of issues, including land use, health and safety, and resource conservation. Typically, a general plan is designed to address the issues facing the jurisdiction for the next 20 years. General plans are prepared with extensive community engagement to create a plan that expresses the community's vision for its future. Per state law, all area plans, specific plans, subdivisions, public works projects, and zoning decisions must be consistent with the direction provided in the County's General Plan.

General plans comprise a collection of "elements" or chapters that cover mandatory topics, as well as other optional elements that address issues of local interest. The State of California requires inclusion of the following eight elements in the General Plan: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, safety, and environmental justice. Though the required topics must be addressed in the General Plan, jurisdictions can organize their general plan anyway they choose. The proposed General Plan meets the requirements of state law by containing the required elements and two optional elements (economic development and community health). Some of the required elements address additional issues that are important to the community. Each element contains goals and policies that will guide future decisions within the County, along with a set of implementation programs that will be used to ensure the goals and policies in the General Plan are carried out.

The proposed General Plan is a long-range plan that guides decision-making, establishes rules and standards for development and county improvements, and helps to inform residents, developers, and decision-makers. It reflects the County's vision for the future, provides direction through the year 2050 on growth and development, and is an expression of the quality of life in Trinity County.

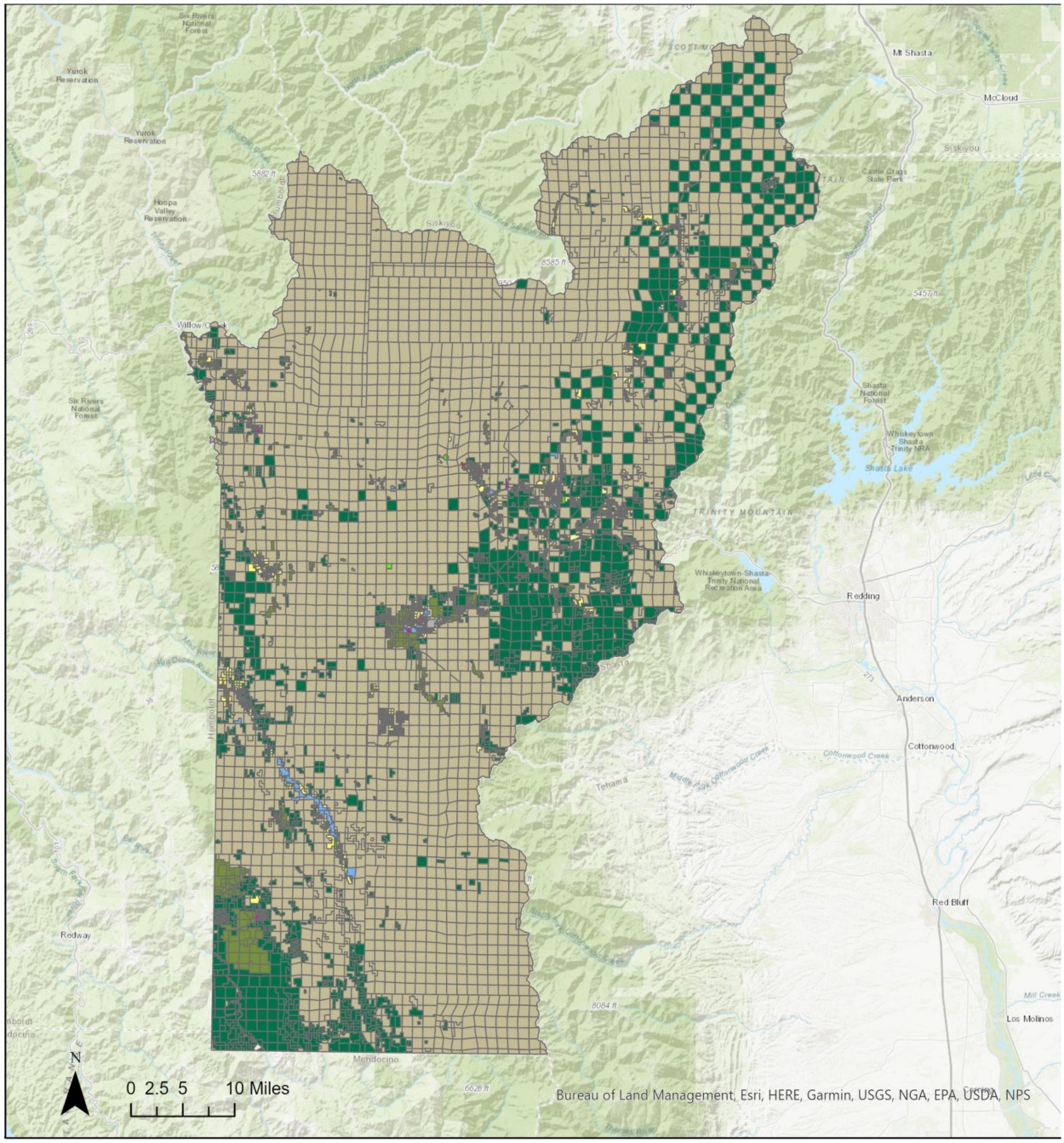
The proposed General Plan addresses the eight mandatory elements and includes two optional elements. The proposed General Plan also includes a Community Plans Element, which incorporates the eight community plans in the county. The policies throughout all elements work together to inform decision-makers when making planning decisions. The elements of the proposed General Plan are described below.

The proposed General Plan is available online at: https://trinity2050.com/ and is incorporated into this document by reference.

2.3.1 Land Use Element

The Land Use Element establishes the pattern and intensity of land use in the county and sets forth policies and standards to guide future development. This Element serves as the primary vehicle for ensuring that new land uses are logically organized and developed in a way that is sustainable and enhances Trinity County's unique identity. The Land Use element contains the Land Use Diagram, which provides a graphical representation of the distribution of allowed land uses within Trinity County. The proposed Land Use Diagram is provided as Figure 2-2.

Figure 2-2 Proposed Land Use Diagram



Last Updated: July 13, 2026

Trinity 2050 Proposed General Plan Land Use

- Agriculture (A)
- Commercial (C)
- High Density Residential (HDR)
- Industrial (I)
- Low Density Residential (LDR)
- Medium Density Residential (MDR)
- Mixed Use (MU)
- Open Space (OS)
- Public Facilities (PF)
- Resource (RE)
- Rural Residential - Low Density (RR-L)
- Rural Residential (RR)
- State, Federal, Other Public Lands (SFP)

The proposed General Plan includes 13 land use designations that depict the types of land uses that will be allowed throughout the unincorporated County. Specific land use designations in the Land Use Element are show in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1 Description of Land Use Designations

Land Use Designation	Allowed Uses	Density	Floor-Area Ratio
Agriculture (A)	The Agriculture (A) land use designation identifies areas for the cultivation of crops, raising of livestock, small-scale agriculture, agricultural processing, horticulture, and other consistent uses. The intent is to preserve agricultural lands and limit the conversion of agriculture to non-agricultural designations. Allowed uses include, but are not limited to, limited single-family residential, agricultural employee housing, ecotourism, recreational camps and facilities, resorts, and other structures necessary for agricultural production (e.g., barns, silos, storage etc.). The minimum parcel size is ten acres. Accessory dwelling units are allowed pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance and applicable state law and do not count toward the allowable density.	Up to 1.0 DU/10 acres	N/A
Rural Residential – Low Density (RR-L)	The Rural Residential – Low Density (RR-L) land use designation identifies areas intended for the development of single-family dwelling units on parcels with a minimum size of 10 acres. The RR-L land use designation allows residential development in outlying areas of the county with minimal impacts, while maintaining the overall character of the landscape, as well as potential for open space, recreation, or resource production, being preserved. Other uses allowed in this land use designation include small home businesses, agriculture, and light industrial operations. Accessory dwelling units are allowed pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance and applicable state law and do not count toward the allowable density.	1.0 DU/10 acres	N/A
Rural Residential (RR)	The Rural Residential (RR) land use designation identifies areas intended primarily for the development of single-family dwelling units. The minimum parcel size in the RR designation is one acre. Allowed uses in the RR land use designation include small home businesses, employee housing, single-family dwellings, and agriculture. Accessory dwelling units are allowed pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance and applicable state law and do not count toward the allowable density.	1.0 DU/acre	N/A
Low Density Residential (LDR)	The Low Density Residential (LDR) land use designation identifies areas intended for single-family residential neighborhoods. The minimum parcel size in the LDR land use designation is 10,000 square feet (approximately 0.23 acres). This designation allows for single-family homes, duplexes, residential care facilities, transitional and supportive housing, and low intensity agriculture. Accessory dwelling units are allowed pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance and applicable state law and do not count toward the allowable density.	1.0-4.0 DU/acre	N/A

Land Use Designation	Allowed Uses	Density	Floor-Area Ratio
Medium Density Residential (MDR)	The Medium Density Residential (MDR) land use designation is intended for community centers where residential development is near transportation and other services and where public water and sewer infrastructure is available. Allowed land uses in the MDR land use designation include apartments, multiplexes with at least four units, condominiums, courtyard buildings, cottage courts, tiny home communities, micro-unit and single room occupancy developments (SROs), congregate housing, group homes, emergency shelters, residential care facilities, transitional and supportive housing, and agriculture. The minimum parcel size in the MDR land use designation is 10,000 square feet. Accessory dwelling units are allowed pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance and applicable state law and do not count toward the allowable density.	5.0-12.0 DU/acre	N/A
High Density Residential (HDR)	The High Density Residential (HDR) land use designation is intended for areas of the county that are suitable for multi-family residential development, are located at the center of community planning areas with the highest population and development densities, and where adequate municipal water and sewer infrastructure is available. Allowed uses in the HDR land use designation include apartments, multiplexes with at least four units, condominiums, courtyard buildings, cottage courts, cooperative housing, tiny home communities, micro-unit and single room occupancy developments (SROs), congregate housing, group homes, emergency shelters, residential care facilities, and transitional and supportive housing. The minimum parcel size in the HDR land use designation is 10,000 square feet. Accessory dwelling units are allowed pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance and applicable state law and do not count toward the allowable density.	12.0-24.0 DU/acre	N/A
Mixed-Use (MU)	The Mixed Use (MU) land use designation identifies areas within the county that are suitable for combined residential and commercial development. The intent of this designation is to maximize development flexibility, allowing for a mixture of land uses to co-exist on a single site (horizontal mixed-use) or within a single structure (vertical mixed-use). The MU land use designation allows for diverse uses including residential, commercial, office, and personal services. The minimum parcel size in the MU land use designation is 10,000 square feet.	1.0-24.0 DU/acre	0.0-2.0
Commercial (C)	The Commercial (C) land use designation identifies areas suitable for the development of various commercial uses such as general retail, offices, tourist-oriented businesses, hotels and motels, camping and resorts, wholesale storage, and lumber yards, as well as multi-family residential uses including apartments, condominiums, and micro-unit and single room occupancy developments (SROs). The minimum parcel size in the Commercial land use designation is 10,000 square feet.	0.0-24.0 DU/acre	0.0-2.0
Industrial (I)	The Industrial (I) land use designation identifies areas for heavy and light manufacturing, resource extraction processing/manufacturing, flex industrial spaces, processing and assembly uses, small-scale research and development with limited to very-low nuisance characteristics. Uses in this designation could also include The minimum parcel size is half an acre.	N/A	0.0-3.5

Land Use Designation	Allowed Uses	Density	Floor-Area Ratio
Public Facilities (PF)	The Public Facilities (PF) land use designation identifies areas of the county for public buildings and facilities. The intent of the PF designation is to provide areas for essential support services to county residents and to ensure compatibility with surrounding land uses. The minimum parcel size for the PF district is 2,000 square feet. Various public and quasi-public uses with similar characteristics, such as government buildings, utility facilities, landfills, airports, and schools are allowed in the PF land use designation. Additionally, this designation may include privately owned facilities built and maintained for public use, such as hospitals. The minimum parcel size is half an acre.	N/A	0.0-0.4
Resource Land (RE)	The Resource Land (RE) land use designation identifies areas for a variety of natural resource production uses such as timber production, mineral production, grazing, and agricultural activities, including, but not limited to, cultivation of crops, raising of livestock, small-scale agriculture, agricultural processing, and horticulture. Activities necessary for resource production, including industrial development, are also allowed in this area if adjacent to the resource being produced. The minimum parcel size is half an acre.	N/A	0.0-0.75
Open Space (OS)	The Open Space (OS) land use designation identifies natural areas to be protected for scenic, wildlife habitat, watershed values or resource rehabilitation. Also included in this designation are areas of important natural processes, such as unstable areas, floodplains, and other natural hazard areas that may contain environmental constraints that do not allow for safe development. Uses approved on a case-by-case basis may include trails, unimproved camps, and small mining operations. The minimum parcel size is half an acre.	N/A	N/A
State, Federal, Other Public Lands (SFP)	The State, Federal, Other Public Lands (SPF) land use designation identifies state- and federally-owned parks, forests, rangelands, and/or associated recreation areas. This may include land under federal or state ownership on which governmental facilities are located. The designation includes public recreational facilities and access, multi-use management where applicable, support for rangeland/forest activities, and interconnection or coordination of state, federal, and local facilities and programs when possible. There is no minimum parcel size for this designation.	N/A	N/A

Cannabis Land Use Allowances

The Land Use Element specifies the allowance of cannabis related uses consistent with existing County regulations included in the Cannabis Ordinance. Policy LU-7.1 indicates that commercial cannabis development is allowed as an agricultural land use in the county. Program LU-2 requires updates to the Cannabis Ordinance, which will occur at a later date, to ensure consistency between the proposed General Plan and County Zoning Code related to cannabis regulations in the county.

2.3.2 Community Plans

The Community Plans Element refines the policies of the General Plan as they apply to smaller geographic areas in Trinity County. The purpose of the Community Plans Element is to specify the distribution, location, types, and intensity of land uses within a prescribed area, and to provide specific policies concerning development in that area that are not already included in the Policy Document. The

General Plan includes Community Plans for the following eight communities: Hyampom, Hayfork, Trinity Center, Douglas City, Weaverville, Junction City, Lewiston, and Post Mountain.

2.3.3 Economic Development Element

The Economic Development Element focuses on supporting traditional employment sectors, including forestry, agriculture (including cannabis), tourism, manufacturing, retail, and construction (both private and public sector), while ensuring the county is responsive to cost pressures, shifting consumer demands, and competition. The Economic Development Element includes goals, policies, and programs intended to help retain and expand existing economic sectors, to help diversify the economy by developing new kinds of businesses and services, such as the restoration economy (e.g., brownfield remediation, infrastructure renewal, and ecological restoration), and to help improve economic resiliency.

2.3.4 Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure Element

The Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure Element guides decision-making concerning public and private infrastructure, utilities, and services. The goals, policies, and programs in this element support the provision and maintenance of infrastructure, facilities, and services in appropriate areas of the county and provide for their timely expansion, if required to maintain adequate services. The goals and policies indicate where those facilities and services will be most beneficial to meet the needs of county communities, residents, and businesses. The Element also includes policies, in coordination with the Community Health Element, for the provision of facilities and services to ensure the health and welfare of residents and visitors.

2.3.5 Conservation and Open Space Element

The Conservation and Open Space Element focuses on conserving the county's park and open space environments for present and future residents, as well as enhancing important attributes of Trinity County that provide recreation for residents and visitors. The Conservation and Open Space Element guides the conservation, management, development, and use of natural resources, including biological, habitat, and water resources; the preservation of open space lands for natural resource protection and recreation; and the management of cultural, historic, and energy resources.

2.3.6 Circulation Element

The Circulation Element focuses on providing a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of streets, roads, and highways for safe and convenient travel. This Element is dedicated to improving circulation and mobility in the county, which positively impact the county's economic vibrancy and the quality of life of its residents. The Circulation Element draws inspiration and guidance from a variety of regional and state planning efforts, including the latest Regional Transportation Plans and statewide sustainability mandates. By integrating these broader objectives with local priorities, the Element establishes a cohesive framework for transportation planning that respects Trinity County's unique character while embracing innovation and progress.

The Circulation Element underscores the importance of active transportation in promoting health, reducing vehicular traffic, and cutting emissions. By expanding and improving the network of trails, bike lanes, and sidewalks, the plan seeks to make walking and cycling viable options for recreation and daily commutes alike. This focus not only supports physical well-being but also contributes to the county's vision of creating and maintaining a safe and healthy quality of life for all community members. Finally, the Element addresses designing mobility solutions for the Native American tribes' lands in the county.

2.3.7 Housing Element

The Housing Element plans to meet housing needs in the county. The Housing Element is updated every four years, as required by state law and is published under separate cover. On August 27, 2025, the California Department of Housing and Community Development completed its review of the County's Adopted Housing Element and found that it meets the statutory requirements of State Housing Element Law (Government Code Section 65580 et seq.). With certification, the Housing Element Update is now complete.

2.3.8 Community Health Element

The Community Health Element assesses the community's access to resources that indicate the health of the community, including access to healthy food, social services, health care, disease prevention, and neighborhood safety.

2.3.9 Hazards and Safety Element

The Hazards and Safety Element establishes a policy framework for protecting people and property from unreasonable risks from natural disasters and other events. It also focuses on disaster and emergency response. The policies that live within the General Plan encourage a physical environment that is conducive to making healthy choices. A healthy built environment gives community members the opportunity to make choices that improve their well-being and quality of life by decreasing chronic disease, preventing injury, and improving overall health.

2.3.10 Noise Element

The Noise Element identifies the primary sources of noise in Trinity County and noise-sensitive land uses where noise exposure could result in health-related risks to members of the community. This Element sets forth strategies to protect the continued quiet and rural nature of the county as it evolves in the future.

2.4 General Plan Buildout

Generally, in California the development of real property is driven by market conditions, including supply and demand and other economic factors, such as the cost of raw materials and construction labor. Simply zoning or designating a parcel for a type of use or development does not automatically result in the development of that parcel with the intended use. For example, designating a parcel for industrial uses does not mean that the parcel will ever be developed with an industrial use or structures, such as a warehouse. Rather, demand for additional warehouse space must exist for there to be reason or incentive to construct a new warehouse. Additionally, economic conditions must also be favorable for construction of a new warehouse to ensure the project would be profitable to construct. If the cost of construction is so incredible that the expense will not be recovered in leasing or selling the structure, the property would be unlikely to be developed.

The Trinity County Transportation Commission (TCTC) generates population and growth projections for the County based on economic trends and demographic factors. The most recent and published TCTC projections are contained in the *2022 Trinity County Regional Transportation Plan* (TCTC 2023). The population in the County has been experiencing a decreasing trend, with an increase in 2020 according to the US Census; however, TCTC projects the population in the county to continue to decline through 2042. This decreasing trend is in line with projections provided by the California Department of Finance. The population decline that Department of Finance projects for the county between 2024 and 2050 is shown in Table 2-2, below.

Table 2-2 County Growth Projections

Parameter	2024	Future Year	Net Change
Population	15,807	15,823 (2050)	-16
Housing (units)	6,019	6,066 (2040)	+47

Source: California Department of Finance 2025a, 2025b

The proposed project is intended to provide room for population, housing, and employment growth in the county through 2050. However, because the county has been experiencing a declining trend, for the purposes of this EIR, a modest buildout assumption (rather than a maximum buildout assumption) is used. The proposed project could allow for a substantially larger increase in population and housing than is predicted. This buildout assumption is based on the annual average population growth reported by Department of Finance from 2010 to 2020, which averaged at 1.55 percent population growth per year. Table 2-3 provides the modest buildout assumption used throughout this EIR.

Table 2-3 Proposed General Plan Growth Projections

Parameter	2025[1]	2050	Net Change
Population	15,884	23,304[2]	+7,420
Housing (units)	8,097	8,999[3]	+902

[1] Source: California Department of Finance 2025c

[2] This projection was calculated assuming a 1.55 percent annual increase in population, based on 2010 to 2020 population growth trends reported by California Department of Finance (2025d).

[3] This projection was calculated based on the estimated 2050 population multiplied by the average persons per household reported in 2025 (2.59 persons per household) (California Department of Finance 2025c).

The figures in Table 2-2 show the anticipated growth that would occur through 2050 and that would cause environmental impacts, forming the basis of this EIR. While the proposed project is not itself causing this growth, for the purposes of this EIR, the potential growth in Table 2-2 is compared to existing conditions in 2025, which form the baseline for anticipated physical impacts that may occur as a result of the implementation of the proposed project and the population growth through 2050. Generally, the proposed project encourages growth to occur in existing unincorporated communities. Goal LU 8 of the Land Use Element encourages adequate housing and residential space to keep pace with moderate population growth. Policy LU 8.2 requires low development density in rural areas, and Policy LU 8.3 supports infill development in existing communities.

2.5 Guiding Principles and Project Objectives

The Introduction chapter of the General Plan includes the following vision statement:

> Trinity County is a place where people can experience a fulfilling life in a peaceful, rural setting while allowing for existing and new development to thrive in appropriate ways and locations. It is a place where employment, housing, world class recreation, and cultural and natural resources opportunities are abundant; where there is a strong sense of community and family, neighbors support neighbors, and residents feel safe and secure.

The Introduction chapter further provides the following guiding principles:

1. **Hazards and Safety**. Provide for safe communities through resilient infrastructure, communitywide education and preparation, effective coordination with state and federal agencies, and hazard planning that includes managing lands to reduce the impacts of climate-related, natural, and human-caused disasters including wildland fires, flooding, and geological events.

2. **Community Health and Health Services**. Promote economic, social, and physical health and wellness by investing in infrastructure and services that promote physical activity and access to local healthy foods; help reduce health disparities; and integrate public health into public policies and the community.
3. **Land Use, Housing, and Zoning**. Identify additional land for future development while ensuring the compatibility of adjoining land uses; incentivizing new development; returning vacant and abandoned properties to active use; increasing affordable housing options; improving resiliency to wildfire through defensible space, home hardening, and fuel management; and emphasizing collaborative approaches to housing challenges.
4. **Mobility and Infrastructure**. Invest in and develop an efficient and safe multimodal transportation network with infrastructure and services that meet the needs of residents and businesses; maintain and enhance law enforcement and fire protection services to protect residents and property; and enhance availability and reliability of communications infrastructure to residents and businesses.
5. **Watersheds and Natural Resources**. Sustainably manage, conserve, and develop the county's open spaces and natural resources with expanded opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the county's heritage and natural setting. Promote the availability and accessibility of recreation sites, entertainment opportunities, waterways, and state and federal lands to all residents and visitors.
6. **Economic Development.** Maintain a high level of coordination and collaboration within the local business community to incentivize business development and employment opportunities, encourage economic growth, and retain capital within the community; strategically distribute resources for economic development throughout all communities in the county; and expand educational and workforce development opportunities, to provide a broad range of jobs across diverse industries

In addition, as stated in the published Notice of Preparation for this EIR, the objectives of the proposed General Plan Update include:

- Express the community's vision for Trinity County's future
- Provide a balance between growth and conservation that meets community needs and protects Trinity County's quality of life
- Inform residents, developers, and decision makers of the ground rules that guide development
- Ensure that development occurs in an efficient, orderly manner that minimizes costs to taxpayers
- Engage in a comprehensive and inclusive outreach process

2.6 Required Approvals

With recommendations from the County's Planning Commission, the Trinity County Board of Supervisors will need to take the following discretionary actions in conjunction with the proposed project:

- Certification of the Final EIR
- Adoption of the proposed General Plan Update

The updated Hazards and Safety Element will also be subject to review and approval from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and Board of Forestry, prior to adoption of the updated Hazards and Safety Element by the County. The Board of Forestry has already approved the updated Hazards and Safety Element.

Additionally, state law (California Government Code Section 65860) requires local government, after amending its General Plan, to bring the zoning into consistency with the General Plan "within a reasonable time". At a later date, the County will finalize and implement revisions to the Zoning Code, which are currently underway, to bring the Code into compliance with the proposed General Plan. The timing of this approval is currently unknown.

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3 Environmental Setting

This chapter provides a general overview of the environmental setting for the proposed project. *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15125 requires that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) includes a description of the existing physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project as they exist at the time the Notice of Preparation is published, to provide the baseline against which project-related impacts are compared. This chapter describes the existing environmental conditions relevant to the Trinity County General Plan Update (proposed project) as of the date the Trinity County (County) published the Notice of Preparation for this EIR. More detailed setting information is provided within the impact analysis for each topic area in Chapter 4, *Environmental Impact Analysis*.

3.1 Regional Setting

The County is located in the northwestern portion of California, approximately midway between the city of Redding in Shasta County to the east and the North Coast Redwood region of Humboldt County. The county is landlocked and shares borders with Siskiyou County to the north; Shasta and Tehama Counties to the east; Mendocino County to the south; and Humboldt County to the west. The County contains no incorporated cities. The county seat and largest community is Weaverville.

The county is accessible primarily via State Route 299, an east-west highway also called the “Trinity River Scenic Byway” that connects the city of Redding to the Humboldt County coast; State Route 36, an east-west route traversing the southern portion of the county; and State Route 3, a north-south route connecting State Route 36 and Weaverville to the Scott Valley area in Siskiyou County. There is no commercial rail service within the county, and no commercial air service connecting to other California regions.

3.2 Planning Area

The Planning Area for the Trinity County General Plan Update encompasses the entirety of unincorporated Trinity County. The vast majority of land within Trinity County is under federal ownership and management. The Shasta-Trinity National Forest, the largest National Forest in California, encompasses significant portions of the county and is managed by the United States Forest Service. The Bureau of Land Management lands, managed by the Bureau of Land Management Redding Field Office, constitute an additional portion of the federal land base within Trinity County. The Trinity Alps Wilderness, the second-largest wilderness area in California, lies within the northern and central portions of the county. The Six Rivers National Forest borders the county to the west.

The proposed General Plan includes a Community Plans Element with community plans for eight communities in Trinity County: Weaverville, Lewiston, Douglas City, Trinity Center, Hayfork, Hyampom, Post Mountain, and Junction City. Each community plan addresses its community's history, existing conditions, land use, and vision for the future. The community plans are incorporated into the proposed General Plan as the Community Plans Element and are included in the project analyzed by this EIR.

3.3 Cumulative Development

In addition to the specific impacts of individual projects, CEQA requires EIRs to consider potential cumulative impacts of the proposed project. CEQA defines 'cumulative impacts' as two or more individual effects that, when considered together, are considerable, or that compound or increase other environmental impacts (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15355). Cumulative impacts are the combined changes

in the environment that result from the incremental effect of the proposed project together with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

Because the proposed project is a General Plan update, cumulative impacts are treated somewhat differently than they would be for a specific development project. *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15130 provides that for a program EIR, the cumulative analysis may be based on: (1) a summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional, or statewide plan or related planning document that describes or evaluates conditions contributing to the cumulative effect; or (2) a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts. For a General Plan update, the General Plan itself constitutes the primary framework within which cumulative development is considered, because the Plan directly establishes the policies and land use designations that will govern future growth and development across the county.

Given Trinity County's limited land supply for private development—constrained by the predominance of federal public lands and the limited extent of valley-floor private land—countywide development activity is relatively low compared to most California counties. Nonetheless, foreseeable future development under the proposed General Plan includes continued rural residential and agricultural development, development of regulated cannabis cultivation under the County's Cannabis Program, infill development, and recreation-related development around Trinity Lake and in rural communities. This EIR adopts a modest buildout assumption based on the 1.55 percent average annual population growth rate from 2010 to 2020, in order to evaluate a conservative upper bound of potential environmental impacts through 2050. The EIR's cumulative analysis is framed around this buildout scenario. Large-scale new industrial or commercial development is not projected in the near term, given geographic, infrastructure, and market constraints.

The geographic scope of the cumulative impact analysis varies depending on the specific environmental resource area being analyzed. For resources with countywide distribution (e.g., biological resources, wildfire risk, water quality), the cumulative analysis considers the region defined by the relevant watershed or applicable regulatory jurisdiction. For resources with more localized effects (e.g., noise, visual character), the cumulative analysis is more geographically limited. Each topic section identifies the geographic scope used and explains why that scope is appropriate given the nature of the resource and the character of the impacts being evaluated.

4 Environmental Impact Analysis

This chapter discusses the possible environmental effects of the Trinity County General Plan Update Project for the specific issue areas that were identified through the scoping process as having the potential to experience significant effects. A "significant effect" as defined by the *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15382:

> "*…means a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment. A social or economic change related to a physical change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.*"

The assessment of each issue area begins with a discussion of the environmental setting related to the issue, which is followed by the impact analysis. In the impact analysis, the first subsection identifies the methodologies used and the "significance thresholds," which are those criteria adopted by Trinity County and other agencies, universally recognized, or developed specifically for this analysis to determine whether potential effects are significant. The next subsection describes each impact of the proposed project, mitigation measures for significant impacts, and the level of significance after mitigation. Each effect under consideration for an issue area is separately listed in bold text with the discussion of the effect and its significance. Each bolded impact statement also contains a statement of the significance determination for the environmental impact as follows:

- **Significant and Unavoidable**. An impact that cannot be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires a Statement of Overriding Considerations to be issued if the project is approved per *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15093.
- **Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated**. An impact that can be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires findings under *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15091.
- **Less than Significant**. An impact that may be adverse but does not exceed the threshold levels and does not require mitigation measures. However, mitigation measures that could further lessen the environmental effect may be suggested if readily available and easily achievable.
- **No Impact.** The proposed project would have no effect on environmental conditions or would reduce existing environmental problems or hazards.

Following each environmental impact discussion is a list of mitigation measures (if required) and the residual effects or level of significance remaining after implementation of the measure(s). In cases where the mitigation measure for an impact could have a significant environmental impact in another issue area, this impact is discussed and evaluated as a secondary impact. The impact analysis concludes with a discussion of cumulative effects, which evaluates the impacts associated with the proposed project in conjunction with other planned and pending developments in the area listed in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting*.

The Executive Summary of this Environmental Impact Report summarizes all impacts and mitigation measures that apply to the proposed project.

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4.1 Aesthetics

This section evaluates the potential impacts on aesthetics of implementing the Trinity County General Plan Update (proposed project), including impacts to scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character and quality, and light and glare.

4.1.1 Setting

Existing Visual Conditions

Scenic resources typically include natural open spaces, unique topographic formations, natural landscapes, and aspects of the built environment such as parks, trails, cultural resources, and architecturally significant buildings.

Viewsheds also contribute to aesthetic value, as they establish the context in which scenic resources may be observed. They are typically defined by physical features that frame one or more scenic resources. For example, an area's topography can contribute to aesthetic value through the creation of view corridors and/or scenic vistas consisting of ridgelines and mountains, which can form a community's visual backdrop. Viewsheds can also include a range of resources (including natural and/or man-made elements) and thus natural and man-made environments can be considered important scenic resources worthy of preservation.

Trinity County is located within the coastal mountain ranges in northern California, with a substantial portion of the populated areas in Weaverville, Hayfork, and Lewiston valleys surrounded by steep mountain views. These developed areas reflect the county's history of gold mining and logging communities, with a number of historic buildings in Weaverville.

Trinity County contains a variety of scenic features that contribute to its visual character and appeal. Its mountainous setting and rural development patterns reflect the region's history and landscape. The County is committed to preserving these visual resources, particularly in areas with high visibility such as near highways or in residential communities. The county contains two Scenic Byways recognized by the United States Forest Service (USFS): the Trinity Scenic Byway and the Trinity Heritage Scenic Byway (USFS 2025b, 2025c). Figure 4.1-1 and Figure 4.1-2 offer example images of aesthetic and visual resources throughout the county.

Figure 4.1-1 Representative Photographs



Photograph 1. Commercial development along Main Street in Weaverville.
Source: Rincon 2021



Photograph 2. View of the Trinity River in Junction City, taken from Route 299.
Source: Rincon 2021

Figure 4.1-2 Douglas City Timber Lodge Motel



Photograph 3. View of commercial development in the foreground with forested mountains in the background, taken in Douglas City.

Source: Rincon 2021

Natural Environment

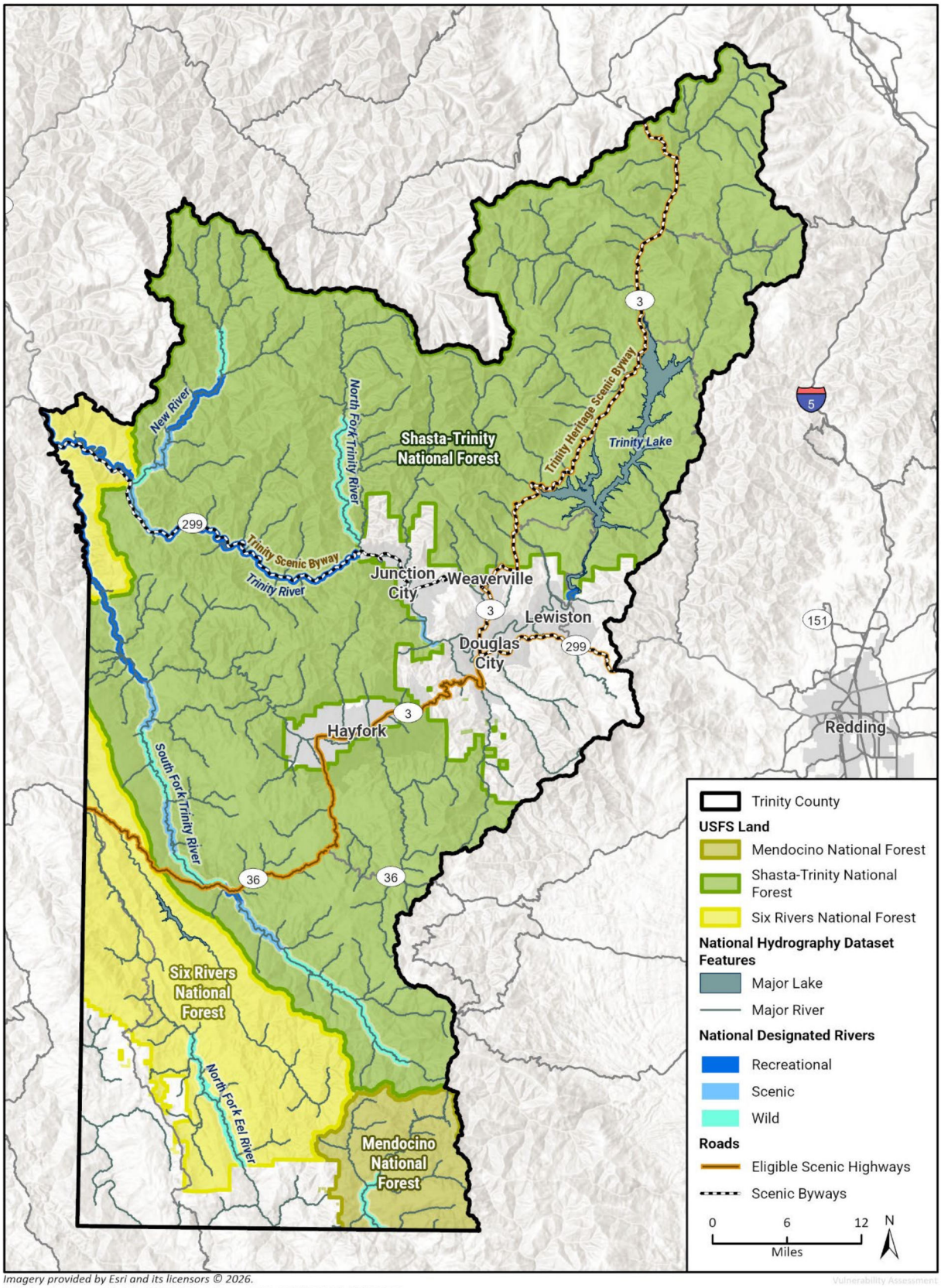
Forests and Wilderness Areas

Trinity County is largely covered by forests and remote wilderness. Forests make up about 83 percent of the county's total land area. Three national forests, the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, the Six Rivers National Forest, and the Mendocino National Forest extend into the county, as shown in Figure 4.1-3. The Shasta-Trinity National Forest spans over 2.2 million acres, the Six Rivers National Forest covers approximately 500,000 acres, and the Mendocino National Forest covers approximately 913,306 acres. These forested regions are characterized by rugged, mountainous terrain. The county also includes the expansive Trinity Alps, which stretch across 517,000 acres (USFS 2025d).

Rivers and Waterways

Trinity County is home to several rivers and creeks, including the Trinity River (including north, middle, and south forks), segments of the Eel River, and New River. Additional waterways within the county include parts of the Mad River and Van Duzen River. Notable lakes such as Trinity Lake and Lewiston Lake lie along the Trinity River, while Ruth Lake is situated along the Mad River (County of Trinity 2025).

Figure 4.1-3 Scenic Resources in Trinity County



Imagery provided by Esri and its licensors © 2026.
Additional data provided by NHD 2025, Caltrans 2025, USFWS 2025, USFS 2023.

Built Environment

Trinity County is made up of rural communities rather than incorporated cities. Most of these areas are primarily residential, though places like Weaverville, Douglas City, and Hayfork also feature commercial, office, and industrial zones. Several of these communities also have designated historic districts. Beyond these rural communities, the county landscape is dominated by forest land, timber land, and to a lesser extent grazing lands and agricultural fields. Crop farming is limited throughout the county, with some parcels participating in crop farming near Hyampom, Hayfork, Post Mountain, and along Salt Creek between Hayfork and Peanut.

Residential

Most of the residential development in the county is comprised of single-family homes located in the flat narrow valleys of the county. Residential development in Trinity County is dispersed and isolated. Decreasing densities and larger lots are spread into hillsides along major highways or corridors below mountain edges. Streets are curvilinear, offering scenic views and vista points through residential areas (County of Trinity 2023).

Weaverville is the most densely developed community in Trinity County, and the only community with a historic core. The streetscape includes trees and front porches, creating a welcoming feel in residential areas. Homes in Weaverville are well-maintained and feature a rustic look with wooden siding and doors. Most trees are deciduous, contrasting the adjacent coniferous forest and mountainous setting. Neighborhoods are arranged around the central business district, providing convenient access by car, and in some areas, by walking or biking.

Non-Residential

Non-residential development is generally sparse, small-scale, and concentrated within a limited number of communities. Commercial development is primarily located in the county's established communities, including Weaverville, Hayfork, Trinity Center, Lewiston, and Junction City. Weaverville is the largest developed area of Trinity County, with the largest retail corridor along State Route 299 (Main Street). Commercial buildings in these communities, particularly in Weaverville, are mostly wooden or brick and colors are muted with reds, whites, and earth tones. Signage is rustic and maintains lettering specific to the early 1900s. Streets are lined with both natural and planted trees, and parks and schools are located near the corridor. Industrial uses along the corridor include lumber companies, tire centers, motor centers, wastewater treatment plants, and solid waste transfer stations.

Paying homage to the gold mining communities first established in the area, the Weaverville Historic District covers 11 acres along State Route 299, with architectural styles of the gold mining days (Trinity County Visitors and Development Bureau 2025).

Scenic Vistas

The term "scenic vistas" refers to a view that has high visual and aesthetic qualities that are valued by the community. As the landscape is mostly forested mountain terrain, scenic vistas can be found in nearly all developed areas of the county. Mature trees line the roads and mountains are visible from many points along Main Street in Weaverville. Snowcapped peaks can be seen from parking lots and roads. In residential areas, winding roads pass through dense forest with mountains in the near distance. Visitors often stop at turnouts to view granite outcroppings. Granite formations and slopes covered with coniferous trees create a distinct sense of place in Trinity County (County of Trinity 2023).

Scenic Highways and Corridors

Scenic highways and corridors offer views of the natural environment in areas with important aesthetic value from publicly accessible places, such as roadways, vista points, and recreation areas.

State Scenic Highway Program

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) defines a scenic highway as any freeway, highway, road, or other public right-of-way, that traverses an area of exceptional scenic quality. Suitability for designation as a state scenic highway is based on vividness, intactness, and unity, as described in Caltrans Visual Impact Assessment Handbook (Caltrans 2023). A brief description of these terms follows:

- **Vividness** is the extent to which the landscape is memorable. This is associated with the distinctiveness, diversity, and contrast of visual elements. A vivid landscape makes an immediate and lasting impression on the viewer.
- **Intactness** is the integrity of visual order in the landscape and the extent to which the natural landscape is free from visual intrusions (e.g., buildings, structures, equipment, grading).
- **Unity** is the extent to which development is sensitive to and visually harmonious with the natural landscape.

Trinity County does not currently have any highways that are formally designated under the California Scenic Highway Program (Caltrans 2018). However, State Route 3 and segments of State Routes 36 and 299 are recognized as eligible for designation, as shown in Figure 4.1-3. The entirety of State Route 3 within the county is eligible for designation, from State Route 36 to the county's northern border. This corridor passes through the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, along the Trinity River and near Trinity Lake, offering views of rugged mountains and forested landscapes. The eligible segment of State Route 36 runs from the western border of Trinity County to State Route 3. The eligible segment of State Route 299 in Trinity County runs west from the eastern border of Trinity County to State Route 3. This segment forms the Trinity Scenic Byway and parallels the Trinity River.

Scenic Byways

The USFS National Scenic Byways Program is a grassroots collaborative effort established to help recognize and preserve roads based on cultural, archeological, historic, natural, or recreational qualities. Two Scenic Byways are located in Trinity County: Trinity Scenic Byway and Trinity Heritage Scenic Byway (USFS 2025a). These Scenic Byways are shown on Figure 4.1-3. Trinity Scenic Byway follows State Route 299 West from the eastern county border to the western county border. It was designated a byway in 1991. USFS recognized the wide variety in plant and animal life and chose the theme "From the Valley Oaks to the Redwood Coast." Trinity Heritage Scenic Byway (State Route 3) offers reflections of the historic mining town in Weaverville and continues north to the county's northern boundary. The byway provides historical reference to the diverse people and resources which can be observed at various points of interest.

Light and Glare

For purposes of this analysis, light refers to light emissions (brightness) generated by a source of light. Stationary sources of light include exterior parking lot and building security lighting; moving sources of light include the headlights of vehicles driving on roadways near the project site. Streetlights and other security lighting also serve as sources of light in the evening hours.

Glare is defined as focused, intense light emanated directly from a source or indirectly when light reflects from a surface. Daytime glare is caused in large part by sunlight shining on highly reflective surfaces at or above eye level. Reflective surfaces are associated with buildings that have expanses of polished or glass surfaces, light-colored pavement, and the windshields of parked cars.

Existing development and motor vehicles in Trinity County produce light and glare. Primary sources of light are streetlights, parking lot lighting, and automobile headlights at night. General sources of glare include reflected sunlight from the windows of buildings, automobiles, and glass building facades.

4.1.2 Regulatory Setting

a. Federal Regulations

National Environmental Policy Act

The National Environmental Policy Act was established in the 1970s, in part, to "assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically pleasing surroundings (42 United States Code Section 4331, Section 101). Under this law, visual impacts are included among environmental effects that must be considered when actions are proposed in or near national forests, parklands, or open space lands under federal jurisdiction. Trinity County has a substantial amount of federal land, primarily the Shasta-Trinity National Forest and public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

In 1968, Congress created the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (16 United States Code 1271 et seq.) to preserve rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations." Sections of the Trinity and Eel rivers within the county are classified as wild, scenic, or recreational under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act under federal and state designations. The classified sections of the Trinity River include 97.5 miles of the Mainstream Trinity River starting from 100 yards below Lewiston Dam to Cedar Flat, the North Fork Trinity River, South Fork Trinity River and the New River tributary. The classified sections of the Eel River include the mouth of the river to 100 yards below the Van Ardsdale, the Middle Fork Eel River from its confluence with the mainstem to the southern boundary of the Yolla Bolly Wilderness Area, the South Fork Eel River from its confluence with the mainstem to the Section Four Creek confluence, the North Fork Eel River from its confluence to Old Gilman Ranch, and the Van Duzen River from its confluence to Dinsmore Bridge (National Wild and Scenic Rivers System 2025a, 2025b). The designated recreational, wild, and scenic rivers are shown in Figure 4.1-3.

b. State Regulations

California Scenic Highway Program

The California Department of Transportation manages the State Scenic Highway Program. The program was created in 1963 with the goal of protecting the aesthetic significance of scenic highways throughout the state. According to the State Streets and Highways Code (Sections 260 through 263), a highway may be designated as scenic based on its scenic quality, how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, and the extent to which development intrudes on the traveler's enjoyment of the view. The California Scenic Highway Program's Scenic Highway System List identifies scenic highways that are either eligible for designation or have already been designated as such. Trinity County does not currently have any highways that are formally designated under the California Scenic Highway Program (Caltrans 2018). However, State Route 3 and portions of State Route 36 and State Route 299 are recognized as eligible for designation.

c. Local Regulations

Trinity County Code of Ordinances

Scenic Overlay Zone

The Scenic Conservation Overlay Zone (Chapter 17.25 of the Code of Ordinances) is used to identify areas of unusual scenic qualities that are unique to Trinity County to guide development that will protect these qualities. The areas designated as an Scenic Conservation Overlay Zone include areas lying within the 100-year flood plain of the streams and reservoirs designated as public waterways in the county

subdivision ordinance, areas lying adjacent to and within 50 feet of public roads and highways designated as scenic highways by the board of supervisors, such as the Trinity Scenic Byway and the Trinity Heritage Scenic Byway, and other such streams designated in the general plan as scenic waterways, such as the Eel River and Trinity River.

Architectural Review and Preservation: Special Treatment

Chapter 17.29C of the Code of Ordinances provides regulations to promote public health, safety, and general welfare by providing for the identification, protection, enhancement, perpetuations, and use of improvements, buildings, structures, signs, objects, features, sites, places, and areas within the architectural, artistic, cultural, engineering, aesthetic, historical, political, social, and other heritage. These apply to all districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places and other sites of historic significance. These areas include Bowerman Barn, Helena Historic District, La Grange Mine, Lewiston Historic District, Weaverville Historic District, and Weaverville Joss House (Office of Historic Preservation 2025). Application procedures require inclusion of lighting standards to ensure there are no negative impacts.

Light and Glare

Trinity County's Code of Ordinances regulates light and glare through performance standards for specific use types and districts, such as temporary asphalt or concrete batch plants, Industrial Districts, or commercial cannabis cultivation operations. Regulations require that exterior lighting be shielded, directed downward, and designed to prevent light trespass onto adjacent properties. Glare-producing materials or fixtures that could impair visibility or create discomfort are prohibited. These standards apply to new development and site improvements, ensuring that lighting is compatible with surrounding land uses and does not detract from scenic qualities.

Trinity County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan

The Trinity County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan includes development requirements near county airports, such as height restrictions and lighting requirements. As specified in Section 8.4.8 of the Plan, lighting that mimics airport lighting (such as steady light or flashing red, white, green, or amber light) cannot be pointed toward an aircraft in takeoff and landing zones. Similarly, glare reflected towards aircraft engaged in takeoff climbs or landing approaches is also prohibited (Trinity County Airport Land Use Commission 2009).

4.1.3 Impact Analysis

a. Significance Thresholds

Based on Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines* a project may be deemed to have a significant impact on aesthetics if it would:

1. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
2. Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;
3. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality; or
4. Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

The California Environmental Quality Act and the *CEQA Guidelines* focus on addressing effects to public views (defined as those experienced from publicly accessibly vantage points); therefore, public views are the focus of this discussion.

b. Methodology

Aesthetics impact assessments involve qualitative analysis that is subjective. Reactions to the same aesthetic conditions vary according to viewer taste and interests but are basically governed by the visual compatibility with the surroundings and existing development, coherence with design guidelines established by the jurisdiction, and use of high-quality materials that blend into the landscape. Ultimately, development decisions that prescribe aesthetic or design treatments for specific projects fall under the purview of the Trinity County Planning Commission and appointed or elected bodies charged with overseeing development permits (such as building permits, site plans, and other similar permits). As a programmatic document, this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) presents an assessment of potential development facilitated by the project. Because the proposed General Plan is a long-term document intended to guide actions for many years into the future, this analysis relies on program-level and qualitative evaluation.

Much of the potential cannabis-related development contemplated by the project was previously analyzed in the Trinity County Cannabis Program EIR (State Clearinghouse Number 2018122049), certified in 2020 (2020 EIR). The 2020 EIR contains four mitigation measures to reduce aesthetics impacts, which were determined to be less than significant with mitigation. 2020 EIR mitigation measures 3.1-1a, 3.1-1b, and 3.1.-1c included changes to the Cannabis Ordinance language to reduce aesthetic impacts. These revisions were incorporated into the County Code of Ordinances and adopted as part of Ordinance Number 315-849 in December 2020. Because these regulatory controls are part of existing conditions and because the proposed General Plan establishes a new countywide policy framework for cannabis activities occurring consistent with the General Plan, this EIR focuses on aesthetic effects not previously addressed or requiring reevaluation under the proposed General Plan.

c. Project Impacts and Mitigation

Threshold 1:	Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Impact AES-1 The proposed project would facilitate growth that may lead to intensified development in Trinity County. Proposed General Plan policies and development standards would regulate development in areas with scenic vistas, reducing potential impacts. Impacts to scenic vistas would be less than significant.

A scenic vista is a view from a public place (roadway, designated scenic viewing spot, etc.) that is expansive and considered important. It can be obtained from an elevated position (such as from the top of a hillside) or it can be seen from a roadway with a longer-range view of the landscape. An adverse effect would occur if development facilitated by the project would block or otherwise damage the scenic vista upon implementation. As described in Section 4.1.1, *Setting*, most of the county is covered by national forests and mountains. Even the developed areas of the county, such as Weaverville, have substantial views of mature trees and mountains.

Most of the proposed land use designations within the county designate agricultural and resource land with some small areas of rural residential land scattered along the west side of the county (as shown in Figure 2-2). Additionally, in the future, the Zoning Code would be updated to match general plan land use designations as required by state law. More intensive land uses facilitated by the project, including commercial, public facilities, and low, medium, and high-density residential uses would occur around the unincorporated communities of Weaverville and Hayfork. This development could affect existing views of mountains and forests in these communities by obstructing these views; however, this development would generally be similar to existing land uses that are concentrated in these more developed areas of the county. Furthermore, cannabis development could occur in existing agricultural areas which could

also obstruct existing views; however, as described in the 2020 EIR, the County's cannabis ordinance was amended to require screening of cultivation sites from county scenic roadways and fencing around the sites that blends in with the existing surroundings (Trinity County Code of Ordinances Section 17.43.060[U]).

Additionally, future development would be required to comply with following goals and policies regarding scenic resources in Trinity County intended to preserve scenic vistas: Goal COS 7, Policy COS 7.1 (Scenic Easements), Policy COS 7.2 (Scenic Preservation), and Policy COS 7.4 (Sustained Yield Practices). These goals and policies require the preservation of scenic, recreational, and forest areas to preserve the character of the county.

Future development would also be subject to the development standards included in the Trinity County Code of Ordinances, which regulates building mass and height. This would ensure that future development projects are consistent with their surroundings and do not obstruct scenic vistas. Adherence to existing regulations would ensure that potential impacts to scenic vistas would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 2:	Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

Impact AES-2 The proposed project would facilitate growth that may lead to intensified development in Trinity County near eligible state scenic highways and scenic byways. Proposed General Plan policies and adherence to the County Code of Ordinances would regulate development in areas near eligible scenic highways and scenic byways, reducing potential impacts. Impact to scenic roadways would be less than significant.

There are no designated scenic highways in Trinity County. However, portions of SR 3 and SR 299 are eligible for designation, and Trinity Scenic Byway and Trinity Heritage Scenic Byway have been recognized by USFS as scenic. Most of the proposed land use designations within the county designate agricultural and resource land with some small areas of rural residential land scattered along the west side of the county (as shown in Figure 2-2). Additionally, in the future, the Zoning Code would be updated to match General Plan land use designations as required by state law. More intensive land uses facilitated by the project, including commercial, public facilities, and low, medium, and high-density residential uses would occur around the unincorporated communities of Weaverville and Hayfork. SR 3 and SR 299 traverse through the communities of Weaverville and Hayfork. Therefore, development in these communities could affect scenic resources within these highways.

However, future development facilitated by the project would be required to comply with following goals and policies regarding scenic resources in Trinity County intended to preserve resources within scenic roadways: Goal COS 6, Policy COS 6.1 (Scenic Highway Zoning), Policy COS 6.2 (Scenic Easement Encroachment), Policy COS 6.3 (Slope Landscaping and Maintenance), and Policy COS 6.4 (View Corridors). These goals and policies require scenic highway zoning, reduce encroachment on scenic areas, enhance hillside management, and preserve view corridors.

Additionally, future development would be required to comply with Chapter 17.29 of the County Code of Ordinances, which requires architectural review in historic districts to preserve historic resources in these areas. Furthermore, as described under Impact AES-1, the County's cannabis ordinance requires screening of cultivation sites from county scenic roadways. Implementation of these policies and

regulations would ensure that development is designed to preserve existing scenic and historic resources within scenic roadways. Adherence to these policies and regulations would ensure that potential impacts to scenic highways would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 3:	Would the project, in non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

Impact AES-3 The proposed General Plan would create land use patterns that are generally consistent with existing land use patterns. Future development would be subject to development standards and County Code requirements intended to ensure consistent development and preservation of character within the county. Impacts related to visual character and public views would be less than significant.

Public Resources Code Section 21071(a) defines an urbanized area as an unincorporated area that meets either of the following criteria:

- Completely surrounded by one or more incorporated cities, and both of the following criteria are met:
  - The population of the unincorporated area and the population of the surrounding incorporated city or cities equals not less than 100,000 persons.
  - The population density of the unincorporated area at least equals the population density of the surrounding city or cities.
- Located within an urban growth boundary and has an existing residential population of at least 5,000 persons per square mile. For purposes of this subparagraph, an “urban growth boundary” means a provision of a locally adopted general plan that allows urban uses on one side of the boundary and prohibits urban uses on the other side.

Trinity County does not include any incorporated cities and has a low population density; therefore, it is considered non urbanized. Development in Trinity County is concentrated in unincorporated communities such as Weaverville and Hayfork. Most of the residential development in the county is comprised of single-family residences located in the flat narrow valleys of the county, with relatively more intense residential and commercial development in communities like Weaverville; however, these developments are still small and dispersed.

Most of the proposed land use designations within the county designate agricultural and resource land with some small areas of rural residential land scattered along the west side of the county (as shown in Figure 2-2). More intensive land uses, including mixed use, commercial, public facilities, and low, medium, and high-density residential uses would occur around the unincorporated communities of Weaverville and Hayfork. This development pattern would generally be consistent with existing development across the county, although some more intense development could occur in Weaverville and Hayfork compared to existing conditions. Development in these areas could affect existing scenic views, as described in Impact AES-1. Additionally, in the future, the Zoning Code would be updated for consistency with the General Plan land use designations, as required by state law. Overall, development facilitated by the project would be subject to development standards in the Trinity County Code of Ordinances which regulate building mass and height. These standards would be largely unchanged by the project, except for

some changes to exceptions for structures that can exceed the allowable structure height such as flag poles, chimneys and flues, broadcasting towers, public buildings, and wireless telecommunication towers.

As described in Impacts AES-1 and AES-2, cannabis operations could impact public views and visual resources; however, the County's cannabis ordinance requires screening of cultivation sites from county scenic roadways and fencing around the sites that blends in with the existing surroundings. Consistency with these regulations would ensure new development is consistent with surrounding development and is not overly obstructive to existing public views or out of character. Additionally, future development in historic districts would be subject to Chapter 17.29C of the County Code of Ordinances, which requires architectural review in historic districts to preserve historic resources in these areas. This would further preserve the existing character of these historic areas within the county.

Overall, development facilitated by the proposed project would be generally similar in nature to existing development and would not significantly alter public views or existing visual character. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 4:	Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area?

Impact AES-4 Development facilitated by the project could increase light and glare effects on sensitive receptors, such as residential uses. However, new development would be subject to existing regulations in the County's Zoning Code. Therefore, impacts to light and glare would be less than significant.

Development in Trinity County is focused in areas such as Weaverville and Hayfork, which currently have a mix of commercial, residential, and public facility uses that contribute to existing light and glare conditions. The proposed project promotes compact growth by concentrating most new development in these already developed areas where utilities and public infrastructure are available or can be consistently provided, while protecting and conserving the County's natural resources such as soils, water, air quality, minerals, vegetation, wildlife, and habitats. This is done through the proposed General Plan land use designations and future implementation of Zoning Code updates to align the County Zoning Code with the proposed General Plan. This has the effect of limiting sprawl into agricultural-zoned areas and open spaces.

The proposed General Plan would facilitate new development that could introduce new sources of light and glare in Trinity County, resulting in increased ambient nighttime lighting. Specific sources would include streetlights, light fixtures in parking lots, signage on businesses, exterior building illumination, interior lighting passing through building fenestration, and outdoor lighting at recreational facilities. Reflective building and vehicles surfaces, and the headlights of motor vehicles, could generate additional light and glare.

Compliance with development standards included in the County Code of Ordinances would ensure that future development would not be a significant source of new light or glare. Specifically, these standards would require that exterior lighting be shielded, directed downward, and designed to prevent light trespass onto adjacent properties. Glare-producing materials or fixtures that could impair visibility or create discomfort are prohibited. Adherence to existing County lighting requirements and would ensure that potential impacts related to light and glare would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

4.1.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope for the cumulative aesthetics analysis is Trinity County. This geographic scope is appropriate because these are areas where identified scenic resources are visible. Areas at a greater distance would be separated by intervening topography, vegetation, and buildings, obstructing views in all directions from the Plan Area, and lighting and glare generally only affect adjacent properties. The cumulative development scenario is described in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting*.

A large portion of Trinity County is characterized by forest land. The county is sparsely populated and retains much of its natural character. Cumulative development would extend the urban edge by expanding the potential for the development of urbanized uses. Views along rural or scenic highways would change with the introduction of residential and commercial development, streets, and nighttime lighting. As a result, rural communities may lose some of their small-town character as they grow. For these reasons, cumulative aesthetic impacts related to scenic views, scenic highways, visual character, and light and glare would be significant. Because the proposed project would foster growth associated with economic development, the proposed project would contribute to the alteration of the visual character and scenic resources of the County. However, implementation of the proposed General Plan policies listed above under Impacts AES-1 and AES-2 would reduce the proposed project's contribution to this significant cumulative impact. Therefore, the project would not have a considerable contribution to this cumulative impact.

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4.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

This section evaluates impacts on agriculture and forestry resources from implementation of the Trinity County General Plan Update (proposed project). Both direct impacts associated with the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural use in the Planning Area and potential indirect impacts to adjacent agricultural operations are discussed. The section also addresses potential project impacts to forestry resources, including the conversion of forestland to non-forest use.

4.2.1 Setting

a. Overview of Agriculture

California Agriculture

California agriculture ranks first in the nation in productivity, its 77,500 farms and ranches received $61.2 billion for their products in 2024. California produces over 400 commodities. Over a third of the country's vegetables and two-thirds of the country's fruits and nuts are grown in California (California Department of Food and Agriculture 2025).

Regional Agriculture

The 2022 Census of Agriculture indicates that the total farmland size in Trinity County is dwindling. The 2022 County Profile report published by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) reports that from 2017 to 2022, the number of farms decreased by 25 percent. The acres of farmland also decreased by 13 percent. In 2022, pastureland comprised 35,292 acres, woodland comprised 18,718 acres, and cropland comprised 1,558 acres of land (USDA 2022).

Although cannabis cultivation is regulated separately and thus is not included in traditional agricultural reporting sources, Trinity County recognizes commercial cannabis cultivation as part of its regulated agricultural economy through the County's Cannabis Program. The County's Cannabis Program established a cap of 530 commercial cannabis cultivation licenses, and the California Department of Cannabis Control reported 357 active annual cannabis licenses and 16 active provisional cannabis licenses in Trinity County in 2025 (California Department of Cannabis Control 2026).

b. Important Farmland

The state mapping of significant farmlands as part of a national Important Farmland Inventory System (additional detail provided in Section 4.2.2, *Regulatory Setting*, below) identifies those agricultural lands that are of Prime Importance, Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland. These designations indicate which lands are used for cultivation compared to the Soil Conservation Service's Land Capability Classification system which rates soils for their potential to support cultivation. A description of each of the three categories of Important Farmland is provided below (California Department of Conservation 2025).

- **Prime Farmland.** Prime Farmland is land with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long-term production of agricultural crops. This land has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. The land must have been used for the production of irrigated crops at some time during the two update cycles prior to the most recent mapping date.
- **Farmland of Statewide Importance.** Farmland of Statewide Importance is land similar to Prime Farmland, but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to hold and store moisture. The land must have been used for the production of irrigated crops at some time during the two update cycles prior to the mapping date.

- **Unique Farmland.** Unique Farmland is land of lesser quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops (i.e., crops of high economic value, such as oranges, olives, avocados, rice, grapes, and cut flowers). This land is usually irrigated, but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards, as found in some climatic zones of California. The land must have been cultivated at some time during the two update cycles prior to the mapping of 2008.

There is no Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance in Trinity County. No data is available from the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) to track agricultural land use changes; therefore, total farmland acreage is difficult to quantify (County of Trinity 2023).

c. Conversion of Farmland

While there are no farmlands considered as Prime or Statewide Importance, agricultural lands in Trinity County are mostly suited to grazing lands, and are at risk of conversion. A common trend across California and Trinity County is the decline in size and number of agricultural lands. The landscape is shifting as new agricultural uses emerge, and traditional agricultural uses decrease. Coupled with threats of scarce water availability and prolonged drought conditions, farms are shrinking in size and production, leaving experienced farmers with challenging decisions for future farm production (County of Trinity, 2023).

Williamson Act

Land enrolled under the California Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act) that does not meet any criteria of Prime Farmland is shown in Figure 4.2-1. Most parcels are located in valleys near creeks and rivers. The southwestern portion of the county, near the Eel River, has the most parcels enrolled in the Williamson Act. The second largest grouping of Williamson Act parcels are located in the southern part of the Hayfork valley, along Hayfork Creek and Salt Creek (County of Trinity 2023).

d. Pastureland and Livestock

Approximately 83 percent of Trinity County is forest and woodlands, which makes the county well suited for livestock grazing on pastureland and rangelands. Grazing is a common practice in federal forest lands. Livestock grazing is important for both the health of the forest and local economy, as grazing land provides substantial forage resources for cattle. Habitats that include livestock grazing in forests and woodlands are also linked to improved water quality (University of California, Davis 2013) and are important for land conservation efforts. Agricultural use on federal forest land is intended to manage multiple systems for healthier topsoil, livestock, wildlife, improved water quality, and enhanced biodiversity, among other benefits.

e. Forestland

Trinity County contains more than 1.7 million acres of forest land, covering approximately 83 percent of the county's total land area. Forest resources, much like agricultural resources, are dependent on the quality of the climate and soils. Trinity County's mild and wet climate is conducive to timber production. Forestry resources contribute to the agricultural sector, tourism, and increased quality of life for residents to enjoy outdoor recreation.

Federal Forests

Outside of the agricultural forestry districts, the county produces timber through two national forests: the Shasta-Trinity National Forest and Six Rivers National Forest. A portion of Mendocino National Forest is also located in the southwestern corner of the county, but the forest is not a major timber producer due to

the lack of infrastructure and paved roads. Figure 4.2-2 shows the vast land area of federal forests in the county.[1] Trees grown in these forests commonly used for timber production include pine, fir, and cedar.

Timber production is managed by the United States Forest Service (USFS). The USFS evaluates land suitability for timber production under the National Forest Management Act and 36 Code of Federal Regulations 219. Forest plans serve as long-term management documents that guide all activities within a national forest, including timber production. These plans include a suitability analysis to identify lands where timber production is appropriate. Lands are unsuitable if timber harvest is legally prohibited, withdrawn by decision, incompatible with management objectives, or if irreversible resource damage cannot be prevented. Suitable lands must be forested, restockable within five years, and capable of sustainable production without compromising soil, water, or ecological integrity. Economic feasibility and alignment with multiple-use objectives are also considered (USDA 2025a).

In Shasta-Trinity National Forest, the most suitable lands for timber production are located in the very northeastern portion in the county, whereas unsuitable lands are located in the western, southern, and southeastern areas.

Outside of timber production, the USFS encourages public access to the natural resources and forests in the area. Trinity County is known for its outdoor recreation, including water sports, fishing, and hiking. These forests are popular destinations for recreational activities such as backpacking, hiking, camping, climbing, boating, off-highway vehicle riding, fishing, and hunting.

f. Forestry Resources

Forestry resources include forestland, timberland, and timberland production zones (TPZs). Definitions used for forest land and timberland are those found in the California Public Resources Code Sections 12220(g) and 4789.2(g) and California Government Code Section 51104(g). These codes define forestland, timberland, and TPZs as follows:

- **Forest Land.** Forest land is land that can support, under natural conditions, 10 percent native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, and that allows for the preservation or management of forest-related resources such as timber, aesthetic value, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreational facilities, and other public benefits (Public Resources Code Section 12220[g]).
- **Timberland.** Timberland means land on which is growing a significant stand of trees of commercial species, or potential commercial species, either in public or private ownership or that is generally capable of maintaining a stand of trees in perpetuity and not withdrawn or otherwise devoted to uses other than timber production (Public Resources Code Section 4789.2[g]).
- **Timberland Production Zones.** TPZs means an area which has been zoned pursuant to Section 51112 or 51113 and is devoted to and used for growing and harvesting timber, or for growing and harvesting timber and compatible uses, as defined in subdivision (h) (California Government Code Section 51104).

[1] Figure 4.2-2 shows National Forest boundaries in the county. The figure is not intended to depict parcel-level land ownership and may include private inholdings or other non-federal lands within the mapped boundaries.

Figure 4.2-1 Williamson Act Lands in Trinity County

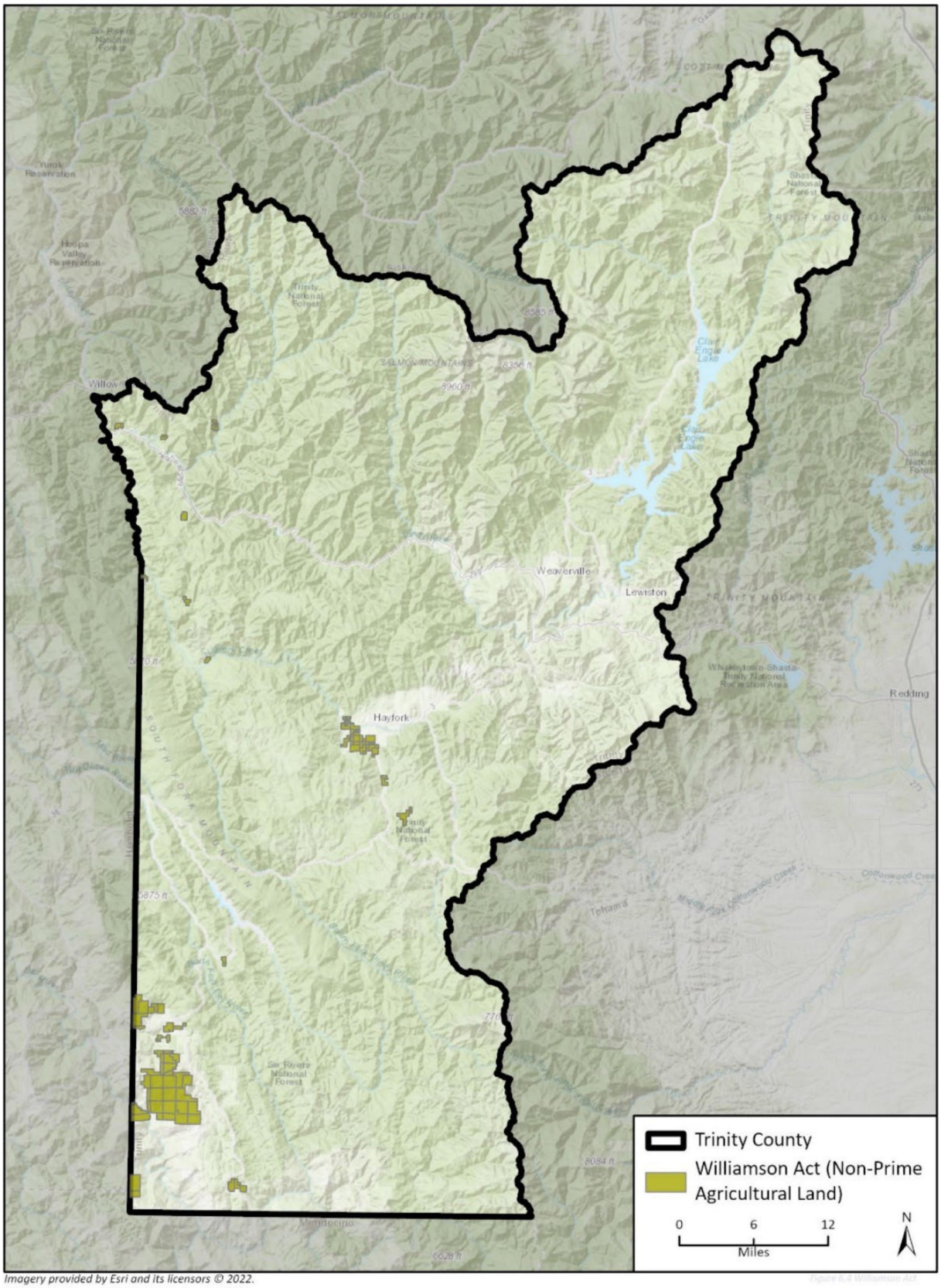
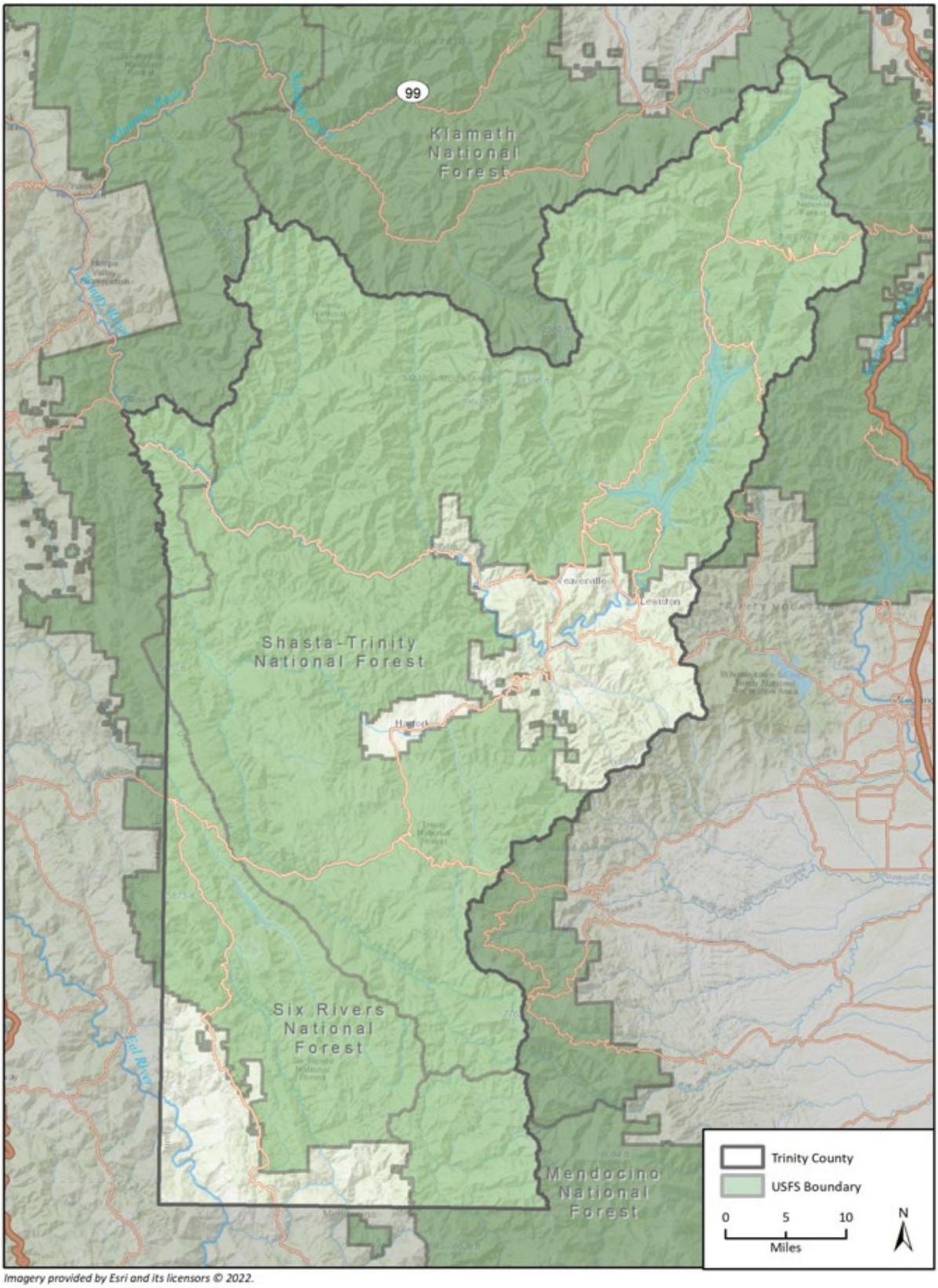


Figure 4.2-2 Federal Forests in Trinity County



4.2.2 Regulatory Setting

a. Federal Regulations

Farmland Protection Policy Act

The Farmland Protection Policy Act is intended to minimize the impact federal programs have on the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. It assures that to the extent possible federal programs are administered to be compatible with state, local units of government, and private programs and policies to protect Farmland. Projects are subject to Farmland Protection Policy Act requirements if they may irreversibly convert Farmland (directly or indirectly) to nonagricultural use and are completed by a federal agency or with assistance from a federal agency (USDA 2025b).

United States Forest Service

The USFS is a federal agency that manages public lands in national forests and grasslands. The USFS is also the largest forestry research organization in the world, and provides technical and financial assistance to state and private forestry agencies. The USFS manages approximately 193 million acres of public land across 154 national forests and 20 national grasslands. Established in 1905, the agency's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of these lands for present and future generations. Its responsibilities include forest and vegetation management, wildfire prevention and suppression, habitat restoration, and providing recreational opportunities. The USFS also conducts scientific research and collaborates with states, tribes, and local communities to promote sustainable land use and resource stewardship (USDA 2025c).

National Forest Management Act

In an effort to establish long-range planning and management of the national forests, Congress passed the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974, and the National Forest Management Act of 1976, which amended the Renewable Resources Planning Act. These laws require comprehensive, long range forest plans to be prepared for each national forest that details, among other things, how the resources within the forest will be managed and used. The management plans stress "multiple use" strategies that encourage the economic use of resources within the forest, including timber, water, mineral resources, and recreation.

Shasta-Trinity National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan

The Forest Plan for the Shasta-Trinity National Forest provides a long-term strategic framework for managing the Shasta and Trinity National Forests. The plan integrates multiple-use objectives, balancing timber production, recreation, watershed protection, wildlife habitat, and wilderness preservation. It establishes management direction, standards, and guidelines for all resource programs, including timber, fire and fuels, water quality, wildlife, and recreation, while ensuring compliance with federal laws. The plan includes monitoring requirements, implementation schedules, and adaptive management provisions to respond to changing ecological and social conditions (USDA 1995).

Mendocino National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan

The Mendocino National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan is a document that guides the long-term management of the forest, providing direction, goals, standards, and monitoring requirements for all activities. It is the principal document for managing the forest for multiple uses like recreation, timber, and wildlife, ensuring it is done sustainably. The current plan is from 1995, though a new plan is being developed through the National Forest Management Act process, which includes public input and scientific analysis (USDA 2025d).

b. State Regulations

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The FMMP was established in 1975 by the Soil Conservation Service to track changes in agricultural uses over time regarding Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Farmland of Local Importance, and Grazing Land.

The California Department of Conservation's FMMP monitors the conversion of the State's Farmland to and from agricultural use. County-level data is collected, and a series of maps are prepared that identify eight classifications and uses based on a minimum mapping unit size of 10 acres. The program also produces a biennial report on the amount of land converted from agricultural to non-agricultural use. The program maintains an inventory of state agricultural land and updates the Important Farmland Series Maps every two years. The FMMP is an informational service only and does not constitute state regulation of local land use decisions. Agricultural land is rated according to several variables, including soil quality and irrigation status, with Prime Farmland being considered the most optimal for farming practices. Other FMMP designations include Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Farmland of Local Importance, Grazing Land, and Urban and Built-Up Land.

Land Conservation Act

Better known as the Williamson Act (California Administrative Code Section 51200 et seq.), the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 creates a legal arrangement whereby private landowners contract with local governments to voluntarily restrict land to agricultural and open space uses, protecting it from unnecessary or premature conversion to urban uses. In return, restricted parcels are assessed for property tax purposes at a rate consistent with their actual use rather than potential market value, which saves landowners from 20 percent to 75 percent in property tax liability each year.

Generally, Williamson Act contracts have an initial term of ten years, with renewal occurring automatically each year thereafter. The contracts run with the land and are binding on all succeeding landowners. Land must be in an agricultural preserve in order to enter into a Williamson Act contract. Agricultural preserves under Williamson Act contract contain at least 100 contiguous acres of agricultural land unless specific findings are made.

Non-renewal initiations are requested either by the landowner or the local government and are often filed in anticipation of converting farmland to other uses. Most contracted land is terminated through non-renewal. Upon the expiration of the contract, the restrictions are removed and the property tax assessment, which had been gradually increasing over the previous nine-year non-renewal period, returns to full market value.

c. Local Regulations

Trinity County Code of Ordinances

Timber Production Zones

Under Trinity County's Zoning Code, TPZs are designated to preserve land primarily for the growing and harvesting of timber and compatible uses. TPZ zoned parcels are scattered throughout the county but are primarily concentrated in the northeastern portion of the county. Ordinance 315-41.1 establishes that TPZ parcels must remain dedicated to timber production for at least ten years, allowing property tax assessments based on timber use rather than market value. Permitted activities include timber harvesting, watershed management, wildlife habitat enhancement, and low-intensity recreation such as hiking and fishing.

Agricultural Districts

Agricultural district zones are designated areas intended to preserve and promote agricultural uses as the primary land use. These zones typically allow farming, ranching, and related activities such as crop production, livestock grazing, and agricultural structures, while limiting non-agricultural development to protect farmland and maintain rural character. Regulations within these zones often include minimum parcel sizes, restrictions on subdivision, and allowances for accessory uses that support agricultural operations. The purpose is to sustain agricultural productivity, reduce land use conflicts, and safeguard open space and natural resources. Agricultural district zones are primarily concentrated in the northeastern portion of the county.

4.2.3 Impact Analysis

a. Significance Thresholds and Methodology

Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines* identifies the following criteria for determining whether a project's impacts would have a significant impact on agriculture or forestry resources:

1. 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 nonagricultural use;
2. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract;
3. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timber Production;
4. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; or
5. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use.

Much of the potential cannabis-related development contemplated by the project was previously analyzed in the Trinity County Cannabis Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR; State Clearinghouse Number 2018122049), certified in 2020 (2020 EIR). The 2020 EIR found that cannabis cultivation is an agricultural activity under state law and that, within Trinity County, no prime farmland mapped by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program is present. Accordingly, cannabis cultivation would not result in the conversion of mapped farmland to non-agricultural use, and no impacts to agricultural resources would occur. The 2020 EIR also acknowledged that cannabis operations may be located in forested areas; however, it identified regulatory restrictions on the location of operations within Timber Production Zones and on public forest lands. Based on this analysis, impacts to forestry resources were determined to be less than significant, and no mitigation measures were required. Because these regulatory controls are part of existing conditions and because the proposed General Plan establishes a new countywide policy framework that supersedes the 2020 EIR for cannabis activities occurring consistent with the General Plan, this EIR focuses on agriculture and forestry effects not previously addressed or requiring reevaluation under the proposed General Plan.

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1:	Would the project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

Impact AG-1 There is no mapped Farmland in the Planning Area, and the proposed General Plan includes policies protective of agricultural resources. Impacts would be less than significant.

There are no Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance mapped within the county. The proposed project seeks to ensure that growth and development in the Planning Area is done in a way that protects open space and agricultural land. The proposed project includes goals and policies that protect and preserve agricultural lands in Trinity County. Some agricultural lands would be redesignated as Rural Residential, Public Facilities, or State, Federal, Other Public Lands by the proposed project. This change is intended to realign the land use designation with the existing land use of such parcels (i.e., the parcels proposed for redesignation as Rural Residential already contain rural residential uses). As such, this modification would not result in the removal of active agricultural uses in the county.

Policies in the proposed project aim to sustain agriculture by protecting agricultural activities from incompatible land uses, promoting agricultural land preservation programs, and developing programs to preserve or maintain soil conditions or improve soil productivity.

The proposed project would preserve agricultural land within the county through Policy COS-10.1, Agricultural Preserves, to implement agricultural land preservation programs for long-term conservation of viable agricultural operations. With Policy COS 10.2 (Agricultural and Land Conversion Review), the County would review discretionary permits and include an assessment of the conversion of productive agricultural land, requiring mitigation where needed. Through Policy COS 10.4 (Crop Land), the County would protect crop lands wherever possible and ensure that only uses related to agriculture are located in crop land areas. Under Policy COS 10.5 (Agricultural Resource Production, the County would advocate for state and federal regulations that sustain profitable resource production and the conservation and open space values. Policy COS 10.6 (Land Improvement Programs) would encourage land improvement programs to increase soil productivity.

Implementation of the goals and policies of the proposed project mentioned would ensure the preservation of all agricultural land in the Planning Area. Full buildout of the proposed project would not result in a loss of agricultural lands and agricultural impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 2:	Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?

Impact AG-2 Development facilitated by the project would not result in conflicts to existing zoning for agricultural uses or Williamson Act contracts. Impacts would be less than significant.

As noted in Section 4.2.1(a), *Overview of Agriculture,* Williamson Act parcels are primarily concentrated in the southwestern portion of the county, near the Eel River, and in the southern part of the Hayfork valley, along Hayfork Creek. As noted in Section 4.2.2(c), *Local Regulations*, lands zoned for Agricultural are concentrated in the northeastern portion of the county. The Williamson Act allows the County government to define compatible land uses for contract lands within their jurisdictions, as long as those

uses are consistent with the compatibility principles set forth in Government Code Section 51238.1. Public agencies acquiring contracted lands for a public use (such as transportation facilities) must comply with Government Code Section 51293. Two criteria must be met when acquiring contracted lands:

1. The location is not based primarily on a consideration of the lower cost of acquiring land in an agricultural preserve.
2. If the land for any public improvement is agricultural land covered under a Williamson Act contract and there is no other land within or outside the preserve on which it is reasonably feasible to locate the public improvement. The proposed project does not envision specific development projects on land subject to a Williamson Act contract. Current Williamson Act contracts are located in southwestern portion of the county, near the Eel River, and in the southern part of the Hayfork valley, along Hayfork Creek. The area surrounding those contracts is not designated for development. Therefore, buildout under the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural uses and Williamson Act contracts.

The proposed project includes policies that aim to conserve agricultural lands and open space including those under the Williamson Act Contract. Policy COS 10.3 (Williamson Act Contracts) states that the County should comply with Williamson Act contracts designated agricultural land, the requirements of the California Land Conservation Act, and adopted County regulations. Additionally, in compliance with Policy LU 8.2 (Development Density), only low development density would be permitted in agricultural areas, and under Policy LU 8.3 (Infill Development), infill development in existing communities would be prioritized. Proposed General Plan goals and policies would reduce conflicts with existing zoning for agricultural uses and Williamson Act contracts. Therefore, impacts to existing zoning for agricultural uses and Williamson Act contracts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 3:	Would the project conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)); timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526); or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?
Threshold 4:	Would the project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

Impact AG-3 The proposed project would encourage the continued operation of existing timber production within the Planning Area. Impacts would be less than significant.

Forest land and woodland represent approximately 83 percent of the county (1.7 million acres). A total of 325,417 acres, or 15.87 percent of the land area in Trinity County, is in a TPZ. TPZs provide for timberland zoning and restrictions for a minimum of 10 years. Allowed uses in the TPZ district include growing and harvesting timber, watershed management, and habitat improvements. TPZ parcels are primarily concentrated in the northeastern portion of the county. Development facilitated by the proposed project may occur in or near forested regions; however, development would be excluded on lands designated as TPZ.

Additionally, Shasta-Trinity National Park, Six Rivers National Park, and the Mendocino National Forest are federally-managed lands designated for conservation, recreation, and timber production. While the USFS seeks County input on major land use and policy decisions, land use decisions and resource management within National Forests are outside the jurisdiction of Trinity County. Future development of forest land would be required to comply with applicable federal development standards and regulations, and thus would by design prioritize continued operation of timber production and forest conservation.

Policies in the General Plan would protect forestry resources by encouraging multiple uses of forest land and carefully managing the forest ecosystem. Policy COS 11.1 (Forest Lands in Production) would encourage multiple uses on federal forest lands in production where possible and Policy COS 11.2 (Timber Resource Salvage) would require the County to work with landowners and the USFS to expedite the salvage of timber resources following wildfires. Additionally, land use strategies contained within the proposed project would help to encourage growth in developed areas rather than a more dispersed land use pattern that could result in conversion of forest land. Because General Plan policies would protect and encourage productive use of forest land, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning of forest land or cause a conversion of forest land to non-forest use and would encourage the continued operation of timber production. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 5:	Would the project 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?

Impact AG-4 The proposed project would not result in the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or forest land to non-forest use. This impact would be less than significant.

The project would not involve changes in the existing environment that, due to their location or nature, could result in the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or the conversion of forest land to non-forest use. As discussed under Impact AG-1, given that (1) there are no Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance mapped within the county, (2) the land use modifications would not result in the removal of active agricultural uses and the project does not modify land use designations adjacent to agricultural lands, and (3) numerous General Plan policies emphasize agricultural preservation and land use compatibility, the project would not involve changes to the existing environment that could lead to the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use.

As discussed under Impact AG-3, (1) development would be prohibited on lands designated as TPZ, (2) much of the forest land within the county falls within national forests that are federally managed to protect forest resources and timber production, and (3) several General Plan policies emphasize preservation of forest resources and continued timber production. As a result, the project would not involve other changes in the existing environment which could conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

For the reasons stated above, impacts involving 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, would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

4.2.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope for cumulative agricultural impacts is the county. This geographic scope is appropriate because the agricultural activities in Trinity County are influenced by countywide land use policies, zoning designations, and forest and agricultural resource management practices. Furthermore, the FMMP assesses the acreage of Important Farmland converted to urban uses on a countywide basis. The cumulative development scenario is described in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting*.

Cumulative development would increase population, residential units, and commercial space in the region. This growth could gradually transform the region's agricultural and forest land uses to non-agricultural uses to a certain extent, and cumulative impacts to agricultural and forest land are considered to be significant. As described under Impact AG-1, the County does not contain any Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance, and implementation of the proposed project would not the result in the direct conversion of agricultural land. As discussed under Impact AG-3, the project would not conflict with existing zoning of forest land or cause a conversion of forest land to non-forest use, and would encourage the continued operation of timber production. Therefore, the project's contribution to conversion of farmland, pursuant to the FMMP of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use or forest land to non-forest use would not be cumulatively considerable.

Cumulative development in Trinity County could have the potential to create compatibility conflicts relating to the interface of agricultural and forestry uses and new urban development. However, Trinity County policies, such as the designation of TPZ land support the continued use of agricultural and forest lands and is intended to minimize potential land use conflict with incompatible uses. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to agriculture and forestry uses due to changes in the existing environment would be less than significant.

4.3 Air Quality

This section analyzes air quality related impacts associated with the implementation of the Trinity County General Plan Update (proposed project), including temporary air quality impacts relating to construction activity and long-term air quality impacts from operation. Construction and operational emissions associated with development facilitated by the project were calculated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), version 2022.1 (Appendix B). Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) for the baseline condition and buildout of the proposed project were provided by Alta Planning + Design, Inc. (Alta) and included in Appendix C, as detailed in Section 4.16, *Transportation.* Greenhouse gas emissions and global climate change impacts are discussed in Section 4.8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*.

4.3.1 Setting

a. Regional Climate and Meteorology

The Planning Area is located within the North Coast Air Basin (NCAB), which includes all of Del Norte, Humboldt, Trinity, and Mendocino Counties and the northern portion of Sonoma County. Additionally, the Planning Area is within North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District (NCUAQMD), which is comprised of Humbolt, Del Norte, and Trinity counties. The region is predominantly mountainous, with terrain ranging from coastal areas at sea level to isolated interior valleys and peaks rising above 9,000 feet. The mountain ranges generally run north to south, divided by deep canyons cut by the many rivers in the region.

NCAB is characterized by cool summers and mild winters with frequent fog and significant amounts of rain. In coastal areas, the ocean helps to moderate temperatures year-round. Further inland, the summers are hotter and drier and the winters colder and snowier. At high elevations in inland areas, it is cool in the summers and snowier in the winter. In the NCAB, dominant winds exhibit a seasonal pattern, especially in coastal areas. In the summer months, strong north to northwesterly winds are common and during the winter, storms from the South Pacific increase the percentage of days with winds from southerly quadrants. Wind direction often assumes a daily pattern in the river canyons that empty into the Pacific. In the morning hours, cool air from higher elevations flows down the valleys while later in the day, as the lower elevation air heats up, this pattern is reversed and the airflow heads up the canyon. These airflows are often quite strong. Offshore and onshore flows are also common along the coast and associated with pressure systems in the area. Onshore flows are also common along the coast and are associated with pressure systems in the area. Onshore flows frequently bring foggy cool weather to the coast, while offshore flows often blow fog away from the coast and bring warm sunny days.

Because of the region's topography and coastal air movements, inversion conditions are common in the NCAB. Inversions are created when warm air traps cool air near the ground surface and prevent vertical dispersion of air. Valley, geographic basins, and coastal areas surrounded by higher elevations are the most common locations for inversions to occur. Trinity County commonly experiences two types of inversions, vertical and horizontal, that affect the vertical depth of the atmosphere through which pollutants can be mixed. Vertical air movement is important in spreading pollutants through a thicker layer of air. Horizontal movement is important in spreading pollutants over a wider area. Upward dispersion of pollutants is hindered wherever the atmosphere is stable; that is, where warm air overlies cooler air below.

During the summer, inversions are less prominent, and vertical dispersion of the air is good. However, during the cooler months between late fall and early spring, inversions last longer and more geographically extensive; vertical dispersion is poor, and pollution may be trapped near the ground for several concurrent days. Radiation inversion occurs when the air layer near the surface of the ground cools and may extend upward several hundred feet. Radiation inversion in Trinity County is found in the night and early mornings almost daily but is more prominent from late fall to early spring where there is

less sunlight and it is cooler. Radiation inversion tends to last longer into the morning during the winter months than in the summer (NCUAQMD 1995).

The warmest month of the year in Trinity County is July, and the coldest month of the year is December. The annual average maximum temperature is 70.0 degrees Fahrenheit, while the annual average minimum temperature is 36.8 degrees Fahrenheit. Approximately 90 percent of the annual precipitation falls between October and April. Higher rainfall in winter often influences high river levels. Winter snowfall is common at higher elevations. The dry season is between May and September. Local climate conditions are summarized below in Table 4.3-1.

Table 4.3-1 Plan Area Climate Conditions

Temperature Condition	Amount
Average annual rainfall	35.45 inches
Annual average maximum temperature	70.0°F
Annual average minimum temperature	36.8°F
Warmest month	July
Coolest month	December

°F = degrees Fahrenheit

Note: Averages are based on the period of record from January 1, 1894, to June 8, 2016, at the Weaverville station.

Source: Western Regional Climate Center 2016

b. Air Pollutants of Primary Concern

Primary criteria pollutants are emitted directly from a source (e.g., vehicle tailpipe, an exhaust stack). The federal Clean Air Act (CAA) and California CAA mandate the control and reduction of certain air pollutants. Under these laws, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) have established the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and the California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) for "criteria pollutants" and other pollutants. Some pollutants are emitted directly from a source (e.g., vehicle tailpipe, an exhaust stack of a factory, etc.) into the atmosphere, including carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds (VOCs)/ reactive organic gases (ROGs),[1] nitrogen oxides (NO_X), particulate matter with diameters of up to 10 microns (PM_{10}) and up to 2.5 microns ($PM_{2.5}$), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), and lead (Pb). Other pollutants are created indirectly through chemical reactions in the atmosphere, such as ozone, which is created by atmospheric chemical and photochemical reactions primarily between ROG and NO_X. Secondary pollutants include oxidants, ozone, and sulfate and nitrate particulates (smog). The following subsections describe the characteristics, sources, and health and atmospheric effects of air pollutants of primary concern.

Ozone

Ozone (O_3) is a highly oxidative unstable gas produced by a photochemical reaction (triggered by sunlight) between NO_X and ROG. ROG is composed of non-methane hydrocarbons (with specific exclusions), and NO_X is composed of different chemical combinations of nitrogen and oxygen, mainly nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2). NO_X is formed during the combustion of fuels, while ROG is formed during the combustion and evaporation of organic solvents. As a highly reactive molecule, O_3 readily combines with many different atmosphere components. Consequently, high O_3 levels tend to exist only while high ROG and NO_X levels are present to sustain the O_3 formation process. Once the precursors have been depleted, O_3 levels rapidly decline. Because these reactions occur on a regional rather than

[1] CARB defines VOC and ROG similarly as, "any compound of carbon excluding carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, carbonic acid, metallic carbides or carbonates, and ammonium carbonate," with the exception that VOC are compounds that participate in atmospheric photochemical reactions. For the purposes of this analysis, ROG and VOC are considered comparable in terms of mass emissions, and the term ROG is used in this analysis.

local scale, O_3 is considered a regional pollutant. In addition, because O_3 requires sunlight to form, it mainly occurs in concentrations considered serious between April and October. People most at risk from O_3 include people with asthma, children, older adults, and people who are active outdoors, especially outdoor workers. In addition, people with reduced intake of certain nutrients, such as vitamins C and E, are at greater risk from O_3 exposure. Depending on the level of exposure, O_3 can cause coughing and a sore or scratchy throat; make it more difficult to breathe deeply and vigorously and cause pain when taking a deep breath; inflame and damage the airways; make the lungs more susceptible to infection; aggravate lung diseases such as asthma, emphysema, and chronic bronchitis; and increase the frequency of asthma attacks (USEPA 2025a).

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a localized pollutant found in high concentrations only near its source. The primary source of CO, a colorless, odorless, poisonous gas, is automobile traffic's incomplete combustion of petroleum fuels. Therefore, elevated concentrations are usually only found near areas of high traffic volumes. When CO levels are elevated outdoors, they can be of particular concern for people with some types of heart disease. These people already have a reduced ability to get oxygenated blood to their hearts in situations where they need more oxygen than usual. As a result, they are especially vulnerable to the effects of CO when exercising or under increased stress. In these situations, short-term exposure to elevated CO may result in reduced oxygen to the heart accompanied by chest pain, also known as angina (USEPA 2025b).

Nitrogen Dioxide

The primary sources of NO_x are motor vehicles, industrial boilers, and furnaces. The principal form of NO_x produced by combustion is nitric oxide, but nitric oxide reacts rapidly to form NO_2, creating the mixture of nitric oxide and NO_2, commonly called NO_x. NO_2 is a reactive, oxidizing gas and an acute irritant capable of damaging cell linings in the respiratory tract. Breathing air with a high concentration of NO_2 can irritate airways in the human respiratory system. Such exposures over short periods can aggravate respiratory diseases leading to respiratory symptoms (such as coughing, wheezing, or difficulty breathing), hospital admissions, and visits to emergency rooms. Longer exposures to elevated concentrations of NO_2 may contribute to the development of asthma and potentially increase susceptibility to respiratory infections. People with asthma and children and the elderly are generally at greater risk for the health effects of NO_2. The nitrate particles that result from NO_X make the air hazy and difficult to see though. It can also contribute to the formation of O_3, smog, and acid rain (USEPA 2025c).

Sulfur Dioxide

SO_2 is the component of greatest concern and is used as the indicator for the larger group of gaseous sulfur oxides. Other gaseous sulfur oxides (such as sulfur trioxide) are found in the atmosphere at concentrations much lower than SO_2. The largest source of SO_2 in the atmosphere is the burning of fossil fuels by power plants and other industrial facilities. Smaller sources of SO_2 emissions include industrial processes such as extracting metal from ore; natural sources such as volcanoes; and locomotives, ships and other vehicles and heavy equipment that burn fuel with a high sulfur content. Short-term exposures to SO_2 can harm the human respiratory system and make breathing difficult. People with asthma, particularly children, are sensitive to these effects of SO_2 (USEPA 2026a).

Particulate Matter

Suspended atmospheric PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ are comprised of finely divided solids and liquids such as dust, soot, aerosols, fumes, and mist. Both PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ are emitted into the atmosphere as by-products of fuel combustion and wind erosion of soil and unpaved roads. The atmosphere, through chemical reactions, can form particulate matter. The characteristics, sources, and potential health effects of PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ can be very different. PM_{10} is generally associated with dust mobilized by wind and vehicles. In contrast, $PM_{2.5}$ is generally associated with combustion processes and formation in the atmosphere as a

secondary pollutant through chemical reactions. PM_{10} can cause increased respiratory disease, lung damage, cancer, premature death, reduced visibility, surface soiling. For $PM_{2.5}$, short-term exposures (up to 24-hours duration) have been associated with premature mortality, increased hospital admissions for heart or lung causes, acute and chronic bronchitis, asthma attacks, emergency room visits, respiratory symptoms, and restricted activity days. These adverse health effects have been reported primarily in infants, children, and older adults with preexisting heart or lung diseases (CARB 2026d).

Lead

Pb is a metal found naturally in the environment, as well as in manufacturing products. The major sources of Pb emissions historically have been mobile and industrial. However, due to the USEPA 's regulatory efforts to remove Pb from gasoline, atmospheric Pb concentrations have declined substantially over the past several decades. The most dramatic reductions in Pb emissions occurred before 1990 due to the removal of Pb from gasoline sold for most highway vehicles. Pb emissions were further reduced substantially between 1990 and 2008, with reductions occurring in the metals industries at least partly due to national emissions standards for hazardous air pollutants (USEPA 2014). As a result of phasing out leaded gasoline, metal processing is currently the primary source of Pb emissions. The highest Pb level in the air is generally found near Pb smelters. Other stationary sources include waste incinerators, utilities, and Pb-acid battery manufacturers. Pb can adversely affect the nervous system, kidney function, immune system, reproductive and developmental systems, and cardiovascular system depending on exposure. Pb exposure also affects the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood. The Pb effects most likely encountered in current populations are neurological in children. Infants and young children are susceptible to Pb exposures, contributing to behavioral problems, learning deficits, and lowered IQ (USEPA 2025d).

Toxic Air Contaminants

In addition to the criteria pollutants discussed above, toxic air contaminants (TACs) are a diverse group of airborne substances/air pollutants that may cause or contribute to an increase in deaths or serious illness, or that may pose a hazard to human health. TACs include both organic and inorganic chemical substances that may be emitted from a variety of common sources, including gasoline stations, motor vehicles, dry cleaners, industrial operations, painting operations, and research and teaching facilities. One of the main sources of TACs in California is diesel engine exhaust that contains solid material known as diesel particulate matter (DPM). More than 90 percent of DPM is less than one micron in diameter (about 1/70th the diameter of a human hair) and thus is a subset of $PM_{2.5}$. Because of their extremely small size, these particles can be inhaled and eventually trapped in the bronchial and alveolar regions of the lungs(CARB 2026d). TACs are different than criteria pollutants because ambient air quality standards have not been established for TACs. TACs occurring at extremely low levels may still cause health effects and it is typically difficult to identify levels of exposure that do not produce adverse health effects. TAC impacts are described by carcinogenic risk and by chronic (i.e., long duration) and acute (i.e., severe but of short duration) adverse effects on human health. People exposed to TACs at sufficient concentrations and durations may have an increased chance of getting cancer or experiencing other serious health effects. These health effects can include damage to the immune system, as well as neurological, reproductive (e.g., reduced fertility), developmental, respiratory, and other health problems (USEPA 2026b).

Naturally Occurring Asbestos

Naturally occurring asbestos is the name for several types of naturally occurring fibrous minerals found in serpentine rock, and its parent material, ultramafic rock. Exposure to asbestos fibers can result in health issues such as lung cancer, mesothelioma (a rare cancer of the thin membranes lining the lungs, chest, and abdominal cavity), and asbestosis (a non-cancerous lung disease which causes scarring of the lungs). Exposure to naturally occurring asbestos can occur during soil-disturbing activities in areas with

deposits present. Serpentinite and/or ultramafic rock are known to be present in 44 of California's 58 counties.

According to the *General Location Guide to Ultramafic Rocks in California—Areas More Likely to Contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos*, there are areas of Trinity County in which asbestos is likely to occur (California Department of Conservation 2000). The Trinity County Safety Element identifies the presence of natural occurring asbestos in the eastern portion of the county (County of Trinity 2014).

c. Current Air Quality

NCUAQMD operates a network of air quality monitoring stations throughout the NCAB. The nearest NCUAQMD-operated monitoring station to the Planning Area is the Eureka-Jacobs air monitoring station, located approximately 56 miles west of the Planning Area. The Eureka-Jacobs station collected 1-hour and 8-hour O_3, NO_2, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 4.3-2 indicates the number of days that each of the federal and state standards has been exceeded at the Eureka-Jacobs monitoring station near the Planning Area in each of the last three years for which data is available. At this station, the state PM_{10} standard was exceeded in 2022 and 2024. No other state or federal standards were exceeded at nearby monitoring stations.

Table 4.3-2 Annual Ambient Air Quality Data from Nearest Monitoring Station

Pollutant	2022	2023	2024
Ozone (ppm), Worst 1-Hour[1]	0.040	0.071	0.054
Number of days above CAAQS (>0.09 ppm)	0	0	0
Number of days above NAAQS (>0.12 ppm)	0	0	0
Ozone (ppm), Worst 8-Hour Average[1]	0.037	0.066	0.049
Number of days above CAAQS (>0.070 ppm)	0	0	0
Number of days above NAAQS (>0.070 ppm)	0	0	0
Nitrogen Dioxide (ppm), Worst 1-Hour[1]	0.027	0.018	0.022
Number of days above CAAQS (>0.180 ppm)	0	0	0
Number of days above NAAQS (>0.100 ppm)	0	0	0
Particulate Matter <10 microns ($\mu g/m^3$), Worst 24 Hours	55.0	44.9	76
Number of days above CAAQS (>50 $\mu g/m^3$)	4	0	3
Number of days above NAAQS (>150 $\mu g/m^3$)	0	0	0
Particulate Matter <2.5 microns (mg/m^3), Worst 24 Hours[1]	21.2	24.5	20.8
Number of days above NAAQS (>35 mg/m^3)	0	0	0

ppm = parts per million; $\mu g/m^3$ = micrograms per cubic meter; CAAQS = California Ambient Air Quality Standards; NAAQS = National Ambient Air Quality Standards

Source: CARB 2026e

d. Sensitive Receptors in the Plan Area

Ambient air quality standards have been established to represent the levels of air quality considered sufficient, with a margin of safety, to protect public health and welfare. They are designed to protect that segment of the public most susceptible to respiratory distress, such as children under 14, the elderly (over the age of 65), people engaged in strenuous work or exercise, and people with cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases. According to CARB (2005), sensitive receptors include schools,

playgrounds, daycare centers, nursing homes, hospitals, and residential communities, all of which are located throughout the Planning Area.

4.3.2 Regulatory Setting

a. Federal Regulations

Clean Air Act

The federal CAA governs air quality in the United States. In addition to being subject to federal requirements, air quality in California is also governed by more stringent regulations under California CAA. At the federal level, USEPA administers the CAA. The CAA is administered by CARB at the state level and by air quality management districts at the regional and local levels. NCUAQMD regulates air quality at the regional level, which includes the Planning Area.

The federal and state governments have authority under the federal and state CAA to regulate emissions of airborne pollutants and have established ambient air quality standards for the protection of public health. An air quality standard is defined as "the maximum amount of a pollutant averaged over a specified period of time that can be present in outdoor air without harming public health" (CARB 2026c). Federal and state ambient air quality standards have been established for six criteria pollutants: O_3, CO, NO_2, SO_2, PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$, and Pb. Ambient air quality standards are designed to protect those segments of the public most susceptible to respiratory distress, such as children under the age of 14, the elderly (over the age of 65), persons engaged in strenuous work or exercise, and people with cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases (USEPA 2025e). In addition to the federal criteria pollutants, the CAAQS also specify standards for visibility-reducing particles, sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, and vinyl chloride (CARB 2026a). Table 4.3-3 lists the current NAAQS as well as the CAAQS for regulated pollutants.

Table 4.3-3 Federal and State Ambient Air Quality Standards

Pollutant	Averaging Time	NAAQS	CAAQS
Ozone	1-Hour	–	0.09 ppm
	8-Hour	0.070 ppm	0.070 ppm
Carbon Monoxide	8-Hour	9.0 ppm	9.0 ppm
	1-Hour	35.0 ppm	20.0 ppm
Nitrogen Dioxide	Annual	0.053 ppm	0.030 ppm
	1-Hour	0.100 ppm	0.18 ppm
Sulfur Dioxide	Annual	–	–
	24-Hour	–	0.04 ppm
	1-Hour	0.075 ppm	0.25 ppm
PM_{10}	Annual	–	20 µg/m³
	24-Hour	150 µg/m³	50 µg/m³
PM_{25}	Annual	9.0 µg/m³	12 µg/m³
	24-Hour	35 µg/m³	–
Lead	30-Day Average	–	1.5 µg/m³
	3-Month Average	0.15 µg/m³	–

NAAQS = National Ambient Air Quality Standards; CAAQS = California Ambient Air Quality Standards; ppm = parts per million; µg/m³ = micrograms per cubic meter

Source: CARB 2024, USEPA 2025e

USEPA and CARB designate air basins or portions of air basins and counties as being in "attainment" or "nonattainment" for each of the criteria pollutants. Areas that do not meet the AAQS standards are classified as nonattainment areas. The NAAQS (other than O_3, PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$, and those based on annual averages or arithmetic mean) are not to be exceeded more than once per year. The NAAQS for O_3, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ are based on statistical calculations over one- to three-year periods, depending on the pollutant. The CAAQS are not to be exceeded during a three-year period. The attainment status for NCAB is included in Table 4.3-4.

Whether an area meets the state and federal standards is based on air quality monitoring data. Areas that are unclassified have insufficient monitoring data for a specific pollutant to determine attainment or nonattainment status, although unclassified areas are typically treated as attainment for a specific pollutant. Since attainment and nonattainment designation is pollutant-specific, an area may be classified as nonattainment for one pollutant and attainment for another. Similarly, because the state and federal standards differ, an area could be classified as attainment for the federal standards of a pollutant and as nonattainment for the state standards of the same pollutant. The region is designated as attainment/unclassified for all federal and state standards, expect the state's PM_{10} standard (CARB 2023).

Table 4.3-4 Attainment Status of Criteria Pollutants in the North Coast Air Basin

Pollutant	State Designation	Federal Designation
O_3	Attainment	Unclassified/Attainment
PM_{10}	Nonattainment	Unclassified/Attainment
$PM_{2.5}$	Attainment	Attainment
CO	Unclassified/Attainment	Unclassified/Attainment
NO_2	Attainment	Unclassified/Attainment
SO_2	Attainment	Unclassified/Attainment

O_3 = Ozone; NO_2 = nitrogen dioxide; CO = carbon monoxide; SO_2 = sulfur dioxide; PM_{10} = particulate matter 10 microns in diameter or less; $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter.

Sources: CARB 2026b

Construction Equipment Fuel Efficiency Standard

USEPA sets emission standards for construction equipment. The first federal standards (Tier 1) were adopted in 1994 for all off-road engines over 50 horsepower and were phased in by 2000. A new standard was adopted in 1998 that introduced Tier 1 for all equipment below 50 horsepower and established the Tier 2 and Tier 3 standards. The Tier 2 and Tier 3 standards were phased in by 2008 for all equipment. The current iteration of emissions standards for construction equipment are the Tier 4 efficiency requirements are contained in 40 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 1039, 1065, and 1068 (originally adopted in 69 Federal Register 38958 [June 29, 2004], and most recently updated in 2014 [79 Federal Register 46356]). Emissions requirements for new off-road Tier 4 vehicles were completely phased in by the end of 2015.

Energy Policy and Conservation Act

Enacted in 1975, the Energy Policy and Conservation Act legislation established fuel economy standards for new light-duty vehicles (autos, pickups, vans, and sport-utility vehicles). The law placed responsibility on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), a part of the United States Department of Transportation, for establishing and regularly updating vehicle standards. USEPA administers the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) program, which determines vehicle manufacturers' compliance with existing fuel economy standards. Since the inception of the program, the average fuel economy for

new light-duty vehicles steadily increased from 13.1 miles per gallon for the 1975 model year to 24.4 miles per gallon for the 2024 model year.

On August 2, 2018, the NHTSA and USEPA, operating under the direction of the Trump Administration, proposed the Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient Vehicles Rule Part One (SAFE I Rule). This rule addresses emissions and fuel economy standards for motor vehicles and is separated in two parts as described below.

- Part One, "One National Program" (84 Federal Register 51310) revoked a waiver granted by USEPA to the State of California under Section 209 of the Clean Air Act to enforce more stringent emission standards for motor vehicles than those required by USEPA for the explicit purpose of GHG emission reduction, and indirectly, criteria air pollutants and ozone precursor emission reduction. This revocation became effective on November 26, 2019, potentially restricting the ability of the CARB to enforce more stringent GHG emission standards for new vehicles and set zero emission vehicle mandates in California. The waiver was reissued in March 2022 and revoked again in May 2025.
- Part Two addressed CAFE standards for passenger cars and light trucks for model years 2021 to 2026. This rulemaking proposed new CAFE standards for model years 2022 through 2026 and amended existing CAFE standards for model year 2021. The proposal retained the model year 2020 standards (specifically, the footprint target curves for passenger cars and light trucks) through model year 2026. The proposal addressing CAFE standards was jointly developed by NHTSA and USEPA, with USEPA simultaneously proposing tailpipe carbon dioxide standards for the same vehicles covered by the same model years.

USEPA and NTHSA published final rules to amend and establish national carbon dioxide and fuel economy standards on April 30, 2020 (Part Two of the SAFE Vehicles Rule) (85 Federal Register 24174). On April 22, 2021, the Biden Administration formally proposed to roll back portions of the SAFE Rule, thereby restoring California's right to enforce more stringent fuel efficiency standards. Most recently, on December 21, 2021, the NHTSA finalized rules to repeal the SAFE I Rule. The final rule concludes the SAFE I Rule overstepped the agency's legal authority and established overly broad prohibitions that did not account for a variety of important state and local interests. The final rule ensures the SAFE I Rule will no longer form an improper barrier to states exploring creative solutions to address their local communities' environmental and public health challenges.

On June 7, 2024, NHTSA issued new CAFE standards. In this final rule, fuel economy will increase by 2 percent per year for passenger cars with model years 2027 to 2031, and 2 percent per year for light-duty trucks with model years 2029 to 2031.

National Energy Policy Act

The National Energy Policy Act calls for programs that promote efficiency and the use of alternative fuels. The National Energy Policy Act requires certain federal, state, and local government and private fleets to purchase a percentage of light duty alternative fuel vehicles capable of running on alternative fuels each year. In addition, the National Energy Policy Act has financial incentives. Federal tax deductions are allowed for businesses and individuals to cover the incremental cost of alternative fuel vehicles. The National Energy Policy Act also requires states to consider a variety of incentive programs to help promote alternative fuel vehicles.

b. State Regulations

California Clean Air Act

The California CAA was enacted in 1988 (California Health and Safety Code Section 39000 et seq.). Under the California CAA, the state has developed the CAAQS, which are generally more stringent than the NAAQS. Table 4.3-3 lists the current state standards for regulated pollutants. In addition to the federal

criteria pollutants, the CAAQS also specify standards for visibility-reducing particles, sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, and vinyl chloride.

California Air Toxics Program

In 1983, the California Legislature enacted a program to identify the health effects of TACs and to reduce exposure to these contaminants to protect the public health (Assembly Bill 1807: Health and Safety Code Sections 39650-39674). The Legislature established a two-step process to address the potential health effects from TACs. The first step is the risk assessment (or identification) phase. The second step is the risk management (or control) phase of the process.

The California Air Toxics Program establishes the process for the identification and control of TACs and includes provisions to make the public aware of significant toxic exposures and for reducing risk. Additionally, the Air Toxics “Hot Spots” Information and Assessment Act (Assembly Bill 2588, 1987, Connelly Bill) was enacted in 1987 and requires stationary sources to report the types and quantities of certain substances routinely released into the air. The goals of the Air Toxics “Hot Spots” Act are to collect emission data, identify facilities having localized impacts, ascertain health risks, notify nearby residents of significant risks, and reduce those significant risks to acceptable levels. The Children's Environmental Health Protection Act, California Senate Bill (SB) 25 (Chapter 731, Escutia, Statutes of 1999), focuses on children's exposure to air pollutants. The act requires CARB to review its air quality standards from a children's health perspective, evaluate the statewide air quality monitoring network, and develop any additional air toxic control measures needed to protect children's health.

State Implementation Plan

The State Implementation Plan (SIP) is a collection of documents that set forth the state’s strategies for achieving the NAAQS and CAAQS. In California, the SIP is a compilation of new and previously submitted plans, programs (such as monitoring, modeling, and permitting), district rules, state regulations, and federal controls. CARB is the lead agency for all matters related to the SIP, pursuant to state law. Local air districts and other agencies, such as the Department of Pesticide Regulation and the Bureau of Automotive Repair, prepare SIP elements and submit them to CARB for review and approval. CARB then forwards SIP revisions to USEPA for approval and publication in the Federal Register. The items included in the California SIP are listed in 40 Code of Federal Regulations Section 52.220.

California Code of Regulations

The California Code of Regulations is the official compilation and publication of the regulations adopted, amended or repealed by state agencies pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act. They are compiled into Titles and organized into Divisions containing the regulations of state agencies. The following California Code of Regulations would be applicable to future development facilitated by the project:

- **Engine Idling.** In accordance with Section 2485 of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations, the idling of all diesel-fueled commercial vehicles (weighing over 10,000 pounds) during construction shall be limited to five minutes at any location.
- **Emission Standards.** In accordance with Section 93115 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations, operation of any stationary, diesel-fueled, compression-ignition engines shall meet specified fuel and fuel additive requirements and emission standards.

Senate Bill 743

SB 743, signed into law in 2013, significantly changed how transportation impacts are evaluated under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Traditionally, transportation impacts were assessed based on the Level of Service metric, which focused on automobile delay and congestion. However, SB 743 introduced a shift towards using VMT as the primary metric. The main goals of SB 743 are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and traffic-related air pollution, promote the development of a multimodal

transportation system, and provide clean, efficient access to destinations. By focusing on VMT, SB 743 aims to encourage more sustainable land use and transportation planning, ultimately helping California achieve its climate and environmental goals.

California Accidental Release Prevention Program

The California Environmental Protection Agency oversees implementation of the California Accidental Release Prevention Program, which aims to prevent accidental releases of extremely hazardous substances that pose the greatest risk of harm to the public and the environment. The program requires certain facilities, referred to as "stationary sources," which handle, manufacture, use, or store any regulated substances above threshold quantities to take actions to proactively prevent and prepare for accidental releases. Facilities subject to the California Accidental Release Prevention Program requirements must submit a Risk Management Plan. The California Environmental Protection Agency oversees the implementation of this program at the state level and Certified Unified Program Agencies implement the program at the local level.

c. Regional Regulations

North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District

NCUAQMD is the regional agency charged with the responsibility of enforcing federal and state air quality regulations in Trinity County. The NCUAQMD adopts and enforces controls on stationary sources of air pollutants through its permit and inspection programs, and it regulates both agricultural and residential burning. All projects in Trinity County are subject to applicable NCUAQMD rules and regulations in effect at the time of construction (NCUAQMD 2026a).

On May 11, 1995, the PM_{10} Attainment Plan was adopted by NCUAQMD to address PM_{10} nonattainment status within NCAB. PM_{10} emissions in Trinity County are generated by a variety of sources. The PM_{10} Attainment Plan includes control strategies that are intended to achieve attainment of the CAAQS. Control strategies include transportation control measures such as encouraging the use of public transit, replacing diesel-powered buses with natural gas-fueled models, encouraging carpooling and bicycle commuting, removal or repair of vehicles with inefficient emission control systems, and traffic flow improvements that reduce idling and vehicle miles traveled. Land use control measures encourage mixed-use or more dense development. The PM_{10} Attainment Plan also includes measures that limit residential burning as well as various measures to encourage the installation of USEPA-certified woodstoves.

All projects are subject to NCUAQMD rules and regulations in effect at the time of construction. The following are rules applicable to future development in the county:

- **Rule 102. Required Permits.** Any project that includes the use of equipment capable of releasing emissions to the atmosphere may be required to obtain permit(s) from NCUAQMD before equipment operation. The applicant, developer, or operator of a project that includes an emergency generator, boiler, or heater should contact NCUAQMD early to determine whether a permit is required, and to begin the permit application process. Portable construction equipment (e.g., generators, compressors, pile drivers, lighting equipment) with an internal combustion engine greater than 30 horsepower must have an NCUAQMD permit or CARB portable equipment registration.
- **Rule 104. Prohibitions.** This rule establishes the following requirements to reduce fugitive dust emissions:
  - No person shall allow handling, transporting, or open storage of materials in such a manner which allows or may allow unnecessary amounts of particulate matter to become airborne.
  - Reasonable precautions shall be taken to prevent particulate matter from becoming airborne, including, but not limited to, the following provisions:

  - Covering open bodied trucks when used for transporting materials likely to give rise to airborne dust.
  - Conduct agricultural practices in such a manner as to minimize the creation of airborne dust.
  - The use of water or chemicals for control of dust in the demolition of existing buildings or structures, construction operations, the grading of roads or the clearing of land.
  - The application of asphalt, oil, water or suitable chemicals on dirt roads, materials stockpiles, and other surfaces which can give rise to airborne dusts.
  - The prompt removal of earth or other track out material from paved streets onto which earth or other material has been transported by trucking or earth moving equipment, erosion by water, or other means.

- **Rule 110. New Source Review and Prevention of Significant Deterioration.** This rule establishes the following requirements for new and modified stationary sources:
  - Best Available Control Technology. An applicant shall apply Best Available Control Technology to any new emissions unit or modification of an existing emissions unit, if the change would result in an increase in the potential to emit from the new unit or modification of existing equipment.

4.3.3 Impact Analysis

a. Significance Thresholds

Based on Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines,* the proposed project would have a significant impact to air quality if the project would:

1. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan;
2. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard;
3. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations; or
4. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people.

NCUAQMD has developed relatively brief guidance for use by lead agencies when preparing CEQA documents. NCUAQMD has not formally adopted CEQA thresholds of significance for evaluating impacts to air quality but rather utilizes the mass emission level criteria for determining when stationary sources are required to implement Best Available Control Technology, as defined in NCUAQMD Rule 110 (NCUAQMD 2026b). These mass emission level criteria are considered to be the allowable incremental contribution by a project while still maintaining overall attainment of the CAAQS and NAAQS in Trinity County and the NCAB. However, these thresholds are not suitable for plan-level projects. Plan-level projects consist of numerous individual projects and produce more criteria pollutants than a single project. Using project-level thresholds for plan-level projects may unfairly penalize them, leading to significant and unavoidable conclusions due to scale. To assess potential impacts at a plan-level, this analysis uses a population-based VMT threshold. This threshold is appropriate for evaluating operational air quality impacts because it accounts for emissions associated with areawide, long-term growth where population growth and travel behavior are the main sources of emissions.

NCUAQMD has not adopted a population-based VMT threshold; however, the Mendocino County Air Quality Management District (MCAQMD) sets significance thresholds for criteria air pollutants based on consistency with current air quality plan control measures and VMT or vehicle trips relative to projected population increases, which this analysis utilizes. NCUAQMD and MCAQMD are neighboring air districts within the NCAB. Therefore, to determine operational criteria pollutant impacts, this analysis uses the following MCAQMD's plan-level thresholds (MCAQMD 2010):

1. Consistency with current air quality plan control measures.
2. Projected VMT or vehicle trip increase is less than or equal to projected population increase.

NCUAQMD does not currently have any thresholds for TAC emissions. However, California Air Pollution Control Officers Association's *Health Risk Assessments for Proposed Land Use Projects* sets a significance threshold for long-term public health risk at 10 excess cancer cases in 1,000,000 for cancer risk. For non-cancer risk, a Hazard Index of more than one (1.0) would cause a significant impact to sensitive receivers, which is utilized in this analysis (California Air Pollution Control Officers Associations 2009).

b. Methodology

As the NCUAQMD does not have plan-level thresholds, a best-effort approach is used to disclose all foreseeable impacts based on available information, consistent with CEQA requirements. The baseline for air quality analysis is the existing condition at the time of NOP publication (January 2026), consistent with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15125(a).

Operational emissions were estimated using CalEEMod, version 2022.1 (outputs provided in Appendix B). CalEEMod uses default and project-specific information, including the project's land uses, square footage for different uses (e.g., mid-rise housing, general office building, strip mall, and unrefrigerated warehouse-no rail), and location, to estimate a project's construction and operational emissions. Development facilitated by the project is anticipated to occur over approximately 25 years, through the planning horizon year of 2050. The project could facilitate development of up to 902 multi-family units, 10,542,000 square feet of general office building, 6,273,000 square feet of retail uses, and 137,000 square feet of industrial uses. Table 4.3-5 summarizes the land use assumptions used in CalEEMod.

Table 4.3-5 CalEEMod Land Use Assumptions

Land Use Categories	Buildout (Net Increase)
Project Buildout	
Residential – Mid-Rise Apartments	902 units
Commercial – General Office Building	10,542,000 square feet
Retail – Strip Mall	6,273,000 square feet
Industrial – Unrefrigerated Warehouse-No Rail	137,000 square feet

Construction Emissions

Construction-related emissions from development facilitated by the project are limited in duration but may still cause adverse air quality impacts. Construction would generate emissions from three primary sources: the operation of construction vehicles (e.g., scrapers, loaders, dump trucks, etc.); ground disturbance during site preparation and grading, which creates fugitive dust; and the application of asphalt, paint, or other oil-based substances.

At this time, the pace, location, and duration associated with construction of development facilitated by the project are not sufficiently detailed to quantify a specific emission impact, and thus it would be speculative to do so. Rather, construction criteria pollutant and TAC emissions impacts from development facilitated by the project are discussed qualitatively.

Operation Emissions

Operational emissions carried out under the proposed project were modeled and represent the emissions assuming buildout of the plan as described in Chapter 2, *Project Description.* Development facilitated by the project is anticipated to span an approximately 25-year planning horizon year. The threshold utilized here for criteria air pollutants and precursors requires an assessment of the rate of increase of VMT and

population. If the anticipated VMT increase is less than or equal to the plan's projected population increase, impacts would be considered to be less than significant. For informational purposes, emissions from project buildout are also shown in Table 4.3-5.

In CalEEMod, operational sources of criteria pollutant emissions include mobile, area, and energy sources. Mobile source emissions consist of emissions generated by vehicles to and from a project site. Average daily VMT was derived from the transportation modeling prepared by Alta (Appendix C). Area emissions were based on CalEEMod defaults for each land use type, such as fireplaces. Energy use emissions, from electricity and natural gas or propane for heating, follow the methodology in Appendix C of the CalEEMod User Guide 2022.1. These estimates account for the 2019 Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24) but not for updates in 2022, 2025, 2028, or future updates.

Trinity County Cannabis Program EIR

Much of the potential cannabis-related development contemplated by the project was previously analyzed in the Trinity County Cannabis Program EIR (State Clearinghouse number 2018122049), certified in 2020 (2020 EIR). The 2020 EIR includes Mitigation Measure 3.3-2a and 3.3-2b, which require Tier 3 or Tier 4 construction equipment, if commercially available, and limit the use of fossil-fueled powered equipment during commercial operations to reduce construction and operational air quality emissions. In addition, Mitigation Measure 3.3-3 require cannabis sites to develop and implement an odor control plan to reduce the potential odor nuisance impacts and includes corrective actions for cultivation sites that routinely generate nuisance odor impacts off-site. Those requirements were subsequently incorporated into the County Ordinance Numbers 315-824, 315-826, 315-828, 315-835, 315-842, 315-843, and 315-873, adopted in December 2020. In its air quality analysis, the 2020 EIR concluded that cannabis cultivation and associated development would not be consistent with the air quality planning efforts in Trinity County and NCAB, exceed NCUAQMD's mass emissions thresholds, and would potentially generate nuisance odor impacts.

Because these regulatory controls are part of existing conditions and because the proposed General Plan establishes a new countywide policy framework that supersedes the 2020 EIR for cannabis activities occurring consistent with the General Plan, this EIR focuses on air quality effects not previously addressed or requiring reevaluation under the proposed General Plan.

c. Impact Analysis

Threshold 1:	Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?
Threshold 2:	Would the project 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?

Impact AQ-1 Development facilitated by the project would generate short-term and long-term emissions of criteria pollutants. However, development facilitated by the project would be consistent with current air quality plan control measures and the rate of increase in vehicle miles traveled under the proposed project would not exceed the rate of population growth. Therefore, the project would not conflict with North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District's PM_{10} Attainment Plan and would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the North Coast Air Basin is in nonattainment. Impacts would be less than significant.

Construction

Development facilitated by the project would result in emissions of criteria pollutants including particulate matter. On May 11, 1995, the PM_{10} Attainment Plan was adopted by NCUAQMD to address PM_{10} nonattainment status within NCAB. Construction activity that would lead to or jeopardize PM_{10}

attainment status in the Planning Area would obstruct the implementation of the NCUAQMD's air quality plan.

Development facilitated by the project would result in temporary emissions associated with construction activities, such as construction worker travel to and from project sites, delivery and hauling of construction supplies and debris, and fuel combustion by on-site construction equipment. These construction activities would temporarily create emissions of dust, fumes, equipment exhaust, and other air contaminants, particularly during site preparation and grading. The extent of daily emissions, particularly ROGs and NO_X emissions, generated by construction equipment would depend on the quantity of equipment used and the hours of operation for each project. In addition, ROG emissions would primarily depend on the square footage of buildings being painted and asphalt surfaces being paved each day. The extent of fugitive dust $PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10} emissions would depend upon the following factors: 1) the amount of disturbed soils; 2) the length of disturbance time; 3) whether existing structures are demolished; 4) whether excavation is involved; and 5) whether transporting excavated materials off site is necessary. Dust emissions can lead to both nuisance and health impacts.

NCUAQMD does not provide specific criteria or plan-level significance thresholds to analyze construction emissions on a programmatic level. In addition, NCUAQMD only provides daily and annual significant thresholds for operational equipment. However, NCUAQMD has adopted rules that would reduce construction-related emissions associated with the proposed project. NCUAQMD Rule 104 establishes requirements to minimize fugitive dust emissions from material handling, storage, and earth-disturbing activities. The rule prohibits the handling, transport, or open storage of materials in a manner that allows unnecessary particulate matter to become airborne and requires the use of reasonable precautions to control dust. Required control measures include covering open-bodied trucks, using water or chemical suppressants during construction, demolition, grading, and land clearing, applying dust control treatments to unpaved roads and stockpiles, and promptly removing track-out from paved roadways. Agricultural practices must also be conducted to minimize dust generation. Implementation of Rule 104 measures would reduce fugitive dust emissions associated with construction, earthmoving, and material transport activities. In addition, the project would support the reduction of construction-related emissions through the implementation of Policies COS-1.1 (Construction Dust Abatement) and COS-1.2 (Minimum Exposure) Policy COS-1.1 requires the incorporation of construction dust abatement measures and best management practices to minimize particulate emissions associated with construction and grading activities. Policy COS-1.2 further requires that construction activities mitigate any potentially significant air quality impacts to the greatest extent feasible, ensuring that nearby sensitive receptors are not exposed to substantial levels of criteria air pollutants.

Development facilitated by the project would be required to comply with NCUAQMD Rule 104, which would reduce construction particulate emissions associated with the proposed project. Therefore, the project would not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of the NCUAQMD PM_{10} Attainment Plan, and cumulative construction-related emissions of criteria air pollutants would not violate an air quality standard or substantially contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Operation

Depending upon the type, size, and timeframe of development, maximum daily emissions associated with individual projects could potentially exceed the VMT growth rate over the projected population growth rate significance threshold. However, future discretionary projects would be required to undergo independent, project-level CEQA review and include mitigation measures, if necessary, to address potentially significant impacts. NCUAQMD does not have plan-level thresholds for evaluating operational criteria air pollutant emissions. Therefore, this analysis uses MCAQMD's plan level thresholds to determine operational criteria pollutant impacts.

The PM_{10} Attainment Plan includes transportation control measures, such as public transit and bicycle program to reduce mobile emissions. Consistent with PM_{10} Attainment Plan's public transit control measure, the project includes Policy CIR 5.3 (Encourage Transit), and Policy CIR 5.4 (Acquire Public Transit Vehicles), which encourage public transit use by supporting efficient transit systems and investment in transit vehicles, reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicles. In addition, consistent with the PM_{10} Attainment Plan's bicycle program control measure, proposed policies CIR 7.1 (Encourage Active Transportation), CIR 7.2 (Add Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities), CIR 7.3 (Facility Development), CIR 7.5 (Active Transportation Plan), and CIR 7.10 (Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities in New Development) would promote active transportation through the development and integration of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in new and existing development, further reducing motor vehicle trips. Therefore, the project would be consistent with current air quality plan control measures.

As shown in Table 4.3-6, the proposed project is projected to accommodate a population increase of 7,420 persons by the year 2050. This is a 47 percent increase compared to the existing population of 15,884 persons. Additionally, the proposed project would generate an estimated daily VMT of 650,067 miles in the year 2050 in the Planning Area, which is an increase of 190,667 miles or 42 percent compared to baseline conditions (459,400 miles) (Appendix C). Therefore, the proposed project would not exceed the rate of increase from the forecast population of approximately 47 percent. The proposed project's net VMT would increase at a lower percentage by promoting a walkable, bikeable community and enhancing access to reliable mass transit. This approach reduces singular vehicle trips and encourages alternative modes of transportation. Therefore, impacts concerning criteria pollutants generated from operation of the proposed project would be **less than significant**.

Table 4.3-6 Net Increase in Population versus VMT

Scenario	Baseline (2025)	Project 2050 Buildout	Net Change
Population (persons)	15,884	23,304	+7,420
Percentage change			+47%
Daily VMT (miles)	459,400[a]	650,067	+190,667
Percentage change			+42%

VMT = vehicle miles traveled

[a] Traffic baseline year is 2024.

Source: Appendix C

For informational purposes, operational emissions of the project were modeled using CalEEMod version 2022.1. Development facilitated by the project would generate long-term criteria pollutant emissions (i.e., ROG, NO_X, CO, SO_2, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$) from mobile sources (i.e., vehicle trips to and from the project site), area sources (e.g., architectural coatings, consumer products, and landscaping equipment), and energy sources (i.e., use of natural gas or propane for cooking and water heating). Table 4.3-7 show the project buildout emissions for ROG, NO_x, CO, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$.

Table 4.3-7 Project Operational Emissions - Buildout

Emission Source	ROG	NO_X	CO	SO_2	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
Maximum Daily Emissions (pounds per day)						
Mobile	15	29	367	1	136	35
Area	2,002	34	2,493	3	236	235
Energy	6	107	89	1	8	8
Project Buildout Emissions	**2,023**	**170**	**2,949**	**5**	**380**	**278**
Annual Emissions (tons per year)						
Mobile	3	5	63	<1	24	6

Emission Source	ROG	NO_X	CO	SO_2	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
Area	158	2	141	<1	10	10
Energy	1	20	16	<1	1	1
Project Buildout Emissions	**162**	**27**	**220**	**<1**	**35**	**17**

PM_{10} = particulate matter with a diameter of 10 microns or less; ROG = reactive organic gases; NO_X = oxides of nitrogen; CO = carbon monoxide; SO_2 = sulfur dioxide

Notes: All numbers have been rounded to the nearest unit. Emissions presented are the highest of the winter and summer modeled emissions. Emission data is pulled from "unmitigated" results. See Appendix B for CalEEMod calculations and assumptions.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 3: Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations??

Impact AQ-2 Development facilitated by the project would not increase carbon monoxide concentrations such that it would create carbon monoxide hotspots. Project emissions within 1,000 feet of a sensitive receptor could expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. However, despite the implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-2a and AQ-2b, TAC emissions would be significant and unavoidable.

Carbon Monoxide Hotspot

The proposed project would facilitate new development that would generate additional vehicle trips on area roadways. Areas with high vehicle density, such as congested intersections, have the potential to create high concentrations of CO ("CO hotspots") and could potentially expose sensitive receptors to harmful levels of pollution. The NAAQS for CO is 35.0 ppm and the CAAQS for CO is 20.0 ppm. A project's localized air quality impact would be significant if it caused CO concentrations to exceed these standards. There is no representative CO monitoring within or near the Planning Area, nor are there any active CO monitoring sites within the NCAB.

Localized CO concentrations are the result of the volume of cars along a road and the level of emissions generated by vehicles, rather than the flow of traffic, and vehicle CO emissions have declined over time due to stringent state standards for vehicle emissions and would continue to decline as more stringent standards are put in place.

Development facilitated by the project would increase average daily traffic (ADT) in the Planning Area. The highest forecasted ADT would occur along State Route 299 at its eastern junction with State Route 3 at approximately 19,360 ADT (Appendix C). A detailed CO analysis, prepared for the South Coast Air Quality Management District's 2003 AQMP, observed the highest CO concentration (4.6 parts per million, well below state and federal standards) at an intersection with approximately 100,000 ADT (South Coast Air Quality Management District 2003). The proposed project would result in substantially lower ADT than would be necessary to create a CO hotspot. Therefore, development facilitated by the project would not generate enough ADT at any intersection to result in CO hotspots. Therefore, the proposed project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial CO concentrations, and localized air quality impacts related to CO hot spots would be **less than significant**.

Toxic Air Contaminants

Construction

Construction-related activities would result in temporary project-generated DPM exhaust emissions from off-road, heavy-duty diesel equipment for site preparation, grading, building construction, and other construction activities. Generation of DPM, which was identified as a TAC by CARB in 1998, from construction projects typically occurs in a single area for a short period. Since NCUAQMD does not currently have any thresholds for TAC emissions, it recommends California Air Pollution Control Officers Association's *Health Risk Assessments for Proposed Land Use Projects,* which set the significance threshold for long-term public health risk at 10 excess cancer cases in 1,000,000 for cancer risk. For non-cancer risk, a Hazard Index of more than one (1.0) would cause a significant impact to sensitive receivers (California Air Pollution Control Officers Associations 2009). If a formal health risk assessment identifies a significant impact, mitigation measures may be required to reduce the predicted levels of toxic air pollutants from the project to a level of less than significant. Currently, development facilitated by the project lacks sufficient detail for a project-level analysis due to the programmatic nature of the plan. As a result, analyzing project level impacts would be speculative. Therefore, construction related TAC emissions are discussed qualitatively.

The extent of DPM emissions from any individual construction project depends upon the following factors: (1) the amount of disturbed soils; (2) the length of disturbance time; (3) whether existing structures are demolished; (4) whether excavation is involved; and (5) whether transporting excavated materials off site is necessary. DPM emissions would be reduced during the other phases of individual project construction because activities such as building construction and architectural coating require less diesel-fueled construction equipment. Generation of DPM from construction projects typically occurs in a single area for a short period. The dose to which the receptors are exposed is the primary factor used to determine health risk. Dose is a function of the concentration of a substance or substances in the environment and the extent of exposure that person has with the substance. Dose is positively correlated with time, meaning that a longer exposure period would result in a higher exposure level for the Maximally Exposed Individual. The risks estimated for a Maximally Exposed Individual are higher if a fixed exposure occurs over a longer period of time.

Construction activities associated with buildout of the project would include site preparation and grading, building construction, installation of wet and dry utilities as needed, construction of roadway improvements, and architectural coating. These activities would generate DPM emissions and dust, which can include PM_{10}. Construction equipment that would generate criteria pollutants include, but would not be limited to, excavators, graders, haul trucks, and loaders. It is assumed that all construction equipment used would be diesel-powered. The proposed project would be required to comply with the CARB Air Toxics Control Measure that limits diesel powered equipment and vehicle idling to no more than five minutes at a location, and the CARB In-Use Off-Road Diesel Vehicle Regulation. Compliance with these existing requirements would minimize emissions of TACs during construction.

According to the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, construction of individual projects lasting longer than two months and placed within 1,000 feet of sensitive receptors could potentially expose nearby sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations and therefore could result in potentially significant risk impacts (Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment 2015). Construction in proximity to these sensitive receptors could result in exposure to significant TAC emissions, depending on the size, amount of equipment, duration, and excavation activity. Buildout of the proposed project is generally not anticipated to expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations; however, some construction activities would occur within 1,000 feet of a sensitive receptor, such as residences and schools. Therefore, impacts from the proposed project could be **potentially significant**.

Operation

CARB's *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective* (2005) provides recommendations regarding the siting of new sensitive land uses near potential sources of air toxic emissions. Typical sources of acutely and chronically hazardous TACs identified by CARB include distribution centers, rail yards, ports, refineries, chrome plating facilities, dry cleaners, and gasoline dispensing facilities. CARB recommends siting distances both for the development of sensitive land uses in proximity to TAC sources and for the addition of new TAC sources in proximity to existing sensitive land uses.

Development facilitated by the project would include residential, commercial, agricultural, and industrial land uses. The proposed General Plan does not site land uses that typically generate TACs, such as industrial land uses near residential land uses. Additionally, if the proposed commercial, retail, warehouse, research and development, and industrial uses site a new stationary TAC source, like an emergency generator, then said stationary source would be required to obtain an Authority to Construct and/or Permit to Operate from NCUAQMD pursuant to Rule 102 and conduct a risk assessment of associated TAC emissions. As part of the permit process, project applicants would be required to demonstrate compliance with the following thresholds, which are designed to prevent TAC emissions from causing or contributing to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious illness or from posing a present or potential hazard to human health:

- The acute and chronic hazard indices for any target organ or organ system due to TAC emissions do not exceed 1.0 at any receptor location; and
- The cancer risk due to TAC emissions does not exceed 10 in one 1,000,000 at any receptor location.

Other sources of potential air toxics associated with proposed project buildout include the use of household hazardous materials such as cleaning solvents, paints, and landscape pesticides. However, these activities, and the land uses associated with the proposed project, are not considered land uses that generate substantial TAC emissions based on review of the air toxic sources listed in CARB's guidelines. It is expected that quantities of hazardous TACs generated on site by future individual residents and industrial and commercial tenants (e.g., cleaning solvents, paints, landscape pesticides) for the types of proposed land uses would be below thresholds warranting further study under the California Accidental Release Prevention Program, which regulates stationary sources of hazardous substances used annually in quantities ranging from 500 to 20,000 pounds. In the event that future tenants of residential, commercial, agricultural, and industrial land uses utilize substantial quantities of hazardous substances, they would be subject to the requirements of the California Accidental Release Program and would be required to develop and implement a Risk Management Plan that would minimize the accidental release of hazardous substances and associated TAC emissions. Because stationary TAC sources in the Planning Area would be required to comply with NCUAQMD Rule 102 and buildout of the proposed project would not otherwise result in substantial TAC sources, the proposed project would not result in the exposure of sensitive receptors to significant amounts of carcinogenic or TACs. Therefore, impacts related to TAC emissions from stationary sources would be **less than significant**.

CARB's *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective* provides guidance for evaluating projects near high-traffic freeways and roadways and recommends against siting sensitive receptors within 500 feet of a freeway, urban roads with 100,000 vehicles per day, or rural roads with 50,000 vehicles per day (CARB 2005). Major roadways in the Planning Area include State Route 3, 36, and 299. In 2023, State Route 299 has the highest an annual average daily trip of 19,360 at the eastern junction with State Route 3 (Appendix C). Local roads constitute a substantial portion of Trinity County's road network, primarily serving residential areas with low-speed, low-volume traffic. Therefore, the proposed project would not introduce sensitive receptors within 500 feet of an urban road with 100,000 vehicles per day. In addition, consistent with General Plan Policy COS 1.3 (Sensitive Receptor Setbacks), individual projects would avoid siting new sensitive land uses within 500 feet of freeways or heavily traveled arterials, or would identify and implement appropriate mitigation measures to reduce air pollution exposure to safe levels. Therefore, the project would not exacerbate existing conditions such

that on- or off-site sensitive receptors would be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations resulting from TAC emissions along high-volume roadways. Impacts related to TAC emissions from operational mobile sources would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

The proposed project would supersede Mitigation Measure 3.3-1(b) and 3.3-1(c) of the 2020 EIR, as shown in Mitigation Measure AQ-2b below. The following measures would reduce construction emissions:

AQ-2a Construction Health Risk Assessment

The County shall require, as a standard condition of approval, preparation of a construction health risk assessment to estimate health risk using air dispersion modeling. This new condition of approval would be required if development facilitated by the project meets the following criteria:

- Individual project active construction duration is greater than 6 months; and
- Individual project construction is within 1,000 feet of sensitive receptors (e.g., residential, schools, childcare facilities, senior living facilities).
- Mitigation Measure AQ-2b is implemented.

AQ-2b Implement Diesel Engine Exhaust Control Measures and Use of Alternative Fuels

Prior to issuance of grading permits, the County shall confirm that the grading plan, building plans, and specifications stipulate that the following measures shall be implemented:

- All diesel-powered off-road equipment used in construction shall meet USEPA's Tier 4 emission standards as defined in 40 Code of Federal Regulations 1039 and comply with the exhaust emission test procedures and provisions of 40 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 1065 and 1068. Tier 3 models with Level 3 diesel particulate filters can be used if a Tier 4 version of the equipment type is not available. This measure can also be achieved by using battery-electric off-road equipment as it becomes available. Implementation of this measure shall be required in the contract the project applicant establishes with its construction contractors.
- Alternative fuel (natural gas, propane, electric, etc.) construction equipment shall be incorporated where available or necessary to reduce TAC emissions. These requirements shall be incorporated into the contract agreement with the construction contractor. A copy of the equipment's certification or model year specifications shall be available upon request for all equipment on-site.
- Electricity shall be supplied to the site from the existing power grid to support the electric construction equipment. If connection to the grid is determined to be infeasible for portions of the project, a non-diesel fueled generator shall be used.

Significance After Mitigation

Incorporation of Mitigation Measure AQ-2a would require the quantification of construction related health risks, identification of potential substantial exposure to sensitive receptors, and implementation of construction controls to reduce potential impacts. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-2b would reduce impacts related to health risks associated with exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial TAC concentrations during construction. Mitigation Measure AQ-2a and AQ-2b would substantially reduce DPM emissions compared to standard CalEEMod assumptions for engine tier. However, exact details of future project-specific construction activities are unknown at this time, and, due to the rural nature of the county, Tier 3 and/or Tier 4 construction equipment is not widely available and cannot be guaranteed for potential future development projects. Although implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-2a and AQ-2b would substantially reduce TAC impacts, it cannot be guaranteed that construction TACs would be reduced to below the applicable threshold of 10 excess cancer cases in 1,000,000 and a Hazard Index of more than one (1.0). Therefore. Due to this uncertainty, this impact would be **significant and unavoidable**.

Threshold 4:	Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

Impact AQ-3 Implementation of the project would expose sensitive receptors to objectionable odors. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-3, an odor plan would be developed to reduce objectionable odors. Therefore, impacts related to odors would be less than significant with mitigation.

During construction activities, heavy equipment and vehicles would emit odors associated with vehicle and engine exhaust and during idling. However, these odors would be intermittent and temporary and would cease upon completion, and odors disperse with distance. In addition, NCUAQMD Rule 104 prohibits the discharge of air contaminants or other materials which would cause a nuisance or detriment to a considerable number of persons or the public, except for odors from agricultural activities. Therefore, odors emitted from the construction of individual future projects under the proposed project would be **less than significant**.

Land uses typically producing objectionable odors include agricultural uses, wastewater treatment plants, food processing plants, chemical plants, composting, refineries, landfills, dairies, and fiberglass molding. Development facilitated by the proposed project would include residential, commercial and agriculture land uses. Residential and mix-use commercial uses do not typically emit substantial odors. Solid waste generated by these land uses would be collected by a contracted waste hauler, ensuring that any odors resulting from on-site waste would be managed and collected in a manner to prevent the proliferation of odors.

Agricultural land uses would be allowed to occur on commercial, industrial, and agriculture zoning. Agricultural land uses under the proposed project would potentially emit odors from cattle, poultry, and hog operations, as well as from cannabis cultivation. Cattle, poultry, and hog operations may generate odors associated with manure and urine, which can release objectionable odors. It is noted that other agricultural operations not specifically listed here may also lead to objectionable odors.

Cannabis cultivation would generate odors from 140 different terpenes, with the highest odor potential occurring during the flowering and harvest periods. A terpene is a volatile, unsaturated hydrocarbon that is found in essential oils of plants, especially conifers and citrus trees and is associated with a distinct skunk-like odor. The distance for odor detection is very site-specific and can be affected by many variables including meteorology, topography, plant strain, and how ready plants are for harvesting. Acceptable levels of cannabis plant odors may vary based on individual perceptions and attitudes toward cannabis.

Development facilitated by the project would require commercial agricultural uses to minimize odor impacts to adjacent properties by enforcing minimum distances from adjacent habitable structures under separate ownership, odor control filtration, and ventilation requirements, as stated in General Plan Policy LU 7.5 (Odor Control). In addition, incompatible commercial agricultural uses shall be prohibited to operate within 600 feet of schools, daycare and youth centers, places of assembly, including civic and private auditoriums, banquet halls, community centers, conference facilities, meeting halls for clubs and other membership organizations; places of worship; and other similar uses, as stated in General Plan Policy LU 7.6 (Sensitive Receptors). The analysis assumes adherence to these policies would reduce potential odor impacts associated with agriculture-related activities.

As part of the Cannabis Program, all cultivation operations are subject to required setbacks, including a minimum of 350 feet from adjacent legal dwellings; Type 3 cultivation operations would additionally require minimum setbacks of 500 feet from adjacent property lines and authorized school bus stops, and 1,000 feet from youth-oriented facilities, schools, churches, and residential treatment facilities (Chapter 17.43 of the Trinity County Code of Ordinances). However, it does not preclude the potential for offsite sensitive receptors to be exposed to odors emitted by commercial agriculture that is objectionable. Therefore, impacts would be **potentially significant**.

Mitigation Measures

The following measure supersedes Mitigation Measure 3.3-3 of the 2020 EIR.

AQ-3 Odor Control Plan

The County shall require the preparation of an odor control plan prior to individual project approval to reduce nuisance odor impacts. Outdoor and indoor cannabis land uses shall retain a qualified odor control consultant prior to approval of the project to evaluate how odors disperse, identify sensitive receptors affected, and develop odor mitigation measures for areas with elevated odor emissions. The County shall require the project applicant to implement all recommended mitigation measures identified in the odor control plan as a condition of the cannabis-related use permit.

The odor control plan shall contain the following, as appropriate, for each proposed cannabis use:

- Identify and describe odor-emitting activities and the nature and characteristics of the emissions.
- Identify the location and distance of sensitive receptors from the site. This may include the preparation of a wind pattern evaluation.
- Identify the odor measurement that would constitute a nuisance at sensitive receptor locations.
- Demonstrate whether the cannabis site's distance to receptors, wind direction, and local topographic conditions would result in detection of cannabis odors by off-site sensitive receptors that would create a nuisance.
- Provide a description of the air treatment system, odor control devices, or other best management practices that will be implemented to prevent cannabis odors from being detected at sensitive receptor locations. This may include, but is not limited to: mechanical ventilation controls, carbon filtration, ozone generation, bi-polar ionization, high-pressure misting systems, fogging systems, aerosol-type handlers, and companion planting, such as plants with strong fragrances.
- Identify corrective actions to address County-verified off-site odor complaints. This shall include an initial assessment of odor measurements at the sensitive receptor and/or complaint location(s) to determine if the odor constitutes a nuisance as defined in the plan. This may include immediate and complete harvest of the cannabis plants or identification of other methods to be applied as part of the current harvest or the next to minimize off-site odor impacts so that they do not conflict with other applicable standards of the County Cannabis Program or state licensing requirements.

Significance After Mitigation

With the implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-3, an odor control plan would be prepared in order to identify likely odor emissions, sensitive receptor locations, and necessary odor reduction measures to reduce potential odor impacts from proposed cannabis sites. This would ensure that odor impacts from outdoor and indoor cannabis would be substantially reduced at sensitive receptor locations. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant** with mitigation.

4.3.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope for considering cumulative impacts to air quality includes the entire NCAB, which is comprised of which includes all of Del Norte, Humboldt, Trinity, and Mendocino Counties and the northern portion of Sonoma County. This geographic scope is appropriate because air quality emissions in one location contribute to regional air quality in the NCAB. The cumulative development scenario is described in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting*.

Since the NCAB is designated a nonattainment area for the state PM_{10} standards[2], there is an existing adverse effect from this pollutant. Additional unplanned growth could exacerbate pollution and hinder the achievement of NAAQS and CAAQS in the NCAB. NCUAQMD does not have guidelines recommending

[2] Humboldt County is designated nonattainment for CAAQS PM_{10}

analyzing cumulative impacts. Therefore, the cumulative impact is determined based on consistency with the NCUAQMD's PM_{10} Attainment Plan.

Air pollution is largely a cumulative impact, and as described in Impact AQ-1 above, project construction-related activity within the Planning Area could contribute to increases in regional and localized air pollutant concentrations. However, NCUAQMD has identified fugitive dust control measures to address construction-related PM_{10} emissions, and the proposed General Plan Policies COS-1.1 and COS-1.2 require implementation of construction dust abatement measures and best management practices, and ensure that construction and operation of new development lessen potential air quality impacts to the greatest extent feasible to protect nearby sensitive receptors from substantial criteria air pollutant exposure. With implementation of these requirements, construction-related emissions from development facilitated by the project would not have a considerable contribution to cumulative construction-related criteria pollutant impacts.

With respect to long-term operations, cumulative development within the region would increase VMT, which could contribute to cumulative criteria pollutant emissions in a nonattainment air basin and be potentially significant. However, as described under Impact AQ-1, the project would increase VMT at a rate that would not exceed projected population growth, resulting in a reduction in per capita vehicle usage. In addition, the project is consistent with the PM_{10} Attainment Plan's public transit and bicycle program control measures by encouraging transit use (Policies CIR 5.3 and CIR 5.4) and promoting pedestrian and bicycle facilities and active transportation (Policies CIR 7.1, CIR 7.2, CIR 7.3, CIR 7.5, and CIR 7.10), which would reduce vehicle miles traveled and associated PM_{10} emissions. Therefore, the project would not have a considerable contribution to cumulative operational-related criteria pollutant emissions, nor would it conflict with the NCUAQMD PM attainment plan or hinder achievement of the NAAQS and CAAQS within the NCAB.

Cumulative development could expose sensitive receptors to cancer risks exceeding the 10 in 1,000,000 threshold. Although cumulative development would be required to comply with NCUAQMD regulations and thresholds to reduce the potential for significant impacts to sensitive receptors, construction of future development within 1,000 feet of a sensitive receptor (such as residences or schools), could expose sensitive receptors to significant TAC emissions, depending on the size, amount of equipment, duration, and excavation activity. The cumulative impact from TACs is potentially significant. As described under Impact AQ-2, development facilitated by the project would implement Mitigation Measure AQ-2a and AQ-2b, to reduce construction TAC emissions. Implementation of these mitigation measures would identify and reduce TAC emissions associated with construction facilitated by the project, including individual projects longer than two months and within 1,000 feet of sensitive receptors. Therefore, the project would not have a considerable contribution to cumulative construction TAC impacts.

Cumulative development could result in new sources of odor. Construction emissions would disperse rapidly with distance, and therefore construction projects in close proximity to one another would not result in combined odors above those analyzed; therefore, construction of cumulative projects would not result in a significant cumulative odor impact. However, operation of cumulative projects would have a potentially significant cumulative odor impact. Development facilitated by the proposed project would potentially include odor-generating uses on land designated for commercial, industrial, and agricultural uses. Mitigation Measure AQ-3 requires the development of an odor control plan prior to approval of individual projects to identify project-specific measures to reduce odor impacts. In addition, the project would enforce minimum distances from adjacent habitable structures under separate ownership, odor control filtration, and ventilation requirements, as stated in General Plan Policy LU 7.5 (Odor Control) and Policy LU 7.6 (Sensitive Receptors). Therefore, project operations would not have a considerable contribution to cumulative odor impacts.

4.4 Biological Resources

This section addresses direct and indirect impacts on the following biological resources: regulated waterways and wetlands, sensitive habitats and mature native trees, special-status plants and animals, and wildlife movement corridors from implementation of proposed project.

4.4.1 Environmental Setting

a. Planning Area Habitat Types

Trinity County consists largely of rugged, mountainous terrain. The Trinity River flows south and west through the county, forming part of its watershed system. Trinity Lake, created by Trinity Dam, is located in the northern region. Less than one percent of the county is developed (490 acres), leaving most of the land as natural habitat and managed forests. Approximately 75 percent of the county is conifer forest, supporting species such as the Cascades frog (*Rana cascadae*). Hardwood forest covers about 11 percent, and shrubland about 8 percent of the county. Open water areas provide corridors for species like Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and summer-run steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) (Conservation Biology Institute 2011). Acreage by land cover type is detailed in Table 4.4-1.

Table 4.4-1 Trinity County Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types

Land Cover Type	Acres	Percent of County
Conifer Forest	248,294	75%
Hardwood Forest	38,220	11%
Shrub	27,967	8%
Herbaceous	6,951	2%
Conifer Woodland	4	<1%
Hardwood Woodland	12	<1%
Agricultural Land	129	<1%
Urban Developed	490	<1%
Total	**331,671**	**100%**

Source: County of Trinity 2023

A full description of vegetation communities and wildlife habitats within Trinity County can be found in the General Plan Background Report (available online at https://trinity2050.com/).

b. Special-Status Resources

For the purposes of this analysis, special-status species include:

- Species listed as threatened or endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA); including proposed and candidate species;
- Species listed as candidate, threatened, or endangered under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA);
- Species designated as Fully Protected by the California Fish and Game Code (CFGC), and Species of Special Concern by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW);
- Species listed as State Rare under the Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA);
- Species on the CDFW Special Animals List with a State Rank imperilment status of S1-S3;

- Species with California Native Plant Society (CNPS) California Rare Plant Ranks (CRPR) 1A, 1B, 2A and 2B;
- Species designated as sensitive by the United States Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management; and
- Species designated as locally important by Trinity County and/or otherwise protected through ordinance, local policy, or Habitat Conservation Plans/Natural Community Conservation Plans.

Most listed and special-status species have specific habitat and micro habitat conditions and would not generally be expected to occur outside of areas that meet those specific habitat criteria; however, some listed or otherwise protected species have the potential to occur in a wide range of habitats, including disturbed and developed areas.

The list of special-status species with documented occurrences in Trinity County is based on queries of several relevant scientific databases that provide information about occurrences of sensitive biological resources for California, including Trinity County. These include the CDFW California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB); the Biogeographic Information and Observation System (CDFW 2026a); the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Critical Habitat Portal (USFWS 2026a); the Information, Planning, and Conservation System Query (USFWS 2026b); and the CNPS Online Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California (CNPS 2025).Appendix D provides a comprehensive list of special-status species with documented occurrences in Trinity County based on these sources. The list contains some special-status species that are not federally or state listed because they are tracked by CNDDB, were recently delisted, or are considered sensitive by scientific organizations. As detailed therein, special-status species with documented occurrences in Trinity County include 94 plant species, three invertebrate species, two fish species, five amphibian species, one reptile species, three bird species, and nine mammal species.

Critical Habitat

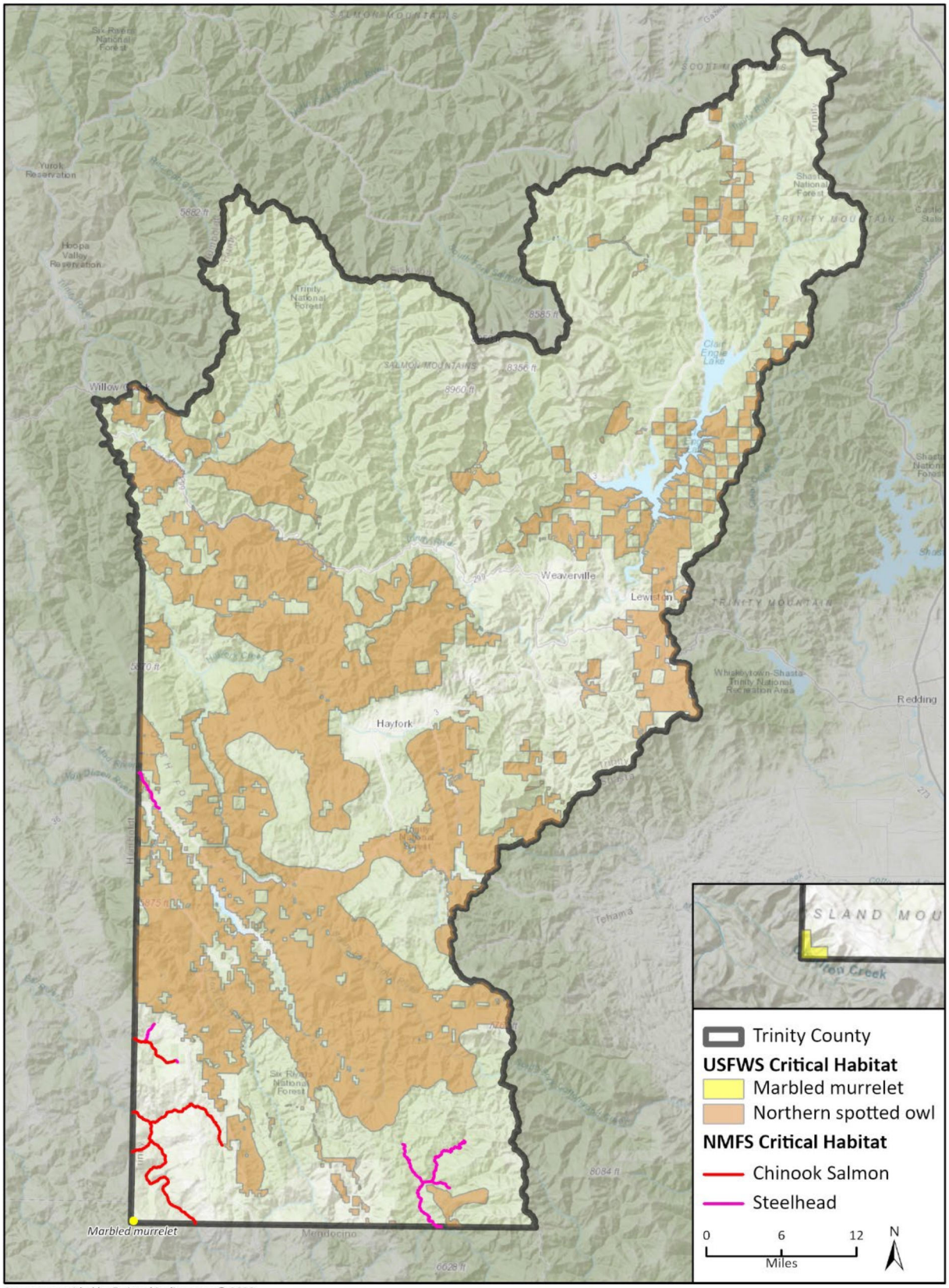
Critical habitat is a term used in FESA defined as specific geographic area(s) that contains features essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that may require special management and protection. Critical habitat may include an area that is not currently occupied by the species but that will be needed for its recovery. An area is designated as “critical habitat” after USFWS and/or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries publishes a proposed federal regulation in the Federal Register and then receives and considers public comments on the proposal. The final boundaries of the critical habitat area, once identified, are published in the Federal Register.

Figure 4.4-1 shows critical habitat in the Planning Area. As shown in the figure, critical habitat for marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*) occurs in the southwestern corner of the Planning Area, and critical habitat for northern spotted owl occurs throughout the Planning Area. Both chinook salmon and steelhead trout have designated critical habitat in rivers and streams near Six Rivers National Forest.

Jurisdictional Waters

Surface waters in the Planning Area include the Trinity River, South Fork Trinity River, Lewiston Lake, Trinity Lake, numerous perennial and intermittent creeks, small ponds, and wetlands. Waters of the United States within the Planning Area consist of Traditional Navigable Waters, rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands meeting federal jurisdictional criteria and exhibiting direct surface connectivity to Traditional Navigable Waters. These features are broadly distributed across the county, with continuous federal-jurisdiction flowlines aligned along river corridors and their mountainous tributaries. Waters of the State encompass all surface waters within California’s jurisdiction, including ephemeral and intermittent streams, wetlands, springs, and riparian areas, regardless of federal status.

Figure 4.4-1 Trinity County Critical Habitat



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Additional data provided by USFWS, 2021 and NOAA, 2021.

Wildlife Movement Corridors

Wildlife movement corridors, or habitat linkages, are generally defined as connections between habitat patches that allow for physical and genetic exchange between animal populations. Such linkages may serve a local purpose, such as providing a linkage between foraging and denning areas, or they may be regional in nature. Some habitat linkages may serve as migration corridors, wherein animals periodically move away from an area and then subsequently return. Others may be important as dispersal corridors for young animals. A group of habitat linkages in an area can form a wildlife corridor network.

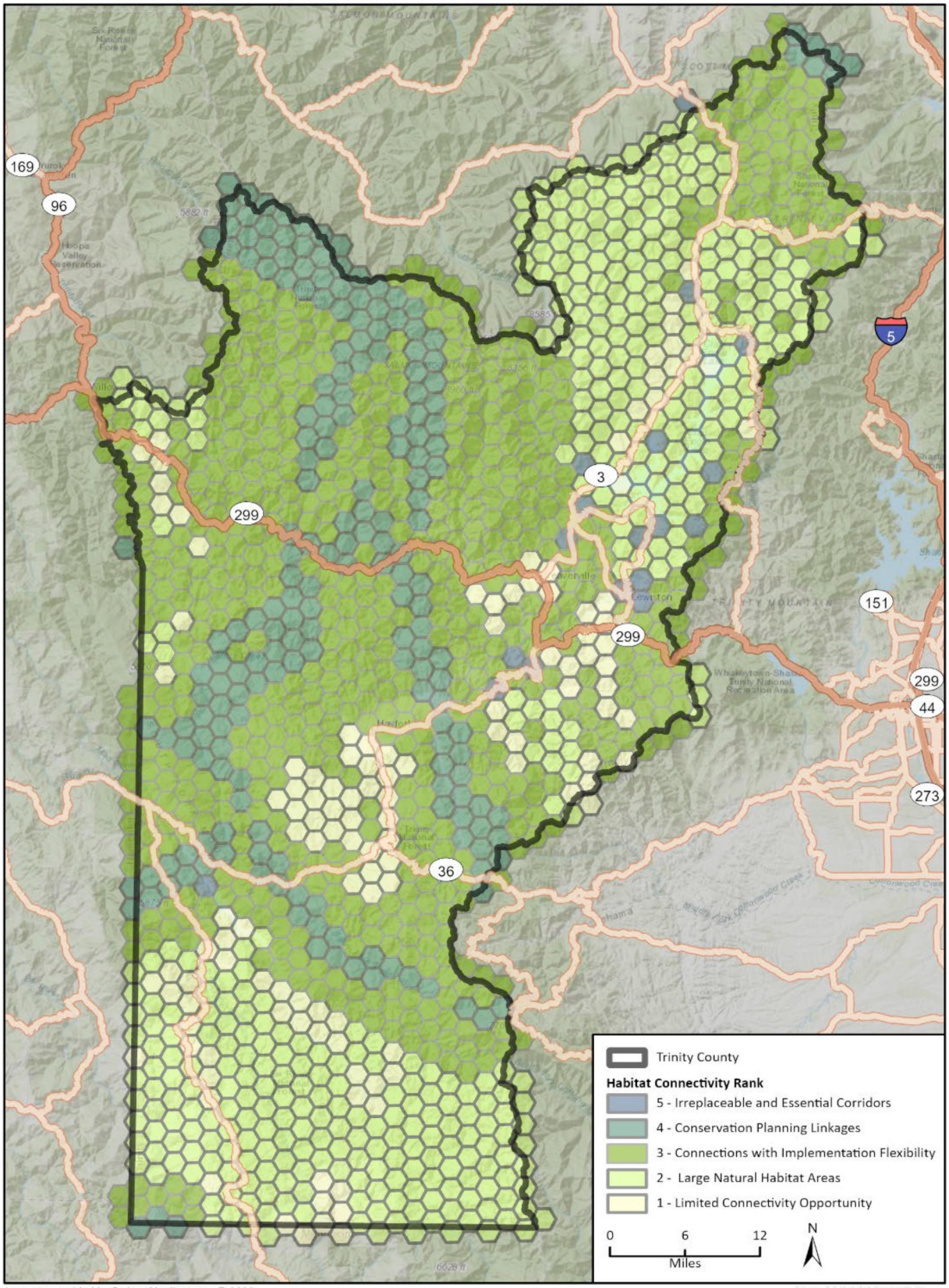
Habitats in a linkage are not necessarily the same as those being linked. Rather, the linkage need only contain sufficient cover and forage to allow temporary use by species during periods of movement between or among larger areas of suitable habitat. Typically, habitat linkages are contiguous strips of natural areas, though dense plantings of landscape vegetation can be used by certain disturbance-tolerant species. Depending on the species, a linkage may require specific minimum physical characteristics (e.g., rock outcroppings, vernal pools, specific vegetation cover) to function as an effective wildlife corridor and allow those species to traverse the linkage. For highly mobile or aerial species, habitat linkages may be discontinuous patches of suitable resources spaced sufficiently close together to permit travel along a route in a relatively short period of time.

The CDFW Biogeographic Information and Observation System website (CDFW 2026a) and California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project: A Strategy for Conserving Connected California (Spencer et al. 2010) evaluated critical wildlife movement corridors throughout California. Trinity County has wildlife corridors and connectivity through the North Coast Ecoregion, characterized by forested mountains crossed by large rivers capable of supporting large and fast-growing trees. As shown in Figure 4.4-2, most of the conservation planning linkages follow slopes and rivers through the Trinity and Six Rivers National Forests, linking the northern and southern regions of the county. These linkages are some of the most valuable, as they provide species the ability to move throughout most of the county where essential habitat is still intact. These contiguous corridors increase their chances at finding food, clean water, and mating opportunities. Wildlife that cannot navigate through core habitat areas tend to lack genetic diversity, decreasing their capabilities of fighting off disease and other stressors, and can also put human safety at risk as wildlife get closer to developed areas.

In addition to these conservation linkages, some parts of the county have been ranked as irreplaceable and essential. These habitats provide priority species movement through contiguous corridors. However, information on priority wildlife movement is currently limited, and identifying these corridors is an active area of research. In Trinity County, irreplaceable and essential habitats surround Clair Engle Lake, connecting the Salmon mountains to the west and the Trinity Mountains and Shasta National Forest in Shasta County to the east (CDFW 2026a).

Lower ranking connectivity areas include “Connections with Implementation Flexibility”, where they have connectivity importance, but are not considered corridors that link essential habitat. These areas typically surround the conservation linkages but are not entirely intact. Areas with lower ranking may contain land uses that limit options for providing wildlife movement such as agricultural or urban land uses. These limited connectivity areas are restricted to the developed areas of Hayfork and Weaverville.

Figure 4.4-2 Habitat Connectivity in Trinity County



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Additional data provided by CDFW, 2019.

4.4.2 Regulatory Setting

The following is a summary of the regulatory context under which biological resources are managed at the federal, state, and local levels. Agencies with responsibility for protection of biological resources within the Planning Area include:

- USFWS (federally listed species and migratory birds)
- United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE; wetlands and other Waters of the United States)
- CDFW (Waters of the State, state listed and fully protected species, and other sensitive plants and wildlife)
- North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB; Waters of the State)

The following discussion provides a summary of those laws that are most relevant to biological resources in the Planning Area.

a. Federal Regulations

Federal Endangered Species Act

The USFWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service administer FESA. FESA requires each agency to maintain lists of imperiled native species and affords substantial protections to these "listed" species. The jurisdiction of the National Marine Fisheries Service under FESA is limited to the protection of marine mammals, marine fishes, and anadromous fish. All other species are subject to USFWS jurisdiction.

The USFWS and National Marine Fisheries Service may "list" a species if it is endangered (at risk of extinction in all or a significant portion of its range) or threatened (likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future). Section 9 of the FESA prohibits the "take" of any wildlife species listed as endangered and most species listed as threatened. Take, as defined by the FESA, means "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct." Harm is defined as "any act that kills or injures the species, including significant habitat modification or degradation where it actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, or sheltering" (50 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 17.3).

FESA includes exceptions that allow an action to be carried out, despite the fact that the action may result in the "take" of listed species, where conservation measures are included for the species. Section 7 of the FESA provides an exception for actions authorized (e.g., under a Section 404 permit), funded, or carried out by a federal agency and Section 10 provides an exception for actions that do not involve a federal agency.

Clean Water Act

Areas meeting the regulatory definition of waters of the U.S. are subject to the jurisdiction of the USACE under provisions of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Waters of the U.S. include waters, such as intrastate lakes, rivers, streams, mudflats, sandflats, playa lakes, natural ponds, territorial seas, and wetlands (33 CFR Part 328). In non-tidal waters, USACE jurisdiction extends to the ordinary high water mark, which is defined in CFR Title 33, Part 328.3, as "the line on the shore established by the fluctuations of water and indicated by physical characteristics, such as a clear, natural line impressed on the bank, shelving, changes in the character of the soil, destruction of terrestrial vegetation or the presence of litter and debris." This guidance is based on the identification of the ordinary high water mark through examination of physical evidence of surface flow in the stream channel; there is no hydrologic definition of the ordinary high water mark. Activities that directly impact waters of the U.S., such as dredge and/or fill placement, require a Section 404 permit from the USACE.

Section 401 of the Clean Water Act requires an applicant requesting a federal license or permit for an activity that may result in any discharge into waters of the U.S. to provide state certification that the proposed activity will not violate state and federal water quality standards. Therefore, all projects that have a federal component and may affect state water quality (including projects that require federal agency approval, such as issuance of a Section 404 permit) must also comply with Clean Water Act Section 401 and the State's Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. In California, Section 401 certification is handled by the RWQCBs. Trinity County is under the jurisdiction of the North Coast RWQCB, which is responsible for implementation of state and federal water quality protection guidelines.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 implements four international conservation treaties that the U.S. entered into with Canada in 1916, Mexico in 1936, Japan in 1972, and Russia in 1976. It is intended to ensure the sustainability of populations of all protected migratory bird species. The law has been amended with the signing of each treaty, as well as when any of the treaties were amended, such as with Mexico in 1976 and Canada in 1995.

The list of migratory bird species protected by the law, in regulations at 50 CFR Part 10.13, is primarily based on bird families and species included in the four international treaties. A migratory bird species is included on the list if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

1. It occurs in the United States or U.S. territories as the result of natural biological or ecological processes and is currently, or was previously listed as, a species or part of a family protected by one of the four international treaties or their amendments.
2. Revised taxonomy results in it being newly split from a species that was previously on the list, and the new species occurs in the United States or U.S. territories as the result of natural biological or ecological processes.
3. New evidence exists for its natural occurrence in the United States or U.S. territories resulting from natural distributional changes and the species occurs in a protected family.

In 2004, the Migratory Bird Treaty Reform Act limited the scope of the MBTA by stating the MBTA applies only to migratory bird species that are native to the United States or U.S. territories, and that a native migratory bird species is one that is present as a result of natural biological or ecological processes. The Migratory Bird Treaty Reform Act requires the USFWS to publish a list of all non-native, human-introduced bird species to which the MBTA does not apply, and an updated list was published in 2020. The 2020 update identifies species belonging to biological families referred to in treaties the MBTA implements but are not protected because their presence in the United States or U.S. territories is solely the result of intentional or unintentional human-assisted introductions.

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act prohibits anyone, without a permit issued by the USFWS, from "taking" bald or golden eagles, including their parts (including feathers), nests, or eggs. The Act provides criminal penalties for persons who "take, possess, sell, purchase, barter, offer to sell, purchase or barter, transport, export or import, at any time or any manner, any bald eagle ... [or any golden eagle], alive or dead, or any part, nest, or egg thereof." The Act defines "take" as "pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest or disturb."

"Disturb" means "to agitate or bother a bald or golden eagle to a degree that causes, or is likely to cause, based on the best scientific information available, 1) injury to an eagle, 2) a decrease in its productivity, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior, or 3) nest abandonment, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior."

In addition to immediate impacts, this definition also covers impacts that result from human-induced alterations initiated around a previously used nest site during a time when eagles are not present, if, upon

the eagle's return, such alterations agitate or bother an eagle to a degree that interferes with or interrupts normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering habits, and causes injury, death, or nest abandonment.

b. State Regulations

CEQA and Sensitive Natural Communities

Under CEQA, public agencies must evaluate whether a project would substantially degrade the quality of the environment, including effects on rare or sensitive biological resources. CEQA requires lead agencies to assess potential impacts to plant and wildlife species, habitat types, and ecological communities that meet the criteria of "rare, threatened, or endangered" under *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15380.

Sensitive Natural Communities (SNC) are a subset of natural communities that qualify as special-status biological resources under CEQA when they meet criteria for rarity or endangerment. Natural communities in California are evaluated using NatureServe's Heritage Methodology. Under this framework, natural communities (including vegetation alliances and associations) with State Ranks of S1 (critically imperiled), S2 (imperiled), or S3 (vulnerable) are considered SNCs for purposes of CEQA review. For vegetation alliances with State Ranks of S1 through S3, all associated vegetation associations within that alliance are also considered Sensitive. In contrast, vegetation alliances that are not ranked S1 through S3 may still contain individual associations that are independently ranked S1 through S3 and therefore qualify as SNCs. Because SNCs with State Ranks of S1 through S3 meet CEQA's definition of rare or endangered ecosystems, impacts to these communities are considered potentially significant and must be avoided, minimized, or mitigated unless substantial evidence supports a conclusion that no substantial adverse effect would occur.

CEQA Guidelines Section 21803, codified in the Public Resources Code, reinforces the responsibility of public agencies to consider and disclose impacts to sensitive biological resources, including sensitive habitats and natural communities, as part of environmental review. *CEQA Guidelines* Section 21803 reinforces the obligation of lead agencies to identify and evaluate impacts to sensitive natural resources using the best available scientific information, including data and methodologies relied upon by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, such as the CNDDB, vegetation classification systems, and NatureServe rarity rankings.

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The State Water Resources Control Board and nine RWQCBs have jurisdiction over "waters of the State," which are defined as any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters, within the boundaries of the State pursuant to the Porter-Cologne Act (California Water Code Section 13050[e]). The State Water Resources Control Board has issued general Waste Discharge Requirements regarding discharges to "isolated" waters of the State (Water Quality Order No. 2004-0004-DWQ, Statewide General Waste Discharge Requirements for Dredged or Fill Discharges to Waters Deemed by the USACE to be Outside of Federal Jurisdiction). In Trinity County, the North Coast RWQCB implements this general order for isolated waters not subject to federal jurisdiction and is also responsible for the issuance of water quality certifications pursuant to Clean Water Act Section 401 for waters subject to federal jurisdiction.

Construction Stormwater General Permit

The General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities, Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System No. CAS000002 (Construction Stormwater General Permit), adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board, regulates construction activity that includes clearing, grading, and excavation resulting in soil disturbance of at least one acre of total land area. The Construction Stormwater General Permit authorizes the discharge of stormwater to surface waters from construction activities. The Construction Stormwater General Permit requires that all developers of land where construction activities will occur over more than one acre do the following:

- Complete a Risk Assessment to determine pollution prevention requirements pursuant to the three risk levels established in the Construction Stormwater General Permit;
- Eliminate or reduce non-stormwater discharges to storm sewer systems and other waters of the United States;
- Develop and implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan that specifies Best Management Practices (BMPs) that will reduce pollution in stormwater discharges to the Best Available Technology/Economically Achievable/Best Conventional Pollutant Control Technology standards;
- Perform inspections and maintenance of all BMPs; and
- Conduct stormwater sampling, if required based on risk level.

Typical BMPs contained in Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans are designed to minimize erosion during construction, stabilize construction areas, control sediment, and control pollutants from construction materials.

Cannabis General Order

The State Water Resources Control Board also maintains general water discharge requirements for waste discharges associated with cannabis cultivation activities (Order WQ 2023-0102-DWQ). The order is intended to protect receiving waters from water quality impacts, including discharge of sediment, irrigation runoff, fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, petroleum, agricultural-related chemicals, cultivation-related waste, refuse, and human waste. The order applies to existing cannabis cultivation sites as well as new cannabis cultivation sites.

California Endangered Species Act

CESA (CFGC Section 2050 et seq.) prohibits take of State-listed threatened or endangered species. Take under CESA is defined as "Hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill" (CFGC Section 86). This definition does not prohibit indirect harm by way of habitat modification, except where such harm is the proximate cause of death of a listed species. Where incidental take would occur during construction or other lawful activities, CESA allows CDFW to issue an Incidental Take Permit upon finding, among other requirements, that impacts to the species have been minimized and fully mitigated. Unlike FESA, CESA's protections extend to candidate species during the period (typically one year) while the California Fish and Game Commission decides whether the species warrants CESA listing.

Native Plant Protection Act

CDFW also has authority to administer the NPPA (CFGC Section 1900 et seq.). The NPPA requires the CDFW to establish criteria for determining if a species, subspecies, or variety of native plant is endangered or rare, and prohibits the take of listed plant species. Effective in 2015, CDFW promulgated regulations (14 California Code of Regulations 786.9) under the authority of the NPPA, establishing that the CESA's permitting procedures would be applied to plants listed under the NPPA as "Rare." With this change, there is little practical difference for the regulated public between plants listed under CESA and those listed under the NPPA.

Additionally, CEQA requires consideration of other special-status plants, including species assigned CRPR by CNPS. CRPRs categorize rarity in California's flora, ranging from presumed extinct species (CRPR 1A) to limited-distribution or watch-list species (CRPR 4). Species with CRPRs of 1A, 1B, 2A, or 2B meet the definitions of rare, threatened, or endangered under CEQA and are eligible for State listing; therefore, they must be evaluated in CEQA documents regardless of their listing status under CESA or the NPPA. Species with CRPRs of 3 and 4 are not considered rare under statute but are recommended for analysis under CEQA due to their limited distribution or emerging vulnerability, and impacts to these species may be considered significant based on context, intensity, and the application of *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15380.

Fully Protected Species Laws

CDFW enforces Sections 3511, 4700, 5050, and 5515 of the CFGC, which prohibit take of species designated as fully protected. CDFW is not allowed to issue an Incidental Take Permit for fully protected species; therefore, impacts to these species must be avoided. The exception is situations where a Natural Community Conservation Plan is in place that authorizes take of the fully protected species.

Avian Protection Laws

CFGC Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 describe unlawful take, possession, or destruction of native birds, nests, and eggs. Section 3503.5 of the CFGC protects all birds-of-prey and their eggs and nests against take, possession, or destruction of nests or eggs. Section 3513 makes it a state-level offense to take any bird in violation of the federal MBTA.

Protection of Lakes and Streambeds

CFGC Section 1602 states that it is unlawful for any person to "substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of, or substantially change or use any material from the bed, channel, or bank of, any river, stream, or lake" without first notifying CDFW of that activity. Thereafter, if CDFW determines and informs the entity that the activity will not substantially adversely affect any existing fish or wildlife resources, the entity may commence the activity. If, however, CDFW determines that the activity may substantially adversely affect an existing fish or wildlife resource, the entity may be required to obtain a Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA) from CDFW, which will include reasonable measures necessary to protect the affected resource(s), before the entity may conduct the activity described in the notification. Upon receiving a complete Notification of Lake/Streambed Alteration, CDFW has 60 days to present the entity with a Draft SAA. Upon review of the Draft SAA by the applicant, any problematic terms are negotiated with CDFW and a final SAA is executed.

c. Local Regulations

Trinity County Code of Ordinances

Chapter 13.15 (County Managed Trees) of the Trinity County Code of Ordinances establishes rules for the management, maintenance, planting, and removal of trees located on Trinity County-owned or county-managed property. It defines what constitutes a county-managed tree[1] and explains that only the County or authorized personnel may prune, remove, or otherwise alter such trees. The chapter creates a Community Tree Advisory Committee to advise on species selection, planting standards, and management practices. It sets basic requirements for planting and maintaining trees on county lands, identifies undesirable and recommended species, and prohibits harmful practices such as tree topping. The ordinance also outlines when tree removal is allowed and establishes emergency exceptions.

4.4.3 Impact Analysis

a. Significance Thresholds

Based on Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines* a project may be deemed to have a significant impact on biological resources if it would:

1. 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;

[1] A county-managed tree refers to trees situated within the county rights-of-way, county owned and managed parks, or other county owned and managed places and facilities within the Weaverville community plan designated areas.

2. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service;
3. 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;
4. 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;
5. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance; or
6. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

b. Methodology

The analysis of impacts related to biological resources is based on review of available literature online record searches of the following databases: the CDFW CNDDB (CDFW 2026a), the CNPS *Online Inventory of Rare, Threatened and Endangered Plants of California* (2025), USFWS *Critical Habitat Mapper* (2026a), and USFWS Information, Planning, and Conservation System (2026b). Data used for this analysis are summarized in Section 4.4.1. Rincon biologists evaluated impacts on biological resources based on the likelihood that special-status species, sensitive habitats, wildlife corridors, and protected trees are present within the Planning Area, and the likely effects of construction or operation on these resources. For the purposes of this EIR, the word “substantial” as used in the significance thresholds below is defined by the following three principal components:

- Magnitude and duration of the impact (e.g., substantial/not substantial),
- Uniqueness of the affected resource (rarity), and
- Susceptibility of the affected resource to disturbance.

Much of the potential cannabis-related development contemplated by the project was previously analyzed in the Trinity County Cannabis Program EIR (State Clearinghouse number 2018122049), certified in 2020 (2020 EIR). The 2020 EIR identified significant impacts to special-status species and their habitat from grading, road construction, and site access improvements associated with construction of cannabis facilities. Furthermore, the 2020 EIR identified potentially significant impacts to special-status fish species and their habitat, riparian habitat and sensitive natural communities, aquatic resources, and wildlife movement. The 2020 EIR included Mitigation Measures 3.4-1a through 3.4-1c, 3.4-2a through 3.4-2o, 3.4-3, 3.4-4a and 3.4-4b, 3.4-5, and 3.4-6a and 3.4-6c, each of which establish performance standards related to special-status species protection. The 2020 EIR concluded with implementation of these mitigation measures, impacts to biological resources would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Because the proposed General Plan establishes a new countywide policy framework that supersedes the 2020 EIR for cannabis activities occurring consistent with the General Plan, this EIR focuses on biological resources effects not previously addressed or requiring reevaluation under the proposed General Plan.

c. Project Impacts and Mitigation

Threshold 1:	Would the project 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?

Impact BIO-1 Development facilitated by the project would be required to comply with proposed General Plan policies protective of special-status species and their associated habitats. Impacts to special-status species would be less than significant with mitigation.

The Planning Area is predominantly composed of natural lands rather than developed areas, with approximately 75 percent conifer forest, 11 percent hardwood forest, and 8 percent shrubland. These extensive natural landscapes provide habitat for a broad range of special-status wildlife and plant species known or expected to occur in the region. Critical habitat for northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet occurs in portions of the Planning Area, and designated critical habitat for Chinook salmon and summer-run steelhead trout occurs within major waterways, including reaches near Six Rivers National Forest.

Appendix D lists special-status species with documented occurrences within the Planning Area. Special-status wildlife species documented within the Planning Area include terrestrial, aquatic, and riparian-dependent species. Because Trinity County contains vast tracts of forestlands, meadows, and riparian corridors, suitable habitat for special-status species is widespread. Areas most likely to support special-status species include the Trinity River corridor, South Fork Trinity River watershed, Trinity Alps, high-elevation montane forests, wet meadows, and riparian vegetation associated with creeks, springs, and lakes.

Construction

Implementation of the proposed project would allow for population and housing growth through 2050, though most growth is expected to occur within existing unincorporated communities such as Weaverville, Hayfork, Lewiston, Trinity Center, Post Mountain, Douglas City, and Junction City. These communities include existing infrastructure, disturbed land cover, and areas with reduced habitat value, although isolated mature trees, riparian segments, and pockets of vegetation within and adjacent to developed areas may still support nesting birds, bats, and other wildlife species.

The proposed project would direct new development primarily toward existing community footprints and discourage expansion into rural lands through policies promoting clustered development. Additionally, the proposed project would maintain extensive land use designations intended to conserve open space, resource lands, and natural habitats, including Agriculture, Resource Land (RE), Open Space (OS), and State/Federal Public Lands (SFP). These designations encompass the majority of the County's natural habitats, thereby reducing the likelihood that proposed project buildout would result in extensive conversion of habitat used by special-status species.

However, development facilitated by the project could result in temporary or localized construction impacts, including vegetation removal, riparian disturbance, noise, and lighting, which could affect wildlife if such activities occur near sensitive habitat. The Trinity River, South Fork Trinity River, and numerous tributaries provide habitat for listed anadromous fish species; therefore, work near creeks or stream crossings may temporarily degrade aquatic or riparian habitat. Additionally, mature trees may provide nesting or roosting habitat for birds and bats protected under the MBTA and CFGC.

In addition to community-focused growth, the Planning Area includes dispersed agricultural, resource production, and rural residential lands where commercial cannabis cultivation may occur consistent with proposed land use designations. Cannabis cultivation sites are often located in forested or rural locations that may contain suitable habitat for special-status species. Activities associated with cannabis facility construction, such as vegetation clearing, grading, road improvements, water diversion, groundwater

extraction, installation of fencing or lighting, and placement of temporary structures, may result in localized impacts on special-status species. Impacts from future cannabis cultivation projects would be reduced to **less than significant** by the 2020 EIR mitigation requirements.

Development facilitated by the project would be subject to the provisions of the various federal and state natural resources regulations and their respective permitting processes. The following proposed General Plan goals, policies, and programs would reduce impacts on special-status species and their habitats: Goal COS-3 (Fish and Wildlife Habitat), Policy COS-3.1 (Fish and Wildlife Preservation), Policy COS-3.2 (Diversified Recreational Uses), Policy COS-3.5 (Fish and Wildlife Protection), Policy COS-3.6 (Biological Resource Assessments), Policy COS-3.7 (Stream Protection), Policy COS-3.8 (Fish Population Restoration), Policy COS-3.9 (Tribal Conservation Consultation), Policy COS-3.10 (Conservation Planning), Policy COS-3.11 (Ungulate Habitat), Policy COS-3.12 (Large Predator Habitat), and Policy COS-3.13 (Invasive Species Management).

Policy COS-3.1 promotes the long-term preservation and stewardship of fish and wildlife populations and their habitats throughout Trinity County, supporting maintenance of ecological functions in forests, riparian systems, meadows, and open space areas where many special-status species occur. Policy COS-3.2 allows recreational, educational, and scientific uses that are compatible with maintaining thriving ecosystems, ensuring these uses do not degrade sensitive habitats relied upon by special-status species. Policies COS-3.5 and COS-3.6 require the County to evaluate and protect habitat for special-status species before permitting development. Policy COS 3.6, in particular, requires preparation of Biological Resource Assessments (BRA) for development in areas of potentially high biological sensitivity, providing early identification of special-status species and enabling avoidance during project design. However, as written, Policy COS 3.6 is open-ended and does not provide specificity on when a BRA is necessary. Therefore, adequate protections of special-status species are not ensured and impacts to special-status species would be **potentially significant**.

Policy COS-3.7 establishes stream protection standards, ensuring perennial and ephemeral streams remain in as natural a condition as possible. This preserves riparian habitat essential for Chinook salmon, summer-run steelhead trout, foothill yellow-legged frog, and riparian-associated birds and mammals. Policy COS-3.8 supports restoration of riverine ecosystems and efforts to increase streamflows and improve aquatic habitat conditions for salmonids and other aquatic species. Policies COS-3.9 through COS-3.12 promote tribal consultation and collaborative species-specific conservation planning for vulnerable taxa such as ungulates and large predators. These policies preserve landscape-scale habitat functions and predator-prey dynamics that also indirectly support vegetation communities and ecological processes important to special-status species. Policy COS-3.13 supports invasive species prevention, which is important in aquatic habitats where invasive plants can displace rare species such as Indian Valley brodiaea and Tracy's beardtongue, as well as amphibians such as Cascades frog and foothill yellow-legged frog that depend on intact hydrologic conditions and vegetative structure.

Collectively, these policies provide comprehensive direction to preserve critical habitat, maintain viable fish and wildlife populations, and avoid or reduce impacts on sensitive biological resources during development review. Their implementation would reduce the potential for construction of future development, including cannabis facilities, to adversely affect special-status species by preserving habitat, requiring biological evaluation, maintaining stream and riparian integrity, and preventing invasive species spread.

Given the distribution of suitable habitat for special-status species across the Planning Area, construction associated with both project-facilitated development and cannabis facilities could result in localized adverse effects to special-status species if activities occur directly within their habitat. However, the proposed land use pattern limits new development outside existing communities, while the proposed Conservation and Open Space Element provides comprehensive direction to evaluate and avoid impacts to special-status species and sensitive habitats. This framework reduces the likelihood that new cannabis cultivation or expansion of existing sites would occur without prior biological assessment and compliance with resource protection policies.

Project-level compliance with applicable federal and state regulations, such as FESA and CESA requirements, CDFW Lake and Streambed Alteration requirements, and Clean Water Act permitting, along with General Plan policies requiring biological evaluation and habitat protection, would reduce the potential for significant impacts on special-status species.

Overall, because Policy COS 3.6 does not provide the necessary specificity for protections of special-status species, construction-related impacts on special-status species and their habitats would be **potentially significant**.

Operation

Implementation of the proposed project may increase traffic volumes, roadway capacity, and lighting, which could elevate wildlife-vehicle collision risk, reduce habitat connectivity, and introduce operational disturbance that affects behavior, movement, and survivorship of special-status species. Additionally, implementation of the proposed project may result in changes in water and quality and vegetation community shifts, which could indirectly affect aquatic, riparian, and terrestrial species. Operational impacts would be reduced through compliance with applicable federal and state natural resource regulations and implementation of proposed goals, policies, and programs, including Goal COS-3 and Policies COS-3.1, COS-3.2, COS-3.5, COS-3.6, and COS-3.7 through COS-3.13. As discussed above, these policies collectively provide mechanisms to avoid, minimize, or reduce long-term operational impacts on special-status species. Therefore, operations-related impacts on special-status species and their habitats would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

BIO-1 Revise Proposed Policy COS 3.6

The County shall include the following revision to General Plan Policy COS 3.6 (Biological Resource Assessment) prior to adoption of the General Plan (revision shown with underlined text):

> **Policy COS 3.6 Biological Resource Assessment.** If determined necessary based on preliminary review conducted by County staff, require new development proposed in an area of potentially high biological sensitivity to prepare a Biological Resource Assessment (BRA) that includes measures for mitigating any potentially sensitive impacts to biological resources to the greatest extent feasible. The County shall require the preparation of a BRA for any non-infill (as defined by PRC Section 21061.3) project that would remove native or naturalized vegetation communities. The BRA shall be conducted by a qualified biologist approved by the County. The qualified biologist shall assess habitat suitability of the proposed development area for all special-status plants, wildlife species, jurisdictional waters, and sensitive habitats having documented occurrences within the proposed development's USGS quadrangle map and surrounding eight quadrangle maps, as appropriate.

The County shall require the implementation of mitigation measures recommended in BRAs prepared pursuant to Policy COS 3.6 as conditions of approval on individual development projects.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant with the implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1, by clarifying when a BRA is necessary. Mitigation Measure BIO-1 requires that a BRA be conducted for projects that are non-infill and would remove native or naturalized vegetation communities. Mitigation Measure BIO-1 also specifies the requirements for conducting the BRA, including qualifications of staff and required contents. With this mitigation measure, potential impacts would be reduced to **less than significant**.

Threshold 2:	Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?
Threshold 3:	Would the project 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?

Impact BIO-2 Development facilitated by the project could adversely impact riparian habitat, other sensitive natural communities, or protected wetlands in the Planning Area. However, federal, state, and local regulations, as well as proposed General Plan goals and policies would ensure riparian habitat, sensitive natural communities, and wetlands are not substantially impacted. Impacts would be less than significant.

Riparian habitat, riverine features, wetlands, and other sensitive natural communities occur throughout the Planning Area. These habitats are concentrated along the Trinity River, South Fork Trinity River, numerous tributaries, springs, wet meadows, and lake shorelines, as well as in montane riparian corridors associated with high-elevation streams and seeps.

Construction

Most development facilitated by the proposed project would occur within existing unincorporated communities such as Weaverville, Hayfork, Lewiston, Douglas City, Junction City, and Trinity Center, where development has already occurred and where wetlands and riparian resources are less prevalent than in surrounding natural areas. However, urbanized development may require infrastructure upgrades, including stormwater systems, roadway improvements, and utility extensions, some of which may occur adjacent to or across waterways, drainage features, or riparian corridors. Development in rural residential, agricultural, resource lands, or cannabis-allowing zones has a greater likelihood of intersecting riparian features, small streams, springs, or seeps. New agricultural uses and cannabis cultivation sites, which are often located in more remote, forested settings, may require access improvements, water storage installation, grading, and vegetation clearing that could occur near sensitive riparian or wetland features.

Project construction may require work, including dredge or fill, within potentially jurisdictional wetlands and streams and could require ground disturbance in riparian habitats associated with these wetlands and streams. Future development in areas identified as containing potentially jurisdictional waters and/or wetlands, streambed/banks, or riparian vegetation would be subject to the permit requirements of the USACE, North Coast RWQCB, and CDFW, pursuant to Section 404 and 401 of CWA, the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, and/or CFGC Section 1600 *et seq*. Actual jurisdictional areas would be determined by the state and federal authorities at the time that permits are requested. *CEQA Guidelines* Section 21803 would be implemented through reliance on information and permitting determinations provided by agencies such as CDFW, the RWQCB, and the USACE during project-level review.

Reasonably foreseeable development within or adjacent to sensitive habitats could result in direct impacts through the removal of vegetation, filling of wetland habitat, runoff of pollutants into riparian habitats or wetlands, compaction of soils, and/or indirectly through dust and vegetation thinning. The issuance of a grading permit for ministerial and discretionary projects requires obtaining other permits required by state or federal agencies. These include but are not limited to streambed alteration agreements from the CDFW and permits for dredge and fill of wetlands and certain watercourses from the USACE and RWQCB. These authorizations may also be required as conditions of approval for grading work to commence. Approval of permits also requires findings that the proposed grading will not result in erosion, stream sediment, or other adverse off-site effects to riparian habitat.

Future development on sites one acre or larger would require implementation of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan BMPs, in accordance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Construction Stormwater General Permit. This would reduce the potential for eroded soil and any

contaminants attached to that soil to contaminate a waterbody following a storm event. Impacts related to drainage and pollution are further discussed in Section 4.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*.

The proposed General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element includes several policies that directly protect riparian habitat, wetlands, and other sensitive natural communities. Policies COS-3.6 (Biological Resource Assessment), COS-3.7 (Stream Protection), COS-3.8 (Fish Population Restoration), COS-3.14 (Meadows and Wetland Habitat), and COS-3.15 (Streamlined Permitting for Restoration Projects) provide direction to maintain and restore hydrologic systems, protect riparian vegetation, avoid channel modification, and conserve wet meadow habitats throughout the Planning Area. Policy COS-3.6 in particular requires preparation of Biological Resource Assessments for development in non-infill areas with native vegetation and identification of sensitive habitats and jurisdictional waters. These policies, together with existing state and federal regulatory requirements, would help reduce the potential for impacts on sensitive aquatic, riparian, and wetland resources during individual project planning and permitting. Therefore, construction-related impacts on riparian habitat, sensitive natural communities, and wetlands would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 4:	Would the project 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?

Impact BIO-3 Development facilitated by the project would conserve open space throughout the Planning Area, as directed by policies in the proposed General Plan. Impacts to wildlife movement corridors and wildlife nursery sites would be less than significant.

Wildlife movement corridors, habitat linkages, and large natural landscape blocks occur throughout the Planning Area. The California Essential Habitat Connectivity mapping and CDFW Biogeographic Information and Observation System data show that Trinity County supports regionally important connectivity between the Trinity Mountains, Salmon Mountains, and adjacent national forest lands, with major linkages following the Trinity River, South Fork Trinity River, and forested ridgelines across the Trinity and Six Rivers National Forests. These conserved blocks and connecting corridors support movement of wide-ranging species that rely on intact canopy, riparian cover, and low-disturbance habitat for dispersal.

Construction

The proposed project would direct most future development toward existing unincorporated communities (including Weaverville, Hayfork, Lewiston, Douglas City, Junction City, and Trinity Center), where land is already disturbed and where wildlife movement opportunities are reduced relative to the surrounding national forest and open space lands. Outside of these community areas, large expanses of land are designated Resource Land, Open Space, Agriculture, and State/Federal Public Lands, all of which preserve extensive connected habitat and reduce the potential for fragmentation of regional movement corridors.

However, some development facilitated by the project may occur within or adjacent to movement pathways. Construction activities in forested or riparian areas could temporarily disrupt wildlife movement through increased noise, lighting, vegetation removal, or placement of physical barriers. Because many linkages in Trinity County follow riparian corridors, construction near streams or drainages

may also temporarily affect movement for aquatic or semi-aquatic species, including anadromous fish that rely on the Trinity River and associated tributaries for migration.

The following proposed goals and policies would minimize impacts on wildlife movement corridors and nursery sites: Goal COS-3 (Fish and Wildlife Habitat), Policy COS-3.1 (Fish and Wildlife Preservation), Policy COS-3.5 (Fish and Wildlife Protection), Policy COS-3.7 (Stream Protection), Policy COS-3.8 (Fish Population Restoration), Policy COS-3.16 (Natural Habitat and Wildlife Corridors), Policy COS-3.17 (Rewilding), and Policy COS-3.18 (Wildlife Connectivity Areas). Policy COS-3.1 supports long-term stewardship and maintenance of wildlife habitat across the Planning Area, including intact forestlands, riparian corridors, and large natural landscape blocks that function as important movement routes for wide-ranging wildlife. Policy COS-3.5 further requires the County to consider the protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife populations and their habitats when evaluating proposed development, ensuring that potential barriers to movement are identified and avoided during project planning. Policies COS-3.7 and COS-3.8 reinforce protection of the county's stream systems, which serve as critical movement corridors for both aquatic species, such as salmonids in the Trinity River and South Fork Trinity River, and for terrestrial wildlife that rely on riparian vegetation for cover, forage, and safe passage. By maintaining natural stream conditions, requiring stream protection standards, and supporting efforts to restore creek and river flows, these policies help preserve movement routes spanning the Planning Area's forested watersheds. Policy COS-3.16 calls for preserving and expanding wildlife corridors and natural lands throughout the County to enhance ecological functions and scientific, recreational, and habitat values. This policy directly prevents fragmentation and supports uninterrupted movement of species across forested and riparian landscapes. Policy COS-3.17 encourages restoration of ecological processes, reintroduction of native species, and expansion of wilderness areas, all of which enhance connectivity and restore large-scale habitat mosaics. Policy COS-3.18 directs the County to identify existing and planned wildlife passages and avoid siting development in these areas, ensuring that key movement pathways remain functional as growth occurs in the Planning Area.

Considering the proposed project contains policies to reduce impacts to stream corridors and protect wildlife movement corridors and open space, construction of development facilitated by the project would result in **less than significant** impacts related to wildlife movement corridors.

Operation

While construction activities would predominately result in direct impacts on wildlife movement corridors through ground disturbance and development of previously undeveloped areas, implementation of the proposed project may also introduce operational features that affect movement patterns over the long term. Certain facility types may require permanent security fencing or other fixed site-protection features that could function as barriers to wildlife movement during operations. These operational features have the potential to restrict movement of some species or incrementally contribute to habitat fragmentation. However, operational impacts would be minimized through implementation of General Plan Goal COS-3 and Policies COS-3.1, COS-3.5, COS-3.7, COS-3.8, COS-3.16, COS-3.17, and COS-3.18, all of which would maintain habitat connectivity and guide development siting away from key movement areas. With these policies in place, the proposed project's operational impacts related to wildlife movement corridors would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 5:	Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

Impact BIO-4 Development facilitated by the project would be required to comply with applicable local policies and ordinances protecting biological resources. Impacts would be less than significant.

Construction

Development facilitated by the project could occur on parcels that contain County-owned and maintained trees. Removal or alteration of these trees would be subject to the County Managed Tree Ordinance (Chapter 13.15 of the Trinity County Code of Ordinances). Specifically, development would be required to adhere to Chapter 13.15.120 (Tree removal), which prohibits the removal, aboveground cutting, or disturbance of any county owned and managed tree without approval of the Community Tree Advisory Committee. Development facilitated by the project would be required to comply with the provisions of the County Managed Tree Ordinance, which would avoid or minimize potential impacts to County owned and maintained trees. Therefore, construction of development facilitated by the project would result in **less than significant** impacts related to conflicts with local biological resources policies and ordinances.

Operation

Operation of future development facilitated by the project could affect County-owned and maintained trees through long-term changes in site drainage patterns associated with grading, roadway improvements, and infrastructure maintenance. Altered surface or subsurface hydrology within tree root zones could reduce soil moisture availability, resulting in tree stress, reduced vigor, or increased susceptibility to disease over time. However, operational impacts would be minimized through implementation of General Plan Goal COS 3 and Policies COS 3.5 (Fish and Wildlife Protection), COS 3.6 (Biological Resource Assessment), COS 3.7 (Stream Protection), COS 5.1 (Best Management Practices), and COS 6.3 (Slope Landscaping and Maintenance). Therefore, operational impacts related to consistency with local biological resources policies and ordinances would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 6:	Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

Impact BIO-5 The proposed project would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. This impact would be less than significant.

The Planning Area is partially overlapped by the Sierra Pacific Land and Timber Company Forestland Management Program Habitat Conservation Plan and Safe Harbor Agreement in the Sacramento River and Trinity River Basins, California, which applies to forestland management activities on lands owned or managed by Sierra Pacific Land and Timber Company within those basins (Sierra Pacific Industries Forestland Management Program 2020). However, the proposed project would not alter conservation measures, covered activities, or species protections established by the plan. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with this plan. This impact would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

4.4.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope of the cumulative biological resources analysis is defined as the USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles containing and surrounding the Planning Area. This cumulative impact area encompasses portions of Shasta, Siskiyou, Humboldt, Mendocino, and Tehama counties and captures regional habitat connectivity, watershed features, and wildlife movement patterns that extend beyond county boundaries. This approach is appropriate because sensitive habitats and wildlife populations occur across a continuous landscape, and species movement is not constrained by jurisdictional limits. The cumulative development scenario is described in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting*.

Most of the cumulative impact area consists of extensive natural landscapes dominated by conifer forest, hardwood forest, shrubland, riparian corridors, montane meadows, and large blocks of federally managed land. Although cumulative development in neighboring jurisdictions is expected to occur in or near established communities or previously disturbed areas, some projects may be located where suitable habitat for special-status species remains. As a result, special-status species and nesting birds may be present in or adjacent to cumulative project sites. These projects would be subject to federal and state regulations protecting listed species, and migratory birds, requiring surveys and avoidance/minimization measures where habitat occurs. Accordingly, although cumulative development would result in ongoing incremental impacts on regulated natural resources across the region, compliance with regulatory requirements would reduce cumulative impacts on special-status species to a less-than-significant level.

The cumulative impact area includes a network of streams, rivers, riparian zones, wetlands, wet meadows, seeps, and other sensitive natural communities that occur throughout the North Coast region. Cumulative development could contribute to incremental loss or degradation of wetlands, streambanks, riparian vegetation, or sensitive natural communities through ground disturbance, vegetation removal, or hydrologic alteration. However, cumulative projects across the region would comply with federal and state permitting requirements under Clean Water Act Sections 401 and 404, the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, and CDFW Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et seq., which require delineation, avoidance where feasible, and mitigation for unavoidable impacts to waters and riparian habitats. These regulatory requirements would reduce cumulative impacts such that impacts to wetlands, riparian habitat, and sensitive natural communities would be less than significant.

The cumulative impact area contains interconnected wildlife movement corridors and Essential Connectivity Areas that span the North Coast region, including major linkages across the Trinity and Six Rivers National Forests and along the Trinity River and South Fork Trinity River. These corridors support wide-ranging mammals, migratory birds, and aquatic species moving across county boundaries. While most cumulative development is expected to occur near established communities, projects in rural areas could incrementally affect wildlife movement through habitat removal, noise, lighting, or increased human presence. However, regional land use plans and permitting frameworks (e.g., the proposed General Plan) generally avoid placing new development in core habitat linkages and require specific measures to avoid obstructing movement. Given these protections, cumulative impacts on wildlife movement corridors across the region would be less than significant.

Cumulative development would be required by local jurisdictions to comply with local policies or ordinances protection biological resources. Therefore, cumulative development would have a less than significant cumulative impact involving conflicts with biological resource policies and ordinances.

Although the Sierra Pacific Land and Timber Company Forestland Management Program Habitat Conservation Plan and Safe Harbor Agreement applies to certain privately managed forestlands within the cumulative impact area, this plan governs site-specific forest management activities on covered lands and would operate independently of cumulative projects. Cumulative projects would not authorize activities subject to the Habitat Conservation Plan, modify its conservation strategy, or interfere with its implementation. Accordingly, the cumulative impact related to conflict with adopted Habitat Conservation Plans or Natural Community Conservation Plans would not be significant.

4.5 Cultural Resources

This section addresses potential impacts on cultural resources from implementation of the proposed project. Cultural resources comprise districts, structures, buildings, sites, areas of traditional use, or objects with historical, architectural, cultural, archaeological, or scientific importance. These resources include archaeological resources (historic and prehistoric), architectural resources (built structures), and traditional cultural properties (properties important to Native American groups for ancestral, religious, spiritual, or traditional reasons).

4.5.1 Setting

a. Regional Prehistory

The following discussion is based on a synthesis of Moratto (1984), Hildebrandt (2007), and King et al. (2016). Trinity County is further refined into the North Coast and Klamath Mountains/North Coast Range by King et al. (2016) based on time-sensitive projectile points and interior versus coastal archaeological data. Trinity County is located in the inland portion of this archaeological subregion, with human occupation spanning from the Paleoindian Period to the present. Based on King et al. (2016), the prehistoric cultural timeline of the Northwest Coastal Subregion can be divided into five periods: the Paleoindian Period (13,400-12,800 calibrated Before Present [cal BP]), the Borax Lake Pattern (8850-5700 cal BP), Squaw Creek Pattern (5700-4500 cal BP), the Mendocino Pattern (4500-1500 cal BP), and the Tulawat (previously Gunther) Pattern (post-dating 1500 cal BP).

Paleoindian Period (13,400-12,800 cal BP)

Artifacts dating from the Paleoindian Period are the earliest evidence of human existence in the Northwest Coastal Subregion and consist of fluted projectile points and chipped stone crescents (King et al. 2016, Moratto 1984). Fluted projectile points, a stone tool technology, and chipped stone crescents have been identified in adjacent Mendocino and Siskiyou counties of California and provide proof of the long-standing human occupation of the region (King et al. 2016). However, these types of artifacts have been found mainly in isolated contexts lacking association with other, well-dated artifact assemblages or good stratigraphic contexts (Hildebrandt 2007). Due to the sparse number of artifacts from this period, little is known about the inhabitants of the Northwest Coastal Subregion during this period of time and King et al. (2016) document a gap in diagnostic artifacts between 12,800 and 10,500 cal BP. This in no way denotes a lack of occupation, only a gap in the archaeological data currently available.

Borax Lake Pattern (8850-5700 cal BP)

The Borax Lake Pattern has been well documented within the Northwest Coastal Subregion, with a number of archaeological sites that have been identified north of the Clear Lake Basin and into Humboldt and Trinity Counties (King et al. 2016). Artifact assemblages associated with these sites include fluted projectile points but also include serrated bifaces, ovoid flake tools, handstones, millingslabs, and edge-flaked spalls. Archaeological sites from this time period are found in a wide range of environmental contexts, even from ridgetops at 4,500 to 6,000 feet above mean sea level in Humboldt County, in upland areas, and along terraces adjacent to the Trinity River (Hildebrandt 2007). Archaeological evidence indicates the Borax Lake Pattern was widespread through the Northwest, with it persisting longer in the more northern areas as evidence by the later indented-based points (King et al. 2016). Hildebrandt (2007) interprets this to represent a “forager” lifestyle based on the composition and homogeneity of the artifact assemblages, and King et al. (2016) note that faunal and floral remains are unlikely to preserve due to the conifer leaf litter and heavy rainfall. The lack of faunal and floral remains limit much of the dating in the region to obsidian hydration dates that are less understood in this region. (King et al. 2016).

Squaw Creek Pattern (5700-4500 cal BP)

The Squaw Creek Pattern is introduced to this subregion by King et al. (2016) as a provisional pattern based on contracting-stemmed points on the Pilot Ridge/South Fork Mountain, hypothesizing an affinity with the Squaw Creek Pattern in Shasta County. Previously this time period was lumped into the Berkeley Pattern, as can be seen in Hildebrandt (2007), which King et al. (2016) attribute to a lack of currently identified, single component assemblages falling between the Borax Lake and Mendocino Patterns.

Mendocino Pattern (4500-1500 cal BP)

The Mendocino Pattern is characterized by side-notched, corner-notched, and concave-base dart points, handstones, millingstones, various flake and cobble tools (including Mckee unifaces), and to a lesser degree cobble mortars and pestles (King et al. 2016). Hildebrandt (2007) describes the Mckee unifaces being important in assemblages north of Sonoma County. According to King et al. (2016), the Mendocino Pattern sites represent temporary hunting camps or seasonal encampments in the coastal regions, with some evidence of greater residential stability further inland. The coastal sites may represent logistical forays from more substantial residential sites, with the intensive harvesting and storage of salmon and acorns emerging near the middle of this temporal period, around 2500 cal BP (King et al. 2016).

Tulawat Pattern (post-dating 1500 cal BP)

The Tulawat Pattern marks several major changes in northwestern California, with significant increases in archaeological site frequencies, evidence of the first permanent village sites emerge for the first time, and an increased diversity in artifact assemblages (King et al. 2016). Characterized by the Tuluwat (formerly Gunther) Pattern of artifacts, items that are specialized for woodworking and used in the construction of plank houses and canoes appear in archaeological findings of the region (King et al. 2016). The interior counties of northern California, such as Trinity County, have lacked large scale archaeological excavations, and so less is known about interior sites of this time period. One interior archaeological site within Redwood National Park (CA-HUM 439) has yielded projectile points similar to those of the Tuluwat Pattern coastal sites; however, the CA-HUM-439 site contained a higher amount of obsidian than at coastal sites (Moratto 1984). Other small-scale excavations along the Smith River (CA-DNO-26) have found small amounts of salmon, sea mammal, and marine shellfish, indicating connections to coastal groups during the Emergent Period (King et al. 2016).

b. Ethnographic Setting

Native American groups living in northwest California have long been associated with the larger Northwest Coast Culture Area, differing significantly from other groups in California. The Northwest Coast Culture Area extends from Canada and Alaska (including groups like the Tlingit and Kwakiutl) south to Cape Mendocino, where groups like the Tolowa, Yurok, Wiyot, Karok, and Hupa represent the southernmost expression of the culture (King et al. 2016).

These groups lived in relatively high densities and occupied permanent coastal and interior riverine settlements, favoring bays lagoons, or the mouths of streams (King et al. 2016, Kroeber 1925). Settlements were supported by the storage of acorns, the procurement of clams, saltwater fishing, and the use of large communal fish weirs (King et al. 2016, Kroeber 1925). River canoes, large oceangoing canoes of the northwestern type, composite harpoons, and redwood smoke houses were developed to aid in the harvest and storage of fish and marine mammals (King et al. 2016, Kroeber 1925). The Tolowa, Yurok, Wiyot, Karok, and Hupa all lived in semisubterranean plank houses located in permanently occupied villages (King et al. 2016).

The Wintuan family of the Penutian linguistic stock includes Wintu, Nomlaki, and Patwin (DuBois 1935). Analysis of historical linguistic indicates that Wintuan languages represent relatively recent migration from Oregon, based on sets of plant and animal species names in the Wintuan languages (Golla 2011). The Wintu/Nomlaki moved south out of Oregon, settled in the northern valley, divided into two distinct languages, and then spread through the various tributaries of the Sacramento and upper Trinity Rivers

(King et al. 2016). Linguistic data for Trinity County is primarily Wintu-Nomlaki, with northern Trinity County speaking Wintuan and the southern portion (south of Cottonwood Creek) speaking Nomlaki, with a small portion of western Trinity County in the vicinity of Hyampom speaking Chamariko (Golla 2011).

The Wintu social unit consisted of several families in loosely scattered bark houses ranging from four to several dozen (DuBois 1935). Seasonally, they hunted deer, elk, and small game; fished for salmon and steelhead; and harvested berries, seeds, and other plants (Dubois 1935, Kroeber 1925). The Wintu were known for basketry that was both beautiful and useful, and traded with various native groups living in coastal and valley areas of California. The Wintu way of life was forever changed with the incursion of trappers and settlers ready to exploit this resource-rich area (King et al. 2016). By the early 1800s nearly three-quarters of the Wintu people had been decimated by diseases to which they had no immunity. The Gold Rush brought even greater changes for the native people, most notably the loss of their traditional lands and culture (National Park Service 2025). The Redding Rancheria was established in 1922 and was where the displaced members of the Wintu, Yana, and Pit River tribes were required to settle. According to the United States Census Bureau, the total population of Wintu people is estimated at 1,447 in 2021 (United States Census Bureau 2021).

c. Regional History

Post-European contact history for the State of California is generally divided into three periods: The Spanish Period (1769-1822), the Mexican Period (1822-1848), and the American Period (1848-Present).

Spanish Period (1769-1822)

Direct and sustained contact between Native and non-native peoples in far northwestern California came relatively late, when compared to the southern and central parts of the state. Despite this later contact, non-native influences were felt early-on, with the arrival of European trade goods and diseases like cholera, smallpox, and measles, which spread between tribal groups. The most common and readily identified archaeological markers of this period are glass trade beads. Glass beads were introduced by the first European mariners, were distributed widely by the Spanish mission system, were used by the Russian-American Fur Company to purchase the land for Colony (Fort) Ross, and continued to be traded to native people in California by fur trappers, gold miners, settlers, and merchants well into the 1800s (King et al. 2016).

Mexican Period (1822-1848)

The Mexican Period commenced when news of the success of the Mexican Revolution (1810-1821) against the Spanish crown reached California in 1822. This period was an era of extensive interior land grant development and exploration by American fur trappers west of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Beginning in 1833, mission lands were conferred as rancho grants. Governor Pío Pico and his predecessors made more than 600 rancho grants between 1833 and 1846, putting most of the state's lands into private ownership for the first time. The Mexican Period saw an increased importance of sea trade and an influx of American settlers which motivated the United States to expand their territory into California. The United States supported a small group of insurgents from Sonoma during the Bear Flag Revolt. The Bear Flaggers captured Sonoma in June of 1846. In July, Commodore John Drake Sloat landed in Monterey and proceeded to take Yerba Buena, Sutter's Fort, Bodega Bay, and Sonoma. That same month, Captain Thomas Fallon entered San Jose and raised the United States flag over the town hall. Fighting between American and Mexican forces continued until Mexico surrendered in 1847 (Rolle 2003).

American Period (1848-Present)

The American Period began with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, which marked the end of the United States' war with Mexico. The discovery of gold in northern California in 1848 led to the California Gold Rush. The United States agreed to pay Mexico $15 million for the conquered territory,

including California, Nevada, Utah, and parts of Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, and Wyoming. The existing Mexican land grants were expected to be recognized, but over time, as settlement increased throughout the state, disputes arose between rancheros and settlers. Rancho owners expended much money and effort attempting to defend their land holdings. Rancheros struggled with this loss of income, debt, and costs incurred from legally defending their land under the new American law. As a result, many of the rancho lands were sold or lost. Most were subdivided into agricultural parcels or towns. In 1850, California was ratified as a State in the United States and by 1853, the population of California exceeded 300,000. Thousands of settlers and immigrants continued to move into the state, particularly after the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 (Rolle 2003).

Trinity County

Though likely visited by fur traders like Jedediah Smith in the early 1800s, the area's first recorded exploration by a non-native person was by Major Pierson P. Reading, who named the Trinity River in 1845. Thinking that the river emptied into the Pacific Ocean at Trinidad Bay, he named the river "Trinity", an anglicization of "Trinidad." Several years later two miners, while looking for a way to the ocean, discovered that the river flows into the Klamath River, not into the ocean (Trinity County Museum 2022). By 1848, gold had been discovered at Readings Creek and 1849 saw a major discovery of gold deposits on the Trinity River. By 1851, Weaverville won the County Seat and Trinity County was officially established (Trinity County Museum 2022).

d. Known Cultural Resources

According to the Office of Historic Preservation, eight resources within Trinity County are listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), as a California Historical Landmark, or as a Point of Interest, as shown in Table 4.5-1. The three historic districts listed also contain individually contributing elements.

Table 4.5-1 Historical Resources in Trinity County

Resource Name	Designation	City
Bowerman Barn	National Register of Historic Places	Trinity Center
Helena Historic District	National Register of Historic Places	Helena
La Grange Mine	California Historical Landmark	Weaverville
Lewiston Historic District	National Register of Historic Places	Lewiston
Old Scott Mountain Road	Point of Interest	Trinity Center
Trinity Center 100F Hall/Odd Fellows Building, Comet Lodge	Point of Interest	Trinity Center
Weaverville Historic District	National Register of Historic Places	Weaverville
Weaverville Joss House	California Historical Landmark	Weaverville

Source: Office of Historic Preservation 2025

4.5.2 Regulatory Setting

a. Federal Regulations

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

Federal cultural resource protection is governed by several laws, including the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 United States Code 470), the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, and regulations administered by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. These laws establish procedures for evaluating impacts on historic properties eligible for the NRHP. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and its implementing regulations (36 Code of Federal Regulations

Part 800) form the primary federal framework for cultural resource review, requiring consideration of effects on properties listed or eligible for listing in the NRHP. The NRHP, managed by the National Park Service, is the national inventory of historic resources, including buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts of historic, architectural, engineering, archaeological, or cultural significance at the local, state, or national level. The criteria (36 Code of Federal Regulations 60.4) for determining NRHP eligibility are as follows:

1. The property is at least 50 years old (however, properties under 50 years of age that are of exceptional importance or are contributors to a district can also be included in the NRHP);
2. It retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and associations; and
3. It possesses at least one of the following characteristics:
    a. Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history (events).
    b. Association with the lives of persons significant in the past (persons).
    c. Distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant, distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (architecture).
    d. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history (information potential). Listing in the NRHP does not entail specific protection or assistance for a property, but it does guarantee recognition in planning for federal or federally assisted projects, eligibility for federal tax benefits, and qualification for federal historic preservation assistance. Additionally, project effects on properties listed in the NRHP must be evaluated under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

National Register of Historic Places

Although the project does not have a federal nexus, properties which are listed in or have been formally determined eligible for listing in the NRHP are automatically listed in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). The following is therefore presented to provide applicable regulatory context. The NRHP was authorized by Section 101 of the National Historic Preservation Act and is the nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. The NRHP recognizes the quality of significance in American, state, and local history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects. Per 36 Code of Federal Regulations Part 60.4, a property is eligible for listing in the NRHP if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

Criterion A: Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

Criterion B: Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past

Criterion C: Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of installation, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction

Criterion D: Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history

In addition to meeting at least one of the above designation criteria, resources must also retain integrity. The National Park Service recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, considered together, define historic integrity. To retain integrity, a property must possess several, if not all, of these seven qualities, defined as follows:

Location: The place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred

Design: The combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property

Setting: The physical environment of a historic property

Materials: Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property

Workmanship: The physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory

Feeling: A property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time

Association: The direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property

Certain properties are generally considered ineligible for listing in the NRHP, including cemeteries, birthplaces, graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions, relocated structures, or commemorative properties. Additionally, a property must be at least 50 years of age to be eligible for listing in the NRHP. The National Park Service states that 50 years is the general estimate of the time needed to develop the necessary historical perspective to evaluated significance. Properties which are less than 50 years must be determined to have "exceptional importance" to be considered eligible for NRHP listing.

b. State Regulations

California Environmental Quality Act

California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21804.1 requires lead agencies to determine if a project could have a significant impact on historical or unique archaeological resources. As defined in PRC Section 21084.1, a historical resource is a resource listed in, or determined eligible for listing in, the CRHR; a resource included in a local register of historical resources or identified in a historical resources survey pursuant to PRC Section 5024.1(g); or any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that a lead agency determines to be historically significant. PRC Section 21084.1 also states resources meeting the above criteria are presumed to be historically or cultural significant unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates otherwise. Resources listed in the NRHP are automatically listed in the CRHR and are, therefore, historical resources under CEQA. Historical resources may include eligible built environment resources and archaeological resources of the precontact or historic periods.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(c) provides further guidance on the consideration of archaeological resources. If an archaeological resource does not qualify as a historical resource, it may meet the definition of a "unique archaeological resource" as identified in PRC Section 21083.2. PRC Section 21083.2(g) defines a unique archaeological resource as an artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria: 1) it contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information; 2) has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type; or 3) is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

If an archaeological resource does not qualify as a historical or unique archaeological resource, the impacts of a project on those resources will be less than significant and need not be considered further (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.5[c][4]). *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.5 also provides guidance for addressing the potential presence of human remains, including those discovered during the implementation of a project.

According to CEQA, an impact that results in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is considered a significant impact on the environment. A substantial adverse change could result from physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of the historical resource would be materially impaired (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.5 [b][1]). Material impairment is defined as demolition or alteration in an adverse manner of those characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical

significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for inclusion in, the CRHR or a local register (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.5[b][2][A]).

If it can be demonstrated that a project will cause damage to a unique archaeological resource, the lead agency may require reasonable efforts be made to permit any or all of these resources to be preserved in place or left in an undisturbed state. To the extent that resources cannot be left undisturbed, mitigation measures are required (PRC Section 21083.2[a]-[b]).

Section 15126.4 of the *CEQA Guidelines* stipulates an EIR shall describe feasible measures to minimize significant adverse impacts. In addition to being fully enforceable, mitigation measures must be completed within a defined time period and be roughly proportional to the impacts of the project. Generally, a project which is found to comply with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* (the Standards) is considered to be mitigated below a level of significance (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.4 [b][1]). For historical resources of an archaeological nature, lead agencies should also seek to avoid damaging effects where feasible. Preservation in place is the preferred manner to mitigate impacts to archaeological sites; however, data recovery through excavation may be the only option in certain instances (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.4[b][3]).

California Register of Historical Resources

The CRHR was established in 1992 and codified by PRC Sections 5024.1 and 4852. The CRHR is an authoritative listing and guide to be used by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens in identifying the existing historical resources of the state and to indicate which resources deserve to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change (PRC Section 5024.1[a]). The criteria for eligibility for the CRHR are consistent with the NRHP criteria but have been modified for state use in order to include a range of historical resources that better reflect the history of California (PRC Section 5024.1[b]). Unlike the NRHP however, the CRHR does not have a defined age threshold for eligibility; rather, a resource may be eligible for the CRHR if it can be demonstrated sufficient time has passed to understand its historical or architectural significance. Furthermore, resources may still be eligible for listing in the CRHR even if they do not retain sufficient integrity for NRHP eligibility. Generally, the California Office of Historic Preservation recommends resources over 45 years of age be recorded and evaluated for historical resources eligibility.

Properties are eligible for listing in the CRHR if they meet one of more of the following criteria:

Criterion 1: Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage

Criterion 2: Is associated with the lives of persons important to our past

Criterion 3: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values

Criterion 4: Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history

California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5

Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code states that in the event of discovery or recognition of any human remains in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, there shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains until the coroner of the county in which the remains are discovered has determined if the remains are subject to the coroner's authority. If the human remains are of Native American origin, the coroner must notify the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours of this identification.

California Public Resources Code Section 5097.98

Section 5097.98 of the California PRC states that the Native American Heritage Commission, upon notification of the discovery of Native American human remains pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, shall immediately notify those persons (i.e., the Most Likely Descendant) it believes to be descended from the deceased. With permission of the landowner or a designated representative, the Most Likely Descendant may inspect the remains and any associated cultural materials and make recommendations for treatment or disposition of the remains and associated grave goods. The Most Likely Descendant shall provide recommendations or preferences for treatment of the remains and associated cultural materials within 48 hours of being granted access to the site.

c. Local Regulations

Trinity County Code of Ordinances

Chapter 17 of the Trinity County Code of Ordinances establishes requirements for architectural review and historic preservation. These provisions apply to all sites listed on the NRHP and other historically significant areas. Approval from the designated review committee is required for proposals that would:

- Demolish, construct, alter, or remove any improvement within a historic district, special treatment area, or designated landmark site
- Modify exterior architectural elements within these areas
- Install, alter, or relocate signage within a historic district or special treatment site
- Remove trees
- Change or remove any feature that affects the visual character of a historic district or special treatment area

4.5.3 Impact Analysis

a. Significance Thresholds

Under CEQA, any project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource would also have a significant effect on the environment. According to Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*, impacts related to cultural resources from the proposed project would be significant if the project would:

1. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5;
2. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5; or
3. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries.

b. Methodology

The significance of a cultural resource and subsequently the significance of any impact is determined by among other things, consideration of whether that resource can increase our knowledge of the past. The determining factors are site content and degree of preservation. A finding of archaeological significance follows the criteria established in the *CEQA Guidelines*.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 (Determining the Significance of Impacts to Archaeological Resources) states:

> (3) […] Generally, a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be "historically significant" if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the CRHR (PRC Section 5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4852).
>
> (4) The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in the CRHR, not included in a local register of historical resources (pursuant to section 5020.1(k) of the PRC), or identified in an historical resources survey (meeting the criteria in section 5024.1(g) of the PRC) does not preclude a lead agency from determining that the resource may be an historical resource as defined in PRC sections 5020.1(j) or 5024.1.
>
> (b) A project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment.

Historical resources are "significantly" affected if there is demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its surroundings. Generally, impacts to historical resources can be mitigated to below a level of significance by following the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings or the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.6[b]). In some circumstances, documentation of an historical resource by way of historic narrative photographs or architectural drawings will not mitigate the impact of demolition below the level of significance (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.4[b][2]). Preservation in place is the preferred form of mitigation for archaeological resources as it retains the relationship between artifact and context and may avoid conflicts with groups associated with the site (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.4[b][3][A]). If an archaeological resource does not meet either the historic resource or the more specific "unique archaeological resource" definition, impacts do not need to be mitigated (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.5[e]). Where the significance of a site is unknown, it is presumed to be significant for the purpose of CEQA.

Much of the potential cannabis-related development contemplated by the project was previously analyzed in the Trinity County Cannabis Program EIR (State Clearinghouse number 2018122049), certified in 2020 (2020 EIR). The 2020 EIR includes Mitigation Measure 3.5-1a, which requires a one-time historic evaluations for existing operations licensed before 2019, and Mitigation Measure 3.5-1b, which requires additional measures to protect historic resources. Those requirements were subsequently incorporated into County Code of Ordinances Chapter 17.43G through Ordinance No. 315-849, adopted in December 2020. In its cultural resources analysis, the 2020 EIR concluded that cannabis cultivation and associated development could occur in areas with historic resources, archaeological resources, or human remains, but that proposed mitigation measures and compliance with existing regulations would reduce potential impacts to a less-than-significant level. Accordingly, the 2020 EIR did not identify any significant and unavoidable impacts related to cultural resources.

Because these regulatory controls are part of existing conditions and because the proposed General Plan establishes a new countywide policy framework that supersedes the 2020 EIR for cannabis activities occurring consistent with the General Plan, this EIR focuses on geology and soil effects not previously addressed or requiring reevaluation under the proposed General Plan.

c. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1:	Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Impact CUL-1 Development facilitated by the project has the potential to impact built-environment historical resources. Proposed General Plan policies would reduce this impact. Impacts would be less than significant.

For purposes of the analysis of impacts to historical resources, historical resources include all resources designated or identified as eligible for listing in the NRHP, CRHR, or County of Trinity Landmarks list. The project does not in itself propose any construction that would impact historical resources; however, future development facilitated by the project could include residential, commercial, industrial, and/or infrastructure projects necessary to accommodate anticipated population growth. Such development could potentially impact historical resources through adjacent development, demolition, and redevelopment.

Based on *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.5, development facilitated by the project would have a significant impact on historical resources if it would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. As discussed in Section 4.5.1, *Setting*, there are eight historical resources listed in and eligible for the NRHP, CRHR, California Landmarks, and/or Points of Interest that are located in the county (Office of Historic Preservation 2025). Three of these are NRHP-listed historic districts in Helena, Lewiston, and Weaverville with a combined 69 acres. In addition, potential historical resources that have not yet been identified may exist. CEQA and local regulations do not specify an age threshold for historical resources. However, guidance from the State Historic Preservation Officer recommends that "sufficient time"—typically 50 years— "must have passed to obtain a scholarly perspective" necessary to evaluate the significance of the historical events with which a property is associated (Office of Historic Preservation 1995). A threshold of 45 years is recommended because there is often "a five-year lag between resource identification and the date that planning decisions are made." (Office of Historic Preservation 1995). Sites subject to development facilitated by the project may contain historical resources that have not yet been identified.

Development facilitated by the project could impact built-environment historical resources through demolition, construction, and reconstruction activities. Generally, new construction of industrial, commercial, and residential development facilitated by the project would be focused in or near established communities. Under Policy CIR 1.9 (Environmental Considerations in Roadway Planning), the proposed General Plan requires that natural and cultural resources be considered during roadway planning and Policy CIR 1.11 (Early Consideration of Environmental Issues) supports the early consideration of environmental issues in the planning and design of transportation facilities. Policy CIR 1.27 (Street Lighting in Historic Districts) requires that updated street lighting within historic districts complement rather than detract from the colors and architecture of the district, thereby reducing the visual impacts to historic properties.

The County is proposing policies to identify, designate, and minimize impacts to built environment historical resources. Proposed General Plan policies COS 8.1 (Historic Preservation), COS 8.2 (Historical Structure Use), COS 8.3 (Historical Design Standards), COS 8.4 (Cultural and Paleontological Resource Assessment), COS 9.1 (Tribal Consultation), COS 9.2 (Tribal Heritage Protection and Compliance), COS 9.3 (Tribal Awareness and Education Partnerships), COS 9.4 (Tribal Collaboration), and COS 9.5 (Native American Heritage) describe measures to identify and minimize impacts to built environment resources and would encourage the identification and designation of, and reduction of impacts to historical resources. Policies COS-8-1 through 8.3 would reduce impacts to historical resources to less than significant by consulting with historic preservation agencies and organizations as appropriate during discretionary project review, encouraging new development to adaptively reuse architecturally or historically significant buildings, and encourage new development to incorporate architectural designs and features that reflect the historical and cultural traditions characteristic to the area and community.

With the implementation of the proposed policies, impacts to built environment resources would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 2:	Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Impact CUL-2 Development facilitated by the project has the potential to impact archaeological resources. Proposed General Plan policies would reduce this impact. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

Effects on archaeological resources can only be determined once a specific project has been proposed because the effects are highly dependent on both the individual project site conditions and the characteristics of the proposed ground-disturbing activity. Ground-disturbing activities, particularly in areas that have not previously been developed with urban uses or utility infrastructure, or when excavation depths exceed those previously attained, have the potential to damage or destroy previously unknown historic or prehistoric archaeological resources that may be present on or below the ground surface. Consequently, damage to or destruction of previously unknown sub-surface cultural resources could occur as a result of development projects implemented under the proposed General Plan. Additionally, there is always the risk of inadvertent discovery of unknown archaeological resources, particularly in areas of high sensitivity.

The proposed General Plan contains goals and policies related to reducing impacts on cultural resources. Specifically, Goals COS-8 and COS-9 and Policies COS 8.1(Historic Preservation), COS 8.2 (Historical Structure Use), COS 8.3 (Historical Design Standards), through COS 8.4 (Cultural and Paleontological Resource Assessment), and COS 9.1 (Tribal Consultation), COS 9.2 (Tribal Heritage Protection and Compliance), COS 9.3 (Tribal Awareness and Education Partnerships), COS 9.4 (Tribal Collaboration), and through COS 9.5 (Native American Heritage) describe measures to identify and minimize impacts to resources. In particular, Policy COS 8.4 would reduce impacts to archaeological resources by requiring a cultural resource assessment by a qualified professional. It is standard practice for qualified professionals to include the results of Policies COS 9.1 through COS 9.5 in a cultural resource assessment, thereby reducing the impacts to archaeological resources.

However, Policy COS 8.4 does not specify the level of effort necessary when conducting the required cultural resource assessments. Identification efforts must be comprehensive and explicit in order to meet data requirement thresholds when determining impacts to and necessary mitigation for the protection of archaeological resources. This includes the collection of recent records search and Sacred Lands Files results as well as geological mapping and regional geoarchaeological overviews. Site recordation should be completed to a level that would allow for the identification of potential impacts and appropriate avoidance measures. Without these specific requirements for future development under the proposed General Plan, future development projects could result in direct or indirect impacts to archaeological resources that could cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of the resource. Therefore, impacts to archaeological resources would be **potentially significant**.

Mitigation Measures

CUL-2 Revise Proposed Policy COS 8.4

The County shall include the following revision to General Plan Policy COS 8.4 (Cultural and Paleontological Resource Assessment) prior to adoption of the General Plan (revision shown with underlined text):

> **Policy COS 8.4 Cultural and Paleontological Resource Assessment.** If determined necessary based on preliminary review conducted by County staff, require new development be assessed for potential cultural and paleontological resources by a qualified professional, and be designed to avoid impacts to these resources whenever possible to the maximum extent feasible. The County shall require that any cultural resource assessment specifically include a records search at the corresponding information center, a Native American Heritage Commission Sacred Lands Files search, and a desktop geoarchaeological assessment of buried site sensitivity. In addition, site records shall be prepared in accordance with the Office of Historic Preservation standards and guidance for any resources identified. Impacts, whenever possible, should be reduced to a less than significant level through appropriate mitigation.

The County shall require the implementation of mitigation measures recommended in cultural and paleontological resource assessments prepared pursuant to Policy COS 8.4 as conditions of approval on individual development projects.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant with the implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-2, by improving identification efforts for both surface and buried resources. Mitigation Measure CUL-2 requires a well-defined and comprehensive assessment for the potential for cultural resources with the most recent information available. The buried site sensitivity analysis would reduce the risk of inadvertent discoveries during construction by identifying areas with higher potential for buried sites. The recordation of identified resources to Office of Historic Preservation standards would aid in the development of effective avoidance measures. With this mitigation measure, potential impacts would be reduced to **less than significant**.

Threshold 3:	Would development facilitated by the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

Impact CUL-3 Ground-disturbing activities associated with development facilitated by the project could unearth human remains. However, compliance with existing regulations and proposed General Plan policies would ensure this impact is less than significant.

Human burials outside of formal cemeteries often occur in prehistoric archeological contexts. These resources could be present in areas where development has not yet occurred or in previously disturbed areas. Excavation during construction activities facilitated by the project could disturb these resources, including Native American burials.

Human burials, in addition to being potential archaeological resources, have specific provisions for treatment in PRC Section 5097. The California Health and Safety Code (Sections 7050.5, 7051, and 7054) has specific provisions for the protection of human burial remains. Existing regulations address the illegality of interfering with human burial remains; protects them from disturbance, vandalism, or destruction; and establishes procedures to be implemented if Native American skeletal remains are discovered. PRC Section 5097.98 also addresses the disposition of Native American burials, protects such remains, and established the Native American Heritage Commission to resolve any related disputes.

Development facilitated by the project would be required to adhere to existing regulations regarding the treatment of human remains. The proposed General Plan also includes several policies to further reduce the risk of disturbing human remains. These are Policies COS 8.1(Historic Preservation), COS 8.2 (Historical Structure Use), COS 8.3 (Historical Design Standards), COS 8.4 (Cultural and Paleontological Resource Assessment), and COS 9.1 (Tribal Consultation), COS 9.2 (Tribal Heritage Protection and Compliance), COS 9.3 (Tribal Awareness and Education Partnerships), COS 9.4 (Tribal Collaboration), and COS 9.5 (Native American Heritage). Thus, impacts to human remains would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

4.5.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope for the cumulative cultural resource impacts is Trinity County and immediately surrounding areas. This geographic scope is appropriate because cultural resource-related impacts are typically site-specific, although cultural resources may cross jurisdictional boundaries. The cumulative development scenario is described in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting*.

Cumulative development may contribute to impacts on cultural resources as growth occurs in the region. The increase in growth from cumulative development may impact existing and previously undisturbed and undiscovered historical or archaeological resources. Therefore, this cumulative impact is considered to be significant. Implementation of Policies COS 8.1 through COS 8.4 would reduce impacts to built environment historical resources but may not in all cases prevent material impairment of the characteristics that convey their historical significance. Given the scope of development anticipated and allowed under the project, the project would not have a considerable contribution to cumulative historical resource impacts. Similarly, proposed General Plan Policies COS 8.1 through COS 8.4, and COS 9.1 through 9.5 would reduce and avoid impacts to archaeological resources. With the implementation of these proposed policies, the project would not have a considerable contribution to cumulative archaeological resource impacts.

Cumulative development has the potential to unearth human remains. Compliance with PRC Section 5097 and California Health and Safety Code (Sections 7050.5, 7051, and 7054) requirements would ensure that human remains are protected and treated appropriately. These regulations would ensure that the cumulative impact to human remains is less than significant.

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4.6 Energy

This section assesses potential impacts on energy from the proposed project. The physical environmental impacts associated with the generation of electricity and burning of fuels have also been accounted for in Section 4.3, *Air Quality,* and Section 4.8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions.*

4.6.1 Setting

Energy relates directly to environmental quality. Energy use, when sourced from fossil fuels, can adversely affect air quality, and generate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that contribute to climate change. Fossil fuels are burned to create electricity to power residences and commercial/industrial buildings, heat and cool buildings, and power vehicles. Transportation energy use is related to the fuel efficiency of cars, trucks, and public transportation; choice of different travel modes such as auto, carpool, and public transit; and miles traveled by these modes. Construction and routine operation and maintenance of transportation infrastructure also consume energy.

a. Energy Fundamentals

Energy is generally consumed either in the form of electricity, measured in kilowatts or megawatts; natural gas or propane, measured in British thermal units (Btu) or cubic feet; and petroleum fuels, such as gasoline or diesel, measured in gallons or liters. Electricity is used primarily for lighting, appliances, and other uses associated with building and vehicle operations. Electricity sources range from renewable (hydroelectric, solar, wind, geothermal, biomass) to nonrenewable (natural gas, oil, nuclear, coal). Natural gas or propane are typically used for space heating, water heating, and cooking. Petroleum fuels are used primarily for powering off-road equipment and vehicles (automobiles, commercial trucks, and other vehicles).

b. Energy Supply

Electricity

Electricity is distributed through the various electric load-serving entities in California. These entities include investor-owned utilities, publicly owned load-serving entities, rural electric cooperatives, community choice aggregators, and electric service providers (California Energy Commission [CEC] 2026c).

According to the CEC, California generated approximately 216,181 gigawatt-hours of electricity in-state in 2024. Approximately 40 percent of this electricity was sourced from natural gas, 39 percent from renewable sources (i.e., solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, small hydroelectric), 12 percent from large hydroelectric sources, and the remaining nine percent from coal, nuclear, oil, other and unspecified sources (CEC 2025).

The Trinity Public Utilities District (Trinity PUD) and Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) provide electric service within Trinity County. Trinity PUD serves the majority of the county and supplies 100 percent carbon-free electricity, primarily from hydroelectric generation associated with the Trinity River Division of the federal Central Valley Project, including Trinity Dam and related facilities (Trinity PUD 2026). Hydroelectric power is considered a renewable and zero-carbon energy resource by the CEC.

PG&E provides electric service to portions of Trinity County not served by Trinity PUD. According to PG&E's 2025 Corporate Sustainability Report, electricity delivered by PG&E to its retail customers was 98 percent GHG-free in 2024, consisting primarily of eligible renewable resources, large hydroelectric power, and nuclear generation. PG&E reports minimal reliance on fossil-fuel generation for retail electricity deliveries, reflecting the company's continued progress toward California's clean energy and greenhouse gas reduction goals (PG&E 2025).

Natural Gas

Natural gas plays an important and varied role in California. According to the California Department of Conservation Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM), net natural gas production in California for 2019 was 129.98 billion cubic feet, or approximately 134,800 billion Btu (DOC 2023).

The 2024 California Gas Report presents a comprehensive outlook for natural gas requirements and supplies for California through the year 2040. California's existing natural gas supply portfolio is regionally diverse. It includes supplies from California onshore and offshore sources, Southwestern United States supply sources, the Rocky Mountains, and Canada (California Gas and Electric Utilities 2024). Nearly 90 percent of California's natural gas supply is from out-of-state imports (CEC 2026f).

Although natural gas is a major energy source statewide, its use in Trinity County is limited due to the rural nature of the county and the lack of widespread natural gas distribution infrastructure. Trinity County is served by a single natural gas transmission pipeline, with limited availability for direct service to end users (National Pipeline Mapping System 2026). As a result, most residential, commercial, and agricultural development in Trinity County relies on propane rather than natural gas for space heating, water heating, cooking, and similar building energy needs.

For the purposes of this EIR, building-related combustible fuel demand is expressed in terms of natural gas, consistent with California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) modeling conventions. However, this modeled natural gas demand is representative of equivalent energy consumption that, in practice, would largely be supplied by propane within Trinity County. Because propane and natural gas provide comparable energy output when measured on a Btu basis, the use of natural gas as a surrogate fuel in the modeling analysis does not affect the overall assessment of energy consumption or environmental impacts.

Petroleum Fuels

California is one of the top producers of petroleum in the nation, with drilling operations occurring throughout the state, but primarily concentrated in Kern and Los Angeles counties. A network of crude oil pipelines connects production areas to oil refineries in the Los Angeles area, the San Francisco Bay area, and the Central Valley. California oil refineries also process Alaskan and foreign crude oil received in ports in Los Angeles, Long Beach, and the San Francisco Bay Area. Crude oil production in California and Alaska is in decline, and California refineries have become increasingly dependent on imports. In 2025, approximately 61 percent of the crude oil refined in California in 2025 was imported from foreign sources (CEC 2026a). In 2025, California's imported crude oil was primarily supplied by Brazil, Iraq, Guyana, Canada, and Ecuador, with Saudi Arabia accounting for less than 10 percent of total foreign crude imports (CEC 2026d). According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), California's crude oil field production declined from approximately 130 million barrels in 2021 to about 110 million barrels in 2024, reinforcing the state's growing reliance on imported crude oil supplies (EIA 2026).

In Trinity County, petroleum fuels are supplied through regional fuel distribution networks and are primarily purchased by individual users such as residents and employees. Unlike counties in the Central Valley and southern California, Trinity County does not contain commercial oil fields or active oil-producing wells. A review of CalGEM records indicates that no active oil wells are present within Trinity County (CalGEM 2026).

Alternative Fuels

A variety of alternative fuels are used to reduce petroleum-based fuel demand. The use of these fuels is encouraged through various statewide regulations and plans, such as the Low Carbon Fuel Standard and Senate Bill (SB) 32. Conventional gasoline and diesel may be replaced, depending on the capability of the vehicle with alternative energy sources such as hydrogen, biodiesel, and electricity, which are discussed in the following subsections.

Hydrogen

Hydrogen is being explored for use in combustion engines and fuel cell electric vehicles. The interest in hydrogen as an alternative transportation fuel stems from its clean-burning qualities, its potential for domestic production, and the fuel cell vehicle's potential for high efficiency, which is two to three times more efficient than gasoline vehicles. There are currently no hydrogen fueling stations in Trinity County (United States Department of Energy 2026).

Biodiesel

Biodiesel is a renewable alternative fuel that can be manufactured from vegetable oils, animal fats, or recycled restaurant greases. Biodiesel is biodegradable and cleaner-burning than petroleum-based diesel fuel. Biodiesel can run in any diesel engine generally without alterations, but fueling stations have been slow to make it available. There are currently no biodiesel refueling stations in Trinity County (United States Department of Energy 2026). The nearest biodiesel fueling stations are in Arcata (Humboldt County), Mt Shasta (Siskiyou County), and Laytonville (Mendocino County) (DriveBiodiesel.net 2026).

Electric Vehicles

Electricity can be used to power electric and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles directly from the power grid. Electricity used to power vehicles is generally provided by the electricity grid and stored in the vehicle's batteries. Fuel cells are being explored to use electricity generated onboard the vehicle to power electric motors. There are numerous publicly available electrical charging stations throughout Trinity County (United States Department of Energy 2026). Existing charging infrastructure is generally concentrated within established communities and along major transportation corridors and highways, rather than in remote or undeveloped areas, where electrical infrastructure and demand are limited.

The federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 established the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Formula Program, which provides $5 billion nationally to support the expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure. California is allocated approximately $384 million in National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure funding over federal fiscal years 2022 through 2026. These funds are being jointly administered by the California Department of Transportation and the CEC. As of 2025, California has received federal approval for its National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment Plans and has begun awarding and deploying funding for DC fast-charging stations along designated highway corridors, with projects prioritizing geographic coverage, system reliability, and equitable access, including in rural and disadvantaged communities (California Department of Transportation 2025).

Biogas

There is growing interest and continued expansion of biogas[1] and biomethane production in California, with principal sources including non-hazardous solid waste landfills, wastewater treatment facilities, organic waste diversion and processing operations, and concentrated animal feeding operations, particularly dairies. When biogas is conditioned and upgraded to meet pipeline quality standards, it may be injected into a natural gas utility's pipeline system and distributed for use by residential, commercial, industrial, or transportation fuel customers. Biomethane may also be consumed onsite for a variety of beneficial uses, including electricity generation using internal combustion engines, turbines, or fuel cells, or as a renewable transportation fuel. In recent years, California has adopted regulatory and incentive programs, including SB 1383, the Low Carbon Fuel Standard, and the CPUC's renewable gas initiatives, to reduce methane emissions and promote the capture and beneficial use of biogas. While flaring and venting of biogas can still occur for safety or operational reasons, particularly at landfills and digesters, state policy increasingly discourages routine flaring in favor of energy recovery and emissions reduction strategies (California Air Resources Board [CARB] 2026).

[1] Biogas is a mixture of methane and carbon dioxide produced by the bacterial degradation of organic matter.

c. Energy Demand

Electricity

The EIA estimates that California electricity consumption in 2024 represents approximately 6.2 percent of total United States electricity consumption in 2024 (EIA 2025). As shown in Table 4.6-1, total electricity consumption within California in 2024 was approximately 245,717 gigawatt-hours. In Trinity County, total electricity consumption in 2024 was approximately 144 gigawatt-hours, representing approximately 0.05 percent of electricity usage in California and approximately 6,230 kilowatt hours per capita (CEC 2024). Trinity County's estimated 2024 population totaled 15,807 people (Department of Finance [DOF] 2025). As such, annual per capita electricity consumption is estimated at approximately 9,110 kilowatt hours per capita.

Table 4.6-1 2024 Annual Electricity Consumption

	2024 Electricity Consumption (GWh)	Per Capita Consumption (kWh per capita)[1]	Percentage of Statewide Consumption
California	245,717	6,230	100%
Trinity County	144	9,110	0.05%

GWh = gigawatt hours; kWh = kilowatt hours

[1] Per capita consumption based on California's estimated 2024 population of 39,420,663 people and Trinity County's estimated 2024 population of 15,807 people (DOF 2025)

Source: CEC 2024

Natural Gas

In 2024, California consumed a total of approximately 11,104 million U.S. therms of natural gas, or 1,032 million Btu (MMBtu), and an annual per capital natural gas consumption at approximately 26,200,000 Btu. Residential natural gas demand accounted for approximately 39 percent of California's total natural gas demand while non-residential natural gas demand accounted for approximately 61 percent (CEC 2026e).

Statewide natural gas demand in California is projected to decline over the long term, driven primarily by reductions in industrial consumption and decreased reliance on natural gas for electricity generation as renewable energy resources expand. Recent forecasts prepared by California gas utilities and the CEC indicate that statewide natural gas demand is expected to gradually decline over the coming decades, although the rate of decline is not uniform across sectors or years. Residential and commercial natural gas consumption is anticipated to remain sensitive to population growth and weather variability, while natural gas use for transportation fuel is expected to increase modestly from a small base and is not projected to offset overall demand reductions (CEC 2026e).

As shown in Table 4.6-2, development in Trinity County consumed approximately 41,290 U.S. therms of natural gas in 2024, or approximately 3,839 MMBtu (CEC 2024), representing approximately 0.93 percent of statewide consumption. Because many residences and businesses in Trinity County rely on alternative heating fuels such as propane, wood, and electricity, utility-delivered natural gas represents only a small portion of total thermal energy use in the county.

Table 4.6-2 2024 Annual Natural Gas Consumption

	2024 Natural Gas Consumption (million therms)	2024 Natural Gas Consumption (MMBtu)	Per Capita Consumption (MMBtu per capita)[1]	Percentage of Statewide Consumption
California	11,104	1,032,383,296	26.19	100%
Trinity County	0.04129	3,839	0.24	0.93%

Btu = British thermal units; MMBtu = million British thermal units

[1] Natural gas consumption values reflect utility-delivered natural gas reported by the California Energy Commission. Trinity County has limited natural gas pipeline infrastructure; therefore, utility-delivered natural gas represents a small portion of total thermal energy consumption in the county.

[2] Per capita consumption based on California's estimated 2024 population of 39,420,663 people and Trinity County's estimated 2024 population of 15,807 people (DOF 2025)

Source: CEC 2024

Petroleum Fuels

According to the EIA, transportation accounted for approximately 45 percent of California's total energy demand, representing approximately 3,035 trillion Btu in 2023, and including gasoline, diesel, aviation fuels, marine fuels, biofuels, and electricity used for transportation (EIA 2025). According to the CEC, California consumed approximately 11.7 billion gallons of gasoline and 1.9 billion gallons of diesel fuel in 2025 (CEC 2026b).

State and county transportation fuel consumption is further illustrated in Table 4.6-3. Trinity County accounted for an estimated four million gallons of gasoline consumption in 2024 (CEC 2026b). Trinity County's estimated 2024 population of 15,807 residents (DOF 2025) results in an annual per-capita gasoline consumption of approximately 250 gallons per person. County-level diesel fuel sales data are not available for Trinity County in the CEC-A15 dataset; therefore, per-capita diesel fuel consumption was not calculated.

Table 4.6-3 2024 Annual Gasoline and Diesel Consumption

Jurisdiction	Fuel Type	2024 Fuel Consumption (gallons)[1]	Per Capita Consumption (gallons per capita)	Percentage of Statewide Consumption
California	Gasoline	11,681,000,000	296	100%
	Diesel	1,904,000,000	48	100%
Trinity County	Gasoline	4,000,000	48	0.03%
	Diesel	N/A	N/A	N/A

[1]County-level diesel fuel sales data are not available for Trinity County in the CEC-A15 dataset.

[2] Per capita consumption based on California's estimated 2024 population of 39,420,663 people and Trinity County's estimated 2024 population of 15,807 people (DOF 2025)

Source: CEC 2026e

4.6.2 Regulatory Setting

a. Federal Regulations

Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007

The Energy Independence and Security Act, enacted by Congress in 2007, is designed to improve vehicle fuel economy and help reduce United States dependence on foreign oil. It expands the production of renewable fuels, thereby reducing dependence on oil and confronting global climate change. Specifically, it does the following:

- Increases the supply of alternative fuel sources by setting a mandatory Renewable Fuel Standard, requiring fuel producers to use at least 36 billion gallons of biofuel in 2022, which represents a nearly five-fold increase over current levels
- Reduces United States demand for oil by setting a national fuel economy standard of 35 miles per gallon by 2020—an increase in fuel economy standards of 40 percent

Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards

The Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975 established the Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards, which are administered by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and set fuel-efficiency requirements for new passenger cars and light trucks sold in the United States.

In June 2024, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration finalized updated Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards for passenger cars and light trucks beginning with model year (MY) 2027. Under the final rule, fleetwide fuel-economy standards increase generally by approximately two percent per year for passenger cars in MY 2027 through MY 2031, with phased increases for light trucks in later model years (89 Federal Register 52540; June 24, 2024).

In addition, in April 2024 the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) finalized multi-pollutant emissions standards for light-duty and medium-duty vehicles for MY 2027 through MY 2032. These standards establish more stringent, performance-based limits on greenhouse gas and criteria pollutant emissions and are expected to further reduce fuel consumption and emissions from the on-road vehicle fleet over time (89 Federal Register 27842; April 18, 2024). Together, the adopted federal fuel-efficiency and emissions regulations are anticipated to continue improving vehicle efficiency and reducing transportation-related energy consumption relative to existing conditions. However, at the time of Draft EIR publication, federal agencies were in the process of updating fuel economy and vehicle emissions regulations, including National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards and USEPA's greenhouse gas emissions standards, which were anticipated to result in more stringent federal fuel-efficiency requirements than those established under the SAFE Rule Part Two.

Energy Star Program

In 1992, USEPA introduced Energy Star as a voluntary-labeling program designed to identify and promote energy-efficient products to reduce GHG emissions. The program applies to major household appliances, lighting, computers, and building components such as windows, doors, roofs, and heating and cooling systems. Under this program, appliances that meet specification for maximum energy use established under the program are certified to display the Energy Star label. In 1996, USEPA joined with the Energy Department to expand the program, which now also includes qualifying commercial and industrial buildings, and homes.

b. State Regulations

California Energy Plan

The CEC is responsible for preparing the California Energy Plan, which identifies emerging trends related to energy supply, demand, conservation, public health and safety, and the maintenance of a healthy economy. The California Energy Plan calls for the State of California to assist in the transformation of the transportation system to improve air quality, reduce congestion, and increase the efficient use of fuel supplies with the least environmental and energy costs. To further this policy, the plan identifies a number of strategies, including assistance to public agencies and fleet operators in implementing incentive programs for zero-emission vehicles and addressing their infrastructure needs and encouragement of urban designs that reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and accommodate pedestrian and bicycle access.

Assembly Bill 2076: Reducing Dependence on Petroleum

Pursuant to Assembly Bill (AB) 2076 (Chapter 936, Statutes of 2000), the CEC and CARB prepared and adopted a joint agency report, *Reducing California's Petroleum Dependence*, in 2003. Included in this report are recommendations to increase the use of alternative fuels to 20 percent of on-road-transportation-fuel use by 2020 and 30 percent by 2030, significantly increase the efficiency of motor vehicles, and reduce per capita VMT. One of the performance-based goals of AB 2076 is to reduce petroleum demand to 15 percent below 2003 demand. Furthermore, in response to the CEC's 2003 and 2005 *Integrated Energy Policy Reports*, the Governor directed the CEC to take the lead in developing a long-term plan to increase alternative fuel use.

Senate Bill 350: Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act of 2015

The Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act of 2015 (SB 350) requires doubling of the energy efficiency savings in electricity and natural gas for retail customers through energy efficiency and conservation by December 31, 2030.

Senate Bill 100: California Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard Program: Emissions of Greenhouse Gases

Approved by the Governor on September 10, 2018, SB 100 amends the state's Renewables Portfolio Standard program, which originally called for electricity retailers to ensure 33 percent of electricity generation was sourced from renewable sources by 2020, 40 percent by 2024, 45 percent by 2027, and 50 percent by 2030. With implementation of SB 100, electricity retailers must ensure 33 percent of electricity generation is sourced from renewable sources by 2020, 44 percent by 2024, 50 percent by 2026, 52 percent by 2027, and 60 percent by 2030. SB 100 further requires electricity retailers to provide 100 percent zero-carbon electricity generation by 2045.

Assembly Bill 1493: Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

AB 1493 (Chapter 200, Statutes of 2002), known as the Pavley Bill, amended Health and Safety Code Sections 42823 and 43018.5, requiring CARB to develop and adopt regulations that achieve maximum feasible and cost-effective reduction of GHG emissions from passenger vehicles, light-duty trucks, and other vehicles used for noncommercial personal transportation in California.

Implementation of new regulations prescribed by AB 1493 required that the State of California apply for a waiver under the federal Clean Air Act. Although the USEPA initially denied the waiver in 2008, the USEPA approved a waiver in June 2009, and in September 2009, CARB approved amendments to its initially adopted regulations to apply the Pavley standards that reduce GHG emissions to new passenger vehicles in model years 2009 through 2016. According to CARB, implementation of the Pavley regulations is expected to reduce fuel consumption, while also reducing GHG emissions.

Assembly Bill 1007: State Alternative Fuels Plan

AB 1007 (Chapter 371, Statutes of 2005) required the CEC to prepare a plan to increase the use of alternative fuels in California. The CEC prepared the State Alternative Fuels Plan in partnership with CARB and in consultation with other federal, state, and local agencies. The State Alternative Fuels Plan presents strategies and actions California must take to increase the use of alternative non-petroleum fuels in a manner that minimizes costs to California and maximizes the economic benefits of in-state production. The State Alternative Fuels Plan assessed various alternative fuels and developed fuel portfolios to meet California's goals to reduce petroleum consumption, increase alternative fuels use, reduce GHG emissions, and increase in-state production of biofuels without causing a significant degradation of public health and environmental quality.

Executive Order S-06-06

Executive Order S-06-06, April 25, 2006, establishes targets for the use and production of biofuels and biopower, and directs state agencies to work together to advance biomass programs in California, while providing environmental protection and mitigation. The Executive Order establishes the following targets to increase the production and use of bioenergy, including ethanol and biodiesel fuels made from renewable resources, and to produce a minimum of 20 percent of its biofuels in California by 2010, 40 percent by 2020, and 75 percent by 2050. Executive Order S-06-06 also calls for California to meet a target for use of biomass electricity.

Bioenergy Action Plan

The 2011 Bioenergy Action Plan identifies barriers to meeting goals and recommends actions to address them so that California can meet its clean energy, waste reduction, and climate protection goals. The 2012 Bioenergy Action Plan updates the 2011 Plan and provides a more detailed action plan to achieve the following goals:

- Increase environmentally and economically sustainable energy production from organic waste
- Encourage development of diverse bioenergy technologies that increase local electricity generation, combined heat and power facilities, renewable natural gas, and renewable liquid fuels for transportation and fuel cell applications
- Create jobs and stimulate economic development, especially in rural regions of the state
- Reduce fire danger, improve air and water quality, and reduce waste

California Code of Regulations

California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 6, sets forth California's energy efficiency standards for residential and nonresidential buildings. CEC first established Title 24 in 1978 pursuant to a legislative mandate to reduce statewide energy consumption through uniform building energy efficiency standards. The standards are updated on an approximately three-year cycle to incorporate new technologies, methods, and policy objectives. The most recent standards were adopted in the 2025 Building Energy Efficiency Standards, which became effective January 1, 2026, replacing the 2022 standards. All buildings for which a building permit application is submitted on or after the applicable effective date must comply with the then-current Title 24 standards. The energy efficiency standards reduce electricity and natural gas consumption, thereby decreasing fossil fuel use and GHG emissions. The standards are enforced through the local plan check and building permit process. Local jurisdictions may adopt and enforce more stringent energy efficiency standards where reasonably necessary due to local climatic, geological, or topographical conditions, provided such standards exceed the requirements of Title 24.

The California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) is adopted as Part 11 of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations and is updated on a triennial cycle as part of the California Building Standards Code. The 2025 CALGreen Code was published on July 1, 2025, and became effective January 1, 2026. CALGreen establishes mandatory minimum green building requirements for the planning, design, construction, and operation of newly constructed residential and nonresidential buildings statewide, with the purpose of reducing GHG emissions, conserving water and materials, improving energy performance, and enhancing indoor environmental quality. In addition to mandatory measures, CALGreen includes voluntary Tier 1 and Tier 2 provisions, which local jurisdictions may adopt to require higher levels of environmental performance and further promote public health, safety, and general welfare through sustainable building practices.

California's 2020 Integrated Energy Policy Report

Every two years, CEC prepares the Integrated Energy Policy Report (IEPR). The IEPR identifies actions the state and other entities can take to ensure a clean, affordable, reliable, and resilient energy system. California's energy policies continue to strengthen energy reliability, reduce GHG emissions, improve air

quality, and support an equitable clean energy transition. The 2025 IEPR focuses on advancing clean energy deployment, including evaluation of firm zero-carbon resources, hydrogen and alternative fuels, and challenges related to clean energy interconnection. The report also includes an updated statewide electricity and gas demand forecast for the 2025-2045 planning horizon, accounting for continued electrification of buildings and transportation, growth in zero-emission vehicles, and evolving load patterns associated with climate adaptation and extreme weather.

c. Local Regulations

Trinity County Code of Ordinances

The County Code of Ordinances adopts, by reference and as amended from time to time, the California Building Standards Code (Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations), including the California Building Code, Electrical Code, Mechanical Code, Plumbing Code, Building Standards Administrative Code, and the California Energy Code. Adoption of the California Energy Code ensures that new construction and certain renovations within Trinity County incorporate mandatory energy-efficiency standards related to building envelope performance, mechanical systems, lighting, and other energy-using features.

Building permits are required for most construction activities, and new structures or utility connections may not be occupied or permanently energized until final inspection and approval by the County Building Official. Through enforcement of the California Energy Code and related building standards, Trinity County's Building Code regulates building-related energy consumption and supports reductions in energy use and associated emissions over time.

4.6.3 Impact Analysis

a. Significance Thresholds

The following thresholds of significance were developed in accordance with Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*. Energy-related impacts would be significant if the proposed project would:

1. Result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation; or
2. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

b. Methodology

Public Resources Code Section 21100(b)(3) states that an EIR shall include "mitigation measures proposed to minimize significant effects on the environment, including, but not limited to, measures to reduce the wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of energy." The physical environmental impacts associated with the use of energy, including electricity production at off-site power generation facilities and the burning of fuels, are discussed in Section 4.3, *Air Quality*, and Section 4.8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*. Energy consumption is analyzed herein in terms of construction and operational energy.

Construction energy demand for the proposed project is evaluated qualitatively because project-specific information regarding construction is unavailable for individual development projects that may be proposed under the proposed project. Construction energy demand accounts for anticipated energy consumption during construction of development facilitated by the project, such as fuel consumed by construction equipment, construction workers' vehicles traveling to and from construction sites, and vendor and haul truck deliveries to construction sites. Construction activities would temporarily create a higher demand for energy supplies. The extent of energy demand generated by construction equipment would depend on the quantity of equipment used and the hours of operation for each project.

CalEEMod, version 2022.1, was used to approximate the operational natural gas and electricity consumption from development facilitated by the project (Appendix B). This analysis then determined whether energy consumed during operation for full buildout of the project would be wasteful, inefficient,

or unnecessary. Operational energy demand accounts for the anticipated energy consumption from development facilitated by the project, such as fuel consumed by cars, trucks, and public transit; natural gas consumed for on-site power generation and heating building spaces; and electricity consumed for building power needs, including, but not limited to, lighting, water conveyance, and air conditioning. The estimate of total daily VMT associated with the proposed project is based on VMT data provided in Appendix C.

Much of the potential cannabis-related development contemplated by the project was previously analyzed in the Trinity County Cannabis Program EIR (State Clearinghouse number 2018122049), certified in 2020 (2020 EIR). The 2020 EIR evaluated energy use associated with construction and operation of licensed commercial cannabis cultivation and noncultivation facilities and concluded that construction-related energy use would be temporary and would not require additional long-term capacity, while operational and transportation-related energy use would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy. These conclusions were based on compliance with the California Energy Code, state cannabis regulations requiring increased reliance on renewable energy, and county cannabis program provisions mandating zero-net-energy electricity sources for relicensed operations and compliance with Renewables Portfolio Standard greenhouse gas intensity thresholds for new facilities. Because these requirements exceeded standard code provisions and applied uniformly across licensed operations, the 2020 EIR determined that energy impacts would be less than significant and that no additional mitigation was required. Many of these requirements have since been codified through County ordinance revisions and state regulatory updates and now function as existing regulatory conditions rather than project-specific mitigation.

Because these regulatory controls are part of existing conditions and because the proposed project establishes a new countywide policy framework that supersedes the 2020 EIR for cannabis activities occurring consistent with the General Plan, this EIR focuses on energy effects not previously addressed or requiring reevaluation under the proposed project.

c. Impact Analysis

Threshold 1:	Would the project result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?

Impact E-1 Development facilitated by the project would not result in the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during construction or operation. Impacts would be less than significant.

Construction

Development facilitated by the project would require energy use during construction activities. Construction-related energy use would primarily consist of fuel consumption associated with operation of heavy construction equipment, light-duty vehicles, machinery, and generators for temporary power and lighting. Temporary electrical service may also be provided to construction trailers or electric construction equipment, where available. Construction-related energy use would be temporary and short-term in nature, and equipment used would be typical of similarly sized construction projects in the region. Construction activities would be subject to applicable state and federal regulations intended to minimize inefficient and unnecessary fuel consumption. These include compliance with California Code of Regulations, Title 13, Sections 2449 and 2485, which limit idling of diesel-fueled on-road and off-road vehicles, as well as applicable USEPA construction equipment fuel-efficiency standards, which reduce unnecessary energy use.

In addition, development facilitated by the project would be required to comply with CALGreen construction waste management requirements, which mandate diversion of a minimum of 65 percent of construction debris from landfills. These requirements would reduce indirect energy consumption

associated with material transport and disposal. Consistent with standard construction practices and cost considerations, fuel use during construction would be managed to reduce inefficiencies. Based on the temporary nature of construction activities, the application of existing regulatory controls, and compliance with construction best practices, construction-related energy use associated with the proposed project would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. Accordingly, impacts related to construction energy consumption would be **less than significant**.

Operation

Operation of development facilitated by the project would contribute to regional energy demand through consumption of electricity, natural gas, and motor vehicle fuels. Natural gas and electricity would be used for heating and cooling systems, lighting, appliances, water and wastewater conveyance, and other building operations, including powering alternative fuel vehicles. Gasoline and diesel fuel consumption would be associated with vehicle trips generated by residents and employees of development facilitated by the project.

As shown in Table 4.6-4, vehicle trips related to development facilitated by the project would require approximately 567,000 gallons of diesel fuel and approximately 2,982,000 gallons of gasoline annually, representing approximately 48,448 MMBtu of diesel fuel and 190,955 MMBtu of gasoline (see Appendix E for energy calculation sheets). Building-related thermal energy demand is expressed in terms of natural gas for consistency with standard energy modeling; however, due to limited natural gas pipeline infrastructure in Trinity County, this demand would predominantly be met through propane rather than natural gas. The energy demand associated with building operations, as expressed in MMBtu, is expected to be equivalent regardless of whether the fuel source is natural gas or propane.

Table 4.6-4 Proposed Project Operational Energy Usage

Source	Energy Consumption	
Vehicle Trips		
Diesel	568,745 gallons	72,492 MMBtu
Gasoline	2,981,927 gallons	327,374 MMBtu
Built Environment		
Electricity	278,664,037 kWh	950,802 MMBtu
Natural Gas Usage	398,753,581 kBtu	398,754 MMBtu

MMBtu = million British Thermal Units; kBtu = thousand British Thermal Units; kWh =: kilowatt-hour

Source: Appendix B for CalEEMod default values for fleet mix and average distance of travel and Appendix E for energy calculation sheets.

Development facilitated by the project would be subject to the energy conservation requirements of the California Energy Code (Title 24, Part 6) and CALGreen (Title 24, Part 11). These regulations establish minimum efficiency standards for building envelopes, space-conditioning systems, water heating, lighting, and appliances, and require construction practices that reduce energy use, particularly during peak demand periods. Compliance with these standards would ensure that operational energy consumption would not be wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary.

In addition, energy demand associated with future development would be partially offset through increasingly efficient building systems and vehicle technologies, as well as through policies included in the proposed project that promote efficient facility operations, resource conservation, and reliable energy systems. Relevant policies include Policy PFSI-1.2 (Efficient Operation and Maintenance); waste-reduction policies such as Policies PFSI-3.5 (Agricultural Waste Reuse) and PFSI-3.7 (Construction Materials); and Policy COS-1.3 (Efficient Energy Source), which requires permanent and reliable electrical

service for new commercial development and minimizes reliance on temporary or inefficient power sources.

The proposed project also promotes land use and circulation patterns that reduce transportation energy demand by encouraging compact development, efficient use of existing infrastructure, and non-automobile travel options. Goals LU-4 and LU-8 support walkable neighborhoods, infill development, and appropriate residential densities that reduce inefficient infrastructure expansion and VMT. Goal LU-5 promotes compact, well-designed commercial and industrial development that supports electric vehicle infrastructure and alternative transportation modes. Transportation energy use would be further reduced by circulation policies under Goals CIR-5 and CIR-7, which emphasize system efficiency, public transit, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Development facilitated by the project would consume approximately 278,664,037 kilowatt-hours (950,802 MMBtu) of electricity annually for lighting and appliances and approximately 398,754 MMBtu of building-related thermal energy per year for heating and cooking (see Appendix B for CalEEMod results). For modeling consistency, building-related thermal energy demand is expressed in terms of natural gas; however, due to limited natural gas pipeline infrastructure in Trinity County, this demand would predominantly be met by propane rather than pipeline-delivered natural gas. Electricity would be supplied by PG&E and Trinity PUD, and building-related thermal energy would be supplied through existing distribution systems serving the Planning Area. Given the temporary and regulated nature of construction activities; compliance with applicable state and federal energy-efficiency regulations; and implementation of land use, circulation, and conservation policies included in the proposed project, development facilitated by the project would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during either construction or operation. Accordingly, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.

Threshold 2:	Would the project conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

Impact E-2 Construction and operation of development facilitated by the project would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. No impact would occur.

Trinity County has not adopted any specific renewable energy or energy efficiency plans. However, as discussed in Section 4.6.2, *Regulatory Setting*, several state plans include energy conservation and energy efficiency strategies intended to enable the state and the County to achieve GHG-reduction and energy-conservation goals. A full discussion of the proposed project's consistency with GHG-reduction plans is included in Section 4.8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*. Table 4.6-5 outlines the proposed project's consistency with state renewable energy and energy efficiency plans.

Table 4.6-5 Consistency with State Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Plans

Renewable Energy or Energy Efficiency Plan	Proposed Project Consistency
California Energy Plan. The plan identifies several strategies, including assistance to public agencies and fleet operators in implementing incentive programs for zero-emission vehicles and addressing their infrastructure needs, as well as encouragement of urban designs that reduce VMT and accommodate pedestrian and bicycle access.	**Consistent**. The proposed General Plan includes Policies LU-8.2 (Development Density) and LU-8.3 (Infill Development) that support infill development, compact site design, and efficient use of existing infrastructure, which reduce the need for long vehicular trips. The proposed project also includes Policy LU-5.2 (Design), which advances land use and circulation strategies that support transit services where available and promotes connected, multi-modal transportation systems, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities. General Plan Update Policies LU-4.2 (Connectivity), CIR-5.5 (Correct Roadway Deficiencies), CIR-7.2 (Add Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities), and CIR-7.10 (Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities in New Development) emphasize design connectivity, efficient commercial and residential development patterns, and transportation system efficiency rather than auto-oriented expansion. In light of these features, the proposed project would encourage development patterns that reduce VMT and support pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access consistent with local context. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the California Energy Plan.
AB 2076: Reducing Dependence on Petroleum. Pursuant to AB 2076, the CEC and CARB prepared and adopted a joint-agency report, *Reducing California's Petroleum Dependence,* in 2003. Included in this report are recommendations to increase the use of alternative fuels to 20 percent of on-road transportation fuel use by 2020 and 30 percent by 2030, significantly increase the efficiency of motor vehicles, and reduce per capita VMT. One of the performance-based goals of AB 2076 is to reduce petroleum demand to 15 percent below 2003 demand.	**Consistent.** The proposed General Plan includes policies that support reductions in petroleum consumption through land-use and transportation strategies that reduce per-capita VMT. Policies LU-8.2 (Development Density) and LU-8.3 (Infill Development) promote infill development, compact site design, and efficient use of existing infrastructure, which reduce the need for long vehicular trips. Policy LU-5.2 (Design) advances development patterns that encourage electric vehicle infrastructure and support transit services where available, while promoting consolidated, energy-efficient commercial and industrial development. Transportation and circulation policies, including Policy CIR-1.12 (Transportation Impact Analysis and VMT), Goal CIR-5, and Goal CIR-7, emphasize system efficiency, expanded transit services, and improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities. In light of these features, the proposed project would support reduced VMT and transportation fuel use consistent with the objectives of AB 2076 and the state's petroleum-reduction goals. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of AB 2076, *Reducing California's Petroleum Dependence*.
2018 Integrated Energy Policy Report (IEPR). Volume I highlights the implementation of California's innovative policies and the role they have played in establishing a clean energy economy. Volume II provides more detail on several key energy policies, including decarbonizing buildings, increasing energy efficiency savings, and integrating more renewable energy into the electricity system.	**Consistent.** Development facilitated by the project would be required to comply with the California Energy Code (Title 24, Part 6) and CALGreen, which establish minimum requirements for building energy efficiency, efficient mechanical systems, lighting, water use, and, where applicable, electric-ready and renewable-energy-supportive design features. These codes are periodically updated to achieve increasing levels of energy efficiency and building decarbonization and represent the primary mechanism through which the IEPR's building-energy objectives are implemented at the local level. The proposed General Plan also includes policies that directly advance these objectives by requiring development to consider energy conservation and renewable energy use through compliance with the California Energy Code, CALGreen, and local policies promoting efficient facility operation and reliable electrical

Renewable Energy or Energy Efficiency Plan	Proposed Project Consistency
	service, such as Policy PFSI-1.2 (Efficient Operation and Maintenance) and Policy COS-1.3 (Efficient Energy Source). In addition, the proposed General Plan promotes compact development, infill development, and efficient use of existing infrastructure through land-use policies such as Policies LU-8.2 (Development Density) and LU-8.3 (Infill Development), which reduce energy demand associated with infrastructure expansion and transportation. Collectively, compliance with state building and green building codes, together with the General Plan's land-use and infrastructure policies that encourage efficient development patterns support increased energy efficiency and integration of renewable energy consistent with the objectives of the 2018 IEPR. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the 2018 IEPR.
AB 1493: Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions. AB 1493 requires CARB to develop and adopt regulations that achieve maximum feasible and cost-effective reduction of GHG emissions from passenger vehicles, light-duty trucks, and other vehicles used for noncommercial personal transportation in California.	**Consistent.** Vehicles used by future residents, employees, visitors, and patrons of development facilitated by the project, as well as vehicles associated with construction activities would be subject to the regulations adopted by CARB pursuant to AB 1493. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of AB 1493.
Energy Action Plan (EAP). The EAP addresses climate change, transportation-related energy issues, and research and development activities. EAP II supplements the earlier EAPs and examines the state's ongoing actions in the context of global climate change. The nine major action areas in the EAP include energy efficiency, demand response, renewable energy, electricity adequacy/reliability/infrastructure, electricity market structure, natural gas supply/demand/infrastructure, transportation fuels supply/demand/infrastructure, research/development/demonstration, and climate change.	**Consistent.** While the proposed project does not directly implement or regulate each of the specific action areas identified in the EAP, development facilitated by the proposed project would occur within a comprehensive state regulatory framework that advances the EAP's core objectives, particularly with respect to energy efficiency, reduced transportation energy demand, and support for renewable energy integration. New development would be required to comply with the California Energy Code (Title 24, Part 6) and CALGreen, which establish mandatory requirements for building energy efficiency, efficient building systems, and, where applicable, infrastructure that supports clean energy technologies. These statewide codes represent the primary mechanism by which California implements the EAP's energy efficiency and building-sector strategies at the local level. The proposed project also includes policies that directly advance these objectives by requiring development to consider energy conservation and renewable energy use through compliance with state regulations and local policies promoting efficient facility operation and reliable electrical service, such as Policy PFSI-1.2 (Efficient Operation and Maintenance) and Policy COS-1.3 (Efficient Energy Source). In addition, the proposed General Plan promotes compact development, infill development, and efficient use of existing infrastructure through land-use policies such as Policies LU-8.2 (Development Density) and LU-8.3 (Infill Development), which reduce energy demand associated with infrastructure expansion and transportation. Accordingly, development facilitated by the project would be implemented in a manner consistent with statewide building energy, transportation, and infrastructure regulations that advance the Energy Action Plan's overarching goals of improved energy efficiency, reduced energy demand, and support for a reliable and sustainable energy system. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the EAP.

Renewable Energy or Energy Efficiency Plan	Proposed Project Consistency
Bioenergy Action Plan, Executive Order S-06-06. The EO establishes the following targets to increase the production and use of bioenergy, including ethanol and biodiesel fuels made from renewable resources: produce a minimum of 20 percent of its biofuels in California by 2010, 40 percent by 2020, and 75 percent by 2050.	**Consistent**. The project would not interfere with or obstruct the production of biofuels in California. Vehicles used by future residents, employees, visitors, and patrons of development facilitated by the project would be fueled by a range of fuel types, including conventional gasoline and diesel fuels blended with ethanol and biodiesel as required by CARB regulations, as well as alternative fuels such as electricity. Therefore, the project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Bioenergy Action Plan.

CARB = California Air Resources Board; CEC = California Energy Commission; EO = executive order; GHG = greenhouse gas emissions; VMT = vehicle miles traveled

As shown in Table 4.6-5, the proposed project would be consistent with state renewable energy and energy efficiency plans. Additionally, given compliance with policies included in the proposed project, construction and operation of future development facilitated by the proposed project would not conflict with state renewable-energy and energy-efficiency plans. Therefore, **no impact** would occur, and no mitigation is required.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

No impact would occur.

4.6.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope for energy consumption is Trinity County. This geographic scope is appropriate, because the smallest scale at which energy consumption information is readily available is the county level. The geographic scopes for the cumulative impact analysis of consistency with renewable-energy and energy-efficiency plans are the State of California and Trinity County, because the applicable plans include statewide plans. The cumulative development scenario is described in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting*.

Cumulative development would increase demand for energy resources. However, new iterations of the California Building Energy Efficiency Standards and CALGreen would require increasingly more efficient appliances and building materials that reduce energy consumption in new development. In addition, vehicle fuel efficiency is anticipated to continue improving through implementation of the existing Pavley regulations under AB 1493. Furthermore, applicable General Plan policies would serve to minimize the potential for wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary energy usage to occur as a result of future development. Therefore, the cumulative impact of increased energy demand would be less than significant.

Cumulative development would be required to adhere to applicable renewable energy and energy efficiency laws, programs, and policies such as California's Renewables Portfolio Standard, AB 1493, and Title 24 standards. All other pending and future projects in Trinity County would be required to adhere to proposed General Plan policies to mitigate energy impacts where feasible. In addition, all pending and future projects would be reviewed for consistency with the proposed project. Therefore, the cumulative impact would be less than significant.

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4.7 Geology and Soils

This section analyzes the potential physical environmental effects related to seismic hazards, underlying soil characteristics, slope stability, and erosion within Trinity County from implementation of the proposed project.

4.7.1 Setting

a. Regional Geology

Nearly three-fourths of Trinity County is in the Klamath Mountain geomorphic province, which includes almost the entire Trinity River drainage basin and its rivers, and the Trinity Alps. The remaining portion of the county is in the Coast Ranges geomorphic province to the south. The Klamath Mountains geomorphic province maintains a rugged topography with protruding peaks and ridges that reach 6,000 to 8,000 feet above sea level. Principal rock units are older and are intruded by granitic rocks. The province is considered a northern extension of the Sierra Nevada. (California Geological Survey [CGS] 2015b). The Trinity Alps are located north of Weaverville (Northern California Hiking Trails 2025).

The Coast Ranges extend about 600 miles from the Oregon border to the Santa Ynez River in Santa Barbara County. They are characterized by numerous north-south trending peaks and valleys that range in elevation from approximately 500 feet above mean sea level to 7,581 feet above mean sea level. The Coast Ranges are composed of a complex assemblage of folded and faulted geologic units, including Mesozoic metasedimentary rocks and ophiolite rocks of the Franciscan-Assemblage, granitic and metamorphic rocks of the Mesozoic Salinian Block, and younger Cenozoic marine and nonmarine shale, sandstone, and conglomerate (Norris and Webb 1990).

b. Local Geologic Setting

Trinity County is comprised of rugged mountainous terrain with limited developed land. Much of the county consists of forested slopes and river valleys within the Klamath Mountains geomorphic province. Surface deposits in Trinity County include Paleozoic metasedimentary rocks, Franciscan complex, Carboniferous marine rocks, Jurassic marine rocks, Oligocene nonmarine rocks, Quaternary alluvium and marine deposits, Paleozoic marine rocks, and Cretaceous marine rocks. Quaternary alluvial deposits are found in valley floors and drainage areas, while older metamorphic and granitic rocks dominate upland regions. Elevations range from approximately 2,000 feet in lower valleys to nearly 9,000 feet in the Trinity Alps. Unique geologic formations and paleontological resources occur throughout the county, particularly within alluvial fans and basin deposits.

c. Seismic and Other Hazards

Geologic hazards include earthquake-induced hazards (e.g., ground shaking, surface fault ruptures, and soil liquefaction), slope instability, ground subsidence, and soil erosion.

Faults

Generally defined, an earthquake is an abrupt release of accumulated energy in the form of seismic waves when movement occurs along a fault. The severity of an earthquake is generally expressed in two ways: magnitude and intensity. The energy released, measured on the Moment Magnitude scale, represents the magnitude of an earthquake. The Richter Magnitude scale has been replaced in most modern building codes by the Moment Magnitude scale because the Moment Magnitude scale provides more useful information to design engineers.

Faults are categorized as active, potentially active, and inactive. A fault is classified as active if it has moved during the Holocene time (during the last 11,000 years). A fault is classified as potentially active if it has experienced movement in Quaternary time (during the last 1.8 million years). Faults that have not moved in the last 1.8 million years are generally considered inactive. Trinity County is in a region of relatively low historical seismicity, and no active faults have been recognized locally (CGS 2019).

Seismic Hazards

Hazards associated with earthquakes include primary hazards, such as surface rupture and ground shaking, and secondary hazards, such as liquefaction and tsunami.

Surface Rupture

Surface rupture represents the breakage of ground along the surface trace of a fault, the intersection of the fault surface area ruptured in an earthquake within the earth's surface. Fault displacement occurs when material on one side of a fault moves relative to the material on the other side of the fault. This can have particularly adverse consequences when buildings are located in the rupture zone. It is not feasible from a structural or economic perspective to design and build structures that can accommodate rapid displacement involved with surface rupture. Amounts of surface displacement can range from a few inches to tens of feet during a rupture event. Surface rupture is generally limited to a linear zone a few yards wide.

The Alquist-Priolo Act establishes regulatory zones around active faults to prevent construction across their surface traces; however, these zones are only designated where faults have shown evidence of surface rupture within the last 11,000 years. Trinity County does not contain any mapped Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones. Although faults occur within and adjacent to the county, the available mapping does not identify locally mapped active fault zones subject to Alquist-Priolo regulation. (CGS 2015a, 2019). Although the probability of surface rupture is minimal, indirect impacts from earthquakes still pose some risk to people, property, and infrastructure.

Ground Shaking

The major cause of structural damage from earthquakes is ground shaking. The intensity of ground motion expected at a particular site depends upon the magnitude of the earthquake, the distance to the epicenter and the geology of the area between the epicenter and the property. Greater movement can be expected at sites located on poorly consolidated material, such as alluvium, in proximity to the causative fault, or in response to a seismic event of great magnitude. Although Trinity County is situated in a zone of relatively low seismic activity, the county could experience low or moderate ground shaking from earthquakes in surrounding areas, particularly in the southwestern quadrant of the county that is closer to the fault lines in adjacent counties (CGS 2026).

Liquefaction

Liquefaction is a seismic phenomenon in which loose, saturated granular and non-plastic fine grained soils lose their structure or strength when subjected to high-intensity ground shaking. Liquefaction occurs when three general conditions exist: 1) shallow groundwater, within the top 50 feet of the ground surface; 2) low-density non-plastic soils; and 3) high-intensity ground motion. Areas with shallow groundwater generally are found in the valley where soil types are mostly coarse or high in clay content, and thus not conducive to liquefaction. Trinity County has low risk of liquefaction (CGS 2025).

Settlement

Settlement can occur in poorly consolidated soils during ground shaking. During settlement, ground shaking physically rearranges the soil materials to result in a less stable alignment of the individual minerals. Settlement of sufficient magnitude to cause significant structural damage is normally associated with rapidly deposited alluvial soils or improperly founded or poorly compacted fill. Most of

the county is underlain by solid metamorphic, plutonic, or ophiolithic terrain, rather than loose compressible sediments (United States Geological Survey 2009). As a result, Trinity County has low risk of settlement.

Soil Hazards

Hazards associated with soils include erosion, expansiveness, landslides, and subsidence.

Soil Erosion

Erosion refers to the removal of soil by water or wind. Factors that influence erosion potentially include the amount of rainfall and wind, the length and steepness of the slope, and the amount and type of vegetation cover. Trinity County has a high erosion potential, particularly in mountainous areas with steep slopes and unstable soils like decomposed granite. A primary cause is poorly designed roads, which alter natural drainage, concentrate runoff, and lead to significant sediment delivery to streams, impacting water quality and fisheries (Trinity County Resource Conservation District 2000).

Expansive Soils

Soils with relatively high clay content are considered expansive due to the capacity of clay minerals to take in water and expand to greater volumes. Highly expansive soils can cause structural damage to foundations and roads without proper structural engineering and require detailed geologic investigations and costlier grading applications. This makes highly expansive soils less suitable for development. There are no expansive soils in Trinity County that have a moderate to high swelling capacity (United States Department of Agriculture 2025).

Landslides

The geologic and topographic character of an area determines its potential for landslides. Steep slopes, the extent of erosion, and the rock composition of a hillside can aid in predicting the probability of slope failure. Common triggering mechanisms of slope failure include undercutting slopes by erosion or grading; saturation of marginally stable slopes by rainfall or irrigation; and shaking of marginally stable slopes during earthquakes. Landslides are common in mountainous regions and areas of steep slopes. Landslides are a documented hazard in Trinity County, with the highest risk on slopes exceeding 30 percent grade. Records show that Trinity County has experienced a major landslide at least once or twice per decade over the past 40 years. Considering the frequency of past events, the likelihood of a significant landslide occurring in any given year is relatively high. Recent landslides have been primarily triggered by winter storms. Road decommissioning and upgrades in the South Fork Trinity River watershed near Hyampom have greatly decreased landslide hazard occurrences and severity of impacts. Nevertheless, landslides, slumps, and rockfalls continue to periodically affect Hyampom Road and portions of State Route 299, State Route 3, and State Route 36 (County of Trinity 2014). While much of the high-risk terrain is currently undeveloped, future land use decisions under the proposed General Plan will need to assess site-specific landslide susceptibility for projects in these areas.

Subsidence

Subsidence occurs below the surface when subsurface pressure is reduced by the withdrawal of fluids (e.g., groundwater, natural gas, or oil) resulting in sinking of the ground. Areas susceptible to subsidence are typically composed of open-textured soils that become saturated. Trinity County has a low risk of subsidence (California Natural Resources Agency and Department of Water Resources 2014).

On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems

On-site wastewater treatment systems, commonly known as septic systems, primarily treat domestic wastewater and employ subsurface disposal. Wastewater services in Trinity County are provided

primarily by septic systems. The more populated communities of Weaverville, Lewiston, and Hayfork have municipal sewer systems. The rest of the county depends on individual septic tanks, and leach fields.

Paleontological Resources

Paleontological resources, or fossils, are the remains and traces of prehistoric life (Society of Vertebrate Paleontology [SVP] 2025). Fossils are typically preserved in layered sedimentary rocks and the distribution of fossils is a result of the sedimentary history of the geologic units within which they occur. Fossils occur in a non-continuous and often unpredictable distribution within some sedimentary units, and the potential for fossils to occur within sedimentary units depends on several factors. Although it is not possible to determine whether a fossil will occur in any specific location, it is possible to evaluate the potential for geologic units to contain scientifically significant paleontological resources, and therefore evaluate the potential for impacts to those resources and provide mitigation for paleontological resources if they occur during construction.

Trinity County spans 79 located United States Geological Survey 7.5-minute topographic quadrangles and two geomorphic provinces, the Klamath Mountain and Coast Ranges. The regional geology was mapped by Fraticelli et al. (2012), Wagner and Saucedo (1987), and Jennings and Strand (1960), who identified 62 distinct geologic units underlying Trinity County, but for simplicity, these geologic units are combined into four groupings: Quaternary sediments, pre-Quaternary sedimentary rocks, melanges, and igneous and metamorphic. Table 4.7-1 depicts the geologic units and their paleontological sensitivities. A map of the paleontological sensitivity of the County is shown in Figure 4.7-1.

Quaternary Sediments

Quaternary sediments refers to geologic units representing sediments deposited in the Pleistocene and/or Holocene. For the purposes of this analysis, the following geologic units are included in this grouping: Quaternary sediments including Quaternary glacial deposits, Quaternary terrace deposits, Quaternary alluvium and colluvium, Quaternary landslide deposits, and Plio-Pleistocene gravel deposits (Table 4.7-1). Holocene-aged sediments are generally considered too young (i.e., less than 11,700 years old; SVP 2025) to preserve paleontological resources, so sediments of this age are generally considered to have Fossil Prediction Map System (FPMS) 2 (Low) paleontological sensitivity. Quaternary glacial deposits and Quaternary landslide deposits may be Pleistocene in age (i.e., old enough to preserve paleontological resources), but they represent deposition in high-energy settings that are not conducive to fossil preservation. Therefore, they are considered FPMS 2 (Low) paleontological sensitivity. Plio-Pleistocene gravel deposits are of appropriate age to preserve paleontological resources and may represent settings conducive to fossil preservation. Therefore, these sediments are considered to have FPMS 3 (Moderate) paleontological sensitivity.

Pre-Quaternary Sedimentary Rocks

Pre-Quaternary sedimentary rocks represent sedimentary or metasedimentary geologic units ranging from Miocene to Devonian in age, and these units are listed in Table 4.7-1. Sedimentary rocks of these ages have the capacity to preserve paleontological resources, but the potential for sedimentary rocks to preserve paleontological resources can vary (SVP 2025). None of these geologic units have an extensive history of producing paleontological resources, but this could be partially due to the low degree of development and previous paleontological exploration in Trinity County and the broader region. Nevertheless, none of the pre-Quaternary sedimentary rocks geologic units were considered to have FPMS 4 (High) or FPMS 5 (Very High) paleontological sensitivity. For the purposes of the paleontological sensitivity analysis, geologic units with documented paleontological localities in the University of California Museum of Paleontology online database or Paleobiology Database are considered to have FPMS 3 (Moderate) paleontological sensitivity (University of California Museum of Paleontology 2026, Paleobiology Database 2026). Geologic units with no documented paleontological localities are considered to have FPMS U (Undetermined) paleontological sensitivity. The paleontological sensitivity of each of the 17 pre-Quaternary sedimentary rock units is listed in Table 4.7-1.

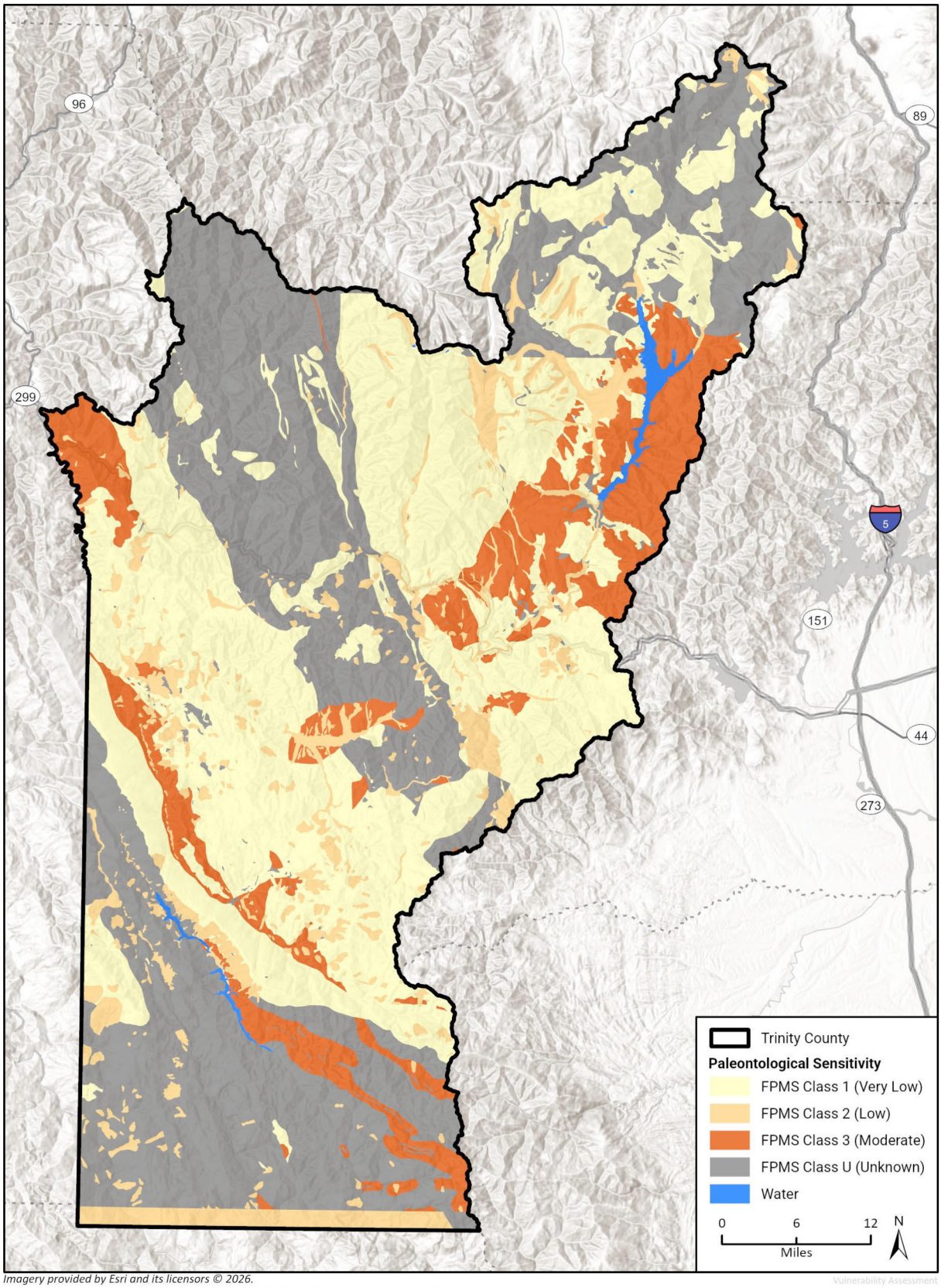
Table 4.7-1 Geologic Units and Paleontological Sensitivity of Trinity County

Grouping	Geologic Unit	Age	Fossil Prediction Map System (FPMS) Designation
Quaternary sediments	Qg—Quaternary glacial deposits	Pleistocene to Holocene	FPMS 2 (Low)
Quaternary sediments	Qt—Quaternary terrace deposits	Holocene	FPMS 2 (Low)
Quaternary sediments	Qa—Quaternary alluvium and colluvium	Holocene	FPMS 2 (Low)
Quaternary sediments	Qls—Quaternary landslide deposits	Pleistocene to Holocene	FPMS 2 (Low)
Quaternary sediments	QTog—Plio-Pleistocene gravel deposits	Pliocene to Pleistocene	FPMS U (Undetermined)
Pre-Quaternary Sedimentary Rocks	Tw—Weaverville Formation	Oligocene to Miocene	FPMS 3 (Moderate)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	Tva—Western Cascade Volcanics andesite	Cenozoic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	Kqd—Shasta Belly Batholith	Cretaceous	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Pre-Quaternary Sedimentary Rocks	Ks—Cretaceous sedimentary rocks	Cretaceous	FPMS U (Undetermined)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	sfm—South Fork Mountain Schist	Cretaceous	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	sfmmb—South Fork Mountain Schist Chinquapin Metabasalt Member	Cretaceous	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	vsmv—Metavolcanic rocks of Valentine Springs Formation	Cretaceous	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Melanges	ctmm—Central Terrane mélange matrix	Jurassic to Cretaceous	FPMS U (Undetermined)
Pre-Quaternary Sedimentary Rocks	ctss—Central Terrane sandstone	Jurassic to Cretaceous	FPMS U (Undetermined)
Pre-Quaternary Sedimentary Rocks	ctch—Central Terrane chert	Jurassic to Cretaceous	FPMS U (Undetermined)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	ctcr—Coast Range Ophiolite	Jurassic to Cretaceous	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	ctgs—Central Terrane greeenstone	Jurassic to Cretaceous	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Pre-Quaternary Sedimentary Rocks	ybtch—Yolla Bolly Terrane chert	Jurassic to Cretaceous	FPMS U (Undetermined)
Pre-Quaternary Sedimentary Rocks	ybh—Metagraywacke of Hammerhorn Ridge	Jurassic to Cretaceous	FPMS U (Undetermined)
Melanges	ybtmm—Yolla Bolly Terrane Mélange	Jurassic to Cretaceous	FPMS U (Undetermined)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	nfv—metavolcanic rocks of Stuart Fork Formation	Jurassic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Pre-Quaternary Sedimentary Rocks	nfs—metasedimentary rocks of Stuart Fork Formation	Jurassic	FPMS 2 (Low)
Pre-Quaternary Sedimentary Rocks	ls—limestone	Paleozoic to Mesozoic	FPMS U (Undetermined)
Melanges	KJf—Franciscan Complex	Jurassic to Cretaceous	FPMS 2 (Low)
Melanges	hm—Hayfork Terrane mélange	Jurassic	FPMS U (Undetermined)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	hgb—Hayfork Terrane gabbro	Jurassic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	hgd—Hayfork Terrane granodiorite	Jurassic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)

Grouping	Geologic Unit	Age	Fossil Prediction Map System (FPMS) Designation
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	hd—Hayfork Terrane diorite	Jurassic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	hpx—Hayfork Terrane pyroxenite	Jurassic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Pre-Quaternary Sedimentary Rocks	hhvc—Hayfork Terrane chert and argillite	Jurassic	FPMS U (Undetermined)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	hhb—Hayfork Terrane meta-andesite	Jurassic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	him—Hayfork Terrane Ironside Mountain Batholith	Jurassic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	hsp—Hayfork Terrane serpentinite	Jurassic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	ha—Hayfork Terrane amphibolite tectonic blocks	Jurassic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	wJgm—Meta-Galice Formation	Jurassic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Pre-Quaternary Sedimentary Rocks	wJg—Galice Formation	Jurassic	FPMS U (Undetermined)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	wJsp—serpentinite of Western Jurassic Terrane	Jurassic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	rcv—Rattlesnake Creek Terrane volcanic mélange	Triassic to Jurassic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	rcsp—Rattlesnake Creek Terrane serpentinite	Triassic to Jurassic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Pre-Quaternary Sedimentary Rocks	rcs—Rattlesnake Creek Terrane detrital sedimentary rocks	Triassic to Jurassic	FPMS U (Undetermined)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	rcp—Rattlesnake Creek Terrane plutonic rocks	Triassic to Jurassic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Melanges	nf—North Fork Terrane dismembered ophiolite	Triassic to Jurassic	FPMS U (Undetermined)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	nfsp—North Fork Terrane serpentinite	Triassic to Jurassic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	nfdb—North Fork Terrane diabase	Triassic to Jurassic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	nfgb—North Fork Terrane gabbro	Triassic to Jurassic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	nfd—North Fork Terrane diorite	Triassic to Jurassic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	Mzd—Mesozoic dioritic rocks	Mesozoic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	Mzg—Mesozoic granitic rocks	Mesozoic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Pre-Quaternary Sedimentary Rocks	MzPzs—Stuart Fork Formation	Permian to Triassic	FPMS U (Undetermined)
Pre-Quaternary Sedimentary Rocks	Mbd—Bragdon Formation	Mississippian	FPMS U (Undetermined)
Pre-Quaternary Sedimentary Rocks	Cbg—Bragdon Formation	Mississippian	FPMS 3 (Moderate)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	Dcg—Copley Greenstone	Devonian	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	cms—Salmon hornblende schist	Devonian	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	Dc—Copley Greenstone	Devonian	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Pre-Quaternary Sedimentary Rocks	DSg—Gazelle Formation	Silurian to Devonian	FPMS U (Undetermined)

Grouping	Geologic Unit	Age	Fossil Prediction Map System (FPMS) Designation
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	Ogb—Ordovician gabbroic and dioritic rocks	Ordovician	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	tum—Trinity ultramafic complex	Ordovician	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	Op—Trinity peridotite	Ordovician	FPMS 1 (Very Low)
Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks	Pza—Abrams Mica Schist	Paleozoic	FPMS 1 (Very Low)

Figure 4.7-1 Paleontological Sensitivity of Trinity County



Imagery provided by Esri and its licensors © 2026.
Additional data provided by Jennings and Strand 1960; Strand 1963; Fraticelli et al. 2012.

Vulnerability Assessment
Fig X Paleontological Sensitivity of Plan Area

Melanges

Melanges represent geologic units that consist of blocks of various rock types ranging in size from a few meters to several kilometers across, and these units are listed in Table 4.7-1. The varying rock types within a mélange may represent rocks capable (i.e., sedimentary) or incapable (i.e., igneous or metamorphic) of preserving paleontological resources. Given that the highest-sensitivity geologic units in Trinity County have FPMS 3 (Moderate) paleontological sensitivity and any such blocks are intermixed with FPMS 1 (Very Low) or 2 (Low) paleontological sensitivity geologic units, the overall sensitivity of the melanges is considered to have FPMS 2 (Low) paleontological sensitivity (Table 4.7-1).

Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks

Igneous rocks represent rocks formed from cooled molten rock, and metamorphic rocks represent rocks formed by the modification of existing rocks due to extreme heat and/or pressure. These geologic units are listed in Table 4.7-1. Due to the conditions of their formation, igneous and metamorphic rocks are incapable of preserving paleontological resources except for extremely rare circumstances (e.g., volcanic mudflows [lahars] or ashfall). Therefore, these geologic units are considered to have FPMS 1 (Very Low) paleontological sensitivity (Table 4.7-1).

4.7.2 Regulatory Setting

a. Federal Regulations

Landslide Hazard Program

The United States Geological Survey created the Landslide Hazard Program in the mid-1970s; the primary objective of the program is to reduce long-term losses from landslide hazards by improving our understanding of the causes of ground failure and suggesting mitigation strategies. The federal government takes the lead role in funding and conducting this research, whereas the reduction of losses due to geologic hazards is primarily a state and local responsibility. In Trinity County, plans and programs designed for the protection of life and property are coordinated by Trinity County Planning Department, the Trinity County Fire Safe Council, the Trinity County Resource Conservation District, and the Trinity County Office of Emergency Services.

Clean Water Act

Congress enacted the Clean Water Act (CWA), formerly the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972, with the intent of restoring and maintaining the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the waters of the United States. The CWA requires states to set standards to protect, maintain, and restore water quality through the regulation of point source and non-point source discharges to surface water, including soil erosion. Those discharges are regulated by the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit process (CWA Section 402). NPDES permitting authority is administered by the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and its nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards. Trinity County is within the jurisdiction of the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.

While the CWA is primarily associated with protecting and enhancing surface water quality, some regulatory provisions of the CWA help to control erosion and soil loss and compliance with these provisions can help mitigate potential impacts to geology and soils. In particular, the SWRCB administers the NPDES Construction General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Construction Stormwater General Permit) (Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002). The order applies to construction sites or other projects that include one or more acre of soil disturbance, as required by the CWA. Activities subject to the Construction Stormwater General Permit include clearing, grading, and disturbances to the ground, such as grubbing or excavation. The Construction Stormwater General Permit requires the development and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) prepared by a Qualified SWPPP Developer and submitted

to the SWRCB. The SWPPP contains a site map that shows the construction site perimeter, existing and proposed buildings, lots, roadways, stormwater collection and discharge points, general topography both before and after construction, and drainage patterns across the project site. The purposes of the SWPPP are: (1) to help identify the sources of sediment and other pollutants that could affect the quality of stormwater discharges and (2) to describe and ensure the implementation of best management practices to reduce or eliminate sediment and other pollutants in stormwater as well as non-stormwater discharges resulting from construction activity. Best management practices that can be implemented include, but are not limited to, silt fences, runoff control devices, wind erosion control, prevention of fluid leaks, and use of tracking controls at the site entrance.

Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000

Congress passed the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act by invoking new and revitalized approaches to mitigation planning. Section 322 of the Act emphasized the need for state and local government entities to closely coordinate on mitigation planning activities and makes the development of a hazard mitigation plan a specific eligibility requirement for any local government applying for federal mitigation grant funds. Communities with an adopted and federally-approved hazard mitigation plan thereby become pre-positioned and more apt to receive available mitigation funds before and after the next declared disaster.

To implement the new Stafford Act provisions, FEMA published requirements and procedures for local hazard mitigation plans in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 44, Chapter 1, Part 201.6. These regulations specify minimum standards for developing, updating, and submitting local hazard mitigation plans for FEMA review and approval at least once every five years.

b. State Regulations

California Building Code

Part 2 of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations is the California Building Code (CBC), a set of regulations that governs the design and construction of structures in California. The purpose of the CBC is to establish minimum standards to safeguard public health, safety, and general welfare through structural strength, means of egress facilities, and general stability by controlling the design, construction, quality of materials, use and occupancy, location, and maintenance of building and structures. The CBC contains specific requirements for seismic safety, excavation, foundations, retaining walls, and site demolition. It also regulates grading activities, including drainage and erosion control.

Chapter 16 of the CBC contains definitions of seismic sources and the procedure used to calculate seismic forces on structures. The earthquake design requirements of the CBC take into account the occupancy category of the structure, site class, soil classifications, and various seismic coefficients, which are used to determine a Seismic Design Category (SDC) for a project. The SDC is a classification system that combines the occupancy categories with the level of expected ground motions at the site and ranges from SDC A (very small seismic vulnerability) to SDC E/F (very high seismic vulnerability and near a major fault). Design specifications are then determined according to the SDC.

The CBC requires addressing soil-related hazards, such as treating hazardous soil conditions involving removal, proper fill selection, and compaction. In cases where soil remediation is not feasible, the CBC requires structural reinforcement of foundations to resist the forces of expansive soils.

Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act of 1972 was passed into law following the destructive February 9, 1971, San Fernando earthquake that had a Moment Magnitude of 6.6. The Act provides a mechanism for reducing losses from surface fault rupture on a statewide basis. The intent of the Act is to ensure public safety by prohibiting the siting of most structures for human occupancy across traces of active faults that constitute a potential hazard to structures from surface faulting or fault creep. This Act

groups faults into categories of active, potentially active, and inactive. Historic and Holocene age faults are considered active, Late Quaternary and Quaternary age faults are considered potentially active, and pre-Quaternary age faults are considered inactive.

Seismic Hazards Mapping Act

The Seismic Hazards Mapping Act (the Act) of 1990 was passed into law following the destructive October 17, 1989, Moment Magnitude 6.9 Loma Prieta earthquake. The Act directs the CGS to delineate Seismic Hazard Zones. The purpose of the Act is to reduce the threat to public health and safety and to minimize the loss of life and property by identifying and mitigating seismic hazards. Cities, counties, and state agencies are directed to use seismic hazard zone maps developed by CGS in their land-use planning and permitting processes. The Act requires the preparation of site-specific geotechnical investigations, including mitigation measures based on site-specific conditions, prior to permitting most urban development projects within seismic hazard zones.

Cannabis General Order

The State Water Resources Control Board also maintains general water discharge requirements for waste discharges associated with cannabis cultivation activities (Order WQ 2023-0102-DWQ). The order is intended to protect receiving waters from water quality impacts, including discharge of sediment, irrigation runoff, fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, petroleum, agricultural-related chemicals, cultivation-related waste, refuse, and human waste. The order applies to existing cannabis cultivation sites as well as new cannabis cultivation sites.

Assembly Bill 885 – On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems

Assembly Bill 885 (Chapter 781, Statutes of 2000) required SWRCB to draft and implement regulations for minimum operating requirements that may include siting, installation, operation, and maintenance of on-site wastewater treatment systems and minimum requirements for monitoring used to determine system performance. The proposed regulations were adopted in 2012.

California Public Resources Code

Section 5097.5 of the Public Resources Code states:

> No person shall knowingly and willfully excavate upon, or remove, destroy, injure or deface any historic or prehistoric ruins, burial grounds, archaeological or vertebrate paleontological site, including fossilized footprints, inscriptions made by human agency, or any other archaeological, paleontological or historical feature, situated on public lands, except with the express permission of the public agency having jurisdiction over such lands. Violation of this section is a misdemeanor.

Here “public lands” means those owned by, or under the jurisdiction of, the state or any city, county, district, authority, or public corporation, or any agency thereof. Consequently, public agencies are required to comply with Public Resources Code Section 5097.5 for their own activities, including construction and maintenance, and for permit actions (e.g., encroachment permits) undertaken by others.

c. Local Regulations

Trinity County Hazard Mitigation Plan

The County adopted a Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2024. This plan describes the process for identifying hazards, risks, and vulnerabilities; identifying and prioritizing mitigation actions; encouraging the development of local mitigation; and providing technical support for those efforts. The Hazard Mitigation Plan mentions that there have been no earthquake disasters recorded in recent Trinity County history, and extent of earthquakes in Trinity County is moderate. (County of Trinity 2024).

Trinity County Code of Ordinances

Chapter 12.12 provides construction improvement standards for roadways in decomposed granite areas of the county in order to protect soil, water, and fishery resources of the county. This chapter includes limits on roadway grades, drainage, and culvert design standards to minimize erosion potential and revegetation and maintenance requirements.

Chapter 15.24 establishes restrictions on mass grading to address soil and geologic stability concerns from recent activities such as water storage ponds, pad grading, and roads for cannabis sites. Grading over 800 cubic yards or 20,000 square feet requires a Director's Use Permit or Conditional Use Permit. Grading is prohibited if it:

- Creates a public health or safety hazard
- Threatens adjacent property stability
- Damages utilities, roads, or drainage facilities
- Obstructs watercourses
- Degrades water quality
- Damages septic systems, wells, or survey markers

Section 15.16.170 requires that all new and replacement water supply and sanitary sewage systems shall be designed to minimize or eliminate infiltration of floodwater into the system and discharge from systems into floodwaters. Onsite waste disposal systems must be located to avoid contamination during a flood event. Section 16.48.122 contains criteria for determining lot size, usable acreage, percolation standards, and other standards that must be met to construct on-site waste disposal systems for subdivision improvements.

Chapter 17.30.020(E)(2)(b)(xv) requires that, if a previously unidentified paleontological resource is discovered during project operation, all excavation and disturbance in the area must cease, and the project owner or developer shall notify the Trinity County Planning Director. Work in the area may not resume until a qualified professional has evaluated the significance of the discovery and implemented appropriate mitigation and has given written authorization to resume work.

Chapter 17.43G governs mitigation of paleontological resources impacts related to cannabis projects. If a paleontological resource is discovered during construction of such projects, all work activities must cease within 100 feet of the discovery and the County shall be contacted. Subsequent to such a discovery, a qualified paleontologist must be retained to observe grading/excavation in the area of the find, establish procedures for temporarily halting or redirecting work if additional resources are discovered. Any discoveries causing delays or redirection of construction activity shall be reported to the County by the paleontologist, and the paleontologist, project developer, and the County shall cooperate to ensure proper salvage of the paleontological resources. Paleontological discoveries shall be stored in state-designated paleontological repositories or, if those repositories decline curation, offered to the County for public education or interpretive displays.

4.7.3 Impact Analysis

a. Significance Thresholds

Based on Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines* a project may be deemed to have a significant impact on geology and soils if it would:

1. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:
    a. 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,

   b. Strong seismic ground shaking,
   c. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction, or
   d. Landslides;
2. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil;
3. 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;
4. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property;
5. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater; or
6. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature.

b. Methodology

The impact analysis is based on an assessment of baseline conditions for the Planning Area, including topography, geologic and soil conditions, and seismic hazards, as described above under Section 4.7.1, *Setting*. The analysis identifies potential impacts based on the predicted interaction between the affected environment and construction, operation, and maintenance activities related to development facilitated by the proposed project. Impacts are described in terms of location, context, duration, and intensity, and mitigation measures are recommended, when necessary, to avoid or minimize impacts.

Much of the potential cannabis-related development contemplated by the project was previously analyzed in the Trinity County Cannabis Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR; State Clearinghouse number 2018122049), certified in 2020 (2020 EIR). The 2020 EIR includes Mitigation Measure 3.10-1a, which requires compliance with State Water Resources Control Board water-resource standards and was intended, in part, to reduce erosion- and sediment-related effects associated with cannabis-related development. Those requirements were subsequently incorporated into County Code of Ordinances Chapter 17.43G through Ordinance No. 315-849, adopted in December 2020. In its geology and soils analysis, the 2020 EIR concluded that cannabis cultivation and associated development could occur in areas with geologic or soils constraints, but that compliance with applicable building, grading, drainage, and erosion-control requirements would reduce geologic and soils impacts to a less-than-significant level. Furthermore, the 2020 EIR identified potential impacts to paleontological resources from ground-disturbing activities but concluded those impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.7-4, which requires evaluation and protection of discovered paleontological resources. Accordingly, the 2020 EIR did not identify any significant and unavoidable impacts related to geology, soils, or paleontological resources.

Because these regulatory controls are part of existing conditions and because the proposed General Plan establishes a new countywide policy framework that supersedes the 2020 EIR for cannabis activities occurring consistent with the General Plan, this EIR focuses on geology and soil effects not previously addressed or requiring reevaluation under the proposed General Plan.

c. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1:	Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving 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, strong seismic ground shaking, seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction, or landslides; or,
Threshold 3:	Would the project 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?

Impact GEO-1 Construction and occupancy of development facilitated by the project could result in exposure of people or structures to a risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, strong seismic ground shaking, seismic-related ground failure, liquefaction, or landslides. However, required adherence to the CBC and Trinity County Code of Ordinances, and implementation of the goals and policies of the proposed General Plan, would reduce the potential for loss, injury, or death following a seismic event to a less than significant level.

As described in Section 4.7.1, *Setting*, the County does not have any active faults locally (CGS 2019). Given this, the potential for surface fault rupture at development sites within the County is low, as surface rupture is typically constrained to the immediate proximity of the fault trace.

Although there are no active faults as delineated by Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning, the County could experience low or moderate ground shaking from earthquakes in surrounding areas, particularly in the southwestern quadrant of the county that is closer to the fault lines in adjacent counties (CGS 2025).

As described in Section 4.7.1, *Setting*, the County has a low risk of liquefaction and settlement. However, the County's mountainous terrain and steep slopes create a high risk of landslides. Accordingly, development facilitated by the project would have the potential to experience seismic ground-shaking and secondary seismic impacts, although shaking intensity and secondary seismic effects at any specific site would vary with magnitude, distance, rupture characteristics, and local soils.

New development under the proposed project would be subject to County Code of Ordinances and CBC engineering design and construction measures and requirements. Development designed in accordance with the CBC would be able to: 1) resist minor earthquakes without damage; 2) resist moderate earthquakes without structural damage, but with some non-structural damage; and 3) resist major earthquakes without collapse, but with some structural, as well as non-structural, damage. Compliance with the CBC would minimize potential structural damage and the exposure of people to the risk of injury or death from structural failure. Foundations and other structures for features would be designed to resist and absorb damaging forces from strong ground shaking and liquefaction in accordance with CBC requirements. Specifically, Section 1613 of the CBC requires every structure and portion thereof, including nonstructural components that are permanently attached to structures and their supports and attachments, to be designed and constructed to resist the effects of earthquake motions. Moreover, Trinity County Code of Ordinances Chapter 15.24 includes requirements pertaining to grading and erosion control.

The proposed General Plan contains the following policies and actions intended to minimize the risks associated with seismic and geologic hazards in order to protect public health and safety, property, and the environment. Policies SAF 3.1 (Geological Soil Study and Engineering Requirements), SAF 3.2 (Unconsolidated Landslide Debris), SAF 3.3 (Slope Stability Protection), and SAF 3.4 (Soil Condition Consideration) ensures that development is carefully planned and engineered to avoid geologic and soil-related hazards, prohibiting development in areas with instability, and requiring development to be designed in ways that protect slope stability.

Development facilitated by the proposed project would be constructed in compliance with current seismic standards, which are designed to ensure that modern buildings are able to withstand the adverse effects of strong seismic ground shaking, liquefaction, and landslides. Potential structural damage and the exposure of people to the risk of injury or death from structural failure associated with liquefaction or landslides would be minimized by compliance with CBC engineering design and construction measures. Foundations and other structural support features would be required to be designed to resist or absorb damaging forces from liquefaction and landsliding. As required by Chapter 15.24 of the Trinity County Code of Ordinances, grading controls would limit the potential for liquefaction and landslide within individual development sites. Accordingly, implementation of the General Plan Update policies and compliance with relevant County Code or Ordinances sections would reduce the potential for loss, injury, or death associated with seismic and secondary seismic hazards, such as those related to rupture of a known earthquake fault, strong seismic ground-shaking, seismic-related ground failure, liquefaction, and landslides to **less than significant** levels.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures would be required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 2:	Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Impact GEO-2 Construction of development facilitated by the project would require ground disturbance such as excavation and grading that could result in loose or exposed soil. This disturbed soil could be eroded by wind or during a storm event, which would result in the loss of topsoil. Compliance with applicable regulations, including the Clean Water Act, and implementation of the policies in the proposed General Plan would minimize the potential for erosion and the loss of topsoil and would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

As discussed above under Section 4.7.1, *Setting,* Trinity County has a high erosion potential, particularly in the mountainous areas with steep slopes and unstable soils like decomposed granite. Development facilitated by the project would involve construction activities such as stockpiling, grading, excavation, paving, and other earth-disturbing activities. Loose and disturbed soils are more prone to erosion and loss of topsoil by wind and water.

Construction activities that disturb one or more acres of land surface are subject to the NPDES General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002) adopted by the SWRCB. Compliance with the permit requires each qualifying development project to file a Notice of Intent with the SWRCB. Permit conditions require development of a SWPPP, which must describe the site, the facility, erosion and sediment controls, runoff water quality monitoring, means of waste disposal, implementation of approved local plans, control of construction sediment and erosion control measures, maintenance responsibilities, and non-storm water management controls. Inspection of construction sites before and after storms is also required to identify storm water discharge from the construction activity and to identify and implement erosion controls, where necessary.

Additionally, SWRCB Order WQ 2023-0102-DWQ requires the preparation of an erosion and sediment control plan for proposed cannabis cultivation projects that are located on a slope greater than 30 percent. The plan must include best management practices for erosion prevention (such as straw mulch placement, plastic covers, slope stabilization, soil binders, or culvert armoring) and sediment control (such as silt fences, fiber rolls, settling ponds, vegetated outfalls, or hydro seeding).

The Trinity County Code of Ordinances (Chapter 15.24) also establishes restrictions on grading to address soil and geologic stability concerns. Additionally, Chapter 12.12 provides construction standards

to minimize erosion potential. Adherence to the requirements of the Trinity County Code of Ordinances would reduce the potential for new construction under the proposed project to cause erosion or the loss of topsoil by ensuring proper management of loose and disturbed soil.

In addition to compliance with mandatory Clean Water Act regulations and the Trinity County Code of Ordinances requirements, implementation of proposed General Plan policies would further reduce the potential erosion and loss of topsoil from construction-related soil disturbance. Policies SAF 3.1 (Geological/Soils Study and Engineering Requirement) and SAF 3.4 (Soil Condition Consideration) would require the County to consider soil conditions when approving new construction or significant earthwork and ensure development plans complete geological and soil studies where there is potential soil instability.

Compliance with applicable regulations in the Clean Water Act, the Trinity County Code of Ordinances, and implementation of the policies in the proposed General Plan would minimize the potential for erosion and the loss of topsoil and would reduce this potential impact to a **less-than-significant** level.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation

Threshold 4:	Would the project be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

Impact GEO-3 Development facilitated by the project could result in the construction of structures on expansive soils, which could create a substantial risk to life or property. However, new development would be required to comply with the standards of the CBC pertaining to expansive soils. Compliance with the requirements of the CBC, the Trinity County Code of Ordinances, and polices in the proposed General Plan would reduce impacts related to expansive soils to a less-than-significant level.

As discussed above under Section 4.7.1, *Setting,* Trinity County soils have a low potential for expansiveness. The proposed project would involve minor land use changes in these areas but would increase development intensity in existing communities. Buildout under the proposed project would be required to comply with the CBC which includes requirements to address soil-related hazards. Typical measures to treat hazardous soil conditions involve removal, proper fill selection, and compaction. In cases where soil remediation is not feasible, the CBC requires structural reinforcement of foundations to resist the forces of any potential expansive soil.

Additionally, Policy SAF 3.1 (Geological/Soils Study and Engineering Requirement) would require development plans to complete geological and soil studies where there is potential soil instability. Furthermore, Policy SAF 3.4 (Soil Condition Consideration) requires the County to consider soil conditions when approving new construction or significant earthwork.

Compliance with the requirements of the CBC, the Trinity County Code of Ordinances, and polices in the proposed General Plan would reduce any potential impacts related to expansive soils to a **less-than-significant** level.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 5:	Would the project have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

Impact GEO-4 Development facilitated by the project would lead to the installation of septic tanks and onsite sewage disposal systems. Portions of the county may contain areas with soils not suitable for wastewater treatment. Such systems must be sited, designed, and constructed in accordance with applicable local requirements. Compliance with the requirements of the CBC, the Trinity County Code of Ordinances, and policies in the proposed General Plan would reduce impacts related to septic tanks and alternative wastewater disposal systems to a less-than-significant level.

Wastewater services in Trinity County are provided primarily by septic systems. The proposed project may lead to the installation of septic tanks and onsite sewage disposal systems, including in areas with soils not suitable for wastewater treatment. Such systems must be sited, designed, and constructed in accordance with applicable state and local requirements. Failing or poorly designed septic systems can allow untreated wastewater to migrate through soils and into groundwater or surface water, degrading water quality, and potentially contaminating drinking water and creating a public health hazard.

The risk of these impacts is mitigated through regulatory requirements. Trinity County Code of Ordinances Section 16.48.122 establishes minimum standards for lot size, usable acreage, and percolation performance that must be met prior to approval of onsite waste disposal systems for subdivisions. Percolation testing prior to system approval ensures that soils have sufficient absorption capacity to treat effluent before it reaches groundwater. Where soil conditions are not adequate, engineered system designs, such as mound systems, drip irrigation dispersal, or other alternative technologies, can meet state and county standards to contain and treat wastewater and prevent discharge into groundwater or adjacent surface waters. Additionally, Trinity County Code of Ordinances Section 15.16.170 requires that all new and replacement water supply and sanitary sewage systems shall be designed to minimize or eliminate infiltration of floodwater into the system and discharge from systems into floodwaters, and that onsite waste disposal systems must be located to avoid contamination during a flood event. This prevents flood events from overwhelming a septic system and causing untreated sewage to discharge directly into surface waters

Additionally, with adherence to Policies PFSI 2.2 (Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems), and PSFI 2.2 (Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Failure Repair), the County will require Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems to meet all applicable requirements and require landlords to replace failing septic tank systems that are a public health threat. These policies ensure ongoing operational compliance beyond initial installation, reducing the risk that aging or failing systems would contribute to groundwater or surface water contamination over the life of the project.

These requirements ensure that septic systems serving new development are sited in locations with adequate soil capacity or are engineered to compensate where soils are limiting, are designed to prevent groundwater contamination under both normal and flood conditions, and are maintained or replaced when they fail. As a result, potential soil impacts associated with septic tanks would be reduced to **less than significant** levels through adherence to the Trinity County Code of Ordinances and the proposed General Plan policies.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 6:	Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Impact GEO-5 Development facilitated by the project could impact paleontological resources in areas with low, moderate, or unknown paleontological sensitivity. Compliance with the requirements of the CBC, the Trinity County Code of Ordinances, policies in the proposed General Plan, and Mitigation Measure CUL-2 would reduce impacts related to paleontological resources to a less-than-significant level.

Consistent with SVP (2025) guidelines, the paleontological sensitivity of the 62 geologic units underlying Trinity County was evaluated using geologic maps, a literature review, and online fossil locality databases. The paleontological sensitivities of each geologic unit are listed in Table 4.7-1, and the paleontological sensitivity throughout Trinity County is shown in Figure 4.7-1. Ground-disturbing activities within previously undisturbed sediments with FPMS 2 (low), 3 (moderate), or U (unknown) paleontological sensitivity could result in significant impacts to paleontological resources. Impacts would be significant if construction activities result in the destruction, damage, or loss of scientifically important paleontological resources and associated stratigraphic and paleontological data.

Adverse effects to paleontological resources can only be determined once a specific project has been proposed because the effects are highly dependent on both the individual project site conditions and the characteristics of the proposed ground-disturbing activity. Ground-disturbing activities associated with construction facilitated by the proposed General Plan, particularly in areas that have not previously been developed with urban uses, have the potential to damage or destroy paleontological resources that may be present on or below the ground surface in areas with FPMS 2, 3, or U paleontological sensitivity. Consequently, damage to or destruction of fossils could occur due to development under the proposed General Plan. In particular, Policy COS 8.4 would reduce impacts to paleontological resources by requiring a paleontological resource assessment by a qualified professional. However, Policy COS 8.4 does not specify the level of effort necessary when conducting the required paleontological resource assessments. Identification efforts must be comprehensive and explicit in order to meet data requirement thresholds when determining impacts to paleontological resources. This includes the collection of geological mapping and regional geoarchaeological overviews. Without these specific requirements for future development under the proposed General Plan, future development projects could result in direct or indirect impacts that could destroy or damage a unique paleontological resource. Therefore, impacts to paleontological resources would be **potentially significant**.

Mitigation Measures

Implement Mitigation Measure CUL-2 (Revise Proposed Policy COS 8.4). Please refer to Section 4.5, *Cultural Resources*, for the full text of the measure.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant with the implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-2, by improving identification efforts for paleontological resources. Mitigation Measure CUL-2 requires a well-defined and comprehensive assessment for the potential for paleontological resources with the most recent information available. The desktop geoarchaeological assessment of buried site sensitivity would reduce the risk of inadvertent discoveries during construction by identifying areas with higher potential for paleontological resources. With this mitigation measure, potential impacts would be reduced to **less than significant**.

4.7.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope for the cumulative geology and soils analysis is Trinity County. This geographic scope is appropriate because geology and soils related impacts are typically site-specific. The cumulative development scenario is described in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting*.

Trinity County is characterized by rugged mountainous terrain and steep slopes with elevated erosion and landslide susceptibility, and river valleys comprised of loose alluvial soils. Cumulative development could place structures at risk to impacts caused by unstable soils or landsliding; and cause erosion or loss of topsoil. Additionally, while the risk of seismic hazards are low, cumulative development could expose people and structures to seismic hazards such as ground shaking, fault rupture, liquefaction, earthquake-induced landslides. Impacts would generally be confined to a specific project area, rather than result in an incremental cumulative effect over the County. For example, while an earthquake can be detected over many counties or multiple states, the risks to property or life from fault rupture or landslides occurs within a typically smaller area closer to the earthquake epicenter. Cumulative development would be required to adhere to the design standards described in the CBC, the Trinity County Code of Ordinances, and applicable General Plan policies, which regulate the design and construction buildings and structures and effectively reduce the effects of seismic activity and geologic hazards at the project level. Compliance with code requirements and applicable policies would reduce cumulative impacts to less than significant.

Cumulative development could disturb areas that may contain paleontological resources. However, potential impacts associated with individual development projects would be addressed on a case-by-case basis and would be subject to local and state regulations regarding the protection of such resources. With compliance with existing policies and regulations, as well as General Plan policies, future development would be required to avoid or mitigate the loss of these resources. Therefore, cumulative paleontological resource impacts would be less than significant.

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4.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The analysis in this section describes existing greenhouse gas (GHG) and climate trends and evaluates the potential GHG impacts of buildout under the proposed project, including GHG emissions that may have a significant impact on the environment and conflicts with plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions.

4.8.1 Setting

a. Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases

Gases that absorb and re-emit infrared radiation in the atmosphere are called GHGs. The gases that are widely seen as the principal contributors to human-induced climate change include carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxides, fluorinated gases such as hydrofluorocarbons and perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride. Water vapor is excluded from the list of GHGs because it is short-lived in the atmosphere and its atmospheric concentrations are largely determined by natural processes, such as oceanic evaporation.

Different types of GHGs have varying global warming potentials (GWPs). The GWP of a GHG is the potential of a gas or aerosol to trap heat in the atmosphere over a specified timescale (generally, 100 years). Because GHGs absorb different amounts of heat, a common reference gas (CO_2) is used to relate the amount of heat absorbed to the amount of the gas emitted, referred to as "carbon dioxide equivalent" (CO_2e), which is the amount of GHG emitted multiplied by its GWP. CO_2 has a 100-year GWP of one. By contrast, CH_4 has a GWP of 30, meaning its global warming effect is 30 times greater than CO_2 on a molecule per molecule basis (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] 2021).

Climate change is the observed increase in the average temperature of the Earth's atmosphere and oceans along with other substantial changes in climate (such as wind patterns, precipitation, and storms) over an extended period. The term "climate change" is often used interchangeably with the term "global warming," but climate change is preferred because it conveys that other changes are happening in addition to rising temperatures. The baseline against which these changes are measured originates in historical records that identify temperature changes that occurred in the past, such as during previous ice ages. The global climate is changing continuously, as evidenced in the geologic record which indicates repeated episodes of substantial warming and cooling. The rate of change has typically been incremental, with warming or cooling trends occurring over the course of thousands of years. The past 10,000 years have been marked by a period of incremental warming, as glaciers have steadily retreated across the globe. However, scientists have observed that the rate of warming has accelerated relative to the pre-industrial (1850-1900) global surface temperature baseline. The IPCC expressed that the rise and continued growth of atmospheric CO_2 concentrations is unequivocally due to human activities in the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report (2021). Human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean, and land, which has led the climate to warm at an unprecedented rate in the last 2,000 years. It is estimated that between the period of 1850 through 2019, that a total of 2,390 gigatonnes of anthropogenic CO_2 was emitted. It is likely that anthropogenic activities have increased the global surface temperature by approximately 1.07 degrees Celsius between the years 2010 through 2019 (IPCC 2021).

The accumulation of GHGs in the atmosphere regulates the earth's temperature. Without the natural heat-trapping effect of GHGs, the earth's surface would be about 33 degrees Celsius (°C) cooler (World Meteorological Organization 2026). However, since 1750, estimated concentrations of CO_2, CH_4, and nitrous oxides in the atmosphere have increased by 47 percent, 156 percent, and 23 percent, respectively, primarily due to human activity (IPCC 2021). GHG emissions from human activities, particularly the consumption of fossil fuels for electricity production and transportation, are believed to have elevated the concentration of these gases in the atmosphere beyond the level of concentrations that occur naturally.

b. GHG Emissions Inventory

Global Emissions Inventory

In 2019, global anthropogenic GHG emissions totaled approximately 59 billion metric tons (MT) of CO_2e, a 12 percent increase from 2010 levels and a 54 percent increase from 1990 levels. Emissions were primarily driven by the energy sector (34 percent), followed by industry (24 percent), agriculture (22 percent), transport (15 percent), and buildings (6 percent) (IPCC 2023). These emissions are key drivers of climate change and are relevant to CEQA review as they may contribute to cumulative impacts on air quality and climate.

United States Emissions Inventory

U.S. GHG emissions were 6,341 million MT of CO_2e in 2022 or 5,487 million MT CO_2e after accounting for sequestration. Emissions decreased by 3.1 percent from 2021 to 2022. Between 2021 and 2022, the increase in total GHG emissions was driven largely by an increase in CO_2 emissions from fossil fuel combustion across most end-use sectors due in part to increased energy use from the continued rebound of economic activity after the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, the energy sector (including transportation and industrial) accounted for 76.4 percent of nationwide GHG emissions while agriculture, commercial, and residential sections accounted for approximately 23.6 percent of nationwide GHG emissions (United States Environmental Protection Agency [USEPA] 2024).

California Emissions Inventory

Based on California Air Resource Board's (CARB) California Greenhouse Gas Inventory for 2000-2023, California produced 360.4 million MT of CO_2e in 2023, which is 11.2 million MT of CO_2e lower than 2022 levels. The major source of GHG emissions in California is the transportation sector, which comprises 37.1 percent of the state's total GHG emissions. The industrial sector is the second largest source, comprising 18.6 percent of the state's GHG emissions while electric power accounts for approximately 15.9 percent (CARB 2025). The magnitude of California's total GHG emissions is due in part to its large size and large population compared to other states. However, a factor that reduces California's per capita fuel use and GHG emissions as compared to other states is its relatively mild climate.

In 2016, California achieved its 2020 GHG emission reduction target of reducing emissions to 1990 levels as emissions fell below 431 million MT of CO_2e. The annual 2030 statewide target emissions level is 260 million MT of CO_2e (CARB 2017).

c. Potential Effects of Climate Change

Globally, climate change has the potential to affect numerous environmental resources though potential impacts related to future air temperatures and precipitation patterns. Scientific modeling predicts that continued GHG emissions at or above current rates would induce more extreme climate changes during the 21st century than were observed during the twentieth century. The year 2025 was the third-warmest year since global records began in 1850 at 1.17°C (2.11 Fahrenheit [°F]) above the 20th century average of 13.9°C (57.0°F). The 10 warmest years in the 176-year record have all occurred since 2015 (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration 2026). Furthermore, several independently analyzed data records of global and regional Land-Surface Air Temperature obtained from station observations jointly indicate that Land Surface Air Temperature and sea surface temperatures have increased. Due to past and current activities, anthropogenic GHG emissions are increasing global mean surface temperature at a rate of 0.2°C per decade. In addition to these findings, there are identifiable signs that global warming is currently taking place, including substantial ice loss in the Arctic over the past two decades (IPCC 2014, 2018).

Potential impacts of climate change in California may include reduced water supply from snowpack, sea level rise, more extreme heat days per year, more large forest fires, and more drought years. *California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment* (California Natural Resource Agency 2019) includes regional reports that summarize climate impacts and adaptation solutions for nine regions of the state and regionally specific climate change case studies. However, while there is growing scientific consensus about the possible effects of climate change at a global and statewide level, current scientific modeling tools are unable to predict what local impacts may occur with a similar degree of accuracy. A summary follows that includes some of the potential effects that climate change could generate in California.

Air Quality and Wildfires

Scientists project that annual average maximum daily temperatures in California could rise by 2.4 to 3.2°C in the next 50 years and by 3.1 to 4.9°C in the next century. Higher temperatures are conducive to air pollution formation and rising temperatures could therefore result in worsened air quality in California. As a result, climate change may increase the concentration of ground-level ozone, but the magnitude of the effect, and therefore its indirect effects, are uncertain. In addition, as temperatures have increased in recent years, the area burned by wildfires throughout the state has increased, and wildfires have occurred at higher elevations in the Sierra Nevada Mountains (California Natural Resource Agency 2019). If higher temperatures continue to be accompanied by an increase in the incidence and extent of large wildfires, air quality could worsen. Severe heat accompanied by drier conditions and poor air quality could increase the number of heat-related deaths, illnesses, and asthma attacks throughout the state. With increasing temperatures, shifting weather patterns, longer dry seasons, and more dry fuel loads, the frequency of large wildfires and area burned is expected to increase (California Natural Resources Agency 2021).

Water Supply

Analysis of paleoclimatic data (such as tree-ring reconstructions of stream flow and precipitation) indicates a history of naturally and widely varying hydrologic conditions in California and the west, including a pattern of recurring and extended droughts. Uncertainty remains with respect to the overall impact of climate change on future precipitation trends and water supplies in California. Year-to-year variability in statewide precipitation levels has increased since 1980, meaning that wet and dry precipitation extremes have become more common (California Department of Water Resources 2018). For example, the winter of 2022-2023 had severe storms and flooding from increased rainfall and snowmelt, which the California Department of Water Resources identified as "the latest example that California's climate is becoming more extreme" (California Department of Water Resources 2023). This uncertainty regarding future precipitation trends complicates the analysis of future water demand, especially where the relationship between climate change and its potential effect on water demand is not well understood. The average early spring snowpack in the western United States, including the Sierra Nevada Mountains, decreased by about 10 percent during the last century. During the same period, sea level rose over 0.15 meter along the central and southern California coasts (California Natural Resource Agency 2019). The Sierra Nevada Mountains snowpack provides the majority of California's water supply as snow that accumulates during wet winters is released slowly during the dry months of spring and summer. A warmer climate is predicted to reduce the fraction of precipitation that falls as snow and the amount of snowfall at lower elevations, thereby reducing the total snowpack. Projections indicate that average spring snowpack in the Sierra Nevada and other mountain catchments in central and northern California will decline by approximately 66 percent from its historical average by 2050 (California Natural Resource Agency 2019).

Hydrology and Sea Level Rise

Climate change could affect the intensity and frequency of storms and flooding (California Natural Resource Agency 2019). Furthermore, climate change could induce substantial sea level rise in the coming century. Rising sea level increases the likelihood of and risk from flooding. The rate of increase of global mean sea levels between 1993 to 2025, observed by satellites, is approximately 4.06 millimeters

per year, double the 20th century trend of 1.6 millimeters per year (World Meteorological Organization 2013, National Aeronautics and Space Administration 2025). Global mean sea levels in 2013 were about 0.23 meter higher than those of 1880 (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration 2023). Sea levels are rising faster now than in the previous two millennia, and the rise will probably accelerate, even with robust GHG emission control measures. The IPCC predicts a mean sea level rise ranging between 0.25 to 1.01 meters by 2100 with the sea level ranges dependent on a low, intermediate, or high GHG emissions scenario (IPCC 2021). A rise in sea levels could erode 31 to 67 percent of southern California beaches and cause flooding of approximately 370 miles of coastal highways during 100-year storm events. This would also jeopardize California's water supply due to saltwater intrusion and induce groundwater flooding and/or exposure of buried infrastructure (California Natural Resource Agency 2019). Furthermore, increased storm intensity and frequency could affect the ability of flood control facilities, including levees, to handle storm events.

Agriculture

In 2024, California's agricultural exports totaled $23.8 billion in value, representing an increase of 6.1 percent compared to the previous year. Top commodities for export included almonds, pistachios, dairy and dairy products, wine and walnuts. California organic product sales have increased by 21.7 percent from $9.7 billion in 2019 to $11.8 billion in 2023. Organic production encompasses 1.78 million acres in the state (California Department of Food and Agriculture 2025). Higher CO_2 levels can stimulate plant production and increase plant water-use efficiency. However, if temperatures rise and drier conditions prevail, certain regions of agricultural production could experience water shortages of up to 16 percent, which would increase water demand as hotter conditions lead to the loss of soil moisture. In addition, crop yield could be threatened by water-induced stress and extreme heat waves, and plants may be susceptible to new and changing pest and disease outbreaks (California Natural Resource Agency 2019). Temperature increases could also change the time of year certain crops, such as wine grapes, bloom or ripen, and thereby affect their quality (California Climate Change Center 2006).

Ecosystems

Climate change and the potential resultant changes in weather patterns could have ecological effects on the global and local scales. Soil moisture is likely to decline in many regions due to higher temperatures, and intense rainstorms are likely to become more frequent. Rising temperatures could have four major impacts on plants and animals: timing of ecological events; geographic distribution and range of species; species composition and the incidence of nonnative species within communities; and ecosystem processes, such as carbon cycling and storage (Parmesan 2006, California Natural Resource Agency 2019).

4.8.2 Regulatory Setting

a. Federal Regulations

Federal Clean Air Act

The U.S. Supreme Court determined in *Massachusetts et al. v. Environmental Protection Agency et al.* ([2007] 549 U.S. 05-1120) that USEPA has the authority to regulate motor vehicle GHG emissions under the federal Clean Air Act. USEPA issued a Final Rule for mandatory reporting of GHG emissions in October 2009. This Final Rule applies to fossil fuel suppliers, industrial gas suppliers, direct GHG emitters, and manufacturers of heavy-duty and off-road vehicles and vehicle engines and requires annual reporting of emissions. In 2012, USEPA issued a Final Rule that established the GHG permitting thresholds that determine when Clean Air Act permits under the New Source Review Prevention of Significant Deterioration and Title V Operating Permit programs are required for new and existing industrial facilities.

In *Utility Air Regulatory Group v. Environmental Protection Agency* (2014) 57 U.S. 302, the U.S. Supreme Court held that USEPA may not treat GHGs as an air pollutant for purposes of determining whether a source can be considered a major source required to obtain a Prevention of Significant Deterioration or Title V permit. The Court also held that Prevention of Significant Deterioration permits otherwise required based on emissions of other pollutants may continue to require limitations on GHG emissions based on the application of Best Available Control Technology.

In *West Virginia v. Environmental Protection* Agency (2022) 597 U.S. 697, the U.S. Supreme Court held that USEPA lacked the authority under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act to implement generation-shifting measures, such as those in the Clean Power Plan, without clear congressional authorization. The Court applied the "major questions doctrine," concluding that such significant regulatory actions require explicit direction from Congress. As a result, USEPA may not mandate a shift in electricity generation from higher-emitting sources like coal to lower-emitting sources such as natural gas or renewables as a means of controlling GHG emissions under this provision.

Federal Fuel Efficiency Standards

Under the Clean Air Act, Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards have been set for passenger cars and light trucks. The State of California has traditionally had a waiver to set its own more stringent fuel efficiency standards. However, on August 2, 2018, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and USEPA proposed the Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient Vehicles Rule. This rule addresses emissions and fuel economy standards for motor vehicles and is separated into two parts as described below.

- Part One, “One National Program” (84 Federal Register 51310) revoked a waiver granted by USEPA to the State of California under Section 209 of the CAA to enforce more stringent emission standards for motor vehicles than those required by USEPA for the explicit purpose of GHG reduction, and indirectly, criteria air pollutants and ozone precursor emission reduction. This revocation became effective on November 26, 2019, potentially restricting the ability of CARB to enforce more stringent GHG emission standards for new vehicles and set zero emission vehicle mandates in California. The waiver was reissued in March 2022 and revoked in May 2025.
- Part Two addresses CAFE standards for passenger cars and light trucks for model years 2021 to 2026. This rule proposed new CAFE standards for model years 2022 through 2026 and amended existing CAFE standards for model year 2021. The proposal retained the model year 2020 standards (specifically, the footprint target curves for passenger cars and light trucks) through model year 2026. The proposal addressing CAFE standards was jointly developed by National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and USEPA, with USEPA simultaneously proposing tailpipe CO_2 standards for the same vehicles covered by the same model years.

b. State Regulations

CARB is responsible for the coordination and oversight of state and local air pollution control programs in California. There are numerous regulations aimed at reducing the state’s GHG emissions. These initiatives are summarized below.

California Advanced Clean Cars Program

Assembly Bill (AB) 1493 (2002), California’s Advanced Clean Cars program (referred to as “Pavley”), requires CARB to develop and adopt regulations to achieve “the maximum feasible and cost-effective reduction of GHG emissions from motor vehicles.” Pavley I regulates model years from 2009 to 2016 and Pavley II, now referred to as “LEV (Low Emission Vehicle) III GHG,” regulates model years from 2017 to 2025. The Advanced Clean Cars program coordinates the goals of the Low Emission Vehicle, Zero Emissions Vehicle, and Clean Fuels Outlet programs and would provide major reductions in GHG emissions. By 2025, the rules will be fully implemented, and new automobiles will emit 34 percent fewer GHGs and 75 percent fewer smog-forming emissions from their model year 2016 levels (CARB 2011). In

October 2023, CARB launched a new effort to consider potential amendments to the Advanced Clean Cars II regulations, including updates to the tailpipe GHG emission standard and limited revisions to the low emission vehicle and zero-emission vehicle regulations. The Advanced Clean Cars II regulations will rapidly scale down light-duty passenger car, pickup truck, and SUV emissions starting with the 2026 model year through 2035. By 2035 all new passenger cars, trucks and SUVs sold in California will be zero emissions. The Advanced Clean Cars II regulations take the state's already growing zero-emission vehicle market and robust motor vehicle emission control rules and augments them to meet more aggressive tailpipe emissions standards and ramp up to 100 percent zero-emission vehicles (CARB 2026).

On June 12, 2025, House Joint Resolution 88 was signed into law nullifying the USEPA's notice which granted CARB's request for the regulation. Therefore, enforcement of the Advanced Clean Cars II regulation remains uncertain at this time. The future of implementation remains unclear as California pursues legal action against the resolution (H.J. Res. 88, 2025).

Executive Order S-3-05

In 2005, the governor issued Executive Order (EO) S-3-05, which identifies statewide GHG emission reduction targets to achieve long-term climate stabilization as follows:

- Reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020
- Reduce GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050

In response to EO S-3-05, the California Environmental Protection Agency created the Climate Action Team, which in March 2006 published the Climate Action Team Report. The Report identified a recommended list of strategies that the state could pursue to reduce GHG emissions. These are strategies that could be implemented by various state agencies to ensure that the emission reduction targets in EO S-3-05 are met and can be met with existing authority of the state agencies. The strategies include the reduction of passenger and light duty truck emissions, the reduction of idling times for diesel trucks, an overhaul of shipping technology/infrastructure, increased use of alternative fuels, increased recycling, and landfill CH_4 capture.

California Global Warming Solutions Act (Assembly Bill 32 and Senate Bill 32)

The California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, or AB 32, outlines California's major legislative initiative for reducing GHG emissions. AB 32 codifies the statewide goal of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 and requires CARB to prepare a Scoping Plan that outlines the main state strategies for reducing GHG emissions to meet the 2020 deadline. In addition, AB 32 requires CARB to adopt regulations to require reporting and verification of statewide GHG emissions. Based on this guidance, CARB approved a 1990 statewide GHG level and 2020 target of 431 million MT of CO_2e, which was achieved in 2016. CARB approved the Scoping Plan on December 11, 2008, which included GHG emission reduction strategies related to energy efficiency, water use, and recycling and solid waste, among others (CARB 2008). Many of the GHG reduction measures included in the Scoping Plan (e.g., Low Carbon Fuel Standard, Advanced Clean Car standards, and Cap-and-Trade) have been adopted since the Scoping Plan's approval.

CARB approved the 2013 Scoping Plan update in May 2014. The update defined CARB's climate change priorities for the next five years, set the groundwork to reach post-2020 statewide goals, and highlighted California's progress toward meeting the "near-term" 2020 GHG emission reduction goals defined in the original Scoping Plan. It also evaluated how to align the state's longer term GHG reduction strategies with other state policy priorities, including those for water, waste, natural resources, clean energy, transportation, and land use (CARB 2014).

On September 8, 2016, the governor signed Senate Bill (SB) 32 into law, extending the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 by requiring the state to further reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 (the other provisions of AB 32 remain unchanged). On December 14, 2017, CARB adopted the 2017 Scoping Plan, which provides a framework for achieving the 2030 target. The

2017 Scoping Plan relies on the continuation and expansion of existing policies and regulations, such as the Cap-and-Trade Program, and implementation of recently adopted policies and legislation, such as SB 1383 and SB 100 (discussed below). The 2017 Scoping Plan also puts an increased emphasis on innovation, adoption of existing technology, and strategic investment to support its strategies. As with the 2013 Scoping Plan update, the 2017 Scoping Plan does not provide project-level thresholds for land use development. Instead, it recommends that local governments adopt policies and locally appropriate quantitative thresholds consistent with statewide per capita goals of 6 MT of CO_2e by 2030 and 2 MT of CO_2e by 2050 (CARB 2017). As stated in the 2017 Scoping Plan, these goals may be appropriate for plan-level analyses (city, county, sub-regional, or regional level), but not for specific individual projects because they include all emissions sectors in the state (CARB 2017).

Assembly Bill 1279

AB 1279, The California Climate Crisis Act, was passed on September 16, 2022, and declares the state will achieve net zero GHG emissions as soon as possible, but no later than 2045, and will achieve and maintain net negative GHG emissions thereafter. In addition, the bill states that the state would reduce GHG emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels no later than 2045.

In response to the passage of AB 1279 and the identification of the 2045 GHG reduction target, CARB published the Final 2022 Climate Change Scoping Plan in November 2022 (CARB 2022a). The 2022 Scoping Plan builds upon the framework established by the 2008 Climate Change Scoping Plan and previous updates while identifying new, technologically feasible, cost-effective, and equity-focused paths to achieve California's climate target. The 2022 Scoping Plan includes policies to achieve a significant reduction in fossil fuel combustion, further reductions in short-lived climate pollutants, support for sustainable development, increased action on natural and working lands (NWL) to reduce emissions and sequester carbon, and the capture and storage of carbon.

The 2022 Update assesses the progress California is making toward reducing its GHG emissions by at least 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, as called for in SB 32 and laid out in the 2017 Scoping Plan; addresses recent legislation and direction from Governor Newsom; extends and expands upon these earlier plans; implements a target of reducing anthropogenic emissions to 85 percent below 1990 levels by 2045; and takes an additional step of adding carbon neutrality as a science-based guide for California's climate work. As stated in the 2022 Scoping Plan, "The plan outlines how carbon neutrality can be achieved by taking bold steps to reduce GHGs to meet the anthropogenic emissions target and by expanding actions to capture and store carbon through the state's NWL and using a variety of mechanical approaches" (CARB 2022a). Specifically, the 2022 Scoping Plan:

- Identifies a path to keep California on track to meet its SB 32 GHG reduction target of at least 40 percent below 1990 emissions by 2030
- Identifies a technologically feasible, cost-effective path to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045 and a reduction in anthropogenic emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels
- Focuses on strategies for reducing California's dependency on petroleum to provide consumers with clean energy options that address climate change, improve air quality, and support economic growth and clean sector jobs
- Integrates equity and protecting California's most impacted communities as driving principles throughout the document
- Incorporates the contribution of NWL to the state's GHG emissions, as well as their role in achieving carbon neutrality
- Relies on the most up-to-date science, including the need to deploy all viable tools to address the existential threat that climate change presents, including carbon capture and sequestration, as well as direct air capture
- Evaluates the substantial health and economic benefits of taking action
- Identifies key implementation actions to ensure success

In addition to reducing emissions from transportation, energy, and industrial sectors, the 2022 Scoping Plan includes emissions and carbon sequestration in NWL and explores how NWL contributes to long-term climate goals. Under the Scoping Plan Scenario, California's 2030 emissions are anticipated to be 48 percent below 1990 levels, representing an acceleration of the current SB 32 target. Cap-and-Trade regulation continues to play a large factor in the reduction of near-term emissions for meeting the accelerated 2030 reduction target. Every sector of the economy will need to begin to transition in this decade to meet our GHG reduction goals and achieve carbon neutrality no later than 2045. The 2022 Scoping Plan approaches decarbonization from two perspectives, managing a phasedown of existing energy sources and technologies, as well as increasing, developing, and deploying alternative clean energy sources and technology.

California Integrated Waste Management Act (Assembly Bill 341)

The California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989, as modified by AB 341 in 2011, requires each jurisdiction's source reduction and recycling element to include an implementation schedule that shows: (1) diversion of 25 percent of all solid waste by January 1, 1995, through source reduction, recycling, and composting activities and (2) diversion of 50 percent of all solid waste on and after January 1, 2000.

Senate Bill 1383

Adopted in September 2016, SB 1383 (Lara, Chapter 395, Statutes of 2016) requires CARB to approve and begin implementing a comprehensive strategy to reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants. SB 1383 requires the strategy to achieve the following reduction targets by 2030:

- CH_4 – 40 percent below 2013 levels
- Hydrofluorocarbons – 40 percent below 2013 levels
- Anthropogenic black carbon – 50 percent below 2013 levels

SB 1383 also requires the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, in consultation with CARB, to adopt regulations that achieve specified targets for reducing organic waste in landfills.

Senate Bill 100

Adopted on September 10, 2018, SB 100 supports the reduction of GHG emissions from the electricity sector by accelerating the state's Renewables Portfolio Standard Program, which was last updated by SB 350 in 2015. SB 100 requires electricity providers to increase procurement from eligible renewable energy resources to 33 percent of total retail sales by 2020, 60 percent by 2030, and 100 percent by 2045. The primary electricity provider for the plan area is Trinity Public Utilities District, which supplies 100 percent carbon-free hydropower to most of Trinity County. Customers in the Big Bar and Big Flat areas are served by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (Trinity Public Utility District 2026).

Executive Order B-55-18

On September 10, 2018, the former Governor Brown issued EO B-55-18, which established a new statewide goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2045 and maintaining net negative emissions thereafter. This goal is in addition to the existing statewide GHG reduction targets established by SB 375, SB 32, SB 1383, and SB 100.

California Building Standards Code

The California Code of Regulations Title 24 is referred to as the California Building Standards Code. It consists of a compilation of several distinct standards and codes related to building construction including plumbing, electrical, interior acoustics, energy efficiency, and handicap accessibility for persons with physical and sensory disabilities. The current iteration is the 2025 Title 24 standards. The California Building Standards Code's energy-efficiency and green building standards are outlined below.

Part 6 – Building Energy Efficiency Standards/Energy Code

The California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 6 is the Building Energy Efficiency Standards or California Energy Code. This Code, originally enacted in 1978, establishes energy-efficiency standards for residential and non-residential buildings in order to reduce California's energy demand. New construction and major renovations must demonstrate their compliance with the current Energy Code through submittal and approval of a Title 24 Compliance Report to the local building permit review authority and the California Energy Commission (CEC).

Part 11 – California Green Building Standards

The California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) was added to Title 24 as Part 11, first in 2009 as a voluntary code, which then became mandatory effective on January 1, 2011 (as part of the 2010 California Building Standards Code). CALGreen includes mandatory minimum environmental performance standards for all ground-up new construction of residential and non-residential structures. It also includes voluntary tiers with stricter environmental performance standards for these same categories of residential and non-residential buildings. Local jurisdictions must enforce the minimum mandatory CALGreen standards and may adopt additional amendments for stricter requirements.

The mandatory standards require:

- Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging for New Construction:1
  - One- and two-family dwellings and town houses with attached private garages: Dedicated 40-ampere 208/240-volt minimum branch circuit and space(s) reserved to permit installation of a branch circuit overcurrent protective device.
  - Multi-family dwellings with unassigned or common use parking: 25 percent of unassigned or common use parking spaces not already provided with low power Level 2 EV charging receptacles shall be equipped with the Level 2 EV chargers and shall be made available for use by all residents or guests.
  - Non-residential land uses shall comply with the following EV charging requirements based on the number of passenger vehicle parking spaces:
    - 0-9: no EV capable spaces or charging stations required;
    - 10-25: 4 EV capable spaces, with 2 required to include charging equipment or 3 for office or retail uses;
    - 26-50: 8 EV capable spaces, with 4 required to include charging equipment or 6 for office or retail uses;
    - 51-75: 13 EV capable spaces, with 6 required to include charging equipment or 8 for office or retail uses;
    - 76-100: 17 EV capable spaces, with 8 required to include charging equipment or 13 for office or retail uses;
    - 101-150: 25 EV capable spaces, with 12 required to include charging equipment or 19 for office or retail uses;
    - 151-200: 35 EV capable spaces, with 18 required to include charging equipment or 26 for office or retail uses and
    - More than 200: EV-capable spaces equal to 20 percent of total parking, with 50 percent of those spaces equipped with charging stations or 75 percent for office and retail uses.

[1] EV Capable = a vehicle space with electrical panel space and load capacity to support a branch circuit and necessary raceways to support EV charging; EV-ready = a vehicle space which is provided with a branch circuit and any necessary raceways to accommodate EV charging stations, including a receptacle for future installation of a charger (see 2025 California Green Building Standard Code, Title 24 Part 11 for full explanation of mandatory measures, including exceptions).

  - Non-residential land uses shall comply with the following EV charging requirements for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles: warehouses, grocery stores, retail stores, office buildings, and manufacturing facilities with planned off-street loading spaces shall install EV supply and distribution equipment, spare raceway(s) or busway(s) and adequate capacity for transformer(s), service panel(s), or subpanel(s) at the time of construction based on the number of off-street loading spaces as indicated in Table 5.106.5.5.1 of the California Green Building Standards;

- Bicycle Parking:
  - Residential
    - Short-term bicycle parking at multi-family buildings, hotels, and motels: one parking space for every 10,000 square feet, but not less than two spaces.
    - Long-term bicycle parking at multi-family buildings: one parking space for every two dwelling units.
    - Long-term bicycle parking at hotel and motel buildings: one parking space for every 25,000 square feet, but not less than two.
  - Non-residential
    - Short-term bicycle parking: 20 percent of the peak daily visitors, with a minimum of two-bike capacity rack.
    - Long-term bicycle parking: 10 percent of the tenant-occupants with a minimum of one bicycle parking facility.

The voluntary standards require:

- Tier 1 EV for Multi-family developments/hotels/motels: minimum 60 percent of total parking spaces shall be EV ready with low power Level 2 EV receptacles.
  - Multi-family with unassigned or common use parking: 40 percent of the total number of parking spaces shall be equipped with Level 2 EV chargers.

- Tier 1 Non-residential land uses shall comply with the following EV charging requirements based on the number of passenger vehicle parking spaces:
  - 1-9: 2 EV capable, with 1 required to include charging equipment or 2 for office or retail uses;
  - 10-25: 5 EV capable spaces, with 3 required to include charging equipment or 4 for office or retail uses;
  - 26-50: 11 EV capable spaces, with 6 required to include charging equipment or 8 for office or retail uses;
  - 51-75: 19 EV capable spaces, with 10 required to include charging equipment or 14 for office or retail uses;
  - 76-100: 26 EV capable spaces, with 13 required to include charging equipment or 20 for office or retail uses;
  - 101-150: 38 EV capable spaces, with 19 required to include charging equipment or 29 for office or retail uses;
  - 151-200: 53 EV capable spaces, with 27 required to include charging equipment or 40 for office or retail uses and
  - More than 200: EV-capable spaces equal to 30 percent of total parking, with 50 percent of those spaces equipped with charging stations or 75 percent for office and retail uses.

- Tier 2 Non-residential land uses shall comply with the following EV charging requirements based on the number of passenger vehicle parking spaces:
  - 1-9: 3 EV capable, with 2 required to include charging equipment or 2 for office or retail uses;

- 10-25: 8 EV capable spaces, with 4 required to include charging equipment or 6 for office or retail uses;
- 26-50: 17 EV capable spaces, with 9 required to include charging equipment or 13 for office or retail uses;
- 51-75: 28 EV capable spaces, with 14 required to include charging equipment or 21 for office or retail uses;
- 76-100: 40 EV capable spaces, with 20 required to include charging equipment or 30 for office or retail uses;
- 101-150: 57 EV capable spaces, with 29 required to include charging equipment or 43 for office or retail uses;
- 151-200: 79 EV capable spaces, with 40 required to include charging equipment or 59 for office or retail uses and
- More than 200: EV-capable spaces equal to 45 percent of total parking, with 50 percent of those spaces equipped with charging stations or 75 percent for office and retail uses.

Executive Order N-79-20

On September 23, 2020, Governor Newsom issued EO N-79-20, which established the following new statewide goals:

- All new passenger cars and trucks sold in-state to be zero-emission by 2035
- All medium- and heavy-duty vehicles in the state to be zero-emission by 2045 for all operations where feasible and by 2035 for drayage trucks
- All off-road vehicles and equipment to be zero-emission by 2035 where feasible

EO N-79-20 directs CARB, the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, the CEC, the California Department of Transportation, and other state agencies to take steps toward drafting regulations and strategies and leveraging agency resources toward achieving these goals.

Clean Energy, Jobs, and Affordability Act (Senate Bill 1020)

Adopted on September 16, 2022, SB 1020 creates clean electricity targets for eligible renewable energy resources and zero-carbon resources to supply 90 percent of retail sale electricity by 2035, 95 percent by 2040, 100 percent by 2045, and 100 percent of electricity procured to serve all state agencies by 2035. This bill shall not increase carbon emissions elsewhere in the western grid and shall not allow resource shuffling.

4.8.3 Impact Analysis

a. Significance Thresholds

Based on Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*, the proposed project would have a significant impact on GHG emissions if it would:

1. Generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment; and/or
2. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs.

Most individual projects do not generate sufficient GHG emissions to directly influence climate change. However, physical changes caused by a project can contribute incrementally to cumulative effects that are significant, even if individual changes resulting from a project are limited. The issue of climate change typically involves an analysis of whether a project's contribution towards an impact would be cumulatively considerable. "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064[h][1]). Pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064(h)(3), a project's incremental contribution to a cumulative impact can be found not cumulatively considerable if the project would comply with a previously approved plan or mitigation program that provides specific requirements that would avoid or substantially lessen the cumulative problem within the geographic area of the project. Therefore, *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064(h)(3) allows a lead agency to make a finding of less than significant impact for GHG emissions if a project complies with adopted plans, programs, policies, and/or other regulatory strategies to reduce GHG emissions.

Section 15064.4 of the *CEQA Guidelines* recommends that lead agencies quantify the GHG emissions of projects and consider several other factors that may be used in the determination of significance of GHG emissions from a project: the extent to which the project may increase or reduce GHG emissions; whether a project exceeds an applicable significance threshold; and the extent to which the project complies with regulations or requirements adopted to implement a reduction or mitigation of GHGs.

Section 15064.4 does not establish a threshold of significance. Lead agencies have the discretion to establish significance thresholds for their respective jurisdictions, and in establishing those thresholds, a lead agency may appropriately look to thresholds developed by other public agencies, or suggested by other experts, such as the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association, as long as any threshold is supported by substantial evidence (see *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.7(c). No agency that has jurisdiction over the Planning Area has adopted a numerical significance threshold for assessing impacts related to GHG emissions. Neither North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District, the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (formerly known as the Governor's Office of Planning and Research), CARB, the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association, nor any other state or applicable regional agency has adopted a numerical significance threshold for assessing GHG emissions that is applicable to the proposed project.

In the absence of any adopted or accepted numeric threshold, the significance of the proposed project's GHG emissions are evaluated consistent with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.4(b) and *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064(h)(3) by considering whether the proposed project complies with applicable plans, policies, regulations, and requirements adopted to implement a statewide, regional, or local plan for the reduction or mitigation of GHG emissions. The Planning Area is not located within a Metropolitan Planning Organization nor has an adopted local GHG reduction plan. Therefore, the project area does not have a local plan to reduce GHG emissions. The significance of the proposed project's potential impacts regarding GHG emissions and climate change is evaluated based on the project's consistency with the 2022 Scoping Plan.

The 2022 Scoping Plan builds on previous initiatives by incorporating the AB 1279 targets, aiming to achieve net zero GHG emissions no later than 2045 and reduce GHG emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels no later than 2045. The 2022 Scoping Plan includes Appendix D, Local Actions, that outlines project-specific measures that can be implemented so that a project is consistent with the Scoping Plan (CARB 2022b). These measures, referred to as "Key Project Attributes," emphasize three priority areas: transportation electrification, VMT reduction, and building decarbonization. Table 4.8-1 lists the key project attributes as they are presented in Appendix D of the 2022 Scoping Plan.

Table 4.8-1 2022 Scoping Plan Key Attributes that Reduce GHGs

Priority Areas	Key Project Attribute
Transportation Electrification	• Provides electric vehicle charging infrastructure that, at minimum, meets the most ambitious voluntary standard in the California Green Building Standards Code at the time of project approval.
Vehicle Miles Traveled Reduction	• Is located on an infill site that is surrounded by existing urban uses and reuses or redevelops previously undeveloped or underutilized land that is presently served by existing utilities and essential public services (e.g., transit, streets, water, sewer). • Does not result in the loss or conversion of natural and working lands. • Consists of transit-supportive densities (minimum of 20 residential dwelling units per acre); or is in proximity to existing transit stops (within a half mile); or satisfies more detailed and stringent criteria specified in the region's SCS. • Reduces parking requirements by: eliminating parking requirements or including maximum allowable parking ratios (i.e., the ratio of parking spaces to residential units or square feet); or providing residential parking supply at a ratio of less than one parking space per dwelling unit; or for multifamily residential development, requiring parking costs to be unbundled from costs to rent or own a residential unit. • At least 20 percent of units included are affordable to lower-income residents. • Results in no net loss of existing affordable units.
Building Decarbonization	• Uses all-electric appliances without any natural gas connections and does not use propane or other fossil fuels for space heating, water heating, or indoor cooking.

Source: CARB 2022b

Projects that incorporate all of these key project attributes would align with the state's priority GHG reduction strategies for local climate action. Therefore, the GHG emissions associated with such projects may result in a less than significant GHG impact (CARB 2022b). The GHG emissions from the operation of the proposed project are provided for informational purposes.

b. Methodology

GHG emissions from the buildout of the proposed project were estimated using traffic modeling based on regional and plan area vehicle trips. While emissions from businesses or individual operations in the plan area and region contribute to global GHG emissions, this analysis only includes emissions that may change under project implementation. Emissions not directly resulting from the project buildout are outside the scope of this CEQA analysis, as analyzing impacts not directly related to the project would be speculative.

The California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2022.1 was used to estimate GHG emissions associated with the project. The analysis focuses on CO_2, CH_4, and nitrous oxides because these make up 98 percent of all GHG emissions by volume (IPCC) and are the GHG emissions that the project would emit in the largest quantities. Emissions of all GHGs are converted into their equivalent weight in CO_2 (CO_2e).

Construction Emissions

Construction carried out under the proposed project is assumed to take place over approximately 25 years, as detailed in Section 4.3, *Air Quality*. During construction, these projects would generate GHG emissions primarily from the use of internal combustion engines to power on-site equipment as well as off-site transportation of workers and materials. At the programmatic level, details such as construction phasing, duration, sequencing, equipment types, intensity of equipment use, haul routes, and material sourcing have not yet been defined. Without this information, it is not feasible to accurately quantify construction-related emissions or other construction-phase impacts. Therefore, GHG construction impacts are discussed qualitatively.

Operational Emissions

Operational GHG emissions would be emitted by sources such as energy, area, mobile, solid waste, water and wastewater, and refrigerants. CalEEMod calculates operational emissions from energy use, including electricity and natural gas use, based on the CEC-sponsored California Commercial End Use Survey for residential and commercial land uses. CalEEMod version 2022.1 incorporates California's 2019 Title 24 building energy efficiency standards. Emissions associated with area sources, including consumer products, landscape maintenance, and architectural coating are calculated based on standard emission rates from CARB, USEPA, and district-supplied emission factor values. Emissions from waste generation are based on the IPCC's methods for quantifying GHG emissions from solid waste using the degradable organic content of waste. Waste disposal rates by land use and overall composition of municipal solid waste in California are primarily based on data provided by California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery. Emissions from water and wastewater usage calculated in CalEEMod are based on the default electricity intensity from the CEC's 2006 Refining Estimates of Water-Related Energy Use in California using the average values for Northern and Southern California (California Air Pollution Control Officers Association 2022). Emissions from mobile sources for the project were also quantified using emission factors and fleet mix from the 2021 Emission Factor model. Details for mobile source inputs included in the modeling of GHG emissions are provided in Section 4.3, *Air Quality*.

Trinity County Cannabis Program EIR

Much of the potential cannabis-related development contemplated by the project was previously analyzed in the Trinity County Cannabis Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR; State Clearinghouse number 2018122049), certified in 2020 (2020 EIR). The 2020 EIR includes Mitigation Measure 3.8-1a and 3.8-1b, which require Tier 3 or Tier 4 construction equipment, if commercially available, and limit the use of fossil-fueled powered equipment during commercial operations to reduce construction and operational GHG emissions. In addition, Mitigation Measure 3.8-1c and 3.8-1d require all electricity to be sourced from renewable energy and high efficacy lighting in new noncultivation operations. Those requirements were subsequently incorporated into County Code of Ordinances Chapter 17.43G through Ordinance No. 315-849, adopted in December 2020. In its GHG analysis, the 2020 EIR concluded that cannabis cultivation and associated development would be consistent with the state's Scoping Plan for reducing GHG emissions and project implementation would not be a considerable contribution to global climate change.

Because these regulatory controls are part of existing conditions and because the proposed General Plan Update establishes a new countywide policy framework that supersedes the 2020 EIR for cannabis activities occurring consistent with the General Plan, this EIR focuses on GHG effects not previously addressed or requiring reevaluation under the General Plan Update.

c. Impact Analysis

Threshold 1:	Would the project generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?
Threshold 2:	Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs?

Impact GHG-1 Construction and operation facilitated by the project would generate GHG emissions, and the project would incorporate features that align with the goals of the applicable plans, policies, and regulations related to the reduction of GHG emissions. However, even with the implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1, individual projects could face challenges that hinder their ability to implement Mitigation Measure GHG-1 and thus may not be consistent with the 2022 Scoping Plan. Therefore, impacts would be significant and unavoidable.

As discussed under Section 4.8.3(a), *Significance Thresholds*, plans and policies have been adopted to reduce GHG emissions in the project region, such as the state's 2022 Scoping Plan. The proposed project's consistency with this plan and applicable policies is discussed below. Estimated GHG emissions for development expected to be carried out under the proposed project are provided for informational purposes following the consistency analysis.

The principal state GHG reduction plans and policies are AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, and the subsequent legislation, SB 32 and AB 1279. The quantitative goal of AB 32 was to reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. The goal of SB 32 is to reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. In 2022, the state passed AB 1279, which declares the state would achieve net-zero GHG emissions by 2045 and would reduce GHG emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels by 2045. The latest iteration of the Scoping Plan is the 2022 Scoping Plan, which focuses on three priority areas: transportation electrification, VMT reduction, and building decarbonization for residential and mixed-use projects. The analysis also evaluates the consistency of commercial and industrial land uses with the 2022 Scoping Plan to ensure the project supports the state's carbon neutrality by 2045 goals. Table 4.8-2 below describes the project's consistency with the key project attributes associated with the three priority areas identified in the 2022 Scoping Plan.

Table 4.8-2 Project Consistency with the 2022 Scoping Plan

Key Project Attribute	Consistency
Transportation Electrification • Provides EV charging infrastructure that, at minimum, meets the most ambitious voluntary standard in the California Green Building Standards Code at the time of project approval.	**Inconsistent.** The project could facilitate development of up to 902 housing units (refer to Table 2-3 in Chapter 2, *Project Description*) as well as up to 10,542,000 square feet of mixed use, 6,273,000 square feet of commercial uses, and 137,000 square feet of industrial uses, based on proposed non-residential land uses. Individual projects would be required to install EV charging infrastructure consistent with the latest mandatory CALGreen standards for residential and nonresidential land uses. Consistent with the state Scoping Plan, multifamily residential developments would be required to equip at least 40 percent of parking spaces with Level 2 EV charging stations. In addition, Tier 2 EV infrastructure for nonresidential uses are based on the number of parking spaces, as provided in CALGreen. The proposed project does not include specific requirements or policies to require or promote the installation of EV charging infrastructure. Therefore, it is uncertain whether future development facilitated by the project would incorporate EV infrastructure that meets CALGreen's most stringent voluntary standards. As a result, the project would conflict with the Transportation Electrification key attribute.

Key Project Attribute	Consistency
VMT Reduction • Is located on an infill site that is surrounded by existing urban uses and reuses or redevelops previously undeveloped or underutilized land that is presently served by existing utilities and essential public services (e.g., transit, streets, water, sewer). • Does not result in the loss or conversion of natural and working lands. • Consists of transit-supportive densities (minimum of 20 residential dwelling units per acre); or is in proximity to existing transit stops (within a half mile); or satisfies more detailed and stringent criteria specified in the region's SCS. • Reduces parking requirements by: eliminating parking requirements or including maximum allowable parking ratios (i.e., the ratio of parking spaces to residential units or square feet); or providing residential parking supply at a ratio of less than one parking space per dwelling unit; or for multifamily residential development, requiring parking costs to be unbundled from costs to rent or own a residential unit. • At least 20 percent of units included are affordable to lower-income residents. • Results in no net loss of existing affordable units.	**Consistent.** The proposed project would include development that is surrounded by existing development and could redevelop underutilized land, which is already served by existing utilities and essential public services such as transit, streets, water, and sewer. Proposed Goal CIR-7 focuses on increasing bicycle and pedestrian travel by developing a safe and convenient network of routes, trails, and walkways. Supporting this goal, Policies CIR-7.1 (Encourage Active Transportation), CIR-7.2 (Add Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities), and CIR-7.3 (Facility Development) promote active transportation by encouraging its use, incorporating pedestrian and bicycle facilities into roadway improvements, and developing facilities consistent with County and state standards and the Trinity County Active Transportation Plan. Policy CIR-7.5 (Active Transportation Plan) calls for maintaining a current Active Transportation Plan and pursuing funding for identified projects, while Policy CIR-7.10 (Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities in New Development) requires new development, where feasible and appropriate, to include pedestrian and bicycle facilities or amenities. The project would add mixed-use developments, which promotes mobility between different land uses, such as homes and retail shopping, through active transportation modes like walking and bicycling. Additionally, as discussed in Section 4.3, *Air Quality*, VMT is anticipated to decrease on a per-capita basis relative to baseline conditions as a result of project design features that reduce automobile dependence and improve travel efficiency. Although overall travel demand may increase due to growth, the incorporation of multimodal transportation options, along with land use and operational efficiencies, would lower average VMT per resident or employee compared to existing conditions, consistent with state and regional air quality and GHG reduction objectives. Therefore, the project would not conflict with the 2022 Scoping Plan's VMT reduction priority area.
Building Decarbonization • Uses all-electric appliances without any natural gas connections and does not use propane or other fossil fuels for space heating, water heating, or indoor cooking.	**Inconsistent.** Development facilitated by the project would comply with the latest Title 24 Green Building Code and Building Efficiency Energy Standards. Development facilitated by the project would receive electricity from Trinity Public Utilities District, which delivers 100 percent carbon-free electricity. However, the proposed project does not include policies for installing all-electric appliances in the proposed buildout. Therefore, development facilitated by the project may not incorporate all-electric appliances, and may not be consistent with this key project attribute of the 2022 Scoping Plan.

Source: CARB 2022a

According to the 2022 Scoping Plan, development projects that incorporate all key project attributes align with the state's priority GHG reduction strategies for local climate action and with the state's climate and housing goals. Although the project would achieve some 2022 Scoping Plan key project attributes, development facilitated by the project may not include the installation of EV chargers and may use natural gas or propane as an energy source. As a result, the project would potentially conflict with the Building Electrification and Building Decarbonization key project attributes identified in the 2022 Scoping Plan, thereby conflicting with the most applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. This impact would be **potentially significant**.

Mitigation Measures

GHG-1 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions

Development facilitated by the project shall incorporate GHG emissions reduction actions to demonstrate consistency with the 2022 Scoping Plan for residential and mixed-use developments. Specifically, individual projects shall incorporate the following design features, which shall be verified by the County prior to issuing a building permit for an individual project:

a. Future residential and mixed-use developments shall implement a combination of on-site and/or off-site renewable energy generation sufficient to fully offset the GHG emissions associated with the use of natural gas appliances incorporated into the project. Compliance shall be verified by County staff on building plans prior to granting building permits.
b. Provide EV charging infrastructure that, at minimum, meets California Green Building Standards Code Tier 2 voluntary measures at the time of project approval.

Significance After Mitigation

Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would require that individual projects facilitated by the project incorporate renewable energy generation to offset GHG emissions from natural gas or propane appliances and EV charging infrastructure consistent with the 2022 Scoping Plan. Offsetting GHG emissions related to natural gas or propane appliances with renewable energy generation aligns with the 2022 Scoping Plan by reducing fossil fuel related emissions and supporting statewide building decarbonization goals. While most individual projects would be able to incorporate these measures, some challenges could hinder the implementation of on- and/or off-site renewable energy generation or the development of EV charging infrastructure consistent with the 2022 Scoping Plan. Notably, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, in *California Restaurant Association v. City of Berkeley* (2024) 89 F.4th 1094 limited a jurisdiction's ability to prohibit natural gas hook-ups for new development. Therefore, local requirements affecting green building design features may be subject to legal constraints. Though there is no legal constraint to encouraging renewable energy generation and EV charging, there may be some instances where mandatory renewable energy generation or the development of Tier 2 EV development features are infeasible. Because on-site and/or off-site renewable energy generation and EV charging infrastructure that, at minimum, meets California Green Building Standards Code Tier 2 voluntary measures cannot be guaranteed, the project would continue to be inconsistent with the 2022 Scoping Plan and impacts would be **significant and unavoidable**.

GHG Emissions for Informational Purposes

Development facilitated by the project would generate GHG emissions through construction as well as operational activities. As mentioned in Section 4.8.3(a), *Significance Thresholds*, there is no adopted numerical threshold applicable to the Planning Area; therefore, quantified GHG emissions are provided for informational purposes only. Construction of projects carried out under the proposed project would generate temporary GHG emissions primarily from the usage of construction equipment as well as from vehicles transporting construction workers to and from individual project sites and heavy trucks to transport building materials. Construction emissions only constitute only a small part of the state's overall GHG inventory and overall project emissions; therefore, construction GHG emissions were not quantified.

Operation of new development facilitated by the project would generate GHG emissions associated with area sources (e.g., landscape maintenance), energy and water usage, vehicle trips, wastewater, solid waste generation, and refrigerant. As shown in Table 4.8-3, project buildout by 2050 would result in an estimated net 53,697 MT of CO_2e per year.

Table 4.8-3 Estimated Annual Emissions of Greenhouse Gases

Emission Source	Annual Emissions (MT of CO_2e/year)
Operational	
Mobile	21,619
Area	1,621
Energy[1]	21,217
Water	3,258
Waste	5,365
Refrigerant	616
Total Emissions	**53,697**

MT CO_2e = metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent

[1] Natural gas infrastructure is limited throughout the county, and propane fuel is used as an alternate energy source in areas where natural gas connections are not available. Natural gas has a lower CO_2 emission rate per million Btu than propane (ToolGrit.com 2026), so it should be noted that the annual CO_2e emissions may be understated. However, CalEEMod only provides energy-related emissions from natural gas sources, and does not have an option for propane energy usage. Because this data has been provided for informational purposes and the proportion of natural gas versus propane usage is not easily calculated, no adjustment has been made.

Source: Appendix B for CalEEMod outputs, see Table 2.5. Operations Emissions by Sector, Mitigated. Project design features, such as the use of carbon-free electricity, are reflected in the mitigated emissions table.

4.8.4 Cumulative Impacts

GHG emissions and climate change are, by definition, cumulative impacts. Although GHG emissions have worldwide repercussions, the contribution of the project to cumulative impacts is addressed in light of the goals for reducing statewide emissions. Therefore, the geographic scope for considering cumulative impacts related to GHG emissions is the State of California. The cumulative development scenario is described in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting*.

Statewide GHG emissions are an existing significant cumulative impact. As such, the state has established the following statewide emissions reductions targets:

- By 2020, reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels.
- By 2030, reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels.
- By 2045, to achieve carbon neutrality.

GHG impacts are assessed in a cumulative context since no single project can cause a discernible change to the climate. Therefore, cumulative significance is based on the same thresholds as the proposed project. In the absence of any adopted numeric threshold for the project area, the significance of the project's GHG emissions is evaluated consistent with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.4(b) by considering whether the project complies with applicable plans, policies, regulations, and requirements adopted to implement a statewide, regional, or local plan for the reduction or mitigation of GHG emissions. The analysis provided GHG emissions for informational purposes. For this project, the most directly applicable adopted regulatory plans to reduce GHG emissions is the 2022 Scoping Plan.

As discussed under Impact GHG-1, development facilitated by the project would install photovoltaic systems consistent with the provisions for residential, mix-use building, and non-residential buildings and energy conservation standards of Title 24 Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Part 6) and Green Building Standards (Part 11). In addition, development facilitated by the project would meet the requirements of the latest CALGreen Standards and incorporate water efficient appliances and fixtures. The project would encourage development near existing residential and commercial areas, enhancing connectivity to these land uses. Development facilitated by the project would be served by Trinity Transit throughout the Planning Area. In addition, multi-family and non-residential land uses would include

bicycle parking consistent with the latest CALGreen Standards. Therefore, the project would promote alternative modes of transportation that would have the effect of reducing VMT and associated mobile GHG emissions. By incorporating Mitigation Measure GHG-1, individual projects would include renewable energy generation to offset GHG emissions from natural gas appliances and EV charging infrastructure that meets the most ambitious voluntary standard in the California Green Building Standards Code. However, implementation of these measures cannot be guaranteed for all development facilitated by the project. Therefore, the proposed project would not be consistent with the Transportation Electrification and Building Decarbonization key project attributes identified in the 2022 Scoping Plan. Thus, based on the *CEQA Guidelines* for determining the significance of GHG emissions, the proposed project's contribution to cumulative GHG impacts would be considerable.

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4.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

This section addresses impacts associated with exposure to hazards and hazardous materials from implementation of the proposed project. Specifically, this analysis addresses impacts related to hazardous materials use and transportation, the accidental release of hazardous materials, new development or re-development on contaminated sites, air traffic hazards, and interference with emergency response and evacuation plans.

4.9.1 Setting

a. Hazards in Trinity County

Trinity County's local hazard setting is defined by a combination of natural hazards and human-related risks shaped by its mountainous terrain, climate, and infrastructure. The County is highly vulnerable to natural hazards such as wildfires, floods, and landslides. Wildfire risk is particularly severe due to patchworked responsibility areas, widespread wildland-urban interface development, dry fuel conditions, and climate change, with increasing frequency and intensity expected over time. Flood hazards are also prevalent, especially along waterways where many communities are located, and can be exacerbated by dam or levee failure and post-wildfire conditions that increase runoff, erosion, and landslides. Geologic hazards such as landslides are common in steep terrain, while seismic risk is relatively low but still capable of causing indirect impacts like slope failures and infrastructure disruption. Wildfire, flood, and geologic hazards are addressed in Section 4.19, *Wildfire*, Section 4.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, and Section 4.7, *Geology and Soils*, respectively.

In addition to natural hazards, Trinity County faces aviation and military-related risks tied to transportation and airspace use. Aviation hazards are the most prominent transportation-related concern due to the presence of multiple public and private airports and reliance on air travel for economic and emergency functions. Risks include aircraft accidents and land use incompatibilities near airport operations. Furthermore, while there are no military installations in the County, portions of the area lie within Military Operation Areas used for low-altitude flight training, creating potential hazards from aircraft activity and conflicts with tall structures or infrastructure. Together, these overlapping natural and operational hazards create a complex local hazard environment requiring coordinated land use planning and safety measures to protect people, property, and critical infrastructure.

b. Definition of Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste

Trinity County considers a material to hazardous if it meets the definition established in Health and Safety Code, Chapter 6.95, Section 255.01(n). This includes:

(A) A substance or product for which the manufacturer or producer is required to prepare a material safety data sheet pursuant to the Hazardous Substances Information and Training Act (Chapter 2.5 (commencing with Section 6360) of Part 1 of Division 5 of the Labor Code) or pursuant to any applicable federal law or regulation.

(B) A substance listed as a radioactive material in Appendix B of Part 30 (commencing with Section 30.1) of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations, as maintained and updated by the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

(C) A substance listed pursuant to Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

(D) A substance listed in Section 339 of Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations.

(E) A material listed as an extremely hazardous waste, as defined in Section 25115, a hazardous waste, as defined in Section 25117, or a hazardous substance, as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 78075.

Chemical and physical properties cause a substance to be considered hazardous. Such properties include toxicity, ignitability, corrosiveness, and reactivity. California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Sections 66261.20 through 66261.24 defines the aforementioned properties. The release of hazardous materials into the environment can contaminate soil, surface water, and groundwater supplies.

Household hazardous waste, as defined in Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.5, is hazardous waste generated incidental to owning or maintaining a place of residence. Household hazardous waste does not include waste generated in the course of operating a business concern at a residence (USEPA 2025).

c. Hazardous Materials Use in Trinity County

Production and Disposal

Trinity County Environmental Health Division implements the Hazardous Waste Generator and Tiered Permitting Program and the Hazardous Waste Release Response Plans and Inventory Program to ensure that hazardous waste generated by Trinity County businesses is properly handled, recycled, treated, stored, and disposed of. Universal waste is produced by households and businesses. Hazardous waste generators in Trinity County include industries, businesses, and public and private institutions. The county contains both small or large quantity hazardous waste generators. The 2024 Trinity County Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies hazardous material releases including petroleum, chemicals, and other waste. Disposal of hazardous waste in the county is handled by the Trinity County Environmental Health Division. Household hazardous waste can be disposed of during Household Hazardous Waste Collection Events.

Transportation

Hazardous materials are transported through the county by truck utilizing State Route (SR) 3 and SR 299. SR 3 runs north of Weaverville, south and west to Hayfork leading to the coastline via SR 36. SR 299 is the national hazardous materials route and is the only east-west transportation route in the county (County of Trinity 2024).

Agricultural Chemicals

Approximately 14 percent of Trinity County is zoned for timber or agriculture land conservation use. Please refer to Figure 4.2-1 in Section 4.1, *Agriculture and Forestry Resources*, for a map of Williamson Act-contracted lands in the county, where active agricultural use is present, as well as Figure 2-2 in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, for a map of proposed land use designations in the county, including the Agriculture (A) designation. Agricultural land uses such as farms and cannabis cultivation use agricultural chemicals such as pesticides and inorganic fertilizers.

d. Existing Hazardous Material Contamination (Cortese List)

Several existing contaminants, including asbestos, lead (in sources such as lead-based paint in buildings or in soil), and contaminated soil and groundwater are present in Trinity County. Asbestos may be present in structures built prior to 1982. Similarly, lead may be present in paint that was sold prior to 1978 when it was banned or in soil that was contaminated by leaded gasoline or improperly discarded batteries.

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) GeoTracker website identifies leaking underground storage tanks (LUST) cleanup sites, Cleanup Program Sites (formerly known as Spills, Leaks, Investigations, and Cleanups sites), military sites, land disposal sites (landfills), permitted underground storage tank sites, Waste Discharge Requirement sites, Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program sites, and Department of Toxic Substances Control cleanup and hazardous waste permit sites. A search of the GeoTracker database was conducted on February 10, 2026 (SWRCB 2026). In addition, the Department of Toxic Substances Control's (DTSC) EnviroStor database was searched on February 10, 2026, for cleanup sites in the County (DTSC 2026). According to these database searches, there are 30 open or active

known hazardous waste/materials sites, four of which have been identified as LUST sites, with one site eligible for closure, one under site assessment, and two undergoing remediation (SWRCB 2026). These LUST sites and open or active hazardous waste/materials sites are listed in Table 4.9-1. Table 4.9-2 lists the EnviroStor Hazardous Waste sites and Table 4.9-3 lists active Cease and Desist Orders (CDOs)and Cleanup and Abatement Orders (CAOs) in Trinity County. LUST sites, EnviroStor Hazardous Waste sites, and CDOs are shown in Figure 4.9-1.

Table 4.9-1 Known Hazardous Materials and Waste Sites in the Planning Area

Site Name	Location	Status
Cleanup Program Site		
Cheek Skyline Logging	SR 3 South, Douglas City	Open – Inactive
Frontier Fuel	SR 3 West, Hayfork	Open – Inactive
Jensen Lumber	South Fork Creek Road, Hyampom	Open – Inactive
North Coast Railroad Authority	Railline, Weaverville	Open – Inactive
North State Petroleum and Chevron	SR 299 West, Weaverville	Open – site assessment
Shell/Texaco Bulk Terminal	Washington Street, Weaverville	Open – Inactive
Stone Forest Industries	SR 299 West, Burnt Ranch	Open – Assessment and Interim Remedial Action
Trinity Industrial Park	SR 299, Weaverville	Open – site assessment
Land Disposal Site		
Bully Choop (Trinity) Mine	Bully Choop Mountain	Open
Humboldt – Mad River Burn Dump	Mad River	Open – site assessment
Kimberly-Clark Company Wildwood Burn D	Wildwood	Open – site assessment
Stone Forest, Burnt Ranch	SR 299, Burnt Ranch	Open
Trinity County – Big Bar Burn Dump	Big Bar	Open – site assessment
Trinity County – Carrville Burn Dump	Carrville	Open – site assessment
Trinity County – Dedrick Burn Dump	Dedrick	Open – site assessment
Trinity County – Denny Burn Dump	Denny	Open – site assessment
Trinity County – Douglas City Burn Dump	Douglas City	Open – site assessment
Trinity County – Forest Glen Burn Dump	Forest Glen	Open – site assessment
Trinity County – Hayfork Burn Dump	Hayfork	Open – site assessment
Trinity County – Hyampom Burn Dump	Hyampom	Open – site assessment
Trinity County – Junction City Burn Dump	Junction City	Open – site assessment
Trinity County – Lewiston Burn Dump	Lewiston	Open – site assessment
Trinity County – Mad River Burn Dump	Mad River	Open – site assessment
Trinity County – Trinity Center Burn Dump	Trinity Center	Open – site assessment
Trinity County – Van Duzen Burn Dump	Van Duzen	Open – site assessment
LUST Cleanup Site		
Ellis James P.	Washington Street, Weaverville	Open – Remediation
Exxon, Glens	SR 3, Weaverville	Open – Remediation
Trinity County Department of Public Works Hayfork Yard	Morgan Hill Road, Hayfork	Open – Eligible for Closure
USFS Weaverville Ranger District	Main Street, Weaverville	Open – site assessment

Site Name	Location	Status
Military Cleanup Site		
Buckhorn Wash Underground Diesel/Gasoline Expanded Exploration Site – US	Buckhorn	Open – Inactive

SR = State Route; LUST = leaking underground storage tank
Sources: SWRCB 2026, CalEPA 2026a

Table 4.9-2 EnviroStor Trinity County Hazardous Waste and Substance Sites

Site Name	Location	Site Type
Altoona Mine	Ramshorn Rd, Trinity Center	Evaluation
Cheek Skyline Logging	SR 3/Marshall Rd, Douglas City	Evaluation
Hayfork Gap Filler Annex	Hayfork Bally, Hayfork	FUDS
Jensen Lumber Company	SR 3, Hyampom	State Response or NPL
Joseph Darin Development	Junction City	Evaluation
Ruth Corporation Yard	Mad River Rd/Dump Rd, Ruth	Evaluation
Sierra Pacific	Mill Ave and SR 3, Hayfork	Evaluation
Sierra Pacific Lumber Mill	690 Tule Creek Rd, Hayfork	Evaluation
Stone Forest Industries	SR 299/Hennessy Rd, Burnt Ranch	Evaluation
USFS Golden Jubilee Mill	Forest Road, Shasta-Trinity	Evaluation
Weaverville Transfer Station	173 Tom Bell Rd, Weaverville	No Action
Wildwood Mill Site	Hayfork Creek Bridge/SR 36, Wildwood	Evaluation

Note: EPA = United States Environmental Protection Agency; FUDS = Formerly Used Defense Sites; NPL = National Priorities List; RWQCB = Regional Water Quality Control Board; USFS = United States Forest Service; SR = State Route
Source: DTSC 2026

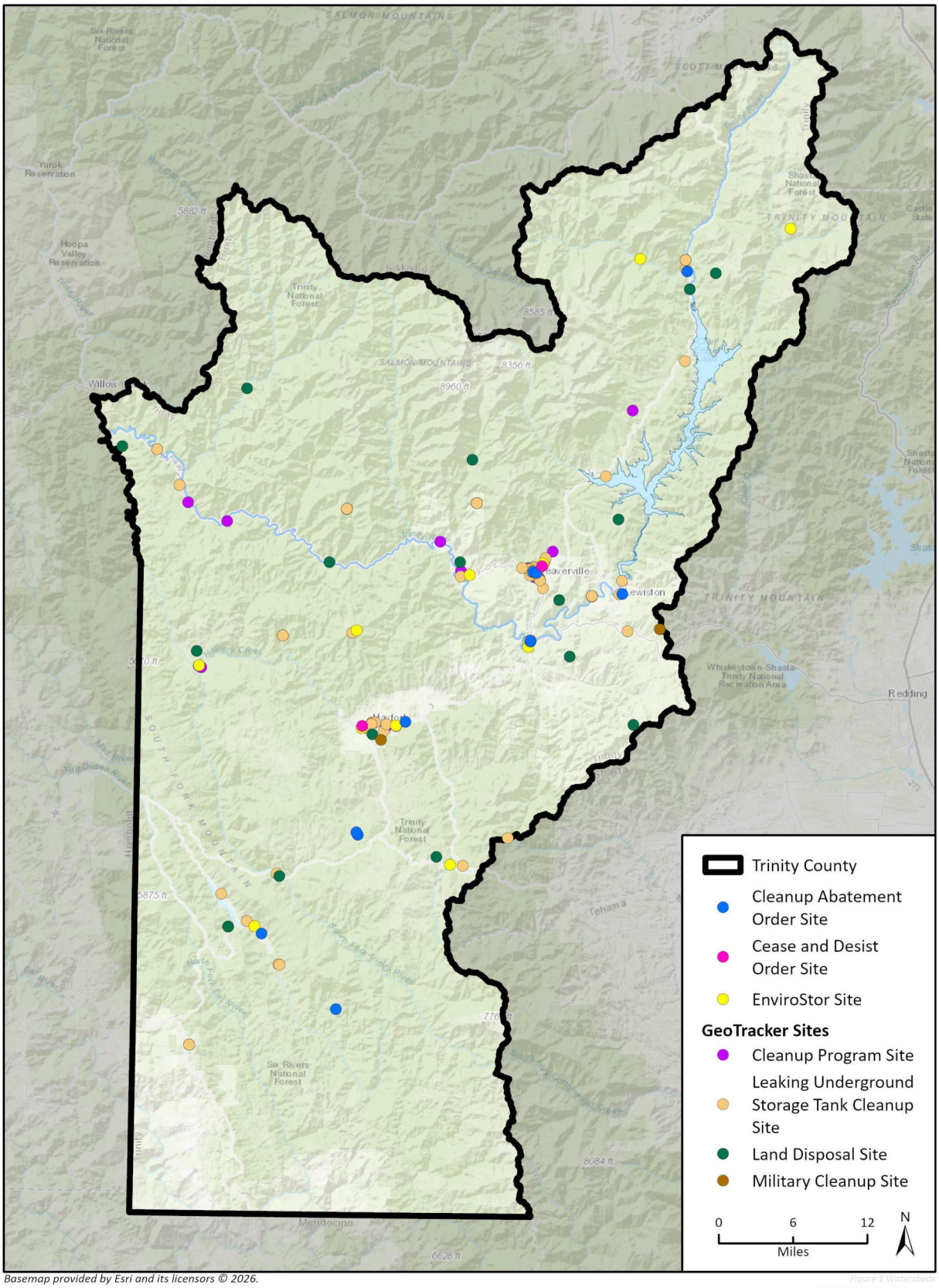
Table 4.9-3 Clean-up and Abatement Order and Cease and Desist Order Sites

Site Name	Location	Type of Site
Brown, Reifeiss, & Brock	East Road, Hayfork	CAO: Service/Commercial Site, NEC
Callcre 3001 LLC	26670 Mad River Road, Mad River	CAO: Cannabis
Collin Barrett Voitk Property, Trinity Pines	Hayfork	CAO: Timber Harvesting
Dark Canyon Creek Culvert Replacement	Wild Mad Road	CAO: Dredge/Fill Site
Grace Sailors Property	Fir Meadow Road, Trinity Pines	CAO: Dredge and Fill
Guerrero (formerly RNC Holdings, Inc) Property	Douglas City	CAO: Nursery/Hydroponics
John Curry and Ian Asher, Trinity Pines Property	Pine Forest Road, Hayfork	CAO: Timber Harvesting
Lewiston Community Service District Wastewater Ponds Publicly Owned Treatment Works	4831 B Trinity Dam Boulevard, Lewiston	CAO: Wastewater Treatment Facility
Mann Well	SR 3, Hayfork	CAO: Groundwater Cleanup
North State Petroleum	West SR 299, Weaverville	CAO: Service/Commercial Site, NEC
Solomon Property (Horse Mane)	Douglas City	CAO: Cannabis

Site Name	Location	Type of Site
Trinity Dam Mobile Home Park	4720 Trinity Dam Boulevard, Lewiston	CAO: Mobile Home Park
Trinity Ridge Farms LLC	Douglas City	CAO: Cannabis
Unocal Bulk Plant	Washington Street, Weaverville	CAO: Gasoline Service Station
Trinity County Solid Waste Disposal Site Weaverville	SR 3, Weaverville	CDO: Landfill
Trinity County Waterworks District #1 Hayfork Wastewater Treatment Plant	502 Tule Creek Road, Hayfork	CDO: Wastewater Treatment Facility

CAO = Cleanup and Abatement Order; CDO = Cease and Desist Order; SR = State Route
Source: CalEPA 2026b

Figure 4.9-1 Location of Cortese List Sites



Basemap provided by Esri and its licensors © 2026.
Additional data provided by EnviroStar, 2026.

4.9.2 Regulatory Setting

a. Federal Regulations

United States Environmental Protection Agency

USEPA is the agency primarily responsible for enforcement and implementation of federal laws and regulations pertaining to hazardous materials. Applicable federal regulations pertaining to hazardous materials are contained in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Titles 29, 40, and 49.

The management of hazardous materials is governed by the following laws:

- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (RCRA) (42 United States Code [USC] 6901 et seq.)
- Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA, also called the Superfund Act) (42 USC 9601 et seq.)
- Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 USC 136 et seq.)
- Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) of 1986 (Public Law 99 499)

These laws and associated regulations include specific requirements for facilities that generate, use, store, treat, and/or dispose of hazardous materials. USEPA provides oversight and supervision for Federal Superfund investigation/remediation projects, evaluates remediation technologies, and develops hazardous materials disposal restrictions and treatment standards.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act

Under RCRA, USEPA regulates hazardous waste from the time that the waste is generated until its final disposal. RCRA also gives USEPA or an authorized state to conduct inspections to ensure that individual facilities comply with regulations, and to pursue enforcement action if a violation is discovered. USEPA can delegate its responsibility to a state if the state's regulations are at least as stringent as the federal regulations. RCRA was updated in 1984 by the passage of the Federal Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments, which required phasing out land disposal of hazardous waste. Title 22, Section 66261.24 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) defines characteristics of toxicity, which is used to help guide the federal program.

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act

Hazardous substances are a subclass of hazardous materials. They are regulated under CERCLA and SARA. Under CERCLA, USEPA has authority to seek the parties responsible for releases of hazardous substances and ensure their cooperation in site remediation. CERCLA, established prohibitions and requirements concerning closed and abandoned hazardous waste sites; provided for liability of persons responsible for releases of hazardous waste at these sites; and established a trust fund also known as the "Superfund" to provide remediation when no responsible party could be identified.

The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act

The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 USC 136 et seq.) provides federal control of pesticide distribution, sale, and use. USEPA was given authority under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act not only to study the consequences of pesticide usage, but also to require users (farmers, utility companies, and others) to register when purchasing pesticides. Later amendments to the law required users to take exams for certification as applicators of pesticides. All pesticides used in the United States must be registered (licensed) by USEPA. Registration assures that pesticides will be properly labeled and that, if used in accordance with specifications, they will not cause unreasonable harm to the environment.

SARA Title III, the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act

SARA Title III, the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act requires companies to declare potential toxic hazards to ensure that local communities can plan for chemical emergencies. USEPA maintains a National Priority List of uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites identified for priority remediation under the Superfund program. USEPA also maintains the CERCLA database, which contains information on hazardous waste sites, potentially hazardous waste sites, and remedial activities across the nation.

Occupational Health and Safety Administration

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) of the United States Department of Labor is responsible for enforcement and implementation of federal laws and regulations pertaining to worker health and safety. Regulations include testing, monitoring, containment, and disposal of hazardous materials. Workers at hazardous waste sites must receive specialized training and medical supervision according to the Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) regulations (29 CFR 1910.120).

Clean Air Act

The Clean Air Act (CAA) (42 United States Code Section 7401 et seq.) authorizes the USEPA to regulate emissions of hazardous air pollutants and criteria air pollutants from stationary, mobile, and area sources that may pose risks to public health or the environment. Under the CAA, USEPA establishes National Ambient Air Quality Standards for pollutants that may endanger public health, including particulate matter and toxic air contaminants that can contain hazardous substances such as asbestos, lead, and volatile organic compounds. The CAA also establishes National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants, which set requirements for handling, demolishing, or renovating structures that contain asbestos or other hazardous materials to prevent the release of airborne contaminants. Additionally, state regulation, CCR Title 13 establishes vehicle standards, including requirements for the transportation of hazardous materials, while federal regulations under CFR Title 49 set safety regulations for the transportation of hazardous materials. Compliance with the CAA and its implementing regulations ensures that demolition, renovation, and operational activities do not result in hazardous air emissions that could affect workers, nearby sensitive receptors, or the broader environment.

National Incident Management System

Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5, issued by President George W. Bush, directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop and administer a National Incident Management System. This system provides a consistent nationwide template to enable federal, state, local, and tribal governments and private-sector and nongovernmental organizations to work together effectively and efficiently to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity, including acts of catastrophic terrorism. Trinity County has acted to reduce potential damages from disaster events by incorporating and complying with the National Incident Management System procedures, principles and policies.

b. State Regulations

Department of Toxic Substances Control

The DTSC is a division of California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) and has primary regulatory responsibility over hazardous materials in California, working in conjunction with the USEPA to enforce and implement hazardous materials laws and regulations. DTSC can delegate enforcement responsibilities to local jurisdictions.

Hazardous Waste Control Act

The hazardous waste management program enforced by DTSC was created by the Hazardous Waste Control Act (California Health and Safety Code Section 25100 et seq.), which is implemented by regulations described in CCR Title 26. The state program is similar to, but more stringent than, the federal program under RCRA. The regulations list materials that may be hazardous, and establish criteria for their identification, packaging, and disposal. Environmental health standards for management of hazardous waste are contained in CCR Title 22, Division 4.5. In addition, as required by California Government Code Section 65962.5, DTSC maintains a Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List for the State called the Cortese List.

Unified Program

CalEPA has established a unified hazardous waste and hazardous materials management regulatory program (Unified Program) as required by Senate Bill 1082 (1993). The Unified Program is intended to provide relief to businesses complying with the overlapping and sometimes conflicting requirements of formerly independently managed programs and is implemented at the local government level by CUPAs. The Unified Program consolidates, coordinates, and makes consistent the administrative requirements, permits, inspections, and enforcement activities for the following environmental programs under CalEPA, the SWRCB, including the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs) in each region of the state, State Office of Emergency Services, and the State Fire Marshal:

- California Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapters 6.7 and 6.75 Underground Storage Tank (UST) program
- Hazardous Materials Release Response Plans and Inventories (Business Plans)
- California Accidental Release Prevention Program
- Hazardous Waste Generator and Onsite Hazardous Waste Treatment (tiered permitting) Programs
- Above ground Petroleum Storage Act requirements for spill prevention, control, and countermeasure plans
- California Uniform Fire Code: Hazardous Material Management Plans and Hazardous Material Inventory Statements

The six environmental programs in the Unified Program are implemented at the local level by local agencies, known for this purpose as a Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA). CUPAs carry out the responsibilities previously handled by approximately 1,300 state and local agencies, providing a central permitting and regulatory agency for permits, reporting, and compliance enforcement.

Regional Water Quality Control Boards

RWQCBs are authorized by the Porter Cologne Water Quality Control Act of 1969 to protect the Waters of the State. RWQCBs provide oversight for sites where the quality of groundwater or surface waters is threatened. Extraction and disposal of contaminated groundwater due to investigation/remediation activities or due to dewatering during construction require a permit from the RWQCB if the water is discharged to storm drains, surface water, or land.

California Department of Pesticide Regulations, Department of Food and Agriculture, and the Department of Public Health

The California Department of Pesticide Regulations, a division of CalEPA, in coordination with the California Department of Food and Agriculture, a division of Measurement Standards and the California Department of Public Health have the primary responsibility to regulate pesticide use, vector control, food, and drinking water safety. CCR Title 3 requires the coordinated response between the County Agricultural Commissioner and Trinity County Department of Environmental Health to address the use of

pesticides used in vector control for animal and human health on a local level. The California Department of Pesticide Regulations registers pesticides, and pesticide use is tracked by the County.

California Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Occupational Health Administration

The California Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal/OSHA), assumes primary responsibility for developing and enforcing workplace safety regulations in the state. Cal/OSHA standards are more stringent than federal OSHA regulations and are presented in CCR Title 8 Section 1532.1. Standards for workers dealing with hazardous materials include practices for all industries (General Industry Safety Orders); specific practices are described for construction, hazardous waste operations, and emergency response. Cal/OSHA conducts on site evaluations and issues notices of violation to enforce necessary improvements to health and safety practices.

La Follette Bill (Assembly Bill 3777)

The La Follette Bill (AB 3777) requires every business which handles specified amounts of acutely hazardous material, as defined in the bill, to file an acutely hazardous materials registration form with the local administering agency on or before September 1, 1987 and established guidelines for Hazardous Materials Management as outlined in the Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.95, Article 2, Sections 25531-25540. It requires owners or operators of each business in the state, which at any time, handles any acutely hazardous material in quantities equal to or greater than 500 pounds, 55 gallons, or 200 cubic feet under standard temperature and pressure for compressed gas to register with an administering agency.

Emergency Services Act

The Emergency Services Act is the State of California's basic law establishing the foundation for emergency response. This Act is contained in the California Government Code beginning with Section 8550. The Act gives the Governor and chief executives of all political subdivisions emergency powers; establishes the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services; assigns emergency functions to state agencies; provides for mutual aid; and authorizes such organizations as are necessary to carry out the provisions of the law. This regulatory area applies to Office of Emergency Services only. Division 2.5 of the Health and Safety Code provides statutory authority and describes the duties of the State Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Authority and local (County) EMS agencies for the administration and planning of EMS systems. This statute requires the local county EMS agencies to “plan, implement, and evaluate an emergency medical services system consisting of an organized pattern of readiness and response services based on public and private agreements and operational procedures.” As pertains to EMS planning activities, the State EMS Authority has developed planning and implementation guidelines which are used by county EMS Agencies as a planning tool by which to measure and improve all aspects of their EMS system. As set forth in the EMS Act, these EMS System Standards and Guidelines are comprised of the following topic areas: (1) Personnel and training; (2) Communications; (3) Transportation; (4) Assessment of hospitals and critical care centers; (5) System organization and management; (6) Data collection and evaluation; (7) Public information and education; and (8) Disaster medical response.

c. Regional and Local Regulations

North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District

The North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District regulates emissions of asbestos and other hazardous air pollutants associated with demolition, renovation, and construction activities. The North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District enforces the statewide *Asbestos Airborne Toxic Control Measure for Construction, Grading, Quarrying, and Surface Mining Operations* (17 CCR Section 93105),

which requires asbestos surveys prior to demolition, notification to the District when asbestos-containing material will be disturbed, and implementation of dust-control measures to prevent the release of asbestos fibers. The district enforces the California Air Resources Board California Rule 228, *Fugitive Dust*, which applies to construction activities and requires dust-suppression practices that minimize airborne particulates that may contain hazardous materials such as naturally occurring asbestos. Compliance with these rules reduces the potential for exposure to hazardous airborne materials during ground-disturbing and demolition activities.

Trinity County Environmental Health Division

In Trinity County, the Trinity County Environmental Health Division is the designated CUPA. As the CUPA, the Trinity County Environmental Health Division is responsible for coordinating administrative activities such as permits, inspections, and enforcement for compliance with the applicable hazardous materials management programs described above (County of Trinity 2026).

Trinity County Emergency Operations

The Trinity County Office of Emergency Services coordinates emergency preparedness, response, and recovery efforts for disasters occurring within the unincorporated area of the County and develops the Trinity County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), Trinity County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP), and assists in the creation of the Safety Element. The plans guide the County's response to emergencies/disasters and work to ensure the most effective use of all resources, materials, and aid, for the protection of the affected community. The Trinity County Office of Emergency Services provides emergency resilience resources and alerts for natural and man-made disasters for residents of Trinity County through the online resource, *Ready Trinity*.

The Trinity County EOP was adopted in March 2019. The EOP describes all-hazards emergency and disaster response protocols for the County. Additionally, the EOP identifies all potential hazards, emergency operations, situational planning, agency roles and responsibilities, command and control authorities, and the development, maintenance, and implementation of the EOP in compliance with local, state, and federal law. The EOP formally set required trainings and operational requirements in compliance with the National Incident Management System, with internal and external organizations, and to meet federal grant program requirements (County of Trinity 2019).

The HMP was developed to better guide hazard mitigation planning in the county. The HMP discusses risks associated with natural and human-made hazards such as hazardous waste. Sites that involve hazardous material or hazardous waste are identified and counted to ensure that, in the event of a hazardous waste incident, the site can be promptly assessed and remediated to its original state. Additionally, the HMP identifies sites of known hazardous material release and previous transportation incidents involving hazardous waste and past hazardous materials incidents and analysis on vulnerable locations. The HMP establishes goals and policies aimed to mitigate potential hazards throughout Trinity County. Policies include requiring permitting and specialized building design and regulation for handling hazardous materials, cooperation with state and federal agencies with expertise in hazardous materials, assessment and remediation of any contamination, disaster and emergency preparedness and public information.

Trinity County Evacuation Plan

The Trinity County Evacuation Plan was developed in partnership with the Trinity County Resource Conservation District and Trinity County Fire Safe Council. The Evacuation Plan provided regional guidance on evacuations, necessary materials, and resources available to the public. Additionally, the plan describes interagency coordination, resource accessibility, community preparedness and public notification as notable indicators of a successful evacuation order.

Trinity County Community Wildfire Protection Plan

The Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) was prepared by the Fire Safe Council as a regional scale wildfire management planning resource promoting wildfire safety and resilience within Trinity County. The CWPP describes online GIS resources, fire and fuel related projects, coordinated grant funding and federal program budget information for the advancement of wildfire resilience programs and projects in the fire prone area.

Trinity County Hazardous Materials Area Plan

The Trinity County Hazardous Materials Area Plan (TCHMAP) provides guidance on appropriate emergency response procedures, protocols, points of contact, and support for clean-up efforts, emergency training, and the handling, and mitigation of hazardous materials and hazards. The plan must be reviewed and updated at least once every five years in coordination with local, regional, state, and federal regulatory and emergency response partners.

Trinity County Code of Ordinances

The Trinity County Code of Ordinances enforces several hazards and hazardous material policy execution and implementation. Chapters 8.30 (Fire Safe Ordinance), 8.80 (Underground Storage Tanks), and 2.40 (Emergency Services) describe the protocols and policies intended to maintain fire safety, adequate emergency services, reduce underground storage tank hazards, and remove hazardous materials post-wildfire events. Additionally, Section 2.64.050 of the Code of Ordinances contains Ordinances applies fees related to the CUPA program, including USTs.

Trinity County Agricultural Commissioner

The regulation of cannabis and pesticide storage, application, and waste disposal is under the jurisdiction of the County Agricultural Commissioner; the Commissioner oversees regulations under the California Department of Pesticide Regulation. Regulatory functions are mandated by state and federal laws and regulations and by local measures and ordinances by the Trinity County Board of Supervisors.

Trinity County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan

Trinity County's aviation system consists of five public use and county owned airports. Specific land use policy plans have been developed for the five airports in Trinity County; Weaverville Airport, Trinity Center Airport, Hayfork Airport, Ruth Airport, and Hyampom Airport. In addition, Trinity County's Airport Land Use Commission adopted a Trinity County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) in November 2009 to protect the public from the adverse effects of airport noise, ensure land use compatibility with the General Plan, and enforce no structures or activities encroach upon, or adversely affect airspace. The ALUCP establishes all land use plans for public use Trinity County airports. The Airport Land Use Commission has the authority to establish policies, evaluate proposed policy actions, and review individual development projects, as they are relevant to airport-to-airport operations. In accordance with Public Utilities Code Section 21676, Airport Land Use Commissions must review general and specific plans of local jurisdictions for consistency with the 2009 Trinity County ALUCP.

4.9.3 Impact Analysis

a. Significance Thresholds and Methodology

The following thresholds of significance are based on Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*. For the purposes of this EIR, implementation of the project may have a significant adverse impact if it would do any of the following:

1. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials;

2. 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;
3. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school;
4. 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;
5. 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;
6. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan; or
7. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires.

This section describes the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project relevant to hazards and hazardous materials. The impact analysis is based on an assessment of baseline conditions for the Planning Area, including locations of hazardous materials use and storage, existing contaminated sites, air traffic hazards, and emergency response and evacuation plan requirements, as described in Section 4.9.1, *Setting*. This analysis identifies potential impacts based on the predicted interaction between the affected environment and construction, operation, and maintenance activities related to the predicted development that would occur under the project. This section describes impacts in terms of location, context, duration, and intensity.

Much of the potential cannabis-related development contemplated by the project was previously analyzed in the Trinity County Cannabis Program EIR (State Clearinghouse number 2018122049), certified in 2020 (2020 EIR). The 2020 EIR includes Mitigation Measure 3.9-2a, which requires a site assessment for hazardous materials be conducted prior to development for cannabis activities; and Mitigation Measure 3.9-2b, which requires the preparation of a hazardous materials contingency plan for construction activities. Those requirements were subsequently incorporated into County Code of Ordinances Chapter 17.43G through Ordinance No. 315-849, adopted in December 2020. In its hazards and hazardous materials analysis, the 2020 EIR concluded that cannabis cultivation and associated development would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through compliance with existing regulations and proposed mitigation measures.

Because these regulatory controls are part of existing conditions and because the proposed General Plan establishes a new countywide policy framework that supersedes the 2020 EIR for cannabis activities occurring consistent with the General Plan, this EIR focuses on geology and soil effects not previously addressed or requiring reevaluation under the proposed General Plan.

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1:	Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Impact HAZ-1 Development facilitated by the project could result in an incremental increase in the overall routine transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials in the Planning Area. However, compliance with applicable regulations related to hazardous materials and compliance with proposed General Plan policies would minimize the risk related to the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Impacts would be less than significant.

Land uses that typically involve the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials include industrial and manufacturing operations; warehouse and distribution facilities; vehicle-related uses (e.g.,

gas stations, fleet fueling, auto repair); agricultural uses; and certain commercial businesses such as dry cleaners, medical and dental offices, laboratories, hardware and paint suppliers, and restaurants using industrial cleaning agents. These uses are expected to occur within areas designated for industrial, commercial, and mixed-use development under the proposed project. As a result, the project would introduce or expand land uses that commonly utilize hazardous materials as part of regular operations.

Development facilitated by the project could occur on agriculture and rural residential land in the Planning Area. Industrial, commercial, and mixed-use development facilitated by the project would incrementally increase the number of businesses storing, using, transporting, and/or disposing of hazardous materials, primarily near Hayfork, Douglas, Weaverville, and Lewiston within the Planning Area. Commercial and industrial land uses, as well as cannabis cultivation and agricultural uses, could use, store, and transport hazardous materials in proximity to residential development. Therefore, development facilitated by the project could potentially increase hazardous materials exposure for residents. The risk of exposure would also increase for workers, because the proposed project facilitates an increase in the number of jobs in the Planning Area through 2050, including industrial and commercial jobs that may require the use of hazardous materials. However, the risk of exposure for residents and employees would be reduced by applicable federal, state, and local regulations, as well as proposed General Plan policies, as discussed below.

Hazardous Materials Transport

Construction of development facilitated by the project would result in the transport of hazardous materials such as fuels, oils, and solvents to individual sites throughout the Planning Area. Operation of industrial, manufacturing, vehicle-related uses, and certain commercial businesses facilitated by the proposed project would result in the routine transport and delivery of hazardous materials, such as industrial chemicals and fuels. As described in Section 4.9.1, *Setting*, hazardous materials and waste may be transported on SR 3 and SR 299. Additionally, gas and hazardous liquid would continue to travel through the Planning Area, while materials poisonous by inhalation, explosives, or high level radioactive may be transported on SR 299, subject to restrictions (United States Department of Transportation 2026). The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, USFS, local volunteer fire departments, Trinity County Office of Emergency Services, and the Trinity County Environmental Health Division would be responsible for any hazardous materials accidents that could occur along hazardous materials transportation routes identified in applicable permits. Increases in hazardous materials transportation activities as a result of the proposed project would result in proportionate increases in hazardous materials incidents throughout the county.

The United States Department of Transportation and Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration regulate the transportation of hazardous materials, as described in CFR Title 49. CCR Title 13 additionally regulates the transportation of hazardous materials by designating appropriate hazard labels shipping preparation, vehicle loading, and hazardous materials registration, among other requirements. Documentation of compliance with hazardous materials regulations codified in CCR Titles 8, 22, and 26 is required for all hazardous materials and hazardous waste transport. In addition, individual contractors and property owners are required to comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to the transport, use, disposal, handling, and storage of hazardous waste, including but not limited to, CFR Title 49. Adherence to applicable regulations and laws would reduce the potential hazards associated with the transport of hazardous materials, including accidental release of hazardous materials during transport.

Proposed Goal SAF 4 and the corresponding policies, Policy SAF 4.1 (Review of Hazard Mitigation and Emergency Operations Plans), Policy SAF 4.2 (Hazardous Materials Area Plan), Policy SAF 4.3 (Hazardous Materials Commodity Flow Study), Policy SAF 4.4 (Inter-Agency Hazardous Materials Regulation), and Policy SAF 4.5 (Certified Unified Program Agency) would minimize the risk of exposure to hazardous materials by ensuring regular updates to the HMP, EOP, TCHMAP, and Trinity County Hazardous Materials Commodity Flow Study, in addition to agency coordination related to these plans. Proposed Goal PFSI 3 and Policy PFSI 3.5 (Household and Business Hazardous Waste) would ensure the

safe handling and disposal of hazardous materials in the county. Therefore, with adherence to federal, state, and local regulations, risks related to the transport of hazardous materials would be **less than significant**.

Hazardous Materials Use and Disposal

The overall quantity of hazardous materials used and requiring disposal in the Planning Area could incrementally increase during construction and demolition activities associated with buildout of the proposed project. Additionally, all new developments which use hazardous materials, including industrial, manufacturing, warehouse/distribution, vehicle-related uses, and certain commercial uses, would be required to comply with the regulations, standards, and guidelines established by the USEPA, the State of California, and Trinity County related to storage, use, and disposal of hazardous materials. Furthermore, residential land uses are expected to generate small quantities of household hazardous waste, similar to existing residential uses in the Planning Area.

Sensitive receptors such as residential or school uses in proximity to agricultural land that utilize pesticides may be exposed to increased health risks. Pesticide and herbicide application permits are renewed on an annual basis by the County Agricultural Commissioner.

As described above in Section 4.9.2(c), *Regional and Local Regulations*, the Trinity County Environmental Health Division has been certified by the CalEPA as the CUPA for all areas of the county. As the CUPA, the Environmental Health Division performs inspections to prevent exposure to environmental health hazards for businesses and residents in Trinity County.

Development of industrial land uses, as well as certain commercial uses such as gas stations, auto repair facilities, dry-cleaners, and other businesses that store or handle hazardous materials over threshold quantities, may involve operations that trigger Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP) requirements. These facilities would be required to prepare and submit an HMBP to Trinity County CUPA. The HMBP consists of general business information; basic information on the location, type, quantity and health risks of hazardous materials; and emergency response and training plans. Hazardous materials must be reported in an HMBP if they are handled in quantities equal or greater than county standards. Mandatory reporting in HMBPs would reduce the potential hazard to residents and the general public in mixed-use development from the use of hazardous materials in the Planning Area.

For employees that would work with hazardous materials, business-specific practices would be required to comply with federal and state laws to eliminate or minimize the potential consequence of hazardous materials exposure. For example, employees who work around hazardous materials are required to wear appropriate protective equipment, and safety equipment is routinely available in all areas where hazardous materials are used. California Building and Fire Code requirements detail standards for the safe management of materials that present a moderate explosion hazard, high fire or physical hazard, or health hazards. Compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local requirements related to the storage of hazardous materials would maximize containment through safe handling and storage practices. Additionally, future development facilitated by the proposed project must adhere to the Hazardous Waste Control Act program and HAZWOPER procedures to ensure safe operational practices, adequate handling hazardous substances, and reporting of hazardous waste sites.

In addition to mandatory compliance with laws and regulations, proposed Policy CIR 6.7 (Hazardous Materials Storage at Airports) would ensure that hazardous materials are adequately stored, managed, and contained at airport facilities.

The proposed General Plan includes the following goals and policies that would reduce the potential for accidental exposure and hazards associated with the use and disposal of hazardous materials: Policy LU 10.3 (Environmental Justice Considerations), Policy LU 10.4 (New Incompatible Land Uses), Goal PFSI 3, Policy PFSI 3.6 (Household and Business Hazardous Waste), Goal SAF 4, Policy SAF 4.1 (Review of Hazard Mitigation and Emergency Operations Plans), Policy SAF 4.2 (Hazardous Materials Area Plan), Policy SAF 4.3 (Hazardous Materials Commodity Flow Study), Policy SAF 4.4 (Inter-Agency Hazardous Materials Regulation), Policy SAF 4.5 (Certified Unified Program Agency), Policy SAF 4.6 (Hazardous

Materials Education and Waste Collection Program), and Policy SAF 4.7 (Hazardous Waste Originating Outside the County). These policies would restrict new incompatible land uses and zoning designations including environmental hazards ensuring no development or storage hazardous materials occurs in residential areas. Policy LU 10.3 would reduce negative impacts on the health and quality of life of Trinity County residents resulting from hazards and use of hazardous materials including but not limited to pesticide use. Goal PFSI 3 and corresponding policies ensure safe handling and disposal of hazardous waste. Goal SAF 4 and the corresponding policies would minimize the risk from disposing of hazardous materials through ensuring regular updates to the HMP, EOP, and TCHMAP, and Trinity County Hazardous Materials Commodity Flow Study, in addition to agency coordination related to these plans.

Development facilitated by the project would adhere to relevant regulations governing the use and disposal of hazardous materials. In addition, such development would be implemented concurrently with the goals and policies outlined above, which would reduce the risk from future development creating a significant hazard to the public due to the use or disposal of hazardous materials. Therefore, impacts related to the use and disposal of hazardous materials would be **less than significant**.

Summary

Compliance with existing applicable regulations, programs, standards such as the California Fire Code and Building Code, and implementation of proposed General Plan goals, policies, and actions would minimize risks from routine transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials. Oversight by the appropriate federal, state, and local agencies and compliance by new development with applicable regulations related to the handling and storage of hazardous materials would minimize the risk of the public's potential exposure to these materials. Therefore, impacts from a hazard to the public or the environment through routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials exposure to these materials would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold: 2	Would the project 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?

Impact HAZ-2 Demolition, grading, or excavation associated with development facilitated by the project could uncover contaminated soils or result in accidental release of hazardous materials. However, compliance with applicable regulations related to hazardous materials and implementation of proposed General Plan policies would minimize the risk of hazards to the public or environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment. Impacts would be less than significant.

Development facilitated by the project would accommodate new residential units in the Planning Area. Therefore, buildout of the proposed project would increase the number of people that could be exposed to a potential accidental release of hazardous materials. Disturbance of soils with residual quantities of agricultural chemicals due to historic agricultural use can also pose health threats.

As described in Section 4.9.1, *Setting,* the Planning Area contains known or potentially contaminated soil or groundwater, including 16 CAO/CDO sites, 12 EnviroStor Hazardous Waste and Substances sites, four LUST sites, 17 Land Disposal sites, nine Cleanup Program sites, and one military cleanup site requiring additional action. Grading, excavation, or other ground-disturbing activities on or near these areas could

encounter contaminated soils or groundwater and result in the release of hazardous materials into the environment.

The disposal of hazardous materials unearthed during grading and excavation activities are regulated through RCRA, which requires that any contaminated soil, groundwater, or debris that qualifies as hazardous waste be properly characterized, segregated, stored, transported by a registered hazardous waste hauler, and disposed of at a permitted treatment, storage, or disposal facility. Compliance with existing regulations would reduce the risk of upset and accidental conditions involving the release of hazardous materials during construction and operation.

The proposed project would facilitate and encourage infill development and redevelopment within established areas with existing infrastructure in the Planning Area. Redevelopment may include demolition of structures that, due to their age, may contain asbestos and/or lead-based paint. As a result, demolition or re-development of these structures to facilitate proposed project buildout could result in health hazard impacts to workers through exposure to lead and asbestos if not remediated prior to construction activities. In addition, construction activities, such as grading or excavation on sites with contaminated soil, groundwater, naturally occurring asbestos, or lead-based road striping, may result in the release of hazardous materials into the environment. Lead-based materials and asbestos exposure are regulated by the California Department of Public Health, the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District, and Cal/OSHA. CCR Section 1532.1 requires testing, monitoring, containment, and disposal of lead-based materials such that exposure levels do not exceed Cal/OSHA standards. Under this rule, construction workers may not be exposed to lead at concentrations greater than 10 micrograms per cubic meter of air averaged over an eight-hour period and exposure must be reduced to lower concentrations if the workday exceeds eight hours. Similarly, CCR Section 1529 sets requirements for asbestos exposure assessments and monitoring, methods of complying with requirements related to exposure, personal protective equipment, communication of hazards, and medical examination of workers.

The control of asbestos during demolition or renovation of buildings is regulated under the Federal CAA. The North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District, Trinity County Environmental Health Division, and Trinity County Building Division enforce the Federal CAA requirement for a thorough inspection for asbestos where demolition will occur and specifies work practices to control emissions, such as removing all asbestos-containing materials, adequately wetting all regulated asbestos-containing materials, sealing the material in leak tight containers and disposing of the asbestos-containing waste material as expediently as practicable (USEPA 2026). Compliance with the CCR and Federal CAA, which is mandatory, would reduce the potential hazards and risks associated with release of lead and asbestos.

The extent to which groundwater may be contaminated by a LUST, if at all, depends on the type of contaminant, the amount released, the duration of the release, and depth to groundwater. If groundwater contamination is identified during construction of future development, characterization of the vertical and lateral extent of the contamination and remediation activities would be required by the SWRCB or the Trinity County Environmental Health Division prior to the commencement of any new construction activities that would disturb the subsurface. If contamination exceeds regulatory action levels, the developer would be required to undertake remediation procedures prior to grading and development under the supervision of the SWRCB and North Coast RWQCB, depending upon the nature of any identified contamination.

As described in Section 4.9.1, *Setting*, there are four LUSTs in use present in Trinity County. If an unidentified LUST is uncovered or disturbed during future construction activities, its removal would be permitted by the Trinity County CUPA (the Trinity County Environmental Health Division) with oversight from the SWRCB. If such removal would potentially undermine the structural stability of existing structures, foundations, or impact existing utilities, the tank might be closed in place without removal. Tank removal activities could pose both health and safety risks, such as the exposure of workers, tank handling personnel, and the public to tank contents or vapors. Potential risks, if any, posed by USTs would be minimized by managing the tank according to existing standards contained in California Health and

Safety Code, Division 20, Chapters 6.7 and 6.75 (UST Program) as enforced and monitored by the SWRCB.

In addition, mandatory compliance with local regulations would reduce the potential for significant hazards to the public or environment through upset and accident conditions involving hazardous materials. Trinity County Code of Ordinances 2.64.050, *Fees*, requires Environmental Health Fees for hazardous materials and programs including USTs, above ground storage tanks, hazardous waste generator, the California Accidental Release Prevention Program, and all environmental health feed enforced by the Trinity County CUPA. Section 25281 of the Health and Safety Code of California includes procedures for cleanup and mitigation of unauthorized releases from a LUST. Furthermore, the HMP, TCHMAP, and proposed General Plan reinforce regulations governing hazardous materials releases.

In addition to mandatory adherence to laws and regulations, the proposed General Plan includes the following policies and actions that would reduce the potential for creating a significant hazard to the public or the environment through upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials: Policy SAF-4.1 (Review of Hazard Mitigation and Emergency Operations and Plans), Goal COS 5, Policy COS 5.1 (Best Management Practices), Policy COS 5.2 (NPDES Permit Compliance), and Policy COS 5.10 (Agricultural Contaminant Reduction). Policy SAF-4.1 (Review of Hazard Mitigation and Emergency Operations and Plans) would ensure regular updates to the HMP and EOP related to hazardous materials spill response procedures. Goal COS 5 and related policies would reduce contaminant risks and protect Trinity County waterways through compliance with hazardous materials regulations and development standards.

Compliance with existing applicable regulations and standards, and implementation of proposed General Plan goals and policies would minimize potential hazards from the accidental release of hazardous materials. Oversight by the appropriate federal, state, and local agencies and compliance by new development with applicable regulations related to the handling and disposal of hazardous materials would minimize the risk of the public's potential exposure to these materials. Therefore, impacts from a hazard to the public or the environment through upset and accident conditions involving hazardous materials would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 3:	Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school?

Impact HAZ-3 Development facilitated by the project could result in hazardous emissions or handling of hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 miles of an existing or proposed school. Compliance with existing regulatory requirements would minimize risks to schools and students, resulting in a less than significant impact.

Under the proposed project, new commercial development, including gas stations, dry cleaners, and auto-body shops, could occur within 0.25 miles of an existing school. Consequently, hazardous materials sites may be located within 0.25 miles from school sites. Use of hazardous materials at future development sites could endanger students in the surrounding community. Hazardous materials and waste generated from future development would not pose a health risk to nearby schools because businesses that handle or have on-site storage of hazardous materials would be required to comply with the provisions of the California Fire Code adopted by the County Code of Ordinances Chapter 2.40 Emergency Services and any additional elements as required by the County Code of Ordinances Section 2.64.050, Fees, establishes the fee for the HMBP, which is compliant with California Health and Safety Code Article 1

Chapter 6.95. As described in Section 4.9.2, *Regulatory Setting*, both the federal and state governments require all businesses that handle more than a specified amount of hazardous materials to submit a business plan to a regulating agency.

Several schools are located within 0.25 miles of a facility that has or could emit hazardous air emissions or handle hazardous materials or wastes. It is possible that future development associated with the proposed project may result in an increase in hazardous emissions and handling of hazardous materials and wastes within 0.25 miles of an existing or future proposed school. As described under Impact HAZ-1, all new developments which use hazardous materials, including industrial, manufacturing, warehouse/distribution, vehicle-related uses, and certain commercial uses, would be required to comply with the regulations, standards, and guidelines established by the USEPA, the State of California, and Trinity County related to storage, use, and disposal of hazardous materials. Proposed General Plan Policy CH 5.5 (Restrict Detrimental Land Uses) would restrict detrimental land uses such as smoke, vape, and cannabis establishments and fast-food restaurants near sensitive receptors such as schools. Proposed Policy LU 7.6 (Sensitive Receptors) would prohibit incompatible commercial agricultural land uses within 600 feet of schools, community centers, and other sensitive receptors.

As such, compliance with the provisions of the California Fire Code and existing applicable state and federal regulations, in addition to proposed General Plan policies, would minimize the risks associated with the use of hazardous materials within 0.25 miles of existing or proposed schools. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures would be required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 4:	Would the project be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous material 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?

Impact HAZ-4 Development facilitated by the project could result in development on sites contaminated with hazardous materials. However, compliance with applicable regulations relating to site cleanup and proposed General Plan policies would minimize impacts from development on contaminated sites. This impact would be less than significant.

Existing sites that may potentially contain hazardous land uses in the Planning Area include large and small-quantity generators of hazardous waste, such as gas stations, landfills, and industrial uses. As noted in Section 4.9.1, *Setting*, 16 CDO/CAO sites, 12 EnviroStor Hazardous Waste and Substance sites, four LUST sites, 17 Land Disposal sites, nine Cleanup Program sites, and one Military Cleanup site are listed hazardous materials sites, pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, located in Trinity County.

New development occurring on documented hazardous materials sites as listed in Table 4.9-1, Table 4.9-2, and Table 4.9-3 would be preceded by remediation and cleanup under the supervision of the Trinity County Environmental Health Division before construction activities could begin. Development facilitated by the project would adhere to state and federal laws during the development construction and operations. As discussed in Section 4.9.2, *Regulatory Setting*, USEPA enforces CERCLA requirements related to clean up of releases and threatened releases of hazardous substances. Similarly, DTSC enforces RCRA requirements for hazardous materials site cleanup.

In addition, the proposed General Plan contains policies related to contaminated sites. As discussed under Impact HAZ-1, Goal SAF 4 and corresponding policies would minimize risks from of hazardous

materials sites through ensuring regular updates to the HMP, EOP, and TCHMAP, and Trinity County Hazardous Materials Commodity Flow Study, in addition to agency coordination related to these plans. Policy LU 7.4 (Abandoned Site Restoration) addresses land utilized for commercial cannabis cultivation must be restored to the sites conditions prior to cannabis cultivation including a site cleanup and restoration. Policy CIR 6.7 (Hazardous Materials Storage at Airports) would require airports with hazardous materials including fuel and other materials be managed in compliance with state, federal, and local regulations. These proposed General Plan policies minimize impacts from potential development on sites contaminated in hazardous materials and enforce site clean ups prior to development.

Implementation of the proposed General Plan policies and goals associated with hazardous material sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, along with compliance to local, state, and federal regulations would allow for development facilitated by the project to not result in **less than significant** impacts to the public or environment.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures would be required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 5:	For a project located within a Military Operation Area 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 result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?

Impact HAZ-5 Five public and private airports are located within Trinity County. Compliance with the ALUCP and implementation of proposed General Plan goals and policies would ensure development facilitated by the project would be less than significant.

There are five public use and county-owned airports within Trinity County: Weaverville/Lonnie Pool Fields Airport, Trinity Center/James E Swett Field Airport, Hayfork Airport, Ruth Airport, and Hyampom Airport. In addition to the daily aircraft operations that originate and terminate at these airports daily, current, and future property owners must be notified of the presence of overflights in the area near airports especially residential land uses located within the area of influence (County of Trinity 2009). During the life of the project, increased intensity of development in proximity to airports in the county could occur. The proposed project limits development within close proximity to airports to reduce exposure to unacceptable noise in Trinity County as supported by Goal SAF 5 and Policy SAF 6.2 of the proposed General Plan. Therefore, the project could result in a greater safety hazard for people residing or working in the county.

There are three Military Operation Area flight paths through Trinity County, with floor elevations between 200 and 300 feet. During the life of the project, increased intensity or density of development within these flight paths could occur, particularly within the communities of Lewiston and Douglas City. The proposed project restricts development within these areas to ensure compatibility and that no safety hazards are created, as supported by proposed Goal SAF 6, Policy SAF 6.1 (Military Training Routes), and Program SAF-8 (Airport Land Use Combability Plan).

As mentioned above in Section 4.9.2(c), *Regional and Local Regulations*, the 2009 Trinity County ALUCP is the primary policy document for all existing airports in the region. Development facilitated by the project would be required to comply with the ALUCP. The Airport Land Use Commission ensures compatibility with airport operations and would provide compatibility recommendations on individual projects including development facilitated by the proposed project. The Airport Land Use Commission is responsible for the implementation of airport noise and safety standards within the Planning Area. The Trinity County ALUCP establishes the airport area of influence for all airports in the county in accordance with state and federal

regulations. The 2009 Trinity County ALUCP includes a noise compatibility criteria matrix, which limits development of land uses that are particularly sensitive to noise, such as residences, schools and hospitals, in the vicinity of airports. This ensures that people residing or working in the vicinity of airports are protected from excessive noise.

Proposed Policy NOI 1.2 (Enhanced Soundproofing in New Developments) would require noise reduction strategies in areas of new development along corridors within a 60 dBA CNEL noise contour or higher in order to reduce noise to acceptable levels. Proposed policies under Goal SAF 5 and Goal SAF 6, including Policy SAF 5.1 (Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan), Policy SAF 5.2 (Zoning Around Airports), and Policy SAF 5.4 (Airport Design) would minimize the risk of hazards from aviation and transportation related impacts through land use compliance, limiting appropriate zoning surrounding airports, and integrating Federal Aviation Administration airport design standards. Proposed policies under Goal CIR 6 would maintain airport land uses, safety hazards through land use controls and policies for property near airports, and to limit urban encroachment around airports in order to preserve the safety of flight operations and the continued viability of airport facilities.

Compliance with the 2009 ALUCP and proposed General Plan policies would reduce airport hazards and excessive noise within the county and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measure needed.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 6:	Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Impact HAZ-6 Proposed General Plan policies address maintenance of a county-wide Hazard Mitigation Plan and emergency access implementation. Therefore, development facilitated by the project would not result in interference with these types of adopted plans. Impacts would be less than significant.

Development facilitated by the project would accommodate future population growth in the Planning Area. Additional population growth could lead to increased congestion, lack of road accessibility and disaster resources during emergency evacuations and hazardous events. However, the proposed General Plan includes the following goals and policies: Policy CIR 3.1 (Develop Safe Roadways), Policy CIR 3.2 (Correct Roadway Safety Hazards), Policy 3.3 (All Weather Roads), Policy CIR 3.4 (Roadway Maintenance and Safety Funding), Policy CIR 3.5 (Inter-jurisdictional Coordination), Policy CIR 8.1 (Planning), Policy PFSI 8.1 (Emergency Service Response Location), and Policy PFSI 8.2 (Emergency Response). These goals and policies would ensure effective and coordinated response to disasters, including events warranting evacuation by improving neighborhood connectivity, and maintaining emergency-capable street networks. These policies require adequate emergency access and facility siting, provide regional coordination with law enforcement and fire agencies, and require development review to address emergency vehicle access and fire and life safety concerns.

Development within the Planning Area is subject to the HMP, which incorporates hazard mitigation principles and programs and recommends specific actions that are designed to protect people and community assets from man-made hazards and hazardous materials (County of Trinity 2024). Additionally, the proposed Hazards and Safety Element would be consistent with the HMP, ensuring that the same emergency preparedness and hazard mitigation framework applies throughout the Planning Area.

Although the 2024 HMP is the primary adopted evacuation and emergency response plan, the Planning Area is also guided by local emergency response and evacuation plans. The proposed Hazards and Safety Element includes goals and policies that ensure consistency with the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Hazardous Materials Area Plan, Emergency Evacuation Plan, and EOP. These plans address wildfire and hazard-related emergencies, evacuation needs, and risk-reduction measures in coordination with regional emergency response agencies.

Future development in Trinity County would be required to adhere to the following proposed General Plan: Policy SAF 1.2 (Collaborative Wildfire Protection Planning), Policy SAF 1.5 (Support Fire Protection Agencies), Policy SAF 2.9 (Dam Failure Emergency Action Plans), Policy SAF 2.10 (Site-Specific Dam Failure Hazard Planning), Policy SAF 4.1 (Review of HMP and Emergency Operations Plans), Policy SAF 4.2 (Hazardous Materials Area Plan), Policy SAF 8.1 (Emergency Operations Plan), Policy SAF 8.2 (County-Wide Hazard Mitigation Plan), Policy SAF 8.6 (Emergency Response and Evacuation Routes), and Policy SAF 8.7 (Emergency Evacuation Locations). These policies directly support emergency response and evacuation planning by requiring periodic updates to emergency plans for development in high-risk hazard areas, ensuring ongoing coordination and implementation of such plans, and mandating adequate emergency vehicle access and roadway clearances for all new development. Collectively, these policies ensure that future development would not conflict with existing evacuation routes or emergency response procedures and would improve overall preparedness and access during emergency events.

Implementation of the proposed General Plan goals and policies associated with emergency planning and response including applicable state and federal regulations, would ensure no conflict with the HMP, CWPP, and existing emergency response and evacuation plans. This impact would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 7:	Would the project expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?

Impact HAZ-7 Development facilitated by the project could expose people or structures to wildland fire hazards. Adherence to policies and goals in the proposed General Plan would ensure that this impact would be less than significant.

Trinity County is in a high and very high fire hazard severity zone area with unincorporated communities located in wildland-urban interface areas and development distributed throughout the county (County of Trinity 2025). Future developments occurring in documented high wildfire and wildland-urban interface areas could increase exposure of residents, structures, and wildlife to wildland fires. Additionally, construction activities could increase wildfire risk if construction equipment is improperly handled. Additional information regarding wildfires is further addressed in Section 4.19, *Wildfire*.

Trinity County's CUPA oversees regulatory programs and compliance which includes the handling of hazardous materials used during development construction and operations activities. Future development in the county would be required to comply with fire code requirements to reduce wildfire risk, including the California Uniform Fire Code which reduces the potential for wildfire hazards.

The proposed General Plan supports several regional plans such as the CWPP, HMP, and Emergency Response Plan to minimize the potential for wildfire hazardous risks in the region. Proposed policies under Goal SAF 1 would enforce the integration of fire preventive programs to improve air quality, redevelop post-fire events, and create collaborative fire-wise communities. These policies include Policy

SAF 1.1 (Community Wildfire Protection Plan), Policy SAF 1.2 (Collaborative Wildfire Protection Planning), Policy SAF 1.3 (Wildfire Hazard Public Outreach and Education), Policy SAF 1.4 (Firewise Communities), Policy SAF 1.5 (Support Fire Protection Agencies), Policy SAF 1.6 (Roadside Fuel Management), Policy SAF 1.7 (Wildland Urban Interfaces), Policy SAF 1.8 (Fuel Break Maintenance), Policy SAF 1.9 (Forest Health Coordination), Policy SAF 1.10 (Wildfire Hazard Consideration and Project Design), Policy SAF 1.11 (Vegetation Management), Policy SAF 1.12 (Post-Fire Natural Resource Recovery), Policy SAF 1.13 (Post-Fire Redevelopment), Policy SAF 1.14 (Reduce Wildfire Air Quality Impacts), and Policy SAF 1.15 (Fire Suppression to Improve Air Quality). Proposed policies under Goal PFSI 9 would require the enforcement of fire protection standards, the integration of a countywide Fire Marshall, and access to fire prevention, suppression, and rescue facilities including access to water, collaboration with community partners, and fuel reduction coordination. Additional policies promoting interagency coordination and partnership include Policy PFSI 4.3 (Reduce Transmission Facility Fire Hazard Risk), Policy PFSI 8.6 (Individual Readiness Educational Programs), Public CIR 1.23 (Road Closure), Policy CIR 6.3 (Preventing the Encroachment of Obstructions), and Policy CIR 6.8 (Airport Availability for Fire Suppression). The Trinity County Code of Ordinances Chapter 8.30 Fire Safe Ordinance would require fire safe standards and practices including fire debris removal and hazardous tree removal.

Implementation of the proposed General Plan policies and goals associated with wildland fire hazards, along with compliance with applicable regulations would reduce wildland fire risk. As a result, development facilitated by the project would result in **less than significant** impacts.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

4.9.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope for cumulative hazards and hazardous materials analysis is Trinity County. This geographic scope is appropriate because hazards and hazardous materials related impacts are typically site-specific. The cumulative development scenario is described in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting*.

Cumulative development generally consists of commercial and residential projects. Cumulative development would generally increase the transportation, use, disposal of hazardous materials and wildland fire risk in the region. Additionally, increased potential exposure to hazards and hazardous materials would occur in the county. Cumulative development and construction would be required to adhere to all applicable state, federal, and local regulations related to hazardous materials use, transportation, and disposal; as well as applicable emergency and evacuation plans, ALUCP, and proposed General Plan policies. With proper regulatory compliance, cumulative development would not violate hazards or hazardous materials requirements, increase exposure to wildland fires, risk the release hazardous materials into the environment, or interfere with an established emergency or evacuation plan or ALUCP. Cumulative development would be required to adhere to the design standards described in the CBC, the Trinity County Code of Ordinances, and applicable General Plan policies, which regulate the design and construction buildings and structures and effectively reduce the effects of noise levels at the project level. Compliance with code requirements and applicable policies would ensure cumulative impacts related to hazardous materials use and transport, reasonably foreseeable upset of hazardous materials, emission of hazardous materials near schools, safety or noise hazards related to development near a public airport, conflicts with adopted emergency response and emergency evacuation plans, and exposure to wildland fires are less than significant.

Cumulative development could disturb areas that may contain hazards and hazardous materials. Potential impacts associated with individual development projects would be addressed on a case-by-case basis and would be subject to local and state regulations regarding the protection and safety of

county residents. This includes state and local requirements for site cleanup measures prior to development or redevelopment of contaminated sites. Therefore, cumulative hazards and hazardous materials impacts related to development on listed hazardous materials sites would be less than significant.

4.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

This section evaluates the potential environmental effects related to hydrology and water quality associated with implementation of the proposed Trinity County General Plan Update. It discusses the regional and local watershed characteristics, including water quality, drainage and infiltration patterns, and flood hazards. The analysis includes a review of surface water, groundwater, water supply, water quality, flooding, and stormwater. Water supply is also discussed in Section 4.18, *Utilities and Service Systems,* as is wastewater conveyance. Issues regarding wetlands and waters of the U.S. are discussed in Section 4.4, *Biological Resources*.

4.10.1 Setting

Trinity County covers approximately 3,200 square miles in northwestern California, among the Klamath Mountains. Water resources in Trinity County include rivers and streams, artificial or constructed waterways, and groundwater.

a. Surface Water

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) divides surface watersheds in California into 10 hydrologic regions, which are further divided into Hydrologic Units, and even smaller Hydrologic Areas within each Hydrologic Unit. Trinity County Is part of the North Coast Hydrologic Region (DWR 2014).

Trinity County Watersheds

Trinity County has five watersheds including the Trinity River Watershed, which includes the Trinity River. The five watersheds are shown in Figure 4.10-1. The Trinity River Watershed is the largest in the county and includes the communities of Weaverville and Lewiston as well as the major reservoirs Trinity Lake and Lewiston Lake. South Fork Trinity Watershed is the second largest in the county, which includes the community of Hayfork. The United States National Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management manage approximately 80 percent of the land in the Trinity Watershed Management Area (WMA), or geographic area where land and water resources are managed to protect water quality and quantity within the Trinity River Basin. The Trinity WMA spans approximately 2,900 square miles (State Water Resources Control Board [SWRCB] 2025).

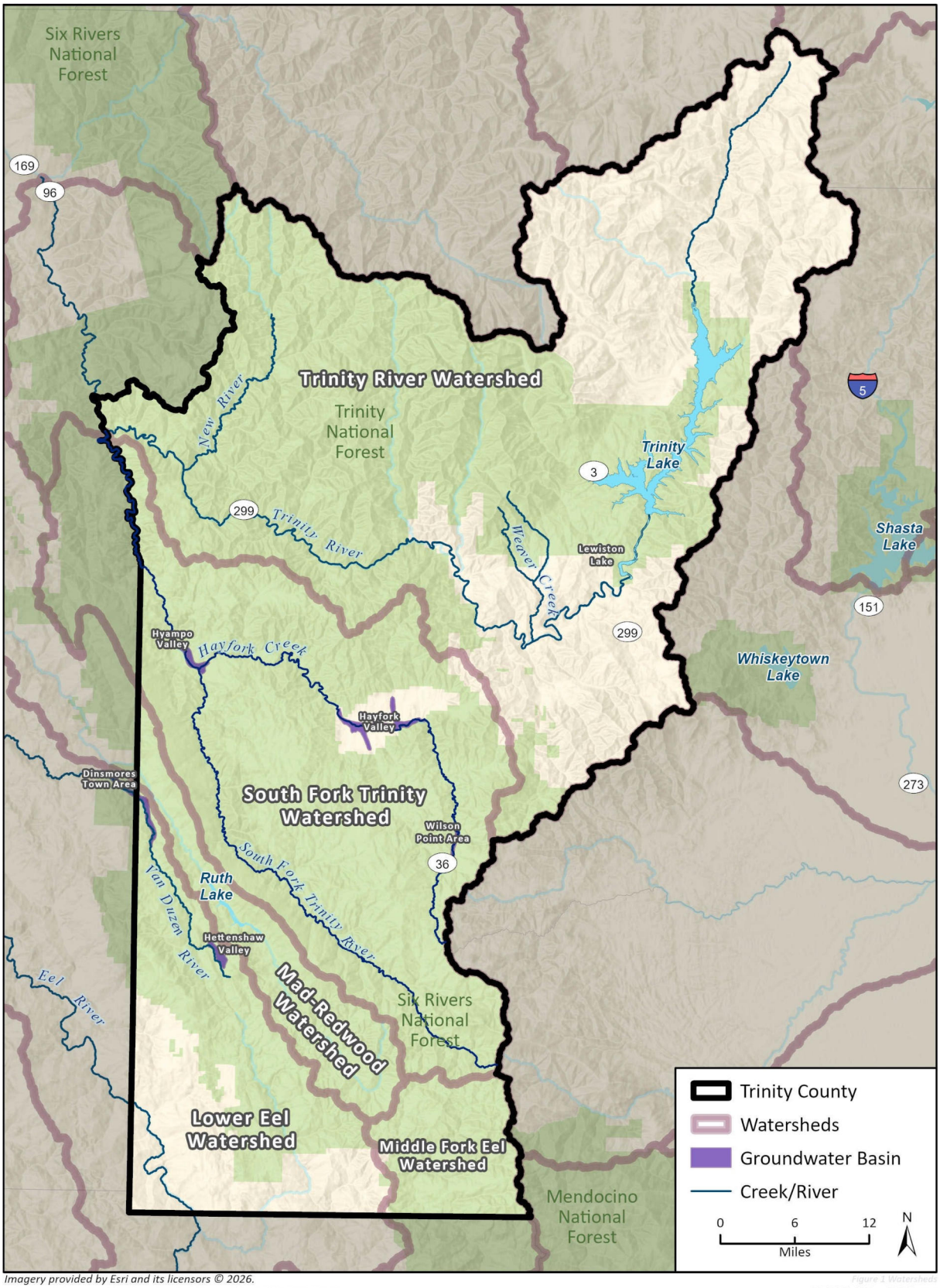
Surface Water Features

The county includes three lakes and five rivers of note, as shown in Figure 4.10-1:

1. The largest lake in the county, **Trinity Lake**, is located north of Lewiston Lake along the Trinity River and to the northeast of the community of Weaverville. Trinity Lake was established following the completion of Trinity Dam in 1961 with a shoreline of 145 miles and a lake length of 19 miles. Water stored and released at Trinity Dam reservoir is used for power-generation and diverted outside of the county for use throughout the Central Valley of California.
2. **Lewiston Lake** is located south of Trinity Lake along the Trinity River and just north of the community of Lewiston. The lake is about 5 miles in length and 70 feet deep at Lewiston Dam. Fish populations found in the lake include rainbow trout, brown trout, and brook trout (United States Forest Service [USFS] 2025b). Lewiston Lake is also part of the Trinity River Division, a component of the Central Valley Project, a federal water network of dams, reservoirs, canals, hydroelectric powerplants and other facilities that moves water from Northern California south to irrigate farms and supply cities in the Central Valley of California.
3. **Ruth Lake** is in the southern portion of the county near the town of Ruth and spans approximately seven miles in length. The lake was created by the construction of R.W. Matthews Dam in 1962. The lake contains fish species of bass, crappie, and trout. Ruth Lake serves the Humboldt Bay Water Community Services District with water, which is in neighboring Humboldt County (USFS 2025a).

4. The **Trinity River** is recognized as one of the National Wild and Scenic River Systems, which flows from the Trinity Alps in northwestern California to the Klamath River as its largest tributary. Its basins drain an area roughly 2,900 square miles of the mountainous watershed with the river origins in the Klamath and Coast Range Mountains. Major tributaries include the South Fork Trinity River, which drains the largest sub-basin and flows through rugged forested canyons; Hayfork Creek, which drains through the agricultural Hayfork Valley; the New River, originating in the Trinity Alps Wilderness; and the North Fork and other smaller tributaries that traverse steep, forested terrain. The river flows approximately 172 miles to the Klamath River from its headwaters. The Trinity River meets the Klamath River about 43 miles upstream from the Pacific Ocean. The river supports fish species including salmon and steelhead trout (SWRCB 2025.).
5. **East Weaver Creek** is located northeast of the community of Weaverville and flows southwest from the Trinity Alps into the mainstem Trinity River. The creek drains a forested, granitic watershed and provides cold water habitat for salmonids, including steelhead and coho salmon. East Weaver Creek is primarily fed by snowmelt and perennial springs, resulting in relatively consistent seasonal flows. As it enters the Weaverville Basin, the creek transitions through rural residential areas before joining the Trinity River downstream of the community (California Department of Fish and Wildlife 1999).
6. **West Weaver Creek** is located west of Weaverville and flows eastward from high elevation slopes. The creek drains a rugged watershed historically affected by hydraulic mining, which altered channel conditions and increased sediment loads. In response, a restoration effort implemented channel and floodplain rehabilitation beginning in 2017. Despite these legacy disturbances, West Weaver Creek supports cold water fish habitat, including steelhead and coho salmon (USFS 2017).
7. The **Van Duzen River** originates in western Trinity County and flows toward Humboldt County. Within Trinity County, the river drains approximately 50 to 60 square miles of forested, mountainous terrain and flows roughly 15 miles before leaving the county. The river supports fish species including rainbow trout and smallmouth bass (USFS 2025c).
8. The **New River** originates in the Trinity Alps Wilderness and flows through steep, forested valleys before joining the Trinity River. Its watershed encompasses roughly 225 square miles of mountainous terrain. The river flows approximately 21 miles from its headwaters to its confluence. Fish species in the river include rainbow trout and bass.
9. The **Eel River** drains a watershed of approximately 3,684 square miles and flows roughly 200 miles from its Coast Range headwaters to the Pacific Ocean. Along its course, the river's major tributaries (North Fork, Middle Fork, South Fork, Van Duzen River) contribute to a complex, multi-fork drainage network. The Eel River supports important native fish and aquatic habitat, including Chinook and coho salmon, steelhead trout, resident rainbow trout, and Pacific lamprey (Eel River Forum 2016).

Figure 4.10-1 Watersheds, Surface Waters, and Groundwater Basins in Trinity County



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Additional data provided by CDFW 2024, CA DWR 2022, NHD 2024.

Figure 1 Watersheds
20-10134 GPU and EIR Figures

b. Groundwater

Trinity County overlies five groundwater basins: the Wilson Point Area, Hettenshaw Valley, Dinsmores Town Area, Hyampom Valley, and Hayfork Valley Groundwater Basins. DWR has designated these basins as very low priority under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), meaning they are not required to prepare groundwater sustainability plans (DWR 2020).

1. The **Hayfork Valley Groundwater Basin** is an irregularly shaped alluvial basin oriented east-west along Hayfork Creek. It also encompasses the alluvial deposits of Salt Creek and Big Creek. The basin consists primarily of Quaternary alluvium overlying fractured bedrock, which limits storage and connectivity. The community of Hayfork is situated near the center of the basin. The basin covers approximately 3,300 acres and has an estimated groundwater storage capacity of 1,500 acre-feet, with recharge occurring mainly through stream infiltration and seasonal precipitation. (DWR 2004d).
2. The **Hyampom Valley Groundwater Basin** lies along the South Fork of the Trinity River, just north of the community of Hyampom. The basin encompasses approximately 1,350 acres of alluvial deposits. Groundwater availability within the basin is estimated at 84 acre-feet for agricultural purposes and 44 acre-feet for municipal and industrial uses, reflecting its limited storage capacity and localized demand (DWR 2004d).
3. The **Dinsmores Town Area Groundwater Basin** occupies a northwest-southeast trending alluvial valley along a short segment of the Van Duzen River, located near and downstream of the community of Dinsmore and at the shared Humboldt/Trinity County line. The basin covers roughly 2,300 acres and is estimated to provide about 46 acre-feet of groundwater for agricultural use and 78 acre-feet for municipal and industrial purposes, reflecting its limited storage capacity and localized demand. (DWR 2004a).
4. The **Hettenshaw Valley Groundwater Basin** is a northwest-southeast trending alluvial basin situated along a tributary of the Van Duzen River, approximately nine miles southeast of the Dinsmores Town Area Groundwater Basin. The basin covers approximately 850 acres and has an estimated groundwater storage capacity of about 1 acre-foot, indicating very limited availability for local use (DWR 2004c).
5. The **Wilson Point Area Groundwater Basin** is a north-south trending alluvial basin located along a short segment of Hayfork Creek near Wilson Point. The basin has an estimated storage capacity of approximately 700 acre-feet. Groundwater extraction is limited, with about 30 acre-feet allocated for agricultural use and roughly 4 acre-feet for municipal and industrial purposes, indicating modest utilization relative to its overall capacity. (DWR 2004e).

Groundwater in Trinity County is generally available in valley fill deposits and fractured-rock aquifers. Most groundwater is suitable for domestic use, but some naturally occurring constituents can exceed recommended levels. About 10 percent of the aquifer system has elevated levels of inorganic chemicals such as arsenic and boron, and roughly 40 percent has high iron or manganese, which can affect water taste or color. Total dissolved solids are moderately elevated in about seven percent of the aquifer system. Contaminants from human activities, such as pesticides or solvents, are uncommon, and nutrients like nitrate are rarely elevated. Overall, groundwater in Trinity County is largely of good quality, but naturally occurring minerals may require treatment for safe or aesthetically acceptable use. Site-specific testing is recommended for new wells or water-supply projects (United States Geological Survey 2015).

c. Water Quality

As water travels through Trinity County watersheds by way of rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells, the water system dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or human activities. There are five potential contaminants that may be present in source water (Weaverville Community Services District 2020):

- **Microbial contaminants**: These include viruses and bacteria that may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.
- **Inorganic contaminants**: These include salts and metals that can be naturally occurring or result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming.
- **Pesticides and herbicides**: These may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses.
- **Organic chemical contaminants**: This may include synthetic and volatile organic chemicals that are byproducts of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, agricultural application, and septic systems.
- **Radioactive contaminants**: These can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

There are three potential sources of degradation of water resources including resource management, urban/rural development, and water diversion. Resource management risks to water quality come from the use of herbicides in timber harvesting, which is a significant economic activity in the watershed. Timber harvesting can leave exposed hillsides susceptible to erosion, which can impact water quality adversely with increased sediment runoff. Additional factors that can lead to erosion include road building and log skidding near or across streams, constructing fill slopes for roads, landings, and pads (which if not adequately compacted can result in rills and gullies), cutting hill slopes for roads, landings, and pads (which can slump or ravel), removing vegetation and broadcast burning (which can increase raindrop erosion and reduce sediment trapping), and removing and stock-piling soil. Urban and rural development can lead to increased runoff rates as a result of increased impervious surfaces being developed. East Weaver Creek has had cases of impacts from inadequate septic systems, which is a common issue across communities in Trinity County. Additional development may lead to the removal of riparian vegetation, which acts as a natural sediment buffer. Increased water diversions from the East and West Weaver Creeks can reduce water quality by leading to a reduction in flows in the summer leading to cascading impacts from increased water temperatures such as a reduction in the ability for creeks to absorb and dissipate sediment and pollutants (County of Trinity 1990).

The Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 303(d) requires states to keep registers of impaired waters that do not meet water quality standards. California's current 2024 303(d) list includes several water bodies in Trinity County, as shown in Table 4.10-1.

Table 4.10-1 Impaired Water Bodies In Trinity County

Water Body Name	Pollutant
Ruth Lake	Mercury
Middle Trinity River HA	Sedimentation/Siltation
Upper Trinity HA, Trinity River, East Fork Trinity River	Mercury, Sedimentation/Siltation
Lower Trinity River HA	Aluminum
Eel River HU, North Fork HA, Lower North Fork Eel River Watershed	Aluminum, Dissolved Oxygen, pH
Eel River HU, Van Duzen River HA	Aluminum
South Fork Trinity HA	Boron, Sedimentation/Siltation

HA = Hydrologic Area; HU = Hydrologic Unit
Source: State Water Resources Control Board 2024

d. Flood Hazards

Flood hazards can occur when the amount of rainfall exceeds the infiltration capacity of the surrounding landscape or the conveyance capacity of the stormwater drainage system. Flood risk is defined as an annual percent chance of flooding, or the probability that flooding would occur in any given year. The probability of a 100-year flood is one percent for any particular year. Two 100-year floods could occur in the same year or even in the same month, but the likelihood that two 100-year flood events would occur consecutively is very small.

Tsunamis are generally a coastal phenomenon and are not a risk in Trinity County, as no portion of the county borders the coast of California. A seiche is a standing wave in a body of water. Seiches are a risk for lakes in seismically active areas, and while there are no documented historical seiche events within Trinity County, seiche could occur at Trinity Lake, Lewiston Lake, or Ruth Lake.

Riverine Flooding

The Trinity County Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies riverine flooding as the most common type of flood event in Trinity County. This type of flooding occurs when streams or rivers exceed their natural capacity to accommodate water flow due to prolonged rainfall or rainfall combined with over saturated soils, causing water to overflow into adjacent land known as a floodplain. The risk of riverine flooding in Trinity County has been a long-known issue with Trinity County adopting its first floodplain ordinance in 1988. The floodplain ordinance was further revised in 1993 and in 2000.

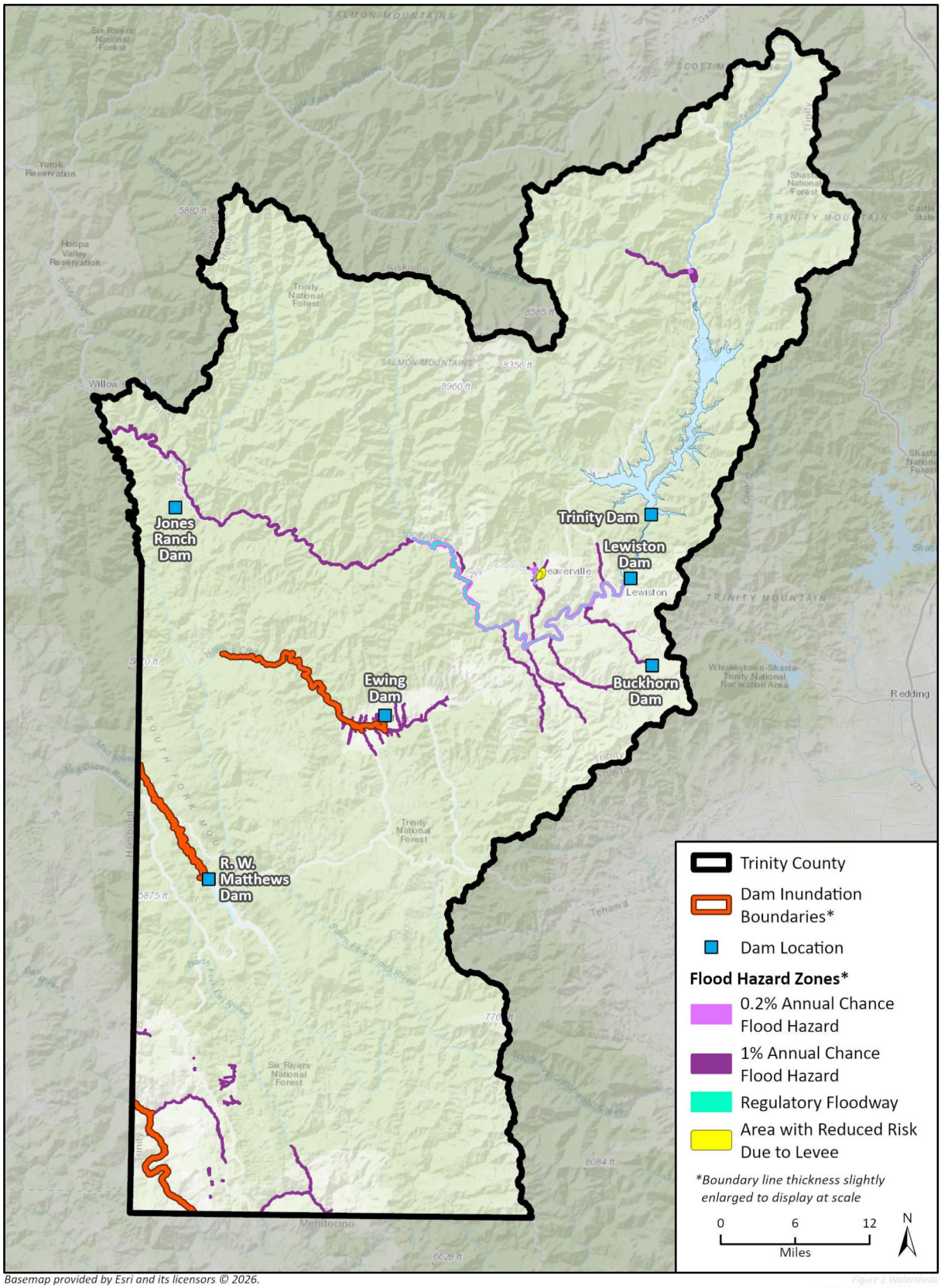
Trinity County is vulnerable to floods due to its geography and climate. During the wet season, typically from November to April, heavy rainfall and melting snow from the nearby Trinity Mountains lead to significant increases in river flow. The Trinity River in particular poses considerable flood risk as it travels through Trinity County. Over the years, several flood events have impacted infrastructure and roads (County of Trinity 2024). Prior to the construction of the Trinity and Lewiston Dams, previous flood occurrences in Trinity County were more frequent and on a larger scale. Since the dams were constructed, historical flood records show there have been at least 21 damaging floods in Trinity County in the last 52 years, indicating a 38 percent chance of flood in any given year (County of Trinity 2024).

FEMA performs Flood Insurance Studies to assess a community's risk to flood hazards through analyzing flood hazard areas along rivers, streams, coasts, and lakes within the community. These reports include, but are not limited to, historic information, topographic data, hydraulic data, and development. The results from these studies are used to create Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). Many of Trinity County's rivers are subject to flooding. Available FIRM data indicates many properties are within the 100-Year or 500-Year floodplains along waterways. Based on FEMA FIRM maps, riverine flooding is possible in parts of Weaverville, Lewiston, Hayfork, Douglas City, Junction City, Burnt Ranch, and smaller riverside communities. However, there are portions of the county, particularly in southern Trinity, which do not have FIRM mapping, such as Hyampom, Mad River, and portions of the Van Duzen River and South Fork Trinity River (County of Trinity 2024). Flood hazard zones are shown in Figure 4.10-2.

Dam Failure

Dams have provided Trinity County with clean, renewable energy for decades; however, they can create a deadly disaster if the dam fails. Dam failure can be caused by flood conditions leading to overtopping, mechanical failure, earthquake, or any combination of these factors. Internal erosion, improper design and maintenance, negligent operation, or failure of upstream dams can also cause dam failure. There are five managed dams in Trinity County: Lewiston, Trinity, Buckhorn, Ewing, and Mathews, as shown in Figure 4.10-2. There are also two managed dams to the south of Trinity County on the Eel River, which flows through Trinity County: Scott Dam and Cape Horn Dam. In Trinity County, 10 to 25 percent of the planning area would be affected in the event of a dam failure. Although these areas make up less than 25 percent of the total land area of the county, they contain major population areas and state highways, which are areas of higher concern in regard to evacuation and safety measures. These areas would be especially vulnerable if the Trinity, Lewiston, or Buckhorn Dam were to fail.

Figure 4.10-2 Flood Zone Hazards and Dam Innundation Areas



Basemap provided by Esri and its licensors © 2026.
Additional data provided by CDFW 2025, DSOD 2025, FEMA 2025.

Figure 1 Watersheds
20-10134 GPU and EIR Figures

4.10.2 Regulatory Setting

a. Federal Regulations

Clean Water Act

The Federal Water Pollution Prevention and Control Act of 1948 was the first major law to address water pollution in the United States. In 1972, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act was amended and became known as the CWA. The CWA established the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States. The CWA gave the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) the authority to implement federal pollution control programs, such as setting water quality standards for contaminants in surface water, establishing wastewater and effluent discharge limits for various industry contaminants in surface water, establishing wastewater and effluent discharge limits for various industry categories, and imposing requirements for controlling nonpoint-source pollution. At the federal level, the CWA is administered by the USEPA and United States Army Corps of Engineers.

The CWA places the primary responsibility for the control of water pollution and for the planning of development and use of water resources with the states, although it does establish certain guidelines for the states to follow in developing their programs. At the state and regional levels in California, the CWA is enforced by the SWRCB and the nine RWQCBs.

Section 401: Water Quality Certification

Section 401 of the CWA regulates discharges of fill and dredged material to waters of the United States. Under Section 401, the SWRCB and RWQCBs have regulatory authority over actions in waters of the United States through the issuance of water quality certifications, which are issued in conjunction with any federal permit (e.g., permits issued by the United States Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the CWA, described below). Section 401 provides the SWRCB and the RWQCBs with the regulatory authority to waive, certify, or deny any proposed activity that could result in a discharge to surface Waters of the State. To waive or certify an activity, these agencies must find the proposed discharge would comply with state water quality standards, including those protecting beneficial uses and water quality. If these agencies deny the proposed activity, the federal permit cannot be issued.

Section 402: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

Section 402 of the CWA establishes the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) regulations for stormwater and other pollutant discharges. Section 402 prohibits discharge of pollutants to waters of the United States unless they are regulated by an NPDES permit. Stormwater discharges are regulated under a variety of NPDES permits, including municipal, agricultural, industrial, construction, and low-threat discharge permits.

In 1987, Congress amended the CWA to require the implementation of a two-phased program to address stormwater discharges. Phase I of the NPDES program, promulgated by the USEPA in November 1990, requires NPDES permits for stormwater discharges from municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) serving populations of 100,000 or greater, construction sites disturbing greater than five acres of land, and 10 categories of industrial activities.

The USEPA recognized that smaller construction projects (disturbing less than five acres) and small MS4s (serving populations smaller than 100,000) were also contributing substantially to pollutant discharges nationwide. Therefore, in order to further improve stormwater quality, the USEPA promulgated the NPDES Phase II program in January 2000, which requires NPDES permits for stormwater discharges from regulated small MS4s and for construction sites disturbing between one and five acres of land.

In California, the NPDES program is administered by SWRCB through the nine RWQCBs. Further discussion of the NPDES program and permits in California are provided in discussion of state and local regulations, below.

Section 404: Discharge of Dredge or Fill

Section 404 of the CWA requires a permit be issued by the United States Army Corps of Engineers before dredged or fill material may be discharged into waters of the United States, unless the activity is exempt from Section 404 regulations (e.g. farming activities, maintenance activities, construction of temporary sedimentation basins, construction and maintenance of forest roads or temporary mining roads). Waters of the United States generally include tidal waters, lakes, ponds, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), and wetlands (with the exception of isolated wetlands).

Section 303(d): Impaired Waters and Total Maximum Daily Load

Section 303(d) of the CWA requires states to identify water bodies that do not meet water quality objectives and are not supporting beneficial uses. Each state must submit an updated biennial list, called the 303(d) list, to USEPA. In addition to identifying the water bodies that are not supporting beneficial uses, the list also identifies the pollutant or stressor causing the impairment. Once a water body has been deemed impaired, a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) must be developed for each pollutant causing an impairment. A TMDL is an estimate of the total load of pollutants from point, nonpoint, and natural sources that a water body may receive without exceeding applicable water quality standards (often with a "factor of safety" included, which limits the total load of pollutants to a level well below that which could cause the standard to be exceeded). Once established, the TMDL is allocated among current and future dischargers into the water body.

National Flood Insurance Program

The National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 made flood insurance available for the first time. The Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 made the purchase of flood insurance mandatory for the protection of property located in Special Flood Hazard Areas. These laws are relevant because they led to mapping of regulatory floodplains and to local management of floodplain areas according to guidelines that include prohibiting or restricting development in flood hazard zones.

b. State Regulations

California Porter Cologne Water Quality Control Act

California's primary statute governing water quality and water pollution is the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act of 1970 (Porter-Cologne Act). The Porter-Cologne Act grants the SWRCB and nine RWQCBs broad powers to protect water quality and is the primary vehicle for the implementation of the CWA in California. The Porter-Cologne Act grants the SWRCB and RWQCBs the authority and responsibility to adopt plans and policies, regulate discharges to surface water and groundwater, regulate waste disposal sites, and require cleanup of discharges of hazardous materials and other pollutants. The Porter-Cologne Act also establishes reporting requirements for unintended discharges of any hazardous substance, sewage, oil, or petroleum product. Each RWQCB must adopt and implement a Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) for its region in conformance with the policies set forth in the Porter-Cologne Act. The RWQCB responsible for Trinity County is the North Coast RWQCB.

California Toxics Rule

In May 2000, the USEPA promulgated the California Toxics Rule, which established numeric water quality criteria for toxic pollutants for waters in California. The California Toxics Rule provides water quality criteria for certain potentially toxic compounds for inland surface waters, enclosed bays, estuaries, and waters designated for human health or aquatic life uses. The California Toxics Rule is often used by the RWQCBs when establishing water quality objectives and TMDLs. Although the California Toxics Rule criteria do not apply directly to discharges of stormwater runoff, they are utilized as benchmarks for toxics in urban runoff and to evaluate the potential ecological impacts of stormwater runoff to receiving waters.

Antidegradation Policy

The State Antidegradation Policy (Resolution No. 68-16) was adopted by SWRCB in 1968 to protect surface water and groundwater from degradation. The Antidegradation Policy applies to the disposal of waste to high-quality surface water and groundwater. The Antidegradation Policy requires the water quality of these water bodies be maintained unless SWRCB finds the change will be consistent with maximum benefit to the people of the state, will not unreasonably affect present and anticipated beneficial uses of the waters, and will not result in water quality less than that prescribed in policies regulating water quality. The Antidegradation Policy also requires the best practicable treatment or control of discharges to high-quality waters to assure pollution or nuisance will not occur and the highest possible water quality will be maintained.

Industrial Stormwater Permit

The General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Industrial Activities (Industrial General Permit; Order No. 2015-0122-DWQ; NPDES No. CAS00001, as amended in 2015 and 2018) regulates operation of industrial facilities in California based on the Standard Industrial Classification Codes specified in the permit. These facilities include, but are not limited to, manufacturing plants, mining facilities, oil and gas facilities, hazardous waste facilities, landfills, wastewater treatment facilities, recycling facilities, and vehicle maintenance shops that have the potential to discharge stormwater runoff into water bodies. To comply with the Industrial General Permit, the operators of these regulated industrial facilities must implement an operational Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that outlines the measures and stormwater BMPs the operator of an industrial facility must implement to reduce stormwater pollution. Operators of facilities regulated by the Industrial General Permit are also required to conduct stormwater monitoring of pollutants including, but not limited to, sediment, metals, oils, and total suspended solids. In addition, the Industrial General Permit requires industrial discharge to comply with TMDL implementation requirements for impaired water bodies.

Construction Stormwater General Permit

The General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities, Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002 (Construction Stormwater General Permit), adopted by SWRCB, regulates construction activities that include clearing, grading, and excavation resulting in soil disturbance of at least one acre of total land area. The Construction Stormwater General Permit authorizes the discharge of stormwater to surface waters from construction activities and requires all developers of land where construction activities will occur over more than one acre to do the following:

1. Complete a Risk Assessment to determine pollution prevention requirements pursuant to the three risk levels established in the Construction Stormwater General Permit;
2. Eliminate or reduce non-stormwater discharges to storm sewer systems and other waters of the United States;
3. Develop and implement a SWPPP that specifies construction BMPs that will reduce pollution in stormwater discharges to the Best Available Technology/Economically Achievable/Best Conventional Pollutant Control Technology standards;
4. Perform inspections and maintenance of all BMPs; and
5. Conduct stormwater sampling, if required based on risk level.

To obtain coverage under the Construction Stormwater General Permit, a project applicant must electronically file all permit registration documents with SWRCB prior to the start of construction. Permit registration documents must include a Notice of Intent, Risk Assessment, site map, SWPPP, annual fee, and signed certification statement.

Typical BMPs contained in SWPPPs are designed to minimize erosion during construction, stabilize construction areas, control sediment, control discharges from groundwater dewatering, and control pollutants from construction materials. The SWPPP must also include a discussion of the program to inspect and maintain all BMPs. The Construction Stormwater General Permit also contains post-construction requirements for projects not covered under a Phase I or Phase II MS4 Permit. The Construction Stormwater General Permit requires implementation of operational BMPs and low impact development features to reduce runoff and pollutants in stormwater discharge.

The Construction Stormwater General Permit also includes groundwater dewatering requirements for projects not covered under a De Minimis or Low Threat Discharge Permit. The dewatering requirements mandate dischargers to implement BMPs to control the volume and velocity of dewatering discharges. The Construction Stormwater General Permit also requires testing and treatment, if necessary, of groundwater discharge to verify the discharge meets or exceeds the effluent limitations specified in the permit.

Cannabis General Order

The State Water Resources Control Board also maintains general water discharge requirements for waste discharges associated with cannabis cultivation activities (Order WQ 023-0102-DWQ). The order is intended to protect receiving waters from water quality impacts, including discharge of sediment, irrigation runoff, fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, petroleum, agricultural-related chemicals, cultivation-related waste, refuse, and human waste. The order applies to existing cannabis cultivation sites as well as new cannabis cultivation sites.

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

SGMA of 2014 is a comprehensive three-bill package that Governor Jerry Brown signed into California state law in September 2014. SGMA provides a framework for sustainable management of groundwater supplies by local authorities, with a limited role for state intervention if necessary to protect the resource. The plan is intended to achieve a reliable groundwater supply for California for years to come. SGMA requires governments and water agencies of high- and medium-priority basins to halt overdrafts of groundwater basins. SGMA requires the formation of local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies that are required to adopt groundwater sustainability plans to manage the sustainability of the groundwater basins.

California Well Standards

DWR Bulletins 74-81 and 74-90 (required pursuant to California Water Code Sections 13800 to 13806) set the minimum statewide standards for construction, alteration, maintenance, and destruction of wells within the state with the purpose of protecting groundwater quality. Local jurisdictions have the authority to adopt standards that meet or exceed the Bulletins 74-81 and 74-90 standards. DWR is currently in the process of revising the standards, which were last updated in 1991.

c. Local Regulations

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan

The North Coast RWQCB is the Regional Water Board that presides over Trinity County's watershed resources. The SWRCB works to protect water resources and provide safe drinking water to communities across the state. The North Coast RWQCB adopted a Basin Plan, which controls the discharge of waste and other controllable factors affecting the quality of waters of the state within the boundaries of the North Coast Region. According to the Basin Plan, surface waters in Trinity County are designated for beneficial uses including domestic and municipal supply, agricultural and industrial supply, recreation (contact and non-contact), commercial and sport fishing, cold-water aquatic life, fish migration and spawning, wildlife habitat, and wetland and floodplain functions (North Coast RWQCB 2025). The North

Coast RWQCB developed the Trinity River WMA to manage the water quality of this watershed, including monitoring, identifying impaired water bodies, and implementing pollutant-reduction programs such as sediment TMDLs. Through the Basin Plan and WMA framework, the North Coast RWQCB regulates discharges, protects designated beneficial uses, and coordinates restoration efforts with federal, state, tribal, and local partners, including the Trinity River Restoration Program (SWRCB 2025).

Trinity County Code of Ordinances

Water Wells

Chapter 15.20 requires a permit for constructing, repairing, modifying, or destroying any well. Under Section 15.20.060, a completion report must be submitted to the County, including a detailed well log, static water level, capacity, and drawdown rate. All well work must comply with standards in DWR Bulletin 74, Chapter II ("Water Well Standards"). Section 16.48.124 sets on-site water availability standards, including a 4-hour pump test and summer supply requirements.

Septic Systems

Section 15.16.170 mandates that new or replacement water and sewage systems be designed to prevent floodwater infiltration and discharge during flood events. On-site waste disposal systems must be located to avoid contamination during flooding. Section 16.48.122 outlines criteria for lot size, usable acreage, percolation rates, and other requirements for constructing on-site waste disposal systems.

Flood Hazard Zoning

The flood hazard zoning district permits agricultural uses that do not involve building structures or other improvements that could obstruct floodwater flow, except within designated floodways.

Trinity County Grading Ordinance

The Trinity County Grading Ordinance (Chapter 15.24) regulates excavation, filling, and land-disturbing activities to protect public safety, drainage, and environmental resources by preventing erosion, landslides, and damage to roads and waterways. A grading permit is generally required when a project disturbs more than 800 cubic yards of material or more than 20,000 square feet of land, or when grading substantially alters natural land contours, such as for building pads, roads, terraces, or CALfire conversion projects.

4.10.3 Impact Analysis

a. Significance Thresholds

The following thresholds of significance are based on Appendix G to the *CEQA Guidelines*. For the purposes of this Environmental Impact Report (EIR), implementation of the proposed project may have a significant adverse impact if it would:

1. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality;
2. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin;
3. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:
    i. result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site,
    ii. substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on or off site,

iii. create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff, or

iv. impede or redirect flood flows;

4. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation; or
5. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.

b. Methodology

This section describes the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project relevant to hydrology and water quality. The impact analysis is based on an assessment of baseline conditions for the proposed project area, including climate, topography, watersheds, surface waters, groundwater, and floodplains, as described above under Section 4.10.1, *Setting*. This analysis identifies potential impacts based on the predicted interaction between the affected environment and construction, operation, and maintenance activities related to anticipated future development that would occur under the proposed project and recommends mitigation measures when necessary to avoid or minimize impacts.

Much of the potential cannabis-related development contemplated by the project was previously analyzed in the Trinity County Cannabis Program EIR (State Clearinghouse number 2018122049), certified in 2020 (2020 EIR). The 2020 EIR found that cannabis cultivation had the potential to degrade surface water quality through erosion, sedimentation, and chemical use. The 2020 EIR included mitigation measures 3.10-1a and 3.10-1b, requiring compliance with SWRCB cannabis cultivation orders and implementation of site-specific drainage, erosion-control, and stabilization measures, which reduced impacts to a less-than-significant level. The 2020 EIR also determined that groundwater pumping for cannabis irrigation could affect local wells and required long-term groundwater monitoring and adaptive management (Mitigation Measure 3.10-2) to ensure recovery and stabilization of groundwater levels, reducing impacts to less than significant. The 2020 EIR further concluded that surface water diversion could reduce streamflows and impair water quality and required compliance with state instream flow protection standards and restrictions on licensing within CDFA-designated moratorium watersheds (mitigation measures 3.10-3a and 3.10-3b) to reduce these impacts to less than significant. Floodplain alteration from cultivation infrastructure was similarly found to be potentially significant, and Mitigation Measure 3.10-4 prohibiting cultivation within the 100-year floodplain reduced these impacts to less than significant. Many of these measures have since been implemented through County ordinance revisions and now function as standing regulatory requirements rather than project-specific mitigation.

Because these regulatory controls are part of existing conditions and because the proposed General Plan Update establishes a new countywide policy framework that supersedes the 2020 EIR for cannabis activities occurring consistent with the General Plan, this EIR focuses on hydrology and water quality effects not previously addressed or requiring reevaluation under the General Plan Update.

c. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1:	Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

Impact HYD-1 Development facilitated by the project would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, or otherwise substantially degrade surface water or groundwater quality. Future individual development projects would be required to comply with state and local water quality regulations and permit requirements for both construction and operation. Impacts would be less than significant.

The General Plan Update would facilitate physical development, changes in land use, and an increased population in the county. Development facilitated by the project could result in a discharge of pollutants

to surface waters or contamination of shallow groundwater due to construction activities and increased operational water demand.

Construction

Construction activities associated with future development could include road improvements or realignments, installation or modification of utility infrastructure, demolition of existing structures, new building construction, and replacement or enhancement of drainage facilities. Water quality impacts during construction would vary by site and depend on factors such as topography, duration and extent of soil disturbance, exposure of bare soil, weather conditions, and proximity to nearby waterbodies.

Earth-moving activities, including excavation, trenching, grading, and soil compaction, could result in substantial soil disturbance. If not properly managed, disturbed soils could become vulnerable to erosion from wind and rainfall, leading to the transport of sediment in stormwater runoff. Runoff from construction sites may contain sediments, oils, fuels, paints, solvents, nutrients, fertilizers, metals, and hydrocarbons, all of which can degrade downstream water quality.

Development facilitated by the project would be required to comply with the Statewide NPDES Construction Stormwater General Permit and applicable Trinity County Code of Ordinances Chapter 15.24, which restricts grading over 800 cubic yards or 20,000 square feet without County authorization. These requirements ensure implementation of construction Best Management Practices (BMPs), such as appropriate timing of construction, prompt stabilization of exposed soils, use of erosion control blankets or hydroseed, containment and covering of stockpiles, designated washout areas, and proper management of temporary facilities. Site-specific BMPs would be tailored to prevailing conditions, and the County may also require on-site stormwater controls to maintain pre-development hydrology, such as on-site detention, retention, or impervious surface limitations. Proposed General Plan Goal COS 5 and subsequent policies, including Policy COS 5.1, *Best Management Practices*; Policy COS 5.2, *NPDES Permit Compliance*; and Policy COS 5.3, *Sedimentation Impact*, further reinforces these protections by requiring the use of BMPs to protect streams from construction and roadway activities, requiring compliance with NPDES permits, and requiring the evaluation of sedimentation impacts.

In portions of Trinity County, construction activities such as excavation and trenching may encounter shallow groundwater. If encountered, dewatering could be required to maintain safe and stable work conditions. Any discharge of extracted groundwater would be regulated by the North Coast RWQCB under the applicable General NPDES Permit for low-threat discharges RWQCB 2025). If extracted groundwater is contaminated or highly turbid, it would be treated prior to discharge or transported to an appropriate disposal or treatment facility to ensure compliance with North Coast RWQCB water quality requirements. Policy COS 5.2, *NPDES Permit Compliance*, also requires new development to comply with NPDES permitting requirements, minimizing the potential for groundwater contamination.

Construction stormwater discharges are further regulated under federal Phase I and Phase II NPDES stormwater requirements, which prohibit stormwater discharges from construction sites disturbing one acre or more unless covered under an NPDES permit. In Trinity County, this coverage is obtained through the Statewide Construction Stormwater General Permit, administered locally by the North Coast RWQCB.

To ensure that the proposed project continues to provide protections related to water quality impacts from cannabis uses, the proposed revisions to the Cannabis Ordinance continue to require compliance with applicable SWRCB water quality and water-diversion regulations, including requirements for erosion control, site stabilization, drainage and runoff management, and road and access-way design.

With adherence to federal, state, and local requirements, and implementation of applicable General Plan policies, construction-related surface water and groundwater quality impacts would be **less than significant**.

Operation

During long-term operation, the land uses envisioned under the General Plan Update, including residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, public facility, and recreational uses, could generate pollutants in stormwater runoff if not properly controlled. Residential and commercial uses generally involve small quantities of household hazardous waste or business-related chemicals that are regulated under state law. Industrial uses with the potential to generate polluted runoff would be required to comply with the Industrial General Permit and hazardous materials management requirements. Agricultural operations may use fertilizers, pesticides, and other chemicals that could affect water quality if misapplied or mobilized by stormwater flows.

Proposed General Plan Goal COS 5 and subsequent policies, including Policy COS 5.1, Best Management Practices; Policy COS 5.5, Wastewater Disposal Review; Policy COS 5.6, Prevent Lake and Stream Impacts; Policy COS 5.9, Rainwater Filtration; and Policy COS 5.10, Agricultural Contaminant Reduction, are intended to reduce operational impacts on water quality. These policies require preventative water quality protection from development-related and agricultural sources of contamination, encourage best management practices, and support long-term protection of water resources. Together, these policies provide a comprehensive framework to prevent substantial degradation of surface water and groundwater during long-term operation of land uses facilitated by the General Plan.

Overall, implementation of the General Plan Update would not create conditions that violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. Compliance with federal CWA regulations, Statewide Industrial Stormwater Permit, Construction Stormwater General Permit, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan discharge requirements, and Trinity County's Grading Ordinance, combined with adherence to General Plan Update policies, would minimize the potential for water quality impacts during both construction and long-term operation. As a result, impacts related to the violation of water quality standards or degradation of surface or groundwater quality would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 2:	Would the project substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

Impact HYD-2 Development facilitated by the project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge through compliance with applicable groundwater and recharge policies contained in the Conservation and Open Space Element. The proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a sustainable groundwater management plan. Impacts would be less than significant.

Development facilitated by the project would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge. Groundwater resources in Trinity County are geographically limited, small in storage capacity, and exist primarily in isolated alluvial pockets. The county overlies five small groundwater basins: Hayfork Valley, Hyampom Valley, Dinsmores Town Area, Hettenshaw Valley, and the Wilson Point Area Groundwater Basins. Each basin is designated by the California Department of Water Resources as very low priority under SGMA. As a result, no groundwater sustainability plans are required or prepared for these basins, and groundwater pumping is not managed as part of a coordinated, basin-wide sustainability program.

Although these basins serve as important local water sources for communities, groundwater extraction in Trinity County is modest due to limited aquifer storage, reliance on fractured-rock hydrogeology, and the county's dependence on surface water from the Trinity River, Trinity Lake, Lewiston Lake, Ruth Lake, and numerous perennial creeks. Population growth facilitated by the project would be incremental and concentrated in existing communities, such that substantial increased demand for groundwater is not expected. Most new development would be served by existing public systems or surface water-based supplies, while rural parcels relying on individual wells would not cumulatively affect groundwater levels given the small size and limited recharge potential of the local basins.

Groundwater recharge in Trinity County occurs primarily in alluvial valley floors, stream corridors, and floodplains. Large portions of the county are steep, forested, and federally- or state-managed, and would remain undeveloped under the proposed project. This preserves watershed conditions and allows natural recharge to continue. Because the project directs new growth into existing communities and maintains very low densities throughout the rural landscape, the overall increase in impervious surfaces would be limited. Any localized reductions in infiltration are not expected to meaningfully affect groundwater recharge given the small size of the groundwater basins, the continued availability of natural recharge areas, and minimal projected groundwater demand increases.

The General Plan Update includes policies that support groundwater protection and recharge. Policies COS 5.2: NPDES Permit Compliance, COS 5.8: Watershed Stewardship Program, and COS 5.9: Rainwater Filtration promote watershed health, protect surface-groundwater connectivity, require the use of best management practices, and encourage low-impact development and agricultural practices that enhance infiltration and reduce runoff. Together, these policies provide a comprehensive framework that maintains recharge conditions and prevents adverse effects on groundwater supplies.

Because groundwater demand is not expected to increase substantially and existing recharge conditions would remain largely intact, and because the proposed General Plan includes policies that promote infiltration, watershed protection, and water-quality stewardship, the project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge. The project would also not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a sustainable groundwater management plan, as none are required for Trinity County's very low-priority groundwater basins. Therefore, impacts related to groundwater supplies and recharge would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 3:	Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would: a. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; b. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site; 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 d. Impede or redirect flood flows?

Impact HYD-3 Development facilitated by the project could alter site-specific drainage patterns and introduce new impervious surface areas. Compliance with applicable regulations, including the regulations contained in the CWA and proposed General Plan policies would ensure that this impact would be less than significant.

Development facilitated by the project would involve construction activities such as clearing, grading, excavation, trenching for utilities, stockpiling of soils, road improvements, and other earth-disturbing activities. Trinity County's steep slopes, erodible soils, and proximity of many communities to rivers and creeks, including the Trinity River, Hayfork Creek, East and West Weaver Creeks, and the South Fork Trinity River, create conditions where ground disturbance could lead to increased erosion or siltation if not properly managed. Soil exposed during grading is susceptible to transport by stormwater runoff, potentially resulting in sediment entering adjacent drainages.

Construction activities that disturb one acre or more must comply with the Statewide NPDES Construction Stormwater General Permit, which mandates preparation and implementation of a SWPPP that includes erosion and sediment control measures, site stabilization practices, stormwater monitoring, and other best management practices to limit off-site sediment transport. Trinity County's Grading Ordinance (Chapter 15.24) further regulates grading activities, requiring permits and erosion control measures when disturbance exceeds specified thresholds. Together, these regulations substantially reduce construction-related erosion and drainage impacts.

During operation, new development could increase impervious surfaces relative to existing conditions, incrementally increasing runoff, potentially concentrating flows, or contributing to localized flooding. However, the project emphasizes infill development in established communities and maintains low rural densities. As a result, countywide increases in impervious surface area would be limited, and most of the landscape would remain undeveloped, allowing natural infiltration and hydrologic functions to continue.

Post-construction stormwater requirements under the CWA are intended to minimize the long-term hydrologic impacts of development by requiring projects to closely mimic pre-development runoff conditions. These requirements focus on retention, infiltration, and treatment of stormwater so that rainfall is managed on site rather than rapidly discharged off site.

Trinity County regulates runoff and requires adequate stormwater drainage primarily through Trinity County's Grading Ordinance (Chapter 15.24). It requires grading projects to control runoff, protect natural drainage courses, and incorporate drainage facilities where necessary. Grading permit applications are required to include drainage plans and compliance inspections to ensure stormwater runoff does not adversely affect roads, waterways, or neighborhood properties. Permit review includes an evaluation of drainage impacts and stormwater management measures. Trinity County Code of Ordinances Chapter 16.48, *Subdivision Improvements*, addresses stormwater by requiring and constructing stormwater and drainage facilities as part of subdivision approvals. Chapter 16.49, *Subdivision Design Standards*, also aims to avoid stormwater impacts by requiring subdivisions to provide adequate drainage facilities and limits subdivisions in flood-prone or areas where unless drainage and flood risks are mitigated. Any necessary drainage improvements would be implemented in compliance with these code requirements.

These code requirements would ensure that the potential effects related to surface runoff and potential effects related to stormwater drainage are minimized for development facilitated by the project.

Additionally, proposed General Plan Goal SAF 2 and subsequent policies, including Policy SAF 2.5, Development in Floodplains; Policy SAF 2.6, Land Subdivision in Floodplains; and Policy SAF 2.7, Critical and Public Facilities Siting and Design; collectively minimize alterations to drainage patterns. These policies support flood hazard reduction, appropriate siting and design of development in flood-prone areas, and preservation of natural hydrologic processes, riparian corridors, and watershed functions. When considered together with other water-resource policies, these measures limit the potential for increased erosion, siltation, runoff, or flooding.

Similarly, Chapter 15.16 of Trinity County Code of Ordinances ensures that development within mapped flood hazard areas is designed to avoid increasing flood hazards or redirecting flood flows. Development facilitated by the project would be required to comply with the County Code of Ordinances and therefore would not impede or alter flood flows in a way that could cause downstream impacts.

Compliance with the CWA, the NPDES Construction Stormwater General Permit, Trinity County Code of Ordinances, and applicable General Plan policies would ensure that development facilitated by the proposed project would not result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; would not increase the rate or amount of surface runoff, which would result in flooding on- or off-site; would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the sites in a manner which would contribute runoff water, which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems; and would not impede or redirect flood flows. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 4:	In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, would the project risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

Impact HYD-4 Development facilitated by the project could risk release of pollutants due to project inundation. Compliance with applicable regulations and implementation of the proposed General Plan goals and policies would minimize the potential for adverse effects related to flood hazards and would ensure this impact would be less than significant.

Tsunamis are generally a coastal hazard and do not pose a risk in Trinity County because the county is entirely inland. Seiche events are standing waves generated within enclosed waterbodies during strong seismic events. Seiches are a risk for lakes in seismically active areas, and while there are no documented historical seiche events within Trinity County, and historical seismicity is low, seiche could occur at Trinity Lake, Lewiston Lake, or Ruth Lake.

Flooding is the primary inundation hazard relevant to the Planning Area. The Trinity County Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies riverine flooding as the most frequent flood risk, particularly along the Trinity River, South Fork Trinity River, Hayfork Creek, East and West Weaver Creeks, and other narrow tributary valleys. FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps identify 100-year flood zones in communities such as Weaverville, Lewiston, Hayfork, Douglas City, Junction City, and Burnt Ranch. In these areas, flooding could mobilize fuels, pesticides, household chemicals, wastewater from septic systems, and other stored materials if structures or facilities were inundated.

The General Plan Update does not propose large-scale new development within major floodplains and directs most growth to existing communities where compliance with established floodplain development standards is required. Future development within FEMA-mapped flood hazard areas must comply with

Trinity County's Floodplain Ordinance (Chapter 15.48), which requires flood-safe siting, minimum elevation standards, anchoring requirements, protection of utilities, and restrictions on the placement or storage of hazardous materials within flood hazard zones. These requirements substantially reduce the potential for structures to be inundated and for pollutants to be mobilized during flood events.

Additionally, the General Plan Update includes Policies SAF 2.5: Development in Floodplains, SAF 2.6: Land Subdivision in Floodplains, SAF 2.7: Critical and Public Facilities Siting and Design , SAF 2.10: Site-Specific Dam Failure Hazard Planning, and SAF 2.11: Development in Dam Inundation Areas, which direct development away from flood-prone areas, require flood-resilient design, ensure that critical facilities are not located within high-risk zones, and require identification and consideration of dam-inundation hazards during land-use planning. Together, these policies ensure that flood-related hazards are considered during project design and approval and that development avoids or mitigates potential inundation risks.

Because the project does not introduce new land uses with unusually high hazardous materials storage needs; future development must comply with federal, state, and County floodplain management regulations; and General Plan policies further minimize pollutant release risks associated with flooding, the potential for pollutant discharge due to inundation in flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones would be low. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 5:	Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

Impact HYD-5 The Planning Area is not subject to a sustainable groundwater management plan. Adherence to state and local regulations would ensure development under the proposed project would not interfere with the objectives and goals of the Basin Plan. This impact would be less than significant.

The General Plan Update would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of any applicable water quality control plan or groundwater management plan. Trinity County falls within the North Coast Region of the SWRCB, which administers a Basin Plan that identifies water quality objectives for rivers, lakes, streams, and groundwater resources. Development facilitated by the project would be required to comply with all applicable Basin Plan provisions, including water quality standards for sediment, nutrients, metals, and biological integrity. Compliance with CWA requirements, the NPDES Construction Stormwater General Permit, and any applicable industrial or municipal stormwater permits would ensure that future development does not conflict with Basin Plan water quality objectives or policies.

With respect to groundwater, Trinity County does not contain groundwater basins that have drafted Groundwater Sustainability Plans. The five groundwater basins present in the county are all designated very low priority, meaning SGMA does not require the formation of Groundwater Sustainability Agencies or the preparation of Groundwater Sustainability Plans. Because no Groundwater Sustainability Plans apply within Trinity County, the project cannot conflict with or obstruct their implementation.

Rather than conflicting with regional water resource management plans, the General Plan reinforces water quality protection and watershed management through numerous policies contained in the Conservation and Open Space Element. Policies such as COS 5.1: Best Management Practices, COS 5.2: NPDES Permit Compliance, COS 5.6: Prevent Lake and Stream Impacts, COS 5.9: Rainwater Filtration, and COS 5.10: Agricultural Contaminant Reduction directly support Basin Plan goals by requiring best management practices, promoting infiltration, protecting riparian areas, controlling sediment and nutrient runoff, and minimizing pollutant discharges. These policies maintain consistency with state water quality

priorities and ensure that new development proceeds in a manner that supports, rather than undermines, watershed health.

Because Basin Plan requirements would continue to apply to all future development, and because no SGMA plans exist within Trinity County, implementation of the project would not conflict with or obstruct any applicable water quality control plan or groundwater sustainability plan. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

4.10.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope of cumulative hydrology and water quality impacts is the Trinity River, South Fork Trinity, Mad-Redwood, Lower Eel, and Middle Fork Eel watersheds. This geographic scope is appropriate because potential hydrology and water quality related impacts would have potential to affect any downstream waterbody or source throughout the watersheds that contain the Planning Area. The cumulative analysis considers the nearby past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future plans listed in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting*, in addition to the proposed project.

Cumulative development generally consists of commercial and residential projects. Cumulative development would generally increase impermeable surface areas in the applicable watersheds, which could potentially increase peak flood flows, alter drainage patterns, reduce groundwater recharge, and increase pollutants in the regional stormwater. Cumulative development would be required to adhere to all applicable state and local regulations designed to control erosion, ensure avoidance or appropriate design within designated flood zones, and protect water quality, including the applicable County Code of Ordinances, NPDES Construction Stormwater General Permit, MS4 Permits, and General Plan policies. All construction sites larger than one acre in size would be required to prepare implement project-specific SWPPPs (as required by the CWA) with BMPs to minimize or avoid water quality degradation from construction and other ground-disturbing activities. Cumulative plans and projects would also be subject to requirements of the CWA and the policies of the applicable planning document. Additionally, cumulative development would be subject to the provisions of the Basin Plan. The underlying groundwater basins are not subject to a sustainable groundwater management plan, though existing applicable regulations ensure sufficient water supplies are confirmed prior to finalized implementation of cumulative development. With proper regulatory compliance, cumulative development would not violate water quality or waste discharge requirements, substantially decrease groundwater supplies, substantially alter drainage patterns, risk the release of pollutant release due to inundation, or obstruct an established water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. Cumulative impacts to hydrology and water quality would be less than significant.

4.11 Land Use and Planning

This section summarizes the County's land use characteristics, including the overall land use pattern as well as a more detailed analysis by major land use type, and analyzes existing plans and focus areas in order to determine the land use and planning effects of the proposed project. The scope of analysis is the Planning Area as described in Chapter 2, *Project Description*.

4.11.1 Setting

a. Current Land Use Pattern

Trinity County covers approximately 2,051,988 acres or 3,222 square miles of unincorporated land and does not contain any incorporated cities. About 76 percent (1,559,511 acres) of the land area is within the Shasta-Trinity, Six Rivers, and Mendocino national forests and in four wilderness areas known as the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Reserve, Trinity Alps, Chanchellula, and North Fork wildernesses (County of Trinity 2026). Development in Trinity County consists of residential, agricultural, commercial, public facilities and infrastructure, industrial, and specific unit land uses, which is concentrated along the main highways State Route (SR) 299 and SR 3 through the county. The majority of development is located in the communities of Weaverville, Hayfork, and Lewiston. Some agricultural uses occur near the communities of Junction City, Douglas City, Hayfork, Weaverville, and Lewiston.

The Shasta-Trinity National Forest covers a majority of the northern and central portions of the county. Southern Trinity County consists mostly of public lands, including a portion of the Six Rivers National Forest and Mendocino National Forest. The County's largest community and county seat, Weaverville, is located southeast of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, near the eastern county boundary.

The county includes the following unincorporated communities, which do not have their own municipal government or independent policy-making authority, but remain useful for orientation and for framing land use planning issues:

- Denny
- Junction City
- North Lake
- Trinity Center
- Salyer-Burnt Ranch/Big Bar
- Weaverville
- Lewiston
- Douglas City
- Hyampom
- Hayfork
- Post Mountain
- Wildwood
- South Fork
- South Trinity
- Ruth
- Zenia
- Hettenshaw
- Kettenpom

Five communities have existing community plans: Junction City, Weaverville, Lewiston, Douglass City, and Hayfork.

Land Use Designations

The current General Plan includes three general land use designation categories, each with one or more specific land uses designations. These designations describe the types of land use throughout the county (County of Trinity 1988).

The County currently has the following existing land use designations:

- Community Development (CD)
  - Community Residential
  - Commercial
  - Industrial
  - Community Expansion
- Village (V)
  - Village
- Natural Resource (NR)
  - Open Space
  - Resource Land
  - Agriculture
  - Rural Residential

b. Existing Plans and Studies

Trinity County Transportation Commission Regional Transportation Plan

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a comprehensive assessment of all forms of transportation available in Trinity County, and of the needs for travel and goods movement. The Trinity County Transportation Commission (TCTC) adopted the 2022 RTP in February 2023. The RTP provides regulatory goals and policies which support existing and proposed land use changes throughout Trinity County. RTP policies and goals support land uses that promote active and accessible transportation.

Community Plans

Figure 4.11-1 displays the locations in which there are existing community plans in Trinity County.

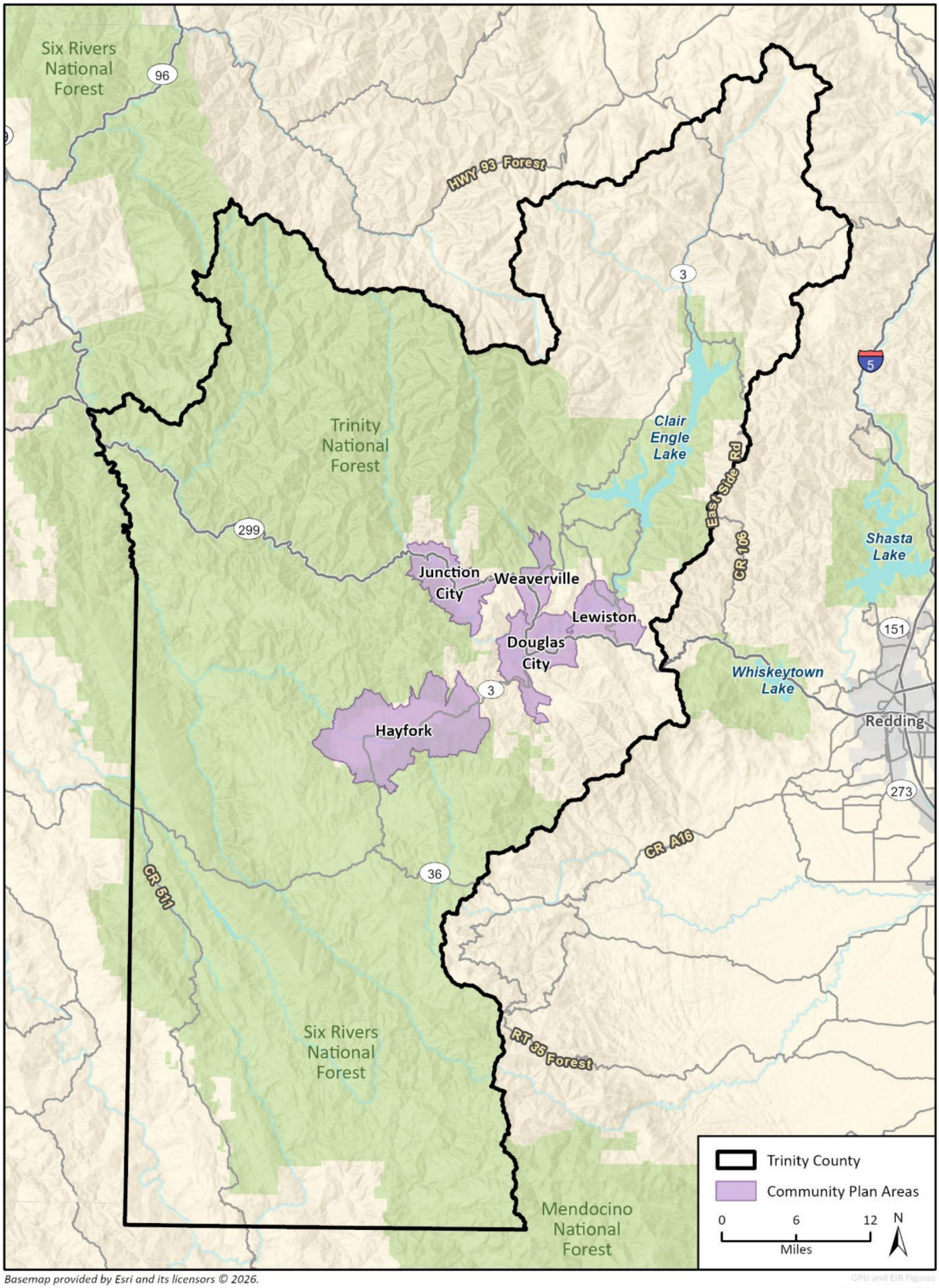
Douglas City Community Plan

The Douglas City Community Plan was adopted in July 1987. The plan area consists of 26,500 acres near the SR 299 and SR 3 junction, located east of Redding and north of Weaverville. Existing land uses are predominantly resource lands, followed by rural residential, commercial, village, agriculture, and open space uses (County of Trinity 1987a).

Hayfork Community Plan

The Hayfork Community Plan area consists of 26,628 acres, with an elevation ranging from 3,600 to 2,250 feet, located in the southern region of the Klamath Mountains along SR 3. The community was formerly established in the early 1850s during the California Gold Rush. Hayfork's existing land uses are agriculture, resource land, residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

Figure 4.11-1 Location of Existing Community Plans in Trinity County



Junction City Community Plan

The Junction City Community Plan consists of approximately 27,000 acres of land, located at an elevation ranging 5,650 to 1,500 feet along SR 299 in eastern Trinity County. The Junction City Community Plan area's primary existing land uses are predominantly government-owned and managed lands, resource lands, and residential areas (County of Trinity 1987b).

Lewiston Community Plan

The Lewiston Community Plan area consists of 10,227 acres, with elevations ranging from 1,850 feet to 3,234 feet. The Lewiston area has access to several outdoor recreational areas including Lewiston Lake, Trinity River, and Shasta-Trinity National Forest. Existing land uses include resource lands, rural residential, open space, commercial, and agricultural uses (County of Trinity 1986).

Weaverville Community Plan

The Weaverville Community Plan consists of approximately 12,800 acres of land located in northeastern Trinity County (approximately 7 miles north of Douglas City and 8 miles east of Junction City). Approximately 38 percent of the Weaverville Community Plan area is managed or owned by the federal government. The planning area's primary existing land uses are residential, commercial, industrial, resource lands, public facilities, and other uses (County of Trinity 1990).

4.11.2 Regulatory Setting

a. Federal Regulations

Shasta and Trinity National Forests Land and Resource Management Plan

The Shasta and Trinity National Forests Land and Resource Management Plan guides management of National Forest System lands within the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. The Forest Plan establishes forest-wide multiple-use goals and objectives, standards and guidelines for future management activities, land suitability for timber production, and management area designations. The Plan integrates resource use and protection, establishes monitoring and evaluation requirements, and provides a planning framework for future project-level decisions.

Six Rivers National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan

The Six Rivers National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan directs management of National Forest System lands within the Six Rivers National Forest. The Plan establishes forest goals, standards and guidelines, and monitoring requirements to guide integrated resource management over a 10- to 15-year planning period. Upon approval, all land and resource management activities, permits, and contracts on National Forest lands are required to conform to the Plan, subject to existing rights. The Plan applies only to federal lands and does not regulate state or private lands within forest boundaries.

Northwest California Integrated Resource Management Plan

The Northwest California Integrated Resource Management Plan provides land use planning and management direction for lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) within northwest California, including portions of Trinity County. The Plan replaces prior BLM resource management plans and establishes a framework for managing BLM-administered lands and federal mineral estate, addressing issues such as ecosystem resiliency, wildfire and fuels management, recreation, special-status species, land tenure, and climate change. The Plan governs only lands within BLM jurisdiction and is supported by a programmatic environmental impact statement prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act.

Weaverville Community Forest Strategic Plan

The Weaverville Community Forest Strategic Plan establishes management objectives, activities, and priorities for the Weaverville Community Forest over an eight-year planning period and provides a multi-year framework to guide project development and implementation within Community Forest boundaries. The Plan is developed and overseen by the Weaverville Community Forest Steering Committee, and management is carried out by the United States Forest Service Trinity River Management Unit, the BLM Redding Field Office, and the Trinity County Resource Conservation District under cooperative and stewardship agreements. The Strategic Plan identifies community priorities and resource management objectives related to forest health, wildfire resilience, watershed protection, recreation, visual quality, and community and cultural uses, but does not authorize specific ground-disturbing projects. All future projects are subject to review and approval under the National Environmental Policy Act, applicable federal land management plans, and other relevant laws and regulations prior to implementation. The Weaverville Community Forest consists of federally managed lands located primarily within the Weaver Creek Watershed and surrounding the community of Weaverville, and management actions within the Community Forest occur independently of the County's General Plan and Zoning Code.

b. State Regulations

General Plan Law (California Government Code Section 65300)

California Government Code Section 65300 regulates the substantive and topical requirements of general plans. State law requires each city and county to adopt a general plan "for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which bears relation to its planning." The California Supreme Court has called a general plan the "constitution for future development." A general plan expresses the community's development goals, and embodies public policy relative to the distribution of future land uses, both public and private.

California Government Code Section 65301

Section 65301 of the California Government Code requires a general plan to address the geographic territory of the local jurisdiction and any other territory outside its boundaries that bears relation to the planning of the jurisdiction. The jurisdiction may exercise their own judgment in determining what areas outside of its boundaries to include in the Planning Area. The California General Plan Guidelines state that a county general plan should address all unincorporated areas and consider the general plans of every city within the county, as well as adjacent jurisdictions even if they are in a different county.

California Government Code Section 65860

Section 65860 of the California Government Code requires that county or city zoning ordinances be consistent with county or city general plans, if a general plan has been adopted and the land uses authorized therein are compatible with those in the general plan. If a zoning ordinance becomes inconsistent with a general plan due to amendments to the plan, the ordinance shall be amended to regain consistency.

Cortese Knox Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000

The Cortese Knox Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 established procedures for local agency changes of organization, including city incorporation, annexation to a city or special district, and consolidation of cities or special districts (Section 56000, et seq.) A Local Agency Formation Commission does not have direct land use authority. However, the Cortese Knox Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act assigns Local Agency Formation Commissions a role in planning issues by requiring them to review proposed boundary changes.

Senate Bill 131

SB 131, effective June 30, 2025, complements AB 130 by focusing on CEQA streamlining for infrastructure and public-serving projects. It introduces a new review pathway for "near miss" projects—those that narrowly fail to qualify for a CEQA exemption due to a single disqualifying condition. Under this provision, CEQA review is limited to the environmental effects of that specific condition, and such projects are exempt from analyzing alternatives or growth-inducing impacts. SB 131 also creates or expands CEQA exemptions for a range of project types, including advanced manufacturing facilities on industrial-zoned land, broadband infrastructure in public rights-of-way, updates to climate adaptation plans, high-speed rail maintenance facilities, and local rezoning actions that implement Housing Element commitments. Additionally, the bill mandates biennial updates to *CEQA Guidelines* to improve clarity and address ambiguities. These changes reflect a broader policy shift toward facilitating development while maintaining targeted environmental protections, and they are expected to significantly impact the planning and approval processes for both housing and infrastructure projects across California.

Senate Bill 375

Enacted in 2008, SB 375 requires that each Metropolitan Planning Organization include an SCS that provides an integrated land use and transportation plan for meeting greenhouse gas emission reduction targets set forth by the California Air Resources Board. The TCTC adopted its current RTP, the 2022-2042 RTP, in February 2023. The 2022-2042 RTP charts the 20-year course of transportation to 2042 to address greenhouse gas emissions reductions and other air emissions. The RTP includes an objective to invest in transportation projects and prioritize planning efforts that would contribute to GHG reduction targets set forth in SB 375 (TCTC 2023).

c. Local Regulations

Trinity County Zoning Code

Zoning is the instrument that implements the land use designations of the General Plan. In addition to establishing permitted uses, zoning also establishes development standards relating to issues such as intensity, setbacks, height, and parking. Projects submitted to the County for review and approval are evaluated for consistency with the zoning General Plan land use designations.

The Trinity County Zoning Code is used by the County to implement the General Plan. The Zoning Code is officially known as Title 17 of the Trinity County Code of Ordinances. The purpose of the Zoning Code is to classify and regulate development in the County's unincorporated areas in a manner consistent with the General Plan. Each district in the Zoning Code corresponds to a General Plan land use designation and has a stated purpose, typical use, and minimum parcel size. The current Zoning Code consists of the following districts:

- Agricultural (A)
- Agricultural-Preserve (AP)
- Agriculture-Forest (AF)
- Conservation
- Rural-Residential (RR-10)
- Rural-Residential (RR-5)
- Rural-Residential (RR-21/2)
- Rural-Residential (RR-1)
- Single-Family Residential (R-1A)
- Single-Family Residential (R-1)
- Duplex Residential (R2)

- Multiple Family (R3)
- Residential-Office
- Mobile Home and Special Occupancy Parks
- Retail Commercial (C-1)
- General Commercial (C-2)
- Heavy Commercial (C-3)
- Highway Commercial (HC)
- Industrial/Manufacturing (I)
- Mining (MN)
- Timberland Preserve (TPZ)
- Specific Unit Development (SUD)
- Open Space (OS)
- Unclassified (U)
- Public Facilities (PF)
- Flood Hazard (FHO)

4.11.3 Impact Analysis

a. Significance Thresholds

The analysis in this section focuses on the compatibility of land uses identified in the proposed project with existing and planned land uses within the Planning Area, as well as consistency with any applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations. The following thresholds of significance are based on Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*. For purposes of this EIR, implementation of the proposed project may have a significant adverse impact if it would do any of the following:

1. Physically divide an established community; or
2. 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.

b. Methodology

This section evaluates the potential land use and planning impacts of the proposed project based on a review of existing land use conditions and adopted planning frameworks within Trinity County, including the General Plan, zoning regulations, community plans, and applicable regional, state, and federal land use policies. The analysis assesses whether implementation of the proposed project would result in land use conflicts, physically divide an established community, or conflict with land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental impacts, consistent with the *CEQA Guidelines* Appendix G checklist. Impacts are evaluated at a programmatic level based on the land use patterns and growth framework contemplated by the proposed project, and mitigation measures are identified where necessary to reduce significant impacts.

Much of the potential cannabis-related land use activity contemplated by the General Plan Update was previously analyzed in the Trinity County Cannabis Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR; State Clearinghouse No. 2018122049), certified in 2020 (2020 EIR). The 2020 EIR evaluated whether existing and future licensed commercial cannabis cultivation and related uses could physically divide established communities or conflict with applicable land use plans and policies. The 2020 EIR concluded that these impacts would be less than significant. As the regulatory framework evaluated in the 2020 EIR remains in effect and has subsequently been codified and refined through County ordinances, the new requirements discussed in the 2020 EIR now function as existing conditions rather than discretionary mitigation.

Accordingly, this EIR relies on the prior programmatic analysis for land use compatibility and community division impacts associated with cannabis activities, and focuses on whether the General Plan Update introduces new land use policies or patterns that would result in different or more severe effects.

c. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1:	Would the project physically divide an established community?

Impact LU-1 Development facilitated by the project would not physically divide an established community. Impacts would be less than significant.

Trinity County contains multiple established communities, including Douglas City, Hayfork, Hyampom, Junction City, Lewiston, Post Mountain, Trinity Center, and Weaverville, as well as several additional smaller communities, including Denny, North Lake, Salyer-Burnt Ranch/Big Bar, Wildwood, South Fork, South Trinity, Ruth, Zenia, Hettenshaw, and Kettenpom. These communities are generally compact in form, oriented around existing roadways, and surrounded by low-density residential uses, agricultural lands, timberlands, public lands, or open space. Some of these communities are currently bisected by SR 3, SR 299, and SR 36.

The proposed project would not include construction of new highways, major arterials, rail corridors, or other linear infrastructure that could physically bisect or divide these established communities. No new circulation alignments are proposed through the centers of established unincorporated communities. Circulation improvements identified in the proposed project are limited to maintenance and upgrades of existing facilities, and incorporation of pedestrian and bicycle features within the existing right-of-way.

Land use changes proposed by the project within established unincorporated communities consist of replacing the existing General Plan land use designations with updated designations, policies, and community plans that guide the location and types of future development through 2050. While not included as part of the proposed project, updates to the County's Zoning Code would be required by state law, after adoption of the proposed General Plan, in order to implement the updated land use designations. The proposed project does not redesignate established residential areas for industrial or other incompatible uses, and does not identify new transportation corridors, infrastructure alignments, or land use patterns that would physically separate existing neighborhoods.

Mixed-use land use designations introduced as part of the proposed project are applied at a programmatic level within identified community planning areas, and provide for compatible residential and community-serving commercial uses on the same parcels without altering established circulation patterns or creating isolated development areas. These changes do not authorize new infrastructure or establish new development corridors that would divide communities. Allowing certain uses to proceed through ministerial approval, where required by state law, would occur on individual parcels and would not alter the physical layout or connectivity of established neighborhoods. Development facilitated by the project would occur on individual parcels within existing zoning districts and community planning boundaries, and would not alter the overall circulation network, block access, or change the physical layout of established neighborhoods.

Several policies in the proposed General Plan support community cohesion and connectivity, and avoid development patterns that could physically divide communities. The proposed Land Use Element includes Policy LU-3.3 (Connectivity Between Existing and New Development), which promotes links between new and existing development through internal circulation systems; Policy LU-4.2 (Connectivity), which supports pedestrian and bicycle access within residential areas; Policies LU-5.1 through LU-5.3 (Sites for Industrial and Commercial Development; Design; and Impacts to Adjacent Uses), which direct commercial and industrial development to appropriate locations and require compact design and buffering to avoid conflicts; Policy LU-6.1 (Agricultural Land Preservation), which directs development away from agricultural and timber lands; and Policy LU-8.3 (Infill Development), which prioritizes development within existing communities.

The proposed Circulation Element policies further support these outcomes by emphasizing maintenance and improvement of existing transportation facilities and safe, multimodal connectivity. These include Policy CIR-5.1 (Prioritize Existing Facilities), which focuses investment on existing roads; Policy CIR-5.5 (Correct Roadway Deficiencies), which improves existing collectors and arterials; and Policies CIR-7.2 (Add Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities), CIR-7.7 (Pedestrian and Bicycle Access Points), CIR-7.10 (Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities in New Development), and CIR-7.11 (Safety and Accessibility Enhancements), which collectively support pedestrian and bicycle facilities, access points, and safe crossings within communities.

Overall, the proposed project directs future growth to existing community areas, sets the stage for future zoning updates and rezonings that reflect established land use patterns, and limits development through opt-out overlays in sensitive locations. The proposed project does not introduce new infrastructure, introduce new land use designations, or encourage future zoning actions that would physically divide an established community. Therefore, development facilitated by the project would not physically divide an established community, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 2:	Would the project 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?

Impact LU-2 Development facilitated by the project would be consistent with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted to avoid or mitigate environmental effects. Impacts would be less than significant.

The proposed project is intended to guide development in a manner that protects open space and agricultural resources, supports economic activity, and focuses growth in unincorporated communities. As discussed in Chapter 2, *Project Description,* the proposed project directs most new development toward existing unincorporated communities such as Weaverville, Hayfork, Lewiston, Douglas City, and Trinity Center—areas where services, infrastructure, and public facilities are available or can be feasibly extended. By focusing growth in these communities and maintaining very low densities in rural areas, the proposed project avoids or minimizes environmental impacts related to habitat loss, wildfire exposure, steep slopes, watershed impacts, and public service constraints.

Large portions of Trinity County are under federal or state ownership, and are governed by applicable federal or state agencies and their respective land management plans and implementing regulations, rather than the County's discretionary land use authority. These lands are managed pursuant to plans including the Shasta and Trinity National Forests Land and Resource Management Plan, Six Rivers National Forest Land Use Plan, Northwest California Integrated Resource Management Plan, and the Weaverville Community Forest Strategic Plan. As described in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, the proposed project applies to the unincorporated area over which the County has land use authority and includes land use changes intended in part to recognize public ownership and jurisdiction. The proposed project would not amend federal land management plans or authorize development on federal lands inconsistent with those plans. To the extent future development facilitated by the proposed project requires federal approvals, access rights, or other federal authorization, consistency with the applicable federal land management framework would be addressed at the individual development project stage. Accordingly, the proposed project would not result in a significant environmental impact due to conflict

with an applicable federal land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

The proposed project contains goals and policies across the Land Use, Circulation, Conservation and Open Space, Hazards and Safety, and Community Plans Elements that directly address environmental protection. Within the Land Use Element, Goal LU-2, Policy LU-2.1 (Rural Character), Goal LU-6, and Policy LU-6.1 (Agricultural Land Preservation) limit development intensity in rural areas and direct growth to appropriate locations, while Goal LU-7 and Policy LU-7.1 (Sites for Commercial Cannabis Development) ensure agricultural and cannabis uses are sited in compatible areas. The Circulation Element supports environmentally responsible transportation planning through Goal CIR-1, Policy CIR-1.9 (Environmental Considerations in Roadway Planning), and Policy CIR-1.14 (Road Design), which require roadway planning and design to protect water quality, slope stability, and natural and cultural resources. The Conservation and Open Space Element further protects environmental resources through Goal COS-3, Goal COS-4, Goal COS-6, Goal COS-7, Goal COS-8, Goal COS-10, Policies COS-10.1 through COS-10.6 (Agricultural Preserves; Agricultural Land Conversion Review; Williamson Act Contracts; Crop Land; Agricultural Resource Protection; and Land Improvement Programs), and Goal COS-11, which collectively conserve biological resources, agricultural lands, timberlands, scenic quality, and cultural resources while supporting long-term resource productivity. Together, these policies provide a framework that protects sensitive environmental resources while guiding future development in a manner consistent with the County's rural character and sustainability objectives.

The Trinity County Zoning Code is the primary tool for implementing the General Plan Update. At a future date, the County will be required by state law to update the Zoning Code to align zoning districts, land use categories, development standards, and permitting procedures with the General Plan's land use designations. Because state law requires the Zoning Code to be updated following adoption of the proposed General Plan, and because the General Plan is intended to inform local zoning regulations, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a conflict with the County's zoning regulations.

The proposed project also specifies the allowance of cannabis related uses consistent with existing County regulations included in the Cannabis Ordinance to ensure consistency with the updated land use framework. Much of the environmental review of cannabis-related land uses in unincorporated Trinity County was previously addressed in the 2020 EIR, incorporated into this EIR by reference pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15150. As described in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, the proposed project continues to allow commercial cannabis development consistent with the County's existing regulatory framework, requires the implementation of future updates to the Cannabis Ordinance and Zoning Code to maintain consistency with the General Plan under Program LU-2, and retains cannabis opt-out overlay areas in specified locations. In this context, the cannabis-related components of the proposed project do not create a new or different land use planning conflict with adopted plans, policies, or regulations intended to avoid or mitigate environmental effects. Instead, they update and integrate cannabis regulation within the County's broader land use framework while leaving the environmental controls applicable to cannabis activities to be addressed through the existing ordinance structure, any carried-forward requirements from the 2020 EIR that now function as regulatory standards, and project-level review where applicable. Accordingly, the cannabis-related components of the proposed project would not result in a significant land use and planning impact.

The TCTC 2022-2042 RTP focuses on maintaining and improving the existing rural transportation network while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting multimodal access. As shown in Table 4.11-1, the proposed project is consistent with RTP goals related to safety, environmental protection, active transportation, and GHG reduction. This table discusses RTP goals with direct relevance to land use and environmental planning. The RTP does not prohibit or conflict with the land uses or transportation improvements contemplated in the General Plan Update.

As shown in Table 4.11-1, the proposed project would be consistent with the goals and policies contained in the TCTC 2022-2042 RTP that pertain to avoiding or reducing adverse environmental impacts, such as GHG emissions.

Furthermore, other regional and community plans described in Section 4.11.1(b), *Existing Plans and Studies,* including the Douglas City, Hayfork, Junction City, Lewiston, and Weaverville Community Plans, establish land use patterns, development standards, and resource protections within their respective planning areas. These plans guide growth toward established communities, maintain rural and resource land designations, and include policies intended to protect natural resources, reduce land use conflicts, and limit development in environmentally constrained areas. Building upon this framework, the proposed updated and new community plans being prepared in tandem with the proposed project refine and expand these policies by incorporating updated information on environmental hazards, natural resources, infrastructure, and community priorities. Together, the adopted community plans and proposed community plans support land use compatibility and resource protection. The proposed project provides a comprehensive, long-term framework that complements these plans by reinforcing resource protection, directing growth towards unincorporated communities, and maintaining low densities in environmentally constrained areas.

As concluded within this impact discussion, implementation of the 2050 General Plan would be generally consistent with applicable adopted plans, regulations, or policies. The proposed project would incorporate land use designations, development standards, and policies that limit development in environmentally constrained areas and guide growth toward existing communities, therefore supporting the objectives of these plans. Accordingly, the proposed project would not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental impacts, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Table 4.11-1 2050 General Plan Consistency with TCTC RTP 2022-2042 RTP

TCTC 2022-2042 RTP Goals and Policies	General Plan Consistency
Goal 1: Develop and maintain an efficient and safe system of streets, highways, and bridges that adhere to the existing and future needs while simultaneously promoting preservation of the environment, equitable access, and economic well-being. **Policy 1.1**: Prioritize roadway projects according to pavement condition and safety and operational deficiencies, including required maintenance and repair, in the most cost-effective manner given available resources	**Consistent**. The 2050 General Plan Circulation Element includes multiple goals and policies that directly support the prioritization of roadway maintenance, rehabilitation, and safety improvements. Policies CIR 1.3 (Roadway Improvement Costs), CIR 1.4 (Roadway Improvement Requirements), and CIR 1.18 (Roadway Standards Compliance) ensure roadway improvements are tied to development impacts and meet County standards, while Policies CIR 3.1 (Develop Safe Roadways), CIR 3.2 (Correct Roadway Safety Hazards), and CIR 3.4 (Roadway Maintenance and Safety Funding) focus on correcting roadway deficiencies and advancing safety enhancements. Additionally, Policies CIR 1.5 (Critical Infrastructure Investments) and CIR 1.19 (Road Maintenance Practice) promote resilient infrastructure and best maintenance practices, reinforcing the County's commitment to stewardship of its rural transportation network. Together, these policies demonstrate a coordinated, resource-conscious approach that supports regional priorities for maintaining safe and functional roadways.
Goal 2: Support recreational travel by making it safe, easy, and inviting. **Policy 2.3:** Support safe bicycle and pedestrian access improvements to State and National Parks, trails, and other recreational facilities.	**Consistent**. The proposed Circulation Element supports safe bicycle and pedestrian access to recreational destinations. Goal CIR 7 and its associated policies promote the development of a connected network of bicycle routes, pedestrian walkways, and multi-use trails that enhance access to recreational facilities throughout the county. Policies CIR 7.2 (Add Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities) and CIR 7.3 (Facility Development) require the incorporation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities into roadway projects and ensure facility development follows state and county standards, while Policies CIR 7.6 (Trail Easements) and CIR 7.7 (Pedestrian and Bicycle Access Points) encourage trail easements and improved access across public lands, including routes leading to parks and natural areas. Together, these policies advance safe, multimodal access to State and National Parks, trails, and other recreational amenities.
Goal 4: Increase the safety for all types of non-motorized transportation users; Increase mobility among all types of non-motorized transportation users. Support the reduction of greenhouse gases; Promote public health; Ensure disadvantaged communities have full share of program benefits; Provide a broad spectrum of projects to benefit many types of bicyclists and pedestrians.	**Consistent**. The Circulation Element promotes environmentally responsible bicycle and pedestrian improvements consistent with TCTC RTP Policy 4.2 by integrating active transportation planning with resource protection. Policies CIR 7.2 (Add Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities) and CIR 7.3 (Facility Development) ensure that new bicycle and pedestrian facilities are incorporated into roadway rehabilitation projects and are designed according to state and local standards, supporting low-impact, sustainable mobility options. Complementing these measures, Policies CIR 1.9 (Environmental Considerations in Roadway Planning) and CIR 1.11 (Early Consideration of Environmental Issues) emphasize early environmental consideration and the protection of natural resources during transportation planning and construction. Together, these policies guide the development of active transportation infrastructure that expands mobility while maintaining Trinity County's ecological integrity. The Circulation Element contains policies that promote coordination with federal, state, tribal, and local partners to improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity. Policies CIR 7.6 (Trail Easements) and CIR 7.7 (Pedestrian and Bicycle Access Points) encourage collaboration on trail easements and access points across public lands, while Policy CIR 3.5 (Inter-jurisdictional coordination) commits the County to ongoing inter-jurisdictional coordination on roadway safety and conditions. Additionally, the Active Transportation Plan referenced in Policies CIR 7.3 (Facility Development) and CIR 7.5 (Active Transportation Plan) provides a structured mechanism for coordinating with stakeholders on the planning, funding, and maintenance of active transportation facilities. These policies collectively support a cooperative approach to expanding and maintaining safe and connected pedestrian and bicycle networks throughout Trinity County.

TCTC 2022-2042 RTP Goals and Policies	General Plan Consistency
Goal 6: Provide affordable, consistent, and efficient public transportation options that will meet user demand. **Policy 6.1**: Encourage the development of a multimodal transportation network between and among transit stops and communities that would provide for better connectivity to community services.	**Consistent**. The Circulation Element supports the development of a multimodal transportation network that strengthens connectivity between communities and transit stops. Goal CIR 4 and its associated policies (CIR 4.1 [Level of Need], CIR 4.3 [Transit Passenger Service Increase], and CIR 4.5 [Transit Development Plan Update]) promote accessible and efficient transit services, including updates to the Transit Development Plan and efforts to increase ridership and service effectiveness. Complementing these transit-focused policies, Goal CIR 7 and Policies CIR 7.2 (Add Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities), CIR 7.3 (Facility Development), and CIR 7.10 (Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities in New Development) encourage the development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities that enhance first- and last-mile connections. Together, these policies advance a coordinated multimodal system that improves access to community services and strengthens connectivity across Trinity County's rural communities.
Goal 7: Prioritize the mobility needs of County residents, visitors, and employees, even with the financial constraints of state and federal transit funding. **Policy 7.2:** Adhere to the transit needs of disadvantaged communities including elderly populations, minority communities, the disabled, and low-income communities.	**Consistent**. The 2050 General Plan Circulation Element emphasizes equitable access to transit services for disadvantaged and mobility-impaired populations. Goal CIR 4 and Policies CIR 4.1 (Level of Need) and CIR 4.3 (Transit Passenger Service Increase) advance transit improvements that respond to the greatest areas of need, including rural, low-income, and senior populations. Policy CIR 7.11 (Safety and Accessibility Enhancements) further supports safe and inclusive mobility by improving pedestrian accessibility for residents with disabilities, while Policy CIR 3.3 (All Weather Roads) ensures all-weather roads for essential services. Collectively, these policies reinforce the County's commitment to improving transit options and multimodal access for the communities most reliant on public transportation.
Goal 9: Provide safe and efficient movement of regional and interregional goods. **Policy 9.3:** Promote roadway designs that will allow for safe movement of larger freight and STAA trucks.	**Consistent**. The Circulation Element includes policies that enhance goods movement and ensure roadway designs accommodate larger freight vehicles. Goal CIR 2 and Policies CIR 2.1 (Road Maintenance Coordination) and CIR 2.3 (Goods Movement Facility Impacts) emphasize coordinated maintenance and review of roadways to ensure they support efficient freight operations, while Policy CIR 2.4 (Warehouse Accessibility) directs warehouse and logistics facilities to be located with convenient access to state highways, reducing conflicts with local streets. Additionally, Policies CIR 1.14 (Road Design) and CIR 1.18 (Roadway Standards Compliance) require new road designs to comply with County and Caltrans standards, ensuring roadway geometry and safety features are appropriate for larger truck travel. Together, these policies support safe and efficient freight movement throughout the County.
Goal 13: Include climate change strategies in transportation investment decisions. **Policy 13.3:** Promote projects that can demonstrate to reduce GHG emissions, such as active transportation projects, transit improvements, and alternative fuel programs.	**Consistent**. The Circulation Element promotes projects and programs that lower greenhouse gas emissions through expanded transit service, reduced vehicle miles traveled, and investment in active transportation. Goal CIR 7 and Policies CIR 7.1 through CIR 7.5 (Encourage Active Transportation; Add Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities; Facility Development; Facility Funding; and Active Transportation Plan) promote bicycle and pedestrian facilities that shift short-distance trips away from automobiles, while Goal CIR 4 supports transit service enhancements that increase ridership and reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles. Policies CIR 1.5 (Critical Infrastructure Investments) and CIR 1.12 (Transportation Impact Analysis and VMT) further incorporate climate-resilient infrastructure and VMT-based impact analysis into transportation decision-making. Together, these policies directly support GHG-reducing strategies consistent with statewide and regional climate goals.

Source: TCTC 2023

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

4.11.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope for cumulative land use and planning impacts is limited to Trinity County because the proposed project governs land use decisions solely within the County's jurisdiction. The proposed project does not influence land use patterns or authorize development outside of Trinity County boundaries. The cumulative analysis considers the nearby past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future plans and projects listed in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting*, in addition to the proposed project.

The potential cumulative land use impact would occur if implementation of the proposed project, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable development in Trinity County, resulted in the physical division of an established community. Such an impact could arise from the incremental effects of development or infrastructure projects that create barriers between neighborhoods or disrupt community connectivity. Cumulative development would direct future development primarily into existing unincorporated communities, such as Weaverville, Hayfork, Lewiston, Douglas City, and Trinity Center, and emphasizes infill development, compact community forms, and multimodal connectivity, reducing the potential for community division. Other cumulative development throughout the County would be subject to applicable development standards, General Plan or other applicable plan policies, and County Code of Ordinances requirements. Because cumulative development is expected to occur within or adjacent to existing community areas, and because the majority of land in Trinity County is federally or state-owned and not subject to large-scale development projects, cumulative impacts related to physically dividing an established community would be less than significant.

The potential cumulative land use impact related to plan consistency would occur if cumulative development resulted in conflicts with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental impacts. The land use pattern and intensity of cumulative development is designed to concentrate growth within existing communities, maintain low densities in rural and resource areas, and limit development in environmentally constrained locations. While incremental development could contribute cumulatively to environmental stressors, such as habitat fragmentation or increased exposure of structures to wildfire in rural areas, cumulative projects would be reviewed for consistency with applicable General Plan, County Code of Ordinances, and community plan requirements, all of which contain policies aimed at avoiding or mitigating environmental impacts. Land within the county that is under federal or state ownership is governed by federal resource management plans, which limit development and further reduce the potential for inconsistent land uses. Given these constraints, the cumulative impact related to conflicts with land use plans or regulations adopted for environmental protection services would be less than significant.

4.12 Mineral Resources

The analysis in this section addresses the potential for the proposed project to result in the loss of mineral resources to the region.

4.12.1 Setting

Mineral resources are extremely valuable because of their limited supply and their usefulness in modern construction and industrial processes. Trinity County has designated land that has the potential to produce minerals under the Resource Land (RE) designation. On a case-by-case basis, small mining operations have the potential to occur on land designated for Open Space (OS) (County of Trinity 2025a). The Department of Conservation California Geological Survey determined there are no Mineral Land Classification reports issued for lands within the county (California Department of Conservation [DOC] 2026). Additionally, there are no California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) Classifications which include mapping of Mineral Resource Zones in Trinity County (DOC 2022). The United States Geological Survey Mineral Resources Online Data Spatial Map displays metallic and nonmetallic mineral resource sites throughout Trinity County with substantial mineral deposit sites located north and south of Interstate 299, State Route 36, and State Route 3 (United States Geological Survey 2026). Northern Trinity County contains Historic Lode and Historic Placer Gold Mine (DOC 1998). Mineral resources in Trinity County can be found at existing mines listed in Table 4-12-1. Some of these mines may be inactive or closed.

Table 4-12-1 Mines in Trinity County

Mine	Operation Type	Primary Product	Mine ID
Mud Creek Quarry	Quarry	Stone	91-53-0027
Blue Rock Quarry	Open Pit	Stone	91-53-0021
Blue Rock Quarry	Quarry	Rock	91-53-0014
Dinsmore Bar	Streambed Or Gravel Bar Skimming and Pitting	Sand and Gravel	91-53-0002
Bully Choop	Underground	Gold (Placer)	91-53-0018
Reico Mine	Quarry	Rock	91-53-0022
Mann Mine	Open Pit	Fill Dirt	91-53-0026
Thunder Rock	Open Pit	Shale and Fill Dirt	91-53-0013
La Grange Mine	Tailings Processing, Sand, and Gravel	Sand, Gravel, and Shale	91-53-0007
Oswald Placer Mine	Open Pit	Gold (Placer)	91-53-0024
Blue Rock Co.	Streambed Or Gravel Bar Skimming and Pitting, Quarry	Sand and Gravel	91-53-0012
Rattlesnake Mine	Open Pit	Gold (Placer)	91-53-0009

Source: DOC 2026

4.12.2 Regulatory Setting

a. Federal Regulations

U.S. Department of the Interior Minerals Availability System

This system identifies between 15 and 17 rare earth minerals as critical resources for United States Department of the Interior applications or resources which are critical to national security. It recommends

the development of a comprehensive approach to help ensure a secure supply of each resource and identifies risks as well as timeframes for actions.

b. State Regulations

Surface Mining and Reclamation Act

Gravel mining operations in Trinity County, and throughout the state, are subject to the California SMARA. The purpose of SMARA is to identify and protect areas containing significant mineral resources. In doing so, SMARA:

1. regulates surface mining operations to assure that adverse environmental effects are prevented or minimized,
2. requires reclamation of mined lands to a usable condition that is readily adaptable to alternative land uses,
3. produces and conserves minerals, and considers values relating to recreation, watershed, wildlife, range and forage, and aesthetic enjoyment, and
4. eliminates residual hazards to the public health and safety. Mining must comply with SMARA through all phases of a project, including the reclamation process.

c. Local Regulations

Trinity County Code of Ordinances

Chapter 17.30A of the County's Zoning Code (Surface Mining and Reclamation) regulates surface mining operations and the protection of mineral resources in the county. In combination with the applicable base zoning districts, surface mining uses may be permitted by right or allowed subject to approval of a use permit. Surface mining is allowed in certain zoning districts, but is restricted in several residential and commercial zones. Chapter 17.30A also requires County approval of a surface mining use permit, where applicable, and approval of a reclamation plan for surface mining.

4.12.3 Impact Analysis

a. Significance Thresholds and Methodology

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines a project may be deemed to have a significant impact on mineral resources if it would:

1. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource of value to the region and residents of the state; or
2. 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.

Impacts related to mineral resources were evaluated using information found in the General Plan Land Use Element Map and the DOC's Mines Online Map and Mineral Land Classification Map.

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1:	Would the project 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?
Threshold 2:	Would the project 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?

Impact MIN-1 The project would not modify the land use designation of mineral extraction sites in the county. There would be no impact.

Mineral resources have been mapped throughout Trinity County. Table 4-12-1 lists the mineral extraction sites present within county. Known mineral resources are located within Resource Land (RE) land use designated areas. The proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of known mineral resource sites, as no land use changes are proposed under the project. Additionally, there would be no interference with mineral extraction operations at any of the identified mineral resources sites. Therefore, development facilitated by the project would result in no impact.

Furthermore, all land in the county designated as Open Space (OS) must receive permission to mine or extract minerals on a case-by-case basis. There would be **no impact** regarding the loss of availability of known mineral resources in the Plan Area.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures would be required.

Significance After Mitigation

No impact would occur.

4.12.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope of the cumulative mineral resources analysis is the Planning Area and nearby areas containing mapped mineral resources or other identified mineral resource areas that could be affected by land use changes. This geographic scope is appropriate because potential impacts to mineral resources would occur where development could convert land containing known mineral resources or otherwise preclude access to such resources.

The cumulative mineral resources analysis is based on the summary of growth, land use, and mineral resource conditions discussed in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting,* and on development that could occur under the proposed project.

A cumulative impact to mineral resources would occur if the proposed project, together with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future development, would contribute to the loss of availability of a known mineral resource of regional or statewide value or a locally important mineral recovery site identified in a local plan. Cumulative development is not expected to result in the loss of availability of identified mineral resources or locally important mineral resource recovery sites. Furthermore, future mining and reclamation activities would be required to comply with applicable County regulations and SMARA. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to mineral resources would be less than significant.

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4.13 Noise

This section evaluates potential noise and groundborne vibration impacts that may result from the implementation of the project during construction and operation. Specifically, this analysis describes the environmental and regulatory setting, the criteria used to evaluate significance of potential noise impacts (including the exposure of noise-sensitive receivers to substantial or incompatible noise levels), methods used to evaluate potential impacts, and mitigation required to reduce potential impacts. Noise calculations associated with this analysis are included in Appendix F of this EIR.

4.13.1 Setting

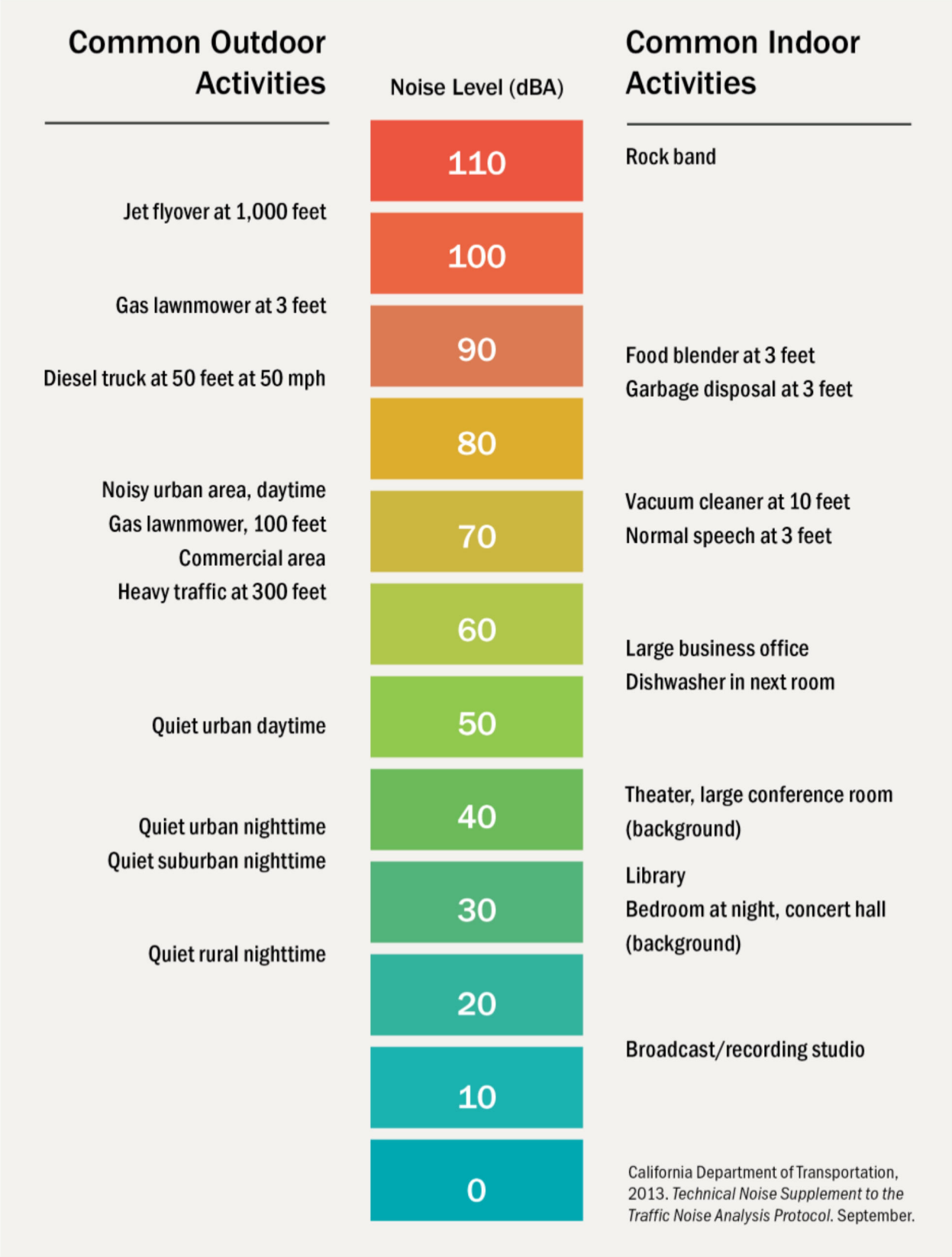
a. Fundamentals of Sound and Noise

Sound is a vibration, created by a moving or vibrating source, that transmits through a medium (such as a gas, liquid, or solid) and is capable of being detected by the hearing organs. Discussions of sound typically refer to the air pressure disturbances that result from these vibrations as they travel through the air from the source to a receiver's ear. Noise is defined as sound that is loud, unpleasant, unexpected, or undesired and may therefore be classified as a more specific group of sounds. The effects of noise on people can include general annoyance, interference with speech communication, sleep disturbance, and, in the extreme, hearing impairment (Caltrans 2013).

Noise levels are commonly measured in decibels (dB) using the A-weighted sound pressure level (dBA). The A-weighting scale is an adjustment to the actual sound pressure levels so that they are consistent with the human hearing response, which is most sensitive to frequencies around 4,000 hertz (Hz) and less sensitive to frequencies around and below 100 Hz (Kinsler, et al. 1999). Decibels are measured on a logarithmic scale that quantifies sound intensity in a manner similar to the Richter scale used to measure earthquake magnitudes. A doubling of the energy of a noise source, such as the doubling of vehicle traffic volumes, results in a noise level increase of 3 dB, whereas dividing the energy in half results in a 3 dB decrease (Crocker 2007). Figure 4.13-1 shows typical indoor and outdoor noise sources and their corresponding noise levels in dBA.

Human perception of noise has no simple correlation with sound energy, i.e., the perception of sound is not linear in terms of dBA or in terms of sound energy. Two sources, each containing the same sound energy, do not "sound twice as loud" as one source. It is widely accepted that the average healthy human ear can detect changes (either increases or decreases) of 3 dBA, which is recognized as being barely perceptible to most people. Similarly, a change of 5 dBA is readily perceptible and a change of 10 dBA sounds twice (or half) as loud (Crocker 2007).

Figure 4.13-1 Typical Noise Levels



The level and frequency content of sound changes as it travels from the source to a receiver. The most obvious change is the decrease in level as the distance from the source increases. The manner by which sound is reduced with distance depends on factors such as the type of source (e.g., a point or line source), the path the sound travels, site conditions, and the presence of intervening structures or other obstacles. Noise from a point source (e.g., construction equipment, industrial machinery, ventilation units) typically is reduced at a rate of 6 dBA per each doubling of distance away from the source. Noise from a line source (e.g., roadway, pipeline, railroad) typically is reduced at a rate of 3 dBA per each doubling of distance away from the source (Caltrans 2013). The propagation of noise is also affected by the absorption characteristics of the ground: a hard site, such as a parking lot or smooth body of water, provides no absorption/attenuation and the changes in noise levels with distance result simply from the geometric spreading of the source (i.e., 3 or 6 dBA reduction per doubling of distance for a point source or line source, respectively). Conversely, a soft site, such as soft dirt, grass, or scattered bushes and trees, may provide additional absorption/attenuation, potentially reducing noise levels an additional 1.5 dBA per doubling of distance away from the source (Caltrans 2013). Noise levels may also be reduced by intervening structures. The amount of reduction provided by the "shielding" of these features depends on the size of the structure(s), the location of the structure(s) relative to the noise source and receivers, and the frequency content of the noise levels. Natural terrain features, such as hills and dense woods, and man-made features, such as buildings and walls, can significantly alter noise levels. Generally, any large structure blocking the line of sight between a noise source and receiver will provide at least a 5 dBA reduction in source noise levels at the receiver (Federal Highway Administration [FHWA] 2011). The presence of building structures can substantially reduce noise levels from the exterior to the interior as well. The FHWA's guidelines indicate that modern building construction generally provides an exterior-to-interior noise level reduction of 20 to 35 dBA with closed windows.

The impact of noise is not a function of loudness alone. The time of day at which noise occurs and the duration of the noise are also important factors when considering potential noise impacts. Most noise that lasts for more than a few seconds is variable in its amplitude, i.e., the noise level continuously fluctuates over time. Consequently, a variety of noise descriptors have been developed. One of the most frequently used noise metrics is the equivalent continuous sound level (L_{eq}), which considers both duration and the sound power level of the source. The L_{eq} is defined as the single steady A-weighted level equivalent to the same amount of energy as that contained in the actual fluctuating levels over time.

The sound level that is exceeded "n" percent of time during a given sample period in the percentile noise level (L_n). For example, the L_{50} level is the statistical indicator of the time-varying noise signal that is exceeded 50 percent of the time (during each sampling period); that is, half of the sampling time, the changing noise levels are above this value and half of the time they are below it. This is called the "median sound level." The L_{10} level, likewise, is the value that is exceeded 10 percent of the time (i.e., near the maximum) and this is often known as the "intrusive sound level." The L_{90} is the sound level exceeded 90 percent of the time and is often considered the "effective background level" or "residual noise level."

Noise that occurs at night tends to be more disturbing than that which occurs during the day. Community noise is usually measured using the Day-Night Average Level (L_{dn}), which is the 24-hour average noise level with a +10 dBA penalty for noise occurring during nighttime hours (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.) hours. It is also measured using the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL), which is the 24-hour average noise level with a +5 dBA penalty for noise occurring during evening hours (7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.) and a +10 dBA penalty for noise occurring during nighttime hours (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.) (Caltrans 2013). Noise levels described by the L_{dn} and CNEL usually differ by about 1 dBA. The relationship between the peak-hour L_{eq} value and the L_{dn}/CNEL depends on the distribution of traffic during the day, evening, and night. Table 4.13-1 briefly defines measurement descriptors and other sound terminology used in this section.

Table 4.13-1 Sound Terminology

Term	Definition
Sound	A vibratory disturbance created by a vibrating object which, when transmitted by pressure waves through a medium such as air, can be detected by a receiving mechanism such as the human ear or a microphone.
Noise	Sound that is loud, unpleasant, unexpected, or otherwise undesirable.
Ambient Noise	The composite of noise from all sources near and far in a given environment.
Decibel (dB)	A unitless measure of sound on a logarithmic scale, which represents the squared ratio of sound-pressure amplitude to a reference sound pressure. The reference pressure is 20 micropascals, representing the threshold of human hearing (0 dB).
A-Weighted Decibel (dBA)	An overall frequency-weighted sound level that approximates the frequency response of the human ear.
Equivalent Noise Level (L_{eq})	The average sound energy occurring over a specified time period. In effect, L_{eq} is the steady-state sound level that in a stated period would contain the same acoustical energy as the time-varying sound that actually occurs during the same period.
Ambient Noise	The composite of noise from all sources near and far in a given environment.
Maximum and Minimum Noise Levels (L_{max} and L_{min})	The maximum or minimum instantaneous sound level measured during a measurement period.
Day-Night Level (DNL or L_{dn})	The energy average of the A-weighted sound levels occurring during a 24-hour period, with 10 dB added to the A-weighted sound levels occurring between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. (nighttime).
Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL)	The energy average of the A-weighted sound levels occurring during a 24-hour period, with 5 dB added to the A-weighted sound levels occurring between 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. and 10 dB added to the A-weighted sound levels occurring between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

Source: Data compiled by Rincon in 2023.

b. Fundamentals of Vibration

Groundborne vibration of concern in environmental analysis consists of the oscillatory waves that move from a source through the ground to adjacent structures. The number of cycles per second of oscillation makes up the vibration frequency, described in terms of hertz (Hz). The frequency of a vibrating object describes how rapidly it oscillates. The normal frequency range of most groundborne vibration that can be felt by the human body is from a low of less than 1 Hz up to a high of about 200 Hz. Typically, groundborne vibration generated by human activities attenuates rapidly with distance from the source of the vibration.

While people have varying sensitivities to vibrations at different frequencies, in general they are most sensitive to low-frequency vibration. Vibration in buildings, such as that from nearby construction activities, may cause windows, items on shelves, and pictures on walls to rattle. Vibration of building components can also take the form of an audible low-frequency rumbling noise, referred to as groundborne noise. Groundborne noise is usually only a problem when the originating vibration spectrum is dominated by frequencies in the upper end of the range (60 to 200 Hz), or when foundations or utilities, such as sewer and water pipes, physically connect the structure and the vibration source (Federal Transit Administration [FTA] 2018).

Vibration energy spreads out as it travels through the ground, causing the vibration level to diminish with distance away from the source. High-frequency vibrations diminish much more rapidly than low frequencies, so low frequencies tend to dominate the spectrum at large distances from the source. Discontinuities in the soil strata can also cause diffractions or channeling effects that affect the propagation of vibration over long distances (Caltrans 2020). When a building is impacted by vibration, a

ground-to-foundation coupling loss will usually reduce the overall vibration level. However, under rare circumstances, the ground-to-foundation coupling may amplify the vibration level due to structural resonances of the floors and walls.

Vibration amplitudes are usually expressed in terms of peak particle velocity (PPV). The PPV is normally described in inches per second (in/sec). PPV is defined as the maximum instantaneous positive or negative peak of a vibration signal. PPV is often used in monitoring of blasting vibration and other construction activity because it is related to the stresses that are experienced by buildings (Caltrans 2020).

c. Noise-Sensitive Land Uses

Noise exposure goals for various types of land uses reflect the varying noise sensitivities associated with those uses. Noise-sensitive land uses are typically those which may be adversely affected and/or disturbed by excessive levels of noise. Noise-sensitive land uses defined in the County's General Plan Noise Element include residential development, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, churches, and libraries (County of Trinity 2003).

Noise-sensitive land uses in the County include residences, assisted living facilities, motels and hotels, schools, libraries, places of worship, community centers, hospitals, local parks, and sensitive wildlife habitats.

d. Existing Noise Conditions and Sources

The majority of the Planning Area consists of federal-owned land, with significant portions of the county encompassed by wilderness areas (e.g., the Shasta-Trinity National Forest and Trinity Alps Wilderness) The existing noise environment in the county is predominantly characterized by vehicle traffic on major roadways. Other sources of noise include industrial and commercial uses (such as lumber yards) and aircraft from County airports and local airfields. Noise levels produced by these sources combine and contribute to the county's noise environment; however, the highest levels of noise are produced by roadways throughout the county.

To characterize the existing noise environment in the Planning Area, roadway noise contours were developed using a version of the FHWA traffic noise prediction model (FHWA-RD-77-108), which takes into account annual average daily traffic (AADT) volumes, speeds, automobile and truck percentages, and time of day splits (daytime, evening, and nighttime). This analysis was based on AADT data included as part of the AADT and VMT Analysis, prepared by Alta Planning + Design, Inc. (Alta) and included as Appendix C to this EIR. This analysis also incorporates 2023 vehicle classification data published by Caltrans (Caltrans 2023) and 2023 hourly traffic count data published by Replica for a typical weekday (Replica 2023). Using this information, existing traffic noise contours were developed for roadways in the Planning Area, which are presented in Appendix G.

4.13.2 Regulatory Setting

a. Federal Regulations

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has set exterior and interior noise goals in Title 24 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 51 (24 CFR Part 51). HUD specifies desirable maximum exterior and interior noise standards of 65 and 45 dBA DNL, respectively, for residential units developed under HUD funding. (These levels are also generally accepted by the State of California.) It is assumed that standard construction of residential dwellings typically provides a minimum exterior-to-interior noise reduction of 20 dBA with the windows closed.

Occupational Safety and Health Act

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has adopted regulations designed to protect workers against the effects of occupational noise exposure. These regulations list permissible noise level exposure as a function of the amount of time during which the worker is exposed. The regulations further specify a hearing conservation program that involves monitoring noise to which workers are exposed, ensuring that workers are made aware of overexposure to noise, and periodically testing the workers' hearing to detect any degradation.

Aircraft Noise Standards

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Advisory Circular Number 150 5020 2, "Noise Assessment Guidelines for New Helicopters," recommends the use of a cumulative noise measure, the 24-hour equivalent sound level, or L_{eq}(24-hr), so that the relative contributions of the heliport and other sound sources in the community can be compared. The L_{eq}(24-hr) is similar to the L_{dn} used in assessing the impacts of fixed-wing aircraft. The helicopter L_{eq}(24-hr) values are obtained by logarithmically adding the sound exposure level values over a 24-hour period.

Public Law 96 193 also directs the FAA to identify land uses that are "normally compatible" with various levels of noise from aircraft operations. Because of the size and complexity of many major hub airports and their operations, FAA Part 150 identifies a large number of land uses and their attendant noise levels.

Federal Transit Administration

The FTA provides criteria for assessing construction noise impacts based on the potential for adverse community reaction for various land use types in the *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual* (FTA 2018). These thresholds are commonly used for assessing construction noise impacts under CEQA in jurisdictions that have not adopted quantitative thresholds. Based on FTA recommendations, the daytime (i.e., 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.) construction noise limit for residential uses is 80 dBA L_{eq}(8-hr).

The *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual* also includes criteria for assessing vibration impacts during construction, which are shown in Table 4.13-2. The thresholds shown in Table 4.13-2 represent the limits at which minor architectural damage (i.e., non-structural) may occur to structures of various construction types.

Table 4.13-2 FTA Vibration Damage Criteria

Building Category	PPV (in/sec)
I. Reinforced concrete, steel, or timber (no plaster)	0.5
II. Engineered concrete and masonry (no plaster)	0.3
III. Nonengineered timber and masonry buildings	0.2
IV. Buildings extremely susceptible to vibration damage	0.12

PPV = peak particle velocity; in/sec = inches per second
Source: FTA 2018.

b. State Regulations

California General Plan Guidelines

State law requires general plans to include a Noise Element under Government Code Section 65302(f). The California General Plan Guidelines, published by the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation, indicate acceptable, specific land use types in areas with specific noise exposure. The

guidelines also offer adjustment factors that may be used to arrive at noise acceptability standards that reflect the noise control goals of the community, the community's sensitivity to noise, and the community's assessment of the relative importance of noise pollution. These guidelines are advisory, and local jurisdictions have the authority to set specific noise standards based on local conditions.

California Building Code

California Code of Regulations Title 24, Building Standards Administrative Code, Part 2, Chapter 12, and the California Building Code codify the state noise insulation standards. These noise standards apply to new construction in California to control interior noise levels as they are affected by exterior noise sources and interior noise sources from separate areas. The regulations specify that interior noise levels shall not exceed 45 dB CNEL/L_{dn} in any habitable room, as well as specifying sound transmission class requirements for walls, floors, and ceilings around sleeping units.

California Green Building Code

California Green Building Standards Code 2022 (CALGreen) Section 5.507.4, Acoustical Control, regulates construction of non-residential uses within the 65 dBA CNEL/L_{dn} contour of an airport, freeway, expressway, railroad, industrial noise source, or other fixed source. According to Section 5.507.4.1.1: "buildings exposed to a noise level of 65 dB L_{eq}(1-hr) during any hour of operation shall employ sound-resistant assemblies as determined by a prescriptive method (CALGreen Section 5.507.4.1) or performance method (CALGreen Section 5.507.4.2)."

Projects may demonstrate compliance through the prescriptive method if wall and roof-ceiling assemblies exposed to the noise source meet a composite sound transmission class (STC) rating of at least 50 or a composite outdoor/indoor transmission class (OITC) rating of no less than 40, with exterior windows of a minimum STC of 40 or OITC of 30. Projects may demonstrate compliance through the performance method if wall and roof-ceiling assemblies exposed to the noise source are constructed to provide an interior noise environment that does not exceed 50 dB L_{eq}(1-hr) in occupied areas during hours of operations.

Airport Noise Standards

California Code of Regulations Title 21, Subchapter 6, Airport Noise Standards, establishes 65 dBA CNEL as the acceptable level of aircraft noise for persons living in the vicinity of airports. Noise-sensitive land uses in locations where the aircraft exterior noise level exceeds 65 dBA CNEL are generally incompatible, unless an aviation easement for aircraft noise has been acquired by the airport proprietor, or the residence is a high-rise with an interior CNEL of 45 dBA or less in all habitable rooms and an air circulation or air conditioning system, as appropriate. Assembly Bill (AB) 2776 requires any person who intends to sell or lease residential properties in an airport influence area to disclose that fact to the person buying the property.

c. Local Regulations

Trinity County Code of Ordinances

Section 17.30.100 of the Trinity County Code of Ordinances contains performance standards relating to noise generated by any use or facility (other than transportation facilities or temporary construction work). Maximum sound pressure levels not to be exceeded at the lot line are presented in Table 4.13-3. Further corrections to these values are shown in Table 4.13-4 based on the time of day the noise is generated, the duration of the noise, and the character of the noise.

Table 4.13-3 Trinity County Code Maximum Noise Level Limits

Octave Bands Frequency in Cycles Per Second	Maximum Noise Level Permitted[1] (dB)
20–75	79
75–150	74
150–300	60
300–600	59
600–1,200	53
1,200–2,400	47
2,400–4,800	41
4,800–9,600	39

dB = decibels

[1] Measurements shall be made using the flat or "C" network using unweighted octave band sound pressure levels.

Source: Trinity County Code of Ordinances, Section 17.30.100(C), Table I.

Table 4.13-4 Corrections to Maximum Noise Level Limits

Type of Location of Operation of Noise	Correction in Decibels or Character
Daytime operation only	Plus 5
Noise source operates less than:	
20% of any one-hour period	Plus 5
5% of any one-hour period	Plus 10
Noise of impulsive character (such as hammering)	Minus 5
Noise of periodic character (such as hammering or screeching)	Minus 5

Source: Trinity County Code of Ordinances, Section 17.30.100(C), Table II.

Trinity County General Plan Noise Element

The Trinity County General Plan Noise Element (County of Trinity 2003) provides a policy framework for addressing potential noise impacts. Goals and policies applicable to the proposed project are as follows:

4.1: Goals

- To protect the citizens of the County from the harmful and annoying effects of exposure to excessive noise.
- To protect the economic base of the County by preventing incompatible land uses from encroaching upon existing or planned noise-producing uses.
- To preserve the tranquility of residential areas by preventing noise-producing uses from encroaching upon existing or planned noise-sensitive uses.
- To educate the citizens of the County concerning the effects of exposure to excessive noise and the methods available for minimizing such exposure.

Policy 4.2.1: New noise-sensitive land uses impacted by existing or projected future transportation noise sources shall include mitigation measures so that resulting noise levels do not exceed the standards shown in [Table 4.13-5].

Policy 4.2.2: Noise created by new transportation noise sources shall be mitigated so that resulting noise levels do not exceed the standards shown in [Table 4.13-5] at noise-sensitive land uses.

Table 4.13-5 Maximum Allowable Noise Exposure – Transportation Noise Sources

Land Use	Outdoor Activity Areas (L_{dn}, dB)	Interior Spaces	
		L_{dn}, dB	L_{eq}, dB[2]
Residential, Transient Lodging, Hospitals, Nursing Homes	60	45	–
Churches, Meeting Halls	60	–	45
Schools, Libraries, Museums, Day-Care Centers	–	–	45

dB = decibels; L_{dn} = day-night average sound level; L_{eq} = equivalent continuous sound level

[1] Where the location of outdoor activity areas is unknown or is not applicable, the exterior noise level standard shall be applied to the property line of the receiving land use.

[2] As determined for a typical werst-case hour during periods of use.

Source: Trinity County General Plan Noise Element, Table VI (County of Trinity 2003).

Policy 4.2.3: New noise-sensitive land uses impacted by stationary noise sources shall include mitigation measures so that resulting noise levels do not exceed the standards shown in [Table 4.13-6].

Policy 4.2.4: Noise created by new proposed stationary noise sources or existing stationary noise sources which undergo modifications that may increase noise levels shall be mitigated so as not to exceed the noise level standards of [Table 4.13-6] at noise-sensitive land uses.

Table 4.13-6 Maximum Allowable Noise Exposure – Stationary Noise Sources

	Daytime (7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.)	Evening (7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.)	Nighttime (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.)
Hourly Equivalent Sound Level (L_{eq}), dB	55	50	45
Maximum Sound Level (L_{max}), dB	75	70	65

dB = decibels; L_{eq} = equivalent continuous sound level; L_{max} = maximum sound level

[1] As determined at outdoor activity areas. Where the location of outdoor activity areas is unknown or not applicable, the noise exposure standard shall be applied at the property line of the receiving land use.

[2] For recurring impulsive noise sources the allowable maximum (L_{max}) noise exposure shall be 70 dBA in the daytime, 65 dBA in the evening, and 60 dBA in the nighttime using "Fast" sound level meter response.

[3] For noise sources primarily comprised of speech and/or music, the allowable noise exposure shall be reduced by 5 dB.

[4] For noise sources that are found and declared by the Board of Supervisors to be from uses of such importance to the county for economic, environmental enhancement or movement of goods, services or people that the allowable noise exposure shall be increased by 10 dB.

Source: Trinity County General Plan Noise Element, Table VII (County of Trinity 2003)

4.13.3 Impact Analysis

a. Significance Thresholds

According to Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*, impacts related to noise would be potentially significant if implementation of the project would do any of the following:

1. Generate 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;
2. Generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels; or
3. 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, expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels.

Construction Noise

While the County does not have specific noise level criteria for assessing construction noise impacts, the FTA has developed guidance for determining whether construction of a project would result in a substantial temporary increase in noise levels. Based on FTA guidance, for residential land uses, a significant impact would occur if construction noise were to exceed an eight-hour 80 dBA L_{eq} daytime noise limit and an eight-hour 70 dBA L_{eq} nighttime noise limit (FTA 2018).

Operational Noise

Stationary Operational Noise

The County has adopted noise standards in the General Plan Noise Element that regulate stationary operational noise sources in the County, presented in Table 4.13-6; however, these standards will be replaced by draft Policy NOI 2.3. Significant stationary operational noise impacts would occur if development facilitated under the proposed project were to result in a noise increase of 1.5 dBA (for ambient noise environments of 65 dBA CNEL and higher), 3 dBA (for ambient noise environments between 60 and 64 dBA CNEL), or 5 dBA (for ambient noise environments of less than 60 dBA CNEL) (proposed Policy NOI 2.3).

Traffic Noise

The County has adopted noise standards in the General Plan Noise Element that regulate transportation noise sources in the County, presented in Table 4.13-5; however, these standards will be replaced by draft Policy NOI 1.3. Significant stationary operational noise impacts would occur if development facilitated under the proposed project were to result in an increase of 4 or more dBA (proposed Policy NOI 1.3).

Groundborne Vibration

The County does not specify quantitative construction vibration thresholds; therefore, the limits established by the FTA, presented in Table 4.13-2, were used to determine the significance of vibration impacts to buildings, during construction. For construction vibration impacts to building structures, a significant impact would occur if construction of future development projects facilitated by the proposed project would generate vibration levels exceeding 0.2 in/sec PPV at residential structures and 0.3 in/sec PPV at modern industrial/commercial structures, which are the limits where minor cosmetic damage may occur to these building types. For sites with extremely fragile historic buildings, vibration impacts were evaluated against a threshold of 0.12 in/sec PPV.

b. Methodology

Construction Noise

Construction of development facilitated by the proposed project would generate temporary levels of increased noise at receptors located near construction sites. Construction equipment can be considered to operate in two modes: stationary and mobile. Stationary equipment operates in a single location for one or more days at a time, with either fixed-power operation (e.g., pumps, generators, and compressors) or variable-power operation (e.g., pile drivers, rock drills, and pavement breakers). Mobile equipment moves around a construction site with power applied in cyclic fashion, such as bulldozers, graders, and loaders. Each phase of construction has its own noise characteristics due to specific equipment mixes; some will have higher continuous noise levels while others may have intermittent, higher instantaneous noise levels. Therefore, construction noise levels may fluctuate depending on the type of equipment being used, construction phase, and/or equipment location. Typically, grading and other earthwork activities generate the highest noise levels because these activities typically involve the largest equipment and cover the greatest work areas.

Variation in power imposes difficulty in characterizing the noise source level from construction equipment. Power variation is accounted for by describing the noise level at a reference distance from

the equipment operating at full power and adjusting it based on the duty cycle[1] of the activity to determine the L_{eq} of the operation (FHWA 2006). It is very common for a programmatic analysis such as this to utilize a conservative standard reference distance of 50 feet. Conversely, project-specific noise analyses typically use more specific distances based on more detailed project information. Note that it is typically uncommon for multiple pieces of heavy equipment to be operating together so close to a nearby property line for extended periods of time.

Construction of development facilitated by the project is assumed to include typical heavy-duty equipment such as bulldozers, excavators, front-end loaders, dump trucks, graders, etc. It is assumed that diesel engines would power all construction equipment. Construction equipment would not all operate at the same time or location due to the different tasks performed by each piece of equipment and mobile nature of construction equipment throughout the course of a workday. In addition, construction equipment would not be in constant use during the 8-hour operating day. Construction noise levels were estimated generally using the FHWA Roadway Construction Noise Model (RCNM) (FHWA 2006). RCNM predicts construction noise levels for a variety of construction operations based on empirical data and the application of acoustical propagation formulas.

Impact devices such as pile drivers may be used to drive foundation piles into the ground and may be used during construction of development facilitated by the project. Although use of pile drivers is uncommon during construction for the type of development facilitated by the project, this analysis considers the potential for use of this equipment as a conservative analysis as some ground types or subterranean parking facilities may require their use. These types of equipment would typically operate separately from other equipment. Maximum noise levels associated with the types of heavy equipment most likely to be utilized during development associated with the project are shown in Table 4.13-7.

Table 4.13-7 Maximum Noise Levels Produced by Typical Construction Equipment

Equipment	Estimated Maximum Noise Level (dBA L_{max})	
Distance from Equipment	**50 feet**	**100 feet**
Air Compressor	80	74
Backhoe	80	74
Concrete Mixer	85	79
Concrete Saw	90	84
Dozer	85	79
Dump Truck	84	78
Excavator	85	79
Grader	85	79
Jackhammer	85	79
Loader	80	74
Paver	85	79
Pickup Truck	55	49
Pile-driver (Impact)	95	89
Pile-driver (Sonic)	95	89
Roller	85	79
Scarifier	85	79
Scraper	85	79

dBA = A-weighted decibels; L_{max} = maximum sound level
Source: FHWA 2006.

[1] A "duty cycle" is the fraction, or period, of time during which a piece of equipment is active.

Operational Noise

Operational Stationary Noise

The primary on-site noise sources associated with operation of development facilitated by the project, and those discussed in this analysis, would include those associated with standard operation of residential and commercial land uses. These sources could include, but are not limited to, landscape and building maintenance activities, stationary mechanical equipment (e.g., pumps, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning [HVAC] units, and other mechanical equipment), garbage collection activities, and other stationary sources of noise such as conversations between people and amplified music.

Operational Traffic Noise

In addition to on-site operational noise, development accommodated under the proposed project would generate off-site noise in the form of additional vehicle trips, thereby increasing noise levels on roadways within the Planning Area. Noise increases associated with traffic volume increases were calculated using a version of the FHWA traffic noise prediction model (FHWA-RD-77-108), which takes into account annual average daily traffic (AADT) volumes, speeds, automobile and truck percentages, and time of day splits (daytime, evening, and nighttime). This analysis was based on forecasted AADT data included as part of the AADT and VMT Analysis prepared by Alta and included as Appendix C to this EIR. The analysis also incorporates vehicle classification data published by Caltrans (Caltrans 2023) and hourly traffic count data published by Replica for a typical weekday (Replica 2023).

Groundborne Vibration

Operation of the proposed project is not expected to include any substantial sources of vibration (e.g., heavy duty industrial operations). Therefore, construction activities would have the greatest potential to generate groundborne vibration affecting sensitive receptors and/or structures adjacent to a construction site, especially for construction sites located near a historic site or structure. Because groundborne vibration could cause architectural damage to structures and is measured in an instantaneous period, vibration impacts are typically modeled based on the closest distance from the location of vibration-intensive construction activities, which is conservatively assumed to be the edge of a project site, to the edge of the nearest sensitive offsite structure. Construction vibration levels that could occur due to buildout of the proposed project are based on reference vibration levels published by the FTA, presented in Table 4.13-8.

Table 4.13-8 Typical Vibration Levels Produced by Various Construction Equipment

Equipment	Vibration Level at 25 Feet (in/sec PPV)
Impact Pile Driver	1.514 (upper range)
	0.644 (typical)
Sonic Pile Driver	0.734 (upper range)
	0.170 (typical)
Vibratory Roller	0.210
Hoe Ram	0.089
Large Bulldozer	0.089
Caisson Drilling	0.089
Loaded Truck	0.076
Jackhammer	0.035
Small Bulldozer	0.003

Source: FTA 2018

Trinity County Cannabis Program EIR

Much of the potential cannabis-related development contemplated by the project was previously analyzed in the Trinity County Cannabis Program EIR (State Clearinghouse number 2018122049), certified in 2020 (2020 EIR). The 2020 EIR includes Mitigation Measure 3.12-1, which would restrict construction activities to daytime hours (i.e., between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.) to avoid construction noise impacts to sensitive receptors during the more sensitive evening and nighttime hours. This requirement was subsequently incorporated in the County Ordinance No.s 315-824(5), 315-826(3), 315-828(5), 315-835(2), 315-837(3), 315-842(6), and 315-843(6). In its noise analysis, the 2020 EIR concluded that long-term traffic noise increases along five roadway segments would be 3 dB or greater, resulting in potentially significant traffic noise impacts. The 2020 EIR determined that no feasible mitigation to address these long-term traffic noise level increases exists and concluded that traffic noise impacts would be significant and unavoidable.

Because the proposed General Plan Update establishes a new countywide policy framework and updated noise thresholds that supersede the 2020 EIR for cannabis activities occurring consistent with the General Plan, this EIR focuses on noise effects not previously addressed or requiring reevaluation under the General Plan Update.

Related to the 2020 EIR, the County requires noise attenuation plans be prepared for proposed cannabis projects that would be constructed within 350 feet of sensitive receptors (legal dwellings).

c. Project Impacts and Mitigation

Threshold 1:	Would the project result in 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?

Impact NOI-1 Construction of development facilitated by the project would temporarily generate noise in the vicinity of individual development sites. Depending on the scope of individual developments, construction may involve long durations, substantial soil movement, use of large, heavy-duty equipment, and/or pile driving near noise-sensitive land uses, which may produce noise levels exceeding applicable construction noise thresholds. Implementation of Mitigation Measures NOI-1a and NOI-1b would reduce construction noise levels; however, because details of future project-specific construction are unknown at this time, temporary construction noise impacts would remain significant and unavoidable. Operation of development facilitated by the proposed project would introduce noise from new stationary and transportation noise sources. Noise levels associated with new stationary noise sources would not exceed applicable noise standards and operational noise impacts would be less than significant. Noise levels associated with an increase in on-road traffic would exceed applicable noise standards; however, no feasible mitigation measures exist, and traffic-related noise impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

Construction Noise

Future construction activity associated with development under the proposed General Plan would require the use of a variety of noise-generating equipment that would result in temporary increases in ambient noise levels on an intermittent basis. Noise levels generated by construction would vary depending on the types of equipment used, the durations of use, distance between the noise source and surrounding receptors, and presence or absence of barriers or other nearby noise-attenuating buildings/structures. Maximum noise levels at 50 and 100 feet from various equipment types that may be used during construction are presented above in Table 4.13-7. The loudest noise levels are typically generated by impact devices (e.g., pile drivers) and heavy-duty offroad equipment (e.g., cranes, dozers, excavators, and graders). Construction noise would occur intermittently throughout the course of a day and, in some cases, multiple pieces of equipment may operate simultaneously, thus generating combined noise levels that are incrementally higher than the individual equipment noise levels shown in Table 4.13-9.

Sensitive receptors located throughout the project area could be exposed to noise associated with construction activities from reasonably foreseeable development under implementation of the proposed General Plan. Because specific development projects have not yet been determined at individual sites, this analysis conservatively assumes the potential for construction activities to occur within 50 feet of sensitive receptors throughout the course of a typical construction day. As shown in Table 4.13-9, sensitive receptors located within 50 feet of the listed typical construction equipment may be exposed to maximum noise levels ranging between 55 and 90 dBA L_{max} and may be exposed to maximum noise levels up to 95 dBA L_{max} if pile drivers are used. Note that these noise levels represent the operation of individual pieces of equipment; however, a typical construction day would likely consist of multiple pieces of equipment operating simultaneously. Therefore, for the purposes of this analysis, an example scenario consisting of three typical pieces of construction equipment (i.e., an excavator, dozer, and jackhammer) operating simultaneously over the course of an eight-hour workday was evaluated. This scenario was based on equipment typically used during demolition and grading phases, which often represent the loudest phases of construction. The combined average noise levels at 50 and 100 feet generated by simultaneous operation of these three pieces of equipment are shown in Table 4.13-9.

Table 4.13-9 Construction Noise Levels Associated with the Proposed Project

Equipment	Individual Noise Level at 50 Feet Away (dBA L_{eq}[8-hr])	Combined Noise Level at 50 Feet Away (dBA L_{eq}[8-hr])	Combined Noise Level at 100 Feet Away (dBA L_{eq}[8-hr])
Dozer	81	85	79
Excavator	81		
Jackhammer	78		

dBA = A-weighted decibels; L_{eq} = equivalent continuous sound level
See Appendix F for RCNM outputs.

As stated previously, construction noise levels would vary depending on the types of equipment used, the durations of use, and the distance from construction activity to nearby receptors. Engine noise reduction technology, including silencers, continues to improve, but heavy construction equipment still generates noise exceeding ambient levels that could cause intermittent annoyance to nearby receptor properties. Noise associated with construction of future development projects within the Planning Area under the proposed project could exceed the eight-hour 80 dBA L_{eq} daytime significance thresholds at residential land uses.

Implementation of and adherence to proposed Policy NOI 3.2 (Noise from Heavy Equipment) would reduce construction noise levels to the extent feasible through the required use of sound mitigation tools or equipment for work adjacent to sensitive uses. While implementation of proposed Policy NOI 3.2 would reduce construction noise impacts associated with future development projects carried out under the proposed project, project-level details are not currently available for future development projects that would be facilitated under the proposed project; therefore, it is not possible to determine exact noise levels, locations, or time periods for construction of such projects, or construction noise at adjacent properties. Construction noise levels associated with future development projects may exceed the FTA's daytime construction noise limits; therefore, temporary noise impacts associated with construction of future development projects under the proposed project would be **potentially significant**.

Operational Noise

Stationary Noise Sources

Stationary and other sources of noise include those associated with the standard operation of land uses, such as landscape and building maintenance activities, stationary mechanical equipment (e.g., pumps, HVAC units), garbage collection activities, and other stationary and area sources such as people's voices and amplified music. Noise generated by residential uses are generally short-term and intermittent in

nature. Furthermore, Division 13, Chapter 2.6, Section 21085 of the 2025 California Public Resources Code states that, for residential projects, noise generated by project occupants and their guests on human beings is not a significant effect on the environment. The project would provide for a substantial increase in residential development throughout the Planning Area. Residential development tends to have lower noise levels than other uses, such as industrial or commercial uses.

The primary sources of stationary operational noise associated with development facilitated by the project are expected to be HVAC and/or other mechanical equipment. A typical residential HVAC system (the Carrier 24ABA4030) produces a sound pressure level of 68 dBA at a distance of 3.28 feet away, while a typical commercial HVAC system (the Carrier WeatherMaker 50FCQM28) produces a sound pressure level of 78 dBA at a distance of 3.28 feet. Depending on the placement of HVAC units relative to nearby receptors, noise generated by HVAC equipment may exceed the County's noise standards shown in Table 4.13-6, which vary depending on the time of day at which the noise is produced. A single residential HVAC unit would exceed the County's daytime, evening, and nighttime noise thresholds if located at 14, 26, and 46 feet or closer, respectively, from the property line of a receiving noise-sensitive land use. A single commercial HVAC unit would exceed the County's daytime, evening, and nighttime noise thresholds if located at 45, 81, and 144 feet or closer, respectively, from the property line of a receiving noise-sensitive land use. Individual projects would be required to locate HVAC equipment (and/or other mechanical equipment) far enough from sensitive receptors and/or shield equipment such that noise levels do not exceed the County's noise standards.

Additionally, the following proposed policies from the General Plan Noise Element would minimize potential adverse noise-related impacts from stationary operational noise sources: Policy NOI-2.1 (Noise Source Control), Policy NOI-2.2 (Project Review), Policy NOI-2.3 (Acoustical Analysis), Policy NOI-2.4 (Noise Attenuation), Policy NOI-2.5 (Noise Protection), Policy NOI-2.6 (Stationary Noise Sources), and Policy NOI-2.7 (Noise Exemptions). These policies require consideration and the quantification of noise that could be generated by new development during the project approval process. Implementation of these proposed policies would ensure that stationary operational noise from future development projects is analyzed and mitigated to acceptable levels prior to project approval. Therefore, stationary operational noise impacts associated with development facilitated by the proposed project would be **less than significant**.

Traffic Noise

Implementation of the project would result in additional buildout, which would generate new vehicle trips that could incrementally increase operational traffic noise throughout the Planning Area. Appendix G provides future roadway noise contours projected for the year 2050 based on traffic data provided by Alta (included as Appendix C). As shown in Appendix G, the 60, 65, and 70 dBA CNEL noise contours are presented for each roadway segment in the Planning Area. Existing and future AADT volumes, as well as other traffic data used in the analysis, for each Planning Area roadway segment are included in Appendix C. Table 4.13-10 presents both existing (year 2023) and future (year 2050) noise levels at 50 feet from each roadway segment and the estimated traffic noise increases on each roadway segment. As shown in Table 4.13-10, future traffic noise increases on the five following roadway segments would exceed the County's noise increase threshold of 4 dBA (proposed Policy NOI 1.3): State Route 3 (junction with State Route 36), State Route 3 (Hayfork), State Route 36 (Humboldt/Trinity County line), State Route 36 (Lower Mad River Road), and State Route 36 (junction with State Route 3 north to Trinity/Shasta County line). As shown in Table 4.13-10, traffic noise increases on these segments would range between 4.8 and 6.2 dBA CNEL. As a result, traffic noise impacts on these five roadway segments would be **potentially significant**.

Traffic noise increases on all remaining roadway segments would not exceed the County's proposed noise increase threshold of 4 dBA, and traffic noise impacts on these remaining roadway segments would be **less than significant**.

Table 4.13-10 Traffic Noise Increases Along Roadway Segments in the Planning Area

Roadway	Segment	Noise Level 50 Feet from Roadway Centerline (dBA CNEL)		Applicable Noise Increase Threshold (dBA CNEL)	Noise Increase (dBA CNEL)[1]	Significant Increase (Yes/No)?
		Existing (2023)	Future (2050)			
State Route 3	Junction with State Route 36	62.4	68.7	4.0	**6.2**	**Yes**
State Route 3	Morgan Hill Road	65.9	68.8	4.0	2.9	No
State Route 3	Hayfork	67.8	73.0	4.0	**5.1**	**Yes**
State Route 3	Weaverville, northern Junction with State Route 299	64.9	62.8	4.0	-2.1	No
State Route 3	County Dump Road	65.3	65.7	4.0	0.5	No
State Route 3	Rush Creek Road	60.8	62.0	4.0	1.2	No
State Route 3	Trinity Center State Highway Maintenance Station	59.1	60.4	4.0	1.2	No
State Route 3	Coffee Creek Road	56.7	58.5	4.0	1.8	No
State Route 3	U.S. Forest Service Road to Trinity/Siskiyou County line	53.4	57.3	4.0	3.9	No
State Route 36	Humboldt/Trinity County Line	62.9	68.7	4.0	**5.9**	**Yes**
State Route 36	Lower Mad River Road	61.9	67.3	4.0	**5.4**	**Yes**
State Route 36	Forest Glen Maintenance Station	58.5	62.1	4.0	3.6	No
State Route 36	Junction with State Route 3 north to Trinity/Shasta County line	57.2	62.0	4.0	**4.8**	**Yes**
State Route 299	Humboldt/Trinity County line	68.4	70.7	4.0	2.3	No
State Route 299	Eastern limit of Salyer	67.4	66.5	4.0	-1	No
State Route 299	Burnt Ranch Road	66.3	65.9	4.0	-0.4	No
State Route 299	Del Loma	65.5	64.8	4.0	-0.7	No
State Route 299	Little French Creek Road	65.6	65.2	4.0	-0.4	No
State Route 299	Big Flat Camp. Wheel Gulch Road	65.7	63.7	4.0	-2.0	No
State Route 299	Weaverville, western community limits	67.0	64.0	4.0	-3.0	No
State Route 299	Weaverville, Washington Street	70.6	69.3	4.0	-1.3	No
State Route 299	Martin Road/Nugget Lane	70.7	71.5	4.0	0.9	No
State Route 299	Eastern junction with State Route 3	70.5	73.5	4.0	3.0	No

Roadway	Segment	Noise Level 50 Feet from Roadway Centerline (dBA CNEL)		Applicable Noise Increase Threshold (dBA CNEL)	Noise Increase (dBA CNEL)[1]	Significant Increase (Yes/No)?
		Existing (2023)	Future (2050)			
State Route 299	Lewiston Road	69.9	72.0	4.0	2.1	No
State Route 299	New Lewiston Road to Trinity/Shasta County line	70.9	73.8	4.0	2.9	No

dBA = A-weighted decibels; CNEL = Community Noise Equivalent Level

[1] Noise increases shown in **bold** would exceed the County's proposed traffic noise increase threshold of 4 dBA (Policy NOI 1.3).

Source: Alta 2026; Caltrans 2023.

Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures are required to reduce construction-related noise impacts to sensitive receptors near subsequent development projects.

NOI-1a Project-Specific Construction Noise Study

The County shall require, as a standard condition of approval, the preparation of a Construction Noise Study, prepared by a qualified noise expert to meet the requirements herein, for development projects that are located within 500 feet of noise-sensitive land uses identified in the County's General Plan Noise Element (e.g., residential development, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, churches, and libraries) and have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Construction durations of 18 months or more (excluding interior finishing);
- Use of large, heavy-duty equipment rated at 300 horsepower or greater;
- The potential for pile driving; or
- Located within 1,000 feet of other construction projects with overlapping construction schedules.

The Construction Noise Study shall characterize sources of construction noise, quantify noise levels at noise-sensitive uses (e.g., residential development, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, churches, and libraries) and identify measures to reduce noise exposure during the construction period. The Construction Noise Study shall identify reasonably available noise reduction devices or techniques to reduce noise levels to acceptable levels and/or durations including through reliance on any relevant federal, state, or local standards or guidelines or accepted industry practices. Noise reduction devices or techniques may include but not be limited to silencers, enclosures, sound barriers, and/or placement of restrictions on equipment or construction techniques (e.g., alternative installation methods to pile driving such as cast-in-place systems or pile cushioning). Each measure in the Construction Noise Study shall identify anticipated noise reductions at noise-sensitive land uses.

NOI-1b Measures to Reduce Construction Noise

If the results of the Project-Specific Construction Noise Study described in Mitigation Measure NOI-1a show that noise levels associated with an individual project are expected to exceed applicable thresholds, the County shall require construction contractors to implement as many of the following measures as feasible prior to issuance of a demolition, grading, and/or building permit:

- **Shielding and Silencing.** Power construction equipment (including combustion engines), fixed or mobile, shall be equipped with noise shielding and silencing devices consistent with manufacturer's standards or the Best Available Control Technology. Equipment shall be properly maintained, and the project applicant or owner shall require any construction contractor to keep documentation on-site during any earthwork or construction activities demonstrating that the equipment has been maintained in accordance with manufacturer's specifications.
- **Enclosures and Screening.** All outdoor fixed mechanical equipment shall be enclosed or screened from off-site noise-sensitive uses. The equipment enclosure or screen shall be impermeable (e.g., solid material with minimum weight of 2 pounds per square foot) and break the line-of-sight from the equipment and off-site noise-sensitive uses.
- **Construction Staging Areas.** Construction staging areas shall be located as far from noise-sensitive uses as reasonably possible and feasible in consideration of site boundaries, topography, intervening roads and uses, and operational constraints.
- **Smart Back-Up Alarms.** Mobile construction equipment shall have smart back-up alarms that automatically adjust the sound level of the alarm in response to ambient noise levels. Alternatively, back-up alarms shall be disabled and replaced with human spotters to ensure safety when mobile construction equipment is moving in the reverse direction.

- **Equipment Idling.** Construction vehicles and equipment shall not be left idling for longer than five minutes when not in use.
- **Workers' Radios.** All noise from workers' radios, including any on-site music, shall be controlled such that they are not audible at off-site noise-sensitive uses.
- **Use of Driven Pile Systems.** Driven (impact), sonic, or vibratory pile drivers shall not be used, except in locations where the underlying geology renders alternative methods infeasible, as determined by a soils or geotechnical engineer and documented in a soils report.
- **Temporary Noise Barriers.** Temporary noise barriers, such as walls or sound blankets, shall be positioned between construction activities and noise-sensitive uses when modeled noise levels from construction equipment exceed applicable standards and have a direct line of sight with noise sensitive receivers. Placement, orientation, size, and density of acoustical barriers shall be specified by a qualified acoustical consultant.
- **Noise Complaint Response.** Project applicants shall designate an on-site construction project manager who shall be responsible for responding to any complaints about construction noise. This person shall be responsible for responding to concerns of neighboring properties about construction noise disturbance and shall be available for responding to any construction noise complaints during the hours that construction is to take place. They shall also be responsible for determining the cause of the noise complaint (e.g., bad silencer) and shall require that reasonable measures be implemented to correct the problem. A toll-free telephone number and email address shall be posted in a highly visible manner on the construction site at all times and provided in all notices (mailed, online website, and construction site postings) for receiving questions or complaints during construction and shall also include procedures requiring that the on-site construction manager respond to callers and email messages. The on-site construction project manager shall be required to track complaints pertaining to construction noise, ongoing throughout demolition, grading, and/or construction and shall notify the County's Community Development Department of each complaint occurrence.

Project applicants shall also be required to implement any additional requirements identified and recommended by the Project-Specific Construction Noise Study prepared under Mitigation Measure NOI-1a, and shall maintain proof that notice of, as well as compliance with, the identified measures have been included in contractor agreements.

Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measures NOI-1a and NOI-1b, as well as implementation of proposed goals, policies, and implementation measures in the County's General Plan Noise Element, would reduce potential noise impacts during construction activities. However, as exact details of future project-specific construction activities are unknown at this time, construction noise could still exceed applicable significance thresholds or potentially need to occur during the more sensitive nighttime hours, resulting in noise impacts during nighttime hours. Although implementation of Mitigation Measures NOI-1a and NOI-1b would substantially reduce construction noise impacts, it cannot be guaranteed that construction noise impacts would be reduced to below the applicable construction noise threshold of 80 dBA L_{eq}(8-hr) at noise-sensitive receptors in all cases or that nighttime construction work may not be needed at times. Therefore, construction noise impacts associated with development facilitated under the proposed project would remain **significant and unavoidable**.

As discussed above, traffic noise increases on five roadway segments would exceed the County's proposed traffic noise increase threshold of 4 dBA. While typical approaches to mitigate traffic noise are through the use of physical structures (such as walls/barriers, natural berms, or a combination of both) to shield sensitive receptors from the noise source (i.e., roadway) and/or the use of "quiet pavement" (such as rubberized asphalt or open-grade asphalt concrete overlays), these methods would not be feasible due to the length of the state highway segments and number of affected sensitive receptors along them. Additionally, any potential barrier locations that fall within the Caltrans right-of-way would be under the

jurisdiction of Caltrans, not Trinity County. Furthermore, installation of physical barriers along highway segments may introduce other environmental impacts (such as aesthetic impacts).

Note that traffic increases are not solely due to the proposed project; rather, they account for both implementation of the proposed project and the projected population growth in the county through the year 2050. However, due to the reasons described above, long-term traffic-related noise impacts would remain **significant and unavoidable**.

Threshold 2:	Would the project result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Impact NOI-2 Construction of development facilitated by the project could temporarily generate levels of groundborne vibration exceeding applicable vibration thresholds at nearby structures; however, implementation of Mitigation Measure NOI-2 would reduce construction vibration impacts to less-than-significant levels.

Construction

Vibration impacts related to building damage would most commonly occur when a future development project uses equipment that generates high vibration levels (e.g., pile drivers and/or vibratory rollers) in close proximity to a historical resource constructed of fragile building materials. These historic structures are typically more sensitive to vibration damage than structures that were built using more modern building techniques and materials. The extent of vibration impacts generated during construction generally depends on the specific construction equipment utilized, the duration of equipment use, and the proximity equipment is operated relative to nearby vibration-sensitive structures. Construction for most individual development projects would require heavy equipment, especially on sites where certain geologic conditions require the use of pile driving. Such heavy equipment may operate within 25 feet of nearby buildings, representing a high potential for vibration impacts. Table 4.13-11 shows vibration levels produced by typical construction equipment at various distances from the equipment source. As shown in Table 4.13-11, construction equipment generating the highest levels of vibration would be pile drivers (producing vibration levels up to 1.518 in/sec PPV at 25 feet) and vibratory rollers (producing vibration levels up to 0.21 in/sec PPV at 25 feet). Vibration levels shown in bolded and underlined text exceed one or more of the FTA building damage criteria shown in Table 4.13-2.

Table 4.13-11 Vibration Levels Produced by Typical Construction Equipment at Various Distances (Building Damage Criteria)

Equipment		Approximate Vibration Level (in/sec PPV)			
		25 feet from Source	50 feet from Source	100 feet from Source	200 feet from Source
Pile Driver (impact)	Upper range	**1.518**	**0.537**	**0.190**	0.067
	Typical	**0.644**	**0.228**	0.081	0.028
Pile Driver (sonic)	Upper range	**0.734**	**0.260**	0.092	0.032
	Typical	**0.17**	0.060	0.021	0.008
Vibratory Roller		**0.21**	0.074	0.026	0.009
Hoe Ram		0.089	0.031	0.011	0.004
Large[1] Bulldozer		0.089	0.031	0.011	0.004
Caisson Drilling		0.089	0.031	0.011	0.004
Loaded Trucks		0.076	0.027	0.010	0.003
Jackhammer		0.035	0.012	0.004	0.002

Equipment	Approximate Vibration Level (in/sec PPV)			
	25 feet from Source	50 feet from Source	100 feet from Source	200 feet from Source
Small[2] Bulldozer	0.003	0.001	<0.001	<0.001

in/sec = inches per second PPV = peak particle velocity

[1] "Large" in this context refers to equipment rated at 100 horsepower or greater.

[2] "Small" in this context refers to equipment rated less than 100 horsepower.

Source: FTA 2018

As shown in Table 4.13-11, the greatest vibration impacts would result from the use of pile drivers and vibratory rollers. Construction of development projects facilitated by the proposed project may require the use of pile driving equipment, thus creating the potential for adverse vibration impacts to existing structures in the vicinity of development sites. Depending on the type of pile driver used, vibration levels from pile drivers could range between 0.17 and 1.518 in/sec PPV at a distance of 25 feet from the source and between 0.021 and 0.190 in/sec PPV at a distance of 100 feet from the source. Additionally, planned large-scale infrastructure projects under the General Plan may require the use of rollers, or other compaction equipment, for roadway paving and resurfacing, potentially resulting in adverse vibration impacts. Vibration levels from use of a vibratory roller could range between 0.21 and 0.026 in/sec PPV at a distance of 25 feet and 100 feet from the source, respectively.

Vibration levels from typical equipment, such as bulldozers, loaded trucks, and jackhammers, would not exceed applicable FTA vibration thresholds at historic structures, residential structures, or engineered structures located 25 feet or greater from the equipment. However, vibration levels from pile driving equipment and vibratory rollers may exceed applicable vibration thresholds at this same distance depending on the equipment used and type of structure affected.

At this stage of planning, project-level details are not available for individual development projects that would be carried out under the proposed project; therefore, it is not possible to determine exact vibration impacts at specific structures at this time. However, based on the scope of development carried out under the proposed project, construction of new uses in high-density areas and near historical resources would represent the greatest potential for adverse vibration impacts due to the close proximity between new development sites and existing surrounding structures. Depending on the distance between construction equipment and affected structures as presented in Table 4.13-11, vibration levels generated during construction of individual projects may exceed applicable building damage vibration thresholds at nearby structures, resulting in **potentially significant** vibration impacts.

Operation

The primary source of operational vibration introduced by development associated with the proposed project would be vehicular traffic on local roadways, which may generate some level of groundborne vibration. However, according to the FTA *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual* (FTA 2018) guidance document, rubber tires and suspension systems dampen vibration levels from trucks to a level that is rarely perceptible. Therefore, groundborne vibration resulting from an increased number of vehicles associated with new development within the Planning Area would generally not be perceptible by sensitive receptors and impacts related to operational groundborne vibration would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

NOI-2 Construction Vibration Control Plan

Prior to issuance of grading or building permits, the County shall require the project applicant to prepare a groundborne vibration analysis to assess and mitigate potential vibration impacts associated with construction activities that include:

- Use of a pile driver within:
  - 135 feet of fragile/historic structures
  - 100 feet of non-engineered timber and masonry buildings (e.g., most residential buildings)
  - 75 feet of engineered concrete and masonry (no plaster)
- Use of a vibratory roller within:
  - 40 feet of fragile/historic structures
  - 25 feet of any other structure (residential, commercial, or industrial)
- Use of a dozer or other large earthmoving equipment within:
  - 20 feet of fragile/historic structures
  - 15 feet of any other structure (residential, commercial, or industrial)

The vibration analysis shall be conducted by a qualified and experienced acoustical consultant or engineer. The vibration levels generated by construction equipment shall not exceed applicable FTA vibration thresholds for architectural damage (i.e., 0.12 in/sec PPV at fragile/historic structures, 0.2 in/sec PPV at non-engineered timber and masonry buildings, and 0.3 in/sec PPV for engineered concrete and masonry structures). If vibration levels were to exceed these thresholds, alternative methods and equipment, such as drilling piles as opposed to pile driving, use of static rollers as opposed to vibratory rollers, and use of lower horsepower equipment as applicable, shall be employed. If necessary, such as when high-vibration equipment may be used within close proximity to a fragile/historic structure, construction vibration monitoring shall be conducted to ensure the applicable vibration thresholds are not exceeded at nearby structures.

Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure NOI-2 would require a vibration analysis for construction activities conducted within specified distances of various types of structures. The vibration analysis would determine alternative methods of construction or types of equipment necessary to reduce vibration levels generated at nearby structures. In addition, Mitigation Measure NOI-2 would require vibration monitoring, as needed, to ensure that vibration levels do not exceed applicable vibration thresholds. Implementation of Mitigation Measure NOI-2 would reduce construction vibration impacts to a **less than significant** level.

Threshold 3:	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?

Impact NOI-3 The proposed project would not expose people residing or working in the Planning Area to excessive airport-related noise levels. Airport-related noise impacts would be less than significant.

Airports within the Planning Area include the Hayfork Airport, Hyampom Airport, Ruth Airport, Trinity Center Airport, and the Weaverville Airport. According to the Trinity County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (Trinity County Airport Land Use Commission 2009), the 60 dBA CNEL noise contours associated with the Hayfork Airport, Hyampom Airport, Ruth Airport, and Weaverville Airport do not extend beyond the respective airport properties; therefore, noise levels in areas surrounding these airports would be below 60 dBA CNEL, which is within the “Normally Acceptable” category for low-density single-family residential uses; i.e., the County’s strictest noise compatibility threshold. The 60 dBA CNEL noise contour associated with the Trinity Center Airport extends slightly past the airport property to the east, south, and west; however, the airport is bounded by Trinity Lake to the east and south and new noise-sensitive uses would not be developable in these affected areas. Similarly, while there are existing single-family residences situated on the west side of the airport, no other new noise-sensitive land uses would be developed on this side of the Trinity Center Airport; therefore, this airport would not expose proposed sensitive receptors to excessive levels of airport noise.

Development of any proposed noise-sensitive land uses around these airports would not be exposed to noise levels exceeding the County's land use compatibility guidelines. Airport-related noise impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

4.13.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope for cumulative noise impacts is the Planning Area plus a 0.25-mile radius around the Planning Area. This geographic scope is appropriate because noise attenuates quickly with distance, and this represents a conservative geographic extent within which noise impacts may occur. The cumulative development scenario is described in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting*.

Cumulative projects that may be constructed simultaneously with future development projects under the proposed project could, without mitigation, combine to temporarily increase noise levels at sensitive receptors located in the vicinity of future cumulative projects. Although this scenario is unlikely due to how quickly noise attenuates with distance, the potential exists for significant cumulative construction noise impacts. As discussed in Impact NOI-1, implementation of Mitigation Measures NOI-1a and NOI-1b, as well as consistency with the proposed goals and policies from the General Plan Update, would reduce noise generated during both construction and operation of new development facilitated by the proposed project. While mitigation measures would be implemented to the extent feasible, it is still possible that construction of future development projects facilitated by the proposed project may result in a considerable contribution to cumulative impacts related to a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels.

Similarly, development sites in close proximity to one another may introduce operational noise sources that, if operated simultaneously, may generate permanently higher cumulative noise levels. However, adherence to the policies of the General Plan Update and noise regulations of the County Code of Ordinances would minimize the permanent increase in ambient noise levels generated by operational activities associated with cumulative development. Therefore, cumulative noise impacts related to a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels would not be significant.

Cumulative development would contribute to increases in traffic on local roadways, resulting in traffic noise increases above County thresholds (established as part of proposed Policy NOI 1.3). The cumulative traffic noise impact would be significant. The project would facilitate the development in the county that would result in new vehicle trips, contributing to the increase in cumulative traffic noise beyond the threshold; therefore, the project would have a considerable contribution to this significant cumulative traffic noise impact.

Vibration generated by human activities, such as construction, is localized and rapidly attenuates with distance. It is possible that construction activities with cumulative development may occur at the same time as other development projects. However, it is unlikely that vibration-generating equipment used during construction of multiple development projects would operate close enough to each other such that cumulative vibration impacts at the same receptors or structures would occur. Therefore, cumulative vibration impacts would not be significant.

Cumulative development of noise-sensitive land uses near the County's airports may expose residents and/or workers to airport-related noise; however, the noise contours of each airport are contained primarily within the boundaries of each airport property and noise levels in immediate areas surrounding these airports would be within "Normally Acceptable" noise compatibility ranges. Therefore, cumulative airport-related noise impacts would not be significant.

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4.14 Population and Housing

This section evaluates the potential impacts on population growth and housing associated with implementation of the proposed project. Because population demographics frequently go beyond jurisdictional boundaries, this analysis uses Trinity County and California for comparative analysis. These points of reference provide comparisons and perspective to highlight distinguishing qualities of Trinity County.

4.14.1 Setting

Population, housing, and employment data from the Trinity County Transportation Commission (TCTC), the United States Census Bureau, and the California Department of Finance (DOF) are used in the sections below to provide an analysis of potential population and housing impacts for Trinity County, California.

a. Population

Several governmental agencies estimate or measure the population of Trinity County, including the TCTC, United States Census Bureau, and DOF. TCTC prepares a regional growth projection for the County as part of its recurring update to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The most recent TCTC regional growth projection is in 5-year increments within the 2022-2042 RTP (TCTC 2023).

The DOF and United States Census Bureau also collect and analyze demographic data for cities and counties throughout California. DOF then uses the data to estimate population and develop future projections. Table 4.14-2 shows population change in Trinity County and its cities from 1970 to 2020, including the percentage of the county's population. Trinity County does not contain any incorporated cities and is an unincorporated area. Trinity County's population in 1970 was approximately 7,615 people and grew to approximately 16,070 people by 2020, an increase of 8,455 people, or 111 percent. According to the DOF, between 2000 and 2020 the County grew by 3,039 people, despite a decline between 1990 and 2000 of 22 people.

Table 4.14-1 Population Change of Trinity County (1970-2020)

	California		Trinity County	
Year	Population	Annual Growth	Population	Annual Growth
1970	19,971,065	n/a	7,615	n/a
1980	23,510,115	1.64%	11,850	4.52%
1990	29,758,213	2.38%	13,063	0.98%
2000	33,140,771	1.08%	13,031	-0.02%
2010	37,223,900	1.17%	13,786	0.56%
2015	38,810,306	0.85%	14,906	1.58%
2020	39,535,623	0.37%	16,070	1.53%

Source: DOF 1982, 2007, 2012, 2021.

b. Households

A household is defined by the DOF and the United States Census Bureau as a group of people who occupy a housing unit. A household differs from a dwelling unit because the number of dwelling units includes both occupied and vacant dwelling units. Not all of the population lives in households. A portion lives in group quarters, such as board and care facilities, while others are unhoused.

Small households (one to two persons per household [pph]) traditionally reside in units with zero to two bedrooms; family households (three to four pph) normally reside in units with three to four bedrooms. Large households (five or more pph) typically reside in units with four or more bedrooms. However, the number of units in relation to the household size may also reflect preference and economics; many small households obtain larger units, and some large families live in small units for economic reasons.

Table 4.14-2 compares the number and size of households in Trinity County as a whole for every five years from the period 2010-2025. As shown therein, the total number of households in the County has increased every five years, however, has recently decreased in 2025. The average household size in the County increased slightly from 2.20 pph in 2010 to 2.59 pph in 2025.

Table 4.14-2 Trinity County Household Data (2010-2025)

Area	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total Households	**6,076**	**6,137**	**6,281**	**6,033**
Annual Change %	–	0.20%	0.46%	-0.13%
Average Household Size	**2.20**	**2.19**	**2.52**	**2.59**
Annual Change %	–	-0.091%	2.85%	0.091%

Source: DOF 2021, 2025a, 2025b

c. Projections

Table 4.14-3 shows DOF population forecasts from 2020 through 2050 for Trinity County and for California overall. It also shows the population of the county and state and the annual change percentage. Trinity County's population is projected to fluctuate and decrease in the 30-year period. The growth rate is expected to peak in 2035 before tapering off in 2050. The rate of growth for the county is expected to decrease in the short term with some small increases in the long term, while the state's growth is expected to gradually increase over time.

Table 4.14-3 California and Trinity County Population Forecasts (2020-2050)

	Trinity County		California	
Year	Population	Annual Change	Population	Annual Change
2020	16,103	n/a	39,535,726	n/a
2025	15,766	-0.422%	39,172,142	0.184%
2030	15,615	-0.192%	39,651,187	0.234%
2035	15,739	0.158%	40,105,580	0.228%
2040	15,838	0.125%	40,468,122	0.180%
2045	15,851	0.016%	40,729,125	0.128%
2050	15,823	-0.035%	40,819.078	0.044%

Source: DOF 2025c

4.14.2 Regulatory Setting

a. State Regulations

State Housing Element Law

State housing element statutes (Government Code Sections 65580-65589.9) mandate that local governments adequately plan to meet the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community. The law recognizes that in order for the private market to adequately

address housing needs and demand, local governments must adopt land use plans and regulatory systems that provide opportunities for, and do not unduly constrain, housing development. As a result, state housing policy rests largely upon the effective implementation of local general plans and in particular, housing elements. Additionally, Government Code Section 65588 dictates that housing elements must be updated at least once every five years. Trinity County's most recent housing element, (Trinity County 2024-2029 Housing Element) was certified August 2025.

Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan

California's Housing Element law requires that each county and city develop local housing programs to meet their "fair share" of future housing growth needs for all income groups, as determined by the DOF. The regional metropolitan planning organization or regional transportation planning agency are then tasked with distributing the state-projected housing growth need for their region among their city and county jurisdictions by income category. This fair share allocation is referred to as the Regional Housing Needs Assessment process. The Regional Housing Needs Assessment represents the minimum number of housing units each community is required to plan for through a combination of: 1) zoning "adequate sites" at suitable densities to provide affordability; and 2) housing programs to support production of below-market rate units. Trinity County was assigned one very low housing unit (up to 50 percent of area median income) and one low housing unit (between 51 and 80 percent of area median income), for a total of two housing units, in the 7th Cycle Regional Housing Needs Assessment (Department of Housing and Community Development 2023).

Prohousing Designation Program

The Prohousing Designation Program seeks to acknowledge and support jurisdictions that go above and beyond state housing law to help accelerate housing production. A jurisdiction with a Prohousing Designation may receive priority processing or funding points when applying for several funding programs. Trinity County submitted an application for a Prohousing Designation in December 2025 and received the designation as of March 2026.

b. Local Regulations

Trinity County Transportation Commission

The TCTC serves as the coordinating and advocacy agency for transportation funding for Trinity County. TCTC acts as the countywide planning and programming agency for transportation related issues. TCTC plays a leading role in transportation by fostering regional partnerships, identifying transportation needs, and initiating long-term transportation planning. The RTP was adopted in February 2023. This comprehensive transportation plan uses California Department of Finance data to forecast future population, housing, and employment in Trinity County and the cities therein, through 2042.

Trinity County Housing Element

The Trinity County Housing Element was adopted August 5, 2025. Housing Element goals and policies are intended to preserve affordable units and prevent displacement in the county as follows:

Goal HE 1: **Ensure the provision of adequate public facilities and services to support existing and future residential development.**

Policy HE 1.1 Constraints. Remove constraints to housing development imposed by County requirements.

Goal HE 2: **Proactively promote the development of secure, safe, sanitary, healthy, and affordable housing for all members of the community.**

Policy HE 2.1 Variety of Housing Types. Encourage the production of a variety of housing types to serve all income levels.

Policy HE 2.2 Affordable Housing. Support the development of affordable housing and affordable homeownership opportunities.

Policy HE 2.3 Special Needs Housing. Encourage the construction or placement of sufficient housing units necessary to meet the needs of households with special housing requirements.

Policy HE 2.5 Emergency Housing Development. Support the development of emergency housing.

Policy HE 2.6 Short-term Emergency Housing. Support community efforts and citizens in need of short-term emergency housing.

Policy HE 2.10 Mobile Home and RV Parks. Encourage and support the development of mobile home and RV parks to expand both long-term and emergency housing options in the county.

Goal HE 4: **Maximize opportunity and housing choice throughout the county and proactively work to overcome patterns of economic segregation and discrimination based upon age, sex, race, sexual orientation, religion, familial status, ethnic background, or disability.**

Policy HE 4.1 Equal Opportunity Housing. Continue to support efforts to promote equal opportunity in housing.

Policy HE 4.2 Service Providers. Support local, regional, and State agencies in the provision of fair housing services in Trinity County.

Policy HE 4.3 Collaborative Efforts. Support collaborations with the State of California, regional jurisdictions, and local agencies that work to overcome historic patterns of segregation and discrimination through education and outreach, regional planning studies and research, or coordinated programs.

Policy HE 4.4 Affirmative Furthering Fair Housing Consideration. Consider affirmatively furthering fair housing goals in all housing-related policy decisions.

Program HE-23 Anti-displacement Program. In combination with programs included in this Housing Element, adopt a multi-pronged anti-displacement strategy to work to relieve displacement pressures caused by the increasing income gap and increasing housing and insurance costs in the county. The strategy shall include measures that encourage affordable housing production, work to preserve existing affordable housing, and protect current residents from displacement in rapidly changing portions of the county, particularly in rural areas with fewer resources. The anti-displacement strategy may include, but is not limited to, the following potential efforts production, preservation, protection for current tenants, and preparation.

4.14.3 Impact Analysis

a. Significance Thresholds and Methodology

Population and housing trends in the county were evaluated by reviewing the most current data available from the United States Census Bureau, California DOF, and TCTC. Impacts related to population are generally social or economic in nature. Under CEQA, a social or economic change is generally not considered a significant effect on the environment unless the changes are directly linked to a physical change. This EIR focuses on the physical environmental impacts that could result from population and housing growth or displacement.

The following thresholds of significance are based on Appendix G to the *CEQA Guidelines*. For purposes of this EIR, implementation of the proposed project may have a significant adverse impact if it would do any of the following:

1. 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), or
2. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

For purposes of this analysis, "substantial" unplanned population growth is defined as growth resulting from extending infrastructure, removing major constraints, or otherwise causing new growth to occur. "Substantial" displacement would occur if allowed land uses would displace more residences than would be accommodated through growth accommodated by the proposed project.

b. Projects Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1:	Would the project 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)?

Impact POP-1 The proposed project would facilitate the construction of new housing in the Planning Area. The proposed project would accommodate and plan for population growth and includes policies to manage growth and development. Impacts would be less than significant.

Implementation of the proposed project would accommodate additional residential development within Trinity County by revising land use designations. As shown in Table 2-3 in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, implementation of the proposed project would facilitate population growth of up to 7,450 residents and 902 housing units under modest buildout assumptions between 2025 and 2050. This would result in a Trinity County population of 23,304 residents and 8,999 housing units in 2050.

Although the projected population under the proposed project would exceed the population forecast prepared by DOF, which estimates approximately 15,823 residents in Trinity County by 2050 (DOF 2025c), the proposed project is a policy-level land use update that does not induce population growth. The proposed project would not include construction of new infrastructure, extension of public utilities, or other improvements that would directly induce population growth. Instead, the proposed project would provide a long-range planning framework that allows future development to occur in a planned manner.

The proposed project's land use changes primarily update density ranges, development standards, and allowable land uses. The project facilitates a broad range of potential development types, including residential, mixed-use, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, and cannabis-related uses, consistent with the intent of each land use designation. While the proposed project allows additional residential capacity, these changes do not include new infrastructure, utilities, or other improvements that would directly induce population growth.

The 7th Cycle Housing Element includes policies that direct development toward areas with existing or planned services, encourage infill, and support production of a variety of housing types without promoting new infrastructure expansion. Relevant policies include Goal HE 1, Goal HE 2, and Goal HE 4, which collectively ensure that increased development capacity occurs in a planned and supported pattern.

In addition, the proposed project includes a guiding principle related to land use, housing, and zoning, which identifies land for future development while promoting compatible land uses, revitalizing underused properties, expanding affordable housing, improving wildfire resilience, and supporting collaborative solutions to housing needs. Proposed Land Use Element policies also emphasize retaining rural character, providing a range of housing types, and guiding growth to areas with existing development. Relevant policies include Policy LU-2.1 (Rural Character), Policy LU-4.1 (Range of Housing

Types), Policy LU-8.1 (Accommodating Future Growth), Policy LU-8.2 (Development Density), and Policy LU-8.3 (Infill Development).

The proposed project is a long-range policy update that plans for and evaluates the environmental consequences of potential future growth through 2050. As described in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, the modest buildout scenario used in this EIR is an analytical assumption for evaluating physical impacts and does not mean all development capacity would be realized. Although the buildout scenario reflects population and housing levels greater than DOF's countywide forecast, the proposed project does not itself approve specific growth-inducing infrastructure, extend major utility systems into undeveloped areas, or remove the physical, topographic, wildfire, and service constraints that continue to limit growth in Trinity County. The project therefore would accommodate potential growth but would not directly or indirectly induce substantial unplanned population growth. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significant After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 2:	Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

Impact POP-2 Development facilitated by the project would not result in the displacement of substantial numbers of housing or people. The proposed project would facilitate the development of new housing, while preserving existing residential neighborhoods. Impacts would be less than significant.

Implementation of the proposed project would not displace substantial numbers of existing housing or people. The proposed project is a policy-level planning document and does not approve or identify any specific development projects, demolition activities, neighborhood clearance, or removal of occupied housing units. The proposed project contains updated land use designations that implement updated development capacities within Trinity County, including Agricultural, Resource, Residential, Commercial, and Mixed-Use designations. These changes primarily expand housing choice and flexibility within the existing land use framework and do not require the removal of existing residential neighborhoods to achieve planned development capacity.

Some residential and mixed-use designations established by the proposed project, such as Medium Density Residential (MDR), High Density Residential (HDR), Commercial (C), and Mixed-Use (MU), allow higher residential densities than are currently permitted in some areas. However, these designations are generally applied within or adjacent to existing unincorporated communities where development has already occurred and where infrastructure and services are available. The proposed project does not approve demolition or identify any specific redevelopment actions that would remove existing housing.

Policies in the County's adopted Housing Element, particularly Goal HE-2, promotes the development of affordable housing and supports housing stability for lower-income and special-needs households, further reducing the likelihood or severity of displacement. In addition, proposed Land Use Element Policies LU 8.1 (Accommodating Future Growth), LU 8.2 (Development Density), and LU 8.3 (Infill Development) ensure that future development occurs in a planned manner supported by appropriate land designations, maintains low-density development in rural areas where services are limited, and prioritizes infill within existing communities to maximize use of existing infrastructure.

The proposed project also directs new growth within and near unincorporated communities and focuses higher-intensity development in already developed areas. Concentrating new housing in these locations would not require displacement of existing residences to achieve planned levels of development. As

noted above, the proposed project and Housing Element encourage affordable housing, infill, and housing choice, which together reduce pressure on existing neighborhoods and support development of new units rather than replacement of existing housing. Therefore, the proposed project would not displace substantial numbers of housing or people. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significant After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

4.14.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope of the cumulative population and housing analysis is Trinity County. This scope is appropriate because population and housing projections at the county/regional level are used to assess long-term service needs, housing demand, and infrastructure planning. The cumulative analysis considers past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects listed in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting*, in combination with the proposed project.

The potential cumulative population impact would occur if the incremental population growth facilitated by the proposed project, when combined with other cumulative development, resulted in substantial population growth beyond existing trends or exceeded the County's ability to accommodate growth in an orderly manner. While cumulative development would contribute incrementally to population growth over time, it does not include construction of new major infrastructure, extension of public utilities, or other improvements that would directly or indirectly induce unplanned population growth. Population changes would continue to be influenced by market demand and infrastructure availability. Accordingly, cumulative impacts related to unplanned population growth would be less than significant.

The potential cumulative housing impact would occur if cumulative development resulted in the displacement of substantial numbers of existing residents or housing units, necessitating construction of replacement housing elsewhere. No cumulative development projects have been identified that would rely on widespread demolition of existing residential neighborhoods to accommodate non-residential growth. Cumulative development occur incrementally and would primarily add new housing units within or adjacent to existing communities. The County's adopted Housing Element includes policies that promote housing stability, preservation of existing housing, and development of a range of housing types, which reduce pressure on existing residential neighborhoods and minimize the potential for displacement. In combination with land use policies that prioritize infill development and limit development intensity in rural areas, these measures reduce the likelihood that cumulative development would result in a net loss of housing or displacement of existing residents. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to housing displacement would be less than significant.

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4.15 Public Services and Recreation

This section assesses potential impacts on public services, including fire, police, public schools, libraries, parks, and recreation from the Trinity County General Plan Update (proposed project). Impacts related to water and wastewater infrastructure and solid waste collection and disposal are discussed in Section 4.18, *Utilities and Service Systems*.

4.15.1 Setting

a. Fire Protection

Fire protection services in the Trinity County are provided by special districts called volunteer fire districts or volunteer fire departments (VFDs). There are 15 VFDs in Trinity County, including Trinity Center, Lewiston, Hayfork, Hawkins Bar, Southern Trinity, Coffee Creek, Junction City, Post Mountain, Salyer, Zenia-Kettenpom, Weaverville, Douglas City, Barker Valley, Down River, and Forest Glen (Trinity County Fire Safe Council 2025a).

Each VFD takes on the responsibility to cover a certain region. In Trinity County, VFDs often have large areas of responsibility, with most of the designated land being places with little development in state or federal responsibility areas. In addition to covering their local communities, VFDs are the first response to the increasing occurrence of wildfires in their large areas of responsibility in heavily forested, mountainous areas. VFDs are established by residents and operated by volunteers to supply services. While some funding assistance is provided by the County, most VFDs in Trinity County must fundraise to maintain adequate funding levels and have difficulty receiving equipment and services needed for optimal operation.

Additionally, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the United States Forest Service (USFS) operate fire protection services in the county. CAL FIRE operates three stations and is responsible for the suppression of wildland fires. The USFS has 13 stations throughout the county that assist with wildfire responses, rescues, and other emergencies within areas of federal responsibility. The BLM operates out of its single field office in Redding, which services a portion of the Northern California District, including Trinity County. BLM Fire focuses on fire management and vegetative fuels management on BLM lands.

ISO Ratings

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) rates fire departments and assigns public protection classifications for the establishment of fire insurance rates. Many districts have multiple ISO ratings depending on distance to fire stations or water hydrants and are often broken up by city and rural service areas. The higher the Insurance Rating number the lower the level of service and the higher the cost for a homeowner's fire insurance. ISO ratings range from Class 1, representing the highest level of fire protection, to Class 10, which indicates that no recognized fire protection services are available. For all-volunteer fire departments, an ISO Class 4 represents the highest rating achievable, while ratings above Class 8 indicate significant limitations in fire protection services. The ISO ratings for fire protection service providers are included in the following profiles.

Personnel, Facilities and Equipment

Weaverville Fire Protection District

Weaverville Fire Protection District (FPD) has a 79 square mile area of responsibility centered on the town of Weaverville and stretching out to surrounding mountainous, forested areas. Weaverville FPD has an area of responsibility stretching from the Trinity Alps Resort to the north, Browns Mountain to the south, Oregon Mountain to the west, and Rush Creek Road to the east. Weaverville FPD has approximately 25

volunteers on its roster. Weaverville FPD has two fire stations: #1, located at 125 Bremer Street and #2 at 290 East Weaver Street, Weaverville. Weaverville FPD is very active in the community and responds to 500 calls per year. Weaverville FPD has five fire trucks and four utility vehicles in service. Weaverville received an ISO rating of 4 (Trinity Local Agency Formation Commission [LAFCo] 2020a).

Coffee Creek Fire Protection District

The Coffee Creek FPD has a 123 square mile area of responsibility in northern Trinity County around Coffee Creek and the surrounding communities, providing emergency response for structural and wildland fires, as well as rescue and medical assistance. The District operates with an ISO rating of 5, reflecting rural conditions and limited water infrastructure. Coffee Creek FPD has six active volunteer personnel on its roster.

Coffee Creek FPD has one fire station located at 1 Cedar Road, Trinity Center. The District's fleet includes a Type 1 Engine, Ambulance, Type III wildland brush rig, and a Type II Tanker, enabling response to diverse incidents across challenging terrain. Mutual aid agreements with neighboring departments and CAL FIRE supplement local capacity during large-scale emergencies (Trinity LAFCo 2020b).

Trinity Center Volunteer Fire Department

Trinity Center VFD has a single fire station located at 111 Trinity Vista Street in Trinity Center. The Trinity Center VFD provides fire protection and emergency medical services (EMS) services within the Department boundaries, and maintains the fire hydrants located in Trinity Center, Trinity Meadows, Northwood Estates, Trinity Lake Knolls, and the KOA Campground. Trinity Center VFD has a 48 square mile area of responsibility centered around the town of Trinity Center. The area of responsibility encompasses most of the western shore of Trinity Lake and areas around California State Route (SR) 3. The Department operates with an ISO rating of 5/9. This rating means properties within 5 road miles of the station and 1,000 feet of a hydrant are rated 5, while those within 5 miles but further from a hydrant are rated 9 (Trinity Center Community Service District 2026).

The Department has twelve active personnel and is managed by a volunteer Fire Chief/Medical Director and two Captains. The fire station houses three engines, a Type I pumper engine, a Type II pumper engine, a Type III CAFS/pumper engine, one rescue truck, and one ambulance, an ALS ambulance (Trinity LAFCo 2020c).

Lewiston Fire Protection District

Lewiston FPD has one fire station located at 200 Texas Avenue, Lewiston, and has a responsibility area of approximately 79 square miles bordered by Browns Mountain in the east, SR 299 in the south, Trinity Dam to the north, and the Shasta County border to the west. The Lewiston FPD provides fire suppression, emergency medical response, and rescue services to the Lewiston area in Trinity County. The District holds an ISO Public Protection Classification of 4, indicating a relatively strong level of fire protection for a rural community.

Staffing consists of approximately 21 volunteer firefighters, supported by a Fire Chief and a governing board. The District has seven apparatuses including: three type I fire engines, two of which have the ability to function as type III engines; two type VI fire engines; a rescue truck; and a water tender (Trinity LAFCo 2024).

Douglas City Volunteer Fire Department

Douglas City VFD has two fire stations: Fire Station #1 is located at 96024 Steiner Flat Road in Douglas City and Fire Station #2 is located at 411 Bridge Road to serve homes along Poker Bar. Douglas City VFD has an area of responsibility of 49 square miles centered around the town of Douglas City. The area of responsibility stretches from Little Browns Creek to the north, Hazel Gulch to the south, Browns Creek to the west, and Joes Peak to the east. Populated areas within the area of responsibility include Douglas

City, Poker Bar, homes along B-Bar-K Road, homes along Reading Creek Road, homes along Indian Creek Road, and homes along Deerlick Springs Road (Trinity LAFCo 2023b).

The Douglas City VFD has approximately 15 volunteer firefighters. Fire Station #1 has four apparatuses including: a rescue, Type 1 engine, Type 3 engine, Type 6 engine, and a water tender. Fire Station #2 has two engines. The ISO rating for Douglas City CSD is not specified (Trinity LAFCo 2023b).

Junction City Volunteer Fire Department

Junction City VFD has three fire stations: Fire Station #1 is located at Dutch Creek Road's junction with SR 299, Fire Station #2 is located on Red Hill Road in Northern Junction City, and Fire Station #3 is located 5201 Canyon Creek Road due south of the ghost town of Canon City. Junction City VFD has an area of responsibility of 63 square miles stretching from the end of Canyon Creek Road to the north, Dutch Creek to the south, Helena to the west, and Oregon Mountain to the east. The Department has approximately 14 volunteers (ResponseAtlas 2026).

Downriver Volunteer Fire Department

The Downriver VFD's fire station is located at 140 Fire House Road, Big Flat. Downriver VFD has an area of responsibility of 150 square miles centered on the town of Big Bar. Downriver VFD's area of responsibility is centered along the SR 299 corridor and the Trinity River, stretching from Chaparral Mountain to the west, Helena to the east, Pattison Peak to the south, and the edge of the town of Denny to the north. Downriver VFD's area of responsibility also includes Hobo Gulch Road, an entry road into the Trinity Alps Wilderness. The Department serves the Cedar Flat area and assists the communities of Junction City and Hawkin's Bar when needed. Downriver VFD currently has seven volunteers on its roster, with two volunteers specialized in emergency medical responses.

Downriver VFD recently completed its firehouse, and interior work is ongoing. The Department currently operates an ambulance, a wildland engine acquired as surplus from the USFS, and a structure engine. Additional equipment includes the Jaws of Life, a rescue rig, and rappel ropes. As of 2022, the department lacks internet and landline service at the station and needs training materials, security cameras, and better communication with the Weaverville dispatch office. Non-functioning repeaters and unreliable radio signals force some calls to be handled by cell phone (County of Trinity 2023).

Hawkins Bar Volunteer Fire Department

The Hawkins Bar VFD's fire station is located at 71 Trinity Court in Hawkins Bar. Hawkins Bar VFD has an area of responsibility of approximately 122 square miles including the populated areas of Trinity Village and Denny. The area stretches from Underwood Mountain to the south, the Humboldt County border to the north, the east face of mountains around the South Fork Trinity River to the west, and Denny to the east. The Department has approximately 14 volunteers (County of Trinity 2023).

Salyer Volunteer Fire Department

The Salyer VFD's fire station is located at 275 Salyer Loop Road and has an area of responsibility of approximately 19 square miles that encompasses the town of Salyer and mountainous terrain south of the town on the South Fork Trinity River. The area of responsibility ranges from Gainor Peak to the south, Willow Creek to the north, the South Fork Trinity River to the west, and the tops of a mountain chain separating the South Fork Trinity River from the rest of Trinity County to the east.

Salyer VFD currently has seven volunteers on its roster, which fluctuates between five and ten persons per year. The Department's station is operational but faces communication issues with the Weaverville Dispatch Office due to a broken repeater and lack of cell service in the area. The department has a water tender, a rescue truck, and three Type II fire engines. Salyer VFD needs a Type III engine but has been unable to secure grant funding. The department also requires improvements to its training space, which needs paving.

Hayfork Fire Protection District

The Hayfork FPD provides fire suppression, emergency medical response, and rescue services to the Hayfork Valley and surrounding areas in Trinity County. The district operates with an ISO Public Protection Classification of 4, which reflects a relatively strong level of fire protection for a rural community (Trinity LAFCo 2023a).

The Department's singular fire station located at 195 Hyampom Road in central Hayfork. Hayfork VFD has an area of responsibility of 84 square miles centered around the town of Hayfork and encompassing all of Hayfork Valley. Hayfork VFD has a new fire station completed in 2015. Hayfork VFD has two type I fire engines, two water tenders, and miscellaneous fire gear. (Trinity LAFCo 2023a).

Post Mountain Volunteer Fire Department

Post Mountain VFD has a singular fire station located at 731 White Oak Road in Post Mountain. Post Mountain VFD has an area of responsibility of approximately 152 square miles. The area of responsibility is centered around Post Mountain, or as it is also known as, the Trinity Pines subdivision. The area includes wide expanses of mountainous, rugged terrain stretching from Irish Mountain to the east, Platina in Shasta County to the west, Red Mountain to the south, and Salt Creek to the north.

Post Mountain VFD currently has four volunteers on its roster. The current fire station, completed in the 1980s, is currently in good condition. Post Mountain VFD has two fire trucks and a water tender, which are in functioning order. The fire department is currently in need of a 10,000-gallon water tank for storage. The current ISO rating for the Department is not available (Trinity LAFCo 2023c).

Southern Trinity Volunteer Fire Department

Southern Trinity VFD has two fire stations: Fire Station #1 is in Mad River at the junction of County Line Creek Road and USFS Road 1 and Fire Station #2 is located north of Ruth at 18010 Mad River Road. Southern Trinity VFD's area of responsibility is approximately 233 square miles centered on the Mad River from Ruth to Dinsmore in Humboldt County. Southern Trinity VFD's area of responsibility includes the populated communities of Mad River, Hettenshaw Valley, Dinsmore, and Ruth (Trinity LAFCo 2022).

Southern Trinity VFD has approximately 28 active volunteers. The Department's apparatuses includes two type I fire engines, three type III fire engines, three rescue trucks, and three water tenders. Southern Trinity VFD has an existing need for new fire equipment. The current ISO rating for the Department is not available.

Hyampom Volunteer Fire Department

The Hyampom VFD provides fire protection and emergency response services to the Hyampom area in Trinity County. Hyampom VFD operates a single fire station at 22509 Hyampom Road in Hyampom. Hyampom VFD has an area of responsibility of 103 square miles centered around the town of Hyampom. The Department operates with an ISO Public Protection Classification of 9, which reflects the challenges of providing fire protection in a remote, rural setting with limited water infrastructure (Trinity LAFCo 2021).

Hyampom VFD currently has 14 volunteers, a Fire Chief, an Assistant Fire Chief, and four Captains. The Department's apparatuses includes one water tender, four fire engines, and one ambulance. Equipment and resources are maintained to meet basic operational needs, though capacity is constrained by funding and personnel availability. The Department relies heavily on mutual aid agreements with neighboring districts and CAL FIRE for large-scale incidents.

Kettenpom Zenia Volunteer Fire Department

The Kettenpom Zenia VFD's fire station is located at 400 Zenia Lake Mountain Road in Kettenpom across the street from the Kettenpom Store. Kettenpom Zenia VFD has an area of responsibility of approximately

176 square miles with the only two populated areas being the two towns of Kettenpom and Zenia. The area of responsibility stretches from the Mendocino County border to the south, Grizzly Mountain to the north, the Humboldt County border to the west, and the North Fork Eel River to the east.

The Department has approximately 14 volunteers. Kettenpom Zenia VFD currently has issues with communications and needs additional repeaters and/or transmission towers within their area of responsibility. Kettenpom Zenia VFD hopes to be able to have another transmitter built on Zenia Lake Mountain. The current ISO rating for the Department is not available.

Palo Verde Volunteer Fire Department

The Palo Verde VFD is located at 2729 Island Mountain Road in rural Garberville. Palo Verde VFD has responsibility over a small 21 square mile region west of the Eel River at the very southwestern tip of Trinity County. Approximately seven people live in this area according to the 2020 United States Census.

CAL FIRE

CAL FIRE is responsible for the suppression of wildland fires within State Responsibility Areas (SRAs) (California Public Resources Code 4125–4137). In Trinity County, SRAs encompass 488,307 acres, primarily in the eastern areas of the county. The area is very remote with SR 3 being the only major road running through the SRA. The area includes remote wilderness around Sugarloaf Peak, Wells Mountain, Barleyfield Peak, and Tylers Peak. CAL FIRE stations are staffed during declared fire season, typically June to October, and engines may respond to calls other than wildland fires if they are available and the call will not affect their core responsibilities (CAL FIRE 2026a). Although the state is responsible for wildland fire suppression within the SRA, CAL FIRE relies on local VFDs, such as those in Trinity County, to respond to such incidents and provide initial attack to ensure that the fires are suppressed at the earliest possible stage. District volunteers participate as needed on CAL FIRE strike teams and loan equipment to CAL FIRE as needed (CAL FIRE 2026b). CAL FIRE has three fire Stations: the Hayfork Forest Fire Station, the Fawn Lodge Forest Fire Station, and the Weaverville Forest Fire Station (County of Shasta 2026).

United States Forest Service

The USFS has one of the largest areas of responsibility in the county given that most of the county is federally owned, unpopulated wilderness. The USFS has 13 fire stations spread out across the county which assist with wildfire responses, rescues, and other emergency operations within their area of responsibility. The USFS has responsibility over the Trinity Alps Wilderness Area, an extremely remote wilderness between Trinity Lake and Interstate 5 in Shasta County, all southeastern Trinity County, wilderness around the Hayfork Bally, and wilderness along the Southern Fork Trinity River (USFS 2025a).

Bureau of Land Management

The BLM provides fire protection and wildfire response services on scattered BLM-managed lands within Trinity County. These lands fall under the jurisdiction of the Redding Field Office, located at 6640 Lockheed Drive, Redding, California, which manages approximately 250,000 acres across five Northern California counties, including Trinity (BLM 2026). BLM Fire operates through interagency agreements and mutual aid protocols with USFS, CAL FIRE, and local districts. Within Trinity County, the Redding Field Office deploys wildland fire engine crews supplied by the national BLM fire program.

Trinity County Fire Safe Council

In 1998, the Trinity County Fire Safe Council was formed as subcommittee to the Natural Resources Advisory Council to address the issue of fire. The Trinity Fire Safe Council includes members from local VFDs, residents, and representatives from tribal, local, state, and federal organizations, such as the USFS, CAL FIRE, Safe Alternatives for Our Forest Environment, Watershed Research and Training Center, and the Trinity County Resource Conservation District) (Trinity County Resource Conservation District 2025).

The Trinity Fire Safe Council aims to strategically plan and prioritize fire hazard mitigation in Trinity County through a locally led, stakeholder-driven process informed by landscape-level risk analysis. Its efforts focus on preventing catastrophic wildfire through vegetation management, prescribed burning, land use planning, and forest health initiatives. The 2020 Trinity County Community Wildfire Protection Plan identifies priority projects and enables coordinated funding and implementation across multiple partners. While the Trinity County Fire Safe Council does not directly fight fires, they offer important notification and incident response services which can protect residents in times of fire hazards.

b. Police Protection Services

Police protection services in the county are provided by the Trinity County Sheriff's Office (TCSO) and the California Highway Patrol. The TCSO is based in Weaverville and has a substation in central Hayfork. The Sheriff's Department also manages the Trinity County Jail, located in Weaverville. In 2022, there were 34 sworn officers serving Trinity County (Peace Officers Research Association of California 2022). TCSO staff is divided between corrections, patrol, animal control, search and rescue, and administrative positions. The California Highway Patrol is primarily responsible for traffic safety on state routes.

Due to the county's large size, mountainous terrain, and dispersed rural population, law enforcement services are provided over a wide service area with limited road access. The rural and forested nature of Trinity County presents coverage challenges for law enforcement. Large areas of the county consist of wilderness areas and sparsely developed communities with limited cellular coverage and few alternate access routes. These conditions can complicate emergency communications, delay officer response, and require coordination with other agencies (Wooley and Smith 2022).

c. Emergency Services

Emergency Coordination

911 Dispatching is handled by the Trinity County Dispatch Center from its headquarters in Weaverville. EMS are provided under authority of NorCal EMS. Trinity County's Dispatch Office also allows contacting 911 via email. The Trinity County Dispatch Center coordinates with the Sheriff's Office for law enforcement inquiries and coordinates with emergency service providers and VFDs for emergency medical service needs (County of Trinity 2025c).

Emergency Operations Plan

The Trinity Disaster Council and the Office of Emergency Services are responsible for countywide disaster preparedness, planning, response, and recovery, including updating the County's Emergency Operations Plan. The Emergency Operations Plan, adopted in March 2019 and currently being updated, outlines the plan of action for any major emergency that occurs in Trinity County. The plan provides details for how to coordinate with the State Office of Emergency Services based in Sacramento and how to report relevant incidents. The plan goes into detail on responding to the top eight identified hazards for the county, which are wildfires, floods, loss of communication, dam failures, severe weather events, drought, pandemics, and earthquakes. If an emergency occurs, the emergency operations plan states that coordination is to occur at the Emergency Operations Center at 61 Airport Road, Suite B, in Weaverville. If the first location is unavailable, the Trinity County Veterans Hall is set as the alternate location for coordinating an emergency response (Trinity County Office of Emergency Services 2019).

Hoopa Valley Tribal Police

For emergencies in northwestern Trinity County, Trinity County's Office of Emergency Services coordinates with the Hoopa Valley Tribal Police to ensure that patients within the K'ima:w Emergency Services area of responsibility are transported and tended to accordingly (County of Trinity 2023).

Southern Trinity Area Rescue

Southern Trinity Area Rescue coordinates with the Trinity County Dispatch Center for emergency dispatch communication needs in the remote southern Trinity County communities of Mad River, Ruth, Kettenpom, and Hettenshaw Valley. Southern Trinity Area Rescue also services remote southeastern Trinity County.

Emergency Medical Services

Trinity County's heavily forested, mountainous terrain, dispersed and small rural communities, and limited roadways make emergency medical support and transportation an extremely difficult task that relies on close collaboration among emergency support providers. At the front line of Trinity County's life support operations are local and regional medical services and VFDs, which carry the responsibility of medical emergencies and medical transportation for their communities. EMS are provided under the authority of NorCal EMS. Due to the terrain and remote nature of the county, residents may need to be airlifted to Trinity Hospital or Mercy Medical Center Redding.

Trauma Care Accessibility

Trinity County has no trauma centers for seriously injured persons with immediate, life-threatening injuries. The closest level-designated trauma center is a level two trauma center, Mercy Medical Center Redding, located at 2175 Rosaline Avenue in western Redding. As Mercy Medical is an hourlong drive from Weaverville, those who have serious life-threatening injuries must be transported by air to this hospital from Trinity County. A level four trauma center, Sutter Coast Hospital, is located to the northwest of Trinity County in Crescent City. The closest level one trauma center University of California, Davis Medical Center in Sacramento, which is 209 miles southeast of Weaverville.

d. Schools

Trinity County School Districts

Trinity County is home to 10 school districts and 19 schools serving 1,601 students from kindergarten to 12th grade. Trinity County does not have any middle schools and instead all elementary schools provide education to 7th and 8th grade students Table 4.15-1 summarizes school districts and schools in Trinity County (Trinity County Office of Education 2025).

Table 4.15-1 Trinity County Schools

School District	Schools	2025 Enrollment	Grades Served
Burnt Ranch Elementary	Burnt Ranch Elementary	85	K-8
Coffee Creek Elementary	Coffee Creek Elementary	7	K-8
Douglas City Elementary	Douglas City Elementary	162	K-8
Junction City Elementary	Junction City Elementary	65	K-8
Lewiston Elementary	Lewiston Elementary	68	K-8
Mountain Valley Unified	Hayfork Elementary	245	K-8
	Hayfork High	96	9-12
	Valley Alternative High	5	9-12
Southern Trinity Joint	Hoaglin-Zenia Elementary	10	K-8
	Lassic Alternative High	1	9-12
	Southern Trinity High	7	9-12
	Van Duzen Elementary	54	K-8

School District	Schools	2025 Enrollment	Grades Served
Trinity Alps Unified	Alps View High	7	9-12
	Trinity High	289	9-12
	Trinity River Elementary	3	K-8
	Weaverville Elementary	331	K-8
Trinity Center Elementary	Trinity Center Elementary	13	K-8
Trinity County Office of Education	California Heritage Youthbuild Academy	140	9-12
	R.I.S.E Academy	4	9-12

Source: California Department of Education 2025

Trinity County Office of Education

The Trinity County Office of Education provides support for school districts in Trinity County including access to special education services, student services, technology support services, administrative services, and instructional support. It operates the California Heritage YouthBuild Academy and R.I.S.E Academy. The California Heritage YouthBuild Academy is a charter program for students ages 16–24 who need a high school diploma, offering flexible, self-paced learning on-site or online. It provides academic and career training, including pathways in nursing and construction. There are 140 students enrolled in the 2025-2026 school year. R.I.S.E. Academy serves K–12 students facing challenges such as expulsion, probation, homelessness, or foster care, creating an alternative learning environment for those who struggle in traditional classrooms. In the 2025-2026 school year, there are four students enrolled.

e. Other Public Services and Facilities

Public Libraries

Trinity County operates the Trinity County Public Library System, which operates three branches. The public library system is based out of the Weaverville Main Library located at 351 Main Street in central Weaverville. The Main Library is the administrative and service headquarters of all the County libraries and has about half of the library system's collection. The Main Library also serves as the meeting location for county government meetings in its attached meeting room. The Hayfork Branch Library is the library system's secondary branch located at 6641 SR 3, which is at the junction of Hayfork's Main Street and Hyampom Road. The Hayfork Branch shares its facilities with the Trinity County Sheriff's Office Hayfork substation. The Trinity Center Branch Library is located at 540B Airport Road in Trinity Center, sharing the same building as the Scott Museum. This branch has the most limited hours out of the three libraries in the county (County of Trinity 2025d).

f. Parks and Recreational Facilities

Trinity County is well known for its natural environment and scenic landscapes, which sustain the local tourism-based economy and provide a diverse range of recreation options. There are over two million acres of parks and open space within the County (County of Trinity 2023). The County's parks, trails, facilities, and historic and cultural attractions are essential to the quality of life for residents and visitors creating recreational opportunities, gathering places, and tourist destinations.

National Parks/Forests

There are three National Forests in Trinity County: Shasta-Trinity National Forest, Mendocino National Forest, and Six Rivers National Forest. Permitted by the USFS, the public has access to these forest areas for outdoor recreational use. Popular recreational activities include biking, nature viewing, climbing,

camping, hiking, horseback riding, and hunting. Managed production of resources is permitted by the USFS (USFS 2025b, 2026a, 2026b).

Shasta-Trinity National Forest is one of the most popular tourist attractions and recreational locations within Trinity County. It encompasses 2.2 million Acres. The forest offers recreation sites, over campgrounds, picnic areas, and boat launches. This National Forest is divided into four management units: Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area (including Shasta, Trinity, and Lewiston lakes), Shasta McCloud Management Unit (including Mt. Shasta and McCloud areas), Trinity River Management Unit (including Weaverville and Big Bar areas), and South Fork Management Unit (including Hayfork and Platina areas).

The Mendocino National Forest covers approximately 913,306 acres of forest land, part of which is in southern Trinity County. This National Forest includes the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness, Snow Mountain Wilderness, and many recreational amenities including boating, fishing, hiking, camping, and more along its densely forested woodlands, open meadows, and riverbanks. The South Fork of the Trinity River begins in the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness, which remains one of the largest undammed rivers in the Western United States.

Six Rivers National Forest covers approximately 974,612 acres, part of which is located along the entirety of the western boundary of Trinity County from Willow Creek to south of Ruth. The Forest includes over 100 miles of trails, campgrounds, and ample fishing opportunities. Park and recreational facilities in the county vary by location but in total include a disc golf course, amphitheater, sports fields, a bike park, playgrounds, historic districts, the Jake Jackson Museum-History Park and Research Center, Bowerman Barn, river access points, trails, the fairgrounds, community forest trail networks, and more. The Trinity County Fair is held in Hayfork at the County Fairgrounds.

Community Forest

The 14,963-acre Weaverville Community Forest is a partnership between the BLM, USFS, and Trinity County Resource Conservation District. This stewardship model places value on the community needs and forest health by pairing local knowledge with federal resources. The community forest offers outdoor recreation, improved wildlife habitat, and sustained revenue in timber harvesting. Over 40 miles of trails are available to visitors in the Weaverville Basin Trail System (Weaverville Community Forest 2025).

Local Parks

Local parks are available for visitors to enjoy outdoor activities and scenic views. The County owns and operates nearly 150 acres of parks and open space area, which are listed in Table 4.15-2.

Table 4.15-2 Trinity County Local Parks

Park	Acreage	Activities
Hayfork Park	10.4	Playground, picnic area, pool, Farmer's Market
Junction City Park	104.1	Sports field, trap shoot and shooting range, disc golf, rodeo arena
Lee Fong Park	12.5	Disc golf, amphitheater, picnic area
Lowden Park	19.8	Playground, picnic area, sports field, horseshoe pits, rodeo arena

Source: County of Trinity 2023

4.15.2 Regulatory Setting

a. Federal Regulations

Disaster Mitigation Act

Section 104 of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-390) requires a state mitigation plan as a condition of disaster assistance. There are two different levels of state disaster plans: "Standard" and "Enhanced." States that develop an approved Enhanced State Plan can increase the amount of funding available through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. The Act has also established new requirements for local mitigation plans.

National Fire Plan

The National Fire Plan was developed under Executive Order 11246 in August 2000, following a landmark wildland fire season. Its intent is to actively respond to severe wildland fires and their impacts to communities while ensuring sufficient firefighting capacity for the future. The plan addresses firefighting, rehabilitation, hazardous fuels reduction, community assistance, and accountability.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that public agencies take all practicable efforts to make facilities accessible and usable by all people. The Act applies to open space and recreational resources, requiring that, where practical, recreational buildings and park trails accommodate wheelchairs, strollers, walkers, and children.

b. State Regulations

California Fire Plan

The Strategic California Fire Plan is the state's road map for reducing the risk of wildfire. The plan was updated in 2012 and directs each CAL FIRE Unit to prepare a locally specific Fire Management Plan. In compliance with the California Fire Plan, individual CAL FIRE units are required to develop Fire Management Plans for their areas of responsibility. These documents assess the fire situation within each of CAL FIRE's 21 units and six contract counties. The plans include stakeholder contributions and priorities and identify strategic areas for pre-fire planning and fuel treatment as defined by the people who live and work with the local fire problem. The plans are required to be updated annually.

California State Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, draft

The purpose of the State Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP) is to significantly reduce deaths, injuries, and other losses attributed to natural and human-caused hazards in California. The SHMP provides guidance for hazard mitigation activities emphasizing partnerships among local, state, and federal agencies as well as the private sector. The California Office of Emergency Services prepares the SHMP. The SHMP identifies hazard risks and includes a vulnerability analysis and a hazard mitigation strategy. The SHMP is federally required under the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 in order for the state to receive federal funding (California Office of Emergency Services 2023). The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires a state mitigation plan as a condition of disaster assistance.

Wildland-Urban Interface Building Standards

On September 20, 2007, the Building Standards Commission approved the Office of the State Fire Marshal's emergency regulations amending the California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 2, known as

the California Building Code. These codes include provisions for ignition-resistant construction standards in the wildland urban interface.

California Fire and Building Code

The Fire and Building Code establishes the minimum requirements consistent with nationally recognized good practices to safeguard the public health, safety, and general welfare for the hazards of fire, explosion or dangerous conditions in new and existing buildings, structures, and premises, and to provide safety and assistance to firefighters and emergency responders during emergency operations. The provisions of this Code apply to the construction, alteration, movement enlargement, replacement, repair, equipment, use and occupancy, location, maintenance, removal and demolition of every building or structure or any appurtenances connected or attached to such building structures throughout the State of California.

California Government Code

Section 65302.5: General Plan Safety Element Review

This statute requires the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to provide recommendations to a local jurisdiction's General Plan Safety Element at the time that the General Plan is amended. While not a direct and binding fire prevention requirement for individuals, General Plans that adopt the Board's recommendations will include goals and policies that provide for contemporary fire prevention standards for the jurisdiction. The Trinity County Safety Element has been approved by the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Sections 6550-65568: Open Space Lands

This section of California planning law defines open space and requires cities and counties to prepare and carry out open space plans, along with state and regional open space plans, to accomplish the objectives of a comprehensive open space program as a required element of its General Plan. Building permits, subdivision approvals, and zoning ordinance approvals must be consistent with the local open space plan.

Section 66477: Subdivision Map Act (Quimby Act)

This law authorizes local jurisdictions to require the dedication of land and/or the payment of in-lieu fees, or a combination of both, for park or recreational purposes. The required land dedication and/or fees are based on the residential density, parkland cost, and other factors. Land dedicated and fees collected pursuant to the Quimby Act may only be used for the purpose of developing new or rehabilitating existing neighborhood park or community park or recreational facilities to serve the subdivision. The maximum land dedication and/or fee allowed under current state law is equivalent to providing three acres of parkland per 1,000 persons, unless the park acreage of a municipality exceeds that standard, in which case the maximum dedication is five acres per 1,000 residents.

Section 24000

The California Government Code mandates that the Office of Sheriff be established in each county in California. The Government Code describes the duties of the Office of Sheriff-Coroner, which include acting as bailiff in the Superior Court, maintaining a jail, and preserving the peace.

Public Resources Code Section 5076: Open-Space Elements and Trail Considerations

This law requires that during development of the General Plan, counties shall consider trail-oriented recreational use and shall consider such demands in developing specific open-space programs. Further,

cities shall consider the feasibility of integrating their trail routes with appropriate segments of the state system.

California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training

The California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training advocates for, exchanges information with sets selection and training standards for, and works with law enforcement and other public and private entities. Peace Officer Standards and Training was established by the Legislature in 1959 to identify common needs that are shared by representatives of law enforcement.

Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act of 1982

In 1978 Californians enacted Proposition 13, which limited the ability of local public agencies to increase property taxes based on a property's assessed value. In 1982 the Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act of 1982 (Government Code Section 53311-53368.3) was created to provide an alternate method of financing needed improvements and services. Mello-Roos bonds provide developers with upfront funds for infrastructure improvements. Repayment of the bonds is shifted to homebuyers through a Special Tax under Proposition 13. Sellers must fully disclose the use of Mello-Roos funding to potential home buyers.

California Code of Regulations

The California Code of Regulations, Title 5 Education Code, governs all aspects of education within the state.

California State Assembly Bill (AB) 2926—School Facilities Act of 1986. In 1986, AB 2926, entitled the School Facilities Act of 1986, was enacted by the state of California and added to the California Government Code (Section 65995). It authorizes school districts to collect development fees, based on demonstrated need, and generate revenue for school districts for capital acquisitions and improvements. It also established that the maximum fees (adjustable for inflation) which may be collected under this and any other school fee authorization are $1.50 per square foot of residential development and $0.25 per square foot of commercial and industrial space.

AB 2926 was expanded and revised in 1987 through the passage of AB 1600, which added Section 66000 et seq. of the Government Code. Under this statute, payment of statutory fees by developers serve as total mitigation under CEQA to satisfy the impact of development on school facilities. However, subsequent legislative actions have alternatively expanded and contracted the limits placed on school fees by AB 2926.

California Senate Bill 50

As part of the further refinement of the legislation enacted under AB 2926, the passage of SB 50 in 1998 defined the Needs Analysis process in Government Code Sections 65995.5–65998. Under the provisions of SB 50, school districts may collect fees to offset the costs associated with increasing school capacity as a result of development. The fees (referred to as Level One fees) are assessed based upon the proposed square footage of residential, commercial/industrial, and/or parking structure uses. Level Two fees require the developer to provide one-half of the costs of accommodating students in new schools, while the state would provide the other half. Level Three fees require the developer to pay the full cost of accommodating the students in new schools and would be implemented at the time the funds available from Proposition 1A (approved by the voters in 1998) are expended. School districts must demonstrate to the state their long-term facilities needs and costs based on long-term population growth in order to qualify for this source of funding. However, voter approval of Proposition 55 on March 2, 2004, precludes the imposition of the Level Three fees for the foreseeable future. Therefore, once qualified, districts may impose only Level Two fees, as calculated according to SB 50.

c. Local Regulations

Trinity County Community Wildfire Protection Plan

The Trinity County Fire Safe Council developed the first comprehensive Trinity County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) between 1999 and 2005. This effort began with a countywide process that resulted in the Recommendations on Trinity County Values at Risk from Fire and Pre-Fire Fuels Treatment Opportunities drawn from Community Meetings 1999/2000 (February 2001). These recommendations were used to develop the first complete Trinity County CWPP, which was accepted by the Trinity County Fire Chiefs' Association, Trinity County Board of Supervisors, and CAL FIRE in September 2005. The CWPP was updated in 2010 and became the primary document to guide the Trinity County Fire Safe Council, its member organizations and partners, in the selection and implementation of strategic fuels reduction projects and public outreach as they have sought to improve cooperation and coordination in all aspects of wildfire management in Trinity County. Trinity County Fire Safe Council members include representatives from local, state, and federal land management agencies, non-governmental organizations including the local VFDs and citizens. The most recent update of the CWPP was completed in 2025 (Trinity County Fire Safe Council 2025b).

Trinity County Code of Ordinances

Chapter 8.30 regulations have been prepared and adopted for the purpose of establishing minimum wildfire protection standards in conjunction with building, construction and development in Trinity County. The future design and construction of structures, subdivisions and developments in the county shall provide for basic emergency access and perimeter wildfire protection measures as specified in the following articles. These measures shall provide for emergency access; signing and building numbering; private water supply reserves for emergency fire use; and vegetation modification. The fire protection standards which follow shall specify the minimum standards for such measures.

4.15.3 Impact Analysis

a. Significance Thresholds and Methodology

According to Appendix G of the adopted *CEQA Guidelines*, impacts related to public services and recreation from implementation of proposed project would be significant if it would:

1. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the need for or provision of new or physically altered government facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other objectives for:
    a. Fire protection
    b. Police protection
    c. Schools
    d. Parks
    e. Other public facilities
2. 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; or
3. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

In terms of Threshold 1(e) regarding impacts on "other public facilities," such facilities include libraries. Impacts related to libraries are discussed in this section. Impacts related to public stormwater facilities are addressed in Section 4.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality,* and Section 4.18*, Utilities and Service*

Systems. Impacts related to public wastewater, water, and solid waste facilities are discussed in Section 4.18, *Utilities and Service Systems.*

Much of the potential cannabis-related development contemplated by the project was previously analyzed in the Trinity County Cannabis Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR; State Clearinghouse number 2018122049), certified in 2020 (2020 EIR). The 2020 EIR found that cannabis cultivation would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of public services, as cannabis activities would be subject to County permitting, performance standards, and compliance requirements designed to limit demand on public services. Similarly, the 2020 EIR determined that cannabis-related development would not increase the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration would occur. Because the proposed General Plan establishes a new countywide policy framework that supersedes the 2020 EIR for cannabis activities occurring consistent with the General Plan, this EIR focuses on public service and recreation effects not previously addressed or requiring reevaluation under the proposed General Plan.

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1a:	Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered fire protection facilities, or the need for new or physically altered fire protection facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives?

Impact PSR-1 Implementation of the proposed project would facilitate increased population, generating additional need for fire protection services. Proposed General Plan policies would reduce impacts associated with the provision of fire protection services, and new facilities would be located in developed areas. Impacts would be less than significant.

Under the proposed project buildout, an estimated 7,420 new residents would be added to the Planning Area. When added to the 2025 population, the proposed project would increase Trinity County's total population to an estimated 23,304 residents, an increase of 46.7 percent. Because the population of Trinity County is expected to increase by approximately 46.7 percent, demand for public services such as fire protection would also increase.

As discussed in Section 4.15.1(a), there are several VFDs that have outstanding equipment needs, are in need of facility upgrades, or need improved communication services to best serve their areas of responsibility. Most VFDs in Trinity County must fundraise to maintain adequate funding levels and have difficulty receiving equipment and services needed for optimal operation.

There are several initiatives to increase fire response capacity, primarily driven through CAL FIRE. CAL FIRE requested an additional appropriation of $2,233,000 to complete the newly relocated Shasta Trinity Unit Headquarters/Northern Operations (California Department of Finance 2026). Staff at this facility location have almost doubled since the project began in 2022. Additionally, CAL FIRE requested an additional appropriation of $640,000 to complete the replacement of the Hayfork Fire Station (California Department of Finance 2025). Further, the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services pre-deploys fire equipment, crews, and other fire resources when weather conditions have the potential to create a wildfire hazard (Governor of California 2025). This proactive response reduces response times and contains fires before they escalate into major incidents. These initiatives increase opportunities to maintain a continuity of operations.

The construction of these new or expanded facilities, in addition to construction of future facilities to accommodate increased demand for fire protection services, could have physical environmental impacts. However, these facilities are planned and would be constructed independent of the proposed project, as they address existing service deficiencies rather than demands generated by new development.

Furthermore, these new and expanded facilities would be located in already developed areas, and would be developed consistent with the goals and policies of the proposed General Plan, including policies to direct growth to existing communities and protect the environment, such as Policy LU 8.2 (Development Density), which requires low development density in rural areas, and Policy LU 8.3 (Infill Development), which supports infill development in existing communities. In addition, these facilities would be subject to project-level planning and environmental review, including project-specific CEQA documentation, if required.

Goal PFSI-9 of the proposed General Plan aims to protect life and property through the efficient provision of fire prevention, suppression, and rescue services and facilities. Policy PFSI 9.1 (Volunteer Fire Services) requires the County to support the expansion of volunteer fire services, especially in remote areas. Policy PFSI 9.2 (Fire Station Siting) encourages new fire stations to be located on sites that are easily accessible, close to existing or future development and/or close to fire hazard areas. Policy PFSI 9.3 (Fuel Reduction) supports coordinated efforts between state, federal, and local agencies; nonprofit organizations; and local fire districts to plan, obtain funding for, and implement fuels reduction projects to protect residents in and around fire hazard areas. Policy PFSI 9.4 (Collaboration Among Partners) encourages fire protection districts to continue to develop relationships with local, state, and federal agencies and non-profit organizations to collaboratively inform and prepare citizens for wildland fires. Policy PFSI 9.5 (Adequate Water Supply and Access) prohibits new development in areas that lack and cannot provide adequate water supplies, access, and response times for firefighting purposes. Policy PFSI 9.6 (Fire Protection Standards) requires new development to comply with applicable standards for fire flows, firefighting equipment connections, and fire protection. Additionally, Policy PFSI 9.7 (Countywide Fire Marshall) supports the creation of a countywide Fire Marshall position to enforce the fire code and review new development applications for compliance with all fire protection standards. Implementation of these goals and policies would ensure that all new development is adequately served by fire protection and emergency services, reducing the need for additional facilities through proper maintenance and improvement of existing facilities.

While the VFDs still have deficiencies in their service capabilities, the currently planned CAL FIRE facilities, the support from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, and proposed General Plan policies, specifically Policy PFSI 9.1 (Volunteer Fire Services), which supports VFD expansion, will ensure that fire protection facilities can meet the needs of anticipated growth. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered fire facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 1b:	Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered police protection facilities, or the need for new or physically altered police protection facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives?

Impact PSR-2 Implementation of the proposed project would facilitate increased population, generating additional demand for police services. Proposed General Plan policies would reduce impacts, and new facilities would be located in developed areas. Impacts would be less than significant.

As described in Section 4.15.1(b), *Police Protection Services*, police service in Trinity County is provided by the TCSO and the California Highway Patrol. In 2022, there were 34 sworn officers serving Trinity County, which provides a ratio of 2.17 officers per 1,000 residents (Peace Officers Research Association of California 2022). The ratio is above the standard of 2.0 officers per 1,000 residents set by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Therefore, as of 2022, the County is above the national standard. Implementation of the proposed project would result in the need for an increase in police staff. Under the proposed project buildout, an estimated 7,420 new residents would be added to the Planning area. When added to the 2025 population, the proposed project would increase Trinity County's total population to an estimated 23,304 residents. To serve the additional 7,420 residents accounted for under the proposed project and meet national standard service ratios, TCSO would need to add 15 officers over the planning horizon (by 2050), bringing the total number of officers to 49. Increased police staffing of this size may result in the need to construct new police facilities within the county.

The proposed General Plan encourages the provision of adequate police services and facilities. For example, Goal PFSI 8 of the proposed General Plan promotes the protection of public safety through effective law enforcement, disaster preparedness, and emergency services. Policy PFSI 8.1 (Emergency Service Response Location) requires that the County locate emergency response services in areas with adequate roads and support systems. Policy PFSI 8.2 (Emergency Response) requires the County to maintain adequate staffing, equipment, and facilities to provide timely and effective emergency response. Policy PFSI 8.3 (Mutual Training and Aid Agreements) requires the County to develop, maintain, and enhance mutual training and aid agreements. Policy PFSI 8.4 (Emergency Services Accessibility) requires the County to identify and remove impediments to emergency services accessibility, particularly for residents facing systemic barriers. Policy PFSI 8.5 (Emergency Vehicles Access) ensures that all new development to provide, and existing development to maintain, adequate access for emergency vehicles. Implementation of these goals and policies would ensure that all new development is adequately served by police protection.

The recommended budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 included a $1.4 million increase to the Sheriff's Department budget, representing an increase in emergency response capacity (*The Trinity Journal* 2025). Given that the proposed project would accommodate development and associated population growth, demand would increase for police services and new or expanded police facilities could be required. However, these facilities are planned and would be constructed independent of the proposed project, as they address existing service deficiencies rather than demands generated by new development. Furthermore, these new and expanded facilities would be located in already developed areas, consistent with the goals and policies of the proposed General Plan, which include to directing growth to existing communities and protect the environment, such as Policy LU 8.2 (Development Density), which requires low development density in rural areas, and Policy LU 8.3 (Infill Development), which supports infill development in existing communities. In addition, these facilities would be subject to project-level planning and environmental review, including project-specific CEQA documentation, if required.

Therefore, the proposed project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered police facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 1c:	Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered schools, or the need for new or physically altered schools, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios or other performance objectives?

Impact PSR-3 Development facilitated by the project may add school aged children to the county's population. However, existing school facilities have adequate capacity and new development would be required to pay impact fees. Impacts would be less than significant.

As described in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, implementation of the proposed project would accommodate development and associated population growth in the county. The population of the unincorporated county would increase by approximately 7,420 people through 2050, as shown in Table 2-3 in Chapter 2, *Project Description*. Some of the residential growth in the county would be school-aged children, or adults who become parents and eventually have school-aged children. As discussed in Section 4.15.1, *Setting*, there are 1,601 students currently enrolled in Trinity County schools. School districts within Trinity County do not have and adopted student generation rate standard, but using student enrollment and household data, the County has an estimated student generation of 0.32 students per dwelling unit in grades K through 12 (Education Data Partnership 2025). The proposed project would facilitate the development of approximately 902 units and approximately, resulting in a total student generation of 289 students.

The increase in school-aged population and demographics in Trinity County would result in increased demand for public services such as schools. The Trinity County Office of Education maintains a high level of communication and cooperation with each school district within the county; however, all school districts within the county maintain their own planning documents which anticipate future growth, which include policies to meet future service and facilities demands. In addition, the proposed General Plan includes Policy PFSI 5.1 (Community Facilities Maintenance), which requires the County to cooperate with school, special districts, and other community service providers to maintain and support public community facilities, including schools.

The provision of new or physically altered facilities would be necessary because of development under the proposed project. Mitigation of impacts would be achieved through payment of school impact fees. Pursuant to Section 65995(3)(h) of the California Government Code (SB 50, chaptered August 27, 1998), the payment of statutory fees "...is deemed to be full and complete mitigation of the impacts of any legislative or adjudicative act, or both, involving, but not limited to, the planning, use, or development of real property, or any change in governmental organization or reorganization." With payment of mandatory school impact fees by developers in the county, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 1d:	Would the proposed project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered parks, need for new or physically altered parks, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios or other performance objectives?
Threshold 2:	Would the proposed 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?
Threshold 3:	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?

Impact PSR-4 Development facilitated by the project would result in an increase in the county's population. This would increase demand for parks and recreation facilities and potentially create the need for new park and recreation facilities. Compliance with the policies in the proposed General Plan would reduce impacts to parks and recreation, and impacts would be less than significant.

Trinity County provides park and recreation opportunities through a combination of County-owned facilities, open space lands, and extensive federally managed lands. As described in Section 4.15.1(f), *Parks and Recreational Facilities*, the County owns and operates approximately 150 acres of parks and open space area, while the remaining park and open space inventory consists of state and federal lands. Although federally owned and managed lands are not included in the County's parkland ratio for Quimby Act purposes, they nonetheless provide substantial recreational opportunities in addition to County-owned parkland. When considering only County-owned parkland relative to the County's small and dispersed population, Trinity County maintains a parkland to population ratio of approximately 9.5 acres to 1,000 residents. The County does not have a formally adopted uniform standard for a parks-to-population ratio, but this ratio exceeds the Quimby Act's minimum standard of three acres of parkland per 1,000 residents (California Government Code Section 66477).

Although the project could accommodate an estimated 7,420 new residents and increase demand for parks and recreational facilities, Trinity County's existing parkland inventory substantially exceeds applicable service standards. As described above, the County exceeds the Quimby Act minimum ratio. Even with projected population growth, the ratio would remain approximately 6.4 acres per 1,000 residents. The proposed project does not include construction of parks or recreational facilities but does include land uses allowing for the development of future parks or recreational facilities. The proposed General Plan is programmatic in nature and new park development would adhere to the goals and policies in the proposed General Plan that ensures adequate planning for new or improved parks and recreation facilities. Proposed General Plan goals and policies would ensure responsible growth in Trinity County and adequate planning for the development of new or improved parks and recreational facilities. For example, Goal PFSI 7 intends to develop and maintain comprehensive system of parklands and recreational facilities that meet the active and passive recreational needs of residents and visitors. Policies PFSI 7.1 (Trail Network) and PFSI 7.5 (New Development Near Trails) require the County to maintain a network of trails and ensure that new development does not have an adverse impact. Policies PFSI 7.2 (Recreational Use of Public Facilities), PFSI 7.3 (Amenities at Public Parks and Recreational Facilities), and PFSI 7.4 (Park and Recreational Facility Accessibility) require the County to make public facilities available for recreational use, provide a range of amenities, and ensure facilities are inclusive. Policy PFSI 7.6 (Partnerships for Recreational Programming) requires the County to development partnerships to provide recreational programing. Furthermore, future development or expansion of park facilities would be subject to separate project-level planning and environmental review, including CEQA analysis, as appropriate.

The project would not increase use of existing neighborhood or regional parks to a degree that would cause substantial physical deterioration. Existing County facilities serve a small, widely dispersed population, and the County's extensive open space resources reduce concentrated recreational use that typically leads to facility overuse and degradation. For these reasons, the proposed project would not

cause or contribute to a substantial adverse effect on parks or recreational facilities, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 1e:	Would the proposed project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered public facilities, or the need for new or physically altered public facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives?

Impact PSR-5 Development facilitated by the project would increase the county's population and the use of existing public facilities. However, adherence to proposed General Plan policies and payment of property taxes related to new development would contribute to new or expanded public facilities as needed to reduce any impacts. Impacts related to the provision of new or physically altered public facilities would be less than significant.

Growth forecasts under the proposed General Plan would increase the demand for library services in the County. The Trinity County Public Library System would be the responsible agency for the planning of new library facilities and anticipating demand to meet existing and future population needs. However, the potential impacts of such facilities would be identified during the facility planning process, and the County would have the authority and responsibility to plan, design, approve, or construct library facilities. In addition, the proposed General Plan includes Policy PFSI 5.1 (Community Facilities Maintenance), which requires the County to cooperate with community service providers to maintain and support public community facilities, including libraries.

However, these facilities are planned and would be constructed independent of the proposed project, as they address existing service deficiencies rather than demands generated by new development. Furthermore, adherence to federal, state, and local building codes and regulations would minimize impacts from any future construction of such facilities. The construction of new or expanded facilities could have physical environmental impacts. However, these new and expanded facilities would be located in already developed areas.

Therefore, the proposed project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered library facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

4.15.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope for the cumulative public services and recreation analysis is the service boundaries of the TCSO, the County's VFDs, CAL FIRE SRAs, school districts, and the county parks. This geographic scope is appropriate because development facilitated by the project would increase demand on public services and recreation facilities within these existing district boundaries. The cumulative development scenario is described in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting*.

Implementation of cumulative development would incrementally increase demands on public services within the service boundaries of TCSO, the County's VFDs, CAL FIRE SRAs, school districts, and the county parks; however, this increased demand would be addressed by policies and actions in the proposed General Plan as well as existing regulations, such as building permit and planning fees and the Trinity County Code of Ordinances. Nonetheless, increased population would generate demand for fire protection, police services, libraries, and parks and recreation facilities. New or expanded facilities could be required to serve the increased population and meet service standards. However, the number of new or expanded facilities would likely be limited, as a public service such as a fire department or a police station serves a large group of the total population. Accordingly, the cumulative impacts from construction of new or expanded public service facilities would be incremental and would be less than significant.

4.16 Transportation

This section summarizes the existing circulation system in Trinity County and evaluates the potential impacts on the local and regional circulation system that would result from implementation of the Trinity County General Plan Update (proposed project). This includes an analysis of the potential for the proposed project to increase local and regional traffic volumes, increase hazards due to design features, interfere with emergency access, or conflict with applicable alternative transportation programs. Analysis in this section is based in part on the ADT and VMT Analysis dated April 13, 2026, prepared by Alta Planning + Design, Inc. and included as Appendix C to this Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

4.16.1 Setting

a. Roadway Network

Trinity County is served by state highways, county roads, and local roads that provide essential connections between dispersed communities and adjacent counties. Regional access is largely east to west via State Route (SR) 299, the county's principal arterial, which links Trinity County to Humboldt County and the north coast to the west and Shasta County and Interstate 5 to the east. North to south connectivity is provided primarily by SR 3, which connects communities such as Weaverville, Hayfork, and Trinity Center, and provides access to Siskiyou County to the north and Mendocino County to the south. Due to the county's mountainous terrain and extensive federally-managed lands, roadway connectivity is limited, and there are no freeway facilities within Trinity County.

Bikeways

Trinity County's approach to bicycle and pedestrian planning is guided by the Trinity County Active Transportation Plan (ATP), adopted in 2020, which serves as a comprehensive long-range framework for improving walking, bicycling, and other non-motorized transportation options throughout the County.

The Trinity County ATP identifies a system of existing and proposed active transportation facilities intended to improve safety, mobility, and access within surrounding cities such as Weaverville, Hayfork, Lewiston, Douglas City, Junction City, and Trinity Center, as well as along key corridors and recreational areas. Consistent with state guidance, the plan classifies bikeways into four facility types (Trinity County Resource Conservation District 2020):

- **Class I Bikeways (Bike Path):** Bikeways designated Class I are bike paths with exclusive right-of-way of cyclists and pedestrians, with minimal cross-flows of vehicles. These are designed to better accommodate bicyclists through corridors where side-by-side sharing of existing streets by motorists and cyclists is inefficient or unsafe.
- **Class II Bikeways (Bike Lanes):** Bike lanes are paths established along streets in corridors where there is significant bicycle demand and where there is a distinct purpose for their use.
- **Class III Bikeways (Bike Routes):** Bike routes are designated routes along existing roads that share the right-of-way with automobiles. The purpose of these routes is to provide continuity to the bikeway system.
- **Shared Roadway (No Bikeway Designation):** These are streets and roads which have no designated bikeway facilities and may lack continuity with other bike routes. These may have no shoulder or, in some cases, may be fully adequate for safe and efficient bicycle travel. Many of the rural roadways in Trinity County fall into this category.

The 2020 Trinity County ATP provides a vision for a safe, accessible, and connected network of trails, sidewalks, and bikeways that serve residents, workers, students, and visitors throughout the County.

State Routes and Arterials

Regional and interregional travel is primarily accommodated by state highways, most notably SR 299, SR 3, Rush Creek Road, and Trinity Dam Boulevard. SR 299 serves commuter travel, recreation, tourism, and emergency access, and provides a critical link between inland Northern California and the coast. SR 3 serves as the county's minor arterial and primary north to south roadway within the County.

In addition to SR 299 and SR 3, Trinity County relies on a network of county-maintained arterials and collectors, such as Trinity Dam Boulevard, Rush Creek Road, and other designated routes, which provide access to smaller communities, recreational destinations, and resource lands. Many county roads also serve agricultural operations, timber activities, tourism, scenic travel, and access to state- and federally-managed lands. Due to the county's rugged terrain, extensive forested areas, and high proportion of publicly owned land, roadway connectivity is comparatively limited, and travel routes are often indirect. Because the state highway system forms the primary backbone of the county's transportation network, the major state routes serving Trinity County are depicted in Figure 4.16-1. As future growth and visitation occur, particularly in existing community centers and recreation areas, incremental increases in commuter, freight, and tourist travel would continue to rely on this existing roadway system.

Movement of Goods

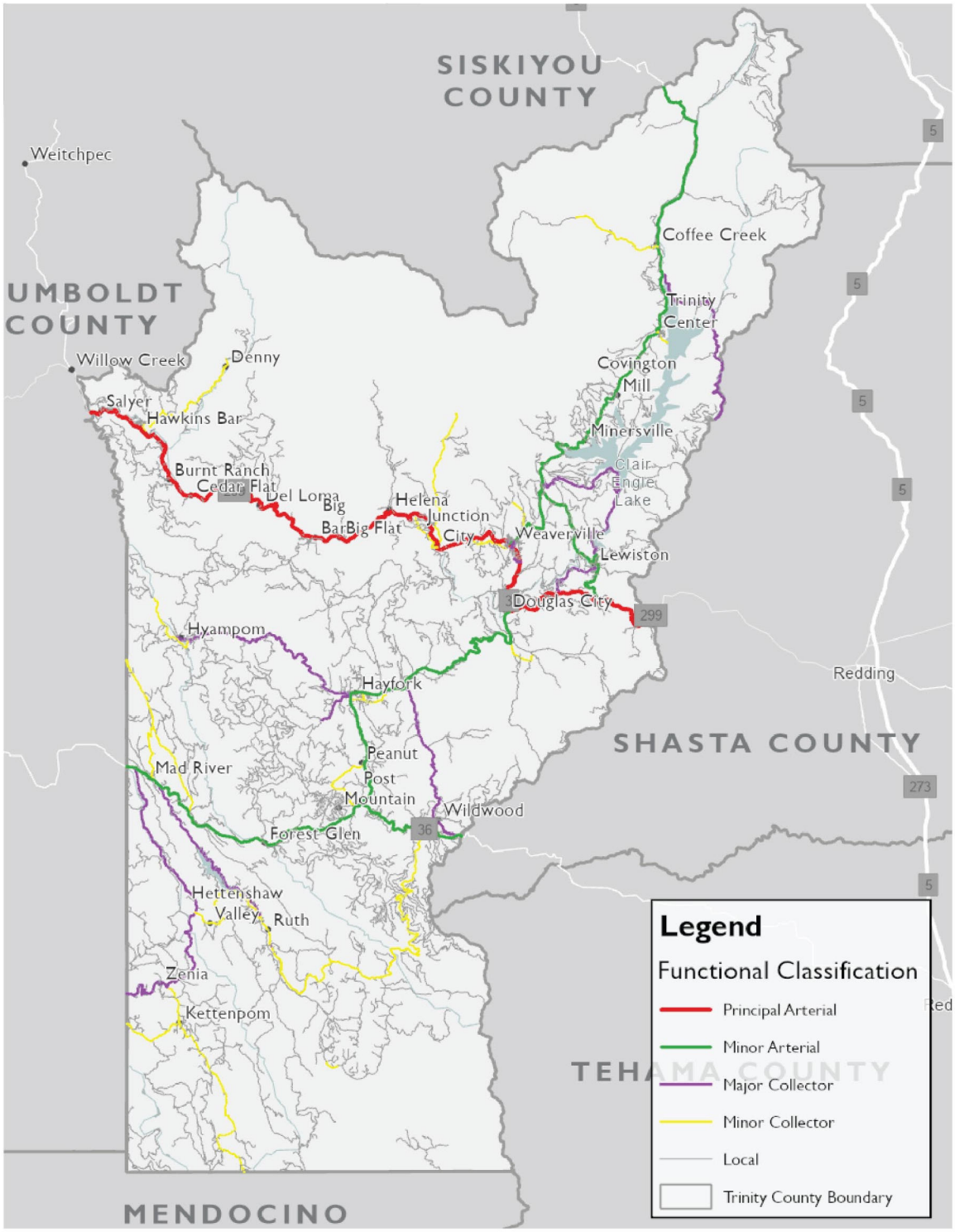
Goods movement in Trinity County is a key component of the local and regional economy, supporting timber and resource industries, agriculture, construction, retail supply chains, tourism, and emergency services. Trinity County's transportation system facilitates the movement of goods primarily through a roadway-based network. The county's goods movement system is closely tied to the state highway network and is shaped by environmental constraints, rural land use patterns, and the need to balance access with roadway safety, scenic values, and community character.

b. Baseline Vehicle Miles Traveled

The basic measure of the amount of roadway transportation generated is vehicle miles traveled (VMT). One vehicle traveling one mile constitutes one VMT, regardless of the size of the vehicle or the number of passengers in the vehicle. Changes in VMT are associated with regional growth. VMT data may not reflect deficient traffic operations, although VMT may have a strong correlation with congestion.

An area's VMT per capita is the average daily VMT per person in Trinity County and is calculated by dividing the overall county's average daily VMT by the county's population. The year 2024 is used as the baseline for VMT analysis in this EIR, as 2024 is the most recent year for which VMT data is available. The 2024 baseline VMT per capita was estimated through the use of the 2015-2024 California Public Road Data. In Trinity County, the 2024 baseline VMT per capita for State Highways and County roadways is 29.1 (Appendix C).

Figure 4.16-1 State Routes and Arterials



Source: FHWA 2022

c. Active Transportation

Bikeways in Trinity County are planned to provide both local and recreational connectivity within communities. Bicyclists are permitted on most roadways in Trinity County; however, bikeway designations recognize that certain routes provide more suitable and safer conditions for bicycling based on factors such as traffic volumes, roadway geometry, speed, and topography. Trinity County's total bicycle network includes approximately 12.92 miles of Class I, Class II, and Class III bikeways as well as sidewalks. This is further broken down in Table 4.16-1.

Table 4.16-1 Bikeways within Trinity County

Class	Number of Miles
I Bike Paths (shared-use trails)	1.19
II Bike Lanes (one direction)	8.36
III Bike Lanes (shared right-of-way)	1.09
Sidewalks	2.28
Total	**12.92**

Source: Trinity County 2025.

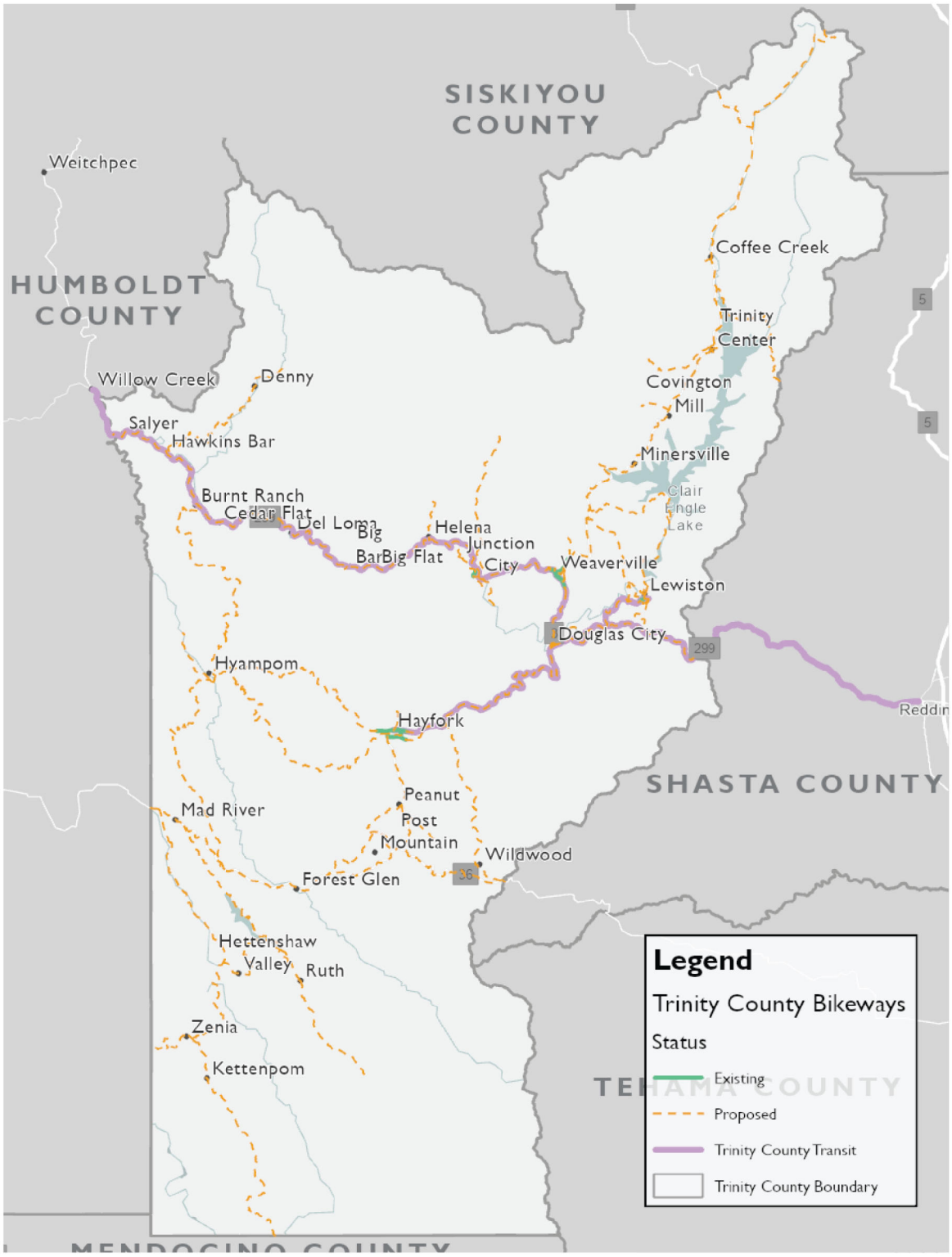
According to the 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, less than one percent of Trinity's population biked to work (United States Census Bureau 2019). Existing pedestrian facilities in unincorporated Trinity County consist primarily of sidewalks, trails, and both controlled and uncontrolled crosswalks. Dirt trails are located throughout the County; the most easily accessible trails are concentrated in the Weaverville Community Forest, and the Ewing Reservoir Trail System. Though some of these trails show promise as connector or commuter trails, they are currently used mainly for non-motorized recreation and fitness. Figure 4.16-2 shows existing and proposed active transportation facilities in the county.

d. Public Transit

Regional and Local Transit

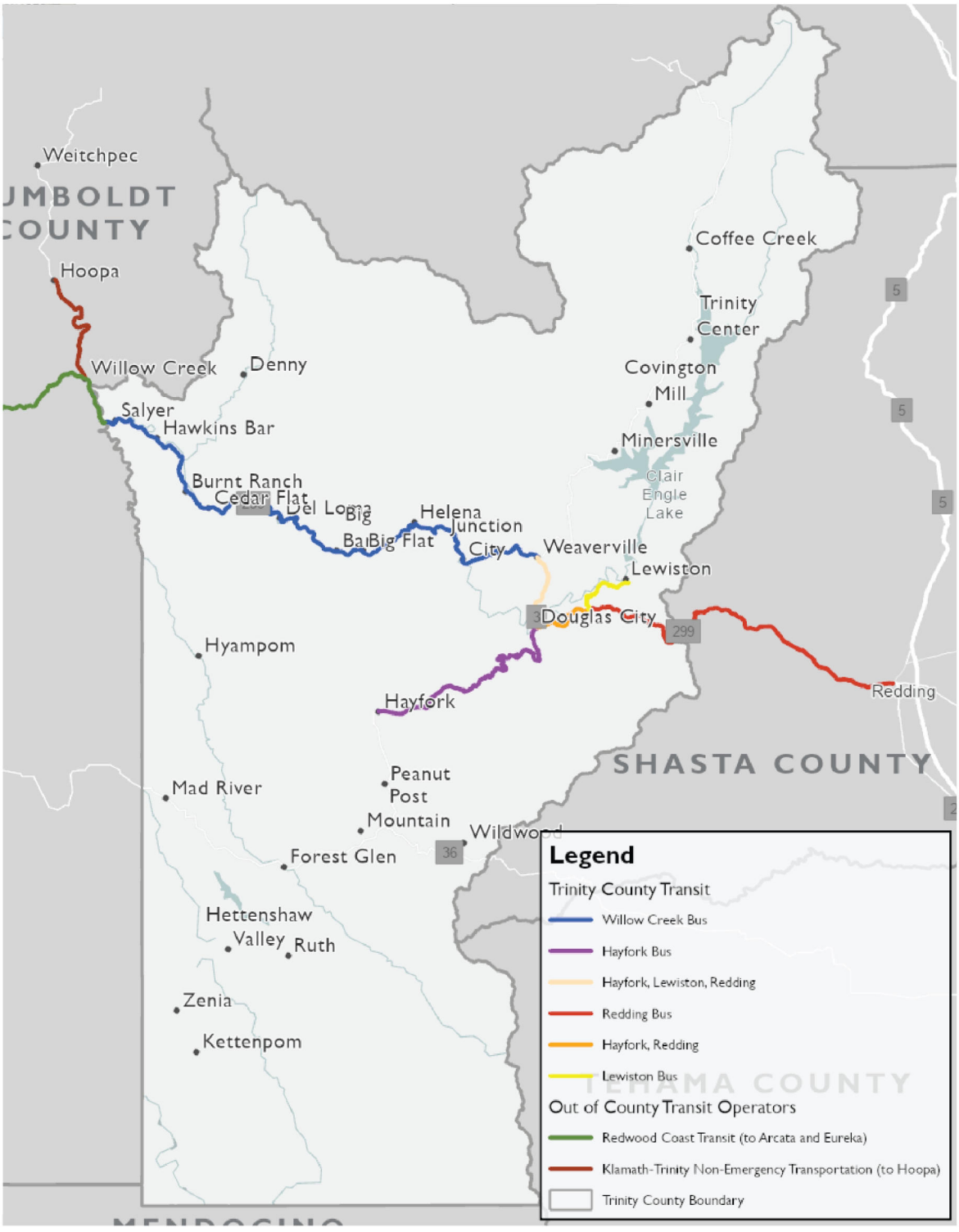
Trinity County Transit (TCT) operates transit services within the county and to neighboring regions, with routes designed to accommodate the needs of residents, seniors, and individuals without access to private vehicles. TCT is the primary provider of public transit services in Trinity County. Transit services are provided through a combination of fixed-route, deviated fixed-route, and demand-responsive services, including routes such as Willow Creek Bus, Hayfork Bus, Hayfork, Lewiston, Redding, Reding Bus, Hayfork, Redding, and Lewiston Bus. In addition, TCT provides out-of-county and interregional connections through services such as the Redwood Coast Transit (to Arcata and Eureka) and Klamath Trinity Non-Emergency Transportation (to Hoopa), linking residents to neighboring counties Humbolt and Shasta. Figure 4.16-3 illustrates the regional multimodal transportation system. Additionally, TCT coordinates regional connections with providers such as Redding Area Bus Authority for service to Shasta County and Humboldt Transit Authority (Redwood Transit System) for connections to Humboldt County.

Figure 4.16-2 Active Transportation



Source: Trinity County Department of Transportation 2022.

Figure 4.16-3 Regional Multimodel System



Source: Trinity County Department of Transportation 2022.

Long-Distance Bus Service

Trinity County does not have direct long-distance intercity bus service within the county. However, regional access to long-distance bus service is available in neighboring counties. Greyhound Lines, Inc., an intercity bus operator providing service to destinations throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico, maintains stations in Redding (Shasta County) and Eureka (Humboldt County). Trinity County residents may access Greyhound and other intercity bus services by traveling to these regional hubs privately or via connections provided by TCT.

e. Aviation Facilities

Trinity County does not contain a commercial passenger airport or regional air service hub. The airports in Trinity County are managed by the Department of Transportation and are largely used for emergency airlift transferring patients to hospitals in Redding and for wildfire suppression efforts. A small percentage of airports are used for recreational purposes. Trinity County residents and visitors access commercial passenger air service through airports located in neighboring counties, including facilities in Shasta and Humboldt Counties. The nearest commercial airport is Redding Municipal Airport in Shasta County, approximately 32 miles east of Trinity County.

4.16.2 Regulatory Setting

a. Federal Regulations

United States Department of Transportation

The United States Department of Transportation provides a number of grant programs, primarily for the construction and upgrading of major highways and transit facilities. In Trinity County, a substantial portion of the transportation network serves federally-managed lands (e.g., U.S. Forest Service); these funding programs are relevant for maintaining access and connectivity throughout the county. Many of these grants are administered by the state and regional governments. Use of federal grant funding also invokes the National Environmental Protection Act in some cases.

b. State Regulations

California Department of Transportation

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is responsible for the planning, design, construction and maintenance of all interstate freeways and state routes. It builds, maintains, and operates the State Highway System in California with a goal to facilitate the safe and efficient use of the state transportation system for all users. Caltrans sets standards in its 2020 Transportation Impact Study Guide that focuses on the VMT metric. This document is often used by local governments to uniformly review transportation analysis and assess the operational standards of Caltrans-maintained facilities. The document is intended to be a reference and informational document that aligns with the standards and thresholds established in the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (formerly the Office of Planning and Research) *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA*. The 2020 document acts as a replacement for the 2002 *Guide for the Preparation of Traffic Impact Studies* but is only intended to be used with local land use projects and plans and not to be used for transportation projects on the State Highway System.

In addition, Caltrans requires the preparation of Transportation Management Plans for projects on the State Highway System that involve lane closures or other traffic disruptions. Transportation Management Plans are governed by Caltrans policy (Deputy Directive 60-R2) and are intended to minimize work-related traffic delays while maintaining safety for both roadway users and construction workers. As described in Caltrans' *Transportation Management Plan Guidelines*, they incorporate strategies such as traffic control, public information, incident management, and detour planning to manage work zone impacts and

maintain acceptable levels of service during construction activities. These requirements establish the regulatory framework for traffic control plans referenced in project-level impact analyses (Caltrans 2015).

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Through the Board of Forestry Fire Safe Regulations (California Code of Regulations, Title 14), the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection establishes minimum standards for roadway design, emergency access, and signage in fire-prone areas. These standards include requirements for road width, grade, turnarounds, and clearance to ensure that emergency vehicles can safely access developed areas and that residents can evacuate effectively during wildfire events. Compliance with these regulations, as implemented through local ordinances, helps reduce hazards by improving emergency response times, minimizing access constraints, and supporting safe evacuation (CAL FIRE 2021).

California Transportation Plan

The California Transportation Plan is prepared by the California State Transportation Agency every five years to provide a long-range policy framework to meet the state's future mobility needs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to goals set by the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Assembly Bill 32, discussed in Section 4.8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*) and implementing legislation Senate Bill (SB) 375 (discussed below). The most recent California Transportation Plan was adopted in 2021 (Caltrans 2021). The California Transportation Plan defines goals, performance-based policies, and strategies to achieve the state's collective vision for California's future statewide, integrated, multimodal transportation system by envisioning a sustainable system that improves mobility and enhances quality of life. Through ongoing engagement, the California Transportation Plan is intended to provide goals and visions to support a fully integrated, multimodal, sustainable transportation system that supports the quality of life, prosperous economy, human and environmental health, and social equity.

Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan is a capital improvement program that plans transportation projects related to state facilities in California for the next five years. The program is updated every two years with new construction projects as more funding is provided. The California Transportation Commission approves the fund estimate, and then Caltrans and regional planning agencies submit plans for transportation improvement projects. If the projects are programmed in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan, then relevant agencies can begin the implementation process.

Senate Bill 743

SB 743, which was signed into law in 2013, tasked the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation with establishing new criteria for determining the significance of transportation impacts under CEQA. SB 743 requires the new criteria to "promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses." It also states that alternative measures of transportation impacts may include "vehicle miles traveled, vehicle miles traveled per capita, automobile trip generation rates, or automobile trips generated." SB 743 changes the way that public agencies evaluate the transportation impacts of projects under CEQA by recognizing that roadway congestion, while an inconvenience to drivers, is not itself an environmental impact (Public Resource Code Section 21099 [b][2]). In addition to new exemptions for projects that are consistent with specific plans, SB 743 guidelines replace congestion-based metrics, such as auto delay and level of service, with VMT as the basis for determining significant impacts, unless the guidelines provide specific exceptions. Statewide implementation of SB 743 is now required. Therefore, this EIR relies on VMT to evaluate transportation impacts.

California's Complete Streets Act

The Complete Streets Act was signed into law as Assembly Bill 1358 in 2008. It requires that cities and other public agencies incorporate "complete street" policies and principles into their general plans and updates within the circulation elements, so that the plan addresses the needs of all users, including bicyclists and pedestrians. Caltrans specifically adopted Deputy Directive 64, which addresses the needs of people of all ages and abilities concerning transportation planning. It also recognizes that transportation improvement projects are opportunities to improve safety, access, and mobility for motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users. The Complete Streets Action Plan Action Plan 2024-25 provides an overview of the program (Caltrans 2024).

c. Regional and Local Regulations

Trinity County Regional Transportation Plan

The Trinity County Transportation Commission (TCTC) 2022-2042 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a long-range planning document that guides transportation investment and policy decisions in Trinity County over a 20-plus-year horizon. It reflects the county's rural, mountainous context by prioritizing safety, preservation, and reliable access over system expansion. The plan emphasizes maintaining existing roads, bridges, and highways, particularly critical state routes while improving safety, supporting emergency response, and ensuring mobility for residents, freight, and visitors. It also addresses limited but essential transit and social service transportation, especially for seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income populations. Environmental stewardship and resilience to wildfires, flooding, and landslides are key considerations embedded throughout the plan. The plan provides a financially constrained, policy-based framework to coordinate transportation planning, align with state and federal requirements, and support Trinity County's long-term mobility and community needs (TCTC 2023).

Trinity County Active Transportation Plan

The 2020 Trinity County ATP outlines a strategy to improve walking and bicycling in a rural county by focusing on safety, connectivity, and equitable access. It documents limited existing infrastructure and higher traffic stress on major highways, highlights health, environmental, and socioeconomic benefits of active transportation, and incorporates community input to identify priority needs especially near schools and town centers. The plan proposes targeted improvements such as sidewalks, crosswalks, bikeways, widened shoulders, and safety signage, prioritizing projects based on safety, feasibility, cost, and public support. The plan serves as a roadmap for securing funding and incrementally building a safer, more connected non-motorized transportation network countywide (Trinity County Resource Conservation District 2020).

Trinity County Code of Ordinances

The Trinity County Code of Ordinances contains the following policies regarding transportation and circulation that may be applicable to the project:

- Title 8. Chapter 8.30-Fire Safe Ordinance: These regulations require the design and construction of structures, subdivisions and developments in the county to provide for basic emergency access.
- Title 12. Chapter 12.10-Design Policies: adopts by reference the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials policy: "A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, 1990." This policy and standards applies to construction and reconstruction of county highways, streets and roads either performed by or contracted through the Trinity County Department of Transportation.

Bikeway Master Plan

The 2015 Bikeways Master Plan promotes the development of a unified bicycle system throughout Trinity County that serves the needs of bicycle commuters, students, users of nonmotorized rolling modes of transportation, seniors, and recreational bicyclists with safe connections to other regional nonmotorized systems. The Bikeway Master Plan identifies Improvements for three Class I facilities in Weaverville and Class III improvements for various Caltrans, county, and community facilities. Additional bikeways needs include:

- "Share the Road" signs are needed on SR 3, SR 36, and SR 299 to alert motorists that bicycles may be on the roadway. These signs should be installed every 2–3 miles and at the county boundaries.
- "Share the Road" signs and the Trinity County bike route logo should be posted on county roads that serve as spur bikeways from the SR network. These spur routes are used by bicyclists to reach remote communities, campgrounds, and other places of interest. (TCTC2015)

4.16.3 Impact Analysis

a. Significance Thresholds

A variety of performance measures are used to assess transportation systems. Depending on the type of performance evaluation required, performance measures may be very specific and focus on intersections or roadway segments, or performance measures may be aggregated to evaluate the overall operation of a regional transportation system. A regional travel model typically only contains information on the number of lanes, posted speed and link capacity on roadway segments and lacks information detailed enough to calculate accurate intersection information.

Because of the programmatic nature of the proposed Trinity County General Plan Update, the performance measures discussed herein are aggregated as a region to evaluate the overall performance of the Trinity County transportation system. Roadway transportation measures that address performance goals specific to the proposed project include VMT per capita.

The criteria for determining whether the proposed project would have significant environmental impacts related to transportation and traffic were based in part on the environmental checklist in Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines* (14 California Code of Regulations 15000 et seq.). Trinity County has not adopted a countywide quantitative threshold of significance for VMT or formal SB 743 implementation guidelines. Accordingly, the VMT significance determination for the proposed project is based on a project-specific threshold supported by substantial evidence and informed by the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation's *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* (Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation 2018). Consistent with this guidance and the county's rural context, implementation of the proposed project would result in a significant transportation impact if it would cause a net increase in VMT per capita relative to existing baseline conditions. Therefore, for the purposes of this EIR, implementation of the proposed project may have a significant adverse impact if the project would:

1. Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities;
2. Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b);
3. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment); or
4. Result in inadequate emergency access.

b. Methodology

Existing and projected VMT were derived from countywide historic and forecast VMT data for Trinity County, using a 2024 base year and a 2041 horizon year. VMT data were obtained from California Public

Road Data and related population projections and were compiled and evaluated by Alta Planning + Design, Inc. for use in this analysis. Calculation methodologies are documented in Appendix C.

Much of the potential cannabis-related development contemplated by the project was previously analyzed in the Trinity County Cannabis Program EIR (State Clearinghouse number 2018122049), certified in 2020 (2020 EIR). The 2020 EIR includes Mitigation Measure 3.14-3, which requires preparation of site access and circulation plans to ensure safe ingress and egress for cannabis-related uses; and Mitigation Measure 3.14-4, which requires implementation of roadway improvements or operational measures where necessary to maintain acceptable levels of service and roadway safety. In its transportation and traffic analysis, the 2020 EIR concluded that cannabis cultivation and associated activities would result in less-than-significant transportation impacts with implementation of applicable regulations and mitigation measures, including compliance with County roadway standards and coordination with local and regional transportation agencies. Because these regulatory controls are part of existing conditions and because the proposed General Plan Update establishes a new countywide policy framework that supersedes the 2020 EIR for cannabis activities occurring consistent with the General Plan, this EIR focuses on transportation issues not previously addressed or requiring reevaluation under the General Plan Update, including potential changes in travel demand in VMT.

c. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1:	Would the project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

Impact TRA-1 Implementation of the proposed project would be consistent with the California Transportation Plan, the TCTC 2022-2042 RTP, and the Trinity County Active Transportation Plan. Impacts would be less than significant.

Several regionally adopted programs, plans, ordinances and policies apply to the proposed project, including the California Transportation Plan, which establishes statewide transportation goals and priorities; the TCTC 2022-2042 RTP, which guides long-term regional transportation planning and investment; and the Trinity County Active Transportation Plan, which promotes safe and accessible walking, bicycling, and other non-motorized travel. As discussed in Section 4.11, *Land Use and Planning*, the proposed project would not conflict or be inconsistent with the TCTC 2022-2042 RTP. The proposed project would support the RTP's objectives of maintaining and improving existing transportation infrastructure, enhancing system safety and reliability, and preserving access within a rural county with extensive federally managed lands. The proposed project is also consistent with the RTP's emphasis on maintaining critical roadway connections without introducing capacity expansions or land use changes that would conflict with regional planning assumptions.

The proposed project includes updates to the Circulation Element with the following goals and policies: Goal CIR 1, Policy CIR 1.1 (Transportation Projects Consistency), Policy CIR 1.2 (Transportation Project Impact Mitigation), Policy CIR 1.3 (Roadway Improvement Costs), Policy CIR 1.4 (Roadway Improvement Requirements), Policy CIR 1.6 (Roadway Classification), Policy CIR 1.7 (Roadway Classification Update), Policy CIR 1.8 (Capacity Increasing Roadway Considerations), Policy CIR 1.10 (Traffic Mitigation), Policy CIR 1.14 (Road Design), Policy CIR 1.15 (Roadway Right-of-Way Needs), Policy CIR 1.16 (Turnouts and Passing Lanes), and Policy CIR 1.18 (Roadway Standards Compliance). The California Transportation Plan establishes statewide transportation goals related to safety, system performance, and sustainability; the TCTC 2022–2042 RTP guides long-range regional transportation planning and investment; and the Trinity County Active Transportation Plan promotes safe and accessible multimodal travel options. Goal CIR 1 and its associated policies would be consistent with, and would help achieve, the objectives of the California Transportation Plan by supporting the safe and efficient movement of people and goods while addressing environmental considerations and long-term system performance. Policies CIR 1.1 through CIR 1.18 emphasize coordination between land use and transportation planning, application of consistent roadway design and classification standards, and consideration of capacity-increasing projects in

accordance with state funding program requirements, all of which align with the California Transportation Plan's focus on system management, safety, and sustainability.

Similarly, Goal CIR 1 and the associated policies are consistent with, and would help achieve, the goals and policies of the TCTC 2022-2042 RTP by supporting an integrated, multimodal transportation system that serves rural and intercommunity travel needs while protecting community character and environmental resources. The proposed policies addressing roadway classification, access management, traffic mitigation, and coordination with Caltrans would support implementation of the RTP's regional roadway and safety improvement strategies and ensure that transportation investments are aligned with regional priorities and funding eligibility requirements.

In addition, implementation of the proposed project would be consistent with the Trinity County Active Transportation Plan by supporting transportation planning that accommodates all users, including pedestrians and bicyclists, through coordinated roadway design standards, project review procedures, and consideration of multimodal needs as part of the development review process. While Trinity County is predominantly rural and heavily reliant on the roadway system, the proposed policies provide a framework that supports incremental improvements to safety, accessibility, and multimodal connectivity consistent with the County's Active Transportation Plan's goals.

As the proposed project would be consistent with the California Transportation Plan, the TCTC 2022-2042 RTP, and the Trinity County Active Transportation Plan, there would be no conflict with applicable programs, plans, ordinances, or policies addressing the circulation system, including roadways, transit, and active transportation facilities. This impact would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 2:	Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

Impact TRA-2 The proposed project would result in a decrease in VMT per capita from baseline (2024) countywide conditions to horizon year (2050) conditions. While the proposed project is a programmatic document that does not approve specific development projects, it directs growth toward existing communities while maintaining low-density rural development patterns. As a result, VMT impacts from implementation of the proposed project would be less than significant.

As described in Section 4.16.3(a), *Significance Thresholds*, Trinity County has not adopted quantitative VMT significance thresholds. In the absence of adopted local thresholds, *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.3(b) allows the use of VMT trends, project characteristics, and reasoned judgment supported by substantial evidence to evaluate transportation impacts. While total VMT would increase from 459,400 miles in 2024 to 650,067 miles in 2050, VMT per capita would decrease from approximately 29.1 under baseline 2024 countywide conditions to approximately 27.9 under 2050 horizon year conditions (a decrease of approximately 4.1 percent). The forecasted VMT for 2050 assumed growth would occur from the proposed project population increase in addition to the average annual growth rate for the county. This decrease reflects that the proposed project directs future growth toward existing communities and encourages more compact, mixed-use development patterns, which may reduce trip lengths and overall vehicle travel compared to dispersed rural development. The proposed project is a policy-level planning document that does not approve specific development projects, does not add roadway capacity, and assumes a modest buildout scenario based on demographic trends rather than maximum development potential.

The proposed project emphasizes infill development, while maintaining low-density development patterns in rural areas of the County. These land use strategies do not introduce development patterns typically associated with substantial increases in VMT, such as project-specific large-scale suburban expansion or automobile-oriented growth. Furthermore, the proposed Circulation Element contains goals and policies specifically intended to support alternatives to vehicle travel and help reduce VMT to the extent feasible given Trinity County's rural context. Such goals and policies include the following: Goal CIR 4, Policy CIR 4.3 (Transit Passenger Service Increase), Policy CIR 4.4 (Supplemental Transit Service), Goal CIR 5, Policy CIR 5.1 (Prioritize Existing Facilities), Policy CIR 5.2 (Low-Cost Alternatives to Road Expansion), Policy CIR 5.3 (Encourage Transit), Goal CIR 7, Policy CIR 7.1 (Encourage Active Transportation), Policy CIR 7.2 (Add Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities), Policy CIR 7.3 (Facility Development), Policy CIR 7.5 (Active Transportation Plan), Policy CIR 7.7 (Pedestrian and Bicycle Access Points), Policy CIR 7.9 (Bike Storage), Policy CIR 7.10 (Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities in New Development), and Policy CIR 7.11 (Safety and Accessibility Enhancements).

Policies such as Policy CIR 5.2 and Policy CIR 5.3 emphasize low-cost alternatives to roadway expansion and encourage the use of public transit. Active transportation is further promoted through Goal CIR 7 and Policies CIR 7.1 through CIR 7.11, which supports the expansion of pedestrian and bicycle facilities within county communities. Collectively, these policies would help reduce reliance on single-occupant vehicle travel where feasible. Based on VMT projections resulting in a net decrease of VMT per capita in 2050, the policy-level scope of the proposed project, and the VMT-reducing transportation goals and policies included in the 2050 General Plan Circulation Element, VMT impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 3:	Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible use (e.g., farm equipment)?

Impact TRA-3 Implementation of the proposed project would not substantially increase hazards due to geometric design features or incompatible uses. Rather, the proposed goals and policies would enhance roadways safety. Impacts would be less than significant.

The proposed project consists of a countywide General Plan Update and does not include specific roadway construction projects or geometric modifications. As such, implementation of the proposed project would not directly introduce new roadway features such as sharp curves, dangerous intersections, or incompatible uses that could increase transportation hazards. Any future transportation or development projects implemented by the proposed project would be subject to applicable County, state, and federal design standards and review processes.

The proposed Circulation Element includes Program CIR-9 (Roadway Safety and Maintenance), which establishes an ongoing, County-led process to identify, prioritize, and correct roadway deficiencies. Program CIR-9 emphasizes maintaining all-weather access, enhancing roadway safety, correcting deficiencies on existing facilities, and prioritizing safety improvements based on community input, field observations, and coordination with emergency services. Implementing this program would help reduce existing hazards related to roadway geometry, maintenance conditions, and operational characteristics, particularly on rural roads and state highways that experience challenging terrain and weather conditions.

The countywide growth that would result from implementation of the proposed project would not affect design level features of roadways, as there are no specific development projects identified in the proposed project. Future projects would be subject to design guidelines established by the jurisdiction with authority over the project. Construction activities resulting from projects associated with

implementation of the proposed project would be short term, intermittent, and geographically dispersed. At the county level, these disruptions would be localized, and impacts would be limited and would not represent a significant impact to the operations of the regional transportation system. At the local level, construction activities could increase travel on local roads and result in detours or increased congestion in certain locations. The actual construction details of potential future projects are not known. Construction impacts would be evaluated at the project level as details regarding the timing, design, scope, and construction program are available. Generally, construction activities would be required to be conducted in accordance with, and subject to review by, all applicable state and/or local jurisdictions with authority over the project; thus, ensuring projects would be designed to minimize the potential for hazardous conditions and to ensure safe travel by all modes.

Furthermore, the proposed Circulation Element contains goals and policies specifically intended to reduce roadway hazards and improve safety for all users. Such goals and policies include the following: Goal CIR 3, Policy CIR 3.2 (Correct Roadway Safety Hazards), Policy CIR 3.4 (Roadway Maintenance and Safety Funding), Policy CIR 3.5 (Inter-jurisdictional coordination), and Policy CIR 3.6 (Reduce Fatalities). Collectively, these policies would reduce hazards by addressing existing safety deficiencies, prioritizing funding for maintenance and safety improvements, and coordinating with state and federal agencies on roadways.

The proposed project would not negatively impact the design of transportation facilities by increasing hazards. Rather, the proposed project would support transportation design improvements to make roadways safer. Future development under the proposed project would be required to follow Chapter 12.10: Design Policies of the Trinity County Code of Ordinances, which establishes standards for roadway design. Compliance with these standards helps ensure that proposed development would be designed to minimize conflicts between users, maintain adequate visibility and stopping distances, and accommodate expected traffic volumes safely. Because future development would be required to adhere to these design standards, the proposed project would not substantially increase hazards due to geometric design features or incompatible land uses.

Similarly, the proposed project would not include substantial land use or circulation changes that would adversely impact the compatible use of transportation facilities. Rather, the proposed Trinity County 2050 General Plan Circulation Element would support and enhance roadway safety. In addition, the proposed project would not introduce new agricultural uses or other similar uses that would result in increased incompatible vehicle uses on roadways in the county, such as slow-moving farm equipment. In addition, development facilitated by the proposed project would be subject to applicable land use regulations established by the jurisdiction with authority over the project. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially increase hazards due to incompatible uses. This impact would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 4:	Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?

Impact TRA-4 The proposed project would not result in inadequate emergency access. Rather, the proposed goals and policies would improve emergency response and facilitate more effective emergency evacuation. Impacts would be less than significant.

The proposed project is a plan-level document that would not implement specific individual projects. The actual design details of development facilitated the proposed project are not known. However, Caltrans, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and local jurisdictions maintain design standards, such as Chapter 12.10: Design Policies of the Trinity County Code of Ordinances, for proposed

new development and roadways to ensure adequate passage of emergency vehicles. Future projects in the county would be subject to review with regard to emergency vehicle requirements by state and/or local jurisdictions with authority over the project, as well as responsible emergency service agencies, thus ensuring individual projects would be designed to meet all applicable emergency design standards. Construction activities could temporarily impair emergency vehicle access due to lane closures, detours, construction staging, and increased congestion within work areas. However, specific project-level standard construction would be subject to standard construction management and traffic control requirements that are intended to maintain emergency access and, where necessary, provide alternative access routes in coordination with emergency service providers. For example, a traffic control plan approved by Caltrans would be required during construction activities that result in lane restrictions or closures of state-managed facilities to minimize traffic delays and ensure worker safety (Caltrans 2015). The traffic control plan would adhere to the standards set forth in the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (Caltrans 2015). In addition, while potential future projects could temporarily impede emergency access at project locations during construction periods, projects would be required to conform to state, regional, and local regulations requiring maintenance of emergency access during construction.

Furthermore, the proposed project includes the following goals and policies, in addition to those described under Impact TRA-3, above, related to emergency response, operations, and access: Policy CIR 3.1 (Develop Safe Roadways), Policy CIR 3.3 (All Weather Roads), Goal SAF 8, Policy SAF 8.1 (Emergency Operations Plan), Policy SAF 8.3 (Disaster Preparedness Training), Policy SAF 8.5 (Adequate Roads for Emergency Vehicles), Policy SAF 8.6 (Emergency Response and Evacuation Routes), and Policy SAF 8.7 (Emergency Evacuation Locations).These proposed goals and policies would maximize the operating efficiency of transportation facilities and result in the capability to effectively respond to emergency incidents; improved community transportation corridors for better evacuation routes and better access for emergency responders; safe access for fire and other emergency equipment on routes of escape to safely handle evacuations; and, future development with adequate access for fire and emergency vehicles and equipment. Overall, proposed policies would improve circulation, emergency access, and resiliency in Trinity County, as well as improve emergency response and facilitate more effective emergency evacuation.

Based on the above analysis and in consideration of proposed goals and policies, the impact of the proposed project on emergency access would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

4.16.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope for cumulative transportation impacts is generally the County of Trinity and the adjoining counties of Humboldt, Siskiyou, Shasta, Tehama, and Mendocino. This geographic scope is appropriate because, while the county limits represent the Planning Area for the project, the transportation system provides direct access to Humboldt, Siskiyou, Shasta, Tehama, and Mendocino counties. The cumulative development scenario is described in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting*.

Cumulative development would be consistent with the federal, state, and regional laws, regulations, and policies outlined in Section 4.16.2, *Regulatory Setting,* thereby avoiding the potential for cumulative conflict between transportation planning for Trinity County and the other surrounding counties. Therefore, the potential cumulative impact related to conflict with programs, plans, and ordinances or policies addressing the circulation system would be less than significant.

Cumulative development within Trinity County and the surrounding region would contribute to long-term increases in VMT due to population growth, tourism, regional travel demands, and the rural nature of the County's transportation system. Trinity County experiences travel patterns characterized by long trip lengths, limited transit availability, and a reliance on personal vehicles for access to employment, services, recreation, and regional destinations. These factors contribute to higher per capita VMT relative to more urbanized areas and are largely driven by geographic and demographic conditions rather than by individual land use policy decisions. Therefore, the cumulative VMT impact would be significant. The proposed project would prioritize infill and community-oriented development while maintaining low-density rural patterns. Proposed Circulation Element policies emphasize maintaining existing facilities, promoting transit, supporting active transportation, and reducing reliance on single-occupant vehicles where feasible. Collectively, these strategies would accommodate future travel demand while moderating VMT growth. Additionally, the project would result in a 4.1 percent decrease in VMT per capita in the county. Therefore, the project would not have a considerable contribution to cumulative VMT impacts.

Other transportation related impacts, such as hazards and emergency access, are governed by federal, state, and local regulations and would be addressed through project-level review and implementation of applicable standards. Additionally, applicable General Plan goals and policies promote roadway safety, emergency response capability, and multimodal system efficiency. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to transportation hazards and emergency access would not be significant.

4.17 Tribal Cultural Resources

This setting evaluates potential impacts on tribal cultural resources (TCR) related to the implementation of the proposed project.

4.17.1 Setting

a. Regional Prehistory

The following discussion is based on a synthesis of Moratto (1984), Hildebrandt (2007), and King et al. (2016). The indigenous history of Trinity County is further refined into the North Coast and Klamath Mountains/North Coast Range by King et al. (2016) based on time-sensitive projectile points and interior versus coastal archaeological data. Trinity County is located in the inland portion of this archaeological subregion, with human occupation spanning from the Paleoindian Period to the present. Based on King et al. (2016), the prehistoric cultural timeline of the Northwest Coastal Subregion can be divided into five periods: the Paleoindian Period (13,400-12,800 calibrated Before Present [cal BP]), the Borax Lake Pattern (8850-5700 cal BP), Squaw Creek Pattern (5700-4500 cal BP), the Mendocino Pattern (4500-1500 cal BP), and the Tulawat (previously Gunther) Pattern (post-dating 1500 cal BP).

Paleoindian Period (13,400-12,800 cal BP)

Artifacts dating from the Paleoindian Period are the earliest evidence of human existence in the Northwest Coastal Subregion and consist of fluted projectile points and chipped stone crescents (King et al. 2016, Moratto et al. 1984). Fluted projectile points (a stone tool technology) and chipped stone crescents have been identified in adjacent Mendocino and Siskiyou counties of California and provide proof of the long-standing human occupation of the region (King et al. 2016). However, these types of artifacts have been found mainly in isolated contexts lacking association with other, well-dated artifact assemblages or good stratigraphic contexts (Hildebrandt 2007). Due to the sparse number of artifacts from this period, little is known about the inhabitants of the Northwest Coastal Subregion during this period of time and King et al. (2016) document a gap in diagnostic artifacts between 12,800 and 10,500 cal BP. This in no way denotes a lack of occupation, only a gap in the archaeological data currently available.

Borax Lake Pattern (8850-5700 cal BP)

The Borax Lake Pattern has been well documented within the Northwest Coastal Subregion, with a number of archaeological sites that have been identified north of the Clear Lake Basin and into Humboldt and Trinity Counties (King et al. 2016). Artifact assemblages associated with these sites include fluted projectile points but also include serrated bifaces, ovoid flake tools, handstones, millingslabs, and edge-flaked spalls. Archaeological sites from this time period are found in a wide range of environmental contexts, even from ridgetops at 4,500 to 6,000 feet above mean sea level in Humboldt County, in upland areas, and along terraces adjacent to the Trinity River (Hildebrandt 2007). Archaeological evidence indicates the Borax Lake Pattern was widespread through the Northwest, with it persisting longer in the more northern areas as evidence by the later indented-based points (King et al. 2016). Hildebrandt (2007) interprets this to represent a “forager” lifestyle based on the composition and homogeneity of the artifact assemblages, and King et al. (2016) note that faunal and floral remains are unlikely to preserve due to the conifer leaf litter and heavy rainfall. The lack of faunal and floral remains limit much of the dating in the region to obsidian hydration dates that are less understood in this region (King et al. 2016).

Squaw Creek Pattern (5700-4500 cal BP)

The Squaw Creek Pattern is introduced to this subregion by King et al. (2016) as a provisional pattern based on contracting-stemmed points on the Pilot Ridge/South Fork Mountain, hypothesizing an affinity

with the Squaw Creek Pattern in Shasta County. Previously this time period was lumped into the Berkeley Pattern, as can be seen in Hildebrandt (2007), which King et al. (2016) attribute to a lack of currently identified, single component assemblages falling between the Borax Lake and Mendocino Patterns.

Mendocino Pattern (4500-1500 cal BP)

The Mendocino Pattern is characterized by side-notched, corner-notched, and concave-base dart points, handstones, millingstones, various flake and cobble tools (including Mckee unifaces), and to a lesser degree cobble mortars and pestles (King et al. 2016). Hildebrandt (2007) describes the Mckee unifaces being important in assemblages north of Sonoma County. According to King et al. (2016), the Mendocino Pattern sites represent temporary hunting camps or seasonal encampments in the coastal regions, with some evidence of greater residential stability further inland. The coastal sites may represent logistical forays from more substantial residential sites, with the intensive harvesting and storage of salmon and acorns emerging near the middle of this temporal period, around 2500 cal BP (King et al. 2016).

Tulawat Pattern (post-dating 1500 cal BP)

The Tulawat Pattern marks several major changes in northwestern California, with significant increases in archaeological site frequencies, evidence of the first permanent village sites emerge for the first time, and an increased diversity in artifact assemblages (King et al. 2016). Characterized by the Tuluwat (formerly Gunther) Pattern of artifacts, items that are specialized for woodworking and used in the construction of plank houses and canoes appear in archaeological findings of the region (King et al. 2016). The interior counties of northern California, such as Trinity County, have lacked large scale archaeological excavations, and so less is known about interior sites of this time period. One interior archaeological site within Redwood National Park (CA-HUM 439) has yielded projectile points similar to those of the Tuluwat Pattern coastal sites; however, the CA-HUM-439 site contained a higher amount of obsidian than at coastal sites (Moratto 1984). Other small-scale excavations along the Smith River (CA-DNO-26) have found small amounts of salmon, sea mammal, and marine shellfish, indicating connections to coastal groups during the Emergent Period (King et al. 2016).

b. Ethnographic Setting

Native American groups living in northwest California have long been associated with the larger Northwest Coast Culture Area, differing significantly from other groups in California. The Northwest Coast Culture Area extends from Canada and Alaska (including groups like the Tlingit and Kwakiutl) south to Cape Mendocino, where groups like the Tolowa, Yurok, Wiyot, Karok, and Hupa represent the southernmost expression of the culture (King et al. 2016).

These groups lived in relatively high densities and occupied permanent coastal and interior riverine settlements, favoring bays lagoons, or the mouths of streams (King et al. 2016; Kroeber 1925). Settlements were supported by the storage of acorns, the procurement of clams, saltwater fishing, and the use of large communal fish weirs (King et al. 2016; Kroeber 1925). River canoes, large oceangoing canoes of the northwestern type, composite harpoons, and redwood smoke houses were developed to aid in the harvest and storage of fish and marine mammals (King et al. 2016; Kroeber 1925). The Tolowa, Yurok, Wiyot, Karok, and Hupa all lived in semisubterranean plank houses located in permanently occupied villages (King et al. 2016).

The Wintuan family of the Penutian linguistic stock includes Wintu, Nomlaki, and Patwin (DuBois 1935). Analysis of historical linguistic indicates that Wintuan languages represent relatively recent migration from Oregon, based on sets of plant and animal species names in the Wintuan languages (Golla 2011). The Wintu/Nomlaki moved south out of Oregon, settled in the northern valley, divided into two distinct languages, and then spread through the various tributaries of the Sacramento and upper Trinity Rivers (King et al. 2016). Linguistic data for Trinity County is primarily Wintu-Nomlaki, with northern Trinity County speaking Wintuan and the southern portion (south of Cottonwood Creek) speaking Nomlaki, with a small portion of western Trinity County in the vicinity of Hyampom speaking Chamariko (Golla 2011).

The Wintu social unit consisted of several families in loosely scattered bark houses ranging from four to several dozen (DuBois 1935). Seasonally, they hunted deer, elk, and small game; fished for salmon and steelhead; and harvested berries, seeds, and other plants (Dubois 1935; Kroeber 1925). The Wintu were known for basketry that was both beautiful and useful, and traded with various native groups living in coastal and valley areas of California. The Wintu way of life was forever changed with the incursion of trappers and settlers ready to exploit this resource-rich area (King et al. 2016). By the early 1800s nearly three-quarters of the Wintu people had been decimated by diseases to which they had no immunity. The Gold Rush brought even greater changes for the native people, most notably the loss of their traditional lands and culture (National Park Service 2025). The Redding Rancheria was established in 1922 and was where the displaced members of the Wintu, Yana, and Pit River tribes were required to settle. According to the United States Census Bureau, the total population of Wintu people is estimated at 1,447 in 2021 (United States Census Bureau 2021).

4.17.2 Regulatory Setting

a. State Regulations

Assembly Bill 52

As of July 1, 2015, California Assembly Bill (AB) 52 was enacted and expands CEQA by defining a new resource category: "tribal cultural resources." AB 52 establishes that "a project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a TCR is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment" (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21084.2). It further states that the lead agency shall establish measures to avoid impacts that would alter the significant characteristics of a TCR, when feasible (PRC Section 21084.3).

PRC Sections 21074(a)(1)(A) and (B) defines TCRs as "sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe" and requires that they meet either of the following criteria:

1) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources, as defined in PRC Section 5020.1(k).
2) 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 PRC Section 5024.1. In applying these criteria, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

AB 52 also establishes a formal consultation process for California tribes regarding TCRs. The consultation process must be completed before a CEQA document can be certified. Under AB 52, lead agencies are required to "begin consultation with a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed project." Native American tribes that have requested notice of projects proposed in the jurisdiction of the lead agency are to be included in the process.

Senate Bill 18

California Government Code Section 65352.3 (adopted pursuant to the requirements of Senate Bill [SB] 18) requires local governments to contact, refer plans to, and consult with tribal organizations prior to making a decision to adopt or amend a general or specific plan. The tribal organizations eligible to consult have traditional lands in a local government's jurisdiction, and are identified, upon request, by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). As noted in the California Office of Planning and Research's *Tribal Consultation Guidelines* (2005), "The intent of SB 18 is to provide California Native American tribes an opportunity to participate in local land use decision sat an early planning stage, for the purpose of protecting, or mitigating impacts to, cultural places."

Codes Governing Human Remains

The disposition of human remains is governed by Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and PRC Sections 5097.94 and 5097.98 and falls in the jurisdiction of the NAHC. If human remains are discovered, the County Coroner must be notified within 48 hours and there should be no further disturbance to the site where the remains were found. If the remains are determined by the coroner to be Native American, the Coroner is responsible for contacting the NAHC within 24 hours. The NAHC, pursuant to PRC Section 5097.98, will immediately notify the most likely descendant (MLD) of the remains to inspect the burial site and make recommendations for treatment of the remains and associated grave goods.

California Public Resources Code Section 5097.98

Section 5097.98 of the California PRC states that the NAHC, upon notification of the discovery of Native American human remains pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, shall immediately notify those persons (i.e., MLD) it believes to be descended from the deceased. With permission of the landowner or a designated representative, the MLD may inspect the remains and any associated cultural materials and make recommendations for treatment or disposition of the remains and associated grave goods. The MLD shall provide recommendations or preferences for treatment of the remains and associated cultural materials within 48 hours of being granted access to the site.

4.17.3 AB 52 and SB 18 Tribal Consultation

On December 4, 2025, pursuant to SB 18, and on December 10, 2025, pursuant to AB 52, the County sent via certified mail notification letters to 13 California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area. The letters were sent to representatives of the Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria, the Grindstone Rancheria of Wintun-Wailaki, the Hoopa Valley Tribe, the Nor-Rel-Muk Wintu Nation, the Noyo River Indian Community, the Redding Rancheria, the Round Valley Reservation/Covelo Indian Community, the Scotts Valley Band of Pomo, the Shasta Indian Nation, the Shasta Nation, the Tsnungwe Council, the Winnemum Wintu Tribe, and the Wintu Tribe of California.

The consultation window for AB 52 closed January 9, 2026, and the consultation window for SB 18 closed on March 4, 2026. The County did not receive comments or requests for consultation from any of the tribal contacts.

4.17.4 Impact Analysis

a. Significance Thresholds

Consistent with the *CEQA Guidelines*, impacts related to TCRs would be considered potentially significant if implementation of the project would:

1. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a TCR, defined in PRC Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:
    a. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in PRC Section 5020.1(k), or
    b. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of PRC Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of PRC Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

b. Methodology

The impact analysis is based on an assessment of baseline conditions for the Planning Area, as described above under Section 4.17.1, *Setting*, and Section 4.17.3, *AB 52 and SB 18 Tribal Consultation*. The analysis identifies potential impacts based on the predicted interaction between the affected environment and construction, operation, and maintenance activities related to development facilitated by the proposed project. Impacts are described in terms of location, context, duration, and intensity, and mitigation measures are recommended, when necessary, to avoid or minimize impacts.

Much of the potential cannabis-related development contemplated by the project was previously analyzed in the Trinity County Cannabis Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (State Clearinghouse number 2018122049), certified in 2020 (2020 EIR). Tribal consultation pursuant to AB 52 was conducted for the 2020 EIR, wherein the County received comments and recommendations from the Tsnungwe Council. The 2020 EIR found less than significant TCR impacts, with no mitigation required.

Because these regulatory controls are part of existing conditions and because the proposed General Plan Update establishes a new countywide policy framework that supersedes the 2020 EIR for cannabis activities occurring consistent with the General Plan, this EIR focuses on TCR effects not previously addressed or requiring reevaluation under the General Plan Update.

c. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1a:	Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 that is 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)?
Threshold 1b:	Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 that is a resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1?

Impact TCR-1 Implementation of the project has the potential to impact tribal cultural resources. However, impacts would be less than significant.

Effects on TCRs are only knowable once a specific project has been proposed as the effects are highly dependent on both the individual project site conditions and the characteristics of the proposed activity. While no TCRs have been identified in the county, new TCRs may be identified or established over the course of implementation of the project, which is expected to occur through 2050. Therefore, during the environmental review phase of individual development projects, tribes who have requested notification shall be notified in accordance with AB 52. Tribes who respond to initial notification and request formal consultation under AB 52 shall enter into formal government to government consultation where TCRs, should they exist in the project vicinity, will be formally identified. If TCRs are identified, project-specific impacts to TCRs would be identified and mitigation required as appropriate.

The proposed General Plan contains goals and policies that relate to TCRs. Specifically, Goals COS-8 and COS-9 and Policies COS 8.1 (Historic Preservation), COS 8.2 (Historical Structure Use), COS 8.3 (Historical Design Standards), COS 8.4 (Cultural and Paleontological Resource Assessment), COS 9.1 (Tribal Consultation), COS 9.2 (Tribal Heritage Protection and Compliance), COS 9.3 (Tribal Awareness and Education Partnerships), COS 9.4 (Tribal Collaboration), and COS 9.5 (Native American Heritage) describe measures to identify and minimize impacts to cultural and tribal cultural resources. Policy COS 8.1 encourages consultation with historic preservation agencies and organizations, as appropriate, to better facilitate historic preservation. Policy COS 8.2 encourages new development to adaptively reuse architecturally or historically significant buildings. Policy COS 8.3 encourages new development to incorporate historical design standards to reflect the historical and cultural traditions characteristic to the

area or community. Policy COS 8.4 requires new developments be assessed for potential cultural resources by a qualified professional. Policy COS 9.1 requires tribal consultation, as determined necessary by County staff on their preliminary review of a project. Policy COS 9.2 requires the safeguarding of archaeological, historical, and cultural resources from damage or destruction during construction and development projects. Policy COS 9.3 requires the promotion of tribal heritage through awareness and education partnerships. Policy COS 9.4 requires the collaboration with local tribal organizations to guide management of natural and cultural resources and landscapes of significance to tribal partners, and Policy COS 9.5 requires support for tribal organizations educating the community about Trinity County's Native American heritage. These policies, in addition to compliance with statewide tribal consultation requirements, would reduce potential impacts to TCRs from future individual development projects.

Impacts associated with the project are therefore **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

4.17.5 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope for the cumulative TCR impacts is Trinity County and immediately surrounding areas. This geographic scope is appropriate because TCR-related impacts are typically site-specific, although TCRs may cross jurisdictional boundaries. The cumulative development scenario is described in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting*.

Cumulative development may contribute to impacts on TCRs as growth occurs in the region. The increase in growth from cumulative development may impact existing and previously undisturbed and undiscovered TCRs. Existing regulations requiring tribal consultation would reduce cumulative TCR impacts; however, this cumulative impact would be significant. As described under Impact TCR-1, the proposed project includes General Plan Policies COS 8.1 through COS 8.4, and COS 9.1 through COS 9.5, which would reduce and avoid potential impacts to TCRs. With the implementation of these proposed policies, the project would not have a considerable contribution to the significant cumulative TCR impact.

4.18 Utilities and Service Systems

This section evaluates potential effects associated with implementation of the Trinity County General Plan Update (proposed project) on utilities by identifying anticipated demands and existing and planned service availability. It describes the physical and regulatory setting, the criteria used to evaluate the significance of potential impacts, the methods used to evaluate these impacts, and the results of the impact analysis. Utility systems analyzed in this section consist of water supply, wastewater, stormwater drainage, solid waste, electric power, natural gas, and telecommunications infrastructure.

4.18.1 Setting

This section describes the existing setting in Trinity County with respect to utilities including water, wastewater, stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, telecommunications, and solid waste facilities and infrastructure. Unless otherwise cited, this section relies on the Draft Community Plans (County of Trinity 2025).

a. Water Supply

Water supply service in Trinity County is provided by small public agencies and community service districts, as well as a decentralized set of mutual water companies and small community water systems that are recognized by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and public water systems. Communities and properties located outside the service areas of an existing supply provider rely on privately owned groundwater wells.

The primary public agencies and community service districts providing water supply service in Trinity County include:

- Weaverville Community Services District (WCSD) – serves the communities of Weaverville, Douglas City, and Union Hill
- Trinity County Waterworks District (TCWD) No. 1 – serves to the City of Hayfork
- TCWD No. 2 – serves Douglas City (separate from WCSD's Douglas City service area)

In addition, the mutual water companies and small community water systems providing water supply service in Trinity County include:

- Lewiston Park Mutual Water Company – serves the Lewiston Park area
- Trinity Center Community Services District (CSD)/Trinity Center Mutual Water Company – serves Trinity Center
- Coffee Creek Water District/Coffee Creek CSD – serves Coffee Creek community
- Canyon Creek Water System – small community system near Junction City
- Post Mountain Public Utility District – serves the Post Mountain area
- Trinity Village Water System – serves Trinity Village near Hawkins Bar
- Salyer Mutual Water Company – serves Salyer area
- Hawkins Bar Water District – serves Hawkins Bar
- Del Loma Water System – small system serving Del Loma
- Big Bar Water System – serves Big Bar community
- Burnt Ranch Water District – serves Burnt Ranch
- Hyampom CSD – serves Hyampom
- Zenia Water District – small, remote system serving the Zenia area

The water supply providers listed above operate independently and are not connected to regional wholesalers, such as for imported surface water supply. Rather, each community treats and distributes water from nearby creeks, springs, or surface water intakes consistent with Title 22 requirements. Local surface water sources include the Trinity River, Hayfork Creek, Coffee Creek, and other tributary streams.

Outside the service areas listed above, rural properties rely on individual water sources, typically private groundwater wells or property-specific surface water diversions where legally permitted.

Surface Water

The Trinity River provides the headwaters for a major portion of the federal Central Valley Project (CVP), but Trinity County does not receive CVP water. The Trinity River Division of the CVP was authorized by the U.S. Congress in 1955 to store and divert water from the Trinity River to the Sacramento River system. The Trinity River Division of the CVP includes Trinity Dam, which forms Trinity Lake, and Lewiston Dam, which regulates flow into the Trinity River and facilitates inter-basin water exports. While Trinity Dam and Lewiston Dam regulate flows, the Clear Creek Tunnel transfers water from Trinity County into Whiskeytown Lake, where it becomes part of the broader CVP supply for agricultural, municipal, and environmental uses in the Central Valley. Congress explicitly stated that up to 704,000 acre-feet per year (AFY) of Trinity River water could be exported to the Central Valley without harming fishery resources in Trinity County (Trinity River Restoration Program 2026).

Although Trinity County provides the headwaters and storage for a major CVP division (Trinity River Division), no CVP water is delivered back into the county. There is no imported surface water and no regional water wholesaler in Trinity County. Rather, all surface water use in the county is conducted in accordance with local surface water rights and small community water systems with their own diversion rights. These rights include:

- **Pre-1914 rights** are appropriate rights established before the 1914 Water Commission Act and are not subject to SWRCB permitting authority; they allow diversion and use of water at a specific rate and location with priority based on the date of first use.
- **Riparian rights** belong to landowners whose property physically touches a natural watercourse; they allow “reasonable use” of water on the riparian parcel without a permit, but water cannot be stored for later use or exported for off-parcel use.
- **Post-1914 appropriative rights** require a permit and license from the SWRCB; they authorize the diversion, storage, and use of water at defined rates, seasons, and purposes, with priority based on application date. These rights are junior to riparian and pre-1914 rights and are subject to curtailment, monitoring, and reporting requirements.

As described above, surface water supply in Trinity County consists of water in streams, creeks, and tributaries to the Trinity River that is managed through surface water rights tied to specific diversion points, with maximum diversion rates. The actual availability of surface water depends upon climatic conditions and streamflow, with less water available during dry and drought years. Surface water rights may be expanded through a formal water rights change petition to the SWRCB, subject to review and authorization by the SWRCB.

Local Groundwater

As discussed in Section 4.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, groundwater in Trinity County is generally available in valley-fill deposits and fractured-rock aquifers. Groundwater in Trinity County is not part of a large basin and rather is found within fractured-rock aquifers in upland areas and in shallow alluvial deposits along rivers and creeks. Groundwater serves as the only water supply source in areas without surface water rights including all areas not served by water districts or small systems, such as Post Mountain, Junction City, and portions of Trinity Center and Lewiston.

Trinity County does not contain any groundwater basins identified by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) as Medium or High Priority; therefore, no groundwater systems in the county are regulated by the

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). SGMA requires governments and water agencies of Medium and High Priority basins to form groundwater sustainability agencies and implement groundwater sustainability plans to halt overdraft and bring groundwater basins into balanced levels of pumping and recharge. Defined basins within Trinity County include the Hayfork Valley, Hyampom Valley, Dinsmores Town Area, Hettenshaw Valey, and Wilson Point Area Groundwater Basins, all of which are designated Low Priority under SGMA and summarized below.

- **Hayfork Valley Groundwater Basin** is an irregularly shaped alluvial basin oriented east west along Hayfork Creek, encompassing the alluvial deposits of Salt Creek and Big Creek. The basin covers approximately 3,300 acres and has an estimated groundwater storage capacity of 1,500 acre-feet, with recharge occurring mainly through stream infiltration and seasonal precipitation. (DWR 2004a)
- **Hyampom Valley Groundwater Basin** lies along the South Fork of the Trinity River, just north of the community of Hyampom. The basin encompasses approximately 1,350 acres of alluvial deposits, with groundwater availability estimated at 84 AFY for agricultural purposes and 44 AFY for municipal and industrial uses. (DWR 2004b)
- **Dinsmores Town Area Groundwater Basin** underlies a northwest-southeast trending alluvial valley along the Van Duzen River, near and downstream of the community of Dinsmore at the boundary between Humboldt and Trinity counties. The basin covers 2,300 acres and provides about 46 AFY for agricultural use and 78 AFY for municipal and industrial purposes. (DWR 2004c)
- **Hettenshaw Valley Groundwater Basin** is a northwest-southeast trending alluvial basin along a tributary of the Van Duzen River, approximately nine miles southeast of the Dinsmores Town Area Groundwater Basin. The basin covers approximately 850 acres and has an estimated groundwater storage capacity of about one acre-foot. (DWR 2004d)
- **Wilson Point Area Groundwater Basin** is a north-south trending alluvial basin located along a segment of Hayfork Creek near Wilson Point. The basin has an estimated storage capacity of approximately 700 acre-feet. Groundwater extraction includes about 30 AFY for agricultural use and 4 AFY for municipal and industrial purposes. (DWR 2004e)

Groundwater rights in Trinity County are “overlying rights,” meaning that a landowner may pump groundwater for use on the overlying parcel as long as pumping is for “reasonable and beneficial use” and pumping does not injure other users. The reasonable and beneficial use doctrine is the basic principle defining all California water rights, including groundwater. All groundwater pumping must be both beneficial (serving an accepted purpose) and reasonable (not excessive, wasteful, or injurious to others). California Water Code Section 275 provides an enforcement mechanism for reasonable and beneficial use, directing the DWR and SWRCB to take appropriative actions to prevent waste, unreasonable use, unreasonable method of use, or unreasonable method of diversion. As such, courts and the SWRCB can curtail groundwater pumping if it becomes unreasonable or wasteful.

b. Wastewater

Wastewater services in Trinity County are provided primarily by septic systems. Municipal wastewater treatment services are available in the communities of Weaverville, Lewiston, and Hayfork. Weaverville Sanitary District (WSD) provides wastewater collection and treatment for Weaverville, California. Communities of Douglas City, Junction City, Trinity Center, and most rural areas rely exclusively on individual onsite wastewater treatment systems. WSD maintains approximately 50 miles of pipeline, one lift station, and one treatment plant. All collection system pipelines are either asbestos-cement or plastic pipe and range from four inches to 15 inches in diameter. The treatment plant, located at 630 Mountain View Street. Weaverville, California, processes sludge with secondary clarification and has an average daily flow of about 0.3 million gallons per day, which is below the facility design flow of 0.5 million gallons per day. The community of Lewiston contains three existing sewer collection, treatment, and disposal facilities: the Lewiston Park Mutual Water Company, the Trinity Dam Mobile Home Park, and Lewiston CSD. The existing wastewater system includes a small treatment plant supported by percolation beds and oxidation ponds. In 2018, a remediation project was approved to address outstanding violations

associated with the three existing service systems. Wastewater treatment for the community of Hayfork is provided by the Trinity County Waterworks District No. 1, which operates a permitted average wet-weather treatment capacity of 0.25 million gallons per day. As of 2016, the system was operating at approximately 30 percent of its permitted capacity (County of Trinity 2020).

c. Stormwater Drainage

Storm drainage systems in Trinity County are primarily undeveloped, and most unincorporated communities rely on natural drainage patterns, roadside ditches, culverts, and river systems rather than formal, engineered storm drain infrastructure. No community operates a comprehensive municipal storm drainage utility or district. Stormwater flows are generally managed through a combination of natural creeks, floodplains, roadside conveyance, and state or County transportation infrastructure, with local conditions heavily shaped by steep terrain, wildfire burn scars, and proximity to major water bodies such as the Trinity River, Trinity Lake, Lewiston Lake, Ruth Lake, and Hayfork Creek.

d. Electric Power, Natural Gas, and Telecommunications

Electric Power

Electric service in Trinity County is provided primarily by the Trinity Public Utilities District, which serves nearly all populated communities in the county, including Weaverville, Lewiston, Trinity Center, Coffee Creek, Junction City, Douglas City, Hayfork, Hyampom, Big Bar, and Wildwood. The Trinity Public Utilities District operates as the county's main electricity distribution provider and functions as a sub-transmission utility serving a large, mountainous, and sparsely populated service area. PG&E also plays a role in providing electric services to a handful of communities within the county.

Natural Gas

The Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) is the sole designated provider of natural gas within Trinity County. Despite being designated to provide service, PG&E does not offer natural gas service to county residents. As a result, all households rely on propane for gas needs.

Telecommunications

Telecommunications services in Trinity County are provided by a combination of regional landline providers, fixed wireless companies, satellite internet networks, and national cellular carriers. Frontier Communications is the primary wired telephone and DSL provider, offering landline service and DSL coverage to some communities in the county. Other internet service providers, including Starlink and Earthlink, are available in other locations in the county. Cable and hybrid wired/wireless service is available in limited areas through Velocity Communications and Compair.

e. Solid Waste

Trinity County has nine solid waste transfer stations: Big Bar Transfer Station, Burnt Ranch Transfer Site, Hayfork Transfer Site, Hobel Transfer Stations, Junction City Transfer Site, Ruth Transfer Site, Van Duzen Transfer Station, Hyampom Transfer Station, and Weaverville Transfer Station. Trinity County operates the Weaverville Inert Cell Solid Waste Disposal Site, which accepts up to 25 cubic yards of inert waste per year. This site has a total permitted disposal capacity of 63,000 cubic yards, which would accommodate its permitted waste rate well into the future (County of Trinity 2020).

4.18.2 Regulatory Setting

a. Federal Regulations

Clean Water Act

The primary goals of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA), 33 United States Code Section 1251, et seq., are to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters and to make all surface waters fishable and swimmable. The CWA forms the basic national framework for the management of water quality and the control of pollutant discharges. The CWA sets forth a number of objectives in order to achieve the above-mentioned goals. The CWA objectives include regulating pollutant and toxic pollutant discharges; providing for water quality which protects and fosters the propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife; developing waste treatment management plans; and developing and implementing programs for the control of non-point sources pollution.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, enacted by the Federal Government in 2021, is intended to fund infrastructure improvements throughout the United States. Part of the purpose of the Act is to eliminate the nation's lead service lines and pipes. Under the Infrastructure Improvement Act, California is expected to receive $3.5 billion dollars over five years to improve water infrastructure across the state to ensure safe drinking water in available in all communities (The White House 2021).

Safe Drinking Water Act

The Safe Drinking Water Act, administered by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) in coordination with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), is the main federal law that ensures the quality of Americans' drinking water. Under the Safe Drinking Water Act, USEPA sets standards for drinking water quality and oversees the states, localities, and water suppliers who implement those standards. In 1996 Congress amended the Safe Drinking Water Act to emphasize sound science and risk-based standard setting, small water supply system flexibility and technical assistance, community-empowered source water assessment and protection, public right-to-know, and water system infrastructure assistance through a multi-billion-dollar state revolving loan fund.

United States Environmental Protection Agency

The USEPA is responsible for developing and enforcing regulations that implement environmental laws enacted by Congress. USEPA is responsible for researching and setting national standards for a variety of environmental programs, and delegates to states and tribes the responsibility for issuing permits and for monitoring and enforcing compliance.

Arsenic is an example of a groundwater contaminant that is regulated by the USEPA. Arsenic is a naturally occurring element and its presence can be traced back to geologic deposits. These natural deposits of arsenic can be found throughout the United States and are prevalent in New England and the Southwest. Groundwater that flows over these deposits may be contaminated with arsenic, which then makes its way into public and private drinking water wells. In 2001 the USEPA lowered the existing 50 ppb standard to 10 ppb; all water systems must comply with this standard by January 2006. The California CDPH must adopt a new arsenic standard that is equal to or more stringent than the USEPA standard and set as close as economically feasible to the Public Health Goal. A Public Health Goal is the level of arsenic in drinking water that would not pose a significant health threat if consumed over a lifetime. The CDPH adopted the 10-ppb standard for arsenic on November 28, 2008.

The USEPA Office of Wastewater Management supports the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (CWA) by promoting effective and responsible water use, treatment, disposal and management, and by encouraging the protection and restoration of watersheds. The Office of Wastewater Management is

responsible for directing the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, pretreatment, and municipal bio-solids management (including beneficial use) programs under the CWA. The Office of Wastewater Management is also home to the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, the largest water quality funding source, focused on funding wastewater treatment systems, non-point source projects, and estuary protection.

In 1990 EPA published final regulations that establish stormwater permit application requirements. The regulations, also known as Phase I of the NPDES program, provide that discharges of stormwater to waters of the United States from construction projects that encompass one or more acres of soil disturbance are effectively prohibited unless the discharge complies with an NPDES permit. Phase II of the NPDES program expands the requirements by requiring operators of small municipal separate storm sewer systems in urbanized areas and small construction sites to be covered under an NPDES permit, and to implement programs and practices to control polluted stormwater runoff

Clean Water Act

The CWA is the cornerstone of surface water quality protection in the United States. The statute employs a variety of regulatory and non-regulatory tools to sharply reduce direct pollutant discharges into waterways, finance municipal wastewater treatment facilities, and manage polluted runoff. Section 303 of the CWA requires states to adopt water quality standards for all surface water of the United States. Where multiple uses exist, water quality standards must protect the most sensitive use. Water quality standards are typically numeric although narrative criteria based on biomonitoring methods may be employed where numerical standards cannot be established or where they are needed to supplement numerical standards. The SWRCB and the Regional Water Quality Board (RWQCB) are responsible for ensuring implementation and compliance with the provisions of the federal CWA.

In 1972, the CWA was amended to provide that the discharge of pollutants to waters of the United States from any point source is unlawful unless the discharge is in compliance with an NPDES permit. The 1987 amendments to the CWA added Section 402(p), which establishes a framework for regulating municipal and industrial stormwater discharges, including discharges associated with construction activities, under the NPDES program.

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is an independent agency that regulates the interstate transmission of electricity, natural gas, and oil. FERC also reviews proposals to build liquefied natural gas terminals and interstate natural gas pipelines, as well as licensing hydropower projects. Licensing of hydroelectric facilities under the authority of FERC includes input from state and federal energy, environmental protection, fish and wildlife, and water quality agencies. The California Energy Commission's Systems Assessment and Facilities Siting Division provides coordination with FERC to ensure that needed energy facilities are authorized in an expeditious, safe, and environmentally acceptable manner.

b. State Regulations

California Water Code

The California Water Code, a section of the California Code of Regulations, establishes the governing laws pertaining to all aspects of water management in California. In 2001, California adopted Senate Bill (SB) 610, which amended California Water Code to require detailed analysis of water supply availability for certain types of development projects. The primary purpose of SB 610 is to improve the linkage between water availability and land use planning by ensuring greater communication between water providers and local planning agencies and ensuring that land use decisions for large development projects are fully informed as to whether sufficient water supplies are available to meet project demands. In accordance with SB 610, certain types of development projects are required to provide detailed

analysis of water supply availability and reliability, in the form of a Water Supply Assessment (WSA). Project applicants provide the WSA to planning agencies as part of the project review and consideration for approval process, thereby incorporating water supply availability into the planning process.

The primary question to be answered in a WSA is:

> Will the total projected water supplies available during normal, single dry, and multiple dry water years during a 20-year projection meet the projected water demand of the proposed project, in addition to existing and planned future uses of the identified water supplies, including agricultural and manufacturing uses?

California Water Code, as amended by SB 610, requires that any proposed project which is subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and would demand more than 75 AFY of water, or an amount of water equivalent to, or greater than, the amount of water required by a residential development with 500 or more dwelling units, is subject to the requirements of SB 610 to prepare a WSA. A WSA, when triggered, is used to inform the CEQA analysis for its respective project and is required to address the following:

- Is there a public water system that will service the proposed project?
- Is there a current Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) that accounts for the project demand?
- Is groundwater a component of the supplies for the project?
- Are there sufficient supplies to serve the project over the next twenty years?

The proposed project itself does not trigger the preparation of a WSA, because it does not propose any specific development projects. However, individual projects designed to accommodate the anticipated growth, and facilitated by approval of the proposed project, would be subject to California Water Code including for the preparation of a WSA, as applicable.

Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Governmental Reorganization Act of 2000

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Governmental Reorganization Act of 2000 requires California Local Agency Formation Commissions to conduct municipal service reviews for specified public agencies under their jurisdiction. One aspect of municipal service review is to evaluate an agency's ability to provide public services within its ultimate service area. A municipal service review is required before an agency can update its sphere of influence.

Senate Bill 610 and Senate Bill 221

SB 610 and SB 221 amended state law, effective January 1, 2002, to improve the link between the information on water supply availability and certain land use decisions made by cities and counties. Both statutes require detailed information regarding water availability to be provided to the City and County decision-makers prior to approval of specified large (greater than 500 dwelling units) development projects. Both statutes also require this detailed information to be included in the administrative record that serves as the evidentiary basis for an approval action by the City or County on such projects. Under SB 610, water assessments must be furnished to local governments for inclusion in any environmental documentation for certain projects as defined in Water Code 10912 subject to the CEQA. Under SB 221, approval by a City or County of certain residential subdivisions requires an affirmative written verification of sufficient water supply.

State Water Resources Control Board

The SWRCB regulates public water systems. Regulatory responsibilities include the enforcement of Federal and State Safe Drinking Water Acts, the regulatory oversight of approximately 8,700 public water systems, the oversight of water recycling projects, issuance of water treatment permits, and certification of drinking water treatment and distribution operators. Other functions include supporting and promoting

water systems security, providing support for small water systems, and improving technical, managerial, and financial capacity, and for providing subsidized funding for water system improvements under the State Revolving Fund and Proposition 50.

California Department of Water Resources

DWR is responsible for preparing and updating the California Water Plan, which is a policy document that guides the development and management of the state's water resources. The plan is updated every five years to reflect changes in resources and urban, agricultural, and environmental water demands. The California Water Plan suggests ways of managing demand and augmenting supply to balance water supply with demand.

State Water Resources Control Board

The SWRCB, in coordination with nine RWQCBs, performs functions related to water quality, including issuance of wastewater discharge permits (NPDES and Waste Discharge Requirement) and other programs on stormwater runoff, and underground and above ground storage tanks.

Small Community Wastewater Grant Program

The Small Community Wastewater Grant Program, funded by Propositions 40 and 50, provides grant assistance for the construction of publicly owned wastewater treatment and collection facilities. Grants are available for small communities with financial hardships. Communities must comply with population restrictions (maximum population of 20,000 people) and annual median household income provisions (maximum income of $37,994) to qualify for funding under the Small Community Wastewater Grant Program.

State Water Resources Control Board

In California, the NPDES stormwater permitting program is administered by the SWRCB. The SWRCB has established a construction General Permit that can be applied to most construction activities in the state. Construction permittees may choose to obtain individual NPDES permits instead of obtaining coverage under the General Permit, but this can be an expensive and complicated process, and its use is generally limited to very large construction projects that discharge to critical receiving waters. In California, owners of construction projects may obtain NPDES permit coverage by filing a Notice of Intent to be covered under the SWRCB Order No. 99-08-DWQ, NPDES General Permit No. CAS00002, Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges of Storm Water Runoff Associated with Construction Activity (General Permit) and subsequent adopted modification.

California Energy Commission

The California Energy Commission is California's primary energy policy and planning agency. Created by the California Legislature in 1974, the California Energy Commission has five major responsibilities: 1) forecasting future energy needs and keeping historical energy data; 2) licensing thermal power plants 50 MW or larger; 3) promoting energy efficiency through appliance and building standards; 4) developing energy technologies and supporting renewable energy; and 5) planning for and directing state response to energy emergencies. Under the requirements of the California Public Resources Code, the California Energy Commission in conjunction with the California Department of Conservation Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources is required to assess electricity and natural gas resources on an annual basis or as necessary.

California Public Utilities Commission

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) is a state agency created by a constitutional amendment to regulate privately-owned utilities providing telecommunications, electric, natural gas,

water, railroad, rail transit, and passenger transportation services, and in-state moving companies. The CPUC is responsible for assuring that California utility customers have safe, reliable utility services at reasonable rates, while protecting utility customers from fraud. The CPUC regulates the planning and approval for the physical construction of electric generation, transmission, or distribution facilities; and local distribution pipelines of natural gas (CPUC Decision 95-08-038).

California Code of Regulations

Title 20, Public Utilities and Energy, contains the regulations related to power plant siting certification. California Code of Regulations, Title 24, California Building Standards, contains the energy efficiency standards related to residential and nonresidential buildings. Title 24 standards are based, in part, on a state-mandate to reduce California's energy demand. The CPUC regulates rates and charges for basic telecommunication services, such as how much a customer pays for the ability to make and receive calls.

Independent System Operator

The Independent System Operator (ISO), whose governing board is appointed by the Governor, manages most of California's transmission system. The ISO's primary function is to balance electricity supply with demand and maintain adequate reserves to meet the needs of California homes and businesses. FERC regulates the ISO. The California Electricity Oversight Board monitors and reports on the activities of the ISO.

California Integrated Waste Management Act

The California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (AB 939), set a requirement for cities and counties throughout the state to divert 50 percent of all solid waste from landfills by January 1, 2000, through source reduction, recycling, and composting. To help achieve this, the Act required that each city and county prepare and submit a Source Reduction and Recycling Element. AB 939 also established the goal for all California counties to provide at least 15 years of on-going landfill capacity.

In 2007, SB 1016 subsequently amended AB 939, now requiring 50 percent diversion requirement to be calculated in a per capita disposal rate equivalent. The California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) sets a target per capita disposal rate for each jurisdiction. Each jurisdiction must submit an annual report to CalRecycle with an update of its progress in implementing diversion programs and its current per capita disposal rate.

In 2011, AB 341 was passed setting a state policy goal of not less than 75 percent of solid waste that is generated to be source reduced, recycled, or composted by the year 2020.

In 2017, SB 1383 was passed, requiring the state to approve and begin implementing a comprehensive strategy to reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants. SB 1383 requires CalRecycle to establish an integrated waste management program that requires each county to prepare and submit a countywide integrated waste management plan specifying targets to reduce organic waste in landfills. Counties and cities are required to report on their progress annually to CalRecycle.

CALGreen Building Code

In 2008, the California Building Standards Commission adopted the nation's first green building standards. The California Green Building Standards Code (Part 11, Title 24, known as "CALGreen") was adopted as part of the California Building Standards Code. Section 4.408, Construction Waste Reduction Disposal and Recycling, mandates that in the absence of a more stringent local ordinance, a minimum of 50 percent of non-hazardous construction and demolition debris must be recycled or salvaged. The Code requires the applicant to have a waste management plan for on-site sorting or construction debris.

c. Regional and Local Regulations

Trinity County Code of Ordinances

Trinity County Code of Ordinances, Title 8 (Health and Safety), Chapter 8.60 (Water Quality Control Ordinance) establishes requirements to protect surface water and groundwater quality by prohibiting activities that could degrade water resources or create public health nuisances and provides enforcement and variance procedures to ensure compliance.

Onsite wastewater treatment systems are regulated locally by the Trinity County Environmental Health Division pursuant to county policies and state standards. The County enforces construction standards, setback requirements, permitting, and inspection procedures for septic systems to ensure protection of public health and water quality. Additionally, Title 8 of the Trinity County Code of Ordinances prohibits the discharge of untreated or improperly treated sewage and other wastes in a manner that could create a nuisance or contaminate land or waters of the county, consistent with RWQCB requirements.

Stormwater management in Trinity County is governed through a combination of state and regional water quality requirements and local land-use and grading controls. Discharges that could result in pollution of surface waters are prohibited under the County's Water Quality Control Ordinance (Chapter 8.60). Development projects are required to comply with applicable grading, erosion control, and drainage requirements administered by the Community Development Department to prevent sedimentation and runoff impacts.

Trinity County Code of Ordinances (Chapter 8.08, Solid Waste Disposal) establishes requirements for solid waste handling, collection, and disposal within the county. Solid waste must be managed in compliance with state and local standards to prevent public health hazards, nuisances, or environmental degradation. Illegal dumping on public or private property is prohibited, and disposal is restricted to approved facilities.

4.18.3 Impact Analysis

a. Significance Thresholds and Methodology

Assessment of impacts is based on review of publicly available information, existing conditions relevant to utilities, analysis provided in the community plans, and County information regarding utility-related issues including water supply and facilities, wastewater facilities, solid waste, and telecommunication infrastructure. According to Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*, a significant impact would occur if implementation of the proposed project would result in one or more of the following circumstances:

1. 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;
2. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years;
3. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments;
4. 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;
5. Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

Much of the potential cannabis-related development contemplated by the project was previously analyzed in the Trinity County Cannabis Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR; State Clearinghouse number 2018122049), certified in 2020 (2020 EIR). The 2020 EIR evaluated potential impacts to utilities

and service systems, including water supply, wastewater treatment, and solid waste disposal, associated with cannabis cultivation and related uses. The 2020 EIR concluded that impacts to wastewater and solid waste systems would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through compliance with applicable regulations and implementation of mitigation measures. The 2020 EIR includes Mitigation Measures 3.15-1b, which requires verification of adequate water supply and wastewater treatment capacity from service providers, preparation of materials management plans for noncultivation activities, and compliance with state and local solid waste handling and disposal requirements. With implementation of these measures, the 2020 EIR concluded that wastewater and solid waste impacts would be less than significant, while impacts related to public water supply could remain significant and unavoidable due to existing watershed constraints and uncertainty regarding long-term water availability.

Because these regulatory controls are part of existing conditions and because the proposed General Plan Update establishes a new countywide policy framework that supersedes the 2020 EIR for cannabis activities occurring consistent with the General Plan, this EIR focuses on utilities and service system impacts not previously addressed or requiring reevaluation under the proposed General Plan.

b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1:	Would the proposed project 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?

Impact UTL-1 Development facilitated by the project would require new connections to existing utility systems and facilities and may require new facilities such as project-specific groundwater supply wells to accommodate future growth. Future development would be consistent with goals and policies in the proposed General Plan which help to reduce impacts. Although the specific locations and extent of future utility improvements are not known, compliance with adopted regulations and proposed General Plan policies would ensure adequate utility service and avoid adverse effects. Impacts would be less than significant.

Development facilitated by the project would require project-specific connections to existing service facilities and may require construction of new or expanded utility infrastructure and facilities, including for the provision of water, wastewater, stormwater, electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications. Project-specific connections would be planned and implemented as part of individual projects and would consist of features such as water supply service connections to existing water main lines, and new electrical wires connected to existing distribution network wires. The increased population of up to 7,420 individuals would introduce substantial new water demands (addressed in more detail under Impact UTL-2, below) and would generate wastewater requiring treatment and disposal (addressed in more detail under Impact UTL-3, below); these services are generally constrained by the availability of existing resources and facilities.

The anticipated population due to growth would require connections to existing utility systems and, in some cases, localized improvements to water, wastewater, and other utility services infrastructure. Individual development projects may construct utility connections or minor extensions but would not necessarily result in the need for new or expanded major facilities such as water treatment plants or wastewater treatment plants. Additionally, any expansion of regional utility infrastructure (e.g., construction of a new or expanded water treatment plant or wastewater treatment plant) would require discretionary approval and would be subject to separate, project-specific CEQA review. Although the specific locations and extent of future utility improvements are not known, development under the project would be required to comply with existing regulations and proposed General Plan policies. These requirements would ensure that utility facilities are constructed in a manner that avoids capacity deficiencies and adverse environmental effects, therefore impacts related to utilities and service systems would be **less than significant**.

Water Supply Facilities

As discussed in Section 4.18.1(a), *Water Supply*, water supply in Trinity County is sourced from surface water diversions managed by community service districts and small water systems, as well as local groundwater resources produced from privately owned and operated wells. Properties located outside the service area of an existing water system rely on groundwater.

Future projects located within the service area of an existing water system would require site-specific connections to the existing water supply distribution system. This would involve installing connection pipelines between the proposed land uses and existing water mains. Such connections would be installed during other ground-disturbing activities associated with project construction to minimize potential environmental impacts. No existing water systems in Trinity County have plans to expand their service areas or existing water supply facilities, including WCSD and TCWD with their respective surface water treatment plants and distribution systems. Existing improvements are focused on replacements and upgrades where necessary to accommodate the existing service population. Future projects seeking water supply from an existing system such as WCSD or TCWD must be located within the provider's existing service area and must request a "will serve" letter from the respective provider. Will serve letters document whether a provider has sufficient water supply and facility capacity available to accommodate a proposed land use(s); projects are not provided connection to the system if sufficient supply and capacity are not available. See Impact UTL-2, below, for discussion of water supply availability.

Future projects located outside the service area of an existing water provider would use privately owned and operated groundwater wells to produce water supply for the proposed land use(s). It is anticipated that future projects would use existing groundwater wells to the extent possible, and that new groundwater wells would be designed and installed on a project-specific basis, as needed. All new wells are required to be permitted through the Trinity County Environmental Health Division under Chapter 15.29 of the Trinity County Code of Ordinances. New wells, when necessary, would be installed during other ground-disturbing activities associated with project construction to minimize potential environmental impacts. See Impact UTL-2, below, for discussion of water supply availability.

Proposed General Plan goals and policies would address water supply infrastructure, and future development would be required to comply with these proposed goals and policies. Goals and policies related to water supply facilities include Goal PFSI 1, Policy PFSI 1.4 (Collaboration to Expand Private Utility Service), and Policy PFSI 9.5 (Adequate Water Supply and Access). Together, these goals and policies ensure that water supply facilities would be sufficient to meet the needs of existing and future development, and that new or expanded facilities needed to accommodate future projects would be appropriately planned for and implemented in accordance with design standards and requirements. Compliance with adopted regulations, General Plan policies, and the Trinity County well permitting program, would ensure that potential impacts to utilities associated with new service system connections or the construction of new groundwater wells to accommodate future growth under the proposed project would be **less than significant**.

Wastewater Treatment Facilities

Most wastewater collection systems within unincorporated Trinity County serve small, dispersed communities, and wastewater service is primarily provided by a limited number of municipal systems, including the WSD, the Lewiston Park Mutual Water Company, Trinity Dam Mobile Home Park, the Lewiston Community Services District, and the Trinity County Waterworks District No. 1, which provides treatment for the community of Hayfork. Many other communities such as Douglas City, Junction City, Trinity Center, and most rural areas rely entirely on individual onsite septic systems for wastewater disposal. These existing wastewater systems do not account for the increased wastewater treatment and disposal needs associated with projected population growth under the proposed project, including an estimated increase of more than 7,420 new residents by 2050. Proposed General Plan goals and policies would address wastewater infrastructure, and development under the project would be required to comply with these proposed goals and policies. Goals and policies related to wastewater treatment facilities include Goal PFSI-2, Policy PFSI-2.1 (Wastewater Connections Requirement), Policy PFSI-2.2

(Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems), Policy PFSI-2.3 (Onsite Wastewater System Failure Repair), and Policy PFSI-2.4 (Design to Minimize Inflow/Infiltration). Together, these goals and policies ensure that wastewater treatment facilities are planned, operated, and maintained to serve existing and future development, require appropriate connections or on-site systems where necessary, and prohibit development in areas where adequate wastewater service cannot be provided.

These goals and policies would ensure that wastewater infrastructure associated with development facilitated by the project would be appropriately planned for and accommodated. However, as discussed above, while existing wastewater treatment facilities were not designed to serve the full extent of projected population growth, individual development projects would typically require connections to existing systems or localized improvements and would not necessarily result in the need for new or expanded regional wastewater treatment facilities. Any expansion of wastewater treatment facilities would require separate discretionary approval and project-specific CEQA review. Implementation of the proposed goals and policies would require verification of adequate wastewater service capacity and prohibit development in areas where sufficient service cannot be demonstrated. Therefore, impacts related to wastewater treatment facilities would be **less than significant**.

Stormwater Drainage Facilities

Stormwater drainage facilities within unincorporated Trinity County are generally minimal and highly localized, as no community operates a comprehensive municipal storm drainage utility or district. Instead, stormwater flows are primarily conveyed through natural drainage patterns, roadside ditches, culverts, local creeks, and river systems rather than engineered storm drain infrastructure. In some community planning areas, limited stormwater conveyance improvements exist but are typically installed on an as-needed basis to support small-scale development and to address local drainage constraints tied to steep terrain, wildfire burn scars, and proximity to major water bodies such as the Trinity River, Lewiston Lake, and Hayfork Creek.

Development facilitated by the project would be subject to existing federal, state, and local regulatory requirements governing stormwater management, including compliance with the NPDES Construction Stormwater General Permit, preparation and implementation of project-specific Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, and adherence to County grading, drainage, and erosion control standards, where applicable. In addition, the proposed General Plan includes goals and policies that address stormwater management and drainage infrastructure, including requirements to manage runoff at the project level, minimize erosion and sedimentation, protect downstream water quality, and ensure that drainage improvements are designed to be compatible with natural drainage systems.

In areas where development is proposed adjacent to or within the service area of existing roadside or natural drainage features, new projects would be required to evaluate existing conveyance capacity and construct new or expanded drainage improvements where needed. These improvements would undergo CEQA review at the project level and incorporate any necessary mitigation measures to avoid or minimize environmental impacts. Because stormwater facilities in Trinity County are typically constructed within the boundaries of individual project sites or within previously disturbed roadway rights-of-way, installation of such facilities would not substantially increase the overall disturbance footprint or result in additional significant environmental effects beyond those identified throughout this EIR. Population growth that could occur under the proposed project is not anticipated to require the relocation of existing stormwater drainage systems, and any new stormwater drainage facilities associated with future development would be subject to CEQA review and associated mitigation measures on a project-specific basis. Therefore, impacts related to stormwater drainage facilities would be **less than significant**.

Electricity, Natural Gas, and Telecommunications Facilities

Electric service in unincorporated Trinity County is primarily provided by the Trinity Public Utilities District, which serves nearly all populated communities including Weaverville, Lewiston, Trinity Center, Coffee Creek, Junction City, Douglas City, Hayfork, Hyampom, Big Bar, and Wildwood. Natural gas service within the county is designated to PG&E; however, PG&E does not actually provide natural gas service to

residents in these areas, resulting in most households relying on propane for heating and cooking needs. Telecommunications services are supplied by a mix of providers, with Frontier Communications serving as the primary wired telephone and DSL provider in most developed communities. Additional limited cable and hybrid wired/wireless services are available through Velocity Communications, while satellite and wireless providers deliver internet and cellular service, especially in rural areas where wired broadband options are limited. Proposed General Plan goals and policies that relate to electric power, natural gas, and telecommunications infrastructure would be required to comply with these proposed goals and policies. Goals and polities related to electric power, natural gas, and telecommunications infrastructure include Goal PFSI-4 (Promote the Efficient Distribution of Public Utility Facilities and Transmission Lines) and Policy PFSI-4.1 (Accessible Public Utilities). Together, these goals and policies ensure that utility providers locate and expand electric, natural gas, and telecommunications infrastructure in a manner that efficiently serves existing and future development while avoiding land use conflicts and hazards, and that new development is adequately served by reliable utility services.

These proposed goals and policies would ensure that electric power, natural gas, and telecommunications infrastructure associated with development under the project would be appropriately planned for and accommodated. Population growth that could occur under the proposed project is not anticipated to require the relocation of existing facilities for electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications, and any new such facilities associated with future development would be subject to CEQA review and associated mitigation measures on a project-specific basis. Therefore, impacts related to electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications facilities would be **less than significant**.

Conclusion

As described above, future development facilitated by the project would result in new utility connections for the provision of water, wastewater, stormwater, electricity, natural gas, and telecommunication services. While incremental development may result in the need for expanded infrastructure and treatment facilities, new water supply or wastewater treatment plants would require separate discretionary approval and project-specific CEQA review. Implementation of proposed goals and policies would (1) ensure that water supply facilities meet the needs of existing and future development, and prohibit new development in areas where adequate, reliable water supply is not available; (2) require verification of adequate wastewater service capacity and prohibit development in areas where sufficient service cannot be demonstrated; (3) require individual projects to manage runoff, minimize erosion and sedimentation, protect downstream water quality, and design drainage improvements to be compatible with natural drainage systems; and (4) ensure that electric power, natural gas, and telecommunications infrastructure associated with development under the project would be appropriately planned for and accommodated. With the implementation of General Plan goals and policies, in addition to compliance with existing regulations, impacts to water, wastewater, stormwater, electric power, natural gas, and telecommunications infrastructure would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 2:	Would the proposed project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

Impact UTL-2 Sufficient water may not be available from existing sources to meet the increased demands of General Plan buildout. However, water supply would be protected from over-use through the issuance of will serve letters and permits to construct and operate groundwater wells. All new development would comply with proposed General Plan policies including for water conservation and the protection of local supply sources. Impacts on water supply availability would be less than significant.

Existing water supply sources in Trinity County include surface water diversions managed by small community service districts and water systems, and groundwater resources pumped from privately owned and operated wells. As discussed under Impact UTL-1, no existing supply systems currently have plans to expand their respective water distribution systems, and any request to connect to the existing system is subject to a review process and the issuance of a will serve letter. If a water supplier including those listed in Section 4.18.1(a), *Water Supply*, determines it does not have sufficient supply available (or infrastructure capacity) to support proposed land use(s), including with consideration to the "reasonable and beneficial use" doctrine discussed in Section 4.18.1(a), *Water Supply*, the will serve letter will be denied and water service connection will not be provided.

In areas that are not served by a community water system and therefore rely on privately owned wells, including Douglas City, Junction City, Trinity Center, Post Mountain, and Hyampom, future projects would require site-specific review of groundwater conditions to assess supply availability, and any new or rehabilitated groundwater well would be permitted through Trinity County Department of Environmental Health. As discussed in Section 4.18.1(a), *Water Supply*, no groundwater sustainability plans are available for Trinity County basins because they are all designated Low Priority and therefore not subject to SGMA; therefore, detailed information regarding inflows and outflows is not available for Trinity County basins, to inform consideration of overall basin budgets or available supply. Groundwater supply availability is dependent on factors including localized hydrologic conditions, surface water flow, and the extent of alluvial or fractured-rock aquifers; as a result, local water supply availability is site-specific and can be variable depending on year-to-year climate patterns, streamflow, and recharge. The existing groundwater systems have been sufficient to support previous and existing land uses, but detailed groundwater budgets are not available due to a general lack of monitoring data.

Potential growth under the proposed project would add approximately 7,420 new residents by 2050, increasing water demand within the service areas of existing water supply systems, as well as in areas dependent on private groundwater wells. As noted above, service providers do not issue will serve letters unless the proposed use is within their service area and sufficient water supply is available from their existing water rights, including rights to surface water diversions and groundwater resources, as applicable. In addition, future projects that meet the thresholds of "project" in SB 610 and would rely on groundwater would require a WSA for compliance with California Water Code (see Section 4.18.2[b], *State Regulations*); the purpose of SB 610 is to tie land use planning decisions to the physical availability of water supply by requiring that project-specific WSAs identify any potential water supply shortages, including during dry year conditions, and identify conservation measures or project design features where needed due to supply availability constraints. When required, a WSA is used to inform the project's CEQA analysis and is attached to the CEQA document for public review, ensuring that decision-makers consider local water supply reliability issues in determining whether to approve a project.

The proposed General Plan contains goals and policies that would support adequate water supply availability to support new development, and proposes protecting water resources and coordinating with water providers to maintain supply reliability and evaluate water availability during project-level review. Future development would only proceed when adequate water supply availability is demonstrated, for surface water provided by service providers as well as groundwater produced from private wells.

Accordingly, compliance with adopted regulations and General Plan policies would ensure that potential impacts associated with water supply availability would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 3:	Would the proposed project result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

Impact UTL-3 Development facilitated by the project would increase wastewater generation in Trinity County and existing small community systems do not have sufficient capacity to accommodate future projected growth. However, development would be required to be consistent with proposed goals and policies in the General Plan and applicable regulations. Impacts related to wastewater treatment capacity would be less than significant.

Existing wastewater treatment systems in Trinity County include WSD, the Lewiston Park Mutual Water Company, Lewiston CSD, Trinity Dam Mobile Home Park, and TCWD No. 1 which are small, community-specific systems that were designed to serve current populations. The majority of unincorporated areas outside these service boundaries rely on individual on-site wastewater treatment systems, which are subject to siting, design, and performance limitations under state and local regulations. As a result, additional wastewater demands associated with development would require project-level evaluation of available treatment capacity or provision of compliant onsite system.

The proposed General Plan includes policies requiring connection to existing systems when available (Policy PFSI 2.1), adherence to state and County standards for onsite systems (Policy PFSI 2.2), repair of failing systems (Policy PFSI 2.3), and design standards to minimize inflow and infiltration (Policy PFSI 2.4). However, these policies do not expand physical treatment capacity or guarantee that existing systems can accommodate the projected growth. As described above in Impact UTL-1, proposed wastewater-related goals and policies require that wastewater infrastructure, including treatment facilities, associated with development facilitated by the proposed project would be appropriately planned for and accommodated, which would minimize potential impacts of growth associated with wastewater treatment. While the locations and distribution of future population growth are not known at this program-level stage, wastewater service availability would be evaluated on a project-by-project basis, and any new or expanded treatment facilities would require separate discretionary approval and project-specific CEQA review. Accordingly, compliance with the proposed General Plan goals and policies would ensure that wastewater treatment demands are addressed and impacts to wastewater treatment capacity would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 4:	Would the proposed project 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?
Threshold 5:	Would the proposed project comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Impact UTL-4 Development facilitated by the project has the potential to increase solid waste generation in Trinity County. However, because the County relies on a transfer station system and exports most solid waste to out-of-county regional facilities with substantially larger permitted capacities, solid waste generated by anticipated growth would not exceed available disposal capacity. Future development would comply with applicable state and local solid waste regulations and the proposed General Plan goals and policies. Impacts would be less than significant.

Trinity County has nine transfer stations: Big Bar Transfer Station, Burnt Ranch Transfer Site, Hayfork Transfer Site, Hobel Transfer Stations, Junction City Transfer Site, Ruth Transfer Site, Van Duzen Transfer Station, Hyampom Transfer Station, and Weaverville Transfer Station. The County operates the Weaverville Inert Cell Solid Waste Disposal Site with available capacity based on its permitted capacity of up to 25 cubic yards a day with a total capacity of 63,000 cubic yards (CalRecycle 2015). Existing permitted capacity at the Weaverville facility is expected to accommodate disposal needs well into the future. Solid waste generated in the county is transported from these transfer stations to regional disposal facilities outside the county, consistent with long-standing operational practices. The transfer stations and inert disposal site currently serve a small and rural population, and available infrastructure capacity is adequate for existing waste generation levels.

Projected population growth under the proposed project is anticipated to add approximately 7,420 new residents by 2050 which would increase solid waste generation in the county. As discussed above, Trinity County is currently served by nine solid waste transfer stations which transfer municipal solid waste to permitted regional disposal facilities located outside the county. In addition, the County operates the Weaverville Inert Cell Solid Waste Disposal Site, which is permitted to dispose of up to 25 cubic yards per day and has an estimated remaining capacity of approximately 63,000 cubic yards. Because municipal solid waste generated in the county is transferred to permitted out-of-county regional disposal facilities and local transfer and disposal facilities have available capacity, additional waste associated with General Plan buildout is not expected to exceed available disposal capacity or conflict with state or local solid waste reduction goals. Furthermore, individual development projects would continue to undergo discretionary review and comply with local and operational standards and requirements, ensuring waste handling and transfer capacity is maintained. Proposed General Plan goals and policies would address solid waste generation, and future development would be required to comply with these proposed goals and policies. Goals and politics related to solid waste generation include Goal PFSI-3, Policy PFSI-3.1 (Solid Waste Disposal System Planning), Policy PFSI-3.2 (Solid Waste Facility Location), and Policy PFSI-3.3 (Solid Waste Capacity). Together, these goals and policies encourage waste reduction through recycling and composting, ensure access to adequate solid waste disposal and transfer facilities, require appropriate siting of solid waste facilities to avoid health and safety risks, and prohibit new development where sufficient solid waste collection, processing, or disposal capacity cannot be demonstrated.

As such, development facilitated by the project would remain subject to federal, state, and local statutes governing solid waste management, recycling, organic waste diversion, and landfill capacity planning. Therefore, compliance with these requirements ensures that solid waste generated under the project would not impair the attainment of state waste reduction goals or result in disposal needs beyond the capacity of existing solid waste infrastructure. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

4.18.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope for the cumulative utilities and service systems analysis is Trinity County and the respective service district of each utility provider. This geographic scope is appropriate because utility and service systems related impacts would affect the specific utility provider. The cumulative development scenario is described in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting*.

Cumulative development may require new or expanded facilities for water, wastewater, stormwater, electricity, or telecommunications, the construction of which could result in a significant cumulative impact. As discussed under Impacts UTL-1, UTL-2, and UTL-3, development facilitated by the project would result in increased demand for water supply and wastewater treatment facilities. As discussed under Impact UTL-4, projected growth under the proposed General Plan is not expected to exceed available disposal capacity or conflict with state or local solid waste reduction goals. Additionally, future development facilitated by the project would be required to be consistent with goals and policies related to utilities in the proposed General Plan and would also be required to comply with existing regulations related to utilities, which would help minimize impacts. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a cumulatively considerable contribution to cumulative utilities and service systems impacts.

4.19 Wildfire

This section addresses the potential for the proposed project to exacerbate wildfire risks. Potential impacts related to exposure to wildfire, including smoke and subsequent flooding and runoff, are also assessed in this section.

4.19.1 Environmental Setting

a. Wildfire Fundamentals

Wildfire is defined as an unplanned fire caused by lightning or other natural causes, by accidental (or arson-caused) human ignitions, or by an escaped prescribed fire, generally including uncontrolled fire in an area of extensive combustible fuel, including vegetation and structures (National Park Service 2025). Wildfires differ from other fires in that they take place outdoors in areas of grassland, woodlands, brushland, scrubland, peatland, and other wooded areas that act as a source of fuel, or combustible material. Buildings may become involved if a wildfire spreads to adjacent communities. The primary factors that increase an area's susceptibility to wildfire include slope and topography, vegetation type and condition, and weather and atmospheric conditions. Regions of dense dry vegetation, particularly in canyon areas and on hillsides, pose the greatest potential for wildfire risks. Additional factors that increase an urban area's susceptibility to wildfire are development patterns and density, building types, and building materials.

The effects of wildland fires can be catastrophic. In addition to stripping the land of vegetation and destroying natural resources, post-fire conditions leave exposed slopes and hillsides vulnerable to surface erosion and runoff. Soil exposed to intense heat may lose its capacity to absorb moisture and support life. Exposed soils erode quickly and enhance siltation of rivers and streams, thereby increasing flood potential, harming aquatic life, and degrading water quality. Lands stripped of vegetation are also subject to increased debris flow hazards. Slope instability from wildfire scarring of the landscape can result in impacts in the form of more intensive flooding and landslides. Debris flows during post-fire rainy seasons can pose a risk to life and property and occur with little warning. Any storm that has rainfall intensities greater than about 10 millimeters/hour (0.4 inch/hour) poses the risk of producing debris flows Wildfires also have negative impacts on air quality. Exposure to smoke and particulate matter has immediate and long-term public health impacts; populations may suffer from eye irritations, respiratory problems, and complications to existing lung and heart conditions.

Wildfire has three basic elements: how and where its ignition occurred; how and why it moves across a landscape from its point of origin; and what the fire's nature is upon arrival at a location. In general, a fire's nature is defined by eight characteristics:

- Direction of the advance of the fire front
- Speed of the advance of the fire front (rate of spread)
- Mechanism causing the advance
- Duration at any one location
- Structure-related consumption of fuels
- Flame length
- Intensity
- Gaining control

A fire front's direction of travel is primarily determined by direction of prevailing winds, geographic aspect, and condition of the fuels in the advance direction of the fire. The speed of a fire front's advance is a result of conditions at the site of the currently burning material and of lands in the advance direction of

the fire. As a fire advances, the overriding influences determining its speed are prevailing wind speed, terrain slope gradient, dominant fuel size classes, and fuel continuity.

Wildfires advance by two principal mechanisms - combustion resulting from radiant heating and remote ignition resulting from ember production. Fire stays at one location primarily due to the size class of the material being consumed. Grass formations are dominated by low volumes of very “fine” fuels and, depending on the level of dryness, can be consumed, with the fire advancing, in a matter of minutes. On the other hand, tree-dominated vegetation has significantly greater volumes of available fuel and a far greater amount of larger-sized fuel components. Fires can remain at these locations for days, often weeks, and sometimes months (on heavily-wooded conifer sites).

Fires burn where fuels are available. Fires in grasslands burn at a level set by the height of the grass, while fires in brushlands can burn surface fuels and typically consume the stems and leafy crowns to the full height of the plants. Fires in tree-dominated vegetation have a much more complex pattern of movement based primarily on the continuity (or “connectedness”) of the fuels. In these stands, there are typically three distinct layers of fuels, arranged vertically - surface, stems and trunks, and the crown, which is composed of branches, twigs, and leaves. The continuity of fuels is important to consider in both horizontal and vertical directions. If a fire enters a stand and is advancing only as a surface fire, it will continue this manner of advance if there is high horizontal fuel connectivity. However, if there is also a high degree of vertical continuity (provided by fuels referred to as “ladder fuels”), then a fire can move up into the crown as well as forward across the surface, involving fuels in the entire stand structure.

Flame lengths are generally determined by the volume of fuels burning, the amount of time to total consumption, and the height of the species in the composition. Grassland produces flame lengths typically ranging from one to three feet as they are composed of low volumes of fine materials that are consumed quickly. Flame lengths are at their maximum when the material is dry. Stands of brush can produce flame lengths from 4 to 10 feet. Native oak-dominated hardwood stands can generate 20- to 40-foot flame lengths, and stands of exotics, such as *Eucalyptus globulus* or *E. cinerea*, or dense conifer stands can generate flame lengths over 100 feet. Flame length is important because it sets the distance over which radiant heating-related combustion can occur.

The temperature achieved in a wildfire is directly related to the amount of cellulosic material available for consumption. Grasslands have very low amounts and attain lower temperatures but woodlands, characterized by large amounts of highly concentrated cellulosic material, can attain temperatures on the order of 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit.

Gaining control over a wildfire’s behavioral character is the objective of response efforts. Grassland fires, burning in low fuel volume, rapid consumption, and at a single level, are the easiest to bring under control. On the other end, fires that are burning in high fuel volumes, full spectrum size classes, and entire stand structure involvement can require days, weeks, or even months to bring under complete control.

b. Wildland Urban Interface

The Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation has recognized that although high-density structure-to-structure loss can occur due to wildfire, structures in areas with low- to intermediate-density housing were most likely to burn, potentially due to intermingling with wildland vegetation or difficulty of firefighter access. In general, avoiding low-density, leapfrog development and increasing development density in infill areas decreases risk of wildfire. The risk of loss of human life, property, natural resources, or economic assets from wildfire is highest at the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), areas of urban development located adjacent to or even within wildland areas. Today approximately one-third of houses in California are within the WUI area (Governor’s Office of Planning and Research 2022). It is important to note that there are varying definitions of what constitutes a WUI, and some local or regional agencies consider some areas to be WUI that are not defined as Wildland Interface or Intermix zones under the Wildland-Urban Interface Building Standards in Title 24, Part 2 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR); these standards are discussed under Section 4.19.2, *Regulatory Setting*.

The WUI is the area where human development meets wildland vegetation, and it is typically characterized by a mix of residential, commercial, and natural land uses. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) uses a combination of housing density, Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) classification, and vegetation lifeform criteria for mapping WUIs as part of their Fire and Resource Assessment Program. The WUI is particularly vulnerable to wildfire because it combines the presence of human-built structures with the presence of combustible vegetation and other wildfire fuels. Pursuant to CAL FIRE, an area must meet all of the following criteria in order to be considered a WUI (CAL FIRE 2019):

- Minimum housing density of one unit per 20 acres
- In a Moderate, High, or Very High FHSZ
- Not dominated by wildland vegetation (herbaceous, hardwood, conifer, shrub)

The Wildland Urban Intermix is a similar term commonly used interchangeably with WUI, although it is typically represented by areas with much higher vegetation density among built infrastructure. Pursuant to CAL FIRE, an area must meet all of the following criteria in order to be considered Wildland Urban Intermix (CAL FIRE 2019):

- Areas not designated WUI
- Minimum housing density between one unit per 20 acres and one unit per five acres OR greater than one unit per five acres in areas dominated by wildland vegetation
- In a Moderate, High, or Very High FHSZ
- Includes improved parcels only

CAL FIRE has also identified Wildfire Influence Zones as wildfire-susceptible vegetation up to 1.5 miles from areas designated as a WUI or Wildland Urban Intermix (CAL FIRE 2019). These zones essentially serve as a buffer to these two designations.

There are areas of Trinity County, primarily along the western and eastern edges of the county, that are within interface and influence zones. This indicates these areas have a higher risk of wildfire. The Trinity County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) indicates all the developed areas within the county are within the WUI (Trinity County Resource Conservation District 2021).

c. Wildfire-Conducive Conditions

A large portion of the county is state, federal, and other public lands that is largely undeveloped and forested. As described above, forested areas present continuous stands of full-spectrum, high-volume woody vegetative fuels which may be conducive to higher intensity wildfires. Additionally, many of these areas of sloped or mountainous, which can contribute to the spread of wildfire and present access difficulties for response personnel. The developed areas of Trinity County, such as Weaverville and Hayfork, are located near this vegetated forestland and open space. The proximity to forest lands and open space contributes to an elevated wildfire risk within these communities. Generally, there is rugged topography and stands of highly flammable vegetation throughout the county, which contributes to the overall fire risk in the region.

Slope, Elevation, and Aspect

Slope can determine how quickly a fire spreads. Sloping land increases susceptibility to wildfire because fire typically burns faster up steep slopes (NPS 2017). This is because as a fire burns, it is heating and drying the fuels above or uphill of the flames, effectively preheating the fuels upslope of the fire. Additionally, steep slopes may hinder firefighting efforts. Following severe wildfires, sloping land is also more susceptible to landslide or flooding from increased runoff during substantial precipitation events.

Elevation affects fire behavior by influencing the timing and amount of precipitation as well as exposure to prevailing winds. Aspect is the direction that a slope faces, and it determines how much radiated heat the slope will receive from the sun. Slopes facing south to southwest will receive the most solar radiation.

As a result, south to southwest aspects are warmer and the vegetation drier than northerly to northeasterly aspects, increasing the potential for wildfire ignition and spread (University of California, Berkeley 2018).

The county is characterized by variable topography with mountainous and forested terrain. The county sits within the lower reaches of the Klamath Mountains, including the Trinity Alps, as well as the Trinity River. Trinity Lake is also a large waterbody within the county.

Vegetation

Vegetation is "fuel" to a wildfire, and it changes over time. The relationship between vegetation and wildfire is complex, but generally some vegetation is naturally fire resistant, while other types are flammable. For example, cured grass present in much of California during the dry season or dry months is much more flammable than standing trees during the same season or months. Grass is considered an open fuel, which means oxygen has free access to promote the spread of fire. Additionally, weather and climate conditions, such as drought, can lead to increasing dry vegetation with low moisture content, increasing its flammability. Vegetation cover within Trinity County includes mostly conifer and hardwood forests which can contribute to high intensity fires when they burn. Vegetation and land cover types within the county are described in greater detail in Section 4.4, *Biological Resources*.

Climate and Weather

Wind, temperature, and relative humidity are influential weather elements in fire behavior and susceptibility (National Park Service 2017). Fire moves faster under hot, dry, and windy conditions compared with cool, wet, calm conditions. Wind may also blow burning embers ahead of a fire into vegetation, causing its spread. Drought conditions also lead to extended periods of excessively dry vegetation, increasing the fuel load and ignition potential.

The climate varies within the county depending on elevation. Generally, summer temperatures reach 85-95 degrees Fahrenheit while winter conditions can be below freezing. The county receives 58 inches of rain a year on average (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration 2026a). The county experiences strong downslope winds which can elevate the risk of wildfire and increase the rate of wildfire spread (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration 2026b).

Power Lines

Above-ground power lines have the potential to contribute to wildfire risk, especially when they are near or traverse wilderness areas. In some instances, high winds can blow nearby trees and branches into power lines, sparking fires. Wind can also snap wooden poles, causing live wires to fall onto nearby grass or other fuel, igniting it. While the California Public Utilities Commission estimates only about 10 percent of California's wildfires are triggered by power lines, the frequency and severity of these wildfires has spurred the agency to promulgate new requirements for power line safety practices (Atkinson 2018). Above ground power lines are common throughout the developed areas of Trinity County.

d. Wildfire Hazard Designations

In California, responsibility for wildfire prevention and suppression is shared by federal, state, and local agencies. Federal agencies are responsible for federal lands in Federal Responsibility Areas, such as some land in the National Forest System managed by the United States Forest Service. The State of California has determined that some non-federal lands in unincorporated areas with watershed value are of statewide interest and have classified those lands as State Responsibility Areas (SRAs), which are managed by CAL FIRE. All incorporated areas and other unincorporated lands are classified as Local Responsibility Areas (LRAs).

While much of California is subject to some degree of wildfire hazard, there are specific features that make certain areas more hazardous. CAL FIRE is required by law to map areas of significant fire hazards based on fuels, terrain, weather and other relevant factors (Public Resources Code [PRC] 4201-4204 and California Government Code 51175-89). As described earlier in the section, the primary factors that increase an area's susceptibility to fire hazards include slope, vegetation type and condition, and atmospheric conditions. CAL FIRE maps fire hazards based on zones, referred to as FHSZs. CAL FIRE maps three zones on SRA: 1) Moderate FHSZs; 2) High FHSZs; and 3) Very High FHSZs (VHFHSZ). Only VHFHSZ are mapped on for LRA. Each of the zones influence how people construct buildings and protect property to reduce risk associated with wildland fires. Under state regulations, areas within VHFHSZ must comply with specific building and vegetation management requirements intended to reduce property damage and loss of life.

According to CAL FIRE's Fire Hazard Severity Zone map, there are no LRA's within Trinity County, but there are SRAs and Federal Responsibility Areas. There are areas along the western edge of the county and in the southwest corner of the county designated as Very High and High FHSZs within SRAs. Additionally, there are areas along the eastern edge of the county and around the communities of Hayfork, Douglas City, and Weaverville that contain Moderate, High, and Very High FHSZ within SRAs as shown in Figure 4.19-1.

e. Recent Wildfire History

Trinity County has experienced three major wildfires since 2020 that have materially altered the county's fire risk landscape and form part of the existing environmental baseline for this analysis.

The August Complex (2020) began as 38 lightning-caused fires in August 2020 and merged into a single complex that burned 1,032,648 acres across six northern California counties, becoming the largest wildfire in California history (CAL FIRE 2020). Within Trinity County, the fire burned primarily across the southern planning area, affecting communities including Ruth, Forest Glen, Post Mountain, and Trinity Pines and destroying residences along with numerous outbuildings and commercial structures.

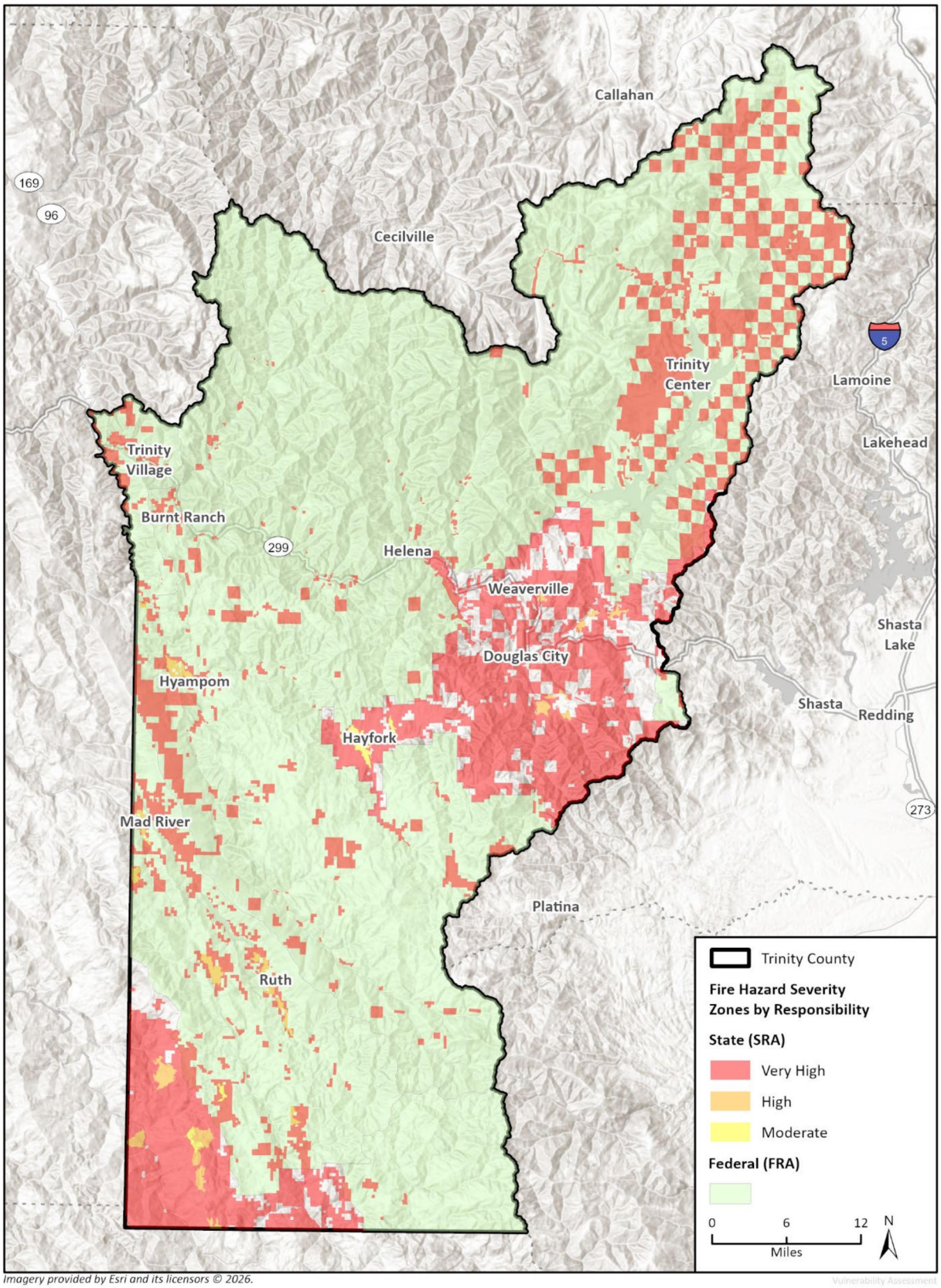
The Monument Fire (2021) ignited July 30, 2021, in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest and burned 223,124 acres along the State Route (SR) 299 corridor in western Trinity County (CAL FIRE 2022a). The fire threatened communities including Weaverville, Hayfork, Junction City, and Douglas City and destroyed structures countywide. The Monument Fire substantially burned existing fire scars from prior fires, creating overlapping burn areas that continue to influence fuel and vegetation recovery conditions in western Trinity County.

The River Complex (2021) also ignited July 30, 2021, and burned 199,359 acres across northern Trinity County and adjacent Siskiyou County, affecting the Coffee Creek, Trinity Center, and Trinity Alps areas (CAL FIRE 2022b). The complex destroyed structures in Trinity County, including residences.

These three fires have altered the physical baseline across substantial portions of the county's southern, western, and northern areas. Areas of the county affected by these fires are more prone to exhibiting reduced forest canopy, elevated ground-level fuel loads from dead and fallen timber, accelerated shrub growth in burned areas, and heightened slope instability on steep terrain due to loss of root structure.

Fuel in post-fire areas often occurs as patches of dead standing timber interspersed with dense shrub regrowth. This creates fire behavior conditions different from pre-fire forest cover, and can affect how quickly a new ignition could spread through affected areas and toward developed communities.

Figure 4.19-1 Fire Hazard Severity Zones



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Additional data provided by CAL FIRE, 2008.

Vulnerability Assessment
Fig 1 Fire Hazard Severity Areas 2026

f. Post-Fire Slope Instability and Drainage Pattern Changes

Vegetation loss from wildfire scarring of the landscape can result in slope instability in the form of more intensive flooding and landslides. These post-fire slope soils and altered drainage patterns can result in soil creep on downslope sides of foundations and reduce lateral support. Additionally, as vegetation and soil layers burn, they can create hydrophobic or water-repellent soil conditions. This hydrophobic zone manifests as a distinct layer within or parallel to the soil surface, where organic compounds with hydrophobic properties coat the soil. This phenomenon occurs when temperatures range between 176 to 288 degrees Celsius (approximately 349 to 550 degrees Fahrenheit). Hydrophobic soils create a barrier against water infiltration, effectively sealing off the soil during rainfall, which leads to heightened post-fire surface runoff and erosion (Western Fire Chiefs Association 2024).

Within Trinity County, the slope instability and altered hydrology in burned watersheds increase the risk of post-fire debris flows and flooding in communities downstream of burned slopes, particularly Weaverville and the southern Trinity communities in proximity to the August Complex burn scar.

4.19.2 Regulatory Setting

a. Federal Regulations

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires a State mitigation plan as a condition of disaster assistance. There are two different levels of State disaster plans: “Standard” and “Enhanced.” States that develop an approved Enhanced State Plan can increase the amount of funding available through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. The Act has also established new requirements for local hazard mitigation plans.

National Fire Plan

The National Fire Plan was developed in August 2000, following a historic wildland fire season. Its intent is to establish plans for active response to severe wildland fires and their impacts to communities while ensuring sufficient firefighting capacity. The plan addresses firefighting, rehabilitation, hazardous fuels reduction, community assistance, and accountability.

b. State Regulations

California Strategic Fire Plan

The Strategic Fire Plan for California is the State’s road map for reducing the risk of wildfire. The most recent version of the Plan was finalized in 2024 and directs each CAL FIRE Unit to prepare a locally specific Fire Management Plan (CAL FIRE 2024). In compliance with the California Fire Plan, individual CAL FIRE units are required to develop Fire Management Plans for their areas of responsibility. These documents assess the fire situation within each of the 21 CAL FIRE units and six contract counties. The plans include stakeholder contributions and priorities, and identify strategic areas for pre-fire planning and fuel treatment as defined by the people who live and work with the local fire problem. The plans are required to be updated annually.

California Office of Emergency Services

The California Office of Emergency Services prepares the State of California Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies hazard risks and includes a vulnerability analysis and a hazard mitigation strategy. The Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan is federally required under the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 in order for the state to receive federal funding. The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires a State mitigation plan as a condition of disaster assistance.

California Code of Regulations Title 24 (California Building Code)

Updated every three years through a rigorous stakeholder process, Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations requires California homes and businesses to meet strong fire and safety measures. Title 24 contains numerous subparts, including Part 1 (Administrative Code), Part 2 (Building Code), Part 3 (Electrical Code), Part 4 (Mechanical Code), Part 5 (Plumbing Code), Part 6 (Energy Code), Part 7 (Wildland-Urban Interface Code), Part 8 (Historical Building Code), Part 9 (Fire Code), Part 10 (Existing Building Code), Part 11 (Green Building Standards Code), Part 12 (Referenced Standards Code). The California Building Code is applicable to all development in California (Health and Safety Code Sections 17950 and 18938[b]).

The regulations receive input from members of industry, as well as the public, with the goal of "[r]educing of wasteful, uneconomic, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy." (PRC Section 25402). These regulations are scrutinized and analyzed for technological and economic feasibility (PRC Section 25402[d]) and cost effectiveness (PRC Section 25402[b][2] and [b][3]).

Part 2 – California Building Code: Fire Safety Requirements

The State of California provided a minimum standard for building design through the latest adopted version of the California Building Standards Code (CBC), which is located in Part 2 of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations. The 2022 CBC is based on the 2021 International Building Code, but has been modified for California conditions. It is generally adopted on a jurisdiction by-jurisdiction basis, subject to further modification based on local conditions. Commercial and residential buildings are plan-checked by local City and County building officials for compliance with the CBC. Typical fire safety requirements of the CBC include the installation of sprinklers in all new high-rise buildings and residential buildings; the establishment of fire resistance standards for fire doors, building material; and particular types of construction.

Part 2 – California Building Code: Wildland-Urban Interface Building Standards

On September 20, 2005, the Building Standards Commission approved the Office of the State Fire Marshal's emergency regulations amending the CCR Title 24, Part 2, known as the CBC. These codes include provisions for ignition-resistant construction standards in the WUI.

Interface zones are areas with dense housing adjacent to vegetation that can burn and meeting the following criteria:

1. Housing density class 2 (one house per 20 acres to one house per 5 acres), 3 (more than one house per 5 acres to one house per acre), or 4 (more than one house per acre)
2. In Moderate, High, or Very High FHSZ
3. Not dominated by wildland vegetation (i.e., lifeform not herbaceous, hardwood, conifer, or shrub)
4. Spatially contiguous groups of 30-meter cells[1] that are 10 acres and larger

Intermix zones are housing development interspersed in an area dominated by wildland vegetation, not located within interface zones, and must meet the following criteria:

1. Housing density class 2
2. Housing density class 3 or 4, dominated by wildland vegetation
3. In Moderate, High, or Very High FHSZ
4. Improved parcels only
5. Spatially contiguous groups of 30-meter cells 25 acres and larger

[1] "30-meter cells" refers to satellite mapping or Geographic Information Systems data, and indicates data is presented as 30-meter by 30-meter squares in the source maps used to determine zone types.

Influence zones have wildfire-susceptible vegetation up to 1.5 miles from an interface zone or intermix zone (CAL FIRE 2019).

While the 2007 CBC creates WUI definitions for interface, intermix and influence zones in order to apply required construction standards, many local and regional entities use their own definitions of WUI areas for other purposes, ranging from simple resident awareness and public outreach to further municipal-level standards.

Part 7 – California Wildland-Urban Interface Code

The California Wildland-Urban Interface Code (WUI Code) contains provisions addressing fire spread, accessibility, defensible space, water supply and more for buildings constructed near wildland areas. The WUI Code became effective on January 1, 2026. The WUI Code incorporates by reference the 2024 International Wildland-Urban Interface Code with necessary California amendments. The code establishes minimum requirements to reduce the likelihood of life and property loss due to a wildfire. The code includes performance and prescriptive requirements for construction and development in FHSZs in SRAs and LRAs. The code institutes requirements that allow new buildings to resist the intrusion of flames or burning embers projected by a vegetation fire.

Part 9 – California Fire Code

The latest adopted version of the California Fire Code (CFC) is Part 9 of CCR Title 24. It establishes the minimum requirements consistent with nationally recognized good practices to safeguard public health, safety, and general welfare from the hazards of fire, explosion, or dangerous conditions in new and existing buildings, structure, and premises, and to provide safety and assistance to firefighters and emergency responders during emergency operations. It is the primary means for authorizing and enforcing procedures and mechanisms to ensure the safe handling and storage of any substance that may pose a threat to public health and safety. The CFC regulates the use, handling, and storage requirements for hazardous materials at fixed facilities. The CFC and the CBC use a hazard classification system to determine what protective measures are required to protect fire and life safety. These measures may include construction standards, separations from property lines and specialized equipment. To ensure that these safety measures are met, the CFC employs a permit system based on hazard classification. The provisions of the CFC apply to the construction, alteration, movement, enlargement, replacement, repair, equipment, use and occupancy, location, maintenance, removal, and demolition of every building or structure or any appurtenances connected or attached to such building structures throughout California.

More specifically, CFC Title 24, Part 9, Chapter 7 addresses fire-resistances-rated construction; CBC Part 2, Chapter 7A, addresses materials and construction methods for exterior wildfire exposure; CFC Chapter 8 addresses fire related Interior finishes; CFC Chapter 9 addresses fire protection systems; and CFC Chapter 10 addresses fire related means of egress, including fire apparatus access road width requirements. Additionally, CFC Section 4906 contains existing regulations for vegetation and fuel management to maintain clearances around structures. These requirements establish minimum standards to protect buildings located in FHSZs within SRAs and WUI Fire Areas. This code includes provisions for ignition-resistant construction standards for new buildings.

Assembly Bill 747 and Senate Bill 99

Assembly Bill 747 (2019) requires that the safety element be reviewed and updated to identify emergency evacuation routes and their capacity, safety, and viability under a range of emergency scenarios (Government Code Section 65302.15). Senate Bill 99 (2019) requires review and update of the safety element to include information to identify residential developments in hazard areas that do not have at least two emergency evacuation routes. In essence, this legislation assists in identifying neighborhoods and households within a hazard area that have limited accessibility and assists counties with identifying opportunities to improve connectivity and evacuation capacity (Government Code Section 65302).

California Code of Regulations Title 14 – Fire Safe Roads

The Board of Forestry maintains fire safe road regulations, as part of CCR Title 14. This includes requirements for road width, surface treatments, grade, radius, turnarounds, turnouts, structures, driveways, and gate entrances. These regulations are intended to ensure safe access for emergency wildland fire equipment and civilian evacuation. CCR Title 14 includes basic emergency access and perimeter wildfire protection measures, signage and building numbering, water supply resources for emergency fire use, and vegetation modification. Title 14 also includes a minimum setback of 30 feet for all buildings from property lines and/or the center of a road and provides defensible space requirements for areas within 30 feet of a structure (Zone 1) and between 30 and 100 feet from a structure (Zone 2).

California Senate Bill 1241

California Senate Bill 1241 (2011) requires cities and counties to address fire risk in SRAs and VHFHSZs in the safety element of their general plans. The bill also amended CEQA to direct amendments to the *CEQA Guidelines* Appendix G environmental checklist to include questions related to fire hazard impacts for projects located in or near lands classified as SRAs and VHFHSZs. In adopting these Guidelines amendments, the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation recognized that generally, low-density, leapfrog development may create higher wildfire risks than high-density, infill development.[2] In general, new development that will be contemplated within the General Plan area would not be considered leapfrog development sites, as they are located near existing development. (Government Code Sections 65302, 65302.5, 65040.20, and 66474.02; PRC Section 21083.01)

California Public Resources Code

The California PRC includes fire safety regulations that restrict the use of equipment that may produce a spark, flame, or fire; require the use of spark arrestors on construction equipment that use an internal combustion engine; specify requirements for the safe use of gasoline-powered tools in fire hazard areas; and specify fire suppression equipment that must be provided on-site for various types of work in fire-prone areas.

- These regulations include the following: Earthmoving and portable equipment with internal combustion engines would be equipped with a spark arrestor to reduce the potential for igniting a wildland fire (PRC Section 4442);
- Appropriate fire suppression equipment would be maintained during the highest fire danger period—from April 1 to December 1 (PRC Section 4428);
- On days when a burning permit is required, flammable materials would be removed to a distance of 10 feet from any equipment that could produce a spark, fire, or flame, and the construction contractor would maintain the appropriate fire suppression equipment (PRC Section 4427); and
- On days when a burning permit is required, portable tools powered by gasoline-fueled internal combustion engines would not be used within 25 feet of any flammable materials (PRC Section 4431).

In addition, PRC Section 4290 establishes minimum wildfire protection standards in conjunction with building, construction, and development in SRAs and VHFHSZs in LRAs. Under PRC Section 4290, the design and construction of structures, subdivisions, and developments in SRAs must provide for basic emergency access and specified perimeter wildfire protection measures. These measures provide road standards for emergency access, signing and building numbering, water supply reserves, and fuel breaks and greenbelts and are known as the State Minimum Fire Safe Regulations.

[2] "Leapfrog development" describes the construction of new development at a distance from existing developed areas, with undeveloped land between the existing and new development.

California Public Utilities Commission General Order 166

General Order 166 Standard 1.E requires that investor-owned utilities develop a Fire Prevention Plan which describes measures that the electric utility will implement to mitigate the threat of power-line fires generally. Additionally, this standard requires that investor-owned utilities outline a plan to mitigate power line fires when wind conditions exceed the structural design standards of the line during a Red Flag Warning in a high fire threat area. Fire Prevention Plans created by investor-owned utilities are required to identify specific parts of the utility's service territory where the conditions described above may occur simultaneously. Standard 11 requires that utilities report annually to the California Public Utilities Commission regarding compliance with General Order 166 (California Public Utilities Commission 2017).

c. Local and Regional Regulations

Trinity County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

In October 2024, Trinity County adopted a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) pursuant to the requirements of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. The plan identifies the fires risk in the county as being high and includes an assessment of past wildfires and the probability of a fire starting in the county in the future. The LHMP includes actions such as Action 14MA which encourages the implementation of fuel reduction projects on private and public lands within the county. Additionally, the LHMP includes actions at the County-wide level to support the development of an evacuation plan and evacuation maps. These actions are intended to achieve the goals of the LHMP which are as follows:

1. Significantly reduce risk to life, community lifelines, the environment, property, and infrastructure
2. Build capacity and partnerships to effectively implement hazard mitigation planning and action
3. Improve understanding on which communities are most vulnerable to better serve these communities
4. Secure additional funding to design, implement, and prioritize projects which will increase community resilience to hazards

Trinity County Emergency Operations Plan

In March 2019, Trinity County prepared an Emergency Operations Plan, which describes how Trinity County will organize and respond to emergencies and disasters. The Emergency Operations Plan provides a framework for coordinated response and recovery activities during a large-scale emergency. The plan describes how various agencies and organizations in the county will coordinate resources and activities with other federal, state, local, tribal, community organizations, faith-based organizations, and private-sector partners (County of Trinity 2019).

Trinity County Community Wildfire Protection Plan

The Trinity County CWPP was drafted by the Trinity County Fire Safe Council in 2005 and subsequently updated by the Trinity County Resource Conservation District in 2010, 2015, and 2020. The CWPP includes projects related to fuel reduction and prescribed burns as well as policy recommendations (Trinity County Resource Conservation District 2021). Overall, the objectives that guide the drafting of the CWPP are:

- Update and prioritize fire and fuels related projects;
- Create an online database where Geographical Information System layers can be accessed by agencies or the public;
- Record project accomplishments;
- Update with new policies and laws;
- Facilitate federal agency consideration of community priorities;

- Improve ability to protect lives and property from wildfire damage;
- Increase public awareness of consequences of living in a wildfire prone environment;
- Provide the public with clear steps they can take to reduce the risks associated with living in the WUI;
- Merge the goals and objectives of landowners with the needs and expectations of the community regarding wildfire risk reduction;
- Coordinate fire protection strategies across property boundaries; and
- Provide a tool to help coordinate grant funding and federal program budgets to achieve the most effective results with limited funding

4.19.3 Impact Analysis

a. Significance Thresholds

The following thresholds of significance are based on Appendix G to the *CEQA Guidelines*. For purposes of this EIR, implementation of the proposed project would have a significant adverse impact if it would result in any of the following if located in or near SRAs or lands classified as VHFHSZ:

1. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan;
2. 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;
3. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment; or
4. 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.

b. Methodology

Cal FIRE Hazard Severity Maps were consulted in determining Trinity County's proximity to SRAs or lands classified as VHFHSZ. Impacts related to wildfire hazards and risks were evaluated using FHSZ mapping for Trinity County, aerial imagery, and topographic mapping. Additionally, weather patterns related to prevailing winds and precipitation trends were evaluated as they relate to the spread and magnitude of wildfire. It was assessed whether the proposed plan would risk exacerbating those existing environmental conditions or causing new direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to other aspects of the environment.

California Attorney General Best Practices for Analyzing and Mitigating Wildfire Impacts of Development Projects Under the California Environmental Quality Act restates the CEQA requirement that an EIR analyze "any significant environmental effects the project might cause or risk exacerbating by bringing development and people into the area affected," including by locating development in wildfire risk areas. As such, this evaluation assesses whether projects located in or near SRA or lands classified as VHFHSZ would exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose people or structures to significant risks during or post-wildfire event; require the installation of emergency-related infrastructure; or result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment.

In addition, pursuant to California Attorney General Best Practices for Analyzing and Mitigating Wildfire Impacts of Development Projects Under the California Environmental Quality Act, this evaluation assesses whether projects located in or near SRAs or lands classified as VHFHSZ would substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

Much of the potential cannabis-related development contemplated by the project was previously analyzed in the Trinity County Cannabis Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR; State Clearinghouse number 2018122049), certified in 2020 (2020 EIR). The 2020 EIR found that cannabis cultivation had the potential to expose people or structures to a significant risk involving wildfire hazards, expose project and

the public to pollution concentrations from wildfire spread, exacerbate fire risk, and expose people to increased risk of landslide from post-fire instability. The 2020 EIR included Mitigation Measure 3.16-1, which requires implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.1-1b to maintain parcels on which cultivation occurs; Mitigation Measures 3.16-2a and 3.16-2b, which require fire prevention methods for new power lines and electrical facilities and on site construction and maintenance activities; and Mitigation Measure 3.16-3 which requires implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.10-1a to demonstrate compliance with water resource standards. Many of these measures have since been implemented through County ordinance revisions and now function as standing regulatory requirements rather than project-specific mitigation. Because these regulatory controls are part of existing conditions and because the proposed project establishes a new countywide policy framework that supersedes the 2020 EIR for cannabis activities occurring consistent with the General Plan, this EIR focuses on wildfire impacts not previously addressed or requiring reevaluation under the proposed project.

c. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Threshold 1:	If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Impact W-1 The proposed General Plan includes policies which ensure emergency access, response, and preparation. Therefore, the proposed project would not impair an emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Impacts would be less than significant.

As mentioned above under Section 4.19.1(b), *Wildland Urban Interface*, and as shown in CAL FIRE's Fire Hazard Severity Zone map in Figure 4.19-1, areas along the northeastern and southwestern edges of the county are within VHFHSZs in a SRA (CAL FIRE 2025). Major evacuation routes within the county are SR 3, SR 36, and SR 299 which connect to most communities within the county (Trinity County Resources Conservation District 2025). Most residents would be required to utilize their neighborhood roads to connect to one of these major highways.

There are areas where most development facilitated by the project would occur, like the community of Weaverville and Hayfork, which are classified as VHFHSZs in a SRA. SR 299 and SR 3 pass through Weaverville, offering evacuation routes in both western and eastern directions. SR 3 runs through Hayfork and provides evacuation access to that community. The proposed project would include proposed goals and policies such as Goal SAF 1, Policy SAF 1.1 (Community Wildfire Protection Plan), and Policy SAF 1.2 (Collaborative Wildfire Protection Planning), Policy SAF 1.6 (Roadside Fuel Management), and Policy SAF 1.3 (Wildfire Hazard Public Outreach and Education). Implementation of these goals and policies would ensure that future development facilitated by the proposed project would be consistent with goals set forth in the CWPP, Trinity County Hazard Mitigation Plan, and Trinity County Fire Safe Council evacuation guides and resources. This would ensure that future projects have adequate ingress and egress for emergency response vehicles and for evacuation purposes. Additionally, this would ensure that future projects are consistent with existing evacuation guidelines and have adequate access to major evacuation routes within the county and that these routes are safe to use by reducing fuel load on roadways throughout the county. Future development would also be required to comply with the CBC and CFC which requires the use of fire-resistant building materials, in addition to other measures, to reduce the risk of wildfire ignition which would reduce the need for emergency response or evacuation within the county.

The County also would continue to use existing evacuation resources to notify residents in the case of an evacuation, such as the use of Code Red, which is an online emergency alerts platform. This platform includes all the emergency evacuation zones across the county and sends out alerts to residents when evacuation is necessary.

Overall, with implementation of existing and proposed regulations and policies and through implementation of existing evacuation resources, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 2:	If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project 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?

Impact W-2 The proposed project would facilitate development in areas within or near VHFHSZs in SRAs which could be affected by downslope wind. However, existing regulations such as the CBC, CFC, and proposed General Plan policies would reduce the risk of wildfire ignition and therefore reduce the risk of uncontrollable spread of pollutants from a wildfire or spread of wildfire itself. Impacts would be less than significant.

As mentioned under Impact W-1, areas along the northeastern and southwestern edges of the county are within VHFHSZs in a SRA (CAL FIRE 2025). Wildfire is identified as a high threat to the county in the proposed General Plan Hazards and Safety Element. Developed communities such as Weaverville and Hayfork are within areas identified as VHFHSZs. As described in the Setting, downslope winds are common in the county due to the county's mountainous terrain, these winds could carry a wildfire downslope into the low-lying areas of the county including the communities of Weaverville and Hayfork.

Future development facilitated by the project would be concentrated in the existing unincorporated communities of Weaverville and Hayfork, both of which are already developed and already classified as VHFHSZs within an SRA. The proposed project does not open new undeveloped areas to residential or commercial development and does not extend infrastructure into previously undeveloped areas. Weaverville and Hayfork have existing road networks, existing water infrastructure, existing evacuation routes along SR 299, SR 3, and SR 36 and existing fire protection resources. Future development facilitated by the proposed project would connect to this existing framework rather than creating new development nodes in areas lacking fire protection infrastructure.

Future development would be required to comply with proposed goals and policies such as Goal SAF-1, Policy SAF 1.1 (Community Wildfire Protection Plan), Policy SAF 1.2 (Collaborative Wildfire Protection Planning), Policy SAF 1.3 (Wildfire Hazard Public Outreach and Education), Policy SAF 1.4 (Firewise Communities), Policy SAF 1.5 (Support Fire Protection Agencies), Policy SAF 1.6 (Roadside Fuel Management), Policy SAF 1.7 (Wildland Urban Interfaces,)Policy SAF 1.8 (Fuel Break Maintenance), Policy SAF 1.9 (Forest Health Coordination), Policy SAF 1.10 (Wildfire Hazard Consideration and Project Design), Policy SAF 1.11 (Vegetation Management), Policy SAF 1.12 (Post-Fire Natural Resource Recovery), and Policy SAF 1.13 (Post-Fire Redevelopment). These policies would ensure that future development facilitated by the project would be consistent with goals set forth in the CWPP, Trinity County Hazard Mitigation Plan, and Trinity County Fire Safe Council evacuation guides and resources. These polices also require development facilitated by the project to maintain fuel breaks, manage fuels and vegetation, implement public outreach and education programs on wildfire hazards, coordinate with multiple agencies on forest health to manage forest vegetation, and require coordination with the Trinity Fire Wise Council. By reducing the fuel load for wildfire and decreasing the chances of wildfire ignition, impacts associated with pollutants released by wildfire, such as air pollutants, would be reduced.

With respect to pollutant exposure, the primary source of smoke in Trinity County has historically been wildfires. As seen with the August Complex Fire (2020), Monument Fire (2021), and River Complex Fire (2021), large fires in and near the county generate smoke conditions that affect all county residents regardless of where they live or what building standards their structures meet. Future residents added by development facilitated by the proposed project would be exposed to smoke from federal land fires to the

same degree as existing residents, thus the proposed project does not place new residents in areas of greater smoke exposure than those in which existing residents currently live. The proposed General Plan includes air quality policies, including Policies SAF 1.14 (Reduce Wildfire Air Quality Impacts), and 1.15 (Fire Suppression to Improve Air Quality), support active fire suppression and air quality monitoring measures to reduce smoke impacts. Therefore, smoke exposure from fires in and near the county, is not an impact that would be created or made worse by the implementation of the proposed project.

Moreover, new construction would be subject to the California Fire Code, which include safety measures to minimize the threat of fire, including ignition-resistant construction with exterior walls of noncombustible or ignition resistant material from the surface of the ground to the roof system and sealing any gaps around doors, windows, eaves, and vents to prevent intrusion by flame or embers. Construction would also be required to meet CBC requirements, including CCR Title 24, Part 2, which includes specific requirements related to exterior wildfire exposure. The Board of Forestry, via CCR Title 14, sets forth the minimum development standards for emergency access, fuel modification, setback, signage, and water supply, which help prevent loss of structures or life by reducing wildfire hazards.

Implementation of existing regulations, including the CBC, CFC, and proposed General Plan policies, would reduce wildfire risk and exposure of people to pollutant concentrations due to wildfire. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 3:	If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?

Impact W-3 The proposed project would facilitate growth primarily in developed areas of the county where infrastructure and roads currently exist. Compliance with existing CBC and CFC regulations as well as proposed General Plan policies would reduce the risk of wildfire ignition associated with installation or maintenance of infrastructure. Impacts would be less than significant.

The proposed project would facilitate growth in Trinity County primarily in developed communities such as Hayfork and Weaverville. These communities have existing utility infrastructure and roadways that future development would connect to. Therefore, the majority of roads and utility infrastructure required for growth facilitated by the proposed project would be existing or would occur in currently developed areas, resulting in negligible temporary or ongoing environmental impacts. This would ensure that wildfire risk is not exacerbated by the installation or maintenance of infrastructure.

As mentioned under Impact W-1, there are areas in and around Hayfork and Weaverville that are within VHFHSZs. While there is existing infrastructure in these communities, some future development could require expansions of this infrastructure beyond simply connecting to existing utility lines and roadways. Construction of this infrastructure would be required to comply with CBC requirements, including CCR Title 24, Part 2, which includes specific requirements related to exterior wildfire exposure and CCR Title 14, which sets forth the minimum development standards for emergency access, fuel modification, setback, signage, and water supply, which help prevent loss of structures or life by reducing wildfire hazards. Additionally, the proposed general plan policies discussed under Impact WFR-2, such as Policy SAF-1.7 (Wildland Urban Interface), Policy SAF-1.8 (Fuel Break Maintenance), and Policy SAF-1.11 (Vegetation Management) would reduce wildfire risk in these areas by maintaining fuel breaks and

managing wildfire fuel. This would reduce the fuel load near developed areas of the county and therefore reduce the risk of wildfire ignition during installation or maintenance of infrastructure or the spread of wildfire by reducing wildfire fuel in these areas. Implementation of existing regulations and proposed General Plan policies would reduce wildfire impacts related to the installation or maintenance of infrastructure. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

Threshold 4:	If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslopes or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

Impact W-4 The proposed project would facilitate development in areas within or near VHFHSZs in SRAs which could be affected by post-fire instability, downstream flooding, or landslides. However, existing regulations such as the CBC, CFC, and proposed General Plan policies would reduce the risk of wildfire ignition and therefore reduce the risk of post-fire instability, downstream flooding, or landslides. Impacts would be less than significant.

As mentioned under Impact W-1, areas along the northeastern and southwestern edges of the county are within VHFHSZs in a SRA (CAL FIRE 2025). Wildfire is identified as a high threat to the county in the proposed General Plan Hazards and Safety Element. Developed communities such as Weaverville and Hayfork are within areas identified as VHFHSZs and are surrounded by hillsides and mountainous terrain. As discussed in Section 4.7, *Geology and Soils*, the risk for landslides within the county are high due to the mountainous terrain. The proposed project would facilitate development primarily in the developed communities within the county such as Weaverville and Hayfork. As such, new development would be in or near VHFHSZs in an SRA and could be at risk of landslides on the slopes near these developed communities. Additionally, the communities of Weaverville and Hayfork are also at risk of riverine flooding due to their proximity to the Trinity River. This risk could be exacerbated by post-fire drainage changes or runoff.

As discussed in Section 4.7, *Geology and Soils*, future development facilitated by the proposed project would be required to comply with the CBC to ensure buildings have foundations and structural support that can resist or absorb damaging forces from landslides. Additionally, proposed General Plan goals and policies such as Goal SAF-1, Policy SAF 1.1 (Community Wildfire Protection Plan), Policy SAF 1.2 (Collaborative Wildfire Protection Planning), Policy SAF 1.3 (Wildfire Hazard Public Outreach and Education), Policy SAF 1.4 (Firewise Communities), Policy SAF 1.5 (Support Fire Protection Agencies), Policy SAF 1.6 (Roadside Fuel Management), Policy SAF 1.7 (Wildland Urban Interfaces), Policy SAF 1.8 (Fuel Break Maintenance), Policy SAF 1.9 (Forest Health Coordination), Policy SAF 1.10 (Wildfire Hazard Consideration and Project Design), Policy SAF 1.11 (Vegetation Management), Policy SAF 1.12 (Post-Fire Natural Resource Recovery), Policy SAF 1.13 (Post-Fire Redevelopment)would ensure that wildfire risk is minimized within the county through vegetation and fuel management, coordination with the Trinity County Fire Safe Council, and by establishing and maintaining fuel breaks within the county. Additionally, these policies would implement fuel management along roadways and ensure projects are designed to reduce wildfire risk. Future development would also be subject to the CFC, which includes safety measures to minimize the threat of fire, including ignition-resistant construction with exterior walls of noncombustible or ignition resistant material from the surface of the ground to the roof system and sealing any gaps around doors, windows, eaves, and vents to prevent intrusion by flame or embers.

Overall, existing regulations would reduce the risk of wildfire ignition within the county and therefore would reduce the risk of post fire instability, landslides, or downstream flooding. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance After Mitigation

Impacts would be **less than significant** without mitigation.

4.19.4 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic scope for cumulative wildfire impacts is all of Trinity County and land immediately bordering Trinity County. This geographic scope is appropriate for wildfire because wildfires can impact large areas and do not stay confined to existing county borders. The cumulative development scenario is described in Chapter 3, *Environmental Setting*.

As shown in Figure 4.19-1, there are large areas within the center of the county that are not within an SRA and are within Federal Responsibility Areas managed by the United States Forest Service for fire risk rather than within CAL FIRE's SRA mapping. Within the geographic scope for this cumulative analysis, wildfire-related impacts could be significant when development occurs in mountainous or VHFHSZs that could exacerbate risks. Cumulative development would increase the density of development in more developed areas such as Hayfork and Weaverville, which could exacerbate wildfire risks. All new development and infrastructure would be subject to statewide standards for fire safety in the CFC, as well as applicable General Plan policies. As discussed in the impact analyses above, compliance with the CFC and proposed General Plan policies would reduce the risk of wildfire and would ensure adequate fire and emergency services in the mountainous areas of the County most at risk for fire. Therefore, cumulative development would not result in a significant cumulative wildfire impact.

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5 Other CEQA Required Discussions

This chapter discusses growth-inducing impacts, irreversible environmental impacts, and significant and unavoidable impacts that would be caused by the proposed project.

5.1 Growth Inducement

Section 15126(d) of the *CEQA Guidelines* requires a discussion of a proposed project's potential to foster economic or population growth, including ways in which a project could remove an obstacle to growth. Growth does not necessarily create significant physical changes to the environment. However, depending upon the type, magnitude, and location of growth, it can result in significant adverse environmental effects. The proposed project's growth-inducing potential is therefore considered significant if project-induced growth could result in significant physical effects in one or more environmental issue areas.

The purpose of the project is to plan for the anticipated growth of Trinity County by adopting the proposed General Plan Update. The potential impacts associated with this growth would be mitigated through the goals and policies included in the proposed General Plan, which provide for orderly and planned growth in the county. This planned growth is concentrated in existing areas of development, which would assist in reducing growth elsewhere in the more rural, agricultural, and undeveloped portions of the county. Analysis of project-related growth is analyzed through this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for individual environmental issue areas in Sections 4.1 through 4.19.

5.1.1 Population Growth

As discussed in Section 4.14, *Population and Housing*, development facilitated by the project could accommodate up to 7,420 new residents and 902 new housing units in the county. With the estimated growth as part of the proposed project, Trinity would have a 2050 population of approximately 23,304 residents and 8,999 housing units. Although the projected potential population under the proposed project would exceed the population forecast prepared by the California Department of Finance, the proposed project would not include construction of new infrastructure, extension of public utilities, or other improvements that would directly induce population growth beyond that which is considered in this EIR. Instead, the proposed project would provide a long-range planning framework that allows future development to occur in a planned and orderly manner. Therefore, the project would not indirectly induce substantial population growth in the county beyond what is already anticipated.

5.1.2 Removal of Obstacles to Growth

The proposed project focuses on managing future development within existing unincorporated communities in Trinity County where infrastructure and public services are already established. A fundamental purpose of the proposed project is to guide development in a manner that minimizes the environmental effects of growth by prioritizing infill development within or adjacent to existing development and limiting dispersed development in rural, agricultural, and open space or resource areas, as seen in proposed Policies LU 8.2 (Development Density) and LU 8.3 (Infill Development). Additionally, Policies LU 1.1 (General Plan Land Use Diagram) and LU 1.2 (Zoning Consistency) require consistency with the General Plan Land Use Diagram and the consideration of infrastructure availability, environmental constraints, and compatibility with surrounding uses, thereby encouraging development in logical areas with minimal impacts. Although development of vacant lands could require localized infrastructure improvements, new development would primarily occur where existing roads and services are available and in accordance with adopted growth management policies that protect rural character, agricultural resources, and open space.

5.2 Irreversible Environmental Effects

The *CEQA Guidelines* require that EIRs evaluating projects involving amendments to public plans, ordinances, or policies contain a discussion of significant irreversible environmental changes. The California Environmental Quality Act also requires decision-makers to balance the benefits of a proposed project against its unavoidable environmental risks in determining whether to approve a project. This section addresses non-renewable resources, the commitment of future generations to the proposed uses, and irreversible impacts associated with the development that would be facilitated by implementation of the proposed project.

Development facilitated by the project would involve construction activities requiring the use of building materials, fuels, and energy, some of which are non-renewable. These resources would be consumed incrementally as future residential, commercial, industrial, and public facility development occurs throughout the unincorporated county. The use of non-renewable resources, such as petroleum-based fuels, propane, and natural gas, is not unique to Trinity County or the proposed project and would occur under any reasonable growth scenario. While increased development would result in an irreversible increase in overall demand for energy resources, implementation of energy efficiency measures, updated building standards, and proposed General Plan policies encouraging compact development patterns and reduced vehicle dependence would help offset resource consumption. Overall, growth facilitated by the proposed project is not anticipated to result in a substantial adverse effect on local or regional energy supplies.

Implementation of the proposed project would also involve an irreversible commitment of public infrastructure and services, including water supply, wastewater treatment, transportation facilities, and solid waste disposal. As discussed in Section 4.18, *Utilities and Service Systems*, future development would be required to comply with applicable regulations, service provider requirements, and adopted 2050 General Plan goals and policies addressing infrastructure capacity, conservation, and the protection of local resources. Although these commitments represent a long-term use of resources, impacts associated with utilities and transportation facilities have been determined to be less than significant. Accordingly, these commitments do not constitute significant irreversible environmental effects under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Growth accommodated by the proposed project would increase travel demand and associated vehicle trips, which would incrementally contribute to traffic, noise, air pollutant emissions, and greenhouse gas emissions. As discussed in Section 4.16, *Transportation*, implementation of the proposed project as a programmatic planning document would not result in significant transportation impacts, and vehicle miles traveled would not increase relative to baseline conditions. As discussed in Section 4.3, *Air Quality*, development facilitated by the project would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants, and potential exposure of sensitive receptors to toxic air contaminants would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of identified mitigation measures. However, as discussed in Section 4.8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, implementation of the proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable greenhouse gas impacts. While the General Plan includes goals, policies, and programs intended to reduce emissions through land use planning, transportation strategies, and energy efficiency, implementation of such measures at the individual project level cannot be assured for all future development. As a result, cumulative greenhouse gas emissions associated with buildout of the proposed project would not be reduced below applicable significance thresholds. This represents an irreversible environmental effect because greenhouse gas emissions contribute to long-term climate change impacts that cannot be fully mitigated once released into the atmosphere.

5.3 Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

The environmental effects of the proposed project, along with recommended mitigation measures, are discussed in detail in Chapter 4, *Environmental Impact Analysis*, of this EIR and summarized in the Executive Summary. The following environmental issues were determined to be less than significant, or can be reduced to less than significant with the incorporation of mitigation measures:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Agricultural and Forestry Resources
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

Section 15126.2(b) of the *CEQA Guidelines* requires that an EIR describe any significant impacts, including those that can be mitigated but not reduced to less-than-significant levels, as a result of implementation of the project. The following environmental issues were determined to result in potential significant and unavoidable impacts:

- Greenhouse Gas Emissions: inconsistencies with the 2022 Scoping Plan
- Noise: potential increase in noise levels resulting from construction activities above County thresholds, and increase in traffic noise levels resulting from increased vehicle trips on local roadways during operational activities

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6 Alternatives

Section 15126.6 of the *California Environmental Quality Act* (*CEQA) Guidelines* provides guidance for the identification and evaluation of project alternatives in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The *CEQA Guidelines* state that an "EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives." This EIR examines a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project that would attain most of the basic project objectives but would avoid or substantially lessen significant adverse impacts.

6.1 Development of Alternatives

Section 15126.6(c) of the *CEQA Guidelines* requires that an EIR identify alternatives that were considered but rejected as infeasible and provide a brief explanation as to why such alternatives were not fully considered in the EIR. As required by the *CEQA Guidelines*, the selection of alternatives for this EIR included a screening process to determine a reasonable range of alternatives, which could reduce significant effects but also feasibly meet project objectives. Alternatives that do not clearly provide any environmental advantages compared to the proposed project, do not meet basic proposed project objectives, or are not feasible to implement have been eliminated from further consideration. Alternatives that were considered but rejected are discussed below in Section 6.1.3.

6.1.1 Guiding Principles and Project Objectives

As discussed in Chapter 2, *Project Description,* the Introduction chapter of the General Plan includes the following vision statement:

> Trinity County is a place where people can experience a fulfilling life in a peaceful, rural setting while allowing for existing and new development to thrive in appropriate ways and locations. It is a place where employment, housing, world class recreation, and cultural and natural resources opportunities are abundant; where there is a strong sense of community and family, neighbors support neighbors, and residents feel safe and secure.

The Introduction chapter further provides the following guiding principles:

1. **Hazards and Safety**. Provide for safe communities through resilient infrastructure, communitywide education and preparation, effective coordination with state and federal agencies, and hazard planning that includes managing lands to reduce the impacts of climate-related, natural, and human-caused disasters including wildland fires, flooding, and geological events.
2. **Community Health and Health Services**. Promote economic, social, and physical health and wellness by investing in infrastructure and services that promote physical activity and access to local healthy foods; help reduce health disparities; and integrate public health into public policies and the community.
3. **Land Use, Housing, and Zoning**. Identify additional land for future development while ensuring the compatibility of adjoining land uses; incentivizing new development; returning vacant and abandoned properties to active use; increasing affordable housing options; improving resiliency to wildfire through defensible space, home hardening, and fuel management; and emphasizing collaborative approaches to housing challenges.

4. **Mobility and Infrastructure**. Invest in and develop an efficient and safe multimodal transportation network with infrastructure and services that meet the needs of residents and businesses; maintain and enhance law enforcement and fire protection services to protect residents and property; and enhance availability and reliability of communications infrastructure to residents and businesses.
5. **Watersheds and Natural Resources**. Sustainably manage, conserve, and develop the county's open spaces and natural resources with expanded opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the county's heritage and natural setting. Promote the availability and accessibility of recreation sites, entertainment opportunities, waterways, and state and federal lands to all residents and visitors.
6. **Economic Development.** Maintain a high level of coordination and collaboration within the local business community to incentivize business development and employment opportunities, encourage economic growth, and retain capital within the community; strategically distribute resources for economic development throughout all communities in the county; and expand educational and workforce development opportunities, to provide a broad range of jobs across diverse industries

In addition, as stated in the published Notice of Preparation for this EIR, the objectives of the General Plan Update include:

- Express the community's vision for Trinity County's future
- Provide a balance between growth and conservation that meets community needs and protects Trinity County's quality of life
- Inform residents, developers, and decision makers of the ground rules that guide development
- Ensure that development occurs in an efficient, orderly manner that minimizes costs to taxpayers
- Engage in a comprehensive and inclusive outreach process

6.1.2 Potentially Significant Impacts of the Project

As discussed throughout Chapter 4, *Environmental Impact Analysis*, and summarized in Table ES-1 in the Executive Summary, the proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, construction noise, and traffic noise. The project would require mitigation to reduce significant impacts related to air quality to less than significant levels. Impacts related to GHG emissions, construction noise, and traffic noise would remain significant and unavoidable even with implementation of feasible mitigation measures.

6.1.3 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

The *CEQA Guidelines* state that an EIR should identify alternatives that were considered by the lead agency but were rejected as infeasible during the scoping process and briefly explain the reasons underlying the lead agency's determination (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.2[c]). Among the factors that may be used to eliminate alternatives from detailed consideration in an EIR are (i) failure to meet most of the basic project objectives, (ii), infeasibility, or (iii) inability to avoid significant environmental impacts (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6[c]). The following paragraph describes a potential alternative to the project that was considered by the County but was rejected due to its infeasibility and/or its failure to meet most project objectives.

The County considered an alternative that would require all cannabis cultivation, manufacturing, and related uses to be fully enclosed within indoor structures. This alternative was considered during the planning process as a potential means to reduce environmental effects associated with outdoor cultivation, including odor, light, and potential impacts to biological resources. However, implementing an entirely indoor requirement on a countywide basis would substantially constrain the range of allowable cultivation methods, including outdoor cultivation already occurring in the county. In addition, such a requirement would require a greater amount of built infrastructure and could shift environmental impacts toward increased energy demand and associated GHG emissions. These factors were identified as constraints because they would reduce the feasibility of cannabis operations throughout the county and

would conflict with General Plan guiding principles that pertain to economic development. Accordingly, this alternative was rejected from further consideration in the EIR.

6.1.4 Project Alternatives

Included in this analysis are two alternatives, including the CEQA required “no project” alternative, that involve changes to the project that may reduce the project-related environmental impacts as identified in this EIR. Alternatives have been developed to provide a reasonable range of options to consider that would help decision-makers and the public understand the general implications of revising or eliminating certain components of the proposed project. Because the proposed project includes limited modifications to General Plan land use designations and thus future physical development that could occur in the county, and there are limited significant and unavoidable impacts that could be reduced through project changes, two alternatives is considered to be a “reasonable range” for the purpose of the proposed project.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(a) states that “an EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project. Rather it must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will foster informed decision making and public participation.” The selected alternatives are limited to those that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the proposed project, that the lead agency determines to be potentially feasible, and that could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the proposed project. This section presents the selected alternatives and includes an evaluation for the environmental topics addressed in Sections 4.1 to 4.19, although at a more general level, to compare the merits of the alternatives to the proposed project (consistent with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6[d]).

This analysis presents two alternatives, including the required “no project” alternative and one alternative that involves changes to the proposed project that may reduce the project-related environmental impacts identified in this EIR. The following alternatives are evaluated in this EIR:

- Alternative 1: No Project/Existing General Plan
- Alternative 2: 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency

Detailed descriptions of the alternatives are included in the impact analysis for each alternative. The potential environmental impacts of each alternative are analyzed in Sections 6.2 and 6.3. As required by CEQA, this section also includes a discussion of the “environmentally superior alternative” among those studied, included in Section 6.4.

6.2 Alternative 1: No Project/Existing General Plan

6.2.1 Description

The *CEQA Guidelines* (Section 15126.6[e][2]) require that the alternatives discussion include an analysis of a No Project Alternative. Pursuant to CEQA, the No Project Alternative refers to the analysis of existing conditions and what would reasonably be expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project was not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services. The No Project Alternative typically will proceed along one of two lines: (1) when a project is a revision of an existing regulatory plan or policy, the No Project Alternative will be the continuation of the existing plan or policy; or (b) if a project is a development project on identifiable property, the No Project Alternative is the circumstance under which the project does not proceed.

In this case, the No Project Alternative assumes that the proposed General Plan Update is not adopted or implemented, and that none of the proposed land use designation changes occur. Future buildout in the county would continue to be guided by existing General Plan elements and community plans, as well as existing zoning. As described under Section 2.4, *General Plan Buildout*, in Chapter 2, *Project Description,* the proposed project could allow for a substantially larger increase in population and housing than is predicted, and could facilitate the development of 902 new housing units and the addition of 7,420 new

residents. Under the No Project Alternative, future growth in the county would be guided by the existing General Plan and zoning designations, and the county's population and housing units would be expected to be lower in buildout year 2050 than under the proposed project. As shown in Table 2-2 in Chapter 2, *Project Description,* the California Department of Finance (DOF) projects that by 2050, the county's population will decrease by 16 people, and the number of housing units will increase by 47.

This alternative would not accomplish most of the project objectives, including:

- Identifying additional land for future development while ensuring the compatibility of adjoining land uses; incentivizing new development; returning vacant and abandoned properties to active use; increasing affordable housing options; improving resiliency to wildfire through defensible space, home hardening, and fuel management; and emphasizing collaborative approaches to housing challenges (General Plan Guiding Principle 3)
- Investing in and developing an efficient and safe multimodal transportation network with infrastructure and services that meet the needs of residents and businesses (General Plan Guiding Principle 4)
- Maintaining a high level of coordination and collaboration within the local business community to incentivize business development and employment opportunities, encouraging economic growth, and retaining capital within the community; strategically distributing resources for economic development throughout all communities in the county; and expanding educational and workforce development opportunities to provide a broad range of jobs across diverse industries (General Plan Guiding Principle 6)
- Expressing the community's vision for Trinity County's future (EIR Objective 1)
- Providing a balance between growth and conservation that meets community needs and protects Trinity County's quality of life (EIR Objective 2)
- Informing residents, developers, and decision makers of the ground rules that guide development (EIR Objective 3)
- Ensuring that development occurs in an efficient, orderly manner that minimizes costs to taxpayers (EIR Objective 4)
- Engaging in a comprehensive and inclusive outreach process (EIR Objective 5)

6.2.2 Impact Analysis

a. Aesthetics

Under the No Project Alternative, future development in Trinity County would continue to follow the existing land use pattern and would be guided by the existing General Plan. New General Plan elements and policies would not be adopted. Consequently, the scale, intensity, and distribution of new development would be more limited compared to the proposed project, and would remain generally the same as existing conditions.

Because this alternative would not facilitate the same level of growth as the proposed project, it would result in fewer changes to the built environment. As a result, potential impacts to scenic vistas, the county's established visual character, and light and glare conditions would be reduced. The visual landscape of Trinity County would remain more consistent with existing conditions, preserving the county's current aesthetic qualities.

The proposed project would involve updating Trinity County Code of Ordinances to clarify regulations related to cannabis operations. These updates would not occur under this alternative. Although the county's cannabis ordinance requires visual screening of cultivation sites, cannabis operations could impact public views and visual resources, as described under Impacts AES-1 and AES-2 in Section 4.1, *Aesthetics.* Accordingly, visual impacts related to cannabis operations would be slightly greater under this alternative.

Although development would still occur under the No Project Alternative, it would be subject to the goals, policies, and regulations that pertain to visual resources in the existing General Plan and Trinity County Code of Ordinances, and would continue to undergo discretionary review. Overall, aesthetic impacts under the No Project Alternative would be less than significant and reduced compared to those anticipated under the proposed project, due to the lower intensity of development.

b. Agriculture and Forestry Resources

As discussed in Section 4.2, *Agriculture and Forestry Resources,* there are no areas of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance mapped within the county. The proposed project includes goals and policies that would protect and preserve other agricultural lands in Trinity County, including areas enrolled in Williamson Act contracts, and those would not be adopted or implemented under the No Project Alternative. However, the No Project Alternative would result in relatively minimal development beyond existing conditions, and accordingly would not facilitate development that would result in the conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses. Impacts to agricultural resources under this alternative would be less than significant, similar to the proposed project.

The No Project Alternative would not introduce new development or regulations that would conflict with existing zoning of forest land or cause a conversion of forest land to non-forest use. The existing General Plan and Trinity County Code of Ordinances would continue to encourage timber production in areas designated and zoned as timberland. Impacts would be less than significant, similar to the proposed project.

c. Air Quality

Under the No Project Alternative, development would remain minimal relative to existing conditions. As shown in Table 2-2 in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, the DOF projects that, in the absence of the proposed project, the county's population would decline by 16 residents, while the number of housing units would increase by 47 by 2050. Accordingly, the No Project Alternative would result in a negligible amount of new construction and operational emissions. This alternative would not conflict with the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District PM_{10} Attainment Plan or result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants. Impacts would be less than significant and reduced compared to the proposed project.

Similar to development facilitated by the proposed project, development under this alternative would not increase carbon monoxide concentrations such that it would create carbon monoxide hotspots. In addition, the No Project Alternative would involve substantially less construction activity than the proposed project, and would result in the emission of fewer toxic air contaminants. Development proximate to sensitive receptors would remain subject to North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District rules and local ordinances, and impacts related to toxic air contaminants would be reduced under the No Project Alternative. Impacts would be less than significant and Mitigation Measures AQ-2a and AQ-2b would not be required.

The No Project Alternative would not allow more cannabis operations than what is already allowed under existing conditions. Cannabis uses would remain subject to the county's cannabis ordinance, and agricultural uses and other land uses that could produce objectionable odors would continue to be regulated by the existing General Plan and Trinity County Code of Ordinances. Therefore, impacts related to objectionable odors would be less than significant and reduced compared to the proposed project. Mitigation Measure AQ-3would not be required.

d. Biological Resources

The No Project Alternative would result in relatively minimal development beyond existing conditions, and less development than the proposed project. Future growth would continue to be guided by the existing General Plan. Similar to the proposed project, the limited development under this alternative is expected

to occur within existing unincorporated communities such as Weaverville, Hayfork, Lewiston, Trinity Center, Post Mountain, Douglas City, and Junction City. These communities include existing infrastructure, disturbed land cover, and areas with reduced habitat value, which would result in a reduced potential for development to impact biological resources. Furthermore, all new development would continue to be subject to the existing Trinity County Code of Ordinances, as well as applicable federal and state regulations discussed in Section 4.4, *Biological Resources.* However, in contrast to the proposed project, the No Project Alternative would not include updated General Plan goals and policies, such as proposed Goal COS-3, Policy COS-3.1, Policy COS-3.2, Policy COS-3.5, Policy COS-3.6, Policy COS-3.7, Policy COS-3.8, Policy COS-3.9, Policy COS-3.10, Policy COS-3.11, Policy COS-3.12, and Policy COS-3.13 , which are designed to preserve and protect biological resources in the Planning Area. Similarly, the No Project Alternative would not implement Mitigation Measure BIO-1, which includes specific requirements for conducting project-level Biological Resource Assessments.

Similar to the proposed project, development under the No Project Alternative would generally occur within existing unincorporated communities, where development has already occurred and where wetlands and riparian resources are less prevalent than in surrounding natural areas. However, as under the proposed project, development could require infrastructure upgrades, including stormwater systems, roadway improvements, and utility extensions, some of which may occur adjacent to or across waterways, drainage features, sensitive natural communities, or riparian corridors. Future development in areas identified as containing potentially jurisdictional waters and/or wetlands, streambed/banks, or riparian vegetation would be subject to the permit requirements of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, pursuant to Section 404 and 401 of Clean Water Act, the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, and/or California Fish and Game Code Section 1600 *et seq*. Actual jurisdictional areas would be determined by the state and federal authorities at the time that permits are requested. Impacts related to riparian habitat, sensitive natural communities, and wetlands would be less than significant and reduced compared to the proposed project.

Development under the No Project Alternative would generally occur within existing developed areas, similar to the proposed project, and would not substantially impact wildlife movement or wildlife corridors. Development would continue to be subject to existing ordinances and policies that protect biological resources, such as existing General Plan policies and the County Managed Tree Ordinance (Chapter 13.15 of the Trinity County Code of Ordinances). Furthermore, the No Project Alternative would not conflict with existing habitat conversation plans.

Overall, the No Project Alternative would have similar impacts compared to the proposed project; however, the No Project Alternative would not have the benefits associated with implementing the updated policies in the proposed General Plan. As such, for the purposes of this analysis, biological resource impacts from the No Project Alternative would be greater than the impacts from the proposed project.

e. Cultural Resources

Although the No Project Alternative would involve less development than the proposed project, future development under this alternative could potentially impact historical resources through demolition, construction, and reconstruction activities. In addition, the No Project Alternative would not include adoption and implementation of proposed General Plan policies intended to identify, designate, and minimize impacts to built environment historical resources. However, individual projects facilitated under this alternative would still be subject to project-level development review, which would include a screening for historical resources. If a proposed project could potentially cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, the project would require additional environmental review. Therefore, impacts to historical resources would be less than significant under the No Project Alternative, similar to the proposed project.

As discussed in Section 4.5, *Cultural Resources,* effects on archaeological resources can only be determined once a specific project has been proposed because the effects are highly dependent on both

the individual project site conditions and the characteristics of the proposed ground-disturbing activity. The No Project Alternative would facilitate less development than the proposed project, and would accordingly have a reduced potential to cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource. However, the proposed General Plan Update includes Policy COS 8.4 and would also be required to implement Mitigation Measure CUL-2, which would require preparation of a cultural resources assessment for individual projects when deemed necessary following a preliminary review by County staff. This is a new policy, and would not be adopted and implemented under the No Project Alternative. Therefore, while this alternative has a reduced potential to encounter archaeological resources as it would result in less ground-disturbing activities, preliminary review for potential resources would not occur and would therefore provide fewer protections to archaeological resources, resulting in greater potential to damage or destroy unanticipated resources. Impacts to archaeological resources would be greater under this alternative compared to the proposed project.

As under the proposed project, development under the No Project Alternative would be required to adhere to existing regulations regarding the treatment of human remains. The California Health and Safety Code (Sections 7050.5, 7051, and 7054) has specific provisions for the protection of human burial remains, and existing regulations address the illegality of interfering with human burial remains; protects them from disturbance, vandalism, or destruction; and establishes procedures to be implemented if Native American skeletal remains are discovered. PRC Section 5097.98 also addresses the disposition of Native American burials, protects such remains, and established the Native American Heritage Commission to resolve any related disputes. Impacts would be less than significant, similar to the proposed project.

f. Energy

Development under the No Project Alternative would require energy use during construction activities. As under the proposed project, construction-related energy use would be temporary and short-term in nature, and equipment used would be typical of similarly sized construction projects in the region. Construction activities would be subject to applicable state and federal regulations intended to minimize inefficient and unnecessary fuel consumption. These include compliance with California Code of Regulations, Title 13, Sections 2449 and 2485, which limit idling of diesel-fueled on-road and off-road vehicles, as well as applicable U.S. Environmental Protection Agency construction equipment fuel-efficiency standards, which reduce unnecessary energy use. In operation, the relatively minimal amount development under the No Project Alternative would negligibly contribute to regional energy demand. Energy impacts would be less than significant under this alternative and would be reduced compared to the proposed project.

g. Geology and Soils

As discussed in Section 4.7, *Geology and Soils,* there are no active local faults in Trinity County, and the County has a low risk of liquefaction and settlement. As under the proposed project, development under the No Project Alternative would be subject to Trinity County Code of Ordinances and California Building Code requirements, ensuring structures are designed to withstand minor earthquakes without damage, moderate earthquakes without structural damage, and major earthquakes without collapse. Compliance with the California Building Code, including Section 1613, would minimize risks to people by requiring structures and attached components to be built to resist earthquake forces, ground shaking, and liquefaction. In addition, Trinity County Code of Ordinances Chapter 15.24 would apply grading and erosion control standards. Accordingly, the No Project Alternative would have less than significant effects related to fault rupture, landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, and collapse, and impacts would be similar to the proposed project.

As discussed in Section 4.7, *Geology and Soils,* soils in Trinity County have high erosion potential. Development would be subject to Trinity County Code of Ordinances Chapter 15.24, which establishes restrictions on grading to address soil and geologic stability, and Chapter 12.12, which provides construction standards to minimize erosion potential. Furthermore, construction activities that disturb one or more acres of land surface would be subject to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land

Disturbance Activities. Impacts related to soil erosion would be less than significant, similar to the proposed project.

Soils in Trinity County have low expansion potential. As under the proposed project, development under the No Project Alternative would be required to comply with the California Building Code which includes requirements to address soil-related hazards. Similar to the proposed project, development under the No Project Alternative would primarily use septic systems for wastewater treatment, which could create environmental hazards if situated on unstable soils. Trinity County Code of Ordinances Section 16.48.122 establishes minimum standards for lot size, usable acreage, and percolation performance that must be met prior to approval of onsite waste disposal systems for subdivisions. Additionally, Trinity County Code of Ordinances Section 15.16.170 requires that all new and replacement water supply and sanitary sewage systems shall be designed to minimize or eliminate infiltration of floodwater into the system and discharge from systems into floodwaters, and that onsite waste disposal systems must be located to avoid contamination during a flood event. Accordingly, impacts related to expansive soil and septic tanks would be less than significant, similar to the proposed project.

Adverse effects to paleontological resources can only be determined once a specific project has been proposed because the effects are highly dependent on both the individual project site conditions and the characteristics of the proposed ground-disturbing activity. As under the proposed project, development under the No Project Alternative has the potential to damage or destroy paleontological resources that may be present on or below the ground surface in areas with paleontological sensitivity. Because the No Project Alternative would involve less development than the proposed project, the potential to encounter and disturb paleontological resources is lower. However, the proposed General Plan Update includes Policy COS 8.4 and would also be required to implement Mitigation Measure CUL-2, which would require preparation of a paleontological resources assessment for individual projects when deemed necessary following a preliminary review by County staff. This is a new policy, and would not be adopted and implemented under the No Project Alternative. Therefore, while this alternative has a reduced potential to encounter paleontological resources as it would result in less ground-disturbing activities, preliminary review for potential resources would not occur and would therefore provide fewer protections to paleontological resources, resulting in a greater potential to damage or destroy unanticipated resources. Impacts to paleontological resources would be greater under this alternative compared to the proposed project.

h. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

As discussed in Section 4.8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions,* the primary GHG emissions reduction plan in California is the California Air Resources Board's 2022 Scoping Plan. Projects that are inconsistent with the key attributes identified in the 2022 Scoping Plan have potentially significant impacts related to GHG emissions. As shown in Table 4.8-2 in Section 4.8, the key attributes include transportation electrification, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction, and building decarbonization. Similar to the proposed project, development under the No Project Alternative cannot be guaranteed to include electric vehicle charging infrastructure that meets CALGreen's most stringent voluntary standards, or to include all-electric appliances. Furthermore, proposed General Plan Updates related to alternative transportation would not be adopted and implemented under the No Project Alternative. Therefore, although the No Project Alternative would generate fewer GHG emissions as it would involve less development than the proposed project, it would result in more inconsistencies with the 2022 Scoping Plan. Impacts to GHG emissions would be significant and unavoidable, and greater than the proposed project.

i. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

As discussed in Section 4.9, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials,* development facilitated by the project could potentially increase hazardous materials exposure for residents through the routine transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials. Demolition, grading, and excavation associated with development could also result in the accidental release of hazardous materials. The No Project Alternative would involve less development than the proposed project, and would have a reduced risk hazardous materials

exposure and accidental release. Construction and operation under the No Project Alternative would remain subject to regulations pertaining to hazardous materials transport, use, and disposal, as outlined in Section 4.9. Accordingly, impacts would be less than significant and reduced compared to the proposed project.

Development facilitated by the proposed project could result in hazardous emissions in proximity to schools or known hazardous materials sites. Because the No Project Alternative would facilitate less development than the proposed project, the potential for this to occur is lower under this alternative. Development under the No Project Alternative would remain subject to regulations, standards, and guidelines related to the storage, use, and disposal of hazardous materials, as outlined in Section 4.9. Furthermore, new development on or near documented hazardous materials sites would be preceded by remediation and cleanup under the supervision of the Trinity County Environmental Health Division before construction activities could begin. Impacts would be less than significant and reduced compared to the proposed project.

There are five public use and county-owned airports within Trinity County. As under the proposed project, development under the No Project Alternative would be required to comply with the 2009 Trinity County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. Individual projects within airport areas of influence would be reviewed by the County's Airport Land Use Commission, which would ensure compatibility with airport operations and provide compatibility recommendations on individual projects. Impacts would be less than significant, similar to the proposed project.

The General Plan Updates in the proposed project would include several goals and policies related to emergency operations, emergency evacuation, and hazardous events. These goals and policies are intended to ensure consistency with the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Hazardous Materials Area Plan, Emergency Evacuation Plan, and Emergency Operations Plan, which address wildfire and hazard-related emergencies, evacuation needs, and risk-reduction measures in coordination with regional emergency response agencies. These goals and policies would not be adopted and implemented under the No Project Alternative. Accordingly, impacts related to implementation of emergency response or evacuation plans would be greater under the No Project Alternative compared to the proposed project.

The General Plan Updates in the proposed project would include several goals and policies related to wildfire hazards, and consistency with plans intended to reduce the risk of wildfire. Under the No Project Alternative, these goals and policies would not be adopted and implemented. Although this alternative would facilitate less development than the proposed project, it would not include policies that would reduce the risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildfires. Impacts would be greater than the proposed project.

Overall, impacts to hazards and hazardous materials under the No Project Alternative would be greater than the proposed project.

j. Hydrology and Water Quality

As discussed in Section 4.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality,* construction activities for future development could result in substantial soil disturbance. If not properly managed, disturbed soils could become vulnerable to erosion from wind and rainfall, leading to the transport of sediment in stormwater runoff and the degradation of downstream water quality. As under the proposed project, development under the No Project Alternative would be required to comply with the NPDES Construction Stormwater General Permit and Trinity County Code of Ordinances Chapter 15.24, which restricts grading over 800 cubic yards or 20,000 square feet without County authorization. These requirements ensure implementation of construction best management practices to control runoff, and site-specific best management practices would be tailored to prevailing conditions. The County may also require on-site stormwater controls to maintain pre-development hydrology, such as on-site detention, retention, or impervious surface limitations. Any discharge of extracted groundwater would be regulated by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board under the applicable General NPDES Permit for low-threat discharges. Operation of future development would similarly be subject to federal Clean Water Act regulations,

Statewide Industrial Stormwater Permit, and North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan discharge requirements. Impacts related to surface or ground water quality would be less than significant under the No Project Alternative. Because this alternative would facilitate less development, impacts would be reduced compared to the proposed project.

As discussed in Section 4.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality,* groundwater resources in Trinity County are geographically limited and none of the groundwater basins in the County have a groundwater sustainability plan. Most of the county's water is sourced from surface water. As under the proposed project, groundwater demand is not expected to increase substantially and existing recharge conditions would remain largely intact under the No Project Alternative. Impacts would be less than significant and reduced compared to the proposed project.

Development under the No Project Alternative could alter drainage patterns that result in erosion, runoff, or redirected flood flows. Because this alternative would result in less development than the proposed project, the potential for this to occur is reduced. As described above, construction activities that disturb one acre or more must comply with the Statewide NPDES Construction Stormwater General Permit and Trinity County's Grading Ordinance (Chapter 15.24), which further regulates grading activities. In addition, as under the proposed project, inundation of future development could risk the release of pollutants, but this risk would be lower under the No Project Alternative as less development would occur. Impacts would be less than significant and reduced compared to the proposed project.

k. Land Use and Planning

Similar to the proposed project, the No Project Alternative would not include construction of new highways, major arterials, rail corridors, or other linear infrastructure that could physically bisect or divide established communities in Trinity County. The proposed project includes updates to General Plan land use policies, some of which would clarify allowable uses. No changes to the existing General Plan or Trinity County Code of Ordinances would occur under this alternative; however, the lack of this action would not result in regulatory inconsistencies that could result in the physical division of an established community. Impacts would be less than significant and similar to the proposed project.

As discussed in Section 4.11, *Land Use and Planning,* the proposed project directs most new development toward existing unincorporated communities where services, infrastructure, and public facilities are available or can be feasibly extended. By focusing growth in existing communities and maintaining very low densities in rural areas, the proposed project avoids or minimizes environmental impacts related to habitat loss, wildfire exposure, steep slopes, watershed impacts, and public service constraints. Development under the No Project Alternative would similarly occur in existing communities, and this alternative would not conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted to avoid or mitigate environmental effects. Impacts would be less than significant and similar to the proposed project.

l. Mineral Resources

As discussed in Section 4.12, *Mineral Resources,* known mineral resources in Trinity County are located within Resource Land designated areas. Similar to the proposed project, no changes to land uses would occur under the No Project Alternative, and development would not interfere with mineral extraction operations at any of the identified mineral resources sites. No impacts to mineral resources would occur under this alternative, similar to the proposed project.

m. Noise

The No Project Alternative would result in less development than the proposed project. As shown in Table 2-2 in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, the DOF projects that, in the absence of the proposed project, the county's population would decline by 16 residents, while the number of housing units would increase by 47 by 2050. Accordingly, ambient noise levels would remain generally the same as existing conditions. However, similar to the proposed project, construction of individual development under this alternative

would temporarily generate noise and vibration, and could expose sensitive receptors to substantial noise and vibration levels. The General Plan Updates facilitated by the proposed project would include Policy NOI 3.2, which would require the use of sound mitigation tools or equipment for work adjacent to sensitive uses. This proposed General Plan policy would not be adopted and implemented under this alternative. Furthermore, the General Plan Updates under the proposed project would include Policies NOI 2.1 through NOI 2.7, which would reduce noise mitigation, require acoustical analyses, and require project design techniques to reduce impacts from stationary operational noise sources. These policies would not be adopted and implemented under this alternative. Therefore, although the No Project Alternative would result in less development than the proposed project, it would have potentially significant impacts related to construction and operational noise and vibration from new development. Impacts would be significant and avoidable, and greater than the proposed project.

Because the No Project Alternative would result in relatively minimal development and growth, this alternative would generate a negligible amount of new vehicle trips. Accordingly, impacts related to operational traffic noise would be less than significant and reduced compared to the proposed project. This alternative would avoid the significant and unavoidable operational traffic noise impact associated with the proposed project. In addition, similar to the proposed project, the No Project Alternative would not facilitate noise-sensitive land uses within the noise contours of airports within the county. The No Project Alternative would not expose people residing or working in the planning area to excessive airport-related noise levels and impacts would be less than significant, similar to the proposed project.

n. Population and Housing

As discussed in Section 4.14, *Population and Housing,* implementation of the proposed project would facilitate population growth of up to 7,450 residents and 902 housing units under modest buildout assumptions between 2025 and 2050. This would exceed regional population estimates for the county, but the proposed project would accommodate and plan for population growth and includes policies to manage growth and development. Accordingly, impacts to substantial unplanned growth would be less than significant. As shown in Table 2-2 in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, the California DOF projects that, in the absence of the proposed project, the county's population would decline by 16 residents, while the number of housing units would increase by 47 by 2050. The No Project Alternative, therefore, represents a limited growth scenario, in line with the DOF projections. The limited new development under this alternative would not result in the displacement of substantial numbers of housing or people. Impacts would be less than significant and reduced compared to the proposed project.

o. Public Services and Recreation

As discussed in Section 4.15, *Public Services and Recreation,* fire protection services in Trinity County are generally provided by volunteer fire departments and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Several volunteer fire departments have outstanding equipment needs, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection is in the process of facilitating new fire protection facilities in the county. The proposed project would increase the county's population, and accordingly, would result in an increased demand for fire protection services. The No Project Alternative would result in relatively little buildout compared to existing conditions, and would not alter the existing need for new fire protection equipment and facilities. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would not result in an additional need for new or expanded fire protection facilities. Impacts would be less than significant and reduced compared to the proposed project.

As discussed in Section 4.15, the Trinity County Sheriff's Office had 34 sworn officers as of 2022, which provides a ratio of 2.17 officers per 1,000 residents. The ratio is above the standard of 2.0 officers per 1,000 residents set by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and therefore, as of 2022, the County is above the national standard. The No Project Alternative would result in relatively little buildout compared to the proposed project, and would not alter the existing ratio of police officers to residents. Accordingly, the No Project Alternative would not result in the need for new or expanded police facilities. Impacts would be less than significant and reduced compared to the proposed project.

Because the No Project Alternative would not result in a substantial increase in population or housing, this alternative would not generate a substantial increase in student population that would attend Trinity County schools. The No Project Alternative would not result in the need for new or expanded schools. Impacts would be less than significant and reduced compared to the proposed project. Furthermore, this alternative would not generate a substantial increase in population that would use park and recreation facilities in the county. Impacts would be less than significant and reduced compared to the proposed project.

p. Transportation

The No Project Alternative would result in relatively minimal development compared to the proposed project, and would not alter existing or planned transit, roadway, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities. Accordingly, this alternative would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system. Impacts would be less than significant and reduced compared to the proposed project. In addition, because this alternative would involve relatively minimal development, the No Project Alternative would not substantially alter VMT per capita or across Trinity County. As a result, VMT-related impacts would be reduced compared to the proposed project.

Because the No Project Alternative would result in relatively minimal new development, this alternative would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible use. Individual projects would continue to undergo the County's existing design review process to identify any project-specific hazards. Furthermore, because the No Project Alternative would result in relatively minimal new development, this alternative would not result in inadequate emergency access. Impacts would be less than significant and reduced compared to the proposed project.

q. Tribal Cultural Resources

As discussed in Section 4.17, *Tribal Cultural Resources,* potential effects to tribal cultural resources are only knowable once a specific project has been proposed. The effects are highly dependent on both the individual project site conditions and the characteristics of the proposed activity. While no tribal cultural resources have been identified in the county, new resources may be identified or established over the course of implementation of this alternative. As under the proposed project, individual development under the No Project Alternative that undergoes environmental review would involve tribal notification in accordance with Assembly Bill 52. If tribal cultural resources are identified within individual sites during the consultation process, project-specific impacts to tribal cultural resources would be identified and mitigation required as appropriate.

The General Plan Update under the proposed project includes several goals and policies that relate to the protection and preservation of tribal cultural resources. These policies would not be adopted and implemented under this alternative. Accordingly, impacts to tribal cultural resources would be greater under this alternative. Impacts would remain less than significant with compliance with Assembly Bill 52.

r. Utilities and Service Systems

As discussed in Section 4.18, *Utilities and Service Systems,* development facilitated by the proposed project would require project-specific connections to existing service facilities and may require construction of new or expanded utility infrastructure and facilities, including for the provision of water, wastewater, stormwater, electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications. Under the No Project Alternative, new connections to services would be required for the limited amount of new development that would occur under this alternative. New, larger-scale water, wastewater, stormwater, electricity, natural gas, and telecommunication facilities would not be required under the No Project Alternative, as this alternative would not involve a substantial amount of new growth or development. Impacts would be less than significant and reduced compared to the proposed project.

Because the No Project Alternative would involve little new development, it would result in a negligible increase in demand for water supply. As under the proposed project, requests to connect to the existing

system is subject to a review process and the issuance of a will serve letter. If a water supplier determines it does not have sufficient supply available (or infrastructure capacity) to support proposed land use(s), including with consideration to the "reasonable and beneficial use" doctrine discussed in Section 4.18.1(a), *Water Supply*, the will serve letter will be denied and water service connection will not be provided. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would have sufficient water supplies available during normal, dry, and multiple dry years. Impacts would be less than significant and reduced compared to the proposed project. Similarly, additional wastewater demands associated with development would require project-level evaluation of available treatment capacity or provision of a compliant on-site system. Because the No Project Alternative would result in little development, impacts related to wastewater treatment capacity would be less than significant and reduced compared to the proposed project.

The No Project Alternative would generate less solid waste than the proposed project, as it would involve less development. As discussed in Section 4.18, there are several solid waste disposal facilities with adequate capacity in the Planning Area. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would not impair the attainment of state waste reduction goals or result in disposal needs beyond the capacity of existing solid waste infrastructure. Impacts would be less than significant and reduced compared to the proposed project.

s. Wildfire

As discussed in Section 4.19, *Wildfire,* areas along the northeastern and southwestern edges of the county are within Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones within a State Responsibility Area. Major evacuation routes within the county are State Routes 3, 36, and 299, which connect to most communities within the county. Most residents would be required to utilize their neighborhood roads to connect to one of these major routes. The No Project Alternative would involve less development than the proposed project, and not impact emergency response or impair an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan. This alternative would not involve adoption and implementation of several proposed General Plan policies related to wildfire protection, which would involve preparation of a community wildfire protection plan, roadside fuel management and fuel break maintenance, and wildfire outreach and education. However, future development would continue to be required to comply with the California Building Code and California Fire Code, which require homes in wildfire-prone areas to use fire-hardened materials and maintain a defensible area. Because there would be less development under this alternative, impacts would be less than significant and similar to the proposed project.

As under the proposed project, development under this alternative would generally occur within existing unincorporated communities. Furthermore, as under the proposed project, the No Project Alternative would not open new undeveloped areas to residential or commercial development and would not extend infrastructure into previously undeveloped areas. Future development would connect to the existing community and roadway framework rather than creating new development nodes in areas lacking fire protection infrastructure. Compliance with the California Building Code and California Fire Code would reduce the risk of wildfire ignition and spread, and reduce hazards associated with post-fire slope instability. Accordingly, impacts related to the spread of a wildfire due to slope, prevailing winds, and post-fire slope instability, and impacts related to the installation of new infrastructure, would be less than significant and similar to the proposed project.

6.3 Alternative 2: 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency

6.3.1 Description

The 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative assumes that the proposed General Plan is adopted and implemented, just as under the proposed project. In addition, all development facilitated by this alternative would be required to have all-electric building systems and would not include the use of propane or natural gas for space heating, water heating, cooking, or other building energy needs. Future development in the county would rely on electricity as the sole on-site energy source, consistent with

building electrification and decarbonization strategies identified in the 2022 Scoping Plan. In addition, this alternative assumes that all new residential and non-residential development would be required to implement voluntary CALGreen electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure measures, including the installation of EV-capable or EV-ready parking spaces sufficient to support future EV charging demand. These requirements would be implemented by new General Plan policies that require future changes to the Zoning Code to require the specified all-electric buildings and EV infrastructure standards.

As described under Section 2.4, *General Plan Buildout*, in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, the proposed project could facilitate the development of up to 902 new housing units and an increase of approximately 7,420 residents. Under the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative, a similar level of growth would occur; however, the energy characteristics of new development would differ substantially. By prohibiting the use of propane and natural gas and requiring EV infrastructure, this alternative would ensure that development in the planning area incorporates key project attributes identified in the 2022 Scoping Plan, including Building Electrification and Building Decarbonization. As a result, this alternative would reduce GHG emissions compared to the proposed project and would avoid or lessen potential conflicts with applicable plans, policies, and regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions.

This alternative would meet most project objectives, similar to the proposed project. However, requiring all-electric building systems and EV infrastructure in new development would generally be more expensive than using propane or natural gas for building heating and energy needs. In particular, the upfront cost for installing solar panels, battery energy storage systems, and EV charging equipment would be costly and could be a constraint to new development (Oklahoma State University 2023; Portland State University 2022). Accordingly, this alternative would not accomplish project objectives related to economic development, including:

- Maintaining a high level of coordination and collaboration within the local business community to incentivize business development and employment opportunities and encouraging economic growth; and strategically distributing resources for economic development throughout all communities in the county (General Plan Guiding Principle 6)
- Ensuring that development occurs in an efficient, orderly manner that minimizes costs to taxpayers (EIR Objective 4)

6.3.2 Impact Analysis

a. Aesthetics

Development and buildout under the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative is assumed to be similar to that of the proposed project. Accordingly, impacts related to scenic vistas, scenic highways, and existing visual character would be similar to those of the proposed project, which are less than significant. However, by requiring all-electric building systems and EV chargers, this alternative would facilitate the installation of more solar power infrastructure than the proposed project, which would incrementally increase sources of glare in existing unincorporated communities where development would be concentrated. Impacts to light and glare would be slightly greater under this alternative.

b. Agriculture and Forestry Resources

Development and buildout under the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative is assumed to be similar to that of the proposed project. The requirement for all-electric building systems and EV chargers would not result in further conversion of agricultural or forestry land uses to non-agricultural or non-forestry land uses than the proposed project. Accordingly, impacts related to the conversion of farmland, Williamson Act contracts, the conversion of forest or timberland, to conflicts with existing zoning for farmland or forest land under this alternative would be similar to those of the proposed project, which are less than significant.

c. Air Quality

The 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative would facilitate the same buildout as the proposed project. As discussed in Section 4.3, *Air Quality,* the proposed project would not conflict with North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District's PM10 Attainment Plan and would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the North Coast Air Basin is in nonattainment. Construction impacts would be generally the same under this alternative. However, this alternative would result in less operational air emissions compared to the proposed project, as development would not use propane or natural gas. Impacts related to consistency with an air quality management plan and net increases in criteria pollutants would be less than significant and reduced under this alternative.

This alternative would facilitate the same buildout as the proposed project and result in similar construction impacts. Accordingly, construction under this alternative could expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. Mitigation Measures AQ-2a and AQ-2b would be required under this alternative and impacts would be less than significant, similar to the proposed project. In operation, development under this alternative would have reduced potential to expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations as building systems would be all electric. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation and reduced compared to the proposed project.

Similar to the proposed project, development under this alternative would consist of residential, commercial and agriculture land uses, which do not typically produce objectionable odors. Odors related to cannabis cultivation would be similar to the proposed project under this alternative. Similar to the proposed project, this alternative would involve adoption and implementation of General Plan policies that pertain to odor control and proximity to sensitive receptors, and would include implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ-3. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation and similar to the proposed project.

d. Biological Resources

Development and buildout under the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative is assumed to be similar to that of the proposed project, and the use of all-electric building systems and EV chargers would not substantially alter construction or operational activities of future development. Accordingly, impacts related to special status species, sensitive natural communities, wetlands, wildlife movements, or conflicts with regulations pertaining to biological resources or habitat conservation plans would be similar to those of the proposed project, which are less than significant with the implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1.

e. Cultural Resources

Development and buildout under the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative is assumed to be similar to that of the proposed project. This alternative would have generally the same construction activities as the proposed project, during which most impacts to historical and archaeological resources would occur. The use of all-electric building systems and EV chargers would not substantially alter the construction or operational activities of future development. Accordingly, impacts to historical resources, archaeological resources, and human remains under this alternative would be similar to those of the proposed project, which are less than significant with the implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-2.

f. Energy

Development under the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative would be required to have all-electric building systems. Construction impacts under this alternative would generally be similar to those of the proposed project, which would be less than significant. In operation, compared to the proposed project, this alternative would reduce local and regional demands for propane and natural gas and would increase demands for electric generation and transmission infrastructure. Because new development would be required to be all-electric, the electrical grids and transmission lines that currently serve unincorporated communities where development would occur may need to be expanded and upgraded. However,

requiring all new development to be all-electric would not result in the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources as it would facilitate the use of renewable energy sources, instead of non-renewable sources like natural gas and propane. All-electric building systems would be consistent with the California Building Code and statewide plans for energy conservation and efficiency. Impacts would be less than significant and similar to the proposed project.

g. Geology and Soils

Development and buildout under the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative is assumed to be similar to that of the proposed project. The use of all-electric building systems would not substantially alter construction or operational activities of future development. Accordingly, development under this alternative would be subject to the same seismic and unstable soils risks as the proposed project, and would also be subject to the local, state, and federal regulations that would minimize risks and hazards associated with fault rupture, soil instability, runoff, and erosion. Impacts related to fault rupture, ground failure, erosion, unstable or expansive soils, septic tanks, and paleontological resources would be similar to those of the proposed project, which are less than significant with the implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-2.

h. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

As discussed in Section 4.8, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions,* the primary GHG emissions reduction plan in California is the California Air Resources Board's 2022 Scoping Plan. Projects that are inconsistent with the key attributes identified in the 2022 Scoping Plan have potentially significant impacts related to GHG emissions. As shown in Table 4.8-2 in Section 4.8, the key attributes include transportation electrification, VMT reduction, and building decarbonization. Although the proposed project would achieve some 2022 Scoping Plan key project attributes, the proposed project does not require new development to include the installation of EV chargers and does not prohibit new development from using natural gas or propane as an energy source. As a result, the proposed project would potentially conflict with the Building Electrification and Building Decarbonization key project attributes identified in the 2022 Scoping Plan, thereby conflicting with the most applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions.

Under the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative, all development would be required to have all-electric building systems and would not include the use of propane or natural gas. In addition, this alternative assumes that all new residential and nonresidential development would be required to implement voluntary CALGreen EV infrastructure measures, including the installation of EV-capable or EV-ready parking spaces sufficient to support future EV charging demand. Therefore, this alternative would be consistent with the 2022 Scoping Plan. Impacts would be less than significant under this alternative, reduced compared to the proposed project and avoiding the proposed project's significant and unavoidable GHG impact. Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would not be required for the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative.

i. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Development and buildout under the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative is assumed to be similar to that of the proposed project, and the use of all-electric building systems would not substantially alter construction or operational activities of future development. Accordingly, impacts related to the use and release of hazardous materials, hazardous emissions, listed hazardous materials sites, development proximity to airports, or implementation of emergency response and evacuation plans would be similar to those of the proposed project, which are less than significant. Refer to Section 6.3.2(s), *Wildfire*, below for discussion of wildfire impacts under this alternative.

j. Hydrology and Water Quality

Development and buildout under the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative is assumed to be similar to that of the proposed project. The use of all-electric building systems would not substantially alter construction or operational activities of future development. Impacts related to surface or ground water degradation, groundwater supply and sustainable management, altering existing drainage patterns, flood hazards, and implementation of water quality and sustainable groundwater management plans would be similar to those of the proposed project, which are less than significant.

k. Land Use and Planning

Development and buildout under the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative is assumed to be similar to that of the proposed project. The use of all-electric building systems would not substantially alter construction or operational activities of future development, and would not result in the physical division of an established community or conflict with plans, policies, or ordinances intended to avoid or mitigate environmental effects. Accordingly, impacts related to land use and planning under this alternative would be similar to those of the proposed project, which are less than significant.

l. Mineral Resources

Development and buildout under the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative is assumed to be similar to that of the proposed project. Accordingly, impacts related to mineral resources under this alternative would be similar to those of the proposed project, and no impact would occur.

m. Noise

Because construction activities under this alternative would generally be the same as the proposed project, this alternative would have similar construction impacts to noise and vibration. Mitigation Measures NOI-1a and NOI-1b would be required to reduce construction noise to the extent feasible, but construction noise impacts would remain significant and unavoidable. This alternative would also require Mitigation Measure NOI-2 to reduce construction vibration levels, and impacts would be less than significant with mitigation, as under the proposed project. Operational noise impacts would also generally be the same as the proposed project. New development would still include stationary mechanical equipment, and this alternative would generate a similar amount of vehicle trips and vehicle noise as the proposed project. Impacts from operational equipment noise, vibration, and airport-related noise, would be similar to the project and therefore less than significant. Impacts from operational traffic noise would be significant and unavoidable, similar to the project.

n. Population and Housing

Development and buildout under the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative is assumed to be similar to that of the proposed project, and would result in the same amount of new houses and new residents in Trinity County. Accordingly, impacts related to substantial unplanned growth and housing displacement under this alternative would be similar to those of the proposed project, which are less than significant.

o. Public Services and Recreation

Development and buildout under the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative is assumed to be similar to that of the proposed project. This alternative would result in the same population growth as the proposed project, and would result in the same demand for fire and police protection services, schools, and parks and recreation facilities. Accordingly, impacts related to public services and recreation under this alternative would be similar to those of the proposed project, which are less than significant.

p. Transportation

Development and buildout under the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative is assumed to be similar to that of the proposed project. The use of all-electric building systems would not substantially alter construction or operational activities of future development. Accordingly, impacts related to VMT would be the same as the proposed project, which would be less than significant. Additionally, conflicts with plans or programs for the circulation system, VMT, transportation hazards, and emergency access would be similar to those of the proposed project, which would be less than significant.

q. Tribal Cultural Resources

Development and buildout under the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative is assumed to be similar to that of the proposed project. This alternative would have generally the same construction activities as the proposed project, during which most impacts to tribal cultural resources would occur. The use of all-electric building systems would not substantially alter the construction or operational activities of future development. Accordingly, impacts to tribal cultural resources under this alternative would be similar to those of the proposed project, which are less than significant.

r. Utilities and Service Systems

Because all new development under the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative would require all-electric building systems, this alternative would require the development of more electrical generation and transmission infrastructure than the proposed project. Existing regulations and proposed General Plan policies would apply to electric power infrastructure under this alternative, and would ensure that infrastructure would be appropriately planned for and accommodated. All-electric development would not result in substantially different demands for water supply or wastewater treatment capacity than the proposed project, nor would it generate greater amounts of solid waste. Accordingly, impacts to utilities and service systems under this alternative would be similar to those of the proposed project, which are less than significant.

s. Wildfire

Because all new development under the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative would require all-electric building systems, this alternative would require the development of more electrical generation and transmission infrastructure than the proposed project, including new power lines. The greater amount of power lines under this alternative would result in greater fire risk than the proposed project. Impacts related to emergency response and evacuation, the spread of wildfire, and post-fire slope instability would generally be the same as the proposed project and would be less than significant. However, impacts related to the installation of infrastructure that may exacerbate fire risk would be greater than the proposed project.

6.4 Environmentally Superior Alternative

Table 6-1 indicates whether each alternative's environmental impact is greater than, less than, or similar to that of the proposed project for each of the issue areas studied. Based on the alternatives analysis provided above, the No Project Alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative. The No Project Alternative would result in reduced impacts to several environmental resource areas compared to the proposed project, generally because it would involve less development than the proposed project and fewer physical changes to the environment.

If the No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, CEQA requires that an environmentally superior alternative among the remaining alternatives be identified (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6[e]). Based on this consideration, the 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative.

The 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency Alternative assumes that the proposed General Plan Update is adopted and implemented, consistent with the proposed project. Under this alternative, all development would be required to use all-electric building systems and would not include propane or natural gas for space heating, water heating, cooking, or other energy needs. Future development would rely on electricity as the sole on-site energy source, consistent with the building electrification and decarbonization strategies identified in the 2022 Scoping Plan. In addition, all new residential and non-residential development would be required to implement voluntary CALGreen EV infrastructure measures, including installation of EV-capable or EV-ready parking spaces. By requiring development to include all-electric building systems, development under this alternative would result in fewer operational air emissions than the proposed project. Furthermore, this alternative would be consistent with the 2022 Scoping Plan, thereby eliminating significant and unavoidable impacts related to GHG emissions. However, the 2022 Scoping Plan Alternative would introduce greater impacts related to aesthetics, by increasing sources of light and glare, and to wildfire, as it would involve the installation of new and expanded electrical infrastructure that would increase the risk of wildfire. Overall, the 2022 Scoping Plan Alternative would reduce the severity of impacts related to air quality, and avoid significant and unavoidable impacts to GHG emissions, making it the environmentally superior alternative.

Table 6-1 Impact Comparison of Alternatives

Impacts	Proposed Project[1]	Alternative 1: No Project/ Existing General Plan	Alternative 2: 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency
Aesthetics	Less than Significant	<	>
Agriculture and Forestry Resources	Less than Significant	=	=
Air Quality	Less than Significant with Mitigation	<	<
Biological Resources	Less than Significant with Mitigation	>	=
Cultural Resources	Less than Significant with Mitigation	>	=
Energy	Less than Significant	<	=
Geology and Soils	Less than Significant with Mitigation	>	=
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Significant and Unavoidable	>	<
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Less than Significant	>	=
Hydrology and Water Quality	Less than Significant	<	=
Land Use and Planning	Less than Significant	=	=
Mineral Resources	No Impact	=	=
Noise	Significant and Unavoidable	>, <[2]	=
Population and Housing	Less than Significant	<	=
Public Services and Recreation	Less than Significant	<	=
Transportation	Less than Significant	<	=
Tribal Cultural Resources	Less than Significant	>	=
Utilities and Service Systems	Less than Significant	<	=
Wildfire	Less than Significant	=	>

Impacts	Proposed Project[1]	Alternative 1: No Project/ Existing General Plan	Alternative 2: 2022 Scoping Plan Consistency
Overall Comparison to Proposed Project		9 <	2 <
		4 =	15 =
		7 >	2 >

[1] Where multiple impact determinations are identified, the highest level (or most severe) impact determination is listed.

[2] As noted in the analysis, Alternative 1 would worsen the significant and unavoidable construction noise impact and would avoid the significant and unavoidable operational noise impact. To reflect both of these key comparisons to the proposed project's significant and unavoidable impacts, two comparison ratings are provided.

< Alternative impacts would be less than those of the proposed project
= Alternative would result in impacts similar to the proposed project
> Alternative impacts would be greater than those of the proposed project

7 References

7.1 Bibliography

Executive Summary

No references cited in this section.

1 Introduction

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