

County of Mariposa

California Environmental Quality Act Initial Study

A. PROJECT INFORMATION:

Project Title: **General Plan Amendment No. 2024-113; Midpines Community Plan**

Lead Agency: Mariposa County

Date: March 3, 2026

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Project Proponent: Mariposa County
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Agent: None

Location: Midpines California, Mariposa County.
The Midpines Community Plan boundaries encompass 22.7 square miles; 14,544 acres. The Plan area is bounded by the Merced River to the north; Sweetwater and Snow creeks to the east; Snow Creek to the south; and Fremont Peak to the west.

Project Description: The project is proposed by Mariposa County to implement the Mariposa County General Plan.

In order to meet the objectives of the project, a General Plan Amendment is required. The project proposes the adoption of the “Midpines Community Plan”, which will be added to Volume II of the Mariposa County General Plan through the general plan amendment process.

The Midpines Community Plan is a policy document. It reflects the desires of the residents in the community regarding how their community is to develop. The document lays the groundwork for the establishment of zoning standards that will implement the policies and standards of the Plan and will specifically guide development within the Planning Area boundaries.

The project analyzed in this Initial Study is the adoption of the proposed Midpines Community Plan. The proposed Plan is a policy document that does not propose or consider any specific development project.

Project Background: Midpines is one of 17 geographical areas in Mariposa County that the Mariposa County General Plan describes as Planning Areas. “Planning Area” is a specific land use classification in the General Plan. Plan development for each Planning Area is consistent with the format of the General Plan and each plan is considered a mini general plan that governs the specific planning area. Area plans are tiered from the General Plan. Each of these area plans – except for the Yosemite National Park General Management Plan – are part of the General Plan.

Section 5.3 of the General Plan identifies Midpines as a Community Planning Area with defined boundaries. Development within a Community Planning Area is designed to be less intensive than a “Town Planning Area” which the General Plan describes as “rural scale ‘urban’ development centers” in the County. Section 5.1.01(B)(1) states that Town Planning Areas are areas for all residential commercial, industrial, job-center, recreation and public uses. Community Planning Areas represent separate policy approaches and are for single-family residential, rural commercial, recreation/resort-oriented, small business, and public land uses consistent with the purpose of a Community Planning Area.

The 17 Planning Areas in the County are broken into Town Planning Areas, Community Planning Areas, Specific Planning Areas and Yosemite National Park Planning Area. Midpines is one of six Community Planning Areas created by the General Plan.

Section 5.3.01(B) – *Extent of Uses* in the General Plan states: “Area plans should embody greenbelts and open space lands to preclude urban sprawl. Area plans may be adopted for purposes of maintaining rural character, identifying and preserve public lands, protecting agriculture land, or addressing localized issues in greater detail than possible in the countywide General Plan.”

Midpines Community Plan Area: Section 5.3.01(E)(1) of the General Plan states that the “Midpines area is a cluster of residential lands surrounding a small scale commercial center. Close to Mariposa, and the nearest County community to Yosemite National Park, Midpines faces growth pressures as the Park Service implements the Yosemite Valley Plan and looks for vacant land in private ownership for seasonal and other employee housing. It also faces issues associated with fire protection and lack of community water.”

The boundaries of the Midpines Community Plan encompass approximately 22.7 square miles (14,544 acres). Principal access to the Midpines Community Planning Area is State Highway 140 as it connects the community of Mariposa with Yosemite National Park.

The Midpines area is the last large area of private land between Mariposa and the Park, which makes it conducive to receive future growth pressure for both tourist and residential facilities. Section 2 – *Issues Important to Midpines Citizens* in the proposed Midpines Community Plan states: “The Midpines

Community wishes to balance this potential growth with the desire of the community to remain a rural community and protect its natural beauty, historical character, and the integrity of its watersheds, forest and riparian habitats, all the while, responding to the fire adapted landscape/ecosystems within which the Midpines community exists.”

Section 2.1 – *Issues of Importance* states: “Through the public engagement process and work of adhoc committees, the Midpines Planning Advisory Committee has identified the following issues, which serve as the basis of the Midpines Community Plan. These issues are addressed through the goals, policies, and implementation measures of the Midpines Community Plan.

- *Maintain rural character;*
- *Promote fire safety;*
- *Provide for commercial development at an appropriate scale;*
- *Provide areas for growing home-based business and rural home industries; and*
- *Ensure commercial development is compatible with existing character.*

*Community Plan
Policies and
Standards:*

The policies and standards of the Midpines Community Plan have their roots in the Guiding Principles as stated in Section 3 of the proposed Plan. These principles are as follows:

- *Midpines will continue to be a rural community of diverse neighborhoods and environments. Personal, community and governmental actions will achieve a strong sense of community that honors our natural resources and our historical and cultural heritage. The Midpines community will work to achieve the following:*
 - *The social, natural, historical and cultural resources of Midpines, including water resources, will be proactively protected for enjoyment of visitors and residents.*
 - *Midpines rural character will be maintained and reinforced through the preservation of scenic open spaces, forested areas, and the quiet, natural beauty of the area.*
 - *Outdoor recreational opportunities will be encouraged, developed, and promoted as important social and economic elements of the community for residents and visitors.*
 - *Existing and new home-grown and small businesses that are compatible with the historical and environmental context will be supported and encouraged.*
 - *Housing will be developed in a way that preserves open space, rural character, natural resources, and the history of Midpines.*

- *Community safety and resilience, and a balance between the protection of private property rights and the needs of the community, will be achieved through strong community action and shared responsibility for hazardous fuel removal resulting in a fire safe forested community.*
- *Community well-being will be maintained by managing growth in accordance with the carrying capacity of community infrastructure and by encouraging a diverse economy and population.*
- *New development will provide public services as development occurs without compromising levels of service or burdening existing residents with the cost of these services.*

The Community Plan establishes six land use classifications within the plan area boundaries. They are as follows:

- Midpines Residential
- Midpines Rural Economic
- Planned Development Area
- Agriculture/Working Landscape
- Natural Resources; and
- Public Sites

The Plan establishes a purpose and standards for each classification. Standards address extent of uses; consistent zoning classifications; population density standards; building intensity standards; and criteria for inclusion in the land use classification. (The standards for the Agriculture/Working Landscape and Natural Resources land use classifications are those that are included in the General Plan. Excluding the Planned Development Area land use classification, which is a new classification in the County, standards within other classifications resemble those for similarly named classifications in the General Plan, with some modifications to fit the community of Midpines.) Many of the consistent zoning districts for the Plan's land use classifications are similar to zones listed as consistent with countywide land use classifications in the General Plan.

Section 5.1.03 – *Land Use Goals and Policies* in the Plan contains goals, policies and implementation measures that will guide development in the community and the preparation of zoning standards to implement the Plan.

The Plan also addresses the issues of infrastructure and services, noise and safety. With respect to infrastructure and services, the Plan states that the standards in the General Plan relating to circulation issues and road maintenance are consistent with the needs of Midpines and that there is no need to include special circulation related goals in the Plan.

Unique Land Use
Policies:

The proposed Community Plan includes a land use classification named “Planned Development Area”, which is a unique classification in Mariposa County. The land use identifies sites and areas that warrant flexible development standards due to their suitability for a variety of uses. The area also provides an opportunity for comprehensively planned uses due to location and suitability for development of these properties. The Planned Development Area consists of seven contiguous parcels totaling approximately 1,080 acres, which are largely undeveloped and are strategically located as a gateway location to the Midpines Community and, to a further extent, Yosemite National Park. For these reasons, future development within this area has the potential to significantly influence the rural character, the protection of natural and scenic resources, and fire safety in Midpines. The intent of defining the Planned Development Area is to establish guidance for land use consistent with the Guiding Principles of the Midpines Community Plan. The objectives are to allow for a compatible low density mixed use for limited residential, resort commercial, recreational development, and agriculture/open space preservation.

The proposed Community Plan establishes the types of residential, resort commercial, recreational and agricultural/open space uses that can be located in this land use area. Development standards for the classification include those for access, parking, design, slope, landscaping, water supply and wastewater disposal and fire protection and fire management. Standards adopted for the consistent zones within the classification will address these issues.

A Planned Development permit application shall be reviewed by Planning Commission and approved by the Board of Supervisors

Environmental Goals
Of the Plan:

The Midpines Community Plan is self-mitigating from the perspective of potential environmental impacts resulting from Plan implementation. The standards for each land use classification and the goals, policies, and implementation measures address maintenance of rural densities; parcel sizes for commercial and institutional uses that maintain rural character; implementation of existing Scenic Highway Overlay standards throughout the community; the integration of transportation and land use decisions to achieve the community’s managed growth objectives; the minimization of impacts and/or improvements to air quality; controlling and minimizing noise impacts within the Plan area; and the provision of adequate fire safety measures to protect residents within the Plan area.

Policies and standards contained in the Plan that address specific environmental issues within the Plan area are analyzed under the corresponding environmental checklist sections contained in this Initial Study.

Once the Community Plan and corresponding zoning standards are adopted for the Midpines area, development projects submitted for review will be subject to all of those adopted policies and standards. Each proposed development project will undergo environmental review in compliance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). It is not the purpose of

this CEQA Initial Study to environmentally review any anticipated and/or future development project, the specifics of which are unknown at this point in the planning process for the community. Plan adoption involves no direct and specific physical changes to the environment. Development projects that may be applied for prior to the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan and corresponding zoning standards will be subject to General Plan and zoning standards in place for the community at that time.

The adoption of the Midpines Community Plan is the first step in the planning process for the community. The Plan provides the framework for the development of specific zoning standards to implement the policies and standards of the Plan.

Environmental
conclusions in this
Study

This Initial Study does not find that adoption of the Midpines Community Plan would have a “significant” impact on the environmental checklist items discussed herein. Roughly one-half of the issues discussed ended with the conclusion that Plan adoption would have no impact on those issues. These issues are those that are specifically addressed in the Mariposa County General Plan, the goals policies and implementation measures contained in the proposed Community Plan and/or the existing regulatory environment. A specific project’s impact on those issues will be reviewed under the existing regulatory and policy framework. Adoption of the Community Plan reinforces the existing regulatory and policy framework.

The environmental issues for which there is a conclusion of “less than significant” impact are those that will involve environmental impacts that are indeterminate at this point in the Planning process for Midpines. For instance, there could be a wide variety of biological resources and cultural resources potentially impacted as the community is built out by specific development projects in accordance with the standards of the Community Plan. The policies and standards of the Community Plan allow consideration of larger scale development projects when the planning process for Midpines is completed through the implementation of zoning standards. Potential impacts from all development projects for which a CEQA document is prepared will require determinations of significance and project specific mitigation to reduce potential impacts to less than significant levels.

Plan adoption on the issues of Population and Housing, Public Services and Recreation and the somewhat more subjective issue of Aesthetics also have conclusions of “less than significant” because the regulatory environment and governing policies and standards are less determinate on these types of issues. The discussion of these environmental issues reiterates that the adoption of the proposed Midpines Community Plan does not propose or consider any specific development projects.

In conclusion, the findings in this Initial Study are based on the fact that the Midpines Community Plan is a policy document and just the initial step in the planning process for the community. As noted, future development projects proposed in accordance with the policies and standards of the Community Plan

and corresponding zoning standards will be subject to project specific environmental review.

Agency Use of the
Community Plan:

The proposed Midpines Community Plan is strictly a policy document that does not propose or consider any specific development projects. The Plan reflects the community's vision relating to how the area is to be developed. Specific development projects will be subject to environmental review at the time of project application. It is during that process that affected local, State and federal agencies will provide input on potential impacts on resources or issues within their purview.

Documents Used in
The Preparation of
this Initial Study:

All documents used in the preparation of this Initial Study are available for review at the Mariposa County Planning Department located on the lower floor of the Mariposa County Government Center, 5100 Bullion Street, Mariposa, CA 95338 or by calling the Department at (209) 966-5151. The Mariposa County General Plan and the proposed Midpines Community Plan are available on the Department's website at: www.mariposacounty.org

B. SUMMARY OF PROJECT IMPACT TO ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS:

(blank): no impact

L: Less than Significant Impact

M: Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation

PS: Potentially Significant

<u>L</u> Aesthetics	<u>L</u> Agriculture/Forest Res.	<u></u> Air Quality
<u>L</u> Biological Resources	<u>L</u> Cultural Resources	<u></u> Energy
<u></u> Geology/Soils	<u></u> Greenhouse Gas Emissions	<u></u> Hazards and Hazardous Mat.
<u></u> Hydrology/Water Quality	<u></u> Land Use/Planning	<u>L</u> Mineral Resources
<u></u> Noise	<u>L</u> Population/Housing	<u>L</u> Public Services
<u>L</u> Recreation	<u></u> Transportation	<u>L</u> Tribal Cultural Res.
<u></u> Utilities/Service Systems	<u></u> Wildfire	<u>L</u> Mandatory Findings of Significance

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Section A
CEQA DETERMINATION OF IMPACT

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- 1) I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- 2) I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- 3) I find the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- 4) I find the proposed project MAY have a “potentially significant impact” or “Less Than Significant With Mitigation” impact on the environment, but at least one effect: 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- 5) I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects: (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR, or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

By: Skip Strathearn Date: 3/3/2026

Title: Senior Planner Representing: County of Mariposa

Signature: /s/

Section B

CEQA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. AESTHETICS

1. AESTHETICS Would the project:	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?			√	
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to: trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?				√
c) In nonurbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?			√	
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?			√	

1. a and c

A significant impact would be one that significantly impacts scenic vistas and existing visual character. The proposed Midpines Community Plan encompasses an area that includes a Scenic Highway Overlay (SHO) Zoning District that protects scenic vistas. The proposed Plan’s policies recommend continued use of the Scenic Highway development standards as a part of the Plan. Although the Plan provides a framework for certain types of development that cannot currently be developed in the Midpines area, such as planned developments, future development within the Plan area will be governed by specific zoning standards that will be adopted to implement the Plan. Further, the Plan is a policy document, the adoption of which involves no direct and specific physical changes to the environment. Goal MIDPINES 5.1-1 in the Plan mandates the maintenance of rural densities for residential development in the Midpines Residential land use classification. Goal MIDPINES 5.1-3 in the Plan mandates that new development emphasizes rural character qualities. These goals are followed by policies and implementation measures that support the goals. Future development would be subject to the Plan policies that incorporate existing SHO requirements. Additionally, specific zoning standards for development on parcels within the SHO district and the Midpines Residential land use classification shall ensure that residential development shall be of an appropriate use, height, scale, mass, and bulk. Development within the Midpines Rural Economic and Planned Development Area classifications and in the SHO district will be subject to SHO standards as well as additional design standards for underlying zones. The process to prepare the Midpines Community Plan was cognizant of the goals, policies and implementation measures within the Conservation and Open Space Element of

the Mariposa County General Plan that address the preservation of scenic resources in the County. *Given these factors, the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have a less than significant impact on scenic vistas.*

1.b State Scenic Highway

A significant impact would be one that substantially damages scenic resources within a state scenic highway. Highway 140 is a designated state scenic highway from Mariposa to El Portal. The Midpines Community Plan is a policy document that proposes no new development, and consequently, no direct and specific physical changes to the environment. Future development, including resort commercial, recreational and planned development uses, will be required to adhere to the SHO standards contained in Mariposa County Zoning Code, as well as additional design standards required in underlying zones. *Based upon these factors, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have no impact.*

1.d. Create Light or Glare

A significant impact would be one that creates a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. No specific development is proposed by the Midpines Community Plan. The Plan is consistent with Mariposa County General Plan, which requires that new development meet International Dark Sky standards. *Based upon these factors, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have a less than significant impact.*

2. AGRICULTURE and FOREST RESOURCES

2. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				√
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				√
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)) or timberland (as defined in Public Resources Code section 4526) or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?			√	
d) Result in loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?			√	
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in				√

conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				
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2.a, b Convert Important Farmland/Conflict with Zoning for Agricultural Use, or a Williamson Act Contract

A significant impact would be one that converts farmland designated as “prime,” “unique” or “farmland of statewide importance” to nonagricultural uses, or conflicts with Williamson Act land. The Midpines Community Planning Area is not located in an important farmland area, nor is there Williamson Act contracted land in its boundaries. Adoption of the Plan would have no impact on agricultural lands. The Plan defers to the General Plan’s Agriculture/Working Landscape element standards as a guide for that land use classification in Midpines. Based upon these factors, *the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have no impact on these issues.*

2.c, d Conflict with Forest Land/Timberland Zoning/Conversion of Forest Land to Non-Forest Use

A significant impact would occur if the project conflicts with forest land zoning or rezones defined forest land or timberland or conflicts with timberland zoned Timber Production. The boundaries of the Midpines Community Plan encompass land that may meet Public Resources Code definitions of forest or timberland. A guiding principle of the Plan states: “Midpines rural character will be maintained and reinforced through the preservation of scenic open spaces, forested areas and the quiet, natural beauty of the area.” The proposed Community Plan does not propose any new development, and would consequently have no direct and specific changes to the environment. The Plan is a policy document. Specific development projects that could be considered in the Plan Area boundaries due to zoning standards that will be established to implement the Plan could have an impact on forest or timberland as defined in State code. Such impacts will be addressed during review of specific applications. Based upon these factors, *it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have a less than significant impact on forest or timberland.*

2.e Conversion of Farmland; Conversion of Forest Land

A significant impact would occur if the project resulted in the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. The Midpines Community Plan is a policy document which does not propose any specific development. It provides a framework for the establishment of specific zoning standards for development in the Plan area. The Plan would not result in the conversion of farmland to a non-agricultural use, nor would it convert forest land to non-forest use. *Based upon these factors, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have no impact on this issue.*

B.3 AIR QUALITY

3. AIR QUALITY – [Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations.] Would the project:	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?				√
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for				√

which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?				
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?				√
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?				√

B.3.a Air Quality Plan and Violation of Air Quality Standards

A significant impact would be one that conflicts with or obstructs implementation of the applicable air quality plan.

Under the California Clean Air Act of 1988, districts designated as non-attainment for state Clean Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) must submit a plan for attaining or maintaining state standards for these pollutants. Mariposa County is located within the Mountain Counties Air Basin (MCAB) and is under the jurisdiction of the Mariposa County Air Pollution Control District (MCAPCD). Mariposa County is classified as either attainment or unclassified status for all federal air quality standards, except ozone, therefore, the California Air Resources Board is not requiring such a plan be prepared. The MCAPCD has adopted regulation XI and amended rule 513 that address New Source Review for projects that will emit more than 100 tons of Ozone Precursors.

Due to the fact that no physical development is authorized by the adoption of the proposed Community Plan, no impacts are identified.

Based upon these factors, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have no impact on implementation of an Air Quality Plan.

B.3.b Cumulative Impacts

A significant impact would be one that results 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.

Due to the fact that no physical development is authorized by the adoption of the proposed Community Plan, no impacts are identified. Impacts on air quality by individual projects within the Plan Area boundaries in the future will be addressed during review of those specific projects. Taken into consideration when specific zoning and development standards are established, based upon the policies of the Midpines Community Plan, will be standards that implement Goal MIDPINES 5.1-5, which states: *“Development minimizes impacts on and/or improves air quality.”*

Based upon these factors, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have no impact on criteria pollutants.

B.3.c Sensitive Receptors to Pollutants

A significant impact would be one that exposes sensitive receptors to pollutant concentration. Sensitive receptors are defined as members of a population who are most sensitive to the adverse health effects of air pollution and the land uses where these populations groups would reside for long periods. These groups include children, elderly, the acutely ill and the chronically ill, and typical land uses include schools, residential care facilities, and hospitals. This policy document does not allow or approve any specific development. Potential impacts on sensitive receptors will be analyzed during environmental review for specific projects. *Based upon these factors, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have no impact on sensitive receptors.*

B.3.d Other Emissions Affecting Substantial Number of People

A significant impact would be one that results in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people. This policy document does not allow or approve any physical specific development. It is unlikely that the nature of development envisioned by the Community Plan would result in emissions, such as odor, that would adversely effect a substantial number of people. Potential emission and odor impacts on a substantial number of people will be analyzed during environmental review for specific projects. *Based upon these factors, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have no impact on other emissions and odors.*

B.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			√	
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service?			√	
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?			√	
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?			√	
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological			√	

resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?			√	

B.4.a Candidate, Sensitive or Special Status Species

A significant impact would occur if the project had a substantial adverse effect on any candidate, sensitive or special status species (rare, endangered or threatened).

B.4.b Sensitive Natural Communities

A significant impact would occur if the project had a substantial adverse impact on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

B.4.c Wetlands

A significant impact would occur if the project would have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands.

B.4.d Native Species/Wildlife Corridors/Nursery Sites

A significant impact would occur if the project substantially interfered 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.

B.4.e Ordinances and Policies Protecting Biological Resources

A significant impact would be one that conflicts with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources.

B.4.f Ordinances and Policies Protecting Biological Resources

A significant impact would be one that conflicts with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

Conclusion for B.4.a, b, c, d, e, and f:

The proposed Midpines Community Plan is a component of and is consistent with the Mariposa County General Plan. The Conservation and Open Space Element of the General Plan contains goals, policies, and implementation measures that specifically address the protection of biological resources. Goal 11-2 states, *“Protect and manage the use of Mariposa County’s limited water resources,”* Under this goal, Implementation Measure 11-2d(1) states: *“Implement requirements for minimum building and grading setback lines from waters of the State (i.e. perennial streams and environmentally significant wetland), that are adequate to protect stream, riparian, and wetland resource values.”*

Goal 11-4 states: *“Conserve and enhance the ecosystems, plant communities, wildlife habitats, and the inherent diversity of both plant and animal species for the recreational, commercial, aesthetic, and basic ecosystems needs.”* This goal is followed by Policy 11-4a, which states: *“Conserve the diversity of native ecosystems, plant communities, wildlife habitat, and plant and animal species in the County.”* The goal and policy are implemented by measures that address conserving, protecting, and mitigating the impacts on sensitive habitats, breeding and nesting areas, special status species and plant communities; minimizing the removal of native trees and groves of

trees; and that requirement site surveys in compliance with Federal and State regulations as part of environmental review to determine impacts on biological resources and mitigating those impacts.

Mariposa County’s Planning program includes strict adherence to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) when a development project is under consideration. Unless it can be found that a development site has been so significantly disturbed that a biological survey is not warranted, such surveys are typically required when a developer submits an application for review. Those surveys are a component of a project’s environmental review. A project’s potential impacts on biological resources are thoroughly vetted during a project’s public review process.

The proposed Midpines Community Plan is a policy document that does not propose or consider any specific development project. There is typically great variance in the presence or lack thereof of significant biological resources on various potential project sites in a large area such as that governed by the Midpines Community Plan. Therefore, it is difficult to determine at this stage of the planning process for the Midpines area the potential impacts on biological resources within the Plan’s boundaries. The Plan’s policies and standards provide the framework for the establishment of zoning standards that may allow County consideration of projects that would not currently be considered in Midpines without general plan/zoning amendments, such as those that may be located in the Planned Development Area land use classification. Irrespective of the Plan’s policies and standards and how they may impact growth and development in Midpines, all projects, both currently under existing general plan and zoning standards and in the future under the standards of the Midpines Community Plan, are subject to the provisions of CEQA.

It is highly likely that a large area such as that encompassed by the Midpines Community Plan boundaries will contain significant biological resources. However, specific projects that may be proposed within the Plan’s boundaries in the future will be subject to all requirements of CEQA, including mandates for the analysis of the project’s potential impact on biological resources.

Based upon these factors, it can be determined that the Midpines Community Plan would have a less than significant impact on the biological resources listed above.

B.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?			√	
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?			√	
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?			√	

B.5.a, b, c Historic/Archaeological Resources/Human Remains

A significant impact would be one that would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historic, archaeological, unique paleontological resource; or a unique geologic feature and human remains.

Conclusion B.5.a, b, and c:

The proposed Midpines Community Plan is a component of and is consistent with the Mariposa County General Plan. The Historic and Cultural Resources Element of the General Plan contains goals, policies, and implementation measures that specifically address the protection of historical and cultural resources. Goal 14-6 states: *“Avoid demolition or destruction of historic and cultural resources”* This goal is followed by Policy 14-6a, which states: *“Seek alternatives to demolition or destruction of historic resources”* The goal and policy are implemented by measures including Implementation Measure 14-6a(2), which states: *“Prior to approval of a demolition permit or grading permit for a cultural place, the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation Consultation Committee shall review the application pursuant to CEQA and determine whether alternatives to the proposed demolition or destruction shall be required.”*

Goal 14-7 states: *“Include Native American representatives in discretionary project review.”* This goal is followed by Policy 14-7a, which states: *“Encourage cooperation and communication between County officials and the Native American population of Mariposa County.”* The measure that implements this goal and policy is Implementation Measure 14-7a(1), which states: *“Mariposa County shall invite the participation of representatives of the Native American community in the review of discretionary projects for which there is a likelihood of potential archaeological artifacts and cultural places.”*

Section 3.1 – *Guiding Principles* in the proposed Midpines Community Plan contains the following: *“The social, natural, historical and cultural resources of Midpines, including water resources, will be proactively protected for the enjoyment of visitors and residents.”*

Mariposa County’s Planning program incorporates strict adherence to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and State Native American consultation statutes when a development project is under consideration. Unless it can be found that a development site has been so significantly disturbed that a cultural resources survey is not warranted, such surveys are typically required when a developer submits an application for review. Those surveys are a component of a project’s environmental review. A project’s potential impacts on cultural resources are thoroughly vetted during a project’s public review process.

The proposed Midpines Community Plan is a policy document that does not propose or consider any specific development project. It is highly likely that a large area such as that encompassed by the Midpines Community Plan boundaries will contain significant cultural resources. There is typically great variance in the presence or lack thereof of significant cultural resources on various potential project sites in such a large area. Therefore, it is difficult to determine at this stage of the planning process for the Midpines area the potential impacts on such resources within the Plan’s boundaries. Irrespective of the Plan’s policies and standards and how they may impact growth and development in Midpines, all projects, both currently under existing General Plan and zoning standards and in the future under the standards of the Midpines Community Plan, are subject to the provisions of CEQA, which mandates review of potential project impacts on cultural resources.

Based upon these factors, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan would have a less than significant impact on the historical and cultural resources.

B.6 ENERGY

6. ENERGY Would the project:	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?				√
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?				√

B.6. a & b Energy

A significant impact would occur if the project resulted in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during construction or if it conflicted with a renewable energy plan or energy efficiency.

Conclusion for B.6.a and b:

The proposed Midpines Community Plan is a policy document that does not propose or consider any specific development project. Individual development projects within the Midpines Community Plan boundary will be reviewed for their potential impacts on the issue of energy during project review. All construction within the state is subject to all applicable State energy efficiency standards. All vehicles and additional equipment is required to adhere to all emissions standards. Development within an area such as Midpines, which is located in a rural county such as Mariposa, is unlikely to result in significant energy impacts or conflict or obstruct any renewable or energy efficiency plans.

Section 3.1 – *Guiding Principles* in the Plan includes the following: “*Midpines rural character will be maintained and reinforced through the preservation of scenic open spaces, forested areas, and the quiet, natural beauty of the area.*” Maintaining rural character and providing for commercial development at an appropriate scale are described as issues of importance to the community within the proposed Plan. The policies and standards of the Plan reflect these principles. The community’s desire to protect the rural nature of the area will significantly limit potential impacts on energy.

Based upon these factors, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan would have no impact on energy issues listed above.

B.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS -- Would the project:	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.				√
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?				√
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?				√
iv) Landslides?				√
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?				√
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?				√
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?				√
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?				√
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?				√

B.7.a Faults, Ground Shaking, Ground Failure and Landslides

A significant impact would be one that exposes people or structures to loss, injury or death.

B.7.b Soil Erosion

A significant impact would be one that results in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil..

B.7.c Unstable Geology/Soil

A significant impact would be one where soil becomes unstable as a result of the project.

B.7.d Expansive Soils

A significant impact would occur if the project is placed on expansive soils and creates substantial risk to life or property.

B.7.e Septic Systems

A significant impact would occur if septic tanks or systems are utilized for the project and the soil is unable to support their use.

B.7.f Paleontological or Unique Geologic Features

A significant impact would occur if the project would directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geological feature.

Conclusion for B.7.a, b, c, d, e, and f:

The proposed Midpines Community Plan is a policy document that does not propose or consider any specific development project. Individual development projects within the Midpines Community Plan boundary will be reviewed for their potential impacts on geology and soils during project review, which will in most cases involve environmental review. All construction within the state is subject to all applicable standards that address grading; soil stability for structures, etc.

The proposed Midpines Residential land use classification mandates that new parcels shall have approved areas for onsite sewage disposal systems and shall obtain an approval from the Health Department (Environmental Health Unit). Likewise, standards for the Midpines Rural Economic and Planned Development Area land use classifications mandate that new development must also have approval of the Environmental Health Unit for an onsite or shared wastewater disposal system to serve the intended structure and its range of uses.

The existing regulatory environment addresses the geology and soils checklist issues described above. *Based upon these factors, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have no impact on geology and soils.*

B.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS Would the project:	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?				√
b) Conflict with any applicable plan,				√

policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?				
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B.8.a & b Impacts: Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

A significant impact would occur if the project generated greenhouse gas emissions that may have a significant impact on the environment or conflict with a plan adopted to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases.

The proposed Midpines Community Plan is a policy document that does not propose or consider any specific development project. Impacts on greenhouse gas emissions by individual projects within the Plan Area boundaries in the future will be addressed during review of those specific projects. Taken into consideration when specific zoning and development standards are established based upon the policies of the Midpines Community Plan will be standards that implement Goal MIDPINES 5.1-5, which states: *“Development minimizes impacts on and/or improves air quality.”* Policy MIDPINES 5.1-5a, which provides the framework to effect this goal, states: *“Implement standards that minimize impacts on and/or improve air quality.”* Implementation Measure MIDPINES 5.1-5a(1), which implements this goal and policy, states: *“For new commercial and institutional building permit and all subdivision applications, including new residential subdivision applications in Midpines, the County shall require energy conservation and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in conformance with California Code of Regulations Title 24, parts 6 and 11.”* The measure includes additional measures to address the issue.

It is unlikely that the smaller scale development projects envisioned by the Community Plan, such as low density residential subdivisions, will generate sufficient amounts of greenhouse gases to have a significant impact on the environment, nor would they conflict with any plans, policies or regulations designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is not known if larger scale development projects that the policies and standards of the proposed Community Plan would allow to be considered in the future, including resort commercial, recreational and planned development uses, would have a significant impact on greenhouse gas emissions as described above. However, environmental review for such projects will necessarily require analyses of impacts on the issue of greenhouse gas emissions.

The proposed Midpines Community Plan takes a proactive approach to addressing greenhouse gas emissions.

Based upon these factors, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan would have no impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

B.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS Would the project:	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?				√
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the				√

environment?				
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				√
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				√
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				√
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				√
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?				√

B.9.a, b Transport of Hazardous Materials/Upset and Accident

A significant impact would be one that produces a substantial risk to the public from routine transportation, use, or disposal of hazardous material, or from reasonably foreseeable accidental release into the environment of such material through upset or accident.

B.9.c School Proximity

A significant impact would be one that emits hazardous emissions or results in the handling of hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.

B.9.d Exposure from Existing Contaminated Sites

A significant impact would be one that is located on a listed contamination site and exposes the public or the environment to the hazard.

B.9.e Hazards Near Airports and Airstrips

A significant impact would be one that results in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the vicinity of a public airport or private airstrip.

Conclusion for B.9. a, b, c, d, and e:

The proposed Midpines Community Plan is a policy document that does not propose or consider any specific development projects. The Plan does not specifically address the above-referenced issues. Given the types of land

uses that could be located in Midpines under the provisions of the Plan, it is unlikely that Plan implementation would lead to significant impacts on the general issue of hazards and hazardous materials. Industrial type uses are not proposed for location within the Community Plan boundaries. In addition, individual projects within the Plan Area boundaries in the future will be assessed for potential impacts on hazards and hazardous materials during review of those specific projects. *Based upon these factors, it can be determined that the adoption of the Community Plan would have no impact on the above-referenced issues.*

B.9.f Emergency Response Plans

A significant impact would be one that impairs the implementation of or interferes with an emergency response or evacuation plan.

B.9.g Risk of Wildland Fires

A significant impact would be one that exposes people or structures to a significant risk of wildland fires. The State of California adopted the State Fire Safe Regulations for the purpose of establishing minimum wildfire protection standards in conjunction with building, construction and development in the State Responsibility Areas (SRA). These regulations, known as SRA Firesafe Regulations provide for basic emergency access and perimeter wildfire protection measures, including clearance around structures.

Conclusion for B.9.e and f:

The issues of emergency response and evacuation and the risk of wildland fires are specifically addressed in the proposed Community Plan. Section 2.1 – *Issues of Importance* contains a list of issues that are addressed through the goals, policies, and implementation measures included in the proposed Community Plan. Included in this list of *Issues of Importance* is the statement: “*Promote fire safety.*”

Section 3.1 – *Guiding Principles* includes the following statement: “*Community Safety and resilience, and a balance between the protection of private property rights and the needs of the community, will be achieved through strong community action and shared responsibility for hazardous fuel removal, resulting in a fire safe, forested community.*”

Section 5.4 – *Safety* in the Community Plan includes goals, policies, and implementation measures that address fire safety. Goal MIDPINES 5.4-1 states: “*Provide adequate fire safety measures to protect residents within the Midpines Community Plan Area.*” The policy to effect this goal is Policy MIDPINES 5.4-1a which states: “*Explore and develop, if necessary, a Fire Protection Overlay that contains additional standards for development within the Midpines Community Plan Area.*” Implementation Measure MIDPINES 5.4-1a(1), which implements the goal and policy, states: “*County Code and existing fire regulations shall be reviewed to determine the need to establish a Fire Protection Overlay zone with additional fire protection development standards or the need for additional regulations related to fire safety for the Midpines Community Plan Area. The standards shall address issues such as:*

- *Slopes and fire risk.*
- *Driveway and access roadway standards.*
- *Fuel modification plan.*
- *Access to water supplies.*
- *Standards for fencing and landscaping.*
- *Structure ignition zone.*
- *Maintenance mechanisms for fire safety related improvements.*

Implementation Measure MIDPINES 5.4-1a(2) states: “*Work with the Public Works Department, CAL FIRE, the Mariposa Fire Safe Council, the Mariposa County Fire Advisory Committee (MCFAC), Office of Emergency*

Services and Mariposa County Sheriff to identify safe and efficient evacuation routes for residents and tourists in the event of an emergency.”

Implementation Measure MIDPINES 5.4-1a(3) states: *“Provide informational materials to potential building permit applicants regarding the structure ignition zone. The material shall include information on how to fire harden homes.”*

The standards contained in the Midpines Rural Economic and Planned Development Area land use classifications require that the project must have an adequate supply of water for fire protection as determined by the applicable fire agency.

The proposed Midpines Community Plan takes a proactive approach to fire safety in the community. Plan adoption and subsequent implementation through zoning standards will have the effect of enhancing fire safety in the community, which is vulnerable to wildfire. (The Mariposa County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, updated in February 2024, gives Midpines a “Very High” risk rating for wildfire.) All construction and maintenance of property within the boundaries of the Plan will be subject to all State and local codes and statutes that address fire safety. As noted previously in this Initial Study, the Midpines Community Plan is a policy document that does not propose or consider any specific development projects. New subdivision roadways, as well as driveways, within the boundaries of the Plan area will be required to meet all applicable width and surfacing standards at the time of construction. *Based upon the proactive approach taken by the Midpines Community Plan on the issue of fire safety and the fact that no specific development project is proposed or considered within the action to adopt the Plan, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have no impact on the issues of emergency evacuation and response and wildland fires.*

In addition, the community of Midpines is subject to all policies contained in the Mariposa County Community Wildfire Protection Plan and Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

B.10 HYDROLOGY & WATER QUALITY

10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY Would the project:	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?				√
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?				√
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a				√

manner which would:				
i) result in a substantial erosion 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?				√
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?				√
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?				√

B.10.a Water Quality Standards/Waste Discharge Requirements/Water Quality

A significant impact would occur if the project violated a water quality standard or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degraded surface or groundwater quality.

B.10.b,e Changes in Groundwater Resources

A significant impact would be one that substantially depletes groundwater quantities or interferes with groundwater recharge.

B.10.c Drainage Patterns/Impervious Surfaces; Substantial Erosion; Flooding; Stormwater System Capacity; Polluted Runoff

A significant impact would be one that substantially alters drainage and surface flows through alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces in a manner that results in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; substantially impacts drainage patterns causing flooding on- or off-site; contributes runoff causing the capacity of drainage systems to be exceeded or provides substantial polluted runoff; or redirects flood flows.

B.10.d Release of Pollutants in Flood Hazard, Tsunami or Seiche Zones from Project Inundation:

A significant impact would occur if the adoption of the Community Plan resulted in a significant impact through the release of pollutants due to project inundation in a flood hazard, tsunami or seiche zone .

Conclusion for B.10.a, b, c, d, and e:

In its description of the Midpines Community Planning Area on pg. 5-25 of the Land Use Element, the Mariposa County General Plan states that the area faces issues associated with fire protection and lack of community water.

As noted previously in this Initial Study, The Midpines Community Plan is a policy document that does not propose or consider any specific development projects. Future development projects will be required to adhere to all State and local codes and statutes relating to all existing hydrology and water quality issues at the time of development, such as those that address project impacts on drainages, groundwater, erosion, flood flows, etc. The existing regulatory environment is sufficient to address these issues when a development project is considered.

The proposed Community Plan provides direction on how future development project impacts on water-related issues in the community are to be addressed. Proposed potable water supply standards for the Midpines Residential land use classification are those that are currently contained in the Mariposa County General Plan. It should be noted that Goal MIDPINES 5.1-1 states: *“Maintain rural densities for residential development in the Midpines Residential land use classification.”* This goal is followed by a policy that states, *“One house per five acres is Midpines’s rural average density.”* Implementation Measure MIDPINES 5.1-1a(1), which implements the goal and policy states: *“In the Midpines Residential land use classification, the maximum allowable density for residential development shall be one dwelling unit per five acres.”* These standards indicate an effort to limit the residential density in Midpines, which would have a corresponding effect of limiting impacts on groundwater resources. This limited density standard tiers from Policy 11-2c in the Mariposa County General Plan, which states: *“Preserve the existing or potential sources of a sustainable water supply.”* Implementation Measure 11-2c(1) of the Mariposa County General Plan states: *“Outside Town Planning Areas and Rural Centers, maintain low intensities of development in order to protect the capacity of watersheds.”* The residential density proposed in the Midpines Community Plan reflects the residential density standard maintained in the countywide Mountain Home zone, the primary residential zone in the County. The General Plan’s EIR states on pgs. 43-44 that Policy 11-2c and its supporting implementation measures provide for the preservation of existing or potential sources of a sustainable water supply through maintaining low intensities of development in order to protect the capacity of watersheds and would designate watershed areas of surface water systems where such systems and their proposed watershed areas serve or are capable of serving as a potable water source.

Standards for the Midpines Rural Economic and Planned Development Area land use classifications in the proposed Midpines Community Plan mandate that new development in those classifications must be served by an approved water supply system adequate to serve the intended structure and its range of uses.

As with all development countywide, future development within the boundaries of the proposed Midpines Community Plan will necessarily impact groundwater. However, those impacts will be analyzed under the standards of the existing regulatory environment and all applicable State and local policies, statutes and codes during review of specific development projects. *Based upon these factors, it can be determined that the adoption of the Community Plan will have no impact on hydrology and water quality issues.*

B.11 LAND USE & PLANNING

11. LAND USE AND PLANNING Would the project:	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
a) Physically divide an established community?				√
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental				√

effect?				
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B.11.a Physically Divide an Existing Community

A significant impact would occur if the project physically divided an established community.

B.11.b Conformance with General Plan Designation, Zoning and Other Environmental Policies

A significant impact would occur if the project conflicted with a land use plan, policy or regulation adopted to avoid or mitigate an environmental effect.

Conclusion for B.11.a and b:

The Midpines Community Planning Area is one of 17 planning areas identified in the Mariposa County General Plan. Section 5.3.01(A) – Purpose in the Land Use Element of the General Plan states that at the policy level, area plans are developed specifically to reflect community values. Section 5.3.01(E) states: “To ensure area plans reflect local values, planning advisory committees are formed of local residents, property owners, and business owners to advise the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors on local issues. The preparation, review, and revision of areas plans are a responsibility of the committee. The planning advisory committee sends its planning documents to the Planning Commission for recommendation and Board of Supervisors for adoption.”

Section 5.3.01(B) – Extent of Uses in the Mariposa County General Plan states the following:

The General Plan defines the geographic boundaries of planning areas and establishes the general purposes of town, community, and special planning areas. A planning area is a defined locality within the County that is managed through an Area Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors have designated Plan Study Areas on the Land Use Diagram, areas that do not have an adopted area plan but which the Board of Supervisors wants evaluated in the preparation of the area plan.

The proposed Midpines Community Plan has been prepared by the Midpines Planning Advisory Committee in accordance with Section 5.3.01(E) and the document reflects the local values of the Midpines community. The Plan’s preparation and proposed adoption process is consistent with the mandates of the Mariposa County General Plan.

Plan Content:

Section 5.3.01(B)(1) in the Land Use Element of the General Plan states the following:

Community Planning Area: Single-family residential, rural commercial, recreation/resort-oriented, small business, and public are land uses consistent with the purpose of a community planning area. Multi-family residential uses with more than two attached dwelling units per structure are not consistent residential uses within community planning areas; live-work commercial/residential uses are acceptable.

Section 5.3.01(B) – Extent of Uses states that an adopted area plan “establishes the extent of land uses for each land use classification in the planning area. Generally, area plans will address residential, commercial, industrial, public, and other land use classifications. However, depending on the guiding principles of an area plan, not all classifications may be included.” This section further states: “Area plans may be adopted for purposes of maintaining rural character, identifying and preserve public lands, protecting agriculture land, or addressing localized issues in greater detail than is possible in the countywide General Plan.” The proposed Midpines Community Plan lists “maintain rural character” as an Issue of Importance in the community and Section 3.1-

Guiding Principles contains the following principle: “*Midpines rural character will be maintained and reinforced through the preservation of scenic open spaces, forested areas, and the quiet, natural beauty of the area.*”

Section 5.3.01(C) – *Zoning Consistency* states: “*Each area plan’s land use classifications define consistent zoning districts. The area plan may use districts already incorporated into the County Code or create new zoning districts, which meet the precise needs of the area. Each of these zoning districts must demonstrate consistency with the area plan and General Plan.*” The vast majority of the proposed zoning districts in the Plan, which are shown as consistent with the Plan’s land use classifications, have the same name as applicable zones currently listed in County Code. In one instance a new zone, Planned Development Zone, would be created. Zoning standards that will be adopted to implement the Plan may vary somewhat from the countywide standards for those zones.

Section 5.3.01(D) – *Population Density and Building Intensity* states: “*Each area plan establishes population densities and building intensities for its planning area.*”

The proposed Midpines Community Plan contains standards and required information as mandated by the General Plan. It is consistent with the statement in Section 5.3.01(A) – *Purpose* on pg. 5-18 of the Land Use Element in the General Plan that “*‘Area Plans’ are mini-General Plans adopted to meet the needs of each town, community, or uniquely identified special area of the County.*”

As noted in previous sections of this Initial Study, specific development projects that may be proposed within the Community Plan’s boundaries in the future, including larger scale resort commercial, recreational and planned development uses, will be subject to the land use classification and zoning standards governing that specific area. Environmental review for such projects will include the project’s potential impacts on the issue of land use and planning. A proposed development project that conflicts with Plan standards will require an amendment to the Plan in order for the project to be implemented. Area Plan amendments involve public hearings and approval action by the Board of Supervisors.

As noted in the introductory “Project Description” section of this Initial Study, the proposed Community Plan includes the Planned Development Area land use classification, which is a unique classification in Mariposa County. The area proposed to be governed by this classification covers roughly 1,080 acres in seven contiguous parcels. The land within the classification is suitable for a wide variety of uses. The proposed Plan lists the types of residential, resort commercial, recreational, and agricultural/open space uses that can be allowed in the area. Irrespective of the location of various types of development projects that may be proposed within the Plan boundaries, they will all be required to comply with standards in the Plan and zoning standards that will be adopted to implement the Plan.

Based upon these factors, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have no impact on land use and planning.

B.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

12. MINERAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?			√	

b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local General Plan, specific plan or other land use plan?			√	
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B.12.a, b Mineral Resources

A significant impact would occur if the project resulted in the loss of availability of a mineral resource of value to the region and state, or result in the loss of a locally important mineral resource shown on land use planning maps.

The boundaries of the proposed Midpines Community Plan encompass areas that have historically been used for mining purposes. The proposed Plan does not address nor does it preclude the potential for future mining activities in the area. It is not likely that the zoning standards that will be adopted for the Plan’s proposed Midpines Rural Economic and Planned Development Area land use classifications will permit or conditionally permit mining activities. However, zoning standards for the Midpines Residential, Agriculture/Working Landscape and Natural Resources classifications may include mining as a permitted or conditional use.

The proposed Midpines Residential land use classification lists Agriculture Exclusive, Mountain General, Mountain Home, and Mountain Transition as consistent zones within the classification. Mining activities are currently listed as conditional uses in the countywide Mountain Home zone, and as permitted in the Mountain General and Agriculture Exclusive zones. It is not known at this point in the planning process for the Midpines Community Plan area how mining will be treated in subsequent zoning code standards. Mining activities in the boundaries of the Plan area will be required to be compliant with adopted standards.

As noted previously in this Initial Study, The Midpines Community Plan is a policy document that does not propose or consider any specific development projects. Specific mining projects are not considered by the proposed Plan. Projects that may have an impact on important mineral resources are also not considered by the proposed Plan. *Given these factors, and given the early status of the planning process for the Midpines area, it can be determined that the adoption of the proposed Community Plan will have a less than significant impact on mineral resources.*

B.13 NOISE

13. NOISE Would the project result in:	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?				√
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?				√
c) For a project located within				√

<p>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?</p>				
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B.13.a Generation of Substantial Noise That Exceeds Established Standards

A significant impact would occur if the project resulted in the generation of substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies.

B.13.c Groundborne Vibration or Noise

A significant impact would occur if the project resulted in the generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels.

B.13.c Exposure to Airport or Airstrip Noise

A significant impact would occur if there is exposure of people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise from public airports or private airstrips. .

Conclusion for B.13.a, b, and c:

As noted previously in this Initial Study, The Midpines Community Plan is a policy document that does not propose or consider any specific development projects. The Plan takes a proactive approach to the issue of noise in the community. Section 5.3 - *Noise* of the Plan specifically addresses noise impacts. This section of the Plan includes the following text under *Distinctive Aspects of Midpines Noise*:

Chapter 15 of the General Plan, the Noise Element, addresses noise issues in the county. Within the Midpines Community Plan Area, ambient noise sources originate primarily from the Highway 140 corridor which traverses the planning area. The natural wooded topography of the area helps to buffer and mitigate traffic associated noise levels. Nuisance noise sources are random and include the use of off-road vehicles such as motorcycles in unimproved areas of Midpines, use of power tools such as chainsaws, chippers, log splitters, and barking dogs. Other sources include gun shots from target shooting on private and Federal lands. The plan relies on and supports the implementation measures contained in the General Plan regarding noise.

Section 5.3 contains the following goal, policy and implementation measure:

Goal MIDPINES 5.3-1:Control and minimize noise impacts within the Midpines Community Planning Area.

(Goal MIDPINES 5.3-1, Policy MIDPINES 5.3-1a, and Implementation Measures MIDPINES 5.3-1a(1) and MIDPINES 5.3-1a(2) are tiered from General Plan Goal 15-1. General Plan text will be reviewed in conjunction with MIDPINES Plan policies and implementation measures.)

Policy MIDPINES 5.3-1a: Support the development of a County noise ordinance that contains standards for limiting noise impacts such as from high-noise equipment such as generators and off-road vehicles.

Implementation Measure *MIDPINES 5.3-1a(1)*: Development standards should be explored and implemented, if feasible, that provide a method of controlling noise at its source for high-noise equipment such as generators and off-road vehicles.

(Goal MIDPINES 5.3-1, Policy MIDPINES 5.3-1a, and Implementation Measures MIDPINES 5.1-1a(1) and MIDPINES 5.1-1a(2) are tiered from General Plan Goal 16-1. General Plan text will be reviewed in conjunction with MIDPINES Plan policies and implementation measures.)

Zoning standards that will be developed to implement the Midpines Community Plan will consider this goal, policy and implementation measure. Specific development projects that may be proposed within the community of Midpines in the future will be required to adhere to all noise standards contained in the General Plan, Midpines Community Plan, and County Zoning Ordinance. Environmental review for development projects will address potential project impacts on noise in the project area.

Based upon the fact that the Plan proactively addresses noise and enhances noise mitigation efforts, and considering the additional factors described above, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have no impact on the issue of noise.

B.14 POPULATION & HOUSING

14. POPULATION AND HOUSING Would the project:	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?			√	
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?			√	

B.14.a Population Growth Inducement

A significant impact would result if the project induces substantial population growth in an area.

B.14.b Displacement of Housing/People

A significant impact would result if the project displaced substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

Conclusion for B.14a and b:

Section 1.3 – *Population and Housing* in the proposed Midpines Community Plan provides background information on those issues. This section states that the Plan area had a population of approximately 982 persons in 2020 and approximately 534 residential structures containing approximately 970 housing units that same year. Seventy two (72) of the 970 housing units were used as vacation (transient occupancy) rental units.

Section 3.1 – *Guiding Principles* in the Plan contains the following vision statement:

Midpines will continue to be a rural community of diverse neighborhoods and environments. Personal, community and governmental actions will achieve a strong sense of community that honors our natural resources and our historical and cultural heritage.

Under that vision statement, the Plan lists guiding principles to implement the community’s vision. The following Guiding Principles are pertinent to the issues of population and housing:

- Midpines rural character will be maintained and reinforced through the preservation of scenic open spaces, forested areas, and the quiet, natural beauty of the area.
- Housing will be developed in a way the preserves open space, rural character, natural resources, and the history of Midpines.
- Community well-being will be maintained by managing growth in accordance with the carrying capacity of community infrastructure and by encouraging a diverse economy and population.

There are large tracts of land within the boundaries of the proposed Community Plan that are classified for and will ultimately be zoned for low density residential development. This type of development will be consistent with the community’s vision statement and accompanying guiding principles and will serve as a means of providing housing opportunities while limiting substantial population growth.

The proposed Community Plan contains Midpines Rural Economic and Planned Development Area land use classifications. The Resort Commercial subclassification within the general Midpines Rural Economic classification lists Resort Commercial as a consistent zone. (Resort Commercial is a currently listed zone within the County Zoning Ordinance.) Likewise, the Planned Development Area classification lists Resort Commercial as a consistent zone and also introduces “Planned Development Zone” as a consistent zone.

The proposed standards addressing proposed development of resort commercial uses in the Resort Commercial subclassification in the Rural Economic land use classification requires the following to be submitted as part of the application:

Applications to site a Resort Commercial subclassification or develop a project within the Resort Commercial subclassification will incorporate an analysis of the housing market by a qualified professional to ensure there is adequate housing for the total number of employees. The housing market analysis is required to utilize a methodology that seeks to analyze local housing market as a primary source. The total number of housing units needed to provide for employee housing may be developed as a part of the development. The housing is not required to be located on-site and new housing is not required to be created if the housing analysis indicates that there is sufficient housing stock available.

Similarly, resort commercial and planned development uses in the Planned Development Area classification require the following to be submitted as part of the application:

Applications to develop a resort commercial or recreational project within the Midpines Planned Development Area will incorporate an analysis of the local housing market by a qualified professional to ensure there is adequate housing for the total number of employees. The total number of housing units needed to provide for employee housing may be developed as an integral part of the development. The housing is not required to be located on-site and new housing is not required to be created if the housing analysis indicates that there is sufficient housing stock available.

Zoning standards for any larger scale commercial development projects in the Rural Economic and Planned Development Area land use classifications will be required to be consistent with the Plan’s *Issues of Importance* and *Guiding Principles*, including the following:

Section 2.1 – *Issues of Importance*:

- Maintain rural character
- Provide for commercial development at an appropriate scale
- Ensure commercial development is compatible with existing character.

The Plan’s proposed standards for the Plan’s land use classifications will guide the development of specific zoning regulations that will necessarily address the community’s desires as stated in the Plan,

The proposed Community Plan takes a proactive approach to population and housing. *Based upon this and the additional factors described above, it can be determined that the adoption of the proposed Community Plan will have a less than significant impact on population and housing.*

B.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

15. PUBLIC SERVICES	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
a) Fire protection?			√	
b) Police protection?			√	
c) Schools?			√	
d) Parks?				√
e) Other public facilities?				√

A project would have a significant impact if it results in substantial impacts on public services and public service providers in a manner described above.

B.15.a. and b. Emergency Services Improvement Impacts

Goal 9-9 of the General Plan states as its goal, “*Maintain quality emergency service delivery.*” Policy 9-9a calls for defining acceptable service standards and creating a comprehensive plan to attain and maintain service delivery,

and Implementation Measures 9-9a(1) and 9-9a(2) call for the preparation and implementation of an emergency services plan to implement the goal. The policies and standards in the proposed Midpines Community Plan tier from the General Plan and propose standards that address fire protection and safety issues specific to Midpines. (See Section B.9.g for a detailed discussion of the proposed Community Plan’s policies and standards that address fire safety.

The maintenance of rural character is an issue of importance for the community as stated in Section 2.1 – *Issues of Importance* of the proposed Plan. The guiding principles governing development in the community are described in Section 3.1 – *Guiding Principles*. The purpose of these guiding principles is to define the significant and long-term objectives of the Midpines Plan and a vision for the Midpines community. Two of those principles are the following:

- *Midpines rural character will be maintained and reinforced through the preservation of scenic open space areas, forested areas, and the quiet, natural beauty of the area.*
- *Housing will be developed in a way that preserves open space, rural character, natural resources, and the history of Midpines.*

In addition, the following guiding principles directly or indirectly address the provision of public services:

Community well-being will be maintained by managing growth in accordance with the carrying capacity of community infrastructure and by encouraging a diverse economy and population.

New development will provide public services as development occurs without compromising levels of service or burdening existing residents with the cost of these service.

The development standards contained in the Plan are designed to implement these principles. There are large tracts of land in the proposed Midpines Residential land use classification where development will be of a low density. The Plan mandates managed growth in accordance with the carrying capacity of community infrastructure, and new development will provide public services as development occurs without comprising levels of service or burdening existing residents with the cost of these services.

The allowed uses in the proposed Plan’s land use classifications would not create development that would be uncommon in Mariposa County or that wouldn’t be allowed in other areas of the County. Land uses included in the Resort Commercial category within the Planned Development Area specifically preclude uses such as regional shopping centers and outdoor concert venues. Land uses included in the Recreational category preclude water parks and amusement parks. These policies would preclude larger scale uses that would demand a greater law enforcement presence and response.

The Midpines Rural Economic/Resort Commercial subclassification lists Resort Commercial as a consistent zoning district. That zone is currently listed in the County’s Zoning Ordinance. The zone allows motel, hotel, restaurants, guest ranch, pistol and rifle range, skeet club, tennis club, golf course, campground/RV park uses, etc. These uses currently exist or have previously existed in Mariposa County; therefore, the inclusion of the Resort Commercial zone in Midpines, if adopted zoning standards are similar to the countywide zone, would not introduce the potential for uses that would be uncommon in the county and which are effectively served by the Mariposa County Sheriff’s Department.

The impacts of future development projects on the provision of emergency services, and whether such development will require new or expanded facilities for fire and police protection will be analyzed under specific environmental

review for those projects. The environmental impacts of the construction of any new emergency facilities will be addressed under that review.

As noted in previous sections of this Initial Study, the proposed Midpines Community Plan is a policy document and does not propose or consider any specific development projects.

Based upon the factors cited above, i.e. the Plan's goal to maintain rural character, manage growth to limit impacts on infrastructure and services, requiring new development to address potential needed additional public services, it can be determined that the adoption of this Community Plan will have a less than significant on fire and police facilities and services.

B.15.c School Improvement Impacts

As noted in previous sections of this Initial Study, the proposed Midpines Community Plan is a policy document and does not propose or consider any specific development projects. Statements in the *Issues of Importance* and *Guiding Principles* sections of the Plan, and the policies and standards proposed to implement those statements, are designed to manage growth through low density residential development in large tracts of land within the Community Plan's boundaries. The issue of future impacts on public schools as the County grows is of countywide importance and is not specific to Midpines. All population growth in the County will impact schools. Due to the managed residential growth in the community of Midpines and the maintenance of rural character as envisioned in the proposed Community Plan, it is unlikely that some population growth in the community will create the need to construct new school facilities that could have an impact on the environment. *Based upon these factors, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have a less than significant impact on schools.*

B.15.d Park Improvement Impacts

As noted in previous sections of this Initial Study, the proposed Midpines Community Plan is a policy document and does not propose or consider any specific development projects. Statements in the *Issues of Importance* and *Guiding Principles* sections of the Plan, and the policies and standards proposed to implement those statements, are designed to manage growth through low density residential development in large tracts of land in the Community Plan's boundaries. The issue of future impacts on parks as the County grows is of countywide importance and is not specific to Midpines. All population growth in the County will impact the issue of the necessity for new public parks. Due to the managed residential growth in the community of Midpines and the maintainance rural character as envisioned in the proposed Community Plan, it is unlikely that some population growth in the community will create the need to construct new parks that could have an impact on the environment. *Based upon these factors, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have a less than significant impact on parks.*

B.15.e Other Public Facility Impacts, Including Road Improvement Impacts

Water and Sewer Public Facilities

As noted in previous sections of this Initial Study, the Plan's *Guiding Principles* specifically address community infrastructure and the provision of public services. Proposed standards for the Midpines Rural Economic and Planned Development Area land use classifications mandate that new development be served by an approved potable water supply system adequate to serve the intended structure and its range of uses. New development must have an adequate supply of water for fire protection as determined by the applicable fire agency. New development must also have approval of the County's Environmental Health Unit for an onsite or shared wastewater disposal system to serve the intended structure and its range of uses. Standards for both classifications mandate that development shall be required to front on a paved, maintained road meeting County road standards. Direct access to State Highways or County arterials should be limited, as appropriate to reduce multiple driveway encroachments, through the use of shared driveways or frontage roads. The proposed standards state that development in the Community Commercial and Resort Commercial subclassifications in the Midpines Rural Economic land use classification must front on a paved, maintained road with adequate capacity.

Access to development in the Midpines Residential classification must have adequate access as determined by the Mariposa County General Plan and shall be constructed in accordance with Fire Safe regulations applicable at the time of development. New subdivisions shall be served by roads meeting minimum county and Fire Safe standards. New residential subdivision parcels shall have approved areas for onsite sewage disposal systems and shall obtain an approval from the Health Department. Water supply to newly created parcels is as prescribed in Section 5.3.02.E(4) of the General Plan.

Midpines Community Plan policies and standards shall be incorporated into the zoning standards that will be adopted to implement the Plan, and compliance with all standards will be incorporated into specific project review. *Based upon these factors, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have a less than significant impact on other public facilities.*

B.16 RECREATION

16. RECREATION	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?			√	
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				√

B.16.a Use of Existing Recreational Facilities

A significant impact would result if the project substantially increased the use of existing recreational facilities or was accelerated due to the project, and the increase in use had the potential to cause substantial physical deterioration. As noted previously in this Initial Study, there are large tracts of land within the boundaries of the proposed Community Plan that are classified for and will ultimately be zoned for low density residential development. This type of development will be consistent with the community’s vision statement and accompanying guiding principles and will serve as a means of providing housing opportunities while limiting substantial population growth. The *Issues of Importance* and *Guiding Principles* of the proposed Community Plan have as their goals the maintenance of the rural character of Midpines. Such residential development would be consistent with the type of development that can currently be developed in the Midpines area, irrespective of the status of the Community Plan.

Resort Commercial is a consistent zone in the proposed Resort Commercial subclassification. The County’s Zoning Ordinance currently contains a Resort Commercial zone, which allows under appropriate permitting an array of recreational uses, such as guest ranches, health resorts, hunting and fishing clubs, campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks. If the zoning standards for the Resort Commercial zone eventually adopted to implement the Midpines Community Plan are similar to the countywide standards, development within the zone has the potential to contribute to recreational opportunities in the community.

The Resort Commercial zone is also listed as consistent in the Planned Development Area land use classification. A new zone, Planned Development Zone, is also listed as consistent within this proposed classification. The classification cites the type of development that the classification is suited for, including Recreational development. The types of recreational uses that would fit within the purpose of the classification and may be proposed through the Planned Development Permit process include, church camps; hiking and nature trails; frisbee golf courses; equestrian riding trails/stables; non-motorized vehicle trails; and art camps. The Resort Commercial category within the classification lists recreational facilities as supporting amenities in the classification.

Development in the Resort Commercial subclassification in the overall Midpines Rural Economic classification and development in the eventual Resort Commercial and Planned Development zones have the potential to provide recreational uses for patrons of destination uses and residents of the area.

Potential impacts on the environment from the development of recreational uses and/or facilities within the Community Plan boundaries will be analyzed at the time of specific project review.

Based upon the factors discussed above, i.e., maintenance of the current standard for low-density residential development in Midpines and the potential provision of recreational uses and facilities in the Midpines Rural Economic and Planned Development Area land use classifications, the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have a less than significant impact on neighborhood and/or regional parks.

B.16.b Construction or Expansion of Recreational Facilities

A significant impact would result if the project included recreational facilities that might adversely affect the physical environment due to construction or expansion. As noted previously in this Initial Study, the Midpines Community Plan is a policy document that does not propose or consider any specific development projects. The potential impacts on the environment from the construction of new or the expansion of existing recreational facilities within the Community Plan boundaries in the future will be analyzed at the time of such development. The proposed Community Plan does not contain policies and standards that mandate the construction of recreational facilities. *Based upon these factors, the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have no impact on this issue.*

B.17 TRANSPORTATION

17.TRANSPORTATION Would the project:	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?				√
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?				√
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?				√
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?				√

B.17.a Circulation System

A significant impact would result if the project conflicted with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system.

B.17.b Conflict With CEQA Guidelines §15064.3, Subdivision (b)

A significant impact would result if the project conflicted with this CEQA Guideline section. This section provides criteria for analyzing transportation impacts of projects. Section 15064.3 of the CEQA Guidelines provides specific considerations for evaluating a project's transportation impacts.

B.17.c Increase Hazards due to Geometric Design Features

A significant impact would result if the project resulted in sharp curves or dangerous intersections or incompatible uses.

B.17.d Emergency Access

A significant impact would result if the project resulted in inadequate emergency access. .

Conclusion:

As noted previously in this Initial Study, the Midpines Community Plan is a policy document that does not propose or consider any specific development projects. Also as noted previously in this Initial Study, there are large tracts of land within the boundaries of the proposed Community Plan that are classified for and will ultimately be zoned for low density residential development. This type of development will be consistent with the community's vision statement and accompanying guiding principles and will serve as a means of providing housing opportunities while limiting substantial population growth. Such residential development would be consistent with the type of development that can currently be developed in the Midpines area, irrespective of the status of the Community Plan. The *Issues of Importance* and *Guiding Principles* of the proposed Community Plan have as their goals the maintenance of the rural character of Midpines.

Access to and within residential subdivisions in Mariposa County, irrespective of their specific location, is subject to the County's Road Improvement and Circulation Policy, the County's Improvement Standards and all State Fire Safe regulations that address roadway surfacing, width, grade, dead-end road length, etc. Commercial projects are also subject to all local and State standards. Individual residential and commercial projects are subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act. Potential project impacts on the checklist issues above are analyzed as part of such review.

It is likely that development in Midpines as envisioned by the Community Plan will have an impact on these Transportation checklist issues. However, the environmental review process will ensure that such impacts are adequately addressed. *Based upon these factors, the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have a less than significant impact on these checklist issues.*

B.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or			√	
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.			√	

B.18.a & b Tribal Cultural Resources

A significant impact would occur if the project had a significant impact on tribal cultural resources, which are defined in the table above. The Midpines Community Plan is a policy document and does not propose or consider any specific development projects. The policies in the Plan lay the groundwork for the adoption of zoning standards to implement the Plan.

Conclusion:

The issue of impacts on tribal cultural resources in Mariposa County is intrinsically tied to the general issue of Cultural Resources due to the significant Native American influence on the history of the County. B.5 – *Cultural Resources* provides a detailed analysis of the proposed Midpines Community Plan’s potential impact on the issue of cultural resources. That section concluded that the adoption of the proposed Midpines Community Plan would have a less than significant impact on cultural resources.

Native American Consultation Notification:

This project involves the processing and potential adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration under CEQA. When such a document is proposed for adoption, Native American tribes on the County’s Native American contact list, which is obtained from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), are notified that they have thirty (30) days to request a consultation on the project. This notification is required pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1. Mariposa Planning sent an email to 23 tribal representatives, including two representatives from the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, and a mailed letter to two representatives on the contact list on April 16, 2025 describing the project and notifying them that they had until May 16, 2025 to request a consultation.

Since the project involves a general plan amendment, Native American tribes on the contact list provided by NAHC are also allowed 90 days to request a consultation under provisions of Public Resources Code §65352.3. Tribal representatives were notified of this 90-day period in the same April 16, 2025 correspondences referenced above. That letter notified representatives that they had until July 15, 2025 to request a consultation on the project.

Mariposa Planning did not receive a request for consultation on the Midpines Community Plan project.

Based upon the factors cited above, it can be determined that the adoption of the proposed Midpines Community Plan would a less than significant on tribal cultural resources.

B.19 UTILITIES & SERVICE SYSTEMS

19. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS Would the project:	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?				√
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?				√
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project’s projected demand in addition to the provider’s existing commitments?				√
d) Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or				√

otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?				
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				√

B.19.a Water, Wastewater Treatment; Stormwater Drainage; Electric Power, Natural Gas, Telecommunications Facilities

A significant impact would result if the project required or resulted in the relocation or construction of these facilities that would cause significant environmental effects.

B.19.b,c Water, Wastewater Treatment Capacities

A significant impact would result if water supplies were insufficient to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years or a wastewater treatment provider does not have the capacity to serve the project in addition to its existing commitments.

B.19.d,e Solid Waste

A significant impact would occur if a project generated solid waste in excess of state or local standards or in excess of local infrastructure or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals or did not comply with reduction statutes related to solid waste.

Conclusion:

As noted previously in this Initial Study, the Midpines Community Plan is a policy document that does not propose or consider any specific development projects. Development that may occur in the Midpines area will be required to do so in accordance with the policies and standards of the Community Plan. Impacts on utilities and service systems from specific development projects will be analyzed as part of the environmental review for those projects.

The policies and standards of the proposed Plan address the issue of utilities and service systems. The guiding principles governing development in the community are described in Section 3.1 – *Guiding Principles*. The purpose of these guiding principles is to define the significant and long-term objectives for the Midpines Plan and a vision for the Midpines community. Two of those principles are the following:

Community well-being will be maintained by managing growth in accordance with the carrying capacity of community infrastructure and by encouraging a diverse economy and population.

New development will provide public services as development occurs without compromising levels of service or burdening existing residents with the cost of these service.

Proposed standards for the Midpines Rural Economic and Planned Development Area land use classifications mandate that new development be served by an approved potable water supply system adequate to serve the intended structure and its range of uses. Applications for larger scale development projects, such as those that may be proposed within the Rural Economic and Planned Development Area land use classifications, will be required to include a detailed hydrological study that will address issues including, but not limited to, the watershed in the area; quantity and quality of the water source(s) serving the project; the ability of the source(s) to serve peak demand for the project, including in dry/drought conditions; fire emergency demands on the supply, and potential impacts on other wells in the watershed.

The Mariposa County Environmental Health Unit plays an integral role in the review of water supply and sewage disposal proposals for development projects in the County. The State of California is also involved in the review

and permitting of projects where community systems are involved, whether the project will use an existing system in the area or construct an onsite system. There is a significant regulatory system in place governing the design, installation and operation of such systems. The proposed Community Plan reinforces this regulatory environment through its policies and standards, which mandate that new development within the Midpines Rural Economic and Planned Development Area land use classifications be served by an approved water supply system adequate to serve the intended structure and its range of uses. The standards require that the project must have an adequate supply of water for fire protection as determined by the applicable fire agency and that the development must also have approval of the Environmental Health Unit for an onsite or shared wastewater disposal system to serve the intended structure and its range of uses.

All development is required to comply with all State and local solid waste requirements.

Based upon these factors, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have no impact on the issue of utilities and service systems.

B.20 WILDFIRE

20. WILDFIRE If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:	Potentially significant impact	Less than significant with mitigation incorporation	Less than significant impact	No impact
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				√
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?				√
c) Require the installation 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?				√
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?				√

B.20.a Emergency Response or Evacuation Plan

A significant impact would result if a project located in or near State Responsibility Areas or very high fire hazard severity zones would result in substantial impacts on adopted emergency response or emergency evacuation plans.

B.20.b Exposure to Pollutant Concentrations

A significant impact would occur if the project exposed project occupants to pollutant concentrations from wildfire.

B.20.c Installation of Infrastructure Exacerbating Fire Risks or Impacts to Environment

A significant impact would occur if the project exacerbated fire risk or resulted in other impacts to the environment through the installation or maintenance of infrastructure.

B.20.d Exposure of People or Structures to Risks

A significant impact would occur if the project exposed people or structures to significant risks as described in the table above.

Conclusion:

Section B.9.g – *Hazards and Hazardous Materials* provides a detailed analysis of the proposed Midpines Community Plan’s potential impact on the issue of wildfire and emergency response. That section concluded the following:

The proposed Midpines Community Plan takes a proactive approach to fire safety in the community. Plan adoption and subsequent implementation through zoning standards will have the effect of enhancing fire safety in the community, which is vulnerable to wildfire. (The Mariposa County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, updated in February 2024, gives Midpines a “Very High” risk rating for wildfire.) All construction and maintenance of property within the boundaries of the Plan will be subject to all State and local codes and statutes that address fire safety. As noted previously in this Initial Study, The Midpines Community Plan is a policy document that does not propose or consider any specific development projects. New subdivision roadways, as well as driveways, within the boundaries of the Plan area will be required to meet all applicable width and surfacing standards at the time of construction. *Based upon the proactive approach taken by the Midpines Community Plan on the issue of fire safety and the fact that no specific development project is proposed or considered within the action to adopt the Plan, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan will have no identifiable negative impact on the issues of emergency evacuation and response and wildland fires.*

In addition, the community of Midpines is subject to all policies contained in the Mariposa County Community Wildfire Protection Plan and Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Section C

MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

<i>Finding:</i>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation	Less than Significant Impact	No Impact
1. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Impact Discussion & Conclusions:

- The Midpines Community Plan is a policy document that does not propose or consider any specific development projects. The issues of potential impacts on biological and cultural resources from the adoption of the Community Plan are discussed in sections B.4 – *Biological Resources* and B.5 – *Cultural Resources* in this study. Text in the Biological Resources section states that it is highly likely that a large area such as that encompassed by the Midpines Community Plan boundaries will contain significant biological resources. However, specific projects that may be proposed within the Midpines Community Plan boundaries in the future will be subject to all requirements of CEQA, including mandates for the analysis of the project’s potential impact on biological resources. The conclusion in those sections is that the adoption of Community Plan would have a less than significant impact on these resources.

It is also highly likely that a large area such as that encompassed by the Midpines Community Plan boundaries will contain significant cultural resources. There is typically great variance in the presence or lack thereof of significant cultural resources on various potential project sites in such a large area. Therefore, it is difficult to determine at this stage of the planning process for the Midpines area the potential impacts on such resources within the Plan’s boundaries. Irrespective of the Plan’s policies and standards and how they may impact growth and development in Midpines, all projects, both currently under existing General Plan and zoning standards and in the future under the standards of the Midpines Community Plan, are subject to the provisions of CEQA, which mandates an analysis of project impacts on cultural resources.

Section B.18 – *Tribal Cultural Resources* refers to the Cultural Resources section for a discussion of potential impacts on tribal resources from adoption of the Midpines Community Plan. The conclusion of the *Tribal Cultural Resources* section was that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan would have a less than significant impact on such resources.

Based upon these conclusions, it can be determined that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan would have a less than significant on the issues described in Mandatory Findings of Significance No. 1.

2. As discussed in detail in Section B.11 – *Land Use and Planning*, the proposed Midpines Community Plan implements the Mariposa County General Plan. An environmental impact report was prepared and certified for the adoption of the General Plan in December of 2006. Section 2.1 – *General Plan Overview* in the General Plan EIR states that the countywide goals, policies, and implementation measures apply to the Planning Study Areas, which included Midpines at the time the General Plan was adopted.

Section 2.5.1 – *Significant Unavoidable Impacts* in the General Plan EIR identifies impacts for which mitigation measures will not reduce to a less than significant level. This level of impact associated with General Plan buildout related to aspects of the following issues:

- Land Use/Mineral production
- Traffic and Transportation/vehicular impacts on state highways and county arterial roads and intersections
- Public Services and Utilities/demand for additional school capacity
- Air Quality/

Potential impacts from General Plan implementation on additional environmental checklist issues were found to be less than significant due to Plan policies that serve as mitigation.

Potential environmental impacts associated with the development of an Area Plan for Midpines were not analyzed in the General Plan EIR. All impacts analyzed in that document addressed countywide General Plan implementation.

The environmental analysis contained in this Initial Study did not find a significant impact for any environmental checklist issue associated with adoption of the Midpines Community Plan. The Study notes in numerous locations that the Midpines Community Plan is a policy document that does not propose or consider any specific development projects. It lays the groundwork for the establishment of zoning standards to implement the Plan. Specific environmental impacts from development that may occur due to the policies and standards of the Community Plan and corresponding zoning standards will be analyzed during specific project review.

The boundaries of the proposed Midpines Community Plan encompass an area totaling 22.7 square miles, which is roughly 1.5% of the County’s 1,450 square mile area. There are large tracts of land within the Community Plan boundaries that are owned by the federal government, and therefore have extremely limited development potential, and additional large tracts designated for low density residential development.

Although development within the Midpines Community Plan boundaries in accordance with the Plan’s policies and standards will contribute to overall environmental impacts associated with General Plan implementation, the impacts of adoption of the Plan will be individually limited, due to the small size of

the area in relation to the entire County and the self-mitigating factors in the Plan, and Plan adoption will not be cumulatively considerable.

Based upon these factors, it can be determined that adoption of the Midpines Community Plan would have a less than significant on the issues described in Mandatory Findings of Significance No. 2.

3. This Initial Study did not find that the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly, from any of the environmental issues analyzed in the Study. Adoption of the proposed Community Plan implements the mandate of the General Plan that Planning Areas, including the Midpines Community Planning Area, have an Area Plan prepared and adopted. The Community Plan does not propose or consider any specific development projects. The Plan lays the groundwork for the preparation of zoning standards to implement the Plan. Zoning standards will be in conformance with the policies and standards contained in the Plan. Specific development projects proposed for the Midpines Planning Area in accordance with the Community Plan and corresponding zoning standards will be subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Based upon these factors, it can be determined that adoption of the Midpines Community Plan would not have substantial adverse effects on human beings as stated in Mandatory Findings of Significance No. 3.

Based upon the environmental review conducted within this Initial Study, and the anticipated level of impact as a result of the adoption of the Midpines Community Plan, a negative declaration will be adopted for the project.

EXHIBIT 1 Community Plan Boundary Map

