



Initial Study

Smith Tentative Parcel Map

Nevada County, California

To:

CEO – Alison Lehman	Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District
Assistant CEO – Patrick Eidman	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Chief Fiscal Officer – Erin Mettler	California Fish and Wildlife Service – North Central Region
Clerk of the Board	Nevada Irrigation District
County Counsel* - Douglas Johnson and Sims Ely	Native American Heritage Commission
Nevada County Assessor - Rolf Kleinhans	Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe
Economic Development – Kimberly Parker	Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians
CDA Director – Trisha Tillotson	Tsi Akim Maidu Tribe
District IV Supervisor – Sue Hoek	United Auburn Indian Community
District IV Commissioner – John Foley	Washoe Tribe of NV and CA
Agricultural Commissioner	General Plan Defense Fund
Building Department	Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E)
Environmental Health Department	Comcast
Department of Public Works – Surveyor	Bear River Recreation & Park District
Department of Public Works - Engineer	Bear Yuba Land Trust
Nevada County Transit Services	California Native Plant Society – Redbud Chapter
Nevada County Consolidated Fire	Federation of Neighborhood Associations
Office of the Fire Marshal	Cal Fire Forestry
Nevada County Sheriff	Caltrans Highways
Nevada County Transportation Commission	CA Department of Parks and Recreation
SAAVE	Sierra Club
Penn Valley Area Chamber of Commerce	Forest Springs, LLC
Penn Valley Municipal Advisory Committee	

**receives full report, others receive NOA with report available online*

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File Number: PLN24-0191; TPM24-0008; EIS24-0014

Owner: Smith Living Trust

Representative: Robert Wood, Millennium Planning & Engineering

Project Location: 13602 Auburn Road, Grass Valley, CA 95949

Assessor Parcel Number: 025-130-078

Zoning District(s): AG-10 (*General Agricultural, 10-acre minimum parcel size*)

General Plan Designation(s): RUR-10; EST

Project Location and Surrounding Land Zoning & Use:

The subject 36.92-acre parcel is located on Auburn Road and is approximately 1.65 miles west of State Highway 49 in Grass Valley, California. It is surrounded by larger and smaller rural parcels in an area with generally low development, including agricultural areas and other rural residential areas. Overall, the project area is characterized as lower montane coniferous forest habitat that includes manzanita and non-native grassland, with the presence of landmark oak trees and groves. The general topography of the parcel is characterized as moderately sloping, with an average elevation in the project area of approximately 2,220 feet. The subject parcel is zoned General Agricultural, with a minimum parcel size of 10 acres (AG-10) and has a Rural General Plan designation, allowing density at one unit per 10 acres (RUR-10), with a small portion in the north-eastern portion of the parcel that has Estate General Plan designation. Surrounding parcels are all designated as RUR-10 or EST by the General Plan and are zoned AG-10, Residential Agricultural (RA-3), Public (P), and Open Space (OS).

Other Permits Which May Be Necessary: Based on initial comments and responses received, the following permits may be required from the designated agencies:

1. Building and Grading Permits – Nevada County Building Department
2. Encroachment Permit – Nevada County Department of Public Works
3. Dust Control Plan – Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District

Relationship to Other Projects: None.

Tribal Consultation: Pursuant to Assembly Bill 52, California Native American Tribes with ancestral land within the project area were notified and routed the project during the initial distribution in November, 2024 and invited to tribal consultation. The United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria (UAIC) requested tribal consultation and to conduct a tribal survey for identification of tribal cultural resources in December, 2024. Based on the results of the tribal survey, UAIC made recommendations for if and/or when any ground disturbance may occur on the parcel, including instructions for unanticipated discoveries, pre-construction notification to the Tribe, and resource and sensitivity training. The California Native American Tribes will be sent a Notice of Availability for Public Review and Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for this project, which will allow the Native American Tribes the opportunity to comment on the analysis of environmental impacts. Mitigation has been included in Section 5 and 18 of this initial study to address a plan for further consultation, if needed.



Figure 2: Project Parcel Aerial Imagery

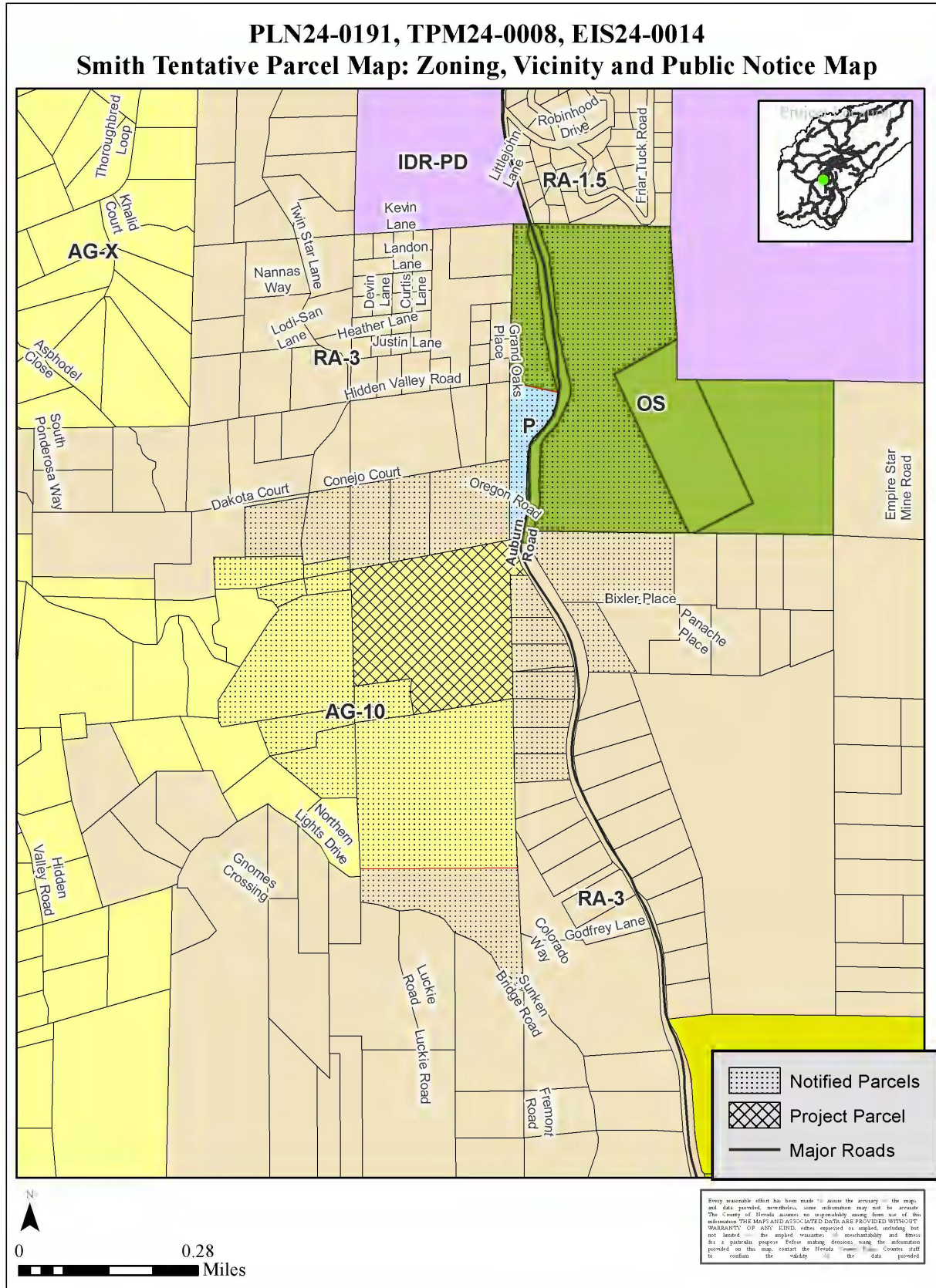


Figure 3: Zoning, Vicinity, and Public Notice Map

Summary of Impacts and Proposed Mitigation Measures

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected:

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

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

Recommended Mitigation Measures:

The following measures shall be implemented, and where appropriate, included as a note on construction plans as outlined in each.

3. Air Quality

Mitigation Measure 3A: Reduce emissions during construction. The following are the minimum recommended mitigation measures designed to help reduce project emissions related to construction, which shall be included as a note on all plans prior to issuance of all grading, improvement, and building permits. In addition to these measures, all statewide air pollution

control regulations shall be followed, including diesel regulations. This note shall be included on the Supplemental Map.

1. During construction, grid power shall be used in order to reduce emissions from other on-site energy sources such as diesel generators for job site power needs where feasible.
2. At least 50% of the mobile off-road construction equipment in use at any time on the project shall be equipped with Tier 1 engines (or cleaner).
3. All architectural coatings shall comply with the California Air Resources Board's Suggested Control Measure for Architectural Coatings.
4. Construction equipment idling times shall be minimized either by shutting equipment off when not in use or reducing the maximum idling time to 5 minutes (as required by the California airborne toxics control measure Title 13, Section 2485 of California Code of Regulations [CCR]) and all construction equipment shall also be maintained and properly serviced in accordance with manufacturer's specifications. Clear signage shall be provided for construction workers at all access points.
5. Use reasonable precautions to minimize dust generation. Reasonable precautions may include using dust suppressants, limiting vehicle speeds, sweeping paved roads, and watering exposed surfaces, as well as any stockpiled material, active demolition sites, and unpaved construction roads. Such methods shall be noted on improvement plans prior to approval.

Timing: Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits

Reporting: Agency approval of the Parcel Map recordation and future permit issuance

Responsible Agency: Planning Department / NSAQMD

Mitigation Measure 3B: Comply with open burning prohibitions. Use alternatives to open burning of vegetative material on the project site, unless deemed infeasible by the Air Pollution Control Officer. Treat cleared vegetation by legal means other than open burning, such as chipping, shredding, grinding, use as compost or firewood, and conversion to biomass fuel. Open burning of site-cleared vegetation shall be permitted only upon NSAQMD's approval of documentation showing alternatives are unobtainable or economically infeasible. Obtain an approval letter from NSAQMD prior to approval of improvement or grading plans for road, driveway or future residential construction indicating the approved method of cleared vegetation disposal. Note such methods on any project plans prior to approval. At no time shall open burning of materials generated by this project occur at another site unless approved in advance by NSAQMD.

Timing: Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits

Reporting: Agency approval of the Parcel Map recordation and future permit issuance

Responsible Agency: Planning Department / NSAQMD

Mitigation Measure 3C: Mitigate any Asbestos Discovered During Construction. If serpentine, ultramafic rock or naturally occurring asbestos are discovered during construction or grading, the District shall be notified within 24 hours, and specific requirements contained in Section 93105 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations must be strictly complied with.

Timing: Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits and throughout construction

Reporting: Agency approval of the Parcel Map for recordation and future permit issuance

Responsible Agency: Planning Department / NSAQMD

4. Biological Resources

Mitigation Measure 4A: Avoid Impacts to Nesting Birds. The following note shall be added to all improvement/grading/construction plans:

Impacts to nesting raptors, including special-status avian or bat species, and migratory birds can be avoided by removing vegetation before the start of the nesting season, or delaying removal until after the end of the nesting season.

1. If construction is to take place during the nesting season (March 1 - August 31), including any ground disturbance, preconstruction surveys, within 250 feet of the disturbance area, for nesting raptors, migratory birds and special-status bats shall be conducted within seven (7) days prior to the beginning of construction activities by a California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) approved biologist and in accordance with California and Federal requirements.
2. Tree removal and construction shall not take place during the breeding season (March 1 – August 31), unless supported by a report from the qualified biologist verifying that birds, including raptors, are not nesting in the trees proposed for removal or disturbance.
3. If active nests are found, temporary nest disturbance buffers shall be established; a quarter-mile buffer for nesting raptors and, a 200-foot buffer if active migratory bird nests are found.
4. If project related activities within the temporary nest disturbance buffer are determined to be necessary during the nesting season, then an onsite biologist/monitor experienced with raptor behavior, shall be retained by the project proponent to monitor the nests, and shall, along with the project proponent, consult with the CFWD to determine the best course of action necessary to avoid nest abandonment or take of individuals. Work may be allowed to proceed within the temporary nest disturbance buffer if raptors are not exhibiting agitated behavior such as defensive flights at intruders, getting up from a brooding position, or flying off the nest. The designated biologist/monitor shall be onsite daily while construction related activities are taking place and shall have the authority to stop work if raptors are exhibiting agitated behavior. In consultation with CDFW and depending on the behavior of the raptors, over time the biologist/monitor may determine that monitoring is no longer necessary, due to the raptors' acclimation to the activities.
5. Any trees containing nests that must be removed as a result of development shall be removed during the non-breeding season. However, the project proponent shall be responsible for offsetting the loss of any nesting trees. The project proponent and biologist/monitor shall consult with CDFW, and the extent of any necessary compensatory mitigation shall be determined by CDFW. Previous recommended mitigation for the loss of nesting trees has been at a ratio of three trees for each nest tree removed during the non-nesting season.

Timing: Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits

Reporting: Approval of the Parcel Map for recordation and future permit issuance

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Mitigation Measure 4B: Establish Building Envelopes to Minimize Impacts to Resident and Migratory Deer Populations. Delineate building envelopes, in accordance with the approved tentative map. The building envelopes shall be shown on the supplemental data sheets to be recorded concurrently with the parcel map and on all future grading/improvement/building permit plans with a Note stating, "All habitable structures shall be limited to the building envelopes

identified on each of the parcels; this restriction does not apply to underground utility placement or driveways.”

Timing: Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits

Reporting: Approval of the Parcel Map for recordation and future permit issuance

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Mitigation Measure 4C: Protect and Facilitate the Free Movement of Wildlife. The Supplemental Data Sheet for the recorded map shall include the following note: To protect agricultural and domestic use of this property while still facilitating the free movement of wildlife, no solid fence shall be placed on any parcel except around the single-family dwelling, cultivated areas and animal enclosures. Perimeter fencing shall be limited to three or four-strand barbed-wire type, open material, with the lowest strand being barb-less and a minimum of 18” from the ground.

Timing: Prior to map recordation

Reporting: Approval of the Parcel Map for recordation

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Mitigation Measure 4D: Establish Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA’s). Sensitive biological resources, as shown on the tentative parcel map, shall be mapped, and identified as ESAs on the recorded parcel map as well as on all future improvement/grading/construction plans to ensure their protection from future disturbance. These resources include the protected landmark oak groves. The following note shall be included: “No disturbance is allowed within areas delineated as Environmentally Sensitive Areas, unless a Management Plan is approved.”

Timing: Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits

Reporting: Approval of the Parcel Map for recordation and future permit issuance

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

5. Cultural Resources

Mitigation Measure 5A: Halt work and conduct appropriate consultation in the event of inadvertent discovery of cultural material and/or in the event of inadvertent discovery of human remains. In the event of an inadvertent discovery of previously unidentified cultural material, archaeological consultation should be sought immediately. In the event that human remains are inadvertently encountered during ground-disturbing activity or at any time subsequently, State law shall be followed. All grading and construction plans shall include a note outlining the requirements provided below to ensure that any cultural resources discovered during project construction are properly managed. These requirements include the following: All equipment operators and employees involved in any form of ground disturbance shall be trained to recognize potential archeological resources and advised of the remote possibility of encountering subsurface cultural resources during grading activities. If such resources are encountered or suspected, work within 100 feet shall be halted immediately and the Nevada County Planning Department shall be contacted. A professional archaeologist shall be retained by the developer and consulted to access any discoveries and develop appropriate management recommendations for archaeological resource treatment. If bones are encountered and appear to be human, California Law requires that the Nevada County Coroner be contacted. Should the discovery include Native American human remains, in addition to the required procedures of Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, Public Resources Code 5097.98 and California Code of

Regulations Section 15064.5(e), all work must stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and the Nevada County Coroner must be notified. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission, and the procedures outlined in California Environmental Quality Act Sections 15064.5(d) and (e) shall be followed. If Native American resources are involved, Native American Organizations and individuals recognized by the County shall be notified and consulted about any plans for treatment.

Timing: Prior to the issuance of building/grading/improvement permits and during construction

Reporting: Agency approval of permits or plans

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

7. Geology and Soils

Measure 7A: Delineate Steep Slopes as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA's.) and Non-Disturbance Areas. Steep slope areas (>30%) and areas of high erosion potential shall be delineated as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA's) on the supplemental data sheets to be recorded concurrently with the parcel map and on all future grading/improvement/building plans, along with a note on both the supplemental data sheets and future plans that no disturbance shall be allowed within these areas unless a Steep Slopes Management Plan is approved by the Planning Department.

Timing: Prior to parcel map recordation and issuance of grading/improvement/building permits

Reporting: Planning Department approval of the Parcel Map for recordation and future permit issuance

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

13. Noise

Mitigation Measure 13A: Limit construction work hours to 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM: During grading and construction, work hours shall be limited from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. Prior to issuance of grading and building permits, improvement plans shall reflect hours of construction.

Timing: Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits and throughout construction

Reporting: Planning Department approval of the Parcel Map for recordation and future permit issuance

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

18. Tribal Cultural Resources

Mitigation Measure 18A: Unanticipated Discovery of Tribal Cultural Resources. The following mitigation measure is intended to address the identification and treatment of unanticipated discoveries of potential tribal cultural resources (TCRs) or resources of cultural significance to UAIC during ground disturbing activities. If any suspected TCRs or resources of cultural significance to UAIC, including but not limited to features, anthropogenic/cultural soils, cultural belongings or objects (artifacts), shell, bone, shaped stones or bone, or ash/charcoal deposits are discovered by any person during construction activities including ground disturbing activities, all work shall pause immediately within 100 feet of the find, or an agreed upon distance based on the project area and nature of the find. Work shall cease in and within the immediate vicinity of the find regardless of whether the construction is being actively monitored by a Tribal Monitor,

cultural resources specialist, or professional archaeologist. A Tribal Representative and the Lead Agency shall be immediately notified, and the Tribal Representative in coordination with the Lead Agency shall determine if the find is a TCR (PRC §21074) and the Tribal Representative shall make recommendations for further evaluation and treatment as necessary.

***Timing:** Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits and throughout construction*

***Reporting:** Planning Department approval grading and construction permits*

***Responsible Agency:** Planning Department and United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC)*

Mitigation Measure 18B: Cultural Awareness Training. The following mitigation measure is intended to address the cultural sensitivity of the project area by including a Worker Environmental Awareness Program for relevant project personnel and construction workers. The training shall be specified in the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), or the Environmental Impact Report, the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), and the Standard Construction Specifications for the project.

The lead agency shall require the applicant/Contractor to provide a tribal cultural resources sensitivity and awareness training program (Worker Environmental Awareness Program [WEAP]) for all personnel involved in project construction, including field consultants and construction workers, at their own expense. The WEAP shall be developed in coordination with interested Native American Tribes.

The WEAP shall be conducted before any project-related construction activities begin at the project site. The WEAP will include relevant information regarding sensitive cultural resources and tribal cultural resources, including applicable regulations, protocols for avoidance, and consequences of violating State laws and regulations. The WEAP will also describe appropriate avoidance and impact minimization measures for cultural resources and tribal cultural resources that could be located at the project site and will outline what to do and who to contact if any potential cultural resources or tribal cultural resources are encountered. The WEAP will emphasize the requirement for confidentiality and culturally appropriate treatment of any discovery of significance to Native Americans and will discuss appropriate behaviors and responsive actions, consistent with Native American tribal values. The training may be done in coordination with the project archaeologist.

All ground-disturbing equipment operators shall be required to receive the training and sign a form that acknowledges receipt of the training.

***Timing:** Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits and throughout construction*

***Reporting:** Planning Department approval grading and construction permits*

***Responsible Agency:** Planning Department and United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC)*

19. Utilities and Service Systems

Mitigation Measure 19A: Appropriate disposal of vegetative and toxic waste. Industrial toxic waste (petroleum and other chemical products) and vegetative waste is not accepted at the McCourtney Road transfer station and if encountered, shall be properly disposed of in compliance with existing regulations and facilities. This mitigation measure shall be included as a note on all

improvement plans, which shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Department prior to permit issuance.

Timing: Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits and throughout construction

Reporting: Agency approval of permits or plans

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

21. Mandatory Findings of Significance

See all Mitigation Measures listed above.

Mitigation and Monitoring Matrix

Measure #	Monitory Authority	Implementation Timing
3A	Planning Department / NSAQMD	Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits
3B	Planning Department / NSAQMD	Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits
3C	Planning Department / NSAQMD	Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits
4A	Planning Department	Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits
4B	Planning Department	Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits
4C	Planning Department	Prior to map recordation
4D	Planning Department	Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits
5A	Planning Department	Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits
7A	Planning Department	Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits
13A	Planning Department	Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits and throughout construction
18A	Planning Department and United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC)	Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits and throughout construction
18B	Planning Department and United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC)	Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits and throughout construction
19A	Planning Department	Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits and throughout construction

Initial Study and Checklist

Introduction:

This checklist is to be completed for all projects that are not exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA requires a brief explanation for answers to the Appendix G: Environmental Checklist except “No Impact” responses that are adequately supported by noted information sources. Answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts. This Initial Study uses the following terms to describe the level of significance of adverse impacts. These terms are defined as follows.

- **No Impact:** An impact that would result in no adverse changes to the environment.
- **Less than Significant Impact:** An impact that is potentially adverse but does not exceed the thresholds of significance as identified in the impact discussions. Less than significant impacts do not require mitigation.
- **Less than Significant with Mitigation:** An environmental effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the environment without mitigation, but which is reduced to a level that is less than significant with mitigation identified in the Initial Study.
- **Potentially Significant Impact:** An environmental effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the environment; either additional information is needed regarding the extent of the impact to make the significance determination, or the impact would or could cause a substantial adverse change in the environment. A finding of a potentially significant impact would result in the determination to prepare an EIR.

1. Aesthetics

Existing Setting: The subject 36.92-acre parcel is located on Auburn Road and is approximately 1.65 miles west of State Highway 49 in Grass Valley, California and contains one primary dwelling, one accessory dwelling unit, and accessory structures. The aesthetics of the development and the natural habitat is similar to the surrounding parcels. The overall topography of the parcel is moderately sloping from north to south and west to east, with elevation ranging from 2,240 to 2,200 feet above mean sea level. The subject parcel is located in an area of mostly lower montane coniferous forest habitat with an understory of whiteleaf manzanita and non-native annual grassland, as well as open areas where less trees and shrubs remain.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, or views open to the public?			✓		A, L
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?				✓	A, L, 27

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
c. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?			✓		A
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?			✓		A, 18

Impact Discussion:

1a, c, d: A scenic vista is typically considered to be a view that possesses visual and aesthetic qualities of high value to the public. Scenic vistas can provide views of natural features or significant structures and buildings. The proposed project is not anticipated to result in an adverse effect on a scenic vista, degrade the visual character of the site or its surroundings, or to create a new source of substantial light or glare. The project proposes to subdivide the subject 36.92-acre parcel (APN: 025-130-078) into three (3) legal parcels as follows: Parcel 1 – 15.40 acres; Parcel 2 – 10.0 acres; and Parcel 3 – 11.51 acres. The subject parcel contains existing improvements, which include a single-family residence, an accessory dwelling unit, as well as other accessory and agricultural structures. These existing improvements are only visible from the adjacent properties, and the private access road has controlled access through a gate, therefore the existing and potential future structures on all parcels will not be easily viewable to the public. The aesthetics of the property and existing improvements are similar to the surrounding area and other rural residential improvements on other parcels in the immediate area. Each proposed parcel includes building envelopes intended to contain future development of habitable space, accessory uses, and agricultural uses. These building envelopes have been designed to ensure that future development will not damage scenic resources and will be somewhat screened by the property’s topography and vegetation. It is anticipated that future development of the proposed parcels will include lighting typically associated with rural residential and agricultural improvements and uses, and it is not anticipated that the project will result in a significant new source of light or glare. As a land division proposing relatively large resultant parcels that would contain existing trees and vegetation, existing and potential future rural residential improvements within building envelopes to allow similar rural residential type improvements to those found within other parcels in the area, the project would result in *less than significant* impacts to public views, scenic vistas, and the general aesthetic character of the area.

1b: The proposed land division is not anticipated to result in significant damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway or a County scenic corridor. The scenic resources of areas which are adjacent to highways and roads which have identified as having high scenic quality are protected and preserved by the Scenic Corridor Combining District as defined by the zoning district map based on an adopted scenic corridor study. The nearest SC combining district is approximately 9 miles south of the project parcel and therefore not in the vicinity of the project parcel. There is currently only one officially designated State Scenic Highway in Nevada County, which is the six-mile stretch of Highway 20 between the Skillman Flat Campground to just east of Lowell Hill Road. This is northeast of Nevada City, and therefore not in the vicinity of the project parcel. State Highway 49 is considered an eligible state scenic highway by the California Department of Transportation (2011). State Highway 49 is approximately 1.65 miles east from the project area; there is no visibility of the property from the highway due to existing topographic features blocking

the view. Therefore, the proposed project would have *no impact* on scenic resources within a state scenic highway.

Mitigation: None required.

2. Agricultural & Forestry Resources

Existing Setting: The subject parcel is designated as “Grazing Land” by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Department of Conservation. Although the parcel is zoned General Agricultural, with a minimum parcel size of 10 acres (AG-10) and has a Rural General Plan designation, allowing density at one unit per 10 acres (RUR-10), with a small portion in the north-eastern portion of the parcel that has Estate General Plan designation, the project parcel is not being used for agriculture. The 36.92-acre parcel is mostly undisturbed and undeveloped, with the existing improvements and structures clustered in one area of the property.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				✓	A, L, 7
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				✓	A, 18
c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resource Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?				✓	A, L, 18
d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				✓	L, 18
e. Involve other changes in the existing environment, which due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				✓	A, L, 7

Impact Discussion:

2a, b: The project is located in an area that is designated “Grazing Land” and will not result in the conversion of Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use. The proposed project will not conflict with or convert existing zoning for agricultural use. Neither the subject parcel or adjacent properties are under a Williamson Act (California Land Conservation Act of 1965) contract. If such a contract is sought after in the future, rural residential improvements within the proposed building envelopes on the resultant large parcels would not prevent or conflict with agricultural activities. Furthermore, the Nevada County Right-to-Farm Notice would be required to be part of all future sales of the properties as a disclosure to future buyers as a standard condition of approval. With no Williamson Act contracts on or near the property and building envelopes to contain rural residential

development within the three proposed parcels, the proposed project is anticipated to have *no impact* on a Williamson Act contract(s) or conversion of farmlands to non-agricultural use.

2c, d, e: The project does not propose a change in zoning or result in the loss or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. The property is not zoned Forest or Timber Production Zone. The proposed subdivision will introduce residential uses in agricultural zoning, but due to the property's designation by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Department of Conservation as "Grazing Land", potential impacts to farmland uses are anticipated to have *no impact*.

Mitigation: None required.

3. Air Quality:

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

Nevada County has two federally recognized air monitoring sites: The Litton Building in Grass Valley (fine particulate matter, also called PM_{2.5}, and ozone) and the fire station in downtown Truckee (PM_{2.5} only). For eight-hour average ozone concentrations, Nevada County is serious nonattainment for both the 2008 and 2015 state and federal ozone standards of 75 and 70 parts per billion, respectively (Table 1). Unlike other pollutants, ozone is not typically released directly into the atmosphere from any sources. Ozone is created by the interaction of nitrogen oxides and reactive organic gases (also known as volatile organic compounds) in the presence of sunlight, especially when the temperature is high. The major sources of nitrogen oxides and reactive organic gases, known as ozone precursors, are combustion sources such as factories, automobiles, and evaporation of solvents and fuels. Ozone The highest concentrations of ozone are generally observed in July and August, when the days are longest, especially in the late

afternoon and evening hours. Ozone is considered by the California Air Resources Board to be overwhelmingly transported to Nevada County from the Sacramento Metropolitan area and, to a lesser extent, the San Francisco Bay Area. This recognition of overwhelming transport relieves Nevada County of CAAQS-related requirements, including the development of CAAQS attainment plan with a “no-net-increase” permitting program or an “all feasible measures” demonstration. For particulate matter, ambient air quality standards have been established for both PM10 and PM2.5. California has standards for average PM10 concentrations over 24-hour periods and over the course of an entire year, which are 50 and 20 µg/m³, respectively. (The notation “µg/m³” means micrograms of pollutant per cubic meter of ambient air.) For PM2.5, California only has a standard for average PM2.5 concentrations over a year, set at 12 µg/m³, with no 24-hour-average standard. Nevada County is in compliance with all of the federal particulate matter standards, but like most California counties, it is out of compliance with the state PM10 standards. Particulate-matter is identified by the maximum particle size in microns as either PM2.5 or PM10. PM2.5, is mostly smoke and aerosol particles resulting from woodstoves and fireplaces, vehicle engines, wildfires, and open burning. PM-10 is a mixture of dust, combustion particles (smoke), and aerosols from sources such as surface disturbances, road sand, vehicle tires, and leaf blowers.

Table 1: Attainment Status by Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District of State and Federal Air Quality Standards. In addition, the entire district is either Attainment or Unclassified for all State and Federal NO₂, SO₂, Pb, H₂S, visibility reducing particles, sulfates, and vinyl chloride standards.

Pollutant	State Designation	Federal Designation
Ozone (O ₃)	Nevada County: Non-attainment (due to overwhelming transport)	<u>2008 O₃ Standard (75 ppb)</u> Western Nevada County: Serious Non-attainment;
		<u>2015 O₃ Standard (70 ppb)</u> Western Nevada County: Serious Non-attainment;
PM ₁₀	Nevada County: Non-attainment	Unclassified
PM _{2.5}	Nevada County: Unclassified	<u>2012 Annual Standard (12µg/m³)</u> Nevada County: Unclassifiable/Attainment
		<u>2012 24-hour Standard (35µg/m³)</u> Unclassifiable/Attainment
CO	Nevada: Unclassified	Unclassifiable/Attainment

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

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

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Conflict with, exceed any potentially significant thresholds, or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plans and goals?				✓	A, G
b. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions that exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?		✓			A, G, 33
c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?				✓	A, G, 33
d. Create objectionable odors, smoke, ash, or dust affecting a substantial number of people?				✓	A, G

Impact Discussion:

3a: Nevada County’s General Plan, Chapter 14 Air Quality Element, contains numerous policies to protect air quality in Nevada County. With the exception of General Plan Air Quality Element Policy 14.7A, which requires compliance with Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District Rule 226, the Nevada County General Plan Air Quality Element policies are intended to apply to development that generates new residents or new employees. By assessing air pollution and emissions associated with the proposed project and recommending mitigation measures based on Thresholds of Significance established by the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD), the project as proposed would comply with NSAQMD regulations. The proposed land division would not conflict with, exceed any potentially significant thresholds, or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plans; therefore, *no impact* is anticipated on the potential adoption or implementation of an air quality plan.

3b: The project is not anticipated to result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants. Western Nevada County is in non-attainment for the Federal 8-hour ozone standard, and the entirety of Nevada County is in non-attainment for the State 1- and 8-hour ozone standards and PM10 standards. While most of the ozone in the County is transported from urban areas, PM10 sources primarily come from within the County. PM10 violations in winter are largely due to wood smoke from the use of woodstoves and fireplaces, while summer and fall violations often occur during forest fires or periods of open burning.

Regulation 226 of NSAQMD requires a dust control plan if more than one (1) acre of natural surface area is to be altered or where the natural ground cover is removed. The resultant parcels would contain residential and agricultural accessory improvements and would gain access from a private road off of Auburn Road. The necessary road improvements serving the proposed parcels are not anticipated to exceed one acre and therefore do not trigger the requirement for a dust control plan and is subsequently not required by NSAQMD. Reasonable precautions may include watering vehicle traffic areas, as well as any stockpiled material, and limiting traffic speeds during construction. Such methods will be required to be noted on the improvement plans prior to approval. Additionally, Mitigation Measure 3A is proposed to reduce dust impacts during construction if the amount of grading exceeds the NSAQMD threshold of 1-acre.

The California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) provides a means to estimate potential emissions associated with both construction and operation of land use projects. Estimated construction impacts were determined using the parameters specific to this proposed project and conservative CalEEMod defaults (CalEEMod Version 2022.1.1.37). The NSAQMD established thresholds of significance for assessing and mitigating air quality impacts of land use projects, as shown in the tables provided below. Level A requires the most basic mitigations, projects falling within the Level B range require more extensive mitigation, and Level C requires the most extensive mitigation. Table 2 below shows that estimated project construction related pollution levels would fall within NSAQMD Level A thresholds.

Pollutant	NSAQMD Threshold*	Project Impact
NOx	< 24 lbs/day	1.85 lbs/day (0.34 tons/yr)
ROG	< 24 lbs/day	0.54 lbs/day (0.09 tons/yr)
PM10	< 79 lbs/day	0.14 lbs/day (0.02 tons/yr)
CO	N/A	2.60 lbs/day (0.47 tons/yr)

Resources: NSAQMD. "Guidelines for Assessing Air Quality Impacts of Land Use Projects" 2024. CalEEMod Version 2022.1.1.37.1

Mitigation Measures 3A and 3B are proposed to reduce emissions during project construction (increased particulate matter from diesel and dust and increase hydrocarbon release for the synthesis of ozone) from heavy equipment used for grading, brush chipping, and other construction activities. Table 3, below, shows resultant operational impacts are within NSAQMD Level A. These emissions are associated with energy use, landscape equipment (stationary sources) and mobile sources associated with vehicle use.

Pollutant	NSAQMD Threshold*	Project Impact
NOx	< 24 lbs/day	0.21 lbs/day (0.03 tons/yr)
ROG	< 24 lbs/day	0.67 lbs/day (0.12 tons/yr)
PM10	< 79 lbs/day	0.27 lbs/day (0.04 tons/yr)
CO	N/A	1.72 lbs/day (0.31 tons/yr)

Resources: NSAQMD. "Guidelines for Assessing Air Quality Impacts of Land Use Projects" 2024. CalEEMod Version 2022.1.1.37.1

In order to ensure the project remains within the operational levels identified above, and to ensure that it does not contribute cumulatively considerable net increases in criteria pollutants that would substantially deteriorate ambient air quality or violate air quality standards, Mitigation Measure 3C reduces potential operational emissions. While mapping does not indicate that the site is likely to contain serpentine, ultramafic rock, or naturally occurring asbestos, Mitigation Measure 3C requires NSAQMD notification in the event of their discovery. Therefore, with implementation of these mitigation measures, the potential for this project to violate any air quality standards during either the construction or the operational phases would be *less than significant with mitigation*.

3c, d: The project proposes to subdivide the subject 36.92-acre parcel into three (3) parcels that would each contain rural residential improvements. Each resultant parcel could be developed with a primary residential dwelling, and a variety of accessory structures could be added within the proposed building envelopes. Rural residential uses are not anticipated to generate substantial pollutant concentrations, nor are there sensitive receptors in the immediate area of the proposed parcels. The proposed land division would result in parcels that contain rural residential improvements and uses similar to those

currently found both on- and off-site. Therefore, no impacts related to exposing sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations are anticipated as a result of this land division and *no impacts* related to the generation of emissions that could affect a substantial amount of people are anticipated.

Mitigation: To offset potentially adverse air quality impacts associated with the project activities, the following mitigation measures shall be required and shall be included in the improvement plans for the project:

Mitigation Measure 3A: Reduce emissions during construction. The following are the minimum recommended mitigation measures designed to help reduce project emissions related to construction, which shall be included as a note on all plans prior to issuance of all grading, improvement, and building permits. In addition to these measures, all statewide air pollution control regulations shall be followed, including diesel regulations. This note shall be included on the Supplemental Map.

1. During construction, grid power shall be used in order to reduce emissions from other on-site energy sources such as diesel generators for job site power needs where feasible.
2. At least 50% of the mobile off-road construction equipment in use at any time on the project shall be equipped with Tier 1 engines (or cleaner).
3. All architectural coatings shall comply with the California Air Resources Board's Suggested Control Measure for Architectural Coatings.
4. Construction equipment idling times shall be minimized either by shutting equipment off when not in use or reducing the maximum idling time to 5 minutes (as required by the California airborne toxics control measure Title 13, Section 2485 of California Code of Regulations [CCR]) and all construction equipment shall also be maintained and properly serviced in accordance with manufacturer's specifications. Clear signage shall be provided for construction workers at all access points.
5. Use reasonable precautions to minimize dust generation. Reasonable precautions may include using dust suppressants, limiting vehicle speeds, sweeping paved roads, and watering exposed surfaces, as well as any stockpiled material, active demolition sites, and unpaved construction roads. Such methods shall be noted on improvement plans prior to approval.

Timing: Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits

Reporting: Agency approval of the Parcel Map recordation and future permit issuance

Responsible Agency: Planning Department / NSAQMD

Mitigation Measure 3B: Comply with open burning prohibitions. Use alternatives to open burning of vegetative material on the project site, unless deemed infeasible by the Air Pollution Control Officer. Treat cleared vegetation by legal means other than open burning, such as chipping, shredding, grinding, use as compost or firewood, and conversion to biomass fuel. Open burning of site-cleared vegetation shall be permitted only upon NSAQMD's approval of documentation showing alternatives are unobtainable or economically infeasible. Obtain an approval letter from NSAQMD prior to approval of improvement or grading plans for road, driveway or future residential construction indicating the approved method of cleared vegetation disposal. Note such methods on any project plans prior to approval. At no time shall open burning of materials generated by this project occur at another site unless approved in advance by NSAQMD.

Timing: Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits

Reporting: Agency approval of the Parcel Map recordation and future permit issuance

Responsible Agency: Planning Department / NSAQMD

Mitigation Measure 3C: Mitigate any Asbestos Discovered During Construction. If serpentine, ultramafic rock or naturally occurring asbestos are discovered during construction or grading, the District shall be notified within 24 hours, and specific requirements contained in Section 93105 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations must be strictly complied with.

Timing: Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits and throughout construction

Reporting: Agency approval of the Parcel Map for recordation and future permit issuance

Responsible Agency: Planning Department / NSAQMD

4. Biological Resources

Existing Setting: The project is located in the Sierra Nevada foothills. According to the Biological Resources Assessment, prepared by Greg Matuzak in November, 2024 and updated in April, 2025, the general topography of the property is characterized as moderately sloped within the center of the parcel with slight sloping towards the south. Average elevation in the project area is approximately 2,220 feet above mean sea level (MSL) with the highest elevation of 2,240 feet above MSL within the northwestern corner of the project area and the lowest elevation of 2,200 feet above MSL within the southwestern section of the project area adjacent to the existing residence within the proposed Parcel 1. The project area is located in an area best characterized as lower montane coniferous forest habitat with much of the project area remaining in open grassland with sparse woodland cover. There are no other habitats within the project area besides a small area of garden that includes olive trees, vines, fruit trees, and some chickens. There are no aquatic resources within the project area. There are no mapped aquatic features within the National Wetland Inventory within or directly adjacent to the project area. Additionally, there are no areas within the project area that contain riparian or wetland vegetation.

The lower montane coniferous forest habitat type includes both conifers and hardwoods. Relatively little understory occurs under the pronounced hardwood tree layer with some areas of whiteleaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos viscida*) within the shrub layer. Ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), foothill pine (*Pinus sabiniana*), and blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) dominate the tree layer within the project area.

Non-native annual grassland are open vegetation types that are dominated by annual plant species, and in this case mostly non-native and invasive. These species can occur within the understory of other vegetation types like oak woodlands, but where annual grasslands occur within the project area there is little overstory or shrub cover. This vegetation type is dominant within the project area where there are open areas with little to no tree or shrub cover and it also does occur within the understory of the existing woodland within the project area. The autumn rainfall sparks germination and plants grow through the cool months and in spring will grow rapidly and flower, fruit, and senesce. Common to the environmental setting of this habitat type within the project area are bromes (*Bromus* sp.), wild oats (*Avena* sp.), yellow star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), soft chess (*Bromus hordeaceus*), as well as other non-native grassland associated species.

The special status species that were considered for this Biological Resources Assessment are based on a current review of the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB), California Native Plant Society (CNPS), and database information provided by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the project area. The database searches did reveal twenty-two (22) species and includes eight (8) wildlife species and fourteen (14) plant species. None of these species, nor any other special-status species (plants or wildlife), were observed during field surveys.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?				✓	A, K, 19
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?				✓	A, K, L, 19
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?				✓	A, K, L, 10, 19
d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?		✓			A, L, 19, 35
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan, protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?		✓			A, 19
f. Introduce any factors (light, fencing, noise, human presence, and/or domestic animals), which could hinder the normal activities of wildlife?				✓	A, 18, 19

Impact Discussion:

4a, b, c: According to the project’s Biological Resources Assessment, the project is not anticipated to result in any adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Similarly, the project is not anticipated to have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service.

According to the project’s biologist, special status species were considered for the Biological Resources Assessment based on a current review of the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB), California Native Plant Society (CNPS), and database information provided by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the project area. The project area does not contain suitable habitat for any special-status species and therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on any special-status species. There are no aquatic resources within the project area. There are no mapped aquatic features within the

National Wetland Inventory within or directly adjacent to the project area. Additionally, there are no areas within the project area that contain riparian or wetland vegetation.

Therefore, the proposed project is anticipated to have *no impact* on the loss of any special status plant or animal species in this area, on protected aquatic resources, or any riparian habitat.

4d: The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Fish and Game Code (FGC) §3513 prohibit take of migratory birds, which is defined to include destruction of active nests (presumed to contain eggs or nestlings). There is a low to medium potential for nesting raptors and other nesting migratory bird species protected under the MBTA to occur within the project area. The project area represents marginal potential habitat for bird species protected under the MBTA, such as tree nesting species (raptors) and ground nesting species like the spotted towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*) and dark-eyed junco (*Junco hyemalis*). In addition, active and inactive nests within and adjacent to the project area were not identified during the field survey. If development or ground disturbing activities within the project area will occur during the nesting season for raptors and ground nesting MBTA protected birds (between March 1 and August 31), a pre-construction nesting survey should be conducted if such development activities pose a risk to nest abandonment prior to the fledging of young from such nests. Measure 4A requires a nesting survey prior to any disturbance to avoid impacts to potentially nesting raptors and migratory birds.

The project area is not located in any known major deer corridor, known deer holding area, or critical deer fawning area. Per the Migratory Deer Ranges Nevada County General Plan map, the project area is located in an area identified as containing Deer Winter Range. The field survey did not record any observations of deer. Mitigation Measure 4B would require clustered development through the prescribed building envelopes to minimize the potential impacts to resident and migratory deer population in the surrounding area. Mitigation Measure 4C would prohibit solid fencing except around a dwelling, cultivated areas and animal enclosures to continue to allow free movement of deer through the area. With implementation of these mitigation measures, the proposed project impacts related to wildlife movement and disturbance of local wildlife would be *less than significant with mitigation*.

4e: The proposed land division is not anticipated to conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance. Nevada County has a number of local policies and ordinances that protect sensitive resources, including deer habitat; rare, threatened, and endangered species and their habitats; timber resources; and watercourses, wetlands, and riparian areas; and steep slopes. A number of these protected resources may be present in the project area: migratory birds would be protected through proposed Mitigation Measure 4A and Mitigation Measures 4B and 4C as discussed above (4d) are proposed to protect the resident deer herd and the movement of other wildlife. Landmark oak groves would be protected through Mitigation Measure 4D as discussed below.

The project area is described in the Biological Resources Assessment as lower montane coniferous forest habitat with much of the project area remaining in open grassland with sparse woodland cover. There are no oak trees within or directly adjacent to the project area that have a diameter at breast height of 36 inches or greater (definition of landmark oak tree), therefore, the project area does contain mapped landmark oak trees. The project area does contain two (2) areas mapped as landmark grove (33% canopy cover or greater of native oaks and other hardwood tree species). The denser areas containing oak trees within the project area are mostly small to medium in size (dbh of 8 to 16 inches), totaling 2.3 acres of landmark groves mapped within the overall project area. The mapped building envelopes ensure proposed development areas associated with each of the newly created parcels within the subject parcel

will be located outside of environmentally sensitive areas that include the aforementioned landmark oak groves. Mitigation Measure 4D would require environmentally sensitive areas to be established on the parcel map as well as on future development plans to ensure their protection from future disturbances. With implementation of these mitigation measures, any conflicts with local policies and ordinances are expected to be *less than significant with mitigation*.

4f: The subject property is not part of a Habitat Conservation Plan or any other adopted conservation plans; therefore, the project would have **no impact** or conflicts with adopted conservation plans.

Mitigation: To reduce potential construction impacts to biological resources, the following mitigation measures shall be required and shall be included as notes on the supplemental data sheets that record concurrently with the parcel map:

Mitigation Measure 4A: Avoid Impacts to Nesting Birds. The following note shall be added to all improvement/grading/construction plans:

Impacts to nesting raptors, including special-status avian or bat species, and migratory birds can be avoided by removing vegetation before the start of the nesting season, or delaying removal until after the end of the nesting season.

1. If construction is to take place during the nesting season (March 1 - August 31), including any ground disturbance, preconstruction surveys, within 250 feet of the disturbance area, for nesting raptors, migratory birds and special-status bats shall be conducted within 7 days prior to the beginning of construction activities by a California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) approved biologist and in accordance with California and Federal requirements.
2. Tree removal and construction shall not take place during the breeding season (March 1 – August 31), unless supported by a report from the qualified biologist verifying that birds, including raptors, are not nesting in the trees proposed for removal or disturbance.
3. If active nests are found, temporary nest disturbance buffers shall be established; a quarter-mile buffer for nesting raptors and, a 200-foot buffer if active migratory bird nests are found.
4. If project related activities within the temporary nest disturbance buffer are determined to be necessary during the nesting season, then an onsite biologist/monitor experienced with raptor behavior, shall be retained by the project proponent to monitor the nests, and shall, along with the project proponent, consult with the CFWD to determine the best course of action necessary to avoid nest abandonment or take of individuals. Work may be allowed to proceed within the temporary nest disturbance buffer if raptors are not exhibiting agitated behavior such as defensive flights at intruders, getting up from a brooding position, or flying off the nest. The designated biologist/monitor shall be onsite daily while construction related activities are taking place and shall have the authority to stop work if raptors are exhibiting agitated behavior. In consultation with CDFW and depending on the behavior of the raptors, over time the biologist/monitor may determine that monitoring is no longer necessary, due to the raptors' acclimation to the activities.
5. Any trees containing nests that must be removed as a result of development shall be removed during the non-breeding season. However, the project proponent shall be responsible for offsetting the loss of any nesting trees. The project proponent and

biologist/monitor shall consult with CDFW, and the extent of any necessary compensatory mitigation shall be determined by CDFW. Previous recommended mitigation for the loss of nesting trees has been at a ratio of three trees for each nest tree removed during the non-nesting season.

Timing: Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of Grading/Improvement/Building permits

Reporting: Approval of the Parcel Map for recordation and future permit issuance

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Mitigation Measure 4B: Establish Building Envelopes to Minimize Impacts to Resident and Migratory Deer Populations. Delineate building envelopes, in accordance with the approved tentative map. The building envelopes shall be shown on the supplemental data sheets to be recorded concurrently with the parcel map and on all future grading/improvement/building permit plans with a Note stating, "All habitable structures shall be limited to the building envelopes identified on each of the parcels; this restriction does not apply to underground utility placement or driveways."

Timing: Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits

Reporting: Approval of the Parcel Map for recordation and future permit issuance

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Mitigation Measure 4C: Protect and Facilitate the Free Movement of Wildlife. The Supplemental Data Sheet for the recorded map shall include the following note: To protect agricultural and domestic use of this property while still facilitating the free movement of wildlife, no solid fence shall be placed on any parcel except around the single-family dwelling, cultivated areas and animal enclosures. Perimeter fencing shall be limited to three or four-strand barbed-wire type, open material, with the lowest strand being barb-less and a minimum of 18" from the ground.

Timing: Prior to map recordation

Reporting: Approval of the Parcel Map for recordation

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

Mitigation Measure 4D: Establish Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA's). Sensitive biological resources, as shown on the tentative parcel map, shall be mapped, and identified as ESAs on the recorded parcel map as well as on all future improvement/grading/construction plans to ensure their protection from future disturbance. These resources include an ephemeral stream, a lake, and protected oak groves. The setback from the perennial stream, pond, and the lake shall be delineated as 100-feet from the highwater mark. The following note shall be included: "No disturbance is allowed within areas delineated as Environmentally Sensitive Areas, unless a Management Plan is approved."

Timing: Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits

Reporting: Approval of the Parcel Map for recordation and future permit issuance

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

5. Cultural Resources

Existing Setting: The approximately 37-acres of land is comprised of relatively flat-to-gently sloping land situated immediately west of Auburn Road, immediately south of Oregon Road, a short distance east of Hidden Valley Road, approximately 1.5-miles south of the Grass Valley corporate boundary, within the

western portion of Nevada County, California. Land affected is located within a portion of Section 9 of Township 15 North, Range 8 East, as shown on the USGS Grass Valley, California, 7.5' Series Quadrangle. According to the Cultural Resources Inventory Survey, prepared by Sean Michael Jensen in August, 2024, biologically, the study area is located in a transition zone between the lower foothill elevations and the higher Sierra Nevada mountains. This transition zone is considered the Yellow Pine Belt (Storer and Usinger 1963). Because it is a transition zone, or ecotone, a variety of flora and fauna species occur in the area that typically occur at zones of either higher or lower elevations. As a transition area, the Yellow Pine Belt in the Grass Valley area is comprised of a number of specific habitat types (Holland 1986). The numerous habitats give rise to a wide variety of flora and fauna. Prehistoric use and occupation focused on major surface water sources and other natural resource areas, with particular emphasis given to stream confluences and to ecotones created at the interface of foothill/valley lands, elements of which are located within and/or near the present study area. Generally, environmental conditions within the region have remained stable throughout the past 8,000 – 10,000 years, although minor fluctuations in overall precipitation and temperature regime have been documented, and these may have influenced prehistoric patterns of land use and settlement. All of the areas of potential effects (APE) are situated within relatively flat-to-gently sloping lands on one of the upper ridges above and east of French Ravine. Virtually all of the region has been affected by past mining, logging, and ranching activities over the past 150 years.

The proposed project will involve a parcel split resulting in three (3) separate parcels. Following the parcel split, the two new parcels could be subjected to residential development, actions which could include grading of new access, land recontouring, construction of new buildings, placement of utilities, and general landscaping. Since the project could ultimately involve physical disturbance to ground surface and subsurface components in conjunction with future residential development, it has the potential to impact cultural resources that may be located within the APE, which is the entirety of the subject parcel. Evaluation of the project’s potential to impact cultural resources is to be undertaken in conformity with Nevada County rules and regulations, and in compliance with requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, Public Resources Code, Section 21000, et seq. (CEQA), and The California CEQA Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, California Administrative Code, Section 15000 et seq. (Guidelines as amended).

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

Impact Discussion:

5a, b, c, d: The official Nevada County archaeological records were examined on July 12, 2024 (NCIC File No. NEV-24-51). This search documented the following existing conditions for the 37-acre APE, and for a 0.25-mile radius surrounding the APE. According to the Information Center's records and response letter, no cultural resources have been documented within the APE, nor within 0.25-miles of the APE. Existing records at the NCIC document that none of the present APE had been subjected to previous archaeological investigation, and that no prehistoric or historic-era sites had been documented within the APE. The pedestrian survey failed to identify any prehistoric or historic-era cultural resources within the APE. Consultation was undertaken with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) regarding sacred land listings for the property. An information request letter was delivered to the NAHC on July 25, 2024. The NAHC responded on August 8, 2024, indicating that the search of their Sacred Lands Files resulted in negative findings. Based on the specific findings detailed above from the Cultural Resources Inventory Survey, no significant historical resources or unique archeological resources are located within the proposed project area.

While cultural resource discovery has been determined to be highly unlikely, Mitigation Measure 5A has been included, which requires that work shall be halted and proper notification and consultation shall be required if any artifacts, cultural resources, paleontological/geologic, or human remains are discovered during construction. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure 5A, impacts to cultural resources are expected to be *less than significant with mitigation*.

Mitigation: To offset potentially adverse cultural or historical resource impacts associated with the construction activities, the following mitigation measure shall be required:

Mitigation Measure 5A: Halt work and conduct appropriate consultation in the event of inadvertent discovery of cultural material and/or in the event of inadvertent discovery of human remains. In the event of an inadvertent discovery of previously unidentified cultural material, archaeological consultation should be sought immediately. In the event that human remains are inadvertently encountered during ground-disturbing activity or at any time subsequently, State law shall be followed. All grading and construction plans shall include a note outlining the requirements provided below to ensure that any cultural resources discovered during project construction are properly managed. These requirements include the following: All equipment operators and employees involved in any form of ground disturbance shall be trained to recognize potential archeological resources and advised of the remote possibility of encountering subsurface cultural resources during grading activities. If such resources are encountered or suspected, work within 100 feet shall be halted immediately and the Nevada County Planning Department shall be contacted. A professional archaeologist shall be retained by the developer and consulted to access any discoveries and develop appropriate management recommendations for archaeological resource treatment. If bones are encountered and appear to be human, California Law requires that the Nevada County Coroner be contacted. Should the discovery include Native American human remains, in addition to the required procedures of Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, Public Resources Code 5097.98 and California Code of Regulations Section 15064.5(e), all work must stop in the immediate vicinity of the find and the Nevada County Coroner must be notified. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission, and the procedures outlined in California Environmental Quality Act Sections 15064.5(d) and (e) shall be followed. If Native

American resources are involved, Native American Organizations and individuals recognized by the County shall be notified and consulted about any plans for treatment.

Timing: Prior to the issuance of building/grading/improvement permits and during construction

Reporting: Agency approval of permits or plans

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

6. Energy

Existing Setting: On February 12, 2019, the Nevada County Board of Supervisors unanimously accepted the Nevada County Energy Action Plan (EAP) as the County’s unincorporated area’s roadmap for expanding energy efficiency, water efficiency, and renewable energy, as well as the cost-savings that accompany these efforts. The EAP is focused on operations of structures, infrastructure that generates energy, and efficient use of water.

The project proposes to subdivide the subject 36.92-acre parcel into three (3) parcels that would each contain rural residential improvements. Each resultant parcel could be developed with a primary residential dwelling, septic system, and a variety of accessory structures could be added within the proposed building envelopes. The property currently has electrical service from PG&E, which would also provide service for future development. The building envelopes on proposed Parcel 1 contain existing improvements, which include a single-family residence, an accessory dwelling unit, as well as other accessory and agricultural structures.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operations?			✓		A, 38
b. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?				✓	A, D, 38

Impact Discussion:

6a: The proposed project is not anticipated to result in significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during either the construction or the operational phase of the project. The proposed parcels are intended to be developed with single-family dwellings and accessory structures. Electricity is currently available to the property, and there are existing public utility easements to provide for future connection to electricity. Operationally, energy needs for four rural residential parcels are low. Future improvements, would be required to meet building code and energy standards in place at the time of their construction. The scale of the project along with requirements to meet energy standards for both construction equipment and materials will ensure that the use of energy resources would not be excessive and therefore, the project would have a *less than significant impact*.

6b: The proposed project would not conflict with any state or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Permits would be required in order to construct the future improvements on the undeveloped project parcels. As part of the building permit review, all equipment and structures would be required to

meet energy standards identified in the California Building Code. Likewise, the project would not obstruct or prevent plans for renewable energy or efficiency. Therefore, the project would have *no impact* to any state or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

Mitigation: None required.

7. Geology and Soils

Existing Setting: The subject property is located in an unincorporated rural area of Nevada County. The Nevada County area is in the Sierra Nevada geomorphic province of Northern California and lies on the western portion of the North American Plate. This property is located towards the western side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Average elevation in the project area is approximately 2,220 feet above mean sea level (MSL) with the highest elevation of 2,240 feet above MSL within the northwestern corner of the project area and the lowest elevation of 2,200 feet above MSL within the southwestern section of the project area, with portions of the property is characterized by gently sloping hills. The soils of the project site are mapped as Josephine Loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes; Secca-rock outcrop complex, 2 to 50 percent slopes; Josephine-Mariposa Complex, 15 to 50 percent slopes, eroded; and Josephine Loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes. The majority of the proposed parcels are not considered to have landslide hazards and the sections of moderate hazard that are on steeper slopes are outside of the proposed building envelopes. The erosion factor for the soils of the parcel indicate that the soil is not susceptible to erosion by water.

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act was adopted in 1972 to prevent the construction of buildings in areas where active faults have surface expression. Ground or fault rupture is generally defined as the displacement that occurs along the surface of a fault during an earthquake. The project site is not within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone and there are no known faults that cross through the project site; however, the project site is located approximately less than 0.5-miles west of Pre-Quaternary faults (Department of Conservation). Generally, western Nevada County is located in the low intensity zone for earthquake severity. The project site is located within Seismic Zone I—the Low Intensity Zone of the Modified Mercalli scale—meaning the site has a low risk for strong ground motion (Nevada County, 1991).

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk or loss, injury, or death involving exposure to or production of unstable earth conditions such as landslides, earthquakes, liquefaction, soil creep, mudslides, ground failure (including expansive, compressible, collapsible soils), or similar hazards?			✓		A, L, 12, 16, 29, 30
b. Result in substantial disruption, displacement, compaction, erosion, or over-covering of the soil by cuts, fills, extensive grading, or loss of topsoil?			✓		A, D, 25, 32

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
c. Be located on a geologic unit or expansive 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?			✓		A, D, 12, 25, 30, 31, 32
d. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?				✓	A, C
e. Result in excessive grading on slopes of over 30 percent?		✓			A, L
f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?		✓			A, L

Impact Discussion:

7a, b, c: The proposed land division is not anticipated to result in adverse effects due to unstable earth conditions or cause significant erosion. The project site is not within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone and there are no known faults that cross through the project site; however, the project site is located approximately less than 0.5-miles west of Pre-Quaternary faults Pre-Quaternary faults, which are older than 1.6 million years. The project site is located within Seismic Zone I, the Low Intensity Zone of the Modified Mercalli scale, meaning the site has a low risk for strong ground motion and thus the project is not anticipated to result in earthquake related impacts. Additionally, the soils of the project site are mapped as Josephine Loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes; Secca-rock outcrop complex, 2 to 50 percent slopes; Josephine-Mariposa Complex, 15 to 50 percent slopes, eroded; and Josephine Loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes, which underlies the majority of the project site, none are described by the USDA Soil Conservation Service as being unstable or expansive and are all classified as well drained. The proposed land division would require road improvements and other disturbance to provide access to the proposed parcels. The Fire Standard Access Road improvements would require ground disturbance and improvements along the existing access driveway for approximately 650 feet from Auburn Road to the end of the proposed building envelope on Parcel 2 to support two (2) 10-foot-wide travel lanes, 2-foot-wide shoulders, and 10-foot-wide fuel modification zones located within the proposed 50-foot-wide dedicated access easement. Work needed to bring the proposed access up to required standards, or that is associated with potential future development within building envelopes is not anticipated to result in substantial soils erosion. Building permits will be required for all earthwork, which would require compliance with the Nevada County grading standards outlined in Nevada County Code Section 14.12.010, requiring erosion control measures as needed to ensure that activities do not result in substantial erosion. Building permits would also require compliance with the California Building Code (CBC) and the Nevada County Code requirements to ensure protection during seismic events. Therefore, due to the project soils, standard permit requirements, impacts associated with unstable earth conditions or disturbance within steep slopes are expected to be *less than significant*.

7d: The project site does not have soils incapable of adequately supporting septic systems. The existing residences on the subject property utilize individual septic systems. Additionally, recent soils testing for

each proposed parcel has confirmed onsite soils are capable of adequate sewage disposal. A typical condition of approval requires Minimum Useable Sewage Disposal Areas to be delineated around existing leach-fields sized with adequate room for a 100 percent repair area should the initial system ever fail. Based on use of existing systems, along with recent soils testing confirmation, the project would have *no impact* relative to a lack of soils for sewage disposal.

7e: The general topography of the project area is characterized as moderately sloping from north to south and west to east. Average elevation in the project area is approximately 2,220 feet above mean sea level (MSL) with the highest elevation of 2,240 feet above MSL within the northwestern corner of the project area and the lowest elevation of 2,200 feet above MSL within the southwestern section of the project area adjacent to the existing residence within the proposed Parcel 1. The sloped areas that exceed 30% (steep slopes) are mapped with clear symbology on the proposed parcel map and the building envelopes and proposed access road and driveway are located outside of any area with identified steep slopes. All work associated with the proposed road improvements and potential future development within building envelopes is not anticipated to result in substantial soils erosion or grading on steep slopes. Further, any future non-habitable structures will require building permits and will not be able to be constructed on slopes steeper than 30% without a management plan. Mitigation Measure 7A would require the identified steep slopes to be shown as Environmentally Sensitive Areas and No Disturbance Areas on the supplemental data sheets that will record with the parcel map. Therefore, impacts relative to soils erosion, or to disturbance within steep slopes resulting from the proposed project are anticipated to be *less than significant with mitigation*.

7f: There are no known paleontological resources or unique geological features in or around the project parcel. However, because ground disturbance is anticipated to bring the proposed driveways up to required standards, or that may be associated with potential future development within building envelopes, Mitigation Measures 5A and 18A would require work to halt in the event that there is an unanticipated discovery of paleontological resources. Direct or indirect damage to paleontological resources is anticipated to be *less than significant with mitigation*.

Mitigation: To mitigate unexpected soils presence and impacts from project grading and construction, both on and off site, please see Mitigation Measures 5A and 18A. To offset potential geological impacts related to disturbance on steep slopes/high erosion areas and/or erosion, the following mitigation measure shall be implemented:

Measure 7A: Delineate Steep Slopes as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA's.) and Non-Disturbance Areas. Steep slope areas (>30%) and areas of high erosion potential shall be delineated as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA's) on the supplemental data sheets to be recorded concurrently with the parcel map and on all future grading/improvement/building plans, along with a note on both the supplemental data sheets and future plans that no disturbance shall be allowed within these areas unless a Steep Slopes Management Plan is approved by the Planning Department.

Timing: *Prior to parcel map recordation and issuance of grading/improvement/building permits*

Reporting: *Planning Department approval of the Parcel Map for recordation and future permit issuance*

Responsible Agency: *Planning Department*

8. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Existing Setting: Global climate change refers to changes in average climatic conditions on the earth as a whole, including temperature, wind patterns, precipitation, and storms. Naturally occurring gases dispersed in the atmosphere determine the Earth's climate by trapping solar radiation. This phenomenon is known as the greenhouse effect, which is a natural process that perpetuates life on earth by keeping the planet's surface warm. Scientific observation indicates that average air and ocean temperatures have steadily increased globally over the last 100 years. Evidence of this includes rapid levels of glacial melt, reductions in sea ice, shorter freezing seasons, and decreases in snowpack.

Scientific studies suggest that human activities are accelerating the concentration of greenhouse gases (GHG), which affects the global climate. One of the most significant contributors is the burning of fossil fuels for transportation and electricity generation, which introduces large amounts of carbon dioxide and other GHGs into the atmosphere. Collectively, these gases intensify the natural greenhouse effect, causing global average surface temperatures to rise. GHGs that are regulated by the State and/or EPA are carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆) and nitrous oxide (NO₂). CO₂ emissions are largely from fossil fuel combustion and electricity generation. Agriculture is a major source of both methane and NO₂, with additional methane coming primarily from landfills. Most HFC emissions come from refrigerants, solvents, propellant agents, and industrial processes, and persist in the atmosphere for longer periods of time and have greater effects at lower concentrations compared to CO₂.

Nevada County, like most communities in the Sierra Nevada, faces challenges associated with regional climate change. From record temperatures to proliferating wildfires and changing precipitation patterns, climate change poses an immediate and escalating threat to the region's environment, economic strength, and public health. The region is affected by more intense dry periods under warmer conditions which lead to extended and more frequent periods of drought in California. The area burned by wildfires across the state increases in tandem with rising temperatures. Tree mortality in forested areas increases dramatically as they become stressed from higher temperatures and decreased water availability, making them more vulnerable to insects and pathogens. The region is also impacted by a higher proportion of precipitation falling as rain instead of snow, more intense atmospheric river storms, and shortages in runoff and water supply, as well as substantial changes in runoff patterns and timing. This will affect groundwater recharge, and in turn affect Nevada County, as well as downstream communities. Climate change can impair the ability of ecosystems to provide goods and services, including reliable snowfall and healthy fishing ecosystems. Many these resources represent cultural, social, and economic benefits that local communities rely on for agriculture, tourism, recreation, and other industries.

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

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

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?		✓			A, G, 20, 38
b. Conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?		✓			A, G, 20, 38

Impact Discussion:

8a, b: The proposed project is not expected to generate greenhouse gases that would result in significant environmental impacts or that would be in conflict with plans for greenhouse gas reductions. The proposed project is located in the Sierra Nevada Foothills, within a rural area surrounded by low-density rural residential properties, and overall GHG outputs are expected to be minimal. California is divided geographically into air basins for the purpose of managing the air resources of the State on a regional basis. The air basin generally has similar meteorological and geographic conditions throughout. Nevada County and Placer County are both within the Mountain Counties Air Basin. Nevada County is within the jurisdiction of the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD), but the NSAQMD has not adopted thresholds of significance for greenhouse gases. However, Placer County Air Pollution District (APCD) has adopted thresholds of significance for greenhouse gases. Due to greenhouse gas emissions being not only a regional, but also a global concern, with the similarities between neighboring air districts, it was determined that the Placer APCD thresholds are a relevant standard for the determination of significance. The thresholds adopted by Placer County APCD include a bright-line threshold of 10,000 metric tons of Carbon dioxide equivalent per year and a De Minimis level of 1,100 metric tons of carbon dioxide per year (MT CO₂e/yr). A De Minimis Level for the operational phases of 1,100 MT CO₂e/yr represents an emissions level which can be considered as less than cumulatively considerable and be excluded from the further GHG impact analysis.

The overall GHG impact is expected to remain at a level that is *less than significant with mitigation*, due to several factors including but not limited to: the proposed land division and residential improvements will apply standard building permit requirements ensuring any new structures meet energy efficiency standards; adherence to Mitigation Measure 3A which requires 50% of equipment to utilize Tier 1 engines or clear, and equipment idle times to be less than five (5) minutes; and because the proposed

development is a low density residential use which will result in the potential for two residential properties that are consistent with existing General Plan and zoning densities in this area.

9. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Existing Setting: The project site is not within or adjacent to any hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (California Department of Toxic Substances Control, 2019). The project area is in a high fire hazard severity zone as designated by Cal Fire. The closest residences are approximately 80 feet from the eastern property boundary line and approximately 35 feet from the southwestern property line. The project is located approximately 5.5 miles from the nearest airport, the Nevada County Airport. The project is located approximately 1.25 miles from the McCourtney Road Transfer and Recycling Station.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?			✓		C
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
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				✓	A, L
d. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				✓	C, 24
e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				✓	A, L
f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				✓	A, L
g. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				✓	H, M
h. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?			✓		H, M

Impact Discussion:

9a, b: The project does not include routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials other than typical household and agricultural use and storage of hazardous substances such as cleaning agents, paints, solvents, and fertilizers. State and federal government regulate the uses of these materials and future residents would be required to comply with usage parameters mandated by these laws. Small quantities of hazardous materials could be stored, used, and handled during construction. During the construction phase of future residential or agricultural development, it is anticipated that small quantities of hazardous materials would be stored, used, and handled. The hazardous materials anticipated for use are small volumes of petroleum hydrocarbons and their derivatives (e.g., gasoline, oils, lubricants, and solvents) required to operate the construction equipment. These relatively small quantities would be below reporting requirements for hazardous materials business plans and would not pose substantial public health and safety hazards through release of emissions or risk of upset. Safety risks to construction workers for the proposed project would be reduced by compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards. Therefore, project related hazard impacts relative to routine transport, use, disposal or emission of hazardous substances to the public or environment would be ***less than significant***.

9c: The project site is not within one-quarter mile from an existing school and therefore the proposed project does not have the potential to emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste that could impact such a facility. Additionally, as noted above, hazardous materials are anticipated to be those associated with typical household uses and those small quantities that could be utilized during construction. Due to the type and amount of materials associated with this land division in conjunction with the distance to the nearest school, ***no impact*** relative to transport, use, or emissions of hazardous materials within proximity of a school is anticipated.

9d: The subject property is not on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5; therefore, there would be ***no impact***.

9e, f: There are no public or private airports near the project site. The project site is not located within an airport land use plan or within any airport compatibility zones. The parcel is approximately 5.5 miles from the nearest airport – the Nevada County Airport, located east of the project site. Therefore, the project is not anticipated to result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area and would therefore have ***no impact***.

9g: The proposed land division is not anticipated to interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, nor would it expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. The subject property is served by the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District, in an area designated by CalFire as a High Fire Severity Zone area. The Nevada County Office of the Fire Marshal has reviewed the project proposal and did not comment on any adverse impacts to emergency response or evacuation plans. The County Office of Emergency Services does not publish emergency evacuation plans; however, the Nevada County Sheriff's Department has verified that there are no emergency response plans or emergency evacuation plans for the project area. The proposed project would not impair or physically interfere with emergency response and evacuation plans, resulting in ***no impact***.

9h: All future improvements would require Building Permits and conformance with Title 14 of the Nevada County Code for building and grading standards. As a condition in the project Conditions of Approval, the applicant would be required to provide defensible space around all structures consistent with California Public Resources Code 4291, which requires up to 100 feet of fuels treatment or to the property line,

whichever is closer. The proposed project would not expose people or structures to wildland fires and would improve access to the site, and therefore there would be a *less than significant* impact.

Mitigation: None required.

10. Hydrology and Water Quality

Existing Setting: The general topography of the parcel is characterized as moderately sloping, with an average elevation in the project area of approximately 2,220 feet. There are no aquatic resources within the project area. There are no mapped aquatic features within the National Wetland Inventory or directly adjacent to the project area. Additionally, there are no areas within the project area that contain riparian or wetland vegetation. The project corridor is not located within or near a 100-year flood hazard zone according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Flood Information. The Federal Emergency Management Agency identifies the area as Zone X, which is an area determined to be outside of the 500-year flood or protected by levee from 100-year floods. The project is not in a tsunami or seiche zones.

The California State Water Resources Control Board regulates stormwater discharges from construction sites because of its potential to mobilize pollutants and discharge into waterbodies or watersheds. By regulating these discharges, the State Water Board is preserving, enhancing, and restoring California’s waterbodies and its resources. Sustainable management of groundwater basins is overseen by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) via the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). This project is not located within any groundwater basins or priority basins identified by the DWR Bulletin 118, or the SGMA Basin Prioritization Dashboard. The nearest DWR Bulletin 118 basins are the North and South Yuba Subbasins of the Sacramento Valley Basin (5-21.60 and 5-021.61, respectively). No Groundwater Sustainability Agency, no Groundwater Sustainability Plan, and no sustainability criteria or goals have been established for the underlying aquifer of this project.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?			✓		A, C, D, I
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?			✓		A, C

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would: i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on-or 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? v) otherwise substantially degrade water quality?			✓		A, D, 9, 19
d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?				✓	A, L, 9, 13
e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?				✓	A, D
f. Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?				✓	A, L, 9, 13
g. Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?				✓	A, L, 13
h. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?				✓	A, L, 9, 13

Impact Discussion:

10a, c: The proposed land division is not anticipated to negatively affect water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, nor is it anticipated to contribute amounts that could exceed drainage system capacity or alter existing drainage patterns. The land division is intended to divide one existing parcel with an existing single-family residence and agricultural accessory structures into three (3) legal standalone parcels served by a private road. The Fire Standard Access Road improvements would require ground disturbance and improvements along the existing access driveway for approximately 650 feet from Auburn Road to the end of the proposed building envelope on Parcel 2 to support two (2) 10-foot-wide travel lanes, 2-foot-wide shoulders, and 10-foot-wide fuel modification zones located within the proposed 50-foot-wide dedicated access easement. Roadway improvements would be required to provide access and road frontage for Parcel 2 and will be conducted under permits issued by the Nevada County Building Department. Any work conducted within the right-of-way will require an encroachment permit from the Nevada County Department of Public Works. Standard erosion control measures will be

required to ensure that this work, and any future improvements within proposed building envelopes, does not result in offsite erosion or deposition of sediment into water features.

There are no aquatic resources or features within the project area. There are no mapped aquatic features within the National Wetland Inventory or directly adjacent to the project area. Additionally, there are no areas within the project area that contain riparian or wetland vegetation. Additionally, any development or improvements shall be contained within the building envelopes on the parcels and would therefore not result in a substantial increase in surface runoff that could result in flooding. Based on the above discussion, project related impacts to water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, including contributing amounts that could exceed drainage system capacity or alter existing drainage patterns would be *less than significant*.

10b: The proposed land division would not result in a substantial decrease in groundwater supplies, interfere with groundwater recharge, or conflict with water quality/groundwater management plans. Existing improvements will continue to rely on the existing well and the newly created parcels would each be required to have new wells permitted and installed. The addition of two (2) residential wells is not anticipated to negatively impact groundwater supplies or groundwater recharge because of the anticipated potential development. The proposed project to divide one (1) parcel into three (3) parcels, is anticipated to have *less than significant impact* on the existing wells on this, or on adjacent properties, and therefore on groundwater supplies and recharge.

10d, e, f, g, h: There is no flood hazard or designated flood zone on the project parcel. Furthermore, the proposed project is not within a tsunami or seiche zone, and it does not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of a water quality control plan. The proposed project does not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss or injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam. Therefore, there would be *no impact* associated with flooding, tsunamis or seiches, water quality control plans, or a sustainable groundwater management plan.

Mitigation: None required.

11. Land Use and Planning

Existing Setting: The subject 36.92-acre parcel is located on Auburn Road and is approximately 1.65 miles west of State Highway 49 in Grass Valley, California and contains one primary dwelling, one accessory dwelling unit, and accessory structures. The subject parcel is zoned General Agricultural, with a minimum parcel size of 10 acres (AG-10) and has a Rural General Plan designation, allowing density at one unit per 10 acres (RUR-10), with a small portion in the northeastern portion of the parcel that has Estate General Plan designation. Surrounding parcels are all designated as RUR-10 or EST by the General Plan and are zoned AG-10, Residential Agricultural (RA-3), Public (P), and Open Space (OS), and are larger and smaller rural parcels in an area with generally low development, including agricultural areas and other rural residential areas. The Nevada County Surveyor has determined through the review of the property's title report and grant deed that the parcel in question was legally created pursuant to the Subdivision Map Act of 1972.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Result in structures and/or land uses incompatible with existing land uses?		✓			A, L, 17.18
b. Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?		✓			A, B, 18, 19
c. Physically divide an established community?				✓	A, L, 17, 18

Impact Discussion:

11a, b: The subject parcel is zoned General Agricultural, with a minimum parcel size of 10 acres (AG-10) and has a Rural General Plan designation, allowing density at one unit per 10 acres (RUR-10), with a small portion in the north-eastern portion of the parcel that has Estate General Plan designation. The AG zoning district allows single-family residential improvements and uses, along with a variety of other uses. The proposed land division would result in three (3) legal parcels as follows: Parcel 1 – 15.40 acres; Parcel 2 – 10.0 acres; and Parcel 3 – 11.51 acres. These parcel sizes are in compliance with the density allowed by the zoning and General Plan designations. Each resultant parcel could be developed with a primary residential dwelling, septic system, and a variety of accessory structures could be added within the proposed building envelopes. Proposed Parcel 1 is currently developed with an existing single-family residence, garage, barn, accessory dwelling unit, swimming pool, well, septic system and repair area, and is accessed directly off of Auburn Road, a county-maintained road, from an existing gravel driveway.

Nevada County Code requires that parcels in the General Agricultural zoning district have 200’ of minimum road frontage and that flagpole parcels in the General Agricultural zoning district have 50’ of road frontage. The proposed flagpole configuration of Parcel 1 includes 50’ of road frontage and a dedicated 50’ wide access easement that will serve all proposed parcels. The existing driveway is proposed to be improved to a fire safe road standard from the existing encroachment off of Auburn Road to the end of the proposed building enveloped for Parcel 2 which is approximately 650 feet in length and will serve both proposed Parcel 2 and 3 with road frontage, with the remaining portion of the driveway that will serve proposed Parcel 1 improved to a fire safe driveway standard. Each proposed parcel’s proposed building envelope conforms with the site development standards for the General Agricultural zoning district, and are located outside of the setbacks, existing easements, environmentally sensitive areas (landmark oak groves), and slopes of greater than 30%. The location of the minimum usable disposal area (M.U.S.D.A.) is identified on each proposed parcel, and proposed Parcels 2 and 3 will have individual septic systems. Parcel 1 is served by an existing private well and proposed Parcels 2 and 3 will require new private wells to be drilled, respectively.

The proposed land division would be in compliance with minimum design standards and requirements set forth in the Nevada County Code. Mitigation Measures 4B, 4D, and 7A have been included to submit documentation showing the building envelopes avoiding all sensitive environmental resources, and to identify those areas as Environmentally Sensitive Areas on the Supplemental Data Sheet prior to map recordation. Potential conflicts with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations that could result in physical impacts are identified within this Initial Study and are found to be less than significant.

Therefore, impacts related to land use policy inconsistency and land use incompatibility are considered *less than significant with mitigation*.

11c: The proposed two-way land division would not physically divide an established community. The project parcel is in a rural area rather than an established community and does not propose any development that could cause community divisions. Therefore, the project would not physically divide an established community, and thus *no impact* is anticipated.

12. Mineral Resources

Existing Setting: Mineral resources, particularly gold, have played a major role in the history of Nevada County. Since 1849, when gold was first discovered in the area, to the years preceding World War II, most of the County's population was economically supported, directly or indirectly, by the local gold mining industry. Other metals produced in the County since 1880 include silver, copper, lead, zinc, chromite, and small amounts of tungsten and manganese. Industrial minerals include barite, quartz for silicon production, and small amounts of limestone, asbestos, clay, and mineral paint. Also, significant deposits of sand, gravel, and rock types suitable for construction aggregate are exposed throughout the County.

In order to promote the conservation of the state's mineral resources, and ensure adequate reclamation of mined lands, the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA) was enacted. SMARA requires that the State Geologist classify land in California for its mineral resource potential. Local governments are required to incorporate the mineral and classification reports and maps into their general plans and consider the information when making land use decisions.

Areas subject to mineral land classification studies are divided into various Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ) categories that reflect varying degrees of mineral potential. Mineral deposits of all types which are designated MRZ-2a or MRZ-2b, are used for areas underlain by mineral deposits where geologic data indicate that significant measured or indicated (MRZ-2a) or inferred (MRZ-2b) resources are present. The project area is not mapped within a Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ), or area of known valuable mineral deposits.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				✓	A, 1
b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?				✓	A, 1

Impact Discussion: The proposed project is not mapped within a known mineral resource area or MRZ and would not change existing residential agricultural land uses on the project site. None of the project parcels contain known or designated mineral resources. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on mineral resources.

Mitigation: None required.

13. Noise

Existing Setting: The project proposes to subdivide the subject 36.92-acre parcel (APN: 025-130-078) into three (3) legal parcels as follows: Parcel 1 – 15.40 acres; Parcel 2 – 10.0 acres; and Parcel 3 – 11.51 acres. The subject 36.92-acre parcel is located on Auburn Road and is approximately 1.65 miles west of State Highway 49 in Grass Valley, California. It is surrounded by larger and smaller rural parcels in an area with generally low development, including agricultural areas and other rural residential areas. Proposed Parcel 1 is currently developed with an existing single-family residence, garage, barn, accessory dwelling unit, swimming pool, well, septic system and repair area, and is accessed directly off of Auburn Road, a county-maintained road, from an existing gravel driveway. Proposed Parcel 2 and Parcel 3 are currently undeveloped with access proposed via the 50’ access easement. Ambient noise levels in the area are generally those generated by the traffic on Auburn Road and noise that commonly accompanies rural and residential uses.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Expose persons to or generation of a substantial temporary, periodic, or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of the County’s adopted standards established in the General Plan and Land Use and Development Code?		✓			A, 17, 18
b. Expose persons to or generate excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels?			✓		A, 18
c. For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				✓	A, L

Impact Discussion:

13a, b: The land division would allow for future development, improvements, and uses consistent with those allowed within the General Agricultural (AG) zoning district. Generally, these land uses are compatible with other residential land uses and are not expected to generate significant noise impacts thereto. The exception to this would be noises and potential vibration generated during any future construction of additional improvements on the new individual parcels. Vibration is typically sensed at nearby properties when it causes objects within the structures to vibrate such as rattling windows. Construction noises and construction-related vibration are not an ongoing land use and as they are short term in nature, they are exempt from the County noise standards. While the County Code does not apply its noise standards to temporary construction, nonetheless there could be a temporary exposure of nearby uses to noise in excess of County thresholds. Therefore, Mitigation Measure 13A is recommended to limit construction work to the hours from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. Anticipated noise generated by the future residential use within the proposed land division is anticipated to be consistent

with the noises generated by existing residential activities and thus result in *less than significant* noise impacts; and *less than significant* construction-related noise impacts *with mitigation*.

13c: There are no public or private airports near the project site. The project site is not located within an airport land use plan or within any airport compatibility zones. The parcel is approximately 5.5 miles from the nearest airport – the Nevada County Airport, located East of the project site. Future development of this parcel could result from this General Plan Land Use and Zoning District Map Amendment project which does not have the potential to result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area due to airport hazards and therefore this project will have *no impact* related to airport noise.

Mitigation: To offset potential construction related noises, the following mitigation measures shall be required and shall be included as notes on the supplemental data sheets that record concurrently with the parcel map:

Mitigation Measure 13A: Limit construction work hours to 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM: During grading and construction, work hours shall be limited from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. Prior to issuance of grading and building permits, improvement plans shall reflect hours of construction.

Timing: Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits and throughout construction

Reporting: Planning Department approval of the Parcel Map for recordation and future permit issuance

Responsible Agency: Planning Department

14. Population and Housing

Existing Setting: The project site is zoned as General Agricultural (AG), a rural district intended to provide areas for agricultural uses such as farming, with agricultural support facilities and services, low intensity uses and open space. The maximum density for the parcel is one unit per 10-acres (AG-10). These are in support of the Rural-10 (RUR-10) General Plan designation of the property. The site has residential and agricultural-related improvements, including residences and accessory structures. The closest residences are approximately 80 feet from the eastern property boundary line and approximately 35 feet from the southwestern property line.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?				✓	A, 17, 18
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				✓	A, 17, 18
c. Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				✓	A, 17, 18

Impact Discussion:

14a, b, c: The proposed land division would not result in an inducement of unplanned population growth or to displace existing people or housing. The parcel’s zoning and General Plan designations allow a minimum density of one parcel per ten (10) acres. As a 36.92-acre parcel, the property could support three (3) parcels and be consistent with the currently adopted Nevada County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. This project proposes to create three (3) parcels total. The proposed land division requires new wells, septic systems, and roadway improvements to be permitted to support additional housing opportunities. Typically, the growth-inducing potential of a project would be considered significant if it stimulates population growth or a population concentration above what is assumed in local and regional land use plans. In the most recent Housing Element Chapter of the Nevada County General Plan, a 2% annual growth is predicted. If additional primary and accessory dwelling units are constructed, it would not exceed the assumed growth rate or be considered additional density. The land division would not require the demolition of any housing, therefore replacement housing would need to be constructed. Therefore, the proposed project would have *no impact* related to these potential issues.

Mitigation: None required.

15. Public Services

Existing Setting: The following services are provided within the project corridor:

Fire: The Nevada County Consolidated Fire Protection District provides fire protection services to the project parcel.

Police: The Nevada County Sheriff Department provides law enforcement services.

Schools: The project site is within the Clear Creek Elementary School District and Nevada Joint Union High School District.

Parks: The project is within the Bear River Recreation District.

Water: The project site is served by well.

Sewer: The sewage disposal is served by individual septic systems.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of or need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the following the public services:					
i) Fire protection?			✓		H, M
ii) Police protection?			✓		A
iii) Schools?			✓		A, L, P
iv) Parks?			✓		A, L
v) Other public services or facilities?			✓		A, B, L

Impact Discussion:

15a: The proposed land division is not anticipated to have significant impacts on fire protection or law enforcement services because of the low-density nature of this project, which is anticipated with the zoning and General Plan designations. The proposed land division would not impact schools or public recreational facilities because the project would not result in a substantial increase in population that would require schools, parks, and other public services and facilities. School, fire mitigation, and recreation impact fees are in place and applicable at the time of building permit issuance to offset the incremental impact on these services. These impact fees are collected based on the dwelling type and size during the permitting process. Therefore, the impact to public services is considered *less than significant*.

Mitigation: None required.

16. Recreation

Existing Setting: The project parcels are located within the Bear River Recreation District. The District provides a variety of recreation programs and cooperative management of several recreation facilities in the southern Nevada County region. No recreational facilities exist on the subject parcels. The Nevada County General Plan recommends the level of service for recreation needs as three acres per each 1,000 persons, countywide.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?			✓		A
b. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?			✓		A
c. Conflict with established recreation uses of the area, including biking, equestrian and/or hiking trails.			✓		A, L

Impact Discussion:

16a, b, c: The proposed land division is not anticipated to result in negative impacts to recreational facilities, trigger the need for new facilities, or conflict with established facilities because of the small potential increase in population. The residential density established by the General Plan for the area would allow three parcels, which is equal to what the land division proposes. Based upon the objectives established in the General Plan, recreation impacts associated with residential growth are offset by a funding program via development fees; see impact fee discussion in 15a (3-5 above). There are no existing recreational facilities on the parcel and the recreational facilities nearby are limited. The Western Nevada County Non-Motorized Recreational Trails Master Plan delineates that the project parcel is within the Auburn-Northstar Corridor, therefore a 10' wide trail easement is proposed along the frontage of Auburn Road to accommodate this approximate proposed trail. Proposed building envelopes would

contain existing and future improvements such that there would be significant separation from use areas to property boundaries and setbacks. Due to the minimal potential increase to population and the lack of existing facilities onsite or in close proximity, the proposed project would have *less than significant* impact related to recreational facilities and established recreational uses of the area.

Mitigation: None required.

17. Transportation

Existing Setting: The land division is intended to divide one existing parcel with an existing single-family residence and agricultural accessory structures into three (3) legal standalone parcels served by a private road that is off of Auburn Road. The Fire Standard Access Road improvements would require ground disturbance and improvements along the existing access driveway for approximately 650 feet from Auburn Road to the end of the proposed building envelope on Parcel 2 to support two (2) 10-foot-wide travel lanes, 2-foot-wide shoulders, and 10-foot-wide fuel modification zones located within the proposed 50-foot-wide dedicated access easement. Roadway improvements would be required to provide access and road frontage for Parcel 2 and will be conducted under permits issued by the Nevada County Building Department. Any work conducted within the right-of-way will require an encroachment permit from the Nevada County Department of Public Works. Figure 1 shows the proposed configuration of the parcels and proposed access road.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Result in an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity or the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume-to-capacity ratio, on roads, or congestion at intersections.				✓	A, H, M
b. Substantially increase hazards due to design features (e.g., a sharp curve or dangerous intersection) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?			✓		A, H, M
c. Result in an increase in traffic hazards to motor vehicles, bicyclists, or pedestrians, including short-term construction and long-term operational traffic?			✓		A, H, M
d. Result in inadequate: Site distance? Ingress/egress? General road capacity? Emergency access (4290 Standard)?				✓	H, M
e. Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?			✓		A, B

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

According to the Senate Bill 743, Vehicle Miles Traveled Implementation, adopted by the Nevada County Transportation Commission, a project's or plan's VMT impact may be considered less than significant if "the project or plan total weekday VMT per service population is equal to or less than "X" percent below the subarea mean under baseline conditions" and "the project or plan is consistent with the jurisdiction's general plan and the Nevada County Regional Transportation Plan." A specific reduction "X" below subarea baseline VMT may be selected by each jurisdiction based on key factors such as the setting (as noted in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(b)(1)), evidence related to VMT performance, and policies related to VMT reduction). However, analysis of smaller, less complex projects can be simplified by using screening criteria. The Office of Land Use & Climate Innovation (LCI) suggest that screening thresholds may be used to identify when land use projects should be expected to cause a less than-significant impact without conducting a detailed study. Screening thresholds identified by the Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) Senate Bill 743 Vehicle Miles Traveled Implementation document include:

Projects in western Nevada County consistent with a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) or General Plan that generate less than 630 VMT per day. This value is based on the CEQA exemptions allowed for projects up to 10,000 square feet as described in CEQA Guidelines Sections 15303. The specific VMT estimate relies on the vehicle trip generation rate contained in the LCI Technical Advisory for small project screening and average vehicle trip lengths for western Nevada County using the travel forecasting model. The potential increase in traffic resulting from the proposed land division would be insignificant in nature so therefore there would be *no impacts* relative to conflicts with traffic review.

17b, c: The proposed project would not result in an increase in hazards due to incompatible uses, or due to a geometric design feature either during construction or during future occupation of the properties. Nevada County Code requires that parcels in the General Agricultural zoning district have 200' of minimum road frontage and that flagpole parcels in the General Agricultural zoning district have 50' of road frontage. The proposed flagpole configuration of Parcel 1 includes 50' of road frontage and a dedicated 50' wide access easement that will serve all proposed parcels. The existing driveway is proposed to be improved to a fire safe road standard from the existing encroachment off of Auburn Road to the end of the proposed building envelope for Parcel 2 which is approximately 650 feet in length and will serve both proposed Parcel 2 and 3 with road frontage, with the remaining portion of the driveway that will serve proposed Parcel 1 improved to a fire safe driveway standard. The Department of Public Works will require an encroachment permit for sight distance improvements, if required for the new encroachment. Encroachment permits include review of Traffic Control Plans and/or other safety measures to ensure the work does not result in hazards during construction, and the Traffic Control Plan shall be approved by the County prior to commencement of work. The Department of Public Works included a condition of approval requiring that project roadways shall be improved to Fire Standard Access Road standards per County Standard Drawing C-1 for the private road from Auburn Road to the end of the proposed building enveloped for Parcel 2. Additionally, a condition of approval regarding the traffic mitigation fees will be required to be complied with, as well as creating and establishing the authority for imposing and charging a Road Improvement Fee with the unincorporated territory of Nevada County, will be levied at the issuance of building permits for each parcel created by the map. Lastly, the Department of Public Works included a condition of approval that the applicant shall provide a road agreement to a maintenance entity for private project access road to provide ongoing maintenance for the road and driveway that serve this project. Therefore, with the application of these standard conditions

of approval, project impacts due to geometric design and traffic hazards for both short-term construction and long-term operational traffic would be a *less than significant* impact.

17d: The proposed land division would improve emergency access. The proposed parcels are proposed to be accessed a private road that will come off of Auburn Road, which is a county-maintained road. The Nevada County Office of the Fire Marshal and the Department of Public Works reviewed the project and have included conditions of approval for the proposed private access road and driveway to require improvements that would include road widening and adding hammerhead turnarounds. These improvements would provide better access for emergency personnel such that there would be adequate facilities for emergency personnel to arrive and for occupants to exit. Any changes with the current design or modifications to existing structures will yield upgrading driveways to current standards. Therefore, the project would have *no impact* relative to resulting in inadequate emergency access.

17e: The proposed project would not conflict with any program plan, ordinance, or policies regarding transit, roadway, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities. Proposed Parcel 1 is currently accessed directly off of Auburn Road, a county-maintained road, from an existing gravel driveway, and proposed Parcels 2 and 3 will be accessed directly off of a proposed 50' access easement. Transit services will not be affected by the proposed project. The potential increase in traffic resulting from the proposed project would be insignificant in nature and therefore there would be no impacts relating to conflicts with traffic review. As noted above (see 17a, b, and c) the Nevada County Non-Motorized Transportation Master Plan delineates that the project parcel is within the Auburn-Northstar Corridor. To remain consistent with the policies identified in the Nevada County Non-Motorized Transportation Master Plan, the project proposes a 10' wide trail easement along the frontage of Auburn Road to accommodate this approximate proposed trail. There are no trails that currently pass through the project area, therefore bicycle and pedestrian movement will not be affected. Therefore, the project would have a *less than significant* impact with any policies regarding transit, roadway, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities.

Mitigation: None required.

18. Tribal Cultural Resources

Existing Setting: Assembly Bill 52 (Chapter 532, Statutes 2014) required an update to Appendix G (Initial Study Checklist) of the CEQA Guidelines to include questions related to impacts to tribal cultural resources (TRC(s)). Changes to Appendix G were approved by the Office of Administrative Law on September 27, 2016. Tribal cultural resources include sites, features, and places with cultural or sacred value to California Native American Tribes. A number of the California Native American Tribes within the region that Nevada County is located in have contacted the County to request consultation on projects falling within their delineated ancestral lands. The project area is located within territory claimed by the northernmost Nisenan at the time of initial contact with colonization culture. The Nisenan were also referred to as Southern Maidu. The subject project is proposed within the United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC) tribal lands. The UAIC is a federally recognized Tribe comprised of both Miwok and Maidu (Nisenan) tribal members and are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area. The Tribe possesses the expertise concerning tribal cultural resources in their area of geographic and cultural affiliation and are contemporary stewards of their culture and the landscapes. The tribal community represents continuity and endurance of their ancestors by maintaining their connection to their history and culture. It is the Tribe's goal to ensure the preservation and continuance of their cultural heritage for current and future generations. See Section 5 for additional information regarding cultural resources.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
<p>a. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of tribal cultural resources, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is: i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1 (k); or ii. A resource determined by the lead agency in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.</p>		✓			J, 22

Impact Discussion:

18a: The land division project proposes to divide the existing parcel into multiple residential parcels, an act that could be followed by grading and land recontouring, construction of new residences, installation of utilities, and general landscaping. Existing records at the North Central Information Center (NCIC) document that none of the present project area had been subjected to previous archaeological investigation, and that no prehistoric or historic-era sites had been documented within the project area. The present effort included an intensive-level pedestrian cultural resources inventory survey, which did not identify any prehistoric or historic-era cultural resources within the APE. Consultation was undertaken with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) regarding sacred land listings for the property and the NAHC response indicated that the search of their Sacred Lands Files resulted in negative findings.

An initial distribution of the project application and the Cultural Resources Study were included in an AB52 consultation request that included the United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria (UAIC) on November 26, 2024. The UAIC requested to consult pursuant to AB52 on the project, which included conducting a tribal survey for the identification of tribal cultural resources. In January, 2025, UAIC closed AB52 consultation with recommendations for if and when any ground disturbance may occur on the parcel. While cultural resource discovery has been determined to be unlikely, Mitigation Measure 5A would require construction to be halted and local tribes to be notified in the unlikely event that there is a discovery of cultural resources, including historic, prehistoric, tribal, and paleontological resources. Additionally, Mitigation Measure 18A is proposed which would require a Tribal Representative from a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area be immediately notified if any suspected TCRs are discovered during ground disturbing construction activities. All work shall cease within 100 feet of the find, or an agreed upon distance based on the project area and nature of the find. Mitigation Measure 18B is proposed to address the cultural sensitivity of the

project area by including a Worker Environmental Awareness Program for relevant project personnel and construction workers. With these protections in place, impacts to TCRs would be *less than significant with mitigation*.

Mitigation: To offset potentially adverse cultural or historical resources impacts associated with the construction activities, the following mitigation measures shall be required and shall be included as notes on the supplemental data sheets that record concurrently with the parcel map:

Mitigation Measure 18A: Unanticipated Discovery of Tribal Cultural Resources. The following mitigation measure is intended to address the identification and treatment of unanticipated discoveries of potential tribal cultural resources (TCRs) or resources of cultural significance to UAIC during ground disturbing activities. If any suspected TCRs or resources of cultural significance to UAIC, including but not limited to features, anthropogenic/cultural soils, cultural belongings or objects (artifacts), shell, bone, shaped stones or bone, or ash/charcoal deposits are discovered by any person during construction activities including ground disturbing activities, all work shall pause immediately within 100 feet of the find, or an agreed upon distance based on the project area and nature of the find. Work shall cease in and within the immediate vicinity of the find regardless of whether the construction is being actively monitored by a Tribal Monitor, cultural resources specialist, or professional archaeologist. A Tribal Representative and the Lead Agency shall be immediately notified, and the Tribal Representative in coordination with the Lead Agency shall determine if the find is a TCR (PRC §21074) and the Tribal Representative shall make recommendations for further evaluation and treatment as necessary.

Timing: Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits and throughout construction

Reporting: Planning Department approval grading and construction permits

Responsible Agency: Planning Department and United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC)

Mitigation Measure 18B: Cultural Awareness Training. The following mitigation measure is intended to address the cultural sensitivity of the project area by including a Worker Environmental Awareness Program for relevant project personnel and construction workers. The training shall be specified in the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), or the Environmental Impact Report, the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), and the Standard Construction Specifications for the project.

The lead agency shall require the applicant/contractor to provide a tribal cultural resources sensitivity and awareness training program (Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP)) for all personnel involved in project construction, including field consultants and construction workers, at their own expense. The WEAP shall be developed in coordination with interested Native American Tribes.

The WEAP shall be conducted before any project-related construction activities begin at the project site. The WEAP will include relevant information regarding sensitive cultural resources and tribal cultural resources, including applicable regulations, protocols for avoidance, and consequences of violating State laws and regulations. The WEAP will also describe appropriate avoidance and impact minimization measures for cultural resources and tribal cultural resources that could be located at the project site and will outline what to do and who to contact if any potential cultural resources or tribal cultural resources are encountered. The WEAP will

emphasize the requirement for confidentiality and culturally appropriate treatment of any discovery of significance to Native Americans and will discuss appropriate behaviors and responsive actions, consistent with Native American tribal values. The training may be done in coordination with the project archaeologist.

All ground-disturbing equipment operators shall be required to receive the training and sign a form that acknowledges receipt of the training.

Timing: Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits and throughout construction

Reporting: Planning Department approval grading and construction permits

Responsible Agency: Planning Department and United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC)

19. Utilities and Service Systems

Existing Setting: The proposed parcels are intended to be developed with single-family dwellings and accessory structures. Electricity is currently available to the property, and there are existing public utility easements to provide for future connection to electricity. The location of the minimum usable disposal area (M.U.S.D.A.) is identified on each proposed parcel, and proposed Parcels 2 and 3 will have individual septic systems. Parcel 1 is served by an existing private well and proposed Parcels 2 and 3 will require new private wells to be drilled, respectively.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Result in a need for the extension of electrical power, natural gas, or communication systems?			✓		A, D
b. Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?			✓		A, D
c. Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?			✓		A, D
d. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?			✓		A
e. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the Project that it has adequate capacity to serve the Project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?			✓		C
f. Be served by a landfill or transfer station with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?		✓			A, C
g. Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?		✓			B, C

Impact Discussion:

19a, b, c, d, e: The proposed project is anticipated to have no impact relative to extension of utilities to serve the project. Currently, the subject parcel relies on electricity from PG&E, a private well for water, and has an existing septic system. The proposed properties are intended for agricultural and residential improvements and will be served by on-site wells and septic systems. Electrical service will be provided by PG&E. No extension of natural gas, or wastewater treatment facilities, or the expansion of existing facilities is proposed or required for this land division. Any additional storm drainage runoff generated by the project would be required to be kept on site and would not affect any off-site drainage facilities. Therefore, the proposed land division is anticipated to have a *less than significant impact* related to utility/service extension.

19f, g: The proposed land division would not result in an increase in solid waste that would be in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste goals. Construction is required to improve the roadway to provide access to the proposed parcels. These construction activities could result in solid waste in the form of construction materials or vegetative debris. Nevada County provides solid waste collection through a franchise for collection and disposal of waste and recyclables for both residential and non-residential areas. There are no known capacity issues with any Waste Management facilities. Any waste generated would be required to comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Mitigation Measure 19A requires solid waste debris generated during construction activities including vegetation and industrial waste such as glues, paint and petroleum products to be appropriately disposed of to avoid potentially adverse landfill and solid waste disposal impacts. Therefore, impacts related to disposal of construction debris would be *less than significant with mitigation*.

Mitigation: To offset potentially adverse impacts related to construction waste, the following mitigation measures shall be required and shall be included as notes on the supplemental data sheets that record concurrently with the parcel map:

Mitigation Measure 19A: Appropriate disposal of vegetative and toxic waste. Industrial toxic waste (petroleum and other chemical products) and vegetative waste is not accepted at the McCourtney Road transfer station and if encountered, shall be properly disposed of in compliance with existing regulations and facilities. This mitigation measure shall be included as a note on all improvement plans, which shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Department prior to permit issuance.

Timing: *Prior to map recordation and prior to issuance of grading/improvement/building permits and throughout construction*

Reporting: *Agency approval of permits or plans*

Responsible Agency: *Planning Department*

20. Wildfire

Existing Setting: The project parcel is within the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District and falls within a high fire hazard severity zone as designated by CalFire. The subject parcel takes access from Auburn Road, which is a county-maintained road and currently meets fire safe road standards. The Safety Element of the Nevada County General Plan addresses wildfire hazards in Nevada County and has several policies to improve fire safety. Nevada County has also adopted a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

(LHMP) that was updated in December, 2024. Additionally, there is a Community Wildfire Protection Plan for Nevada County that was updated in April, 2016. The Nevada County Office of Emergency Services published a Wildfire Evacuation Preparedness Action Plan in 2020. The plan highlights five initiatives to reduce wildfire risk in Nevada County:

1. Create safer evacuation routes countywide to save lives.
2. Improve early warning systems and emergency communications to reach everyone.
3. Establish defensible space around our homes and neighborhoods by reducing hazardous vegetation and encouraging voluntary compliance with defensible space standards.
4. Provide a coordinated approach to wildfire response preparedness through planning, community engagement, and project implementation.
5. Enhance critical infrastructure needed to respond to wildfires such as evacuation route improvements, water storage, fire hydrants, communication systems, and green waste facilities.

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high hazard severity zones, would the project:					
a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			✓		A, H, M, 23
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?			✓		A, B, H, M, 18, 19
c. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, powerlines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?			✓		A, H, M
d. Expose people or structure to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?			✓		A, H, M, 9, 31

Impact Discussion:

20a, c: The proposed project is not anticipated to conflict with emergency plans or result in negative environmental impacts due to infrastructure installation. The Safety Element of the Nevada County General Plan addresses wildfire hazards in Nevada County and has several policies to improve fire safety. The Safety Element discusses the importance of ingress and egress by roadways, and Policy FP-10.7.3 requires that a condition of development is to maintain private roads, including the roadside vegetation. Nevada County has also adopted a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) that was updated in December, 2024 with goals and objectives related to improve communities’ capabilities to prevent and/or mitigate hazards by increasing the use of technologies reduce fire severity and intensity by promoting the

implementation of fuel management on private and public lands. A condition of approval from the Nevada County Deputy Fire Marshal will require vegetation clearance around structures that meets the minimum requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291. Therefore, project impacts relative to compliance with emergency plans, impacts relative to increased fire risk, and impacts to the environment through the minimal work along these existing routes would be a *less than significant* impact.

20 b, d: The land division would not result in altered slopes that would increase wildfire risks or expose people or structures to significant risks such as landslides or flooding. Proposed building envelopes, which would contain existing and any future structures, avoid areas mapped as steep slopes (slopes that exceed 30%). All work associated with the proposed road improvements and potential future development within building envelopes is not anticipated to result in substantial soils erosion or grading on steep slopes. Further, any future non-habitable structures will require building permits and will not be able to be constructed on slopes steeper than 30% without a management plan. Additionally, all future improvements would require conformance with requirements including but not limited to maximum impervious surface coverage on each of the parcels, the prohibition of increasing stormflow onto offsite parcels, and adequate erosion control measures. Therefore, the proposed land division is anticipated to have a *less than significant* impact relative to the spread of wildfire and fire risks.

Mitigation: None required.

21. Mandatory Findings of Significant Environmental Effect

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference Source (Appendix A)
a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of major periods of California's history or prehistory?		✓			
b. Does the project have environmental effects that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of the project are considered when viewed in connection with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects.)			✓		
c. Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?		✓			

Impact Discussion:

21a, c: This draft Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration evaluates the potential impacts the proposed project could have on the environment. Compliance with existing federal, state, and local regulations and mitigation measures identified in this Initial Study will reduce all potential impacts of the

proposed project to a less than significant level. As discussed in Sections 1 through 20 above, the proposed land division would comply with all local, state, and federal laws governing general welfare and environmental protection. Project implementation during construction and operation could result in potentially adverse impacts to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, noise, tribal cultural resources, as well as utilities and service systems. Due to the possible impacts to nesting birds, resident and migratory deer populations, and the free movement of wildlife, mitigation has been added to reduce potential impacts when construction occurs. To ensure clustering and protect other environmentally sensitive resources, such as landmark oaks and steep slopes, mitigation to establish building envelopes and delineated environmentally sensitive areas has been added. Although cultural, tribal cultural, and paleontological resources are not known in the project area, mitigation has been added to halt work if resources are discovered. To minimize the disruption to surrounding parcels during construction, mitigation has been included to reduce construction-related emissions and dust generation, and to reduce construction-related noise by limiting construction to daytime hours. Mitigation has been added to reduce potentially adverse air quality impacts related to construction waste and unanticipated discovery of naturally occurring asbestos during construction or grading.

Each of the potential adverse impacts are mitigated to levels that are *less than significant levels with mitigation*, as outlined in each respective section.


21b: A project's cumulative impacts are considered significant when the incremental effects of the project are "cumulatively considerable," meaning that the project's incremental effects are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects. Reasonably foreseeable projects that could have similar impacts to the proposed project include other anticipated projects within the project vicinity that could be constructed or operated within the same timeframe as the project. All of the proposed project's impacts can be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of the mitigation measures identified in this Initial Study and compliance with existing federal, state, and local regulations. Therefore, the proposed project would have *less than significant* environmental effects that are individually limited but not cumulatively considerable.

Mitigation: To offset potentially adverse impacts to air quality, biological and cultural resources, geological resources, noise, tribal cultural resources, and possible impacts utilities and services systems, see Mitigation Measures 3A, 3B, 3C, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 5A, 7A, 13A, 18A, 18B, and 19A.

Recommendation of the Project Planner

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

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


Justine Quealy, Assistant Planner

March 5th, 2026

Date

Appendix A – Reference Sources

- A. Planning Department
 - B. Department of Public Works
 - C. Environmental Health Department
 - D. Building Department
 - E. Nevada Irrigation District
 - F. Natural Resource Conservation Service/Resource Conservation District
 - G. Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District
 - H. Nevada County Consolidated Fire District
 - I. Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Region)
 - J. North Central Information Service, Anthropology Department, CSU Sacramento
 - K. California Department of Fish & Wildlife
 - L. Nevada County Geographic Information Systems
 - M. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)
 - N. Nevada County Transportation Commission
 - O. Nevada County Agricultural Advisory Commission
 - P. Clear Creek School District/Nevada Joint Union High School District (D-3)
 - Q. Nevada County Connects
1. State Division of Mines and Geology. *Mineral Land Classification Map of Nevada County, CA*, 1990.
 2. State Department of Fish and Game. *Migratory Deer Ranges*, 1988.
 3. State Department of Fish and Game. *Natural Diversity Data Base Maps*, as updated.
 4. Cal Fire. *Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map for Nevada County*, as updated. Available at: <https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/fire-hazard-severity-zones>.
 5. State Division of Mines and Geology. *Geologic Map of the Chico, California Quadrangle*, 1992.
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 13. Federal Emergency Management Agency. *Flood Insurance Rate Maps*, as updated.
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19. Greg Matuzak, 13602 Auburn Road Tentative Parcel Map Project: *Biological Resources Assessment*, November, 2024, updated April, 2025.
20. Placer County Air Pollution Control District, California Environmental Quality Act Thresholds of Significance, October 2016, <https://www.placer.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2061/Threshold-Justification-Report-PDF>.
21. US Environmental Protection Agency. *Current Nonattainment Counties for All Criteria Pollutants*. As updated. <https://www3.epa.gov/airquality/greenbook/ancl.html>.
22. Sean Michael Jensen, M.A., *Cultural Resources Inventory Survey: Smith Parcel Split Project*, August, 2024.
23. Nevada County. *2025 Nevada County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan*. December 2024. <https://www.nevadacountyca.gov/3830/Local-Hazard-Mitigation-Plan>.
24. California Department of Toxic Substances Control. Accessed January, 2026: <https://dtsc.ca.gov/>.
25. United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service and Forest Service. *Soil Survey of Nevada County Area, California*. Soil Survey, Reissued 1993. https://www.ncrcd.org/files/f8e71d71f/Soil_Survey_of_Nevada_County_Area_California.pdf
26. California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines & Geology. "Report 2000-19: A General Location Guide for Ultramafic Rocks in California – Areas More Likely to Contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos." 2000.
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33. California Emissions Estimator Model, <https://caleemod.com/model>.
34. Nevada County. *Parcels Affected by Williamson Act, Nevada County 2017*, <https://www.nevadacountyca.gov/717/Williamson-Act-Parcel-Maps>.
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