



# **County of Calaveras Department of Planning**

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Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration  
Review Period: May 11, 2026, through June 10, 2026

# **Initial Study ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST**

For: Assurance Development obo Vertical Bridge  
Administrative Use Permit 2024-003  
Assessor's Parcel No. 050-055-010

1. Project Title: 2024-003 – Administrative Use Permit for Vertical Bridge
2. Lead Agency Name and Address: Calaveras County Planning Department  
891 Mountain Ranch Road  
San Andreas, CA 95249
3. Contact Person and Phone Number: Madeleine Flandreau, (209) 754-6394
4. Project Location: 8867 Rose Marie Drive, Valley Springs, CA  
APN: 050-055-010  
Section 17, T3N, R10E, MDB&M
5. Project Sponsor's Name and Address: Assurance Development obo Vertical Bridge  
1499 Huntington Drive, Suite 305  
South Pasadena, CA 91030
6. General Plan Designation: Rural Transition B (RTB)
7. Zoning: Rural Residential- 10 acre minimum (RR-10)
8. Project Description: An application has been received by the Calaveras County Planning Department requesting an Administrative Use Permit (AUP) to install a new unmanned telecommunications and public utility facility. The request includes installation of a new 104' stealth monopine with ten (10) antennas, six (6) RRU's, one (1) 3' microwave, one (1) GPS antenna, required antenna cabling, HCS jumpers, two (2) ground mounted radio cabinets, one (1) raised concrete pads, cable ice bridge, utility backboard, and multi-meter utility service mounted on H-frame within a 40'x40' fenced lease area. There are also three future co-locator lease areas which are 10 ft. by 15 ft. within the fenced area.

9. Surrounding land uses and setting:

Location	General Plan Designation	Zoning	Land Use
North	Rural Transition B	Rural Residential	Residential
South	Rural Transition B	Rural Residential	Residential
East	Rural Transition B	Rural Residential	Residential
West	Rural Transition B	Rural Residential	Residential

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required: NONE

11. Have California Native American Tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code §21080.3.1? **NO** If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.? **N/A**

**ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:**

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact", as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- |                                                                 |                                                              |                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural and Forestry Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality                          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions            | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing                | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Service Systems Significance | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of                |

**DETERMINATION (To be completed by Lead Agency):**

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 original scope of the proposed project **COULD** have had a potentially significant effect on the environment, there **WILL NOT** be a significant effect because revisions/mitigations to the project have been made by or agreed to by the applicant. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a potentially significant effect on the environment and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** or its functional equivalent will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a potentially significant impact on the environment. However, at least one impact has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document, pursuant to applicable legal standards, and has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis, as described in the report's attachments. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required, but it must analyze only the impacts not sufficiently addressed in previous documents.
- I find that, although the proposed project could have had a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects have been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or Negative Declaration, pursuant to applicable standards, and have been avoided or mitigated, pursuant to an earlier EIR, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, all impacts have been avoided or mitigated to a less-than-significant level and no further action is required.

*Madeleine Flandreau*

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Madeleine Flandreau  
Project Planner

\_\_\_\_\_  
5/11/2026  
Date

## EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All 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.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4. "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from "Earlier Analyses," as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).
5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
  - a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
  - b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
  - c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
8. This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
9. The explanation of each issue should identify:
  - a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
  - b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance

## **Environmental Impact Analysis:**

This Initial Study has been prepared for Administrative Use Permit 2024-003 – Vertical Bridge which proposes to install a new unmanned telecommunications and public utility facility. The request includes installation of a new 104-foot (ft.) stealth monopine tower with ten (10) antennas, six (6) Remote Radio Units, one (1) 3 ft. microwave, one (1) GPS antenna, required antenna cabling, HCS jumpers, two (2) ground mounted radio cabinets on a raised concrete pad, within a 40 ft. by 40 ft. fenced lease area. There are also three future co-locator lease areas which are 10 ft. by 15 ft. within the fenced area. The Project site is 8.99-acres in size and currently developed with a single-family residence in the center portion of the parcel. The parcel currently takes access off of Rose Marie Drive, a private road.

The construction of the proposed project includes a 20-foot-wide by 109-foot-long gravel access road and utility easement that extends west, connecting with State Route 26. Also included is a 577-foot-long utility easement that extends northeast, connecting with existing utilities. The utilities for this proposed project are being routed underground from the lease area to an existing utility pole. This pole is being replaced with a new pole, and the existing utility pole on the west side of Highway 26 will also be replaced with a new utility pole by PG&E. Power will be routed overhead across Highway 26. Power will then be routed overhead to another existing utility pole on the east side of Highway 26 and on to an existing utility pole along Rose Marie Drive. In total, the Project site is approximately 9,560 square feet. The development is proposed within a previously disturbed area within the rural residential Rancho Calaveras Subdivision, directly adjacent to State Route 26.

Installation of the telecommunication tower and associated equipment will involve vegetation removal, grading, excavation, pouring concrete foundations, tower assembly, trenching for utilities, fencing, and the addition of gravel to the currently undeveloped areas. Construction equipment will likely include trucks and cranes to bring in equipment and to install concrete pads, the towers, the underground utility route, and larger support equipment.

The Project site has a land use designation of Rural Transition B and is zoned Rural Residential (RR). The RR zone is intended to provide lands for personal ranches in which residential use is the primary land use. The RR zone is established to permit small-scale farming for personal use and not as the primary use for the property. This application was deemed complete under the previous Zoning Code and is being processed according to those standards. Pursuant to 17.22.030.B.5(c) of the previous County Code, telecommunications facilities are permitted in the RR zone with the approval of an Administrative Use Permit (AUP).





Figure 3 - Aerial Photo with Approximate Site Location (boundary lines shown are approximate)

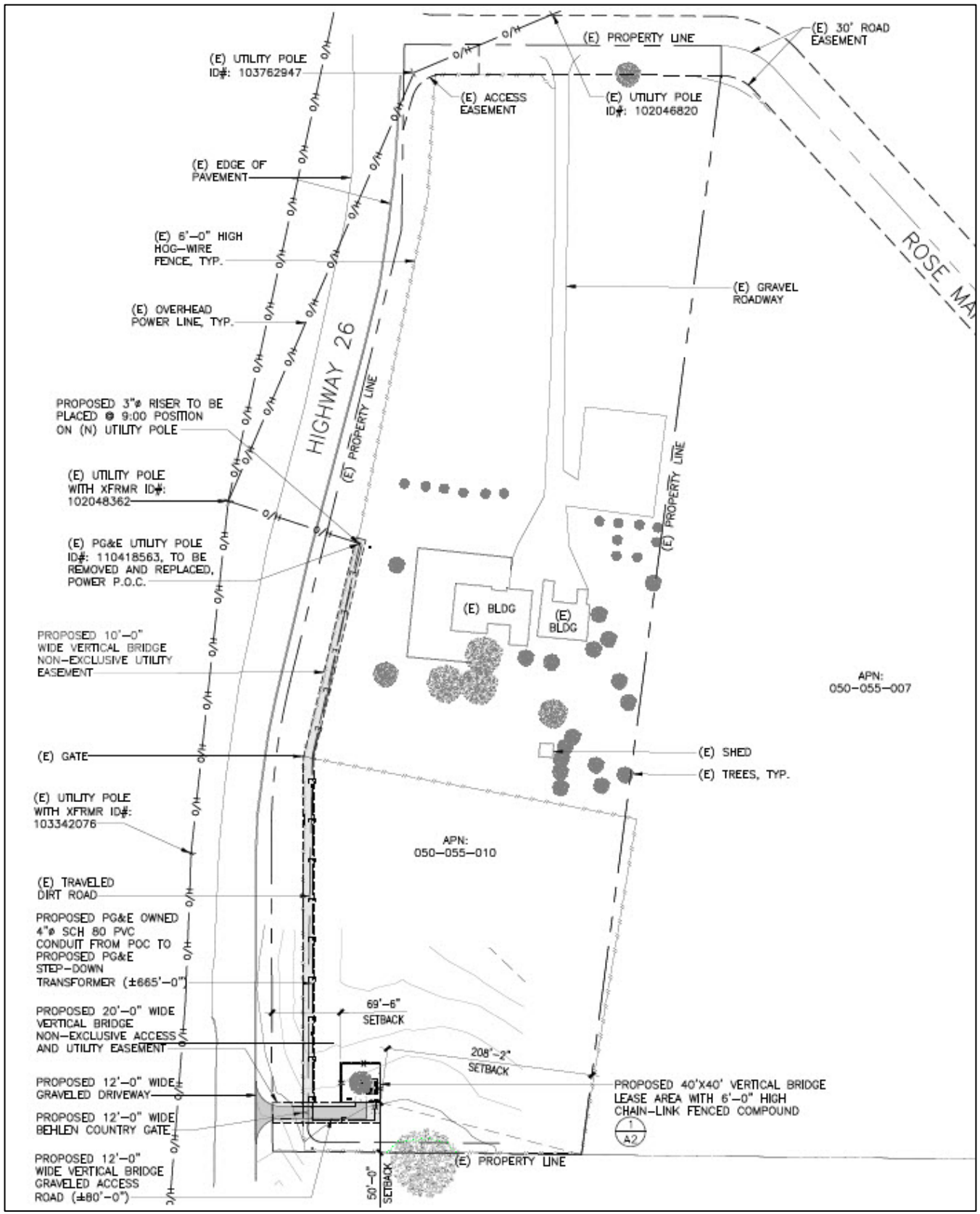


Figure 4 – Site Plan



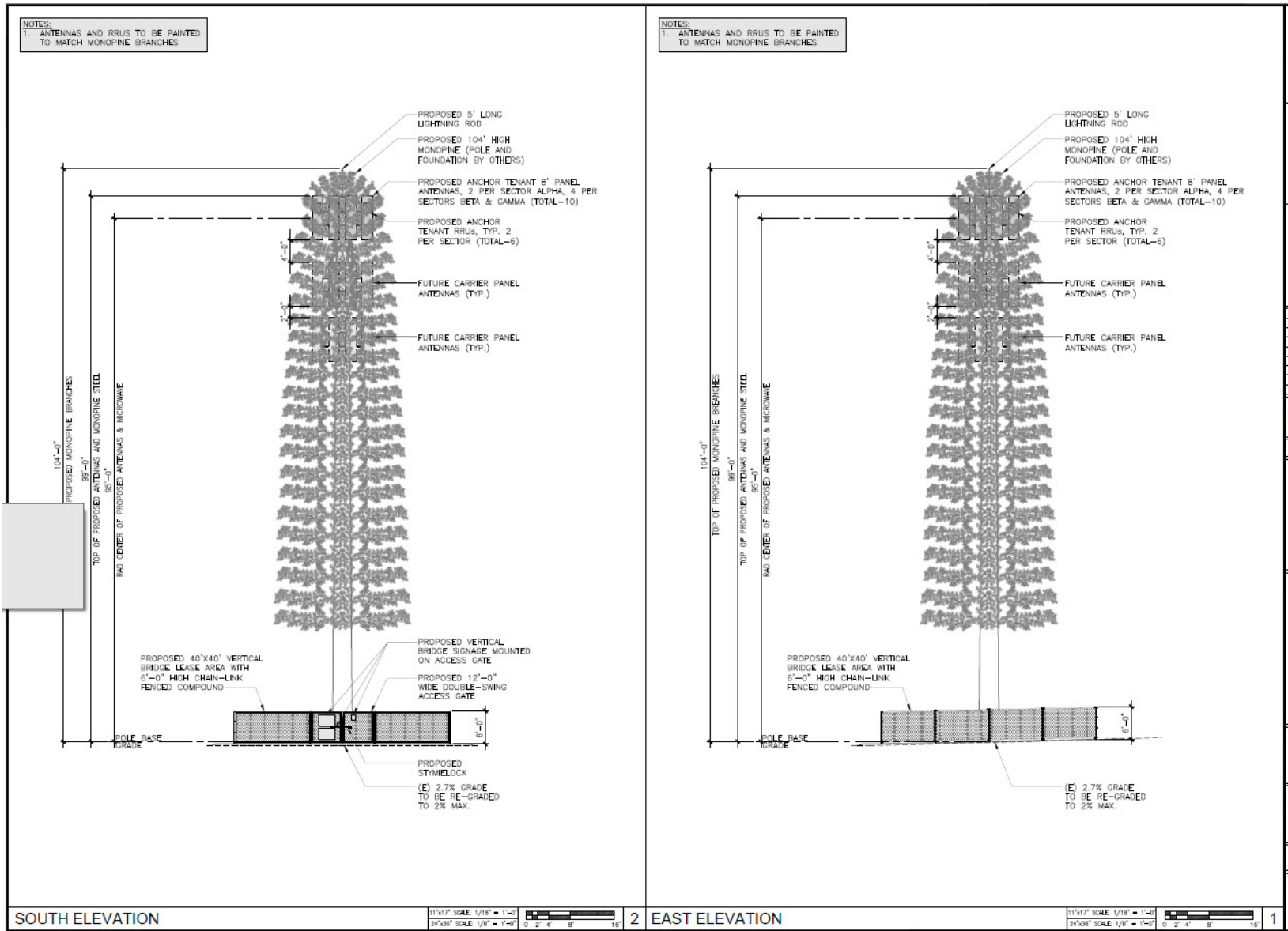


Figure 6 – Elevations

### AERIAL MAP

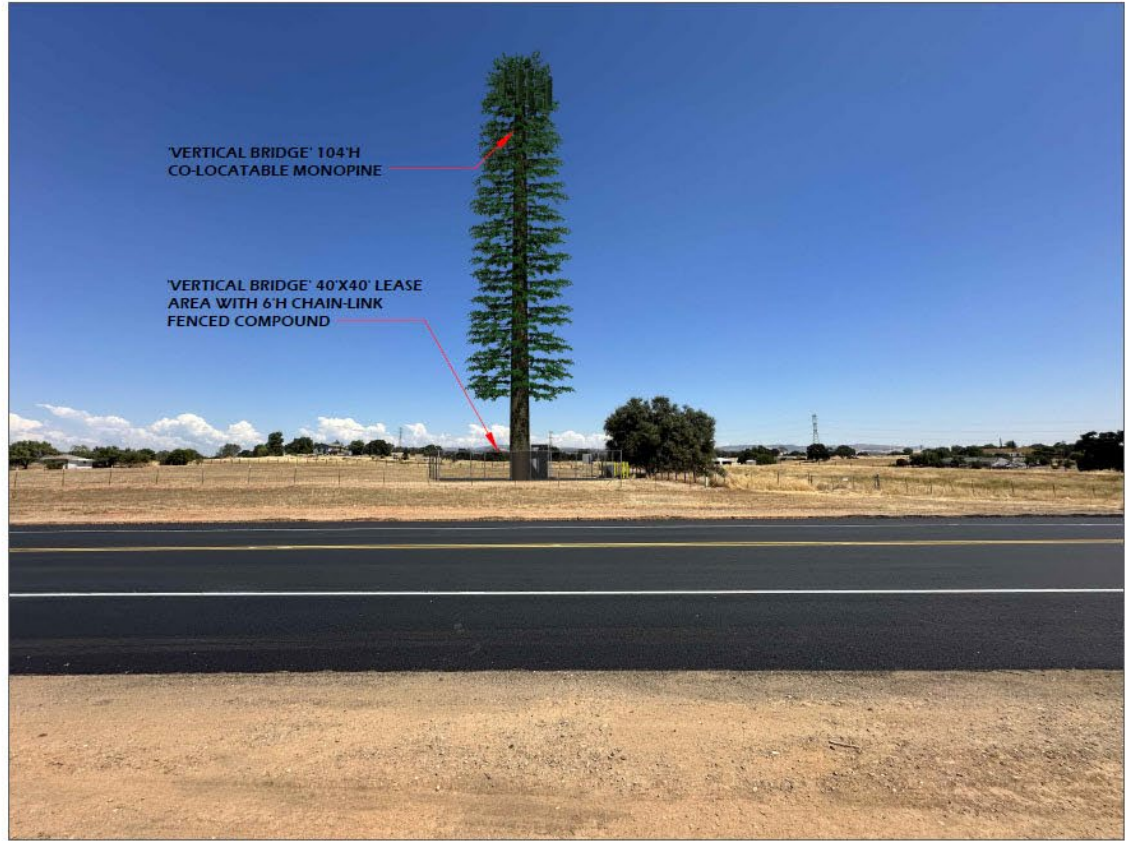


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### EXISTING



### PROPOSED



DISCLAIMER: THIS IS A RENDERING REPRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT ONLY

PHOTO PROVIDED BY: ASSURANCE DEVELOPMENT

Figure 7 – Photo Simulation

# I. AESTHETICS

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Except as provided in Public Resources Code §21099, would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a) **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation**– A scenic vista is an area that is designated, signed, and accessible to the public for the express purposes of viewing and sightseeing. The Project site is located off of State Route 26, on an approximately 8.99-acre parcel developed with a single-family residence and accessory structures. The Project parcel consists of mostly grassland with a few ornamental trees adjacent to the on-site residence. The surrounding parcels range from 5 to 10 acres in size, most of which are developed with single-family residences. The Project site is not designated as a scenic vista by the County General Plan, nor does it contain any unique or distinguishing features that would qualify the site for designation as a scenic vista.

Since the 104-foot-tall cell tower will be visible in all directions it will have an effect on the local vista. This impact could be considered to be significant from an aesthetics standpoint. The submitted photo simulation (Figure 7 above) indicates that the proposed mono-pine tower appears to blend well with the existing landscape. While likely not completely screening the tower, the tree appearance will appreciably reduce the aesthetic impact to a level that is less than significant with this mitigation. By disguising the tower as a tree, and thus blending in more with surrounding vegetation, the proposed Project will have a less than significant

impact to the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings will not be substantially degraded with the proposed mitigation measure below.

**Mitigation Measure AES-1 (Aesthetics):**

The 104-foot telecommunications tower will be constructed as a mono-pine in order to better blend in with the surrounding vegetation. Stealth poles of this nature are now required by ordinance as part of the updated zoning code in order to minimize aesthetic impacts of cell towers, and requiring the same of this applicant as mitigation will achieve the same goal.

- b) **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation-** The County General Plan’s Conservation and Open Space Element notes that the County’s scenic resources are some of its most valued assets and include forests, rolling hills, ranches, agricultural land, historic landscapes, oak woodlands, rock formations and other unique topographical features, river corridors, lakes, and streams. The site consists of oak grassland and no trees will be removed as a part of this project. Therefore, the Project will not substantially degrade these scenic resources. There are no other scenic resources on-site as defined by the General Plan. The nearest officially designated State Scenic Highway is the portion of State Route 4 (SR 4) known as Ebbetts Pass National Scenic Byway, located approximately 49 miles east of the Project site. By disguising the tower as a pine tree, and thus blending in more with surrounding vegetation, the proposed Project will have a less than significant impact to the scenic resources on the site will not be substantially degraded with the proposed mitigation measure AES-1 above.
  
- c) **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation-** The subject parcel is located off of State Route 26 in the community of Rancho Calaveras, which is a “non-urbanized area.” The view from the proposed project site is non-descript (see Figure 8) nearly flat terrain, with seasonal agricultural fields, wire fences, and several tall undisguised utility towers visible in multiple directions. The proposed tower will be very close to Hwy 26, along which already exist many undisguised, tall utility towers and high-tension power lines near the highway traveling in both directions from the proposed site. This particular tower will be disguised as a tree, which—even though it will not resemble a tree species native to that location—still achieves a more natural look than other prominent undisguised towers in the vicinity and, unlike the undisguised towers, will appear more tree-like from a distance. Therefore, the construction of the monopine stealth tower will not significantly “degrade” the existing public views, as intermittent *undisguised* towers near the road are common in the general vicinity. Therefore, with the design as a monopine as required by mitigation measure AES-1, the Project will have a less than significant impact.



Figure 8 – View looking east at project site from State Route 26

- d) **No Impact** – Pursuant to Title 47 Section 17.7 and 17.21 of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) code of regulations, telecommunication towers that are less than 200 feet in height above the ground do not require FAA notification and therefore no lighting nor painting is required. The proposed tower is 104 feet high, with antennas to be attached at 90 ft. All new lighting will adhere to Calaveras County Code 17.36.060(C) which states that exterior lighting shall be shielded and directed in such a manner that it does not shine directly into adjoining residences. With the adherence to outdoor lighting regulations at the time of development, the proposed Project would not create new sources of substantial lighting or glare that would generate a significant impact.

## II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

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

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
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provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

Would the project:

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 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?                                                                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

a) **No Impact** – The subject parcel is designated by the County General Plan as Rural Transition B which is not land classified as high capability agriculture, and there are no agricultural activities occurring within its boundary. The California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program has published map data for Calaveras as of 2022. The California Important Farmland Finder tool was used to identify land surrounding the project parcel. This land is categorized as “Other Land”, defined as “Land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than forty acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as “Other Land”. This indicates this area including the project parcel, is not a prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of Statewide importance. Therefore, the proposed Project will not result in the loss of agricultural land within the meaning of this impact category.

b) **No Impact** – The proposed Project site is not restricted by a Williamson Act contract, nor are any of the adjacent parcels under a Williamson Act contract. There will therefore be no impact related to a Williamson Act contract.

- c) **No Impact** – There is no timberland located on the Project site or within the vicinity of the proposed project. The proposal is for an Administrative Use Permit on a parcel zoned Rural Residential. The proposed project will not conflict with the parcel’s existing zoning, nor will it result in rezoning of any forestland.
- d) **No Impact** – The proposed project does not involve the removal of any trees and will be constructed on private property not considered forest land. The County’s General Plan and Zoning Ordinance does not consider the Project site to be high capability timberland or a timber production zone; therefore, the proposed project would not result in loss or conversion of forest land to a non-forest use.
- e) **No Impact** – The approximately 1,600 square foot lease area is a small portion of a residentially developed parcel and is not considered forest land or farmland. All adjacent parcels are large residential parcels which are not being used agriculturally, and therefore, the proposed project would not be incompatible with a surrounding agricultural use. Thus, the proposed project will not result in a conversion of farmland or forest land. In addition, no trees are proposed to be removed as part of this project. Therefore, no impact will occur.

### III. AIR QUALITY

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

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a&b) **Less than Significant Impact** – Calaveras County is part of the Mountain Counties Air Basin (MCAB). Air quality within the County is under the jurisdiction of the Calaveras County Air Pollution Control District (CCAPCD). CCAPCD manages the County’s air quality through education and enforcement of CCAPCD rules and California Air Resources Board (CARB) measures and regulations. The subject parcel is approximately 8.99 acres in size and is surrounded by similarly sized properties. Emissions that could be created by the proposed project would result not from the operation of the telecommunications tower but from temporary impacts during construction of the tower.

The County has been classified as a non-attainment area for the State and Federal ozone standards (1-hour and 8-hour) and Particulate Matter standards (PM2.5 and PM10). An area is designated in attainment for the Federal standards if concentration for the specified pollutant is not exceeded on average more than once per year. The primary source of secondary particulate matter (i.e., ROG and NOx) is mobile sources, including cars, trucks, buses, construction equipment, and agricultural equipment. Common sources of particulate matter pollution in the County include residential, development, and land management related activities such as woodstoves, windblown dust and/or diesel from construction activities, and forestry management burning. Limited, temporary, on-site construction activities would occur within the boundaries of the existing site. Construction would include grading for the new 12-foot-wide, approximately 100-foot-long gravel access road, and concrete pad in the lease area, and a 577-ft long utility trench.

These construction activities are not substantial or prolonged enough to create emissions that would violate applicable air quality standards or substantially contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact related to the potential to conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan, or to result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard.

- c) **Less than Significant Impact** – Sensitive receptors include those individuals within the population that have an increased sensitivity to air pollution or environmental contaminants. They include children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing serious health problems affected by air quality, and sensitive receptor locations include schools, parks and playgrounds, day care centers, nursing homes, hospitals, and residences. The closest sensitive receptors to the Project site include the single-family residences located on the subject parcel (approximately 400 ft. away), and the single-family residences to the west (approximately 300 ft. away). The adjacent residences to the south and east are approximately 700 ft. away.

The expected estimate of maintenance trips for the tower is once per month. A single-family residence can generate up to an average of 10 vehicle trips per day before it is considered significant. The maintenance of the tower should not be greater than the number of trips a residence would generate. A diesel generator is not proposed as part of this project. Therefore, the proposed project will have a less than significant impact on sensitive receptors.

- d) **No Impact** – No emissions that create odors are expected to be emitted from the unmanned telecommunications facility and no impact is expected.

#### IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                          |                                     |                          |                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service?                                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?                                                                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 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?                                                                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?                                                                                                                                                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?                                                                                                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

a) **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation** – A Biological Resources Impact Analysis (BRA) was prepared by Environmental Assessment Specialists was completed in February of 2024. A review of the CNDDDB and the CNPS Electronic Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants resulted in a list of 36 sensitive wildlife species, 2 sensitive plant community, and 23 sensitive plant species that occur in the vicinity. Development is proposed within a previously disturbed area within the rural residential Rancho Calaveras Subdivision and is directly adjacent to State Route 26.

Ground disturbance required for the proposed project will occur on the undeveloped grassland area in the southern portion of the subject parcel. The proposed trenching route and access road will follow the State Route 26 right-of-way along the western property boundary. The areas of the proposed telecommunication facility, trenching route, access road, and equipment compound installation were observed on foot during a site survey February 12, 2024, for the above listed wildlife and plant species and sensitive community and none were observed. According to the application and BRA, no trees will be removed as a part of this project.

Potential for sensitive plant species to occupy the site is low due to previous surface disturbance, and none of the 23 sensitive plant species are anticipated to occur, and none were observed. Sensitive plant communities with the potential to occupy the site include: lone chaparral and northern hardpan vernal pool. The parcel consists of previously disturbed grassland with no other vegetation, and neither of these sensitive plant communities were observed on the site.

Critical Habitat has been designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the California tiger salamander (CTS), and although Critical Habitat is mapped on the subject parcel, it does not occur within the Project site. Only the CTS was found to have the potential to occur on the Project site due to the presence of potential habitat.

USFWS Biological Opinion September 18, 2025:

A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Biological Opinion received on December 11, 2025, in response to the Federal Communications Commission's April 3, 2025, requested initiation of formal consultation with the USFWS. A complete consultation package was received by USFWS on June 11, 2025. At issue are the proposed project's effects on the federally listed as threatened Central California Distinct Population Segment of the California tiger salamander (CTS). Critical Habitat has been designated for the CTS, and although Critical Habitat is mapped on the subject parcel, it does not occur within the action area of the proposed project.

No wetland or aquatic features are located on the site, and therefore, no CTS breeding habitat is present on the site. There have been three occurrences of CTS observations at breeding ponds located within 2 miles of the proposed project. Based on the suitable upland habitat present within both action areas, the proximity of suitable aquatic habitat, the proximity of known occurrences to the action areas, and a breeding population within dispersal distance of the Project location, the USFWS has determined that the presence of CTS cannot be ruled out, and the species could use the action areas as upland habitat for foraging, dispersal, and refugia. According to the USFWS, construction of the proposed project will result in the permanent loss of 0.235 acre and temporary loss of 0.765 acre of suitable upland habitat for the CTS, totaling 1 acre of impacts. Ground-disturbing construction activities associated with installing utility lines underground, construction of the access routes, as well as equipment staging and the preparation and use of workspace could result in killing, injuring, and disrupting CTS in the action area. To minimize construction-related impacts from the proposed Project, the applicant will implement the *Conservation and Compensatory Measures* from the USFWS, which are included as Mitigation Measures BR-1 through BR-11 below.

Mitigation Measure BR-1

All construction personnel associated with the project will attend a worker education-training program conducted by a qualified biologist to avoid or reduce impacts to the California tiger salamander (CTS) and other sensitive biological resources. This instruction will include training on distribution, general behavior and ecology, protection status, and procedures for reporting encounters.

<p><u>Mitigation Measure BR-2</u></p> <p>The area of disturbance should be confined to the smallest practical area and use previously disturbed areas as much as practical. All work boundaries should be flagged to minimize surface disturbance.</p>
<p><u>Mitigation Measure BR-3</u></p> <p>A qualified biological monitor will remain on site during all ground-disturbing activities. If the biological monitor observes a CTS within the project area, construction activities will stop, the species will be allowed to move out of the project area on its own volition, and the Service will be contacted immediately.</p>
<p><u>Mitigation Measure BR-4</u></p> <p>Items that could pose a risk of entanglement, such as ropes, cables, lines, etc., will be kept secure. Pipes, culverts, and similar materials will be stored to prevent wildlife species from using them as temporary refuges. These materials will be inspected each morning for the presence of animals before being moved.</p>
<p><u>Mitigation Measure BR-5</u></p> <p>All open trenching, if left overnight, will be covered up to prevent animals from falling into the ditch.</p>
<p><u>Mitigation Measure BR-6</u></p> <p>All equipment will be maintained to prevent leaks of automotive fluids, including gasoline, oils, and solvents.</p>
<p><u>Mitigation Measure BR-7</u></p> <p>All foods and food-related trash items will be enclosed in sealed trash containers at the end of each day and removed completely from the site daily.</p>
<p><u>Mitigation Measure BR-8</u></p> <p>Any temporary on-site construction piles will be securely covered with a tarp or other device to contain debris.</p>
<p><u>Mitigation Measure BR-9</u></p> <p>Project activities will occur during the dry season (April 15-October 31). However, if this cannot be implemented for whatever reason, the presence of a biological monitor will allow the project to proceed.</p>
<p><u>Mitigation Measure BR-10</u></p> <p>To the maximum extent practicable, no construction activities will occur during rain events or within 24 hours following a rain event. Prior to resuming construction activities,</p>

a qualified biologist will inspect the action area and all equipment and materials for the presence of CTS.

Additionally, the applicant has committed to provide compensatory habitat for the CTS with the intent to minimize the impacts of the proposed project on the species resulting from the permanent and temporary loss of habitat described above. The compensatory CTS habitat for the proposed Project will be in the form of 1.469 CTS habitat preservation credits purchased at the Great Valley Conservation Bank or another Service approved conservation bank. The compensatory habitat provided will ensure that habitat for the CTS will be protected and managed in perpetuity.

#### Mitigation Measure BR-11

The applicant has proposed to offset the loss of suitable CTS upland habitat due to the two projects' temporary and permanent effects by purchasing CTS habitat preservation credits at a 3:1 ratio for permanent effects and a 1:1 ratio for temporary effects. Therefore, prior to any earth-moving activities, the applicant will purchase 0.705 acre (0.235 acre x 3) for permanent effects to upland habitat and 0.765 acre (0.765 acres x 1) for temporary impacts to upland habitat, totaling 1.469 acres of CTS habitat preservation credits from the Great Valley Conservation Bank or at another Fish and Wildlife Service approved conservation bank.

It is the USFWS' biological opinion that the Project, as proposed, is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the CTS. The Service reached this conclusion because:

- 1.) The effects of construction activities on upland and dispersal habitats suitable for the CTS will be small-scale relative to the amount of suitable habitat that exists for the species outside of the action area.
- 2.) The conservation measures will minimize and avoid impacts to the species.

#### USFWS Incidental Take Statement

Upon implementation of the measures above, the USFWS determined in their Biological Opinion that incidental take of CTS associated with the proposed Project will become exempt from the prohibitions described in Section 9 of the Federal Endangered Species Act, They also determined that this level of anticipated take is not likely to result in jeopardy to the species.

Therefore, after consultation with USFWS and with implementation of Mitigation Measures BR-1 through BR-11, impacts to CTS will be less than significant.

- b) **No Impact** – No riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified on the USGS Valley Springs Quadrangle map, or in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service is known to be on or directly near the subject property, nor will the proposed project impact one. The nearest watercourse is Indian Creek, an intermittent stream which is located approximately 400 feet to the west of the which passes through the eastern most portion of the parcel. The Project site is approximately 500 to the east of the intermittent stream,

across State Route 26, and therefore, the proposed project would not result in any impacts to this resource.

- c) **No Impact** – The Project site and surrounding area consists of grassland with ornamental trees and with a few scattered oaks. No hydrophytic plants were observed on the Project site; therefore, it was not necessary to examine for hydrology and soils, since all three criteria must be met where wetlands are present. No jurisdictional wetlands will be impacted by the installation of the proposed facility. The site was evaluated for Waters of the U.S. during the survey and none were identified on site or adjacent to the site.
- d) **Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation** – The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) protects all common wild birds in the United States except a select few species. California Fish and Game Code 3503 makes it illegal to destroy any bird nests or eggs protected under the MBTA. The Biological Resources Impact Analysis<sup>6</sup> determined that no avian nests or activity was observed during the study. Although no trees are proposed to be removed, there is one oak tree in the nearby vicinity which could provide suitable nesting habitat for several avian species. Therefore, pursuant to the codes stated above, installation of the proposed tower is recommended to be outside the nesting season generally extending from early February through September including yearly variability due to weather conditions. No nests or nesting activity were observed during the field survey.

Mitigation Measure BR-12

If facility installation occurs within the bird nesting season (February 1 – September 30), a qualified biologist shall conduct a nesting bird survey to identify nesting activity. If active nests are observed, construction activity must be prohibited within a 500-foot buffer around the nest until the nestlings have fledged. All construction in the vicinity of the nest(s) must be in the presence of a qualified biological monitor. Construction activity may encroach into the buffer area at the discretion of the biological monitor.

- e-f) **No Impact** – The Project site is not located within the boundaries of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with any local policies, ordinances or plans protecting biological resources, and no impact would occur.

## V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- |                                                                                                                |                          |                                     |                          |                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

a-c) **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation** – A Cultural Resources Assessment was conducted by Environmental Assessment Specialists, Inc. on November 13, 2023. A field survey was conducted on November 9, 2023, along with a records search with the Central California Information Center. The investigation found no cultural or historic resources within the Direct Area of Potential Effects, meaning the area where the telecommunications facility would be built. The Indirect Area of Potential Effects, the area within a ½ mile radius of the proposed facility, was also researched. There are seven (7) cultural resources recorded in this radius, one of which includes a segment of the old Highway 26 which is adjacent to the subject parcel. This resource is part of the existing highway, which is a paved State right-of-way. According to a memo from Environmental Assessment Specialists, Inc. from January 31, 2026, the utilities for this proposed project are being routed underground from the lease area to an existing utility pole. This pole is being replaced with a new pole, and the existing utility pole on the west side of Highway 26 will also be replaced with a new utility pole by PG&E. Power will be routed overhead across Highway 26. Power will then be routed overhead to another existing utility pole on the east side of Highway 26 and on to an existing utility pole along Rose Marie Drive. Since there will be no groundwork, there will be no impacts to Highway 26 as a result of the proposed project.

Local tribes were contacted as part of the study, and no responses were received with concerns within the project area.

Future development would be required to comply with the required procedures of conduct following the accidental discovery of human remains as mandated in the Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 and the California Code of Regulations Section 15064.5(e) (CEQA).

In the event of accidental discovery of human remains, the procedures pursuant to Title 14 section 15064.5 of CA Code of Regulations should be followed. There was no evidence of cultural resources in the project area, therefore, no impact to historical, cultural, or archaeological resources would occur.

Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code states that if human remains are found during construction activities, all operations are to cease until the County coroner has determined that the remains are not subject to the provisions of law concerning investigation of the circumstances in the manner provided in Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code. The potential exists to possibly uncover previously unidentified resources; therefore, it is concluded that there is a less than significant impact with mitigation measure incorporated.

<u>Mitigation Measure CR-1</u>
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If subsurface deposits believed to be cultural or human in origin are discovered during construction, all work must halt within a 100-foot radius of the discovery. A qualified professional archaeologist, meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for prehistoric and historic archaeologist, shall be retained to evaluate the significance of the find, and shall have the authority to modify the no-work radius as appropriate, using professional judgment. The following notifications shall apply, depending on the nature of the find:

- If the professional archaeologist determines that the find does not represent a cultural resource, work may resume immediately and no agency notifications are required.
- If the professional archaeologist determines that the find does represent a cultural resource from any time period or cultural affiliation, he or she shall immediately notify the lead federal agency, the lead CEQA agency, and applicable landowner. The agencies shall consult on a finding of eligibility and implement appropriate treatment measures if the find is determined to be eligible for inclusion in the NRHP or CRHR. Work may not resume within the no-work radius until the lead agencies, through consultation as appropriate, determine that the site either:

- A. is not eligible for the NRHP or CRHR; or
- B. that the treatment measures have been completed to their satisfaction.

- If the findings include human remains, or remains that are potentially human, he or she shall ensure reasonable protection measures are taken to protect the discovery from disturbance (Assembly Bill [AB] 2641). The archaeologist shall notify Glenn County Coroner (as per § 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code). The provisions of § 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code, § 5097.98 of the California PRC, and AB 2641 will be implemented. If the Coroner determines the remains are Native American and not the result of a crime scene, the coroner will notify the NAHC, which then will designate a Native American Most Likely Descendant (MLD) for the Project (§ 5097.98 of the PRC). The designated MLD will have 48 hours from the time access to the property is granted to make recommendations concerning treatment of the remains. If the landowner does not agree with the recommendations of the MLD, the NAHC can mediate (§ 5097.94 of the PRC). If no agreement is reached, the landowner must rebury the remains where they will not be further disturbed (§ 5097.98 of the PRC). This will also include either recording the site with the NAHC or the appropriate Information Center; using an open space or conservation zoning designation or easement; or recording a reinternment document with the county in which the property is located (AB 2641). Work may not resume within the no-work radius until the lead agencies, through consultation as appropriate, determine that the treatment measures have been completed to their satisfaction.

## VI. ENERGY

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				

- |                                                                                                                                                                                   |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?                                                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

a-b) **No Impact** – The proposed telecommunications facility will use electric power directly from the grid. Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) was notified of the proposed project and responded that the proposed Project did not appear to directly interfere with existing PG&E facilities. The applicant chose this location because of existing, adequate access and power for the proposed site. The project would provide wireless service to an under-served area, and therefore, the operation of the telecommunication facility would not represent a wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. Calaveras County has not adopted a local renewable energy or energy efficient plan. The proposed telecommunications facility will be built to all applicable energy codes, to prevent energy waste and unnecessary consumption. Calculations will be required to be certified by a licensed engineer in compliance with applicable State and Federal energy standards. Per these regulations, the proposed project will not have an impact on renewable energy nor energy efficiency.

## VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv. Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?

- |                                                                                                                                                                                      |                          |                          |                                     |                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?                                                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

a)

- i. **No Impact** – There are no known active faults transversing the project site, and the project site is not within an Alquist–Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or any other established fault zones (CGS 2024). Thus, the proposed project would not be exposed to fault rupture hazards, and no impact would occur.
- ii. **Less-than-Significant Impact** – The primary seismic hazard for the project site, as with most regions in California, is the susceptibility to ground shaking due to the presence of major active or potentially active faults in the region; However, the project is not within any established fault zones. The design and construction of the telecommunications facility would comply also with all applicable building codes and standards established by regulatory agencies, including the County Department of Public Works and the latest California Building Code, to minimize damage in the event of an earthquake. There is no indication that construction of a 104-foot tower on a 40 ft. x 40 ft. concrete pad would induce strong seismic ground shaking. Complying with all applicable building codes and standards would ensure project impacts related to strong seismic ground shaking would be less than significant.
- iii. **Less-than-Significant Impact** – Potential secondary seismic effects of strong seismic ground shaking include liquefaction, lateral spreading, and seismically induced settlement/differential compaction. Liquefaction is defined as a loss of strength of saturated, cohesionless soil, generally due to seismic shaking. Soil types most susceptible to liquefaction are loose, saturated silty to clean fine sands. There are no Zones of Required Investigation for liquefaction or earthquake-induced landslides on the project site (California Geological Survey 2024). Therefore, the potential for the proposed project to exacerbate hazards from liquefaction and subsequent lateral spreading on this site are negligible. Compliance with all applicable building codes and standards would ensure the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact.
- iv. **Less-than-Significant Impact** – The areas of landslide concern are those that include high elevations with steep ravines and gulches associated with river and stream channels. Located at approximately 250 feet in elevation, the subject parcel has no ravines or gulches associated with rivers or stream channels. The project site is within an

“unevaluated area” for earthquake-induced landslide zone according to the Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation Valley Springs Quadrangle Map (CGS 2024); however, the project is not within any established fault zones. Any future construction would comply with the latest California Building Code standards to minimize damage in the event of a nearby landslide. Compliance with standard building code requirements generally minimizes potential geologic risk. Slopes on the site are 0-10%, and as such, there is no indication that the future construction of residential or agricultural structures as a result of the proposed project would induce or exacerbate the risk of landslides on the project site. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- b) **Less Than Significant Impact** – According to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service soils maps, the subject parcel contains soils classified as Pardee-Amador complex which consists of cobbly loam. The parcel is relatively flat and vegetated which increases the stability of the soil, creating less probability of erosion. While some minor soil erosion and loss of topsoil is expected during future construction/development of the site, existing codes and Best Management Practices that regulate erosion control would be implemented during wet winter months and during future grading and development of the property in compliance with Title 8 as it pertains to the County’s grading ordinance and improvement standards. The impacts on soil erosion and topsoil would be less than significant.
- c) **Less Than Significant Impact** – The Project site is relatively flat and is not within a geological unit or soils that are considered unstable. According to the Department of Conservation Data Viewer, the project site has not been mapped within a designated liquefaction, landslide, or earthquake fault hazard zone (CDC 2025b). Seismic hazard zones for liquefaction have not been established in Calaveras County. Based on the presence of shallow bedrock, the potential for liquefaction occurring at the site is considered very low. The proposed project would not be expected to result in on-site or off-site impacts due to landslide, liquefaction, lateral spreading, subsidence, or collapse, and complying with the latest Building Code requirements would ensure proposed project impacts are less than significant.
- d) **Less than Significant Impact** – Expansive soils generally have a significant amount of clay particles that can give up water or take on water which exerts stress on buildings and other loads placed on these soils. Consolidated formations like bedrock are generally less likely to be impacted compared to unconsolidated material such as alluvium. The Project site is underlain by Mehrten Formation, and other metamorphic rock formations that are particularly resistant and not considered expansive soil as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994). Therefore, impacts related to expansive soils would be less than significant.
- e) **No Impact** – A well and on-site septic system currently exist on the subject parcel in the southern portion where the residence is located. Installation of an unmanned telecommunications facility will not create an increased need or use of this infrastructure. No impact would occur.
- f) **No Impact** – The site does not contain any rock outcroppings or geologic features. See the discussion under Cultural and Aesthetic Resources above for further details.

## VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

a-b) **Less than Significant Impact** – Construction emissions would be temporary and limited to the construction employees travelling to the site and creation, construction, and installation of proposed improvements. These emissions associated with this project are minimal and result in a less than significant impact. The project does not involve a site modification or operational usage that meets criteria for emissions generating uses. Although the telecommunications facility would generate periodic vehicular trips for management and maintenance, the project would fall below the CCAPCD thresholds, and the impact is considered less than significant. Future construction would be required to comply with the updated Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations established by the Energy Commission. The County has not adopted a plan or program to reduce GHG's so the proposed Project would not be in conflict with any such plan or program, and therefore, the impact is considered less than significant.

## IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

- e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?
- f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?
- g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

a) **Less Than Significant Impact** – The Environmental Health Department requires a Hazardous Materials Business Plan to be put in place if hazardous materials are stored or handled in quantities that equal or exceed 55 gallons for liquid, 500 pounds for solids, or 200 cubic feet for gases. This HMBP process is designed to ensure that significant hazards to the public or the environment are fully mitigated. Although no back-up generator is proposed with this project, any future generator with a fuel storage tank will be required to meet all applicable Federal, State, and County regulations that apply to all hazardous materials that may be used or stored on the subject parcel. Assuming lawful storage and use of those materials, the potential for significant impacts from these materials is less than significant.

Although cell towers emit radio frequency (RF) emissions that members of the public are sometimes concerned about, federal law preempts local agencies from taking into consideration the direct or indirect environmental impacts from RF emissions when making land use decisions related to telecommunications projects. The provider must, however, comply with the Federal Communication Commission’s RF guidelines.

- b) **Less Than Significant Impact** – Hazardous materials such as diesel, maintenance fluids, and paints would be used onsite during construction. Should they be stored onsite, these materials would be stored in secure locations to reduce the potential for upset or accident conditions. Assuming lawful storage and use of those materials, the potential for significant impacts from these materials is less than significant.
- c) **No Impact** - The nearest school to the Project site is Jenny Lind Elementary School located approximately 3 miles to the east of the Project site. Due to the distance to the Project site, there will be no impact to the school.
- d) **No Impact** - Based on a search of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control database, the Project site does not contain any known EPA National Priority List sites, State

response sites, voluntary cleanup sites, or any school cleanup sites. No impact would occur as the Project site is not on any known list of hazardous materials sites.

- e) **No Impact** – The subject parcel is not located in an airport land use plan or within 2 miles of a public use airport.
- f) **No Impact** – There is no adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan specifically involving the parcel in question. The proposed tower will take access directly off of State Route 26 via an encroachment which will be permitted by Caltrans, and therefore, will not impede any traffic or alter any roads or obstruct emergency vehicle access. The proposed project has been reviewed by the Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection District and found acceptable as designed. There will be no impact to any adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.
- g) **No Impact** – According to The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP), this area of the county has a moderate fire risk. The proposed project would comply with current California Department of Forestry and California Building Code requirements for fire safety. The Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection District has reviewed the proposed project and had no concerns. Therefore, the proposed project will not expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires. No impacts will occur.

## X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a) **No Impact** – The proposed telecommunications facility will not cause any additional waste discharge or similar effluent that would cause a degradation of ground water quality. All construction and operation of uses on the parcel are subject to all applicable codes, policies, and regulations regarding waste discharge and water quality, which are sufficient to prevent substantial degradation. No impacts would occur.

b) **No Impact** – The proposed project is not within a utility service area district and does not propose to use any groundwater for operation of the telecommunications facilities. For this reason, the proposed project would not use any groundwater resources or lower the local groundwater table. The project would minimally increase the amount of impervious area on the project site. The subject parcel is located within the boundaries of the Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Subbasin. The application was routed to the Eastside San Joaquin Groundwater Sustainability Agency but did not provide comments. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on groundwater recharge.

c) **Less Than Significant Impact** – The proposed project would not substantially alter the existing drainage patterns of the site or vicinity. As the groundwork for proposed project, including the structural footprint and the development of the access road, constitutes minor physical change to the site and will only minimally alter its topography, it would not result in an impact to or substantially alter the drainage pattern on site or cause a significant increase in erosion or siltation on or off the Project site. Compliance with applicable codes, policies, and regulations regarding waste discharge and water quality would ensure that Project operations would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality. Comments received from the County Public Works Department require compliance with the County Road Ordinance (Chapter 12.02), Encroachment Ordinance (Ch 12.08), Storm Water Quality Ordinance (13.01), and the Grading & Draining Ordinance (15.05), in order to prevent substantial impacts to erosion and pollution of water due to construction. These are utilized and enforced by not only the Public Works department during grading activities, but also the Building Department during construction through inspections. Compliance with these regulations and the small-scale of this proposed project ensures there will not be substantial erosion, siltation or runoff that would impact the site or area off-site.

- d) **No Impact** – The subject parcel is not located in an area that is subject to flood hazards, tsunamis, or seiches, and would not be at risk of releasing pollutants due to inundation. No impacts would occur.
- e) **No Impact** – The proposed project does not include development of that will impede or redirect flood flows and will not obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. As stated above, the application was routed to the Eastside San Joaquin Groundwater Sustainability Agency but did not provide comments. No impacts would occur.

## XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a-b) **No Impact** - The Project site is located in the southern portion of an 8.99-acre residential parcel which borders State Route 26 within the community of Rancho Calaveras, which is an established community of multi-acre residential lots of dissimilar design that does not have an adopted Community Plan. There are multiple utility poles and towers located within the community, and the addition of telecommunications tower would not result in the physical division of an established community. The proposed project would not also conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. The proposed project complies with the Calaveras County General Plan, the Calaveras County Zoning Ordinance, applicable County Code sections, and all other applicable regulations. There are no habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans applicable to the property. Therefore, the project results in no impact.

## XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>

Would the project:

- |                                                                                                                                                                       |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 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? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

a-b) **No Impact** –The Project site is not located within the County’s Mineral Resource Overlay and mineral resource extraction is not proposed with this project. The Project site is located within a rural residential community and not within or adjacent to any active mining operations. Thus, the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of any known mineral resources of value to the region or result in the loss of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan. No impact would occur.

### XIII. NOISE

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project result in:				
a) Generation of a substantial, temporary, or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a-b) **Less Than Significant Impact** – The proposed project would result in a temporary increase in noise levels during the site grading and construction activities to develop the proposed project. The project must also comply with the County Noise Ordinance (Chapter 9.02) which would require construction activities to be limited to be between 7:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. As such, the proposed project would not result in long-term or significant construction noise impacts.

A noise analysis was conducted on December 27, 2023, by Waterford to determine if the proposed equipment will comply with the noise ordinance. The heat exchanger is the only

noise source of concern and is on a pre-manufactured equipment cabinet which runs continuously. Waterford’s report concluded that the maximum noise level would be 46.7 dBA from the nearest property line, which is approximately 60 ft. from the heat exchanger. This would be compliant with the noise standard of 50 dBA per Calaveras County Code<sup>8</sup> 9.02.040 B. The proposed project will be required to construct the project in accordance with the proposed site plan as shown in Figure 4; therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

- c) **No Impact** – The subject parcel is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. No impact would occur.

## XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- a-b) **No Impact** – The proposed project would be visited by one or two employees approximately once a month to monitor and provide maintenance to the wireless telecommunications facility. As this is a minimal number of employees, and certainly not enough to induce substantial population growth, the project would not substantially increase the number of jobs in the area, nor would it affect any existing housing. No people would need to be rehoused elsewhere as a result of the project, and no new public roads are being built or extended as a result of it. Therefore, no impacts to population and housing would occur.

## XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental				

impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a) **No Impact** – Public services are currently provided to the project area and the additional demand placed on existing services as a result of the proposed project would be minimal. The proposed project is located within the jurisdiction of the Calaveras Consolidated Fire District and is provided police services by the Calaveras County Sheriff’s Office. As this is an unmanned facility, there would be no impacts on the Sheriff’s services. The Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection District reviewed the application and had no concerns about the project’s potential flammability or other potential increased demand for their services. The access road off of State Route 26 will comply with the State’s encroachment regulations with respect to providing adequate access for emergency fire equipment. The proposed project would have no impact on public parks and schools as no residences are proposed, no existing public parks or schools will be affected by the project, and no public parks or schools are currently planned for this location. Therefore, no impacts on public services will occur.

## XVI. RECREATION

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

a-b) **No Impact** – The proposed project would not increase the use of any existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities in the vicinity. Development of recreational facilities is not proposed as part of the Project, nor were they proposed at this location prior to the submittal of the Project application. No impact would occur.

## XVII. TRANSPORTATION

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines §15064.3, subdivision (b)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- a) **No Impact** – The proposed addition of a telecommunications facility would utilize the existing infrastructure, taking access off of State Route 26. A private access road for the telecommunications facility will be constructed for use by the leaseholder. The proposed project would be consistent with the number of vehicle trips associated with a single-family residence and does not require a traffic study, or access to transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities. This proposed project will comply with fire and road standards and will therefore not conflict with any plans, ordinances, or policies pertaining to transportation. It would not conflict with any existing program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing circulation—including transit, roadway, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities. No impacts would occur.
- b) **Less than Significant Impact** – The proposed cell tower is an allowable use with approval of an Administrative Use Permit in the RR zone. There are no high-volume transit stops in this rural area. The proposed cellular tower will not be open to the public and should not generate additional traffic in this regard. As discussed in Section VIII, Greenhouse Gasses, the vehicle trips for maintenance are estimated to be one (1) per month, comprising a less than significant impact.
- c) **No Impact** – The access road will be constructed to provide adequate access from State Route 26 to the cellular tower location and will not increase hazards. The area consists of rural residential neighborhood along a state highway and there are no known hazardous design features (such as sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (such as farm equipment) that would increase the hazards of constructing access to the proposed location. Therefore, the project will have no impact.
- d) **Less than Significant Impact** – Local and State emergency services, including the fire district, have been notified of the project. The Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection District reviewed the application and had no concerns. Permitting procedures from the land use departments will ensure adequate emergency access, bringing this concern to a less than significant impact.

## XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
<p>Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:</p>				
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

a-b) **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation**– As discussed in the Cultural Resource Assessment from Environmental Assessment Specialists, there are no known Tribal cultural or archaeological resources or dedicated cemeteries on the Project site.

As part of the processing of the project application, County staff-initiated consultation with tribes that have requested formal notification of proposed projects within their geographic area of traditional and cultural affiliation per AB 52 Notification Request, Public Resources Code Section 21080.3(b). The Calaveras Band of Miwuk Indians, the California Valley Miwok Tribe, and the Lone Band of Miwuk Indians, Buena Vista Rancheria, and Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California have been notified of this proposed project. The California Valley Miwok Tribe responded with no comment or concern about the proposed project. No responses were received from the other the Tribes.

If any site excavation occurs in the future and any artifacts uncovered, that project would be subject to laws governing the accidental discovery. It is concluded the proposal will have a less than significant impact with mitigations incorporated.

### Discovery of Tribal Cultural Resources

In accordance with State and Federal Laws if any potentially prehistoric, protohistoric, and/or historic cultural resources are accidentally encountered during future excavation of the site, all work shall cease in the area of the find pending an examination of the site and materials by a qualified archaeologist.

Mitigation Measure TCR-1

All personnel upon entering the project site are to undergo tribal cultural awareness training by, at minimum, reviewing and concurring to the corresponding Conditions of Approval and Mitigation Measures requiring to stop work and notify the lead agency and tribes in the event of discovery.

Mitigation Measure TCR-2

In the event that any prehistoric or historic subsurface cultural (including Tribal) resources are discovered during ground disturbing activities, all work within 100 feet of the resources shall be halted and the applicant/operator shall consult with the County and a qualified archaeologist (as approved by the County) and corresponding tribal representative to assess the significance of the find per CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5. The qualified archaeologist shall determine the nature of the find, evaluate its significance, and, if necessary, suggest preservation or mitigation measures. Appropriate mitigation measures, based on recommendations listed in the archaeological survey report and tribal representative, will be determined by the Glenn County Planning & Community Development Services Agency. Work may proceed on other parts of the project site while mitigation for historical resources, unique archaeological resources, and/or tribal resources is carried out. All significant cultural materials recovered shall be, at the discretion of the consulting archaeologist, subject to scientific analysis, professional museum curation, tribal representative, and documented according to current professional standards.

**XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS**

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
Would the project:				
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?                                                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

a-e) **No Impact** – The proposed project will not require the construction of additional infrastructure beyond the telecommunications facility itself. There is adequate power near the site and sufficient drainage. The utilities for this proposed project are being routed underground from the lease area to an existing utility pole. According to the applicant, PG&E is replacing this pole with a new pole, and the existing utility pole on the west side of Highway 26 will also be replaced with a new utility pole. No new natural gas, water, or wastewater utilities are proposed nor will they be needed on site as it is an unmanned facility. Permitting procedures from the land use departments will ensure proper installation of the facilities per local and State standards. Operation of the proposed project would not generate demand for utilities requiring the relocation or construction of new or expanded facilities. The Project application was circulated to utility agencies for an opportunity to comment on the proposed project. The County received a letter from PG&E stating that the proposed improvements will not interfere with existing facilities. No other letters were received concerning impacts to their services. The operation of the proposed cell tower facility does not generate solid waste. No impact would occur in this regard.

## XX. WILDFIRE

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:				
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines, or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?

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

## DISCUSSION

The project site is located within a State Responsibility Area and is rated as a moderate fire hazard severity zone. This rating is based on factors of slope, vegetation, and annual summer weather patterns. These zones, referred to as Fire Hazard Severity Zones, provide the basis for application of various mitigation strategies to reduce risks to buildings associated wildland fires. The zones also relate to the requirements for building codes designed to reduce the ignition potential to buildings in the wildland-urban interface zone.

- a) **No Impact** – The Project does not propose activities that would substantially impair the Calaveras County Emergency Operations Plan. All roads in the area would remain open. The project site is located on private property and will be accessed from a State highway. The proposed project will not interfere with adjacent roadways that may be used for emergency response or evacuation. The proposed project will not prohibit subsequent plans from being established or prevent the goals and objectives of existing plans from being carried out. No impacts would occur.
- b) **No Impact** – The tower facility does not propose significant changes to the existing landscape that would affect wildfire risk and no project occupants will be stationed at the telecommunications facility and so will have no impact on exposure of occupants to pollutants. No impacts would occur.
- c) **Less Than Significant Impact** – The proposed telecommunications facility will have a road that meets fire access requirements and a hammerhead turnaround, allowing for emergency vehicles at the site. The project application was routed to all applicable fire departments and agencies and they recommended no additional conditions; therefore, the proposed project will not result in conditions to further maintenance of infrastructure which might exacerbate the risk of fire. Impacts will be less than significant.
- d) **Less than Significant Impact** – As previously discussed under “Geology and Soils” and “Hydrology and Water Quality,” runoff will continue to occur naturally at the project site after development, and flooding and landslide events are not common within the project area. Areas with slopes greater than 20% may be susceptible to erosion, instability, or landslides, especially during periods of high rainfall or snowmelt. With respect to areas recently affected by wildfires, steep slopes can be the site of fast-moving, highly destructive debris flows in response to heavy rains. However, slopes on the project site are less than 10%, posing a less than significant risk of landslides and post-fire slope instability. The installation of a telecommunications facility will not significantly alter

drainage patterns, cause slope instability, or expose people or structures to risks associated with these impacts, including post-fire events; therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

## XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	<u>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION</u>	<u>LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>
a) Does the project have the potential to Substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a) <b>Less Than Significant Impact</b> – Based on the information and analysis provided throughout this Initial Study, implementation of the proposed project would not substantially degrade the quality of the environment and would not 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 rare or endangered plants or animals, or eliminate important examples of California history or prehistory.				

CEQA-level project-specific biological and cultural resource studies were required per the General Plan at the project application stage, and the none of the reports prepared in the wake of these studies suggested that any potential project-specific impacts could be consequential enough to any biological or cultural resource to trigger one or more of the mandatory findings of significance. Similarly, no direct or indirect safety-related impacts or large-scale environmental impacts were identified that could be consequential enough to trigger one or more of the mandatory findings of significance. All mitigation proposed for this

project in Section IV. Biological Resources is adequate to clearly avoid triggering any impact that could trigger a mandatory finding of significance.

Development of the proposed project would not eliminate any known historic, archaeological, or paleontological resources. There are no known unique ethnic or cultural values associated with the project site, nor are known religious or sacred uses associated with the project site. All mitigation proposed for this project in Section V. Cultural Resources and Section XVIII. Tribal Cultural Resources is adequate to clearly avoid triggering any impact that could trigger a mandatory finding of significance. Additionally, the project applicant is required to comply with California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 15064.5(e), California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, and Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5097.98 as a matter of policy in the event human remains are encountered at any time. Therefore, the impact is less than significant.

- b) **Less Than Significant Impact** – The proposed telecommunications facility would not create a significant cumulative impact to any of the items discussed above. There are no current or probable future projects in the vicinity of the Project site that would compound noise, hazards, or emissions; and the project would add only a single additional tall utility structure to an area that has many—and one that is better disguised than the others. . Potential air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, hydrology and traffic associated impacts are discussed in their respective sections above and there is nothing about this project, its location, or other projects in the area that would significantly compound any of these impacts . The analysis determined that all potential impacts were less than significant and would not contribute significantly to cumulative impacts.
- c) **Less Than Significant Impact** –The proposed project would not create significant hazards or health safety concerns. Aspects of this project which have the potential to have an effect on human beings or the environment have been discussed in this document, and none of the impacts identified would have the type of substantial impacts this portion of the analysis is designed to address. The project as proposed will not have substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly, and the impact is less than significant. It is concluded that there will be a less than significant impact.

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