Valley Springs Commercial Project

Public Review Draft
Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

October 2026 | 09594.00002.001

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section **Page**

1.0 INTRODUCTION 1

2.0 PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING 1

2.1 Project Location 1

2.2 Project Setting 2

2.3 Existing Zoning and General Plan Land Use Designation 2

3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION 2

3.1 Rezone and General Plan Amendment 2

3.2 Tentative Parcel Map 3

3.3 Commercial Development 3

3.4 Access, Circulation, and Parking 4

3.5 Drainage and Utility Improvements 4

3.6 Construction and Staging 6

3.7 Operation 6

3.8 Required Approvals 6

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED 9

5.0 DETERMINATION 10

6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST 11

I. AESTHETICS 12

II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES 15

III. AIR QUALITY 17

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES 32

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES 59

VI. ENERGY 70

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS 73

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS 79

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS 84

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY 93

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING 99

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

Section			Page
	XII.	MINERAL RESOURCES	103
	XIII.	NOISE	104
	XIV.	POPULATION AND HOUSING	113
	XV.	PUBLIC SERVICES	115
	XVI.	RECREATION	118
	XVII.	TRANSPORTATION	119
	XVIII.	TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES	135
	XIX.	UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS	138
	XX.	WILDFIRE	143
	XXI.	MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE	148
7.0	**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM**		**150**
8.0	**REFERENCES**		**150**
9.0	**PREPARERS**		**156**

LIST OF FIGURES

No.	Title	Follows Page
1	Site and Vicinity Map	1
2	Aerial Map	1
3	Tentative Parcel Map	2
4a-b	Site Plan	2

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

LIST OF TABLES

No.	Title	Page
1	Proposed Development by Parcel	3
2	Calaveras County Attainment Status	20
3	Anticipated Construction Schedule	22
4	Construction Equipment Assumptions	22
5	CCAPCD Thresholds of Significance	25
6	Maximum Daily Construction Emissions	26
7	Maximum Daily Operational Emissions	27
8	MEIR Maximum Incremental Health Effects	29
9	MEIW Maximum Incremental Health Effects	29
10	Discrete Receptor Incremental Cancer, Chronic, and Acute Health Effects	30
11	Previous Studies Conducted within One-Quarter Mile of the APE	60
12	Summary of Findings from Historic-Era Maps Depicting the APE	63
13	Summary of Findings from Aerial Photographs Depicting the Current APE	63
14	California Electricity Sources	70
15	Construction GHG Emissions	81
16	Unmitigated Operational GHG Emissions	81
17	Mitigated Operational GHG Emissions	82
18	Plan Consistency Evaluation	100
19	Exterior Noise Level Standards	106
20	Construction Noise Levels	108
21	Operational Noise	109
22	Trip Distribution Assumptions	121
23	Baseline Peak Hour Intersection Level of Service	126
24	Baseline Plus Project Peak Hour Intersection Level of Service	130

LIST OF APPENDICES

A	Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Analysis
B	Biological Resources Assessment
C	Aquatic Resources Delineation
D	Cultural Resources Assessment
E	Noise and Vibration Assessment
F	Transportation Impact Study
G	Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Assembly Bill
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AFY	acre-feet per year
ALUC	Airport Land Use Commission
ALUCP	Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan
amsl	above mean sea level
APE	Area of Potential Effects
APN	Assessor's Parcel Number
ARD	Aquatic Resources Delineation
ATRTP	Calaveras Active Transportation and Recreational Trails Plan
APSA	Aboveground Petroleum Storage Act
bcf/year	billion cubic feet per year
BMPs	Best Management Practices
BOR	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
BOS	Board of Supervisors
CA-MUTCD	California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CalARP	California Accidental Release Prevention
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
Cal-Co Fire	Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection District
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CALGreen	California Green Building Standards Code
CalRecycle	California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAPCOA	California Air Pollution Control Officers Association
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBC	California Building Code
CCEHD	Calaveras County Environmental Health Department
CCIC	Central California Information Center
CCOG	Calaveras County Council of Governments
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CCWD	Calaveras County Water District
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Census Bureau	U.S. Census Bureau
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CGS	California Geological Survey
CHL	California Historical Landmarks
CHP	California Highway Patrol
CHRIS	California Historical Resources Information Systems

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS (cont.)

CNDDB	California National Diversity Database
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO	carbon monoxide
County	Calaveras County
CO_{2e}	carbon dioxide equivalent
CPUD	Calaveras Public Utility District
CRPR	California Rare Plant Rank
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
CUPA	Certified Unified Program Agency
CUP	Conditional Use Permit
CVP	Central Valley Project
CVRWQCB	Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
CWA	Clean Water Act
CWC	California Water Code
CY	cubic yards
dB	decibel
DMR	Division of Mine Reclamation
DOC	California Department of Conservation
DOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
DPM	diesel particulate matter
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
DWR	Department of Water Resources
EOD	Explosives Ordnance Disposal
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
ESJGA	Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Authority
EV	Electric vehicle
FAR	floor area ratio
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FESA	Federal Endangered Species Act
FHSZ	Fire Hazard Severity Zones
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FMMP	Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
GHG	greenhouse gases
GSA	groundwater sustainability agency
GSP	groundwater sustainability plan
GWh	gigawatt hours
HELIX	HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc.
HCM	Highway Capacity Manual
HMBP	Hazardous Materials Business Plan
HRA	Health Risk Assessment

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS (cont.)

HSC	Health and Safety Code
IPaC	Information for Planning and Consultation
IPCC	International Panel on Climate Change
IS/MND	Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
ITE	Institute of Transportation Engineers
LAFCO	Local Agency Formation Commission
LCI	California Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
L_{dn}	Day-Night Average Level
L_{eq}	average or equivalent continuous sound level
L_{max}	maximum sound level
LED	light emitting diode
LOS	Level of Service
LRA	Local Responsibility Area
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MLC	Mineral Land Classification
MLD	Most Likely Descendant
mgd	million gallons per day
MJHMP	Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan
MMRP	Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
MTSJH	Mark Twain St. Joseph's Hospital
N_2O	nitrous oxide
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NO_x	nitrogen oxide
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPL	National Priorities List
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NSLU	noise-sensitive land use
OEHHA	Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
OES	Office of Emergency Services
OHP	Office of Historic Preservation
OMR	Office of Mining Reclamation
OS/RC	Resource Conservation Designation
Pb	lead
PFC	perfluorocarbons
pga	peak ground acceleration

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS (cont.)

PG&E	Pacific Gas and Electric Company
PM_{10}	particulate matter 10 micrometers or less in diameter
$PM_{2.5}$	particulate matter 2.5 micrometers or less in diameter
PRC	California Public Resources Code
ROG	reactive organic gas
RRFB	rectangular rapid flashing beacon
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SARA	Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act
SB	Senate Bill
SEWD	Stockton East Water District
sf	square feet
SLF	Sacred Lands Files
SF_6	sulfur hexafluoride
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SOI	Sphere of Influence
SO_2	sulfur dioxide
SO_X	sulfur oxides
SRA	State Responsibility Area
SR	State Route
SSC	Species of Special Concern
SWITRS	Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAC	toxic air contaminant
TCR	Tribal Cultural Resources
TIS	Transportation Impact Study
TPM	Tentative Parcel Map
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
UST	underground storage tank
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
VSCP	Valley Springs Community Plan
VSPUD	Valley Springs Public Utility District
WSA	Water Supply Assessment
WTP	water treatment plant
WWTP	wastewater treatment plant

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INITIAL STUDY INFORMATION SHEET

1.	Project title:	Valley Springs Commercial Project
2.	Lead agency name and address:	Calaveras County Planning Department 891 Mountain Ranch Road San Andreas, CA 95249
3.	Lead agency contact:	Madeleine Flandreau, Senior Planner mflandreau@calaverascounty.gov (209) 754-6394
4.	Project location:	Approximately 1,040 feet south of the intersection of State Route (SR) 12 and SR 26
5.	General plan designation:	Existing: Industrial (I) and Commercial (C) Proposed: Commercial (C)
6.	Zoning:	Existing: C2/M4 (General Commercial/Business Park) and C2 (General Commercial) Proposed: C2 (General Commercial)

7. Description of project:

The project is located in the unincorporated community of Valley Springs in the northwestern corner of Calaveras County. The approximately 6.99-acre project site would be located on a portion of one legal parcel (referred to as the subject parcel), which is comprised of Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 046-016-091 and 046-016-092. APN 046-016-091 is currently zoned C2 (General Commercial) and has a General Plan land use designation of Commercial (C). APN 046-016-092 is currently zoned C2/M4 (General Commercial/Business Park) and has a General Plan land use designation of Industrial (I). The subject parcel totals 32.3 acres; however, only 6.99 acres would be developed under the project. The proposed commercial development would total 6.37 acres, and the existing and proposed County rights-of-way (ROW) areas would encompass 0.62 acre. The remaining fifth parcel would be approximately 26 acres located west of the project site and is anticipated to continue to be used as grazing land. The project is seeking a General Plan amendment and zoning amendment for the subject parcel. The current zoning would be amended from C2/M4 (General Commercial/Business Park) to C2 (General Commercial), and the current land use would be amended from Industrial (I)/Commercial (C) to Commercial (C).

The proposed project would require a Tentative Parcel Map (TPM) to divide the subject parcel into a total of five parcels, four of which would be developed as part of the project. The project would include construction of a drive-through coffee shop, an ARCO convenience store with six fuel pumps and a car wash tunnel, a drive-through fast-food restaurant, a diner, and an oil change shop on the four parcels. The project would also include on-site parking spaces, three entrances off State Route (SR) 26, utility improvements, landscaping, signage, and lighting. The project seeks approval of Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 2025-031 to allow for the proposed gas station, convenience store car wash, and drive-throughs in the General Commercial (C2) zone.

8. Surrounding land uses and setting:

The project site is bordered by a single-family residence and commercial land uses to the north, SR 26 and commercial/retail land uses to the east, commercial land uses and undeveloped land to the south, and vacant land and SR 12 to the west. Existing commercial development in the project vicinity includes a hardware store, auto parts store, and retail to the north, and a Chevron gas station, convenience store, car wash, restaurants, and storage facility immediately east of the site off of SR 26.

The project site is undeveloped and currently used for cattle grazing. The project site gently slopes from north to south with elevations ranging from 682 feet to 633 feet above mean sea level (amsl). There is an existing Calaveras County Water District (CCWD) 15-foot-wide sewer easement and sewer manhole in the southeastern corner of the project site. Existing road signage and Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) overhead power poles and utility lines are located along the eastern boundary of the project site and parallel to SR 26.

The project site is situated between three reservoirs that provide local and regional recreational opportunities including camping, boating, and fishing. Pardee Reservoir is located approximately 3.5 miles to the north, New Hogan lake is located approximately 1.5 miles to the south, and Camanche Reservoir is located approximately 6 miles to the northwest of the project site.

9. Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement:

- Calaveras County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

10. Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1? 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.?

In accordance with Assembly Bill (AB) 52 and Senate Bill (SB) 18 requirements, the County mailed tribal consultation letters to the following five tribes on December 26, 2025:

- Calaveras Ban of Mi-Wuk Indians
- California Valley Miwok Tribe
- Ione Band of Miwok
- Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wik Indians
- Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California

Each tribe was provided with a brief description of the proposed project and its location, including a description of the proposed General Plan amendment, as well as the Cultural Resources Assessment prepared for the proposed project. The 30-day response period for consultation under AB 52 ended January 26, 2025, and the 90-day response period for consultation under SB 18 ended March 26, 2026. During the AB 52 and SB 18 consultation period for the project, the County received one comment from

the California Valley Miwok Tribe dated December 31, 2025. The letter from the California Valley Miwok Tribe indicated that the tribe had no comments regarding the proposed General Plan Amendment or proposed commercial development of the project site.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) has been prepared by HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. (HELIX) for the proposed Valley Springs Commercial Project ("proposed project" or "project") in the community of Valley Springs in unincorporated Calaveras County (County). This IS/MND has been prepared to satisfy the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] 15000 et seq.). CEQA requires that State and local government agencies consider the environmental consequences of projects over which they have discretionary authority before they approve or implement those projects.

The IS/MND is a public document used by the decision-making Lead Agency to determine whether a project may have a significant effect on the environment. The County will use this IS/MND to determine whether the proposed project has a significant effect on the environment. This IS/MND relies on CEQA Guidelines Section 15064 in its determination of the significance of the environmental impacts. Per Section 15064, the finding as to whether a project may have one or more significant impacts shall be based on substantial evidence in the record, and that controversy alone, without substantial evidence of a significant impact, does not trigger the need for an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

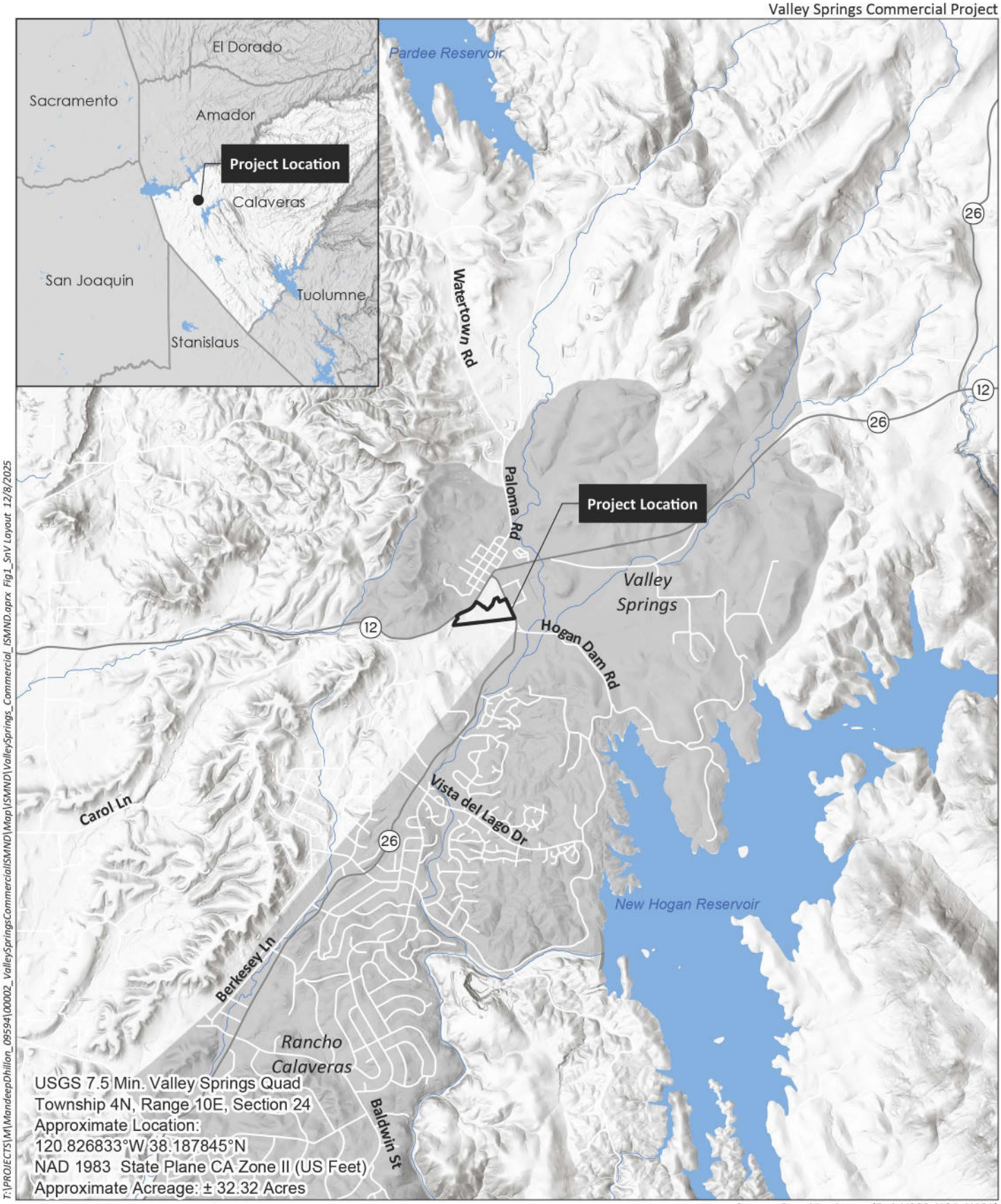
2.0 PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

2.1 Project Location

The proposed project is located in the unincorporated community of Valley Springs in the northwestern corner of Calaveras County. The project site is located approximately 1,040 feet south of the State Route (SR) 26 and SR 12 intersection and immediately west of SR 26 and Nove Way. The project site is located approximately 18 miles northwest of the City of Angels Camp and approximately eight miles west of the community of San Andreas, the County seat. New Hogan Lake is located approximately 1.5 miles south of the project site.

The project site is situated in Township 4 North, Range 10 East, Section 24, and is depicted on the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) *Valley Springs*, *California* 7.5-minute quadrangle map. The approximate center of the Study Area is at latitude 38.187845 and longitude -120.82685. See Figure 1 for a site and vicinity map and Figure 2 for an aerial map of the project site.

The approximately 6.99-acre project site would be located on a portion of a 32.3-acre legal parcel (referred to as the subject parcel), which is comprised of Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 046-016-091 and 046-016-092. The subject parcel totals 32.3 acres; however, only 6.99 acres would be developed under the project. This would include approximately 6.37 acres for the proposed commercial parcels and 0.62 acre that would be dedicated to existing and proposed County rights-of-way (ROW) areas. The remaining approximately 26 acres are anticipated to continue to be used as grazing land and are not proposed to be developed as part of this project.



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Source: Base Map Layers (Esri, USGS, NGA, NASA)

HELIX Environmental Planning

Site and Vicinity Map

Figure 1



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Source: Aerial (Maxar, 9/9/2024)

HELIX Environmental Planning

Aerial Map

Figure 2

2.2 Project Setting

Project Setting and Existing Land Uses

The project site is undeveloped and currently used for cattle grazing. The project site gently slopes from north to south with elevations ranging between 633 and 682 feet above mean sea level (amsl). There is an existing Calaveras County Water District (CCWD) 15-foot-wide sewer easement and sewer manhole in the southeastern corner of the project site. Existing road signage and Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) overhead power poles and utility lines are located along the eastern boundary of the project site and parallel to SR 26.

Surrounding Land Uses

The project site is bordered by a single-family residence and commercial land uses to the north, SR 26 and commercial/retail land uses to the east, commercial land uses and undeveloped land to the south, and vacant land and SR 12 to the west. Existing commercial development in the project vicinity includes a hardware store, auto parts store, and retail to the north, and a Chevron gas station, convenience store, car wash, restaurants, and storage facility immediately east of the site off of SR 26.

The project site is situated between three reservoirs that provide local and regional recreational opportunities including camping, boating, and fishing. Pardee Reservoir is located approximately 3.5 miles to the north, New Hogan lake is located approximately 1.5 miles to the south, and Camanche Reservoir is located approximately 6 miles to the northwest of the project site.

2.3 Existing Zoning and General Plan Land Use Designation

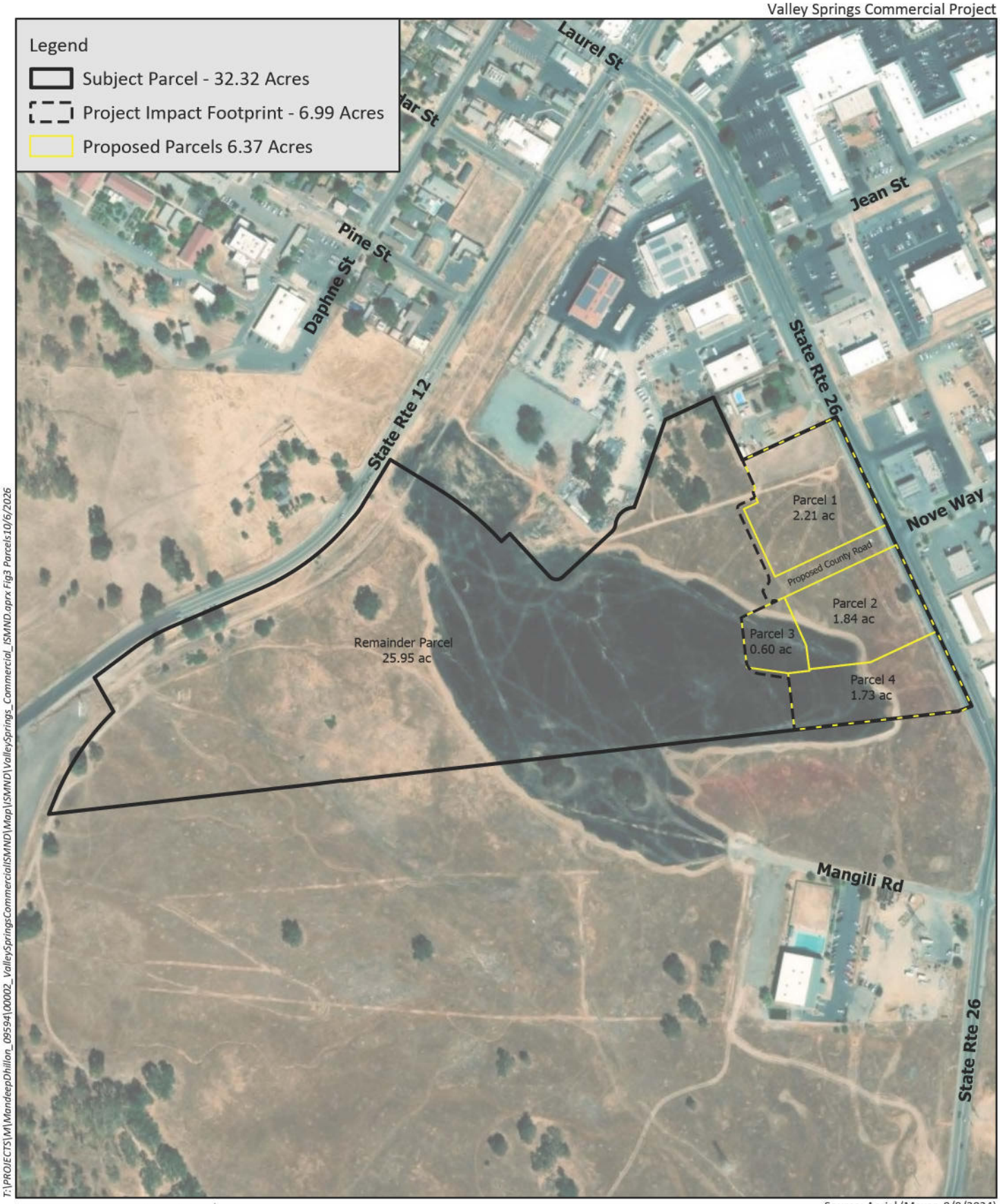
The 32.3-acre subject parcel is one legal parcel with a Tax Rate Area line dividing the parcel into APNs 046-016-091 and 046-016-092. The subject parcel is currently zoned C2/M4 (General Commercial/Business Park) and has a General Plan land use designation of Industrial (I)/Commercial (C).

3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project would require approval of a General Plan amendment and zoning amendment to change the current zoning and land use designation of the subject parcel and would include a Tentative Parcel Map (TPM) to divide the 32.3-acre subject parcel into a total of five parcels, four of which would be developed under the proposed project. See Figure 3 for the Tentative Parcel Map. The project would include construction of a drive-through coffee shop, an ARCO convenience store with six fuel pumps and a car wash tunnel, a drive-through fast-food restaurant, a diner, and an oil change shop on the four parcels. The project would also include on-site parking spaces, three entrances off SR 26, utility improvements, landscaping, signage, and lighting. Each of the project components are discussed in greater detail below. See Figures 4a and 4b for the proposed site plan.

3.1 Rezone and General Plan Amendment

The project applicant is seeking a General Plan amendment and zoning amendment for the subject parcel. The current zoning would be amended from C2/M4 (General Commercial/Business Park) to C2 (General Commercial), and the current land use would be amended from Industrial (I)/Commercial (C) to Commercial (C).



T:\PROJECTS\M\MandeepDhillon_09594\00002_ValleySpringsCommercial\ISMND\Map\ISMND\ValleySprings_Commercial_ISMND.aprx Fig3 Parcels10/6/2026

0 350 Feet

Source: Aerial (Maxar, 9/9/2024)

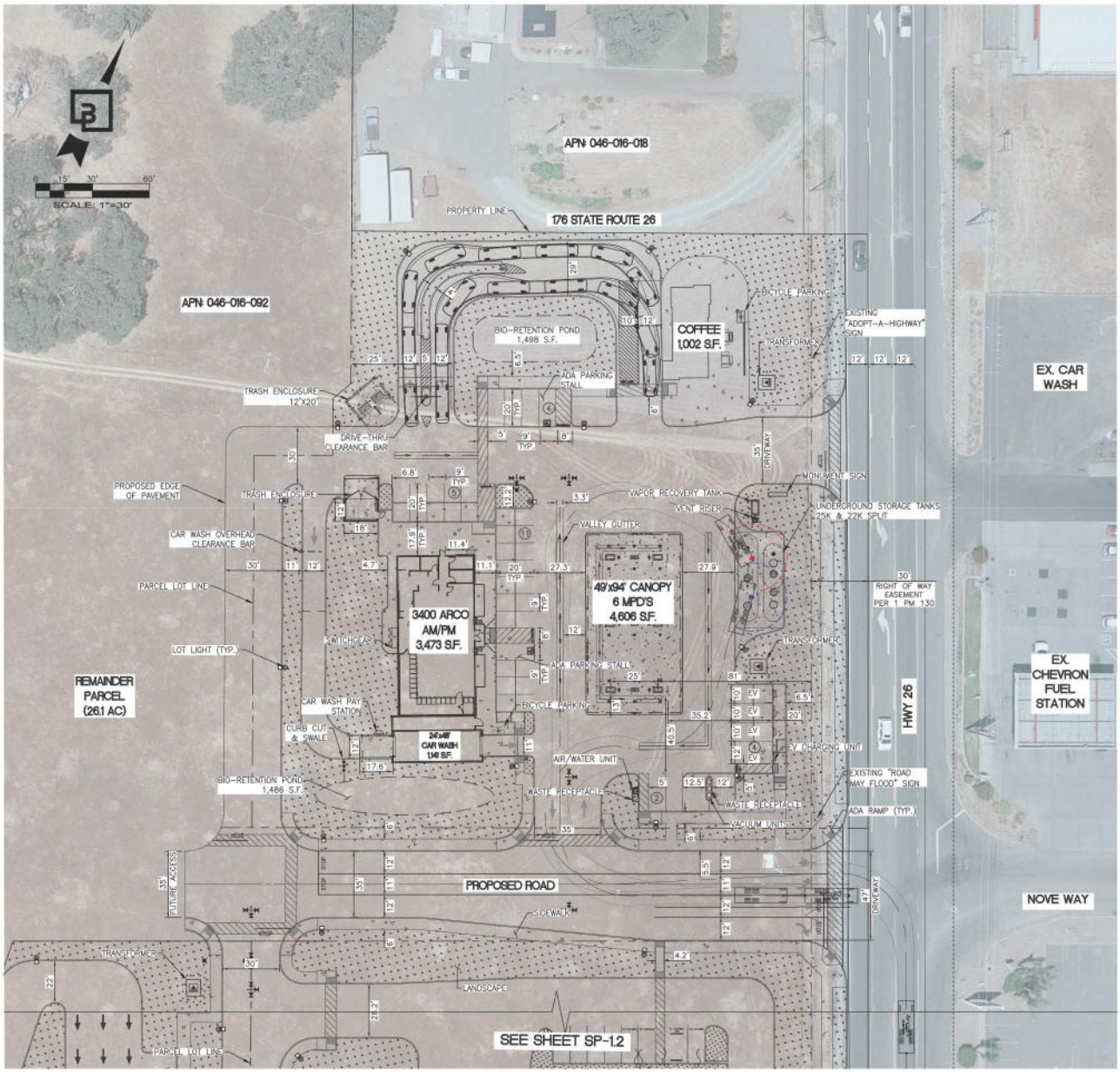
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Tentative Parcel Map

Figure 3

DETAILED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

VALLEY SPRINGS RETAIL CENTER



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Source: Source: Barghausen Consulting Engineers, Inc., 2026

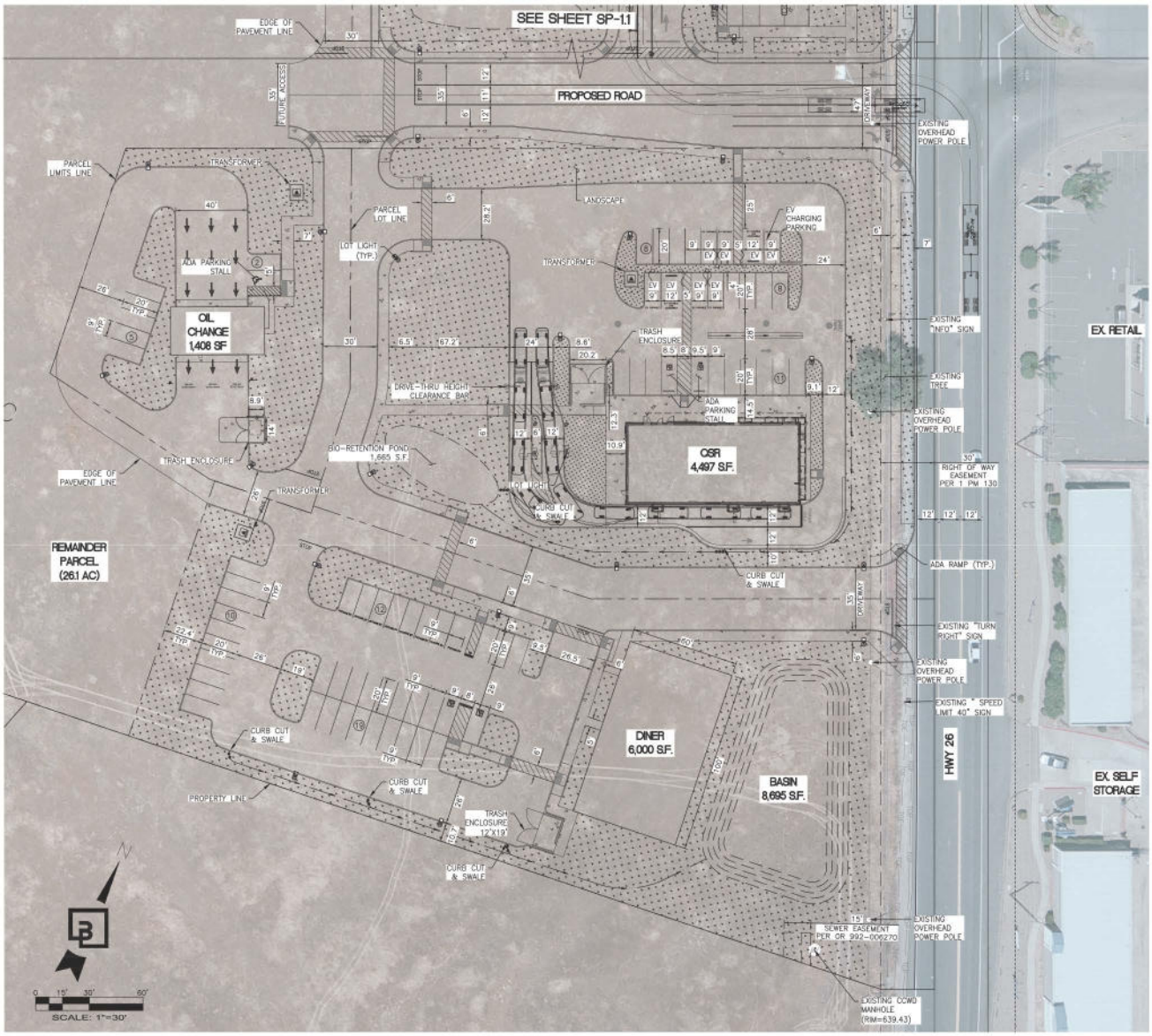
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Site Plan

Figure 4a

DETAILED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

VALLEY SPRINGS RETAIL CENTER



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Source: Source: Barghausen Consulting Engineers, Inc., 2026

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Site Plan

Figure 4b

3.2 Tentative Parcel Map

The project would require approval of a TPM to subdivide the 32.3-acre subject parcel into five parcels. However, the proposed commercial development would be located on four of the proposed parcels and would total 6.37 acres. It should be noted that the proposed project site would be 6.99 acres, which includes the proposed County road that would encompass 0.62 acre and be dedicated to the County through a permanent easement following construction.

The remaining fifth parcel would be approximately 26 acres located west of the project site and is anticipated to continue to be used as grazing land. This parcel is not proposed to be developed as part of this project and is not included within the project site.

See Table 1 below for a summary of project components proposed on each parcel.

Table 1:
Proposed Development by Parcel

Parcel	Acreage	Proposed Use	Building Size (in square feet [sf])
1	2.21	Drive-through coffee shop, ARCO convenience store with gas station and car wash	1,002 and 4,614
2	1.83	Drive-through restaurant	4,497
3	1.73	Diner	6,000
4	0.60	Oil change shop	1,408
Total:	**6.37**	N/A	**17,521**

Note: The total project site is approximately 6.99 acres; however, the remaining approximately 0.62 acre includes existing and proposed County ROW areas.

3.3 Commercial Development

The proposed project would include construction of a 1,002 square-foot (sf) drive-through coffee shop on the northern portion of the project site. The drive-through coffee shop would include a two-lane queuing aisle. The coffee shop would include 20 indoor seats.

The proposed project would also include construction of an ARCO convenience store with a gas station and car wash tunnel on the northern portion of the project site, just south of the coffee shop. The proposed convenience store would be 3,473 sf, and the car wash tunnel would be 1,141 sf, resulting in a total building square footage of 4,614 sf. The proposed car wash would utilize a water reclaim system, which is designed to filter and recycle wastewater generated during car washes for reuse. The gas station would include six multi-product dispensers providing 12 fueling positions under a 4,606-sf canopy. Two underground storage tanks (USTs) would be constructed east of the gas station, including a 25,000-gallon tank and a 22,000-gallon split tank. A vapor recovery tank and vent riser would be installed north of the two USTs, which are designed to capture and store gasoline vapors released during the fueling process. The gas station would also provide an air/water unit, two vacuum units, and a propane fill station.

The proposed project would also include construction of a 4,497-sf drive-through fast-food restaurant with a two-lane queuing aisle, a 6,000-sf diner, and a 1,408-sf quick oil change shop with drive-through lanes in the southern portion of the project site.

3.4 Access, Circulation, and Parking

Vehicular access to the project site would be provided via three ingress/egress roads off SR 26, including two proposed 35-foot-wide driveways and a public County roadway. The proposed public County roadway would be the primary site entrance and would be located in the central portion of the project site immediately across from Nove Way. This roadway would have a 47-foot-wide entrance off SR 26 before tapering down to a 35-foot-wide public County roadway. The public County roadway would encompass approximately 0.5 acre that would be dedicated to the County in a permanent easement. The public County roadway would extend 352 linear feet into the project site before terminating at a three-way stop.

The two proposed 35-foot-wide driveways would be located north and south of the proposed public County roadway. These driveways would lead to internal drive aisles that would range from approximately 27 to 30 feet wide, which would connect to the three-way stop and would provide circulation throughout the project site. Drive-through lanes would provide access to the proposed coffee-shop, car wash, fast-food restaurant, and oil change shop.

The project would include a total of 103 parking spaces throughout the project site, including seven Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant spaces, 12 electric vehicle (EV) spaces, and one space designated for use of the air/water unit and two vacuum units. The project would also include on-site bicycle parking.

Internal pedestrian facilities and crosswalks would provide pedestrian circulation throughout the site. A pedestrian sidewalk with ADA ramps would be located along the project frontage to SR 26 between the north and south driveways.

3.5 Drainage and Utility Improvements

Stormwater System

The proposed stormwater system would consist of curb cuts and swales, open grates, underground storm drain lines, three bioretention ponds, and one detention basin. The three proposed bioretention ponds would be constructed with engineered biofiltration media and sandy loam topsoil and vegetated with low-growing native grasses and/or a native no-mow fescue blend to remove pollutants prior to infiltration and increase infiltration. Flows from the three proposed bioretention ponds would be conveyed via underground 8-inch storm drain lines to the 8,695-sf detention basin located in the southeastern corner of the site. This basin would be hydroseeded with native grasses and serve as the central stormwater management facility for the site. The proposed stormwater system would be designed to maintain the existing northwesterly to southeasterly drainage pattern on-site.

The proposed swales, bioretention ponds, and detention basin would incorporate energy dissipation structures and other erosion control measures to prevent scour where needed. Final discharge from the detention basin would be released at a pre-development rate through a new 12-inch storm drain line into the existing Calaveras Public Utility District (CPUD) drainage infrastructure on SR 26.

Utilities

Water

Based on a preliminary review of the proposed project's plans, and as documented in a letter dated January 6, 2026, CCWD indicated that they would supply water to the proposed project (CCWD 2026). Although the CCWD would supply water to the project, a portion of the project site located on APN 046-016-091 is located within the Sphere of Influence (SOI) and service boundary of the Valley Springs Public Utility District (VSPUD) for water services. Approval from the Calaveras County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) would be required for a service area adjustment for CCWD to provide water services to the entire project site.

A proposed 12-inch water main would supply water to the project site and would connect to the existing CCWD public water main located parallel to SR 26. The proposed pressurized water distribution system would loop throughout the site to provide potable water, irrigation, and fire suppression (sprinkler) service connections to each of the proposed buildings. Individual water meter and backflow prevention devices would be installed at each of the proposed parcels based on the projected flow demand and capacity requirements of the proposed uses. Fire hydrants would be located throughout the project site to provide fire protection coverage to each of the proposed buildings.

Wastewater

Based on a preliminary review of the proposed project's plans, and as documented in a letter dated January 6, 2026, CCWD indicated that the project would receive wastewater services from CCWD. Although CCWD would supply wastewater services for the project site, a portion of the project site located on APN 046-016-091 is partially located within the VSPUD's SOI and service boundary for wastewater services. Approval from LAFCO would be required for a service area adjustment for CCWD to provide wastewater service to the entire project site.

A proposed 8-inch sanitary sewer main would be installed on-site and would connect to existing sewer infrastructure parallel to SR 26. The proposed sewer main would extend throughout the project site to provide sanitary sewer and grease waste connections to each of the proposed buildings. The sewer system would include a reclaimed water system, grease interceptors, and water-oil separators to manage wastewater generated by commercial uses, including building operations, trash enclosures, and car wash. These components would be designed to pre-treat wastewater by removing solids, grease, and other contaminants prior to discharge into the CCWD sewer system.

Electricity

Electric power to the project site would be provided by PG&E. No natural gas utilities are proposed. The existing distribution system to the east of SR 26 would be trenched under the road to bring service to the project site. A transformer, switchgear, and meter would be installed on each parcel proposed for development. A propane tank exchange display would be installed on the side of the ARCO convenience store; however, no bulk propane tanks would be stored on-site.

Trash/Recycling

Five gated trash and recycling enclosures would be installed throughout the project site.

Landscaping, Signage, and Lighting

The project frontage and perimeters of the parking areas would be landscaped per the commercial zoning district requirements contained in Chapter 17.20, Landscaping, of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances. The project is estimated to include up to 91,190 sf (approximately 2.1 acres) of landscaping throughout the site.

Signage would include a multi-tenant monument sign near the northern driveway vehicle entrance, as well as individual tenant signage for each proposed building, including a fuel price sign for the proposed gas station.

Exterior lighting would include parking lot security lighting and exterior building lighting installed on building facades. All lighting would be shielded and direct light downwards toward the project site to prevent off-site light spillage and keep glare away from the adjacent properties and rights-of-way.

3.6 Construction and Staging

Construction of the project is anticipated to occur over an approximately 14-month period starting in as early as July 2028 and ending in September 2029. Project construction activities would include demolition of existing fencing and signage, site preparation, grading/excavation for underground utilities and USTs, paving, building construction, and architectural coating (e.g., painting). The proposed construction staging area would be located within the 6.99-acre project site. See Section 6.III, Air Quality, for more information on construction equipment and activities.

3.7 Operation

Project operation would involve typical commercial operations for the proposed drive-through coffee shop, ARCO convenience store, gas station, car wash, drive-through fast-food restaurant, diner, and oil change shop. The Arco convenience store and gas station would operate 24 hours per day and are anticipated to have up to 20 employees. It is estimated that the gas station would have a maximum annual throughput of gasoline up to 12,000,000 gallons. The car wash would operate 24 hours per day and would serve up to eight vehicles per hour, or up to 46,720 vehicles per year, and would use approximately 1,228,736 gallons of water per year. Although car wash sales are expected to occur primarily during the hours of 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., there is potential for a small number of sales to occur during the nighttime hours.

The fast-food restaurant would operate up to 24 hours per day and is expected to have between 30 and 50 employees.

The hours of operation and number of employees for the drive-through coffee shop, diner, and oil change shop are currently unknown and may vary depending on future tenants and vendors.

3.8 Required Approvals

A listing and brief description of the approvals and/or regulatory permits required to implement the Valley Springs Commercial Project are provided below. This environmental document is intended to address the environmental impacts associated with the following discretionary actions and approvals:

Calaveras County

- **Zoning Amendment**: The project applicant seeks approval of a Zoning Amendment to rezone the legal subject parcel (comprised of APNs 046-016-091 and 046-016-092) from General Commercial/Business Park (C2/M4) to General Commercial (C2).

- **General Plan Amendment:** The project applicant seeks approval of a General Plan Amendment to amend the General Plan land use designation for the legal subject parcel (comprised of APNs 046-016-091 and 046-016-092) from I (Industrial) to C (Commercial).

- **Tentative Parcel Map:** The project applicant seeks approval of a TPM to subdivide the legal subject parcel (comprised of APNs 046-016-091 and 046-016-092) into five parcels. Four of the proposed parcels would be developed as part of the proposed project, and the remaining fifth parcel (approximately 26 acres) would not be developed under this project.

- **Conditional Use Permit:** The project seeks approval of Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 2025-031 to allow for the proposed gas station, convenience store, car wash, and drive-throughs in the General Commercial (C2) zone.

- **Grading Permit**

- **Building Permit**

- **Consideration of the Environmental Document:** Calaveras County will act as the Lead Agency as defined by CEQA and will have authority to determine if the environmental document is adequate under CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines.

- **Project Approval:** The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors (BOS) will consider approval of the project and entitlements described above.

Other Agencies

- **Calaveras County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO):** APN 046-016-091 is currently located within VSPUD's service area of influence and service boundary for water and wastewater services. The project would require LAFCO approval of a service area adjustment for APN 046-016-091 to receive water and wastewater services from CCWD.

- **Calaveras County Water District (CCWD):** Following LAFCO approval of the service area adjustment for APN 046-016-091, CCWD would approve and provide water and wastewater services.

- **California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW):** Issuance of Incidental Take Permit (ITP) may be required for impacts to State listed species if identified on-site during protocol-level surveys and/or pre-construction surveys.

- **California Department of Transportation (Caltrans):** An Encroachment Permit from Caltrans District 10 would be required for the two proposed private driveways and proposed public County road off of SR 26.

- **Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB):** Issuance of a Notice of Applicability for fill activities impacting less than 0.2 acre or 400 linear feet of non-jurisdictional waters of the State in accordance with State Water Resources Control Board Water Quality Order No. 2004-0004-DWQ (General Order 2004-0004) or a Waste Discharge Requirement if its determined that the project is not eligible for coverage under General Order 2004-0004. Issuance of National Pollutant Discharge Eliminated System (NPDES) Construction General Permit Order 2009-0009-DWQ (as amended by 2010-0014-DWQ and 2012-006-DWQ).

- **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS):** Section 7 and/or Section 10 consultation may be required for impacts to federally listed species if identified on-site during protocol-level surveys and/or pre-construction surveys.

4.0 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" or "Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

☐ Aesthetics	☐ Agriculture and Forestry Resources	☐ Air Quality
☒ Biological Resources	☒ Cultural Resources	☒ Energy
☒ Geology and Soils	☒ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☒ Hazards and Hazardous Materials
☐ Hydrology and Water Quality	☒ Land Use and Planning	☐ Mineral Resources
☒ Noise	☐ Population and Housing	☐ Public Services
☐ Recreation	☒ Transportation	☐ Tribal Cultural Resources
☐ Utilities and Service Systems	☒ Wildfire	☒ Mandatory Findings of Significance

5.0 DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

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

Signature

Date

Printed Name

For

6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

The County, as the Lead Agency, has defined the column headings in the environmental checklist as follows:

A. "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.

B. "Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the inclusion of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." All mitigation measures are described, including a brief explanation of how the measures reduce the effect to a less than significant level. Mitigation measures from earlier analyses may be cross-referenced.

C. "Less Than Significant Impact" applies where the project does not create an impact that exceeds a stated significance threshold.

D. "No Impact" applies where a project does not create an impact in that category. "No Impact" answers do not require an explanation if they are adequately supported by the information sources cited by the Lead Agency which 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 would not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project specific screening analysis).

The explanation of each issue identifies the significance criteria or threshold used to evaluate each question; and the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significant.

I. AESTHETICS

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:					
a)	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b)	Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c)	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 point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d)	Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Environmental Setting

The project site is undeveloped and is currently used for cattle grazing. The project site is relatively flat with elevations ranging between 633 and 682 feet amsl. The project site is predominantly annual grassland with a small seasonal wetland situated within the grassland area. The project site is located in the southern portion of Valley Springs, a rural unincorporated community in northwestern Calaveras County, and is situated within a commercially developed area.

Views to the north of the project site consist of a single-family residence in the foreground, commercial structures in the middle ground, and rolling hills dotted with trees in the background. Views to the east are dominated by SR 26 in the foreground and commercial development in the middle ground and background, including an auto parts store, car wash, parking lots, and gas stations. To the south of the project site, views include two commercial structures adjacent to SR 26 in the foreground, undeveloped grassland and trees in the middle ground, and scattered development and distant hills in the background. Views to the west primarily include undeveloped grassland and trees in the foreground, scattered development in the middle ground, and distant hills in the background.

Impact Analysis

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

Less Than Significant Impact. Although the Calaveras County General Plan does not define specific areas of outstanding scenic value, a scenic vista is typically defined as a viewpoint that provides expansive views of a highly valued landscape (such as an area with remarkable scenery or a resource that is indigenous to the area) for the benefit of the general public. The project site is bordered by a single-

family residence and commercial land uses to the north, SR 26 and commercial land uses to the east, commercial land uses and undeveloped land to the south, and undeveloped land and SR 12 to the west. Distant views of rolling hills are provided at the project site; however, existing development in the project vicinity largely obfuscates such views. The areas surrounding the project are not representative of scenic vistas in the County, as they do not provide expansive views of a highly valued landscape. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, and the impact would be less than significant.

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

No Impact. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) manages the State Scenic Highway Program, which includes a list of highways that are either eligible for designation as scenic highways, or have been officially designated. There is one officially designated State Scenic Highway in the County, Ebbetts Pass (SR 4), from Arnold to the Alpine County line, approximately 26 miles east of the project site. Other highways eligible for designation in the County include a segment of SR 4 from Angels Camp to Arnold, approximately 17 miles southeast of the site, and the entire segment of SR 49 within the County, approximately seven miles east of the site. Due to distance and intervening structures and topography, the project site is not within the viewshed of eligible or officially designated State Scenic Highways. Therefore, the proposed project would not damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State Scenic Highway. No impact would occur.

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 point).

Less Than Significant Impact. The project would include construction of a drive-through coffee shop, an ARCO convenience store with six fuel pumps and a car wash tunnel, a drive-through fast-food restaurant, a diner, and an oil change shop. The project would provide 103 on-site parking spaces and three entrances off SR 26. The project also proposes various utility improvements, landscaping, signage, and lighting. The proposed project is located in a rural unincorporated community and is situated within a commercially developed area. As the site is currently undeveloped, implementation of the proposed project would alter the existing visual character of the site. However, the project would be of similar size and scale to existing commercial development in the project vicinity, including an existing hardware store, auto parts store, and retail to the north, and a Chevron gas station, convenience store, car wash, and storage facility east of the site across SR 26. The visual character and quality of the site would be largely similar to and compatible with existing commercial development in the project vicinity. As such, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. Development of the project would create new sources of light and glare associated with the proposed exterior lighting, including parking lot security lighting and exterior building lighting installed on building facades. However, these new sources of light and glare would be largely similar to and compatible with existing commercial development in the project vicinity, including

an existing hardware store, auto parts store, and retail to the north, and a Chevron gas station, convenience store, car wash, and storage facility immediately east of the site off of SR 26. Additionally, all project lighting would include shields to direct light downwards toward the project site to prevent off-site light spillage and keep glare away from the adjacent properties and rights-of-way, as required by Section 17.16.100, Lighting and Illumination, of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances. With adherence to existing County regulations pertaining to light and glare, the proposed project's lighting would not adversely affect day or nighttime views in the areas, and the impact would be less than significant.

II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b)	Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c)	Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d)	Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e)	Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non- forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

The California Department of Conservation (DOC) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) prepares, updates, and maintains Important Farmland Series Maps as defined in subdivision (f) of Section 65560 of the Government Code, and prepares and maintains an automated map and data base system to record and report changes in the use of agricultural lands every two years on even numbered calendar years. Agricultural land is rated according to soil quality and irrigation status; the best quality land is called Prime Farmland. For environmental review purposes under CEQA, the categories of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland constitute “agricultural land” (PRC Section 21060.1). The FMMP maps the project site as Grazing Land, which is defined as land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock (DOC 2025a). Per PRC Section 21060.1, Grazing Land does not constitute agricultural land for CEQA review purposes.

The project site is currently zoned C2 (General Commercial) and C2/M4 (General Commercial/Business Park). The project site is undeveloped and does not currently support agricultural uses besides animal grazing. Based on a review of historic aerial imagery, the project site has not been historically used for other agricultural purposes.

Impact Analysis

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?

No Impact. The project site is mapped by the FMMP as Grazing Land (DOC 2025a). The site is surrounded by lands mapped as Urban and Built-Up Land to the north and east, and Grazing Land to the south and west. The proposed project would not convert Farmland to non-agricultural use. Therefore, no impact would occur.

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

No Impact. The project would amend the current zoning of the subject parcel from C2/M4 (General Commercial/Business Park) to C2 (General Commercial), and the current land use would be amended from Industrial (I)/Commercial (C) to Commercial (C). In addition, the 32.3-acre subject parcel is not zoned Agricultural Preserve (AP) and does not meet the 100-acre minimum property size to qualify for a Williamson Act contract. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract, and no impact would occur.

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))?

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

No Impact. The project site is currently undeveloped. The project site and immediate surrounding areas are not zoned forestland, timberland, or Timberland Production and do not contain forest land. Additionally, as discussed in question b), the project site is currently zoned C2 (General Commercial) and C2/M4 (General Commercial/Business Park). The project proposes to rezone APN 046-016-092 from General Commercial/Business Park (C2/M4) to General Commercial (C2). Therefore, the project would not conflict with an existing zoning for forest land and would not result in the loss or conversion of forest land. No impact would occur for questions c) and d).

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

No Impact. As discussed in the responses above to questions a) through d), the project site and immediate surrounding areas do not contain Farmland, as defined in PRC Section 21060.1, or forest land. The proposed project would not 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. Therefore, no impact would occur.

III. AIR QUALITY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

This section is based on an Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Technical Report prepared by HELIX for the proposed project in June 2026 (HELIX 2026a). The report is included in Appendix A to this IS/MND.

Environmental Setting

The project site is located within the Calaveras County portion of the Mountain Counties Air Basin (MCAB). Air quality in Calaveras County is regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) at the federal level, by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) at the State level, and by the Calaveras County Air Pollution Control District (CCAPCD) at the regional level.

Air Pollutants of Concern

Criteria Pollutants

Criteria pollutants are defined by State and federal law as a risk to the health and welfare of the general public. In general, criteria air pollutants include the following compounds:

- Ozone (O_3)
- Carbon monoxide (CO)
- Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2)
- Particulate matter (PM), which is further subdivided:
  - Coarse PM, 10 microns or less in diameter (PM_{10})
  - Fine PM, 2.5 microns or less in diameter ($PM_{2.5}$), a subset of PM_{10}.

- Sulfur dioxide (SO_2)
- Lead (Pb)

Criteria pollutants can be emitted directly from sources (primary pollutants; e.g., CO, SO_2, PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$, and lead), or they may be formed through chemical and photochemical reactions of precursor pollutants in the atmosphere (secondary pollutants; e.g., ozone, NO_2, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$). PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ can be both primary and secondary pollutants. The principal precursor pollutants of concern are reactive organic gases ([ROGs] also known as volatile organic compounds [VOCs])[1] and nitrogen oxides (NO_X).

Toxic Air Contaminants

The Health and Safety Code (Section 39655, subd. (a).) defines a toxic air contaminant (TAC) as "an air pollutant which may cause or contribute to an increase in mortality or in serious illness, or which may pose a present or potential hazard to human health." A substance that is listed as a hazardous air pollutant pursuant to subsection (b) of Section 112 of the Federal Clean Air Act (CAA) (42 United States Code Section 7412[b]) is a TAC. Under State law, the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), acting through CARB, is authorized to identify a substance as a TAC if it determines the substance is an air pollutant that may cause or contribute to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious illness, or that may pose a present or potential hazard to human health.

Diesel Particulate Matter

Diesel engines emit a complex mixture of air pollutants, including both gaseous and solid material. The solid material in diesel exhaust is referred to as diesel particulate matter (DPM). Almost all DPM is 10 microns or less in diameter, and 90 percent of DPM is less than 2.5 microns in diameter (CARB 2026a). Because of their extremely small size, these particles can be inhaled and eventually trapped in the bronchial and alveolar regions of the lung. In 1998, CARB identified DPM as a TAC based on published evidence of a relationship between diesel exhaust exposure and lung cancer and other adverse health effects. DPM has a notable effect on California's population—it is estimated that about 70 percent of total known cancer risk related to air toxics in California is attributable to DPM (CARB 2026a).

Asbestos

Asbestos is a mineral fiber that naturally occurs in some rock and soil. Long-term exposure to airborne asbestos fibers has been linked to major health effects, including lung cancer; mesothelioma, a rare form of cancer that is found in the thin lining of the lung, chest, and the abdomen and heart; and asbestosis, a serious progressive, long-term, non-cancerous disease of the lungs (USEPA 2026). Because of its fiber strength and heat resistance, asbestos has been used in a variety of building construction materials for insulation and as a fire retardant, primarily in buildings constructed before 1979. Asbestos fibers may be released into the air by the disturbance of asbestos containing material during renovation and demolition activities; or during earth-disturbing activities in areas where naturally occurring asbestos (NOA) is present in the rock or soil. A known area of ultramafic rock likely to contain NOA is located east of the community of Valley Springs, starting approximately 1.5 miles northeast of the

[1] CARB defines and uses the term ROGs while the USEPA defines and uses the term VOCs. The compounds included in the lists of ROGs and VOCs and the methods of calculation are slightly different. However, for the purposes of estimating criteria pollutant precursor emissions, the two terms are often used interchangeably.

project site (CARB 2000). The project site is not within 0.25 mile of a known area likely to contain NOA. Therefore, NOA is not likely to be present in the soil and rock of the project site.

Gasoline Dispensing Facilities

Activities at gasoline dispensing facilities can release gasoline vapor into the air. Gasoline vapor consists of a mixture of organic gases, including seven gases classified as TACs with quantifiable health risk factors: benzene, ethyl benzene, n-hexane, naphthalene, propylene (or propene), xylenes, and toluene (CARB 2022a).

Gas Station Toxics Best Available Control Technology

The Toxics Best Available Control Technology (T-BACT) for gas stations are vapor recovery systems installed to collect gasoline vapors that would otherwise escape into the atmosphere. Gasoline vapor emissions at gas stations are controlled in two phases. Phase I vapor recovery collects vapors displaced from USTs when a cargo tank truck delivers gasoline to a gas station. Phase II vapor recovery collects vapors displaced during the transfer of gasoline from a dispensing nozzle to a vehicle, fuel container, or gasoline-powered equipment; and vapors related to the storage of gasoline at a gas station. CARB regulations establish standards for the level of emissions control vapor recovery systems must achieve during the transfer and storage of gasoline.

Vapor recovery system performance standards for gas stations have become more stringent over the years. Since 2001, CARB has adopted a number of significant advancements as part of the enhanced vapor recovery (EVR) program. Phase I EVR, in accordance with California Executive Order VR-102, requires more durable and leak-tight components, along with an increased collection efficiency of 98 percent. Phase II EVR, in accordance with California Executive Order VR-204, includes three major advancements: (1) dispensing nozzles with less spillage and required compatibility with onboard refueling vapor recovery (ORVR) vehicles, (2) a processor to control the static pressure of the ullage, or vapor space, in the UST, and (3) an in-station diagnostic (ISD) system that provides warning alarms to alert a gas station operator of potential vapor recovery system malfunctions. Phase I EVR was fully implemented in 2005. Phase II EVR was fully implemented between 2009 and 2011 (CARB 2013). The project would be required to implement Phase I EVR and Phase II EVR systems (with an ISD system) meeting the latest CARB performance standards.

ORVR systems were phased in beginning with 1998 model year passenger vehicles, and are now installed on all passenger, light-duty, and medium-duty vehicles manufactured since the 2006 model year. When an ORVR vehicle is fueled, almost all the gasoline vapor displaced from the fuel tank is routed to a carbon canister in the vehicle fuel system. At the start of dispensing, a small portion of the vapor in the vehicle fuel tank may escape through the fill-pipe before the onboard system is fully engaged. Uncontrolled fill-pipe emissions from ORVR vehicles are approximately two orders of magnitude lower than the same emissions from vehicles without ORVR and are easily captured by Phase II vapor recovery systems (CARB 2013).

Sensitive Receptors

CARB and the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) have identified the following groups of individuals (sensitive receptors) as the most likely to be affected by air pollution: the elderly over 65, children under 14, infants (including in utero in the third trimester of pregnancy), and persons with cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis. Some

land uses are considered more sensitive to air pollution than others due to the types of population groups or activities involved and are referred to as sensitive receptor locations. Examples of these sensitive receptor locations are residences, schools, hospitals, and daycare centers (CARB 2005; OEHHA 2015).

Residential areas are considered sensitive receptor locations because residents (including children and the elderly) tend to be at home for extended periods of time, resulting in sustained exposure to any pollutants present. Children and infants are considered more susceptible to health effects of air pollution due to their immature immune systems, developing organs, and higher breathing rates. As such, schools are also considered sensitive receptor locations, as children are present for extended durations and engage in regular outdoor activities.

The closest existing sensitive receptor location to the project site is a single-family residence adjacent to the project site with outdoor use space starting approximately 90 feet north of the project site and approximately 245 feet north of the proposed gas station pump canopy. The closest school is the Valley Springs Elementary School located approximately 1,450 feet (0.27 mile) northwest of the project site. There are no hospitals or daycare centers within one mile of the project site.

Regulatory Setting

The Calaveras County portion of the MCAB is in an area designated as a nonattainment area for certain pollutants that are regulated under the CAA. Table 2, *Calaveras County Attainment Status*, lists the federal and State attainment status of Calaveras County for the criteria pollutants. Calaveras County is designated as nonattainment for the 8-hour ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and as attainment or unclassified for all other criteria pollutant NAAQS. Under State designation, Calaveras County is currently nonattainment for the ozone (1-hour and 8-hour) and PM_{10} California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) and in attainment or unclassified for all other CAAQS (CARB 2023).

Table 2: Calaveras County Attainment Status

Pollutant	State of California Attainment Status	Federal Attainment Status
Ozone (1 hour)	Nonattainment	No Federal Standard
Ozone (8 hour)	Nonattainment	Nonattainment
Coarse Particulate Matter (PM_{10})	Nonattainment	Unclassifiable
Fine Particulate Matter ($PM_{2.5}$)	Unclassified	Unclassifiable/Attainment
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	Unclassified	Unclassifiable/Attainment
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)	Attainment	Unclassifiable/Attainment
Lead	Attainment	Unclassifiable/Attainment
Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2)	Attainment	Unclassifiable/Attainment
Sulfates	Attainment	No Federal Standard
Hydrogen Sulfide	Unclassified	No Federal Standard
Visibility Reducing Particles	Unclassified	No Federal Standard

Source: CARB 2023

Methodology

Criteria pollutant and GHG emissions were calculated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), Version 2022.1. CalEEMod is a computer model used to estimate air emissions resulting from land development projects throughout the state of California. CalEEMod was developed by the

California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) in collaboration with the California air quality management and pollution control districts. The calculation methodology, source of emission factors used, and default data is described in the CalEEMod User's Guide, and Appendices C, D, and G (CAPCOA 2022).

Construction Emissions

CalEEMod has the capability to calculate reductions in construction emissions from the effects of dust control, diesel-engine classifications, and other selected emissions reduction measures. In compliance with CCAPCD Rule 207, fugitive dust emissions calculations assume application of water on exposed surface a minimum of two times per day.

CalEEMod estimates construction GHG emissions for each year of construction activity based on the annual construction equipment profile and other factors determined as needed to complete all phases of construction by the target completion year. As such, each year of construction activity has varying quantities of GHG emissions.

Construction Activities

Construction emissions were estimated based on the timeline provided by the project engineer, which assumes construction would be completed in one phase commencing in July 2028 and completing in September 2029. The quantity, duration, and intensity of construction activity influence the amount of construction emissions and related pollutant concentrations that occur at any one time. As such, the emission forecasts provided herein reflect a specific set of conservative assumptions based on the expected construction scenario wherein a relatively large amount of construction activity is occurring in a relatively intensive manner. Because of this conservative assumption, actual emissions could be less than those forecasted. If construction is delayed or occurs over a longer period, emissions could be reduced because of: (1) a more modern and cleaner-burning construction equipment fleet mix than assumed in CalEEMod; and/or (2) a less intensive buildout schedule (i.e., fewer daily emissions occurring over a longer time interval).

Construction activities would include demolition (removal of fencing, power poles, and asphalt), site preparation (clearing and grubbing), grading/excavation for underground utilities and USTs, paving, building construction, and architectural coatings. Construction is assumed to occur five days per week with equipment operating up to eight hours per day. During demolition, approximately 200 tons of debris would be removed from the project site. Site preparation would include the removal of vegetation and debris, estimated at approximately 2,600 CY. During grading, approximately 12,047 CY of soil would be imported to the project site. During paving, approximately 8,316 CY of aggregate and asphalt would be imported to the project site. As noted above, construction of the project is anticipated to start as early as July 2028 and end in September 2029. For CalEEMod purposes, it was conservatively assumed that construction would begin in January 2027, as described below in Table 3, *Anticipated Construction Schedule* (Core States Group 2025). The site preparation, grading, underground utilities, and paving activities would include off-site work in SR 26 right-of-way along the project frontage.

Table 3: Anticipated Construction Schedule

Activity	Start Date	End Date	Workdays
Demolition	1/1/2027	1/29/2027	20
Site Preparation	1/30/2027	2/13/2027	10
Grading/Underground Utilities	2/14/2027	3/14/2027	20
Paving	3/15/2027	4/9/2027	20
Building Construction	4/10/2027	2/25/2028	230
Architectural Coating	11/26/2027	2/25/2028	66

Source: CalEEMod (output report provided in Appendix A of Appendix A); Core States Group 2025

Construction Off-Road Equipment

Construction would require the use of heavy off-road equipment. Construction equipment estimates for all activities were based on CalEEMod defaults with the addition of a water truck for dust suppression during earth moving activities. Table 4, *Construction Equipment Assumptions*, presents a summary of the equipment assumptions.

Table 4: Construction Equipment Assumptions

Activity	Equipment Type	Number	Hours per Day
Demolition	Concrete/Industrial Saws	1	8
	Excavators	3	8
	Rubber-Tired Dozers	2	8
	Water Truck	1	4
Site Preparation	Rubber-Tired Dozers	3	8
	Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes	4	8
	Water Truck	1	4
Grading/Underground Utilities	Excavators	2	8
	Graders	1	8
	Rubber-Tired Dozers	1	8
	Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes	3	8
	Water Truck	1	4
Paving	Pavers	2	8
	Paving Equipment	2	8
	Rollers	2	8
Building Construction	Cranes	1	7
	Forklifts	3	8
	Generator Sets	1	8
	Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes	3	7
	Welders	1	8
Architectural Coating	Air Compressors	1	6

Source: CalEEMod (output report provided in Appendix A of Appendix A)

Construction On-Road Trips

Worker commute trips and vendor delivery trips were modeled based on CalEEMod defaults. Worker trips are anticipated to vary between 15 and 20 trips per day, depending on construction activity. Vendor trips during building construction would be 3 per day per CalEEMod defaults. Exporting debris from the project site during demolition would result in one to two truckloads per day (approximately 3

one-way trips per day). Exporting vegetation and debris from the site during site preparation would result in 16 to 17 truckloads per day (approximately 33 one-way trips per day). Importing soil to the site during grading would result in 37 to 38 truckloads per day (approximately 75 one-way trips per day). To account for importing approximately 8,316 CY of aggregate/asphalt/concrete, 52 one-way haul truck trips per day were added to the paving trips model assumptions.[2] The CalEEMod default worker, vendor and haul trip distances were used in the model, except site preparation and demolition debris would be exported to the Rock Creek solid waste facility; an approximately 15-mile one-way haul distance.

Construction Architectural Coatings

CalEEMod default VOC content and painted areas were used for construction architectural coatings: 250 grams per liter (g/L) for building interior and exterior surfaces and street/parking lot marking.

Operational Emissions

Operational impacts were estimated using CalEEMod. Operational sources of emissions include mobile, area, energy, water and wastewater, solid waste, and refrigerants.

Vehicular (Mobile) Sources

Operational emissions from mobile source emissions are associated with project-related vehicle miles traveled (VMT; calculated in the model from trip generation and trip lengths). A trip generation analysis for the project was provided in the project Transportation Impact Study (TIS). Including reductions for internal capture and pass-by trips, the project would generate 3,461 net new average daily trips (ADT; W-Trans 2026). Because the trip generation included reductions for internal capture and pass-by trips, the CalEEMod trips were set to 100 percent primary trips (no additional pass-by or diverted trip reduction). The CalEEMod default trip distances and purposes were used.

Area Sources

Area sources include emissions from landscaping equipment, the use of consumer products, and the reapplication of architectural coatings for maintenance. Emissions associated with area sources were estimated using the CalEEMod default values.

Energy Sources

Development within the project site would use electricity for lighting, heating, and cooling. Electricity generation typically entails the combustion of fossil fuels, including natural gas and coal, which is then transmitted to end users. A building's electricity use is thus associated with the off-site or indirect emission of GHGs at the source of electricity generation (power plant). The project would be required to install solar panels in accordance with California's Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24 Part 6). The capacity of solar electricity generation required is dependent on building size, available roof area, and shading. To be conservative, no project energy use reductions from Title 24 Part 6 solar panel requirements are not included in the project emissions modeling.

Energy use for project buildings and lighting was modeled using CalEEMod defaults. The energy requirements for the car wash were estimated using car wash industry survey cost averages of $0.50 per

[2] Paving haul trips assume one-foot average uncompressed aggregate/asphalt depth for a total of 486 truckloads assuming 16 CY per tandem trailer load.

vehicle for electricity (Professional Car Washing 2014). The cost of $0.50 for electricity was converted to 3.92 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per vehicle for electricity based on an average cost of $0.1275 per kWh for commercial customers in the U.S. in 2017 (U.S. Energy Information Administration 2026). Per the project engineer, the project would wash up to 46,720 cars per year (Core States Group 2026), resulting in 183,142 kWh per year electricity use.

Water Sources

Project building water use was modeled using CalEEMod defaults. According to a report on water conservation from the International Car Wash Association, typical freshwater use for a friction type of conveyor car wash with water reclamation is 65.8 gallons per vehicle (International Carwash Association 2000). California AB 2230, enacted in 2012, requires that any conveyor car wash installed after 2013 reuse a minimum of 60 percent of the water previously used in the wash or rinse cycles. Therefore, the proposed car wash would reclaim at least 39.5 gallons per vehicle for a total water use of 26.3 gallon per vehicle. Per the project engineer, the project would wash up to 46,720 cars per year (Core States Group 2026), resulting in 1,228,736 gallons per year of water use.

Solid Waste Sources

The disposal of solid waste produces GHG emissions from anaerobic decomposition in landfills, incineration, and transportation of waste. CalEEMod determines the GHG emissions associated with disposal of solid waste into landfills. Portions of these emissions are biogenic. CalEEMod methods for quantifying GHG emissions from solid waste are based on the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) method using the degradable organic content of waste. Solid waste was modeled using CalEEMod defaults.

Refrigerants

CalEEMod calculates GHG emissions associated with refrigerants (typically hydrofluorocarbons [HFCs] or blends of gases containing HFCs) which are emitted through leakage or maintenance from project refrigeration systems, freezers, and air conditioning systems. Refrigerant emissions were calculated using CalEEMod defaults.

Gas Station ROG Emissions

Gasoline vapor emissions from the loading and storage of gasoline in USTs, and from refueling of vehicles are comprised mostly of ROGs. Emissions of ROGs from the project retail gasoline dispensing activities were calculated using emission factors in pounds of total organic gases per 1,000 gallons of gasoline throughput from CARB's *Revised Emission Factors for Gasoline Marketing Operations at California Gasoline Dispensing Facilities* (CARB 2013). A printout of the ROG calculation sheet is included in Appendix B of Appendix A.

Health Risk Assessment

Potential health risks to nearby sensitive receptors from the emission of TACs during operations at the proposed project's gas station were analyzed in accordance with the CARB's *Gasoline Service Station Industrywide Risk Assessment Technical Guidance* (CARB 2022a), CARB's *Revised Emission Factors for Gasoline Marketing Operations at California Gasoline Dispensing Facilities* (CARB 2013), CAPCOA's *Gasoline Service Station Industrywide Risk Assessment Guidelines* (CAPCOA 1997), and OEHHA's *Air*

Toxics Hot Spots Program Guidance Manual for Preparation of Health Risk Assessments (OEHHA 2015). A printout of this assessment is included in Appendix C, *Health Risk Assessments Inputs/Outputs* of Appendix A.

Significance Criteria

Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines states that the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the above determinations. In their *Guidelines for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts of Land Use Projects*, the CCAPCD has established significance thresholds to assess the regional impacts of project-related ROG, NO_X and PM_{10} (CCAPCD 2014). Table 5, *CCAPCD Thresholds of Significance*, presents the CCAPCD thresholds. A project with daily emission rates below these thresholds is generally considered to have a less than significant effect on air quality.

Table 5: CCAPCD Thresholds of Significance

Pollutant	Construction	Operation
Mass Daily Thresholds (pounds per day)		
ROG	150	150
NO_X	150	150
PM_{10}	150	150

Source: CCAPCD 2014

CCAPCD = Calaveras County Air Pollution Control District; NO_X = nitrogen oxides; PM_{10} = respirable particulate matter with a diameter of 10 microns or less; ROG = reactive organic gases.

For non-cancer chronic and acute health effects, risk is measured in terms of the Hazard Index (HI). The HI is the sum of hazard quotients for TACs that affect the same target organ/system or produce similar toxic effects. A hazard quotient is the exposure (dosage) to a TAC divided by a Recommended Exposure Limit (REL) for that TAC and exposure pathway. An HI of less than one indicates no adverse health effects are anticipated. Unlike non-cancer chronic and acute health effects, for exposure to carcinogens, there is no level of exposure below which no adverse health effects are anticipated. Potential increases in long-term cancer risks are evaluated in terms of the increased chance of an individual developing cancer from long-term exposure to a source or sources of TACs, expressed in chances per million.

The CCAPCD has not adopted thresholds of significance for health risks from exposure to TACs. Therefore, this analysis relies on thresholds adopted by the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD). A significant impact would occur if the health risks associated with exposure to project TAC emissions would exceed an incremental increased cancer risk exceeding 10 in 1 million or a non-cancer chronic or acute health risk exceeding a hazard index of 1.0.

Impact Analysis

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The applicable air quality plans for attainment of the ozone and PM_{10} NAAQs are the State Implementation Plans (SIPs). Attainment planning and control measures in the SIP are based on State regulations and transportation/growth planning, and local air district regulations and thresholds. The project would conflict with the SIP for ozone and PM_{10} attainment if project emissions would exceed the CCAPCD's thresholds, or if the project would result in growth unaccounted for in the County General Plan and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

As discussed in question b), below, project emissions would not exceed the CCAPCD's construction or operational thresholds for ozone precursors (ROG and NO_X) or PM_{10}. The project applicant is seeking a General Plan amendment and zoning amendment for the subject parcel. The current zoning would be amended from C2/M4 (General Commercial/Business Park) to C2 (General Commercial), and the current land use would be amended from Industrial (I)/Commercial (C) to Commercial (C). This could result in potential County employment growth different than anticipated in the County General Plan and RTP. However, according to the VMT impact analysis and consistent with guidance from the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI), the project would be considered local serving retail and would not result in an increase in regional VMT. Therefore, any changes in County employment growth resulting from implementation of the project would result in negligible changes in regional emissions of ROG, NO_X, or PM_{10}. Implementation of the project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of applicable portions of the SIPs, and the impact would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. By its very nature, air pollution is largely a cumulative impact. The nonattainment status of regional pollutants is a result of past and present development within Calaveras County. The region is in nonattainment for ozone (ozone precursors NO_X and ROG) and PM_{10}. The project's emissions of these criteria pollutants and precursors during construction and operation are evaluated below.

Construction Emissions

The project's construction emissions were estimated using the CalEEMod model. The model output data is provided in Appendix A of Appendix A. The results of the project construction modeling are shown in Table 6, *Maximum Daily Construction Emissions*. The data are presented as the maximum anticipated daily emissions for comparison with the CCAPCD thresholds. The modeling assumes implementation of the fugitive dust control measures to comply with CCAPCD Rule 207, specifically watering exposed surfaces twice daily.

Table 6: Maximum Daily Construction Emissions

Activity	ROG (lbs./day)	NO_X (lbs./day)	CO (lbs./day)	SO_X (lbs./day)	PM_{10} (lbs./day)	$PM_{2.5}$ (lbs./day)
Demolition	2.6	21.5	21.4	<0.1	1.2	0.8
Site Preparation	3.5	32.4	31.6	0.1	9.5	5.3
Grading/Underground Utilities	2.2	25.6	22.3	0.1	5.5	2.5
Paving	1.5	13.4	12.1	<0.1	1.4	0.6
Building Construction	1.2	9.7	14.9	<0.1	0.5	0.4
Building Construction and Architectural Coating	9.6	10.5	15.6	<0.1	0.6	0.4
Maximum Daily Emissions	**9.6**	**32.4**	**31.6**	**0.1**	**9.5**	**5.3**
CCAPCD Threshold	*150*	*150*	*None*	*None*	*150*	*None*
Exceed Threshold?	***No***	***No***	***No***	***No***	***No***	***No***

Source: CalEEMod (output data is provided in Appendix A of Appendix A); Thresholds: CCAPCD 2014
CCAPCD = Calaveras County Air Pollution Control District; lbs./day = pounds per day; ROG = reactive organic gas; NO_X = nitrogen oxides; CO = carbon monoxide; SO_X = sulfur oxides; PM_{10} = particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter; $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter.

As shown in Table 6, emissions of criteria pollutants and precursors would not exceed the CCAPCD significance thresholds.

Operational Emissions

The project operational emissions were estimated using CalEEMod and the project's gas station ROG emissions were calculated off model. Model outputs are provided in Appendix A of Appendix A and gas station ROG calculations are provided in Appendix B of Appendix A. Table 7, *Maximum Daily Operational Emissions*, presents the summary of operational emissions for the project. The data are presented as the maximum anticipated daily emissions for comparison with the CCAPCD thresholds.

Table 7: Maximum Daily Operational Emissions

Source	ROG	NO_X	CO	SO_X	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
Mobile	24.9	22.3	141.6	0.2	18.8	5.0
Area	0.7	<0.1	0.8	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Energy	<0.1	0.4	0.4	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Gas Station Gasoline Vapor	2.0	-	-	-	-	-
Total Daily Emissions[1]	**27.6**	**22.7**	**142.7**	**0.2**	**18.8**	**5.0**
CCAPCD Threshold	*150*	*150*	*None*	*None*	*150*	*None*
Exceed Threshold?	***No***	***No***	***No***	***No***	***No***	***No***

Source: CalEEMod (output data is provided in Appendices A and B of Appendix A); Thresholds: CCAPCD 2014

[1] Totals may not sum due to rounding.

[2] Maximum daily emissions of NO_X occur during winter, maximum daily emissions of all other pollutants occur during summer or are not seasonally dependent.

CCAPCD = Calaveras County Air Pollution Control District; ROG = reactive organic gas; NO_X = nitrogen oxides; CO = carbon monoxide; SO_X = sulfur oxides; PM_{10} = particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter; $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter

As shown in Table 7, long-term emissions of criteria pollutants and precursors would not exceed the CCAPCD thresholds.

Summary

Construction or operation of the project would not result in emissions of criteria pollutants and precursors exceeding the CCAPCD thresholds. The project would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which Calaveras County is nonattainment under an applicable NAAQS or CAAQS. The impact would be less than significant.

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less Than Significant Impact.

Construction Activities

Construction of the project would result in the use of heavy-duty construction equipment, haul trucks, portable generators, and construction worker vehicles. These vehicles and equipment could generate the TAC DPM. Generation of DPM from construction projects typically occurs in a localized area (e.g., at the project site) for a short period of time. Because construction activities and subsequent emissions vary depending on the phase of construction (e.g., grading, building construction), the construction-related emissions to which nearby receptors are exposed to would also vary throughout the

construction period. During some equipment-intensive phases involving such as demolition, site preparation, and grading (which are anticipated to last a combined total of 3.5 months), construction-related emissions would be higher than other less equipment-intensive phases such as building construction. Heavy construction equipment for demolition, clearing, and earth moving activities would move throughout the approximately 6.99-acre project site and would not be concentrated near sensitive receptor locations for extended periods

The dose (of TAC) to which receptors are exposed is the primary factor used to determine health risk. Dose is a function of the concentration of a substance in the environment and the extent of exposure a person has with the substance; a longer exposure period to a fixed quantity of emissions would result in higher health risks. Current models and methodologies for conducting cancer health risk assessments are associated with longer-term exposure periods (typically 30 years for individual residents based on guidance from OEHHA) and are best suited for evaluation of long duration TAC emissions with predictable schedules and locations. These assessment models and methodologies do not correlate well with the temporary and highly variable nature of construction activities. Cancer potency factors are based on animal lifetime studies or worker studies where there is long-term exposure to the carcinogenic agent. There is considerable uncertainty in trying to evaluate the cancer risk from projects that will only last a small fraction of a lifetime (OEHHA 2015). Considering this information, the highly dispersive nature of DPM, the short duration of construction activities with intensive heavy equipment use, and the fact that construction activities would occur at various locations throughout the project site for short periods, construction of the project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial DPM concentrations.

Operational Activities

CO Hotspots

Vehicle exhaust is the primary source of CO in California. In an urban setting, the highest CO concentrations are generally found in close proximity to congested intersections. Under typical meteorological conditions, CO concentrations tend to decrease as distance from the emissions source (i.e., congested intersection) increases. Project-generated traffic has the potential of contributing to localized “hot spots” of CO off-site. Because CO is a byproduct of incomplete combustion, exhaust emissions are worse when fossil-fueled vehicles are operated inefficiently, such as in stop-and-go traffic or through heavily congested intersections. However, the volume of traffic required for CO concentrations to exceed the NAAQS and CAAQS is very high. CCAPCD has not developed methods to determine if project generated traffic would result in or contribute to CO hot spots; therefore, the Bay Area Air District’s guidance is used. The Bay Area Air District provide screening guidance in their CEQA Guidelines concerning the volume of traffic which could result in a CO hot spot: intersections which carry more than 44,000 vehicles per hour; or intersections which carry more than 24,000 vehicles per hour and where vertical and/or horizontal mixing is substantially limited (e.g., tunnel, parking garage, bridge underpass, natural or urban street canyon, below-grade roadway; Bay Area Air District 2023a).

Per the TIS for the project, the highest volume project-affected intersection would be the intersection of SR 26 and SR 12 which is anticipated to carry a peak hourly volume of 1,940 vehicles in the future conditions plus project scenario (W-Trans 2026). This traffic volume is several orders of magnitude below the 44,000 vehicles per hour screening level for CO hotpots suggested by the Bay Area Air District. Therefore, long-term operation of the project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial localized concentrations of CO.

Toxic Air Contaminants (Gasoline Vapor)

Implementation of the project would result in emissions of TAC in gasoline vapor from operation of a retail gasoline dispensing facility (gas station). To evaluate potential impacts to sensitive receptors from the project's gas station emissions, a health risk assessment (HRA) was completed.

The incremental excess cancer risk is an estimate of the chance a person exposed to a specific source of a TAC may have of developing cancer from that exposure beyond the individual's risk of developing cancer from existing background levels of TACs in the ambient air. For context, the average cancer risk from TACs in the ambient air for an individual living in an urban area of California is 830 in 1 million (CARB 2015). Cancer risk estimates do not mean, and should not be interpreted to mean, that a person will develop cancer from estimated exposures to toxic air pollutants.

The maximum estimated community incremental health effects due to exposure to the project's TAC emissions from long term operation of the proposed retail gasoline dispensing facility for the Maximally Exposed Individual Resident (MEIR; modeled receptor R1 is the only residence in the project site vicinity, see Figure 4 of Appendix A) are presented in Table 8, *MEIR Maximum Incremental Health Effects*. These estimates are conservative (health protective) and assume that the resident is outdoors for the entire exposure period.

Table 8: MEIR Maximum Incremental Health Effects

	MEIR Cancer Risk (chances per million)	MEIR Non-Cancer Chronic Hazard Index	MEIR Acute Hazard Index
Results	1.7	0.01	0.27
Threshold	10	1	1
Exceed Threshold?	*No*	*No*	*No*

Source: Lakes AERMOD View and ADMRT
MEIR = Maximally Exposed Individual Resident

The maximum estimated community incremental health effects due to exposure to the project's TAC emissions from operation of the proposed gas station for the Maximally Exposed Individual Worker (MEIW; modeled receptor W5 for cancer and non-cancer chronic risks, and modeled receptor W4 for acute risks, see Figure 4 of Appendix A for receptor locations) are presented in Table 9, *MEIW Maximum Incremental Health Effects*. These estimates are conservative (health protective) and assume that the worker is outdoors for the entire exposure period.

Table 9: MEIW Maximum Incremental Health Effects

	MEIW Cancer Risk (chances per million)	MEIW Non-Cancer Chronic Hazard Index	MEIW Acute Hazard Index
Results	0.36	0.02	0.87
Threshold	10	1	1
Exceed Threshold?	*No*	*No*	*No*

Source: Lakes AERMOD View and ADMRT
MEIW = Maximally Exposed Individual Worker

The estimated incremental excess cancer risk, chronic hazard index, and acute hazard index due to exposure to the project's TAC emissions for each receptor location shown in Figure 4 of Appendix A are

presented in Table 10, *Discrete Receptor Incremental Cancer, Chronic, and Acute Health Effects*. The model inputs, outputs, and risk isopleth figures are available in Appendix C to Appendix A.

Table 10: Discrete Receptor Incremental Cancer, Chronic, and Acute Health Effects

Receptor ID	Description	Cancer Risk (chances per million)	Non-Cancer Chronic Hazard Index	Acute Hazard Index
R1	Single-Family Residence	1.8	<0.01	0.3
W1	Dollar General	<0.01	<0.01	0.2
W2	Sacred Skin Tattoo Shop	<0.01	<0.01	0.4
W3	O'Reilly Auto Shops	<0.01	<0.01	0.5
W4	Chevron Car Wash	0.2	<0.01	0.9
W5	Chevron Food Mart	0.4	0.02	0.5
W6	Reality World Real Estate	0.3	0.01	0.5
W7	Secured Self Storage Office	<0.01	<0.01	0.2

Source: Lakes AERMOD View and ADMRT

The point of maximum off-site impact for residential cancer and non-cancer chronic health risks would be on the project site south boundary at approximately Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinates Zone 10, 690331.06 meters East, 4228952.9 meters North, on the west shoulder of SR-26. No residents or workers are anticipated to be at the point of maximum impact for prolonged periods. If residents were to be located at the point of maximum impact for 30 years, the estimated incremental excess cancer risk would be 26.3 in 1 million. The point of maximum impact and the MEIR locations are shown in Figure 4 of Appendix A.

As shown in Table 8, Table 9 and Table 10, the incremental increased cancer risks would not exceed the SMAQMD threshold of 10 in 1 million and the chronic and acute hazard indices would not exceed the SMAQMD threshold of 1. Therefore, community health effects due to exposure to TAC emissions from long term operation of the proposed retail gasoline dispensing facility would not exceed the SMAQMD thresholds at the maximum proposed permitted throughput of 12 million gallons per year, and long-term operation of the proposed gas station would not expose of sensitive receptors to substantial TAC concentrations.

Summary

Implementation of the project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, including short term construction emission of DPM, long-term operational localized CO concentrations, or long-term emissions of TACs associated with operation of the proposed gas station. The impact would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. Odors associated with diesel exhaust and ROG from application of asphalt and architectural coatings would be emitted during project construction. The odor of these emissions is objectionable to some; however, emissions would disperse rapidly from the project site and therefore should not be at a level that would affect a substantial number of people. Further, construction activities would be temporary. As a result, impacts associated with temporary odors during construction are not considered significant.

Typical land uses which could generate significant odor impacts include wastewater treatment plants, sanitary landfills, composting/green waste facilities, recycling facilities, petroleum refineries, chemical manufacturing plants, painting/coating operations, rendering plants, food packaging plants, and feed lots/dairies. The project would not include any of these land uses. The project would include a retail gas station which can be a source of gasoline vapor odors. However, the gas station would be required by the CCAPCD and CARB regulations to install and maintain gasoline vapor control systems which would also control odors from gasoline vapors. Therefore, the project would not result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people, and the impact would be less than significant.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b)	Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c)	Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d)	Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e)	Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☒	☐	☐
f)	Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

This section is based on a Biological Resources Assessment (BRA) and Aquatic Resources Delineation (ARD) prepared by HELIX for the proposed project in June 2026 (HELIX 2026b; HELIX 2026c). The BRA and ARD are included within Appendix B and Appendix C, respectively, to this IS/MND.

Environmental Setting

Biological Study Area

The approximately 6.99-acre biological Study Area is coterminous with the project site and encompasses the area of physical development. The biological Study Area does not include the approximately 26-acre remainder parcel, as no development is proposed on this parcel under the project. The Study Area is bordered on the east and south sides by paved roads and commercial development. On the north side, the Study Area abuts a residential property and woodland habitat. The grassland habitat within the

Study Area extends outside of the Study Area and continues west. The land within the Study Area was almost exclusively annual grassland, and aerial photos indicated that a portion of the Study Area had been burned within several months of the field survey. However, evidence of the burn was not observed at the time of the survey. A seasonal wetland is located within the annual grassland area of the Study Area.

Methodology

The summary below includes the methodology for preparation of the BRA and ARD, including database queries and literature reviewed and fieldwork/survey methods.

Biological Resources Assessment

Database Queries and Literature Review

Before performing the field survey for the BRA, background research was conducted to inform and create target lists to focus the survey efforts. Accessible information in public databases pertaining to natural resources in the region of the Study Area was queried. The following site-specific published information and prior survey results were reviewed:

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). 2025. *California Natural Diversity Database* (CNDDB). For *Valley Springs, Valley Springs SW, Salt Spring Valley, Jackson, Wallace, Ione, Mokelumne Hill, Jenny Lind,* and *San Andreas* USGS 7.5-minute series quadrangles, Sacramento, CA. [Accessed December 2, 2025];

- California Native Plant Society (CNPS). 2025. *Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants* (online edition, v9.5.1) For *California Natural Diversity Database* (CNDDB). For *Valley Springs, Valley Springs SW, Salt Spring Valley, Jackson, Wallace, Ione, Mokelumne Hill, Jenny Lind,* and *San Andreas* USGS 7.5-minute series quadrangles, Sacramento, CA. [Accessed December 2, 2025];

- HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. (HELIX). 2025a. "Biological Resources Due Diligence Assessment for the BCN#23619 Mixed-Use Development Project, Valley Springs, Calaveras County, CA."

- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). 2025. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). *Web Soil Survey*. Available online at: http://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov. [Accessed December 2, 2025];

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). 2025a. *Information for Planning and Consultation* (IPaC) for *Valley Springs Commercial Project.* [Accessed December 2, 2025]; and

- USFWS 2025b. National Wetlands Inventory. Available online at: https://www.fws.gov/program/national-wetlands-inventory. [Accessed December 2, 2025].

The results of the database queries, which included the *Valley Springs* USGS 7.5-minute quad and eight surrounding quads, or the Study Area, are included in Appendix A, CNDDB, CNPS, and USFWS Lists of Regionally Occurring Special-Status Species, of Appendix B.

Special-status species are plant and wildlife species that have been afforded special recognition by federal, State, or local resource agencies or organizations. They are generally of relatively limited distribution and may require specialized habitat conditions. Special-status species are defined as meeting one or more of the following criteria:

- Listed or proposed for listing under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) or the federal Endangered Species Act (FESA);
- Protected under other regulations (e.g., Migratory Bird Treaty Act [MBTA]);
- Included on the CDFW Special Animals List;
- Identified as Rare Plant Rank 1 to 3 by CNPS; or
- Receive consideration during an environmental review under CEQA.

Biological Field Surveys

HELIX biologists Kira McCall, Sophia Drewelow, and Bella Anderson, conducted the biological field survey on December 3, 2025. The weather during the field survey was mostly sunny with an average temperature of 55 degrees Fahrenheit (°F). The Study Area was systematically surveyed on foot to ensure total search coverage, with special attention given to portions of the Study Area with the potential to support special-status species and sensitive habitats. Binoculars were used to further extend site coverage and identify species observed. All identifiable plant and animal species observed were recorded and biological communities occurring within the Study Area were characterized according to the *A Guide to Wildlife Habitats of California* (Mayer and Laudenslayer 1988). Plant nomenclature is taken from *The Jepson Manual: Vascular Plants of California, second edition* (Baldwin et al. 2012). Focused or USFWS or CDFW protocol surveys for wildlife species were not conducted during biological reconnaissance-level surveys. All resources of interest were mapped with Global Positioning System (GPS)-capable tablets equipped with GPS receivers running ESRI Field Maps for ArcGIS with sub-meter accuracy.

Following the field survey and review of database queries and other project reports, the potential for each species identified in the database query to occur within the Study Area was determined based on the field survey, soils, habitats present within the Study Area, and species-specific information, as shown in Appendix B, Potential for Special-Status Species to Occur in the Study Area, of Appendix B. Species observed within the Study Area during the survey are included in Appendix C, Plant and Wildlife Species Observed in the Study Area, and photographs taken during the survey are included in Appendix D, Representative Photographs, of Appendix B.

Aquatic Resources Delineation

Database Queries and Literature Review

The following sources were used in preparation for this jurisdictional delineation:

- Aerial photography taken September 9, 2024, downloaded from Esri®,
- USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) online wetland mapper (USFWS 2025b);
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) *Web Soil Survey* (NRCS 2025a);
- Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual (Environmental Laboratory 1987);
- Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: *Arid West Region* (Version 2.0; USACE 2008);

- National Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) Field Delineation Manual for Rivers and Streams: Final Version (USACE 2025);
- Field Indicators of Hydric Soils in the United States (Version 9; NRCS 2024); and
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) 2022 National Wetland Plant List for the Arid West (USACE 2023).

Jurisdictional Delineation Fieldwork

HELIX Biologist, Sophia Drewelow, conducted the fieldwork for the aquatic resources delineation (ARD). The fieldwork was conducted on November 13 and 14, 2025. Vegetation, soils, and hydrologic characteristics were visually assessed by conducting meandering transects through the entire Study Area to obtain 100 percent visual coverage. Mapping of aquatic resources followed the mapping guidelines stipulated by the USACE (February 10, 2016) *Updated Map and Drawing Standards for the South Pacific Division Regulatory Program* and was consistent with the State Water Resources Control Board (April 6, 2021) *Procedures for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State* (Section III, *Wetland Delineation*). HELIX followed the USACE Wetlands Delineation Manual (USACE 1987), the Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Arid West Region (Version 2.0; USACE 2008), and the *National Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) Field Delineation Manual for Rivers and Streams* (Version: Final). As applicable, the ARD incorporated the final rule amending the definition of the Clean Water Act (CWA) "waters of the U.S.," as issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and USACE on August 29, 2023, in response to the *Sackett* decision.

Topography and Drainage

The terrain in the Study Area is generally flat with elevations ranging from approximately 633 and 682 feet amsl (193 to 207 meters), and there is a slight decline in elevation from the north to the south. The Study Area is in the Upper Calaveras watershed (HUC8 18040011). There is one depressional feature identified as a seasonal wetland within the Study Area.

Drainage within the Study Area would be expected to flow downslope to the south of the Study Area towards Cosgrove Creek, which flows northeast to southwest outside of the Study Area.

Soils

The NRCS mapped two soil units within the project site: Amador sandy loam, 2-15 percent slopes and Urban land-Amador Complex, 2-15 percent slopes. The general characteristics and properties associated with these soils are described below (NRCS 2025a):

- **Amador sandy loam, drained, 2-15 percent slopes:** This soil type typically occurs on low hills at elevations between 200 and 480 feet amsl. It is a residual soil formed by the weathering of bedrock in place. A typical soil profile is sandy loam (0-15 inches) and bedrock (15-25 inches). The layer of sandy loam has a moderately high to high capacity to transmit water, but the bedrock permeability capacity can range from low to moderately low. These soils are typically non-saline to very slightly saline and are considered well drained. These soils are used for pasture and livestock grazing, and support vegetation that is primarily annual grasses and forbs. This soil type is considered non-hydric with no hydric minor components and makes up the majority of the Study Area (89.7 percent).

- **Urban land-Amador Complex, 2-15 percent slopes:** This soil type typically occurs on low hills at elevations between 590 and 1,050 feet amsl. It is a type of residual soil formed by the weathering of bedrock in place. A typical soil profile is sandy loam (0-15 inches) and bedrock (15-25 inches). The layer of sandy loam has a moderately high to high capacity to transmit water, but the bedrock permeability capacity can range from very low to moderately low. These soils are typically non-saline to very slightly saline and are considered well drained. Amador soil is typically non-saline to very slightly saline and are considered well drained. This soil type is considered non-hydric, but has one hydric minor component. Soils classified under the category of "Urban land" generally describes anthropogenically disturbed soil material that typically has a non-agricultural surface layer, is derived from man-made materials, sealed by impervious surfaces, or altered by physical disturbances and management (Pouyat et al. 2020). The small portion of the Study Area containing the paved road and road shoulder is classified under this soil complex.

Vegetation Communities

Annual Grassland

A total of 6.45 acres of annual grassland habitat was mapped within the Study Area. Annual grassland habitats are open grasslands composed primarily of annual plant species. The growth structure in annual grassland depends largely on weather patterns and livestock grazing. Many wildlife species use annual grasslands for foraging, but often, other special habitat features such as cliffs, caves, ponds, or habitats with woody plants for breeding, resting, and escape cover are preferred for breeding, nesting and roosting (Mayer and Laudenslayer 1988). Characteristic reptiles that breed in annual grassland habitats include the western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), common garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*), and western rattlesnake (*Crotalus oreganus*); mammals typically found in this habitat include the black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*), California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*), Botta's pocket gopher (*Megascapheus bottae*), western harvest mouse (*Reithrodontomys megalotis*), California vole (*Microtus californicus*), badger (*Taxidea taxus*), and coyote (*Canis latrans*) (Mayer and Laudenslayer 1988).

The annual grassland habitat within the Study Area made up the majority of the Study Area. The soil substrate was observed to be comprised of fine loam particles with gravel sized rocks. A small seasonal wetland is present within this habitat, and one isolated valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) tree was growing within this habitat on the eastern side of the Study Area. Habitats observed outside of the Study Area included rural residential to the north, a small patch of oak woodland to the northwest, and annual grassland to the immediate west and south. Although one valley oak tree was observed growing within the Study Area, there were no habitat characteristics within the Study Area that would qualify as oak woodland. Plant species observed within annual grassland habitat in the Study Area include medusahead (*Elymus caput-medusae)*, wild oat (*Avena fatua*), stinkwort (*Dittrichia graveolens*), hare's-foot clover (*Trifolium arvense)*, bahiagrass (*Paspalum notatum*), scarlet pimpernel (*Lysimachia arvensis)*, broadleaf filaree (*Erodium botrys)*, purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria)*, common evening primrose (*Oenothera biennis)*, and Italian-thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*). Several small mammal burrows were observed within this habitat, and bird species such as northern harrier (*Circus hudsonius*), turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*), house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), and white crowned sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) were also observed during the site visit.

Urban

Unvegetated and paved habitat was mapped along the eastern border of the Study Area and can most closely be categorized as urban habitat. This 0.53-acre area includes SR 26 and its associated gravel right-of-way (ROW). Urban habitat is human altered and can be covered in pavement and buildings and is either unvegetated or has less than 2 percent coverage of herbaceous and wildland species (Mayer and Laudenslayer 1988). Urban habitat within the Study Area would not be quality habitat for any species and would present a potential barrier to movement because of lack of cover and hazards from vehicle strikes. The dangers associated with the traffic on paved roads would deter most species from using this habitat. Wildlife may occasionally only use this habitat to pass through and reach quality habitat with more resources. Aside from some emergent vegetation growing through the gravel ROW, such as green carpetweed (*Mollugo verticillata)*, this habitat was 98 percent unvegetated, and no wildlife species were observed.

Aquatic Resources

One aquatic resource was delineated within the Study Area, consisting of 0.02 acre of seasonal wetland. Seasonal wetlands are shallow depressions that collect surface runoff from surrounding terrain and stay inundated for a long enough duration to form hydric soil and support a dominance of hydrophytic vegetation. A restrictive soil layer may be present, weakly formed, or absent. These features are typically shallower than vernal pools and generally have a shorter inundation period than vernal pools. Seasonal wetlands generally exhibit a hydrologic regime dominated by saturation rather than inundation. This habitat was located near the center of the Study Area within grassland habitat and was characterized by a slight depression and a different assemblage of vegetation compared to the surrounding grassland. There was no standing water at the time of the site visit, but the soil was saturated.

Vegetation species observed within the seasonal wetland include common spikerush (*Eleocharis macrostachya*), perennial quaking grass (*Briza media*), lesser quaking grass (*Briza minor*), Iris leaved rush (*Juncus xiphioides*), and Italian rye grass (*Festuca perennis*). No wildlife species were observed within this habitat, but small mammal burrows were observed on the border with the grassland habitat.

Listed and Special-Status Species

Plant Species

According to the database query, 18 listed and/or special-status plants have the potential to occur on-site or in the vicinity of the Study Area (CDFW 2025; CNPS 2025). Based on field observations, published information, and literature review, two special-status plants have a moderate potential to occur within the Study Area: spicate calycadenia (*Calycadenia spicata*) and pincushion navarretia (*Navarretia myersii ssp. myersii*). The following species have a low potential to occur within the Study Area because suitable habitat is present, but observations of this species within five miles of the Study Area occurred greater than 25 years prior to the field survey or are reported to be extirpated: Henderson's bent grass (*Agrostis hendersonii*), Ahart's dwarf rush (*Juncus leiospermus var. ahartii*), and legenere (*Legenere limosa*). All other regionally listed special-status plants identified in the query occur within chaparral habitats, on serpentine or Ione formation soils, or within other specific habitats or at elevations that do not occur in the Study Area.

Spicate Calycadenia

Spicate calycadenia has a CRPR Ranking of 1B.3, which indicates that this species is rare in California and requires evaluation for consideration under CEQA, but it is not listed as threatened or endangered at the State or federal level. This species is an annual herb found in valley and foothill grasslands and cismontane woodlands. It occurs on dry, adobe or clay soils that are gravelly or rocky, often in disturbed areas, openings, and roadsides from 40 to 1,400 meters (approximately 131 to 4,593 feet) elevation. This species blooms from May to September (CNPS 2025). This species was not observed in the Study Area during the field survey conducted for the BRA on December 3, 2025, or field survey conducted for the Due Diligence Assessment on June 23, 2025 (HELIX 2025a). There are two documented occurrences of this species within five miles of the Study Area. One occurrence is 1.1 miles east of the Study Area from 1992, and the other is 4.3 miles west of the Study Area from 2020 (CDFW 2025). There is a moderate potential for spicate calycadenia to occur within the Study Area. Grazed grassland habitat is present within the Study Area, which is suitable habitat for this species. However, soils ideal for this species consist of adobe or clay, and the soils that make up that Study Area are considered sandy loam, which may not be suitable. Documented occurrences in close proximity to the Study Area were recorded in similar grassland habitat on cobbly, sandy loam soil within heavily grazed grassland fields, similar to that found within the Study Area, indicating that this species can tolerate a variety of soil types. Based on recorded observations within five miles of the Study Area in similar habitats, it is possible that the Study Area could support this species.

Pincushion Navarretia

Pincushion navarretia has a CRPR Ranking of 1B.1, which indicates that this species is rare in California and requires evaluation for consideration under CEQA, but it is not listed as threatened or endangered at the State or federal level. This species is an annual herb found in vernal pools and wetlands from 20 to 330 meters (approximately 66 to 1,083 feet) elevation. This species is often found on clay soils within non-native grassland habitat and blooms from April – May (CDFW 2025; CNPS 2025). This species was not observed in the Study Area during the field survey conducted for the BRA on December 3, 2025, or field survey conducted for the Due Diligence Assessment on June 23, 2025 (HELIX 2025a). There are no documented occurrences of this species within five miles of the Study Area (Calflora 2025; CDFW 2025). There is a moderate potential for Patterson's navarretia to occur within the Study Area based on the little information available for this species. Suitable aquatic habitat is present and is surrounded by non-native grassland.

Henderson's Bent Grass

Henderson's bent grass is listed as CRPR Rank 3.2, which indicates that this species is rare in California and requires evaluation for consideration under CEQA, but it is not listed as threatened or endangered at the State or federal level. This species is an annual herb found in mesic valley and foothill grassland and vernal pool habitats from 65 to 1,030 meters (approximately 213 to 3,380 feet) elevation, and blooms from April – June (CDFW 2025; CNPS 2025). This species was not observed in the Study Area during the field survey conducted for the BRA on December 3, 2025, or field survey conducted for the Due Diligence Assessment on June 23, 2025 (HELIX 2025a). If present within the Study Area, it would have been observed blooming in the June survey There are no documented occurrences of this species within five miles of the Study Area (CDFW 2025). There is a low potential for Henderson's bent grass to occur within the Study Area. While grassland and mesic habitats are present within the Study Area, the only recorded occurrence within the 9-quad CNDDB species query was six miles west of the Study Area in 1935 and is reported to be extirpated.

Ahart's Dwarf Rush

Ahart's dwarf rush has a CRPR Ranking of 1B.2, which indicates that this species is rare in California and requires evaluation for consideration under CEQA, but it is not listed as threatened or endangered at the State or federal level. This species is an annual herb found in vernal pools and vernally mesic valley grassland habitats from 30 to 229 meters (approximately 98 to 751 feet) elevation. This species is known from approximately ten occurrences within California. This species blooms from March – May (Calflora 2025; CNPS 2025). This species was not observed in the Study Area during the field survey conducted for the BRA on December 3, 2025, or field survey conducted for the Due Diligence Assessment on June 23, 2025 (HELIX 2025a). If present within the Study Area, it would not be expected to bloom or be observed during either survey. There are no documented occurrences of this species within five miles of the Study Area (CDFW 2025). The nearest occurrence of this species is located approximately 7.4 miles southwest of the Study Area, recorded in 1987 (Calflora 2025). There is a low potential for Ahart's dwarf rush to occur within the Study Area. Vernally mesic grassland habitat and a seasonal wetland are present within the Study Area. However, with the lack of reported database records, and the majority of those records occurring more than 20 years prior to the field survey, the potential for this species to occur within the Study Area is limited.

Legenere

Legenere has a CRPR Ranking of 1B.1, which indicates that this species is rare in California and requires evaluation for consideration under CEQA, but it is not listed as threatened or endangered at the State or federal level. This species is an annual herb found in vernal pools and wetlands from 1 to 1,005 meters (approximately 1 to 3,297 feet) elevation. Soils underlying occupied pools are typically shallow, acidic clays with few stones (Barbour et al. 2007). It blooms from April - June (CDFW 2025; CNPS 2025). This species was not observed in the Study Area during the field survey conducted for the BRA on December 3, 2025, or field survey conducted for the Due Diligence Assessment on June 23, 2025 (HELIX 2025a). If present within the Study Area, this species would be expected to be observed blooming during the June survey. There are no documented occurrences of this species within five miles of the Study Area (CDFW 2025). There is a low potential for legenere to occur within the Study Area. The seasonal wetland within the Study Area could provide suitable habitat conditions to support this species, but soils within the Study Area are considered sandy loam (NRCS 2025), which would be unsuitable for this species.

Wildlife Species

According to the database query, 17 listed and/or special-status wildlife species have the potential to occur in the Study Area or in the vicinity of the Study Area (CDFW 2025; USFWS 2025a). Based on field observations, published information, and literature review, seven special-status wildlife species have the potential to occur within the Study Area: Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*), vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*), California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*, pop 1), California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*), western spadefoot (*Spea hammondii*), Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), and northern harrier (*Circus hudsonius*). In addition to these species, other migratory birds and raptors protected under federal, State, and local laws/policies also have the potential to occur within the Study Area.

The following species only have a low potential to pass through the Study Area during migration, during foraging, or during movements between more suitable habitat and are not expected to occur or use the Study Area in any substantial way: tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*) and prairie falcon (*Falco*

mexicanus). Because these species are only expected to potentially temporarily pass through the Study Area, they are not discussed further.

Crotch's Bumble Bee

Crotch's bumble bee is listed as candidate endangered species under CESA. Crotch's bumble bee occurs in grassland and scrub habitats. New colonies are initiated by solitary queens, generally in the early spring, which typically occupy abandoned rodent burrows. This species is a generalist forager and has been reported visiting a wide variety of flowering plants. The flight period for queens in California is from February to October. New queens hibernate over the winter and initiate a new colony the following spring. Crotch's bumble bees are rare throughout their range and are in decline in the Central Valley and southern California (CDFW 2019). The current known range of this species follows a small strip from western Trinity County south to Tehama County and along the entire Central Valley and coast south of Monterey to the southernmost portions of the State. The range is generally bound on the east by the high Sierra Nevada range and areas east of Bishop, Ridgecrest, and the Salton Sea (CDFW 2023). This species was not observed in the Study Area during the field survey conducted for the BRA on December 3, 2025, or field survey conducted for the Due Diligence Assessment on June 23, 2025 (HELIX 2025a). It is expected that the species would have been detectable during the June survey, but not the December survey. There are no documented occurrences of this species within five miles of the Study Area (CDFW 2025).

Suitable grassland habitat is present in the Study Area and small mammal burrows were observed during the survey. Suitable food genera were not observed during the December field survey, but this timeframe is typically outside of the blooming period for most of the preferred species. During the previous reconnaissance survey within and around the Study Area in June 2025, *Lupinus bicolor* was observed (HELIX 2025a). There is a moderate potential for this species to occur within the Study Area due to the seasonal presence of food genera and suitable habitat components, but the lack of nearby observations reduces the likelihood for this species to occur on-site.

Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp

The vernal pool fairy shrimp is listed as a federally threatened species. Vernal pool fairy shrimp occurs in a variety of seasonally inundated habitats, especially with grassy or muddy substrates. It is typically found in turbid water but also occurs in clear water with aquatic vegetation. It is endemic to the grasslands of the Central Valley, Central Coast mountains, and South Coast mountains (CDFW 2025). This species was not observed in the Study Area during the field survey conducted for the BRA on December 3, 2025, or field survey conducted for the Due Diligence Assessment on June 23, 2025 (HELIX 2025a). There is one documented occurrence of this species within five miles of the Study Area, located 1.4 miles east of the Study Area in seasonal wetlands within grassland habitat similar to that observed within the Study Area and recorded in 2006 (CDFW 2025). Potentially suitable aquatic habitat for this species occurs in the seasonal wetland of the Study Area, and there are observations of this species within five miles of the Study Area.

California Tiger Salamander

California tiger salamander is listed as a federal and State endangered species. California tiger salamander requires both aquatic breeding habitat and suitable upland habitat. It is typically found in grasslands, meadows, oak savannah, and oak woodland habitats when not utilizing breeding habitat. Adults aestivate (enter a dormant state during summer or dry weather) in small mammal burrows and

other crevices throughout summer and typically emerge after the first heavy rains to migrate to breeding pools (Trenham 2001). Breeding takes place in vernal pools, ponds, wetlands, and other freshwater habitats where predators, such as fish, are absent. Eggs are laid singly or in clumps on both submerged and emergent vegetation and on submerged debris in shallow water (Zeiner et al. 1990). The breeding season typically occurs from November through April (USFWS 2017) and is likely influenced by local precipitation and ambient temperature. Females typically lay eggs between December and early April. Larvae typically metamorphose in three to six months and juveniles begin to move out of the natal pond in late spring or early summer, and rarely overwinter (USFWS 2017). Adults have been known to inhabit upland habitats up to 1.24 miles from breeding pools, and juveniles have been known to occur up to 2 miles from breeding pools (Trenham 2001). California tiger salamander was not observed in the Study Area during the field survey conducted for the BRA on December 3, 2025, or field survey conducted for the Due Diligence Assessment on June 23, 2025 (HELIX 2025a). There are nine documented occurrences of this species within five miles of the Study Area, with the closest occurrence recorded approximately 1.6 miles southwest of the Study Area in 2015. This observation occurred in a pond surrounded by oak savannah and grassland habitat similar to that found within and around the Study Area (CDFW 2025). There is one paved residential road separating the nearest occurrence of the species from the Study Area.

There is a high potential for California tiger salamander to aestivate within the grassland habitat of the Study Area. While suitable aquatic breeding habitat does not occur in the Study Area, and the Study Area is not within 1.3 miles of a documented breeding pond, aquatic habitats such as ponds and reservoirs are located within 1.3 miles of the Study Area that have potential to serve as breeding habitat. Suitable grassland habitat within the Study Area included small mammal burrows in which this species could utilize as upland refugia and aestivation habitat if avenues for migration to the Study Area were present. Barriers to movement, such as SR 26 and SR 12, could limit the potential for this species to reach the Study Area, but the prevalence of occurrences within five miles of the Study Area and potentially suitable aquatic habitat near the Study Area indicate a high potential for this species to occur during aestivation.

California Red-Legged Frog

California red-legged frog adults require dense, shrubby or emergent riparian vegetation closely associated with deep (greater than 2 1/3-foot deep) still or slow-moving water. The largest densities of California red-legged frogs are associated with deep-water pools with dense stands of overhanging willows (*Salix* spp.) and an intermixed fringe of cattails (*Typha latifolia*). These are generally seasonal ponds, stock ponds, wetlands, marshes, and swamp habitats. Well-vegetated riparian areas may provide important sheltering habitat during winter. California red-legged frogs aestivate in small mammal burrows and moist leaf litter. They have been found up to 100 feet from water in adjacent dense riparian vegetation and may migrate up to two miles from a breeding pond. Studies have indicated that this species cannot inhabit water bodies that exceed 70° F, especially if there are no cool, deep portions. This species requires 11-20 weeks of permanent water for larval development (CDFW 2025; USFWS 2002). This species was not observed in the Study Area during the field survey conducted for the BRA on December 3, 2025, or field survey conducted for the Due Diligence Assessment on June 23, 2025 (HELIX 2025a). There is one documented occurrence of this species within five miles of the Study Area, located approximately 3.1 miles northeast of the Study Area in 2003 (CDFW 2025). This observation occurred near a spring-fed stream surrounded by riparian habitat and grazed oak savannah.

California red-legged frog has a moderate potential to occur within the Study Area if it was to aestivate within the small mammal burrows present in the grassland habitat. Suitable aquatic and riparian habitat does not occur in or adjacent to the Study Area, and none of the aquatic resources within the Study Area are inundated for an appropriate amount of time for this species to breed. The seasonal wetland only holds water ephemerally, so the hydroperiod of these features would not be long enough for larval development. However, several streams, seasonal ponds, and stock ponds that could be potential breeding habitat are located within two miles of the Study Area, an appropriate distance for this species to migrate to the Study Area. Access to the Study Area from nearby potential breeding habitats could be limited by development and movement barriers such as roads, but aestivation can still be supported if this species were to arrive to the Study Area. Within the vicinity of the Study Area, quality upland grassland habitat is widely available, and based on the last recorded observation of this species occurring within five miles of the Study Area occurring 22 years prior to the field survey, there is only moderate potential that this species would occur within the Study Area.

Western Spadefoot

Western spadefoot is proposed for listing as a threatened species under FESA and listed as a CDFW species of special concern (SSC). Western spadefoot occurs in a variety of open habitats including grasslands, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, sandy washes, and playas. It can also be found in valley-foothill woodlands. This species selects grassland habitat for burrow locations, and burrows in friable, sandy loam soils (Baumberger et al. 2019). The majority of its life is spent underground, and this species typically emerges between October to May to breed. Breeding occurs in vernal pools, depressional wetlands, and sometimes puddles. Breeding sites must remain inundated for at least 30 days for larvae to mature (CDFW 2025). This species disperses from breeding pools through grassland and shrub/scrub habitats. The mean distance of dispersal is approximately 40 meters (141 feet), but this species has been recorded to disperse 605 meters (1,985 feet) from a breeding pond to upland habitat (USFWS 2023). Western spadefoot was not observed in the Study Area during the field survey conducted for the BRA on December 3, 2025, or field survey conducted for the Due Diligence Assessment on June 23, 2025 (HELIX 2025a). If present within the Study Area during the December field survey, this species would have been breeding and potentially detectable. There are two documented occurrences of this species within five miles of the Study Area. These occurrences were recorded 4.2 and 4.4 miles southwest of the Study Area in 1990 and 1978, respectively, and were found in creeks (CDFW 2025).

Western spadefoot have a moderate potential to occur within the Study Area. Suitable aquatic habitat for breeding occurs around the Study Area in the seasonal wetlands and creeks, and the seasonal wetland within the Study Area could be suitable for breeding if it is inundated for at least 30 days. Grasslands with suitable soils and small mammal burrows do occur within the Study Area. While suitable upland and potentially suitable aquatic habitat is present and there are observations of this species within five miles of the Study Area, these observations occurred greater than 25 years prior to the field survey and were located more than 605 meters (1,985 feet) from the Study Area, much farther than the maximum dispersal distance known for this species. Nevertheless, the Study Area contains suitable habitats which could support this species if it were to arrive in the Study Area.

Swainson's Hawk

Swainson's hawk is a California threatened species and protected by Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 of the California Fish and Game Code (CFGC). Swainson's hawk occurs in a variety of open habitats including expansive grasslands, agricultural areas, and open woodlands. It breeds in California and

winters in Mexico and South America. Swainson's hawks usually arrive in the Central Valley between March 1 and April 1 and migrate south between September and October. This species usually nests in trees adjacent to suitable foraging habitat but is known to forage in areas away from the nest. Nests are usually located in trees near the edges of riparian stands, in lone trees or groves of trees in agricultural fields, and in mature roadside trees. Mature oak and riparian trees are the most used nest trees, typically associated with high quality foraging habitat (CDFW 2025). Swainson's hawk was not observed in the Study Area during the field survey conducted for the BRA on December 3, 2025, or field survey conducted for the Due Diligence Assessment on June 23, 2025 (HELIX 2025a). However, this species would not have been present in California during the December survey. There are no documented occurrences of this species within five miles of the Study Area reported on CNDDB, and there are no recorded nest trees within ten miles of the Study Area (CDFW 2025). However, there were six sightings of this species within five miles of the Study Area reported on eBird, with the closest occurrence located approximately 1.2 miles northeast of the Study Area in 2017 (eBird 2025).

There is a moderate potential for foraging and breeding Swainson's hawk to occur within and around the Study Area. An individual mature oak (*Quercus* sp.) was located adjacent to the barren habitat in the Study Area, and blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) woodland habitat was observed outside of the Study Area. These trees could potentially provide nesting habitat, and are adjacent to grassland habitat, which can be used for foraging. Small mammal burrows were observed within the grassland habitat, indicating the presence of a prey base. Within the region, suitable nesting and foraging habitat is abundant and stands of riparian trees associated with New Hogan Lake approximately 1.5 miles south of the Study Area would offer more suitable resources than that found on and around the Study Area. While the potential for this species to utilize the Study Area is moderate to low compared to other areas with more suitable and abundant resources, there remains some potential for this species to occur within the Study Area.

Northern Harrier

Northern harrier is listed as a CDFW SSC. This species occurs in large tracts of coastal scrub, grassland, marsh, riparian scrub, and wetland habitats with low, dense vegetation. It is also known to occur in agricultural habitats. It nests on the ground in shrubby vegetation usually at the edge of aquatic habitat (CDFW 2025). Several individuals of this species were observed foraging in and around the Study Area during the field survey on December 3, 2025. It was not observed during the survey on June 23, 2025 (HELIX 2025a). There are eleven documented occurrences of this species within five miles of the Study Area. There is one documented occurrence within the Study Area in 2013, and two additional observations within 0.5 mile of the Study Area in 2018 and 2019 (eBird 2025).

Suitable foraging habitat and a prey base are present throughout the Study Area within the grassland habitat, but the grazed grassland vegetation would likely not provide enough cover or protection for this ground-nesting species. While this species was present within the Study Area at the time of the survey, it would likely only utilize the Study Area for foraging.

Other Migratory Nesting Birds

Migratory birds are protected under the MBTA of 1918 (16 USC 703-711). The MBTA makes it unlawful to take, possess, buy, sell, purchase, or barter any migratory bird listed under 50 CFR 10; this also includes feathers or other parts, nests, eggs, or products, except as allowed by implementing regulations (50 CFR 21). Additionally, Section 3503 of the California Fish and Game Code states that it is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird. Section 3503.5 specifically states that it is unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any raptors (i.e., hawks, owls, eagles, and falcons), including their

nests or eggs; Section 3513 specifically states that it is unlawful to take or possess any migratory nongame bird as designated in the MBTA or any part of such migratory nongame bird except as provided by rules and regulations adopted by the Secretary of the Interior under provisions of the MBTA. A number of migratory birds and raptors, in addition to Swainson's hawk, and northern harrier have the potential to nest within or adjacent to the Study Area. Suitable nest locations within and adjacent to the Study Area include trees, shrubs, grass, artificial structures, and bare ground.

Impact Analysis

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?

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

Special-Status Plant Species

Of the 18 listed and/or special-status plants that have the potential to occur in the vicinity of the project site, five plants have potential to occur on-site. Two plant species have a moderate potential to occur on-site (spicate calycadenia and pincushion navarretia), and three plant species have a low potential to occur on-site (Henderson's bent grass, Ahart's dwarf rush, and legenere) based on habitat suitability on-site and/or documented occurrences in the project area. However, none of these plant species with potential to occur on-site were observed during the field survey conducted for the BRA on December 3, 2025, or field survey conducted for the Due Diligence Assessment on June 23, 2025 (HELIX 2025a).

However, project construction activities, including vegetation removal, grading, construction, and paving have the potential to result in adverse effects to special-status species including spicate calycadenia, pincushion navarretia, Henderson's bent grass, Ahart's dwarf rush, and legenere if present on-site. Direct impacts to these species could occur through loss of individuals during construction, which would be a potentially significant impact. However, Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-4 would be implemented to avoid impacts to these species. Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would require a qualified biologist to conduct an environmental awareness training for all construction personnel prior to the start of construction, which would include identification special-status plants, animals, and sensitive resources with potential to occur on-site, and general measures implemented during project construction. Mitigation Measures BIO-2 and BIO-3 would require BMPs during construction to avoid general impacts to vegetation and wildlife as a result of construction activities and human disturbance. Mitigation Measure BIO-4 would require pre-construction rare plant surveys to be conducted during the appropriate blooming period for each of the threatened special-status plant species with potential to occur on-site. If special-status plants are found on-site and cannot be avoided, consultation with CDFW and/or USFWS would be required. Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-4, the impact on special-status plant species would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Worker Environmental Awareness Training

The project applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to conduct an environmental awareness training for all project-related personnel before the initiation of project construction activities, including site preparation. The training shall include identification of all special-status plants, animals, and sensitive resources with potential to occur within the project site. The training will outline the required practices before the start of construction, general measures that are being

implemented to protect the species and resources as they relate to the project, penalties for non-compliance, and boundaries of the permitted disturbance zones. Upon completion of the training, all construction personnel shall sign a form stating that they have attended the training and understand all the measures. Proof of this instruction will be kept on file with the biologist on-site and the project applicant. Subsequent trainings shall be given by the qualified biologist for all new personnel before they begin working on-site.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2: General Vegetation and Wildlife Avoidance Best Management Practices

The project site contains vegetation communities that can support special-status plant and wildlife species. The project applicant and/or construction contractor shall ensure that the following general avoidance and protection measures are implemented to protect vegetation and wildlife, to the extent practical:

- Cleared or trimmed native vegetation and wood debris will be chipped and left onsite. Cleared or trimmed non-native, invasive vegetation that are in the flowering and/or seeding/fruiting stages, then the seed heads will be bagged tightly and disposed of will be disposed of in a legal manner at an approved disposal site (landfill) as soon as possible to prevent regrowth and the spread of weeds.

- The removal of native vegetation shall be avoided and minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Temporary impacts shall be returned to pre-existing contours and revegetated with appropriate native species.

- Vehicles and equipment will be free of caked mud or debris prior to entering a project site to avoid the introduction of new invasive weedy plant species.

- To minimize construction-related mortalities of nocturnally active species such as mammals and snakes, it is recommended that all work be conducted during daylight hours. Nighttime work (and use of artificial lighting) will not be permitted unless specifically authorized.

- If required, night lighting will be directed away from the preserved open space areas to protect species from direct night lighting. All unnecessary lights will be turned off at sunset to avoid attracting wildlife such as insects, migratory birds, and bats.

- Any wildlife encountered during the course of project activities will be allowed to freely leave the area unharmed.

- Wildlife will not be disturbed, captured, harassed, or handled. Animal nests, burrows and dens will not be disturbed without prior survey and authorization from a qualified biologist.

- Covered trash receptacles will be placed at each designated work site and the contents will be properly disposed of at least once a week. Trash removal will reduce the attractiveness of the area to opportunistic predators such as common ravens, coyotes, northern raccoons, and Virginia opossums.

The project applicant and/or construction contractor shall ensure that storm water BMPs include erosion control measures for construction-related disturbance near undeveloped land

with ponded water to avoid sedimentation of breeding grounds for special-status sensitive amphibians and invertebrates.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3: Construction Best Management Practices

All construction personnel shall implement the following construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) to ensure that impacts to sensitive biological resources, such as sensitive habitat and special-status terrestrial wildlife species are minimized or avoided:

- Water pollution and erosion control plans shall be developed and implemented in accordance with the project's 2022 Construction Stormwater General Permit (Order 2022-0057-DWQ) and State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Resolution No. 2019-0015 [Waste Discharge Requirements permit]) requirements.

- Equipment storage, fueling, and staging areas shall be located on upland sites with minimal risks of direct drainage into riparian areas or another sensitive habitat. These designated areas shall be located in a manner as to prevent any runoff from entering sensitive habitat. Necessary precautions shall be taken to prevent the release of cement or other toxic substances into surface waters. Project-related spills of hazardous materials shall be reported to appropriate entities including but not limited to applicable jurisdictional areas per the County, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and shall be cleaned up immediately and contaminated soils removed to approved disposal areas.

The project applicant and/or construction contractor shall ensure that all project work crews will be directed to use construction BMPs where applicable. These measures will be identified prior to construction and incorporated into the construction operations via the required project Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

Mitigation Measure BIO-4: Pre-Construction Rare Plant Surveys

The project site contains suitable habitat for spicate calycadenia, pincushion navarretia, Henderson's bent grass, Ahart's dwarf rush, and legenere in the grassland and seasonal wetland feature. The following measures shall be implemented prior to the start of project activities, including site preparation.

- Where ground disturbance activities will occur within 50 feet of habitat suitable for spicate calycadenia, pincushion navarretia, Henderson's bent grass, Ahart's dwarf rush, and legenere (i.e. drainages, seeps, and other aquatic resources), focused surveys for special-status plant species shall be conducted by a qualified botanist, using established rare plant protocol, such as the 2018 *Protocol for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Natural Communities* (see https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/SurveyProtocols), prior to the commencement of construction-related activities.

    - One survey shall be conducted during the blooming periods for each species are as follows, when each plant is at its most identifiable point in order to increase the likelihood of each plant species being detected:

        - Spicate calycadenia: May – September
        - Pincushion navarretia: April – May
        - Henderson's bent grass: April – June
        - Ahart's dwarf rush: March – May
        - Legenere: April – June

    - Botanical surveys shall be floristic in nature (every plant taxon that occurs on a site is identified to the taxonomic level necessary to determine rarity and listing status);

    - Surveys shall be conducted in the field at the time of year when target plant taxa are both evident and identifiable (usually during flowering or fruiting), and multiple visits to a site be made (e.g. in early, mid, and late-season) to accurately survey the floristic diversity of the site and detect the presence of all special status plant taxa that are evident and identifiable;

    - Nearby reference populations shall be visited whenever possible to determine if known special status plant populations are evident and identifiable this year, and to obtain a visual image of the target species, associated habitat, and associated natural community. Reference populations may be particularly important this year to ensure that the timing of surveys is appropriate and to help substantiate negative findings in adverse conditions caused by drought.

- Should spicate calycadenia, pincushion navarretia, Henderson's bent grass, Ahart's dwarf rush, and/or legenere be documented within 50 feet of the construction footprint, avoidance measures shall be implemented to minimize indirect impacts to individual plants wherever feasible. These measures include the following:

    - Adjustments to the limits of grading boundaries to confine work to avoid populations of special-status plants by at least 50 feet or as otherwise determined by a qualified botanist and in consideration of the type and extent of ground disturbance, potential for indirect impacts following ground disturbance activities, topography, and other factors.

- Prior to construction activities, a qualified botanist shall flag or fence the location of special-status plant populations and the corresponding avoidance setback. This flagging shall be in addition to, and distinguished apart from, any required construction boundary fencing. The construction contractor shall be responsible for maintaining the flagging through the duration of construction. The flagging (or similar) shall be removed immediately following construction.

- If avoidance is not feasible, the following additional measure is required:

    - If avoidance of spicate calycadenia, pincushion navarretia, Henderson's bent grass, Ahart's dwarf rush, and/or legenere plants is not feasible, a Rare Plant Salvage and Translocation Plan shall be prepared by a qualified botanist prior to implementing

any ground-disturbing activities related to the project. The Rare Plant Salvage and Translocation Plan shall be pre-approved by the County and CDFW and shall include, at a minimum: identification of occupied habitat to be preserved and removed; identification of onsite or off-site preservation, restoration, enhancement, or translocation locations; methods for preservation, restoration, enhancement, and/or translocation; goals and objectives; replacement ratio and success standard of 1:1 for impacted to established acreage; a monitoring program to ensure mitigation success; adaptive management and remedial measures in the event that the performance standards are not achieved that include financial assurances and a mechanism for conservation of any mitigation lands required in perpetuity.

Special-Status Wildlife Species

Of the 17 listed and/or special-status wildlife species that have the potential to occur in the vicinity of the Study Area, seven species have the potential to occur on-site: Crotch's bumble bee, vernal pool fairy shrimp, California tiger salamander, California red-legged frog, western spadefoot, Swainson's hawk, and northern harrier. Of these species, only northern harrier was observed during the field survey conducted for the BRA on December 3, 2025, or field survey conducted for the Due Diligence Assessment on June 23, 2025 (HELIX 2025a). In addition to the above special-status species, other migratory birds and raptors protected under federal, State, and local laws/policies also have the potential to occur on-site. Potential impacts to special-status wildlife species and non-special-status migratory birds and raptors are discussed below.

Special-Status Invertebrates

Crotch's Bumble Bee

The grassland on-site provides suitable habitat for foraging, burrowing, and overwintering for Crotch's bumble bee. Implementation of the proposed project could result in direct and indirect adverse effects to Crotch's bumble bee if the species were to utilize the site for nesting, overwintering, or foraging during construction activities. Ground-disturbing activities associated with construction could adversely affect this ground-nesting species through direct mortality if individuals or nests are present. Ground clearing and grading may also result in the loss of suitable habitat. If ground nests are present on-site, excavation and destruction of those nests during grading would result in a potentially significant impact. However, Mitigation Measure BIO-3 would require pre-construction focused Crotch's bumble bee surveys and would require an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) to be obtained from CDFW, if necessary. In addition, Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 would require a qualified biologist to conduct an environmental awareness training prior to the start of construction and general construction BMPs to be implemented, as previously described. With implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 and BIO-5, the impact to Crotch's bumble bee would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure BIO-5: Focused Crotch's Bumble Bee Surveys

Within one (1) year prior to vegetation removal and/or grading, the project applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to conduct a minimum of three (3) surveys of all areas within the project site to determine the presence/absence of Crotch's bumble bee. The survey methods are provided below and shall be submitted to CDFW prior to survey implementation.

- A qualified biologist familiar with the behavior of Crotch's bumble bee and life history that is approved by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and has the appropriate handling permits shall conduct focused surveys for Crotch's bumble bee in areas of suitable habitat where they have potential to be impacted by project activities (potential colony nest locations).

- A minimum of three on-site surveys shall be conducted prior to the start of project construction. Each survey will ideally be spaced two to four weeks apart during the Colony Active Period (April – August) to ensure that they cover a range of dates and account for variability in resource use by the candidate species and floral resource phenology within the project site (CDFW 2023).

- Surveys shall occur during the day (at least an hour after sunrise and at least two hours before sunset, though ideally between 9 AM and 1 PM) on warm but not hot, sunny days (65 to 90 degrees F), with low wind (less than eight mph). Survey methodology shall remain consistent with the Survey Considerations for CESA Candidate Bumble Species (CDFW 2023). Even if surveys from a particular project site failed to detect bumble bees one year, the project applicant shall perform a full round of surveys in each year that project construction will occur or assume presence.

- All bumble bee species observed during the surveys will be photographed to the extent possible and identified to species level. If Crotch's bumble bee or any CESA-protected bumble bee individual or colony is identified in the project site or within 25 feet, no work shall occur until CDFW has been notified and has provided direction for the project moving forward. If impacts to Crotch's bumble bee cannot be avoided, the project proponent will obtain an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) from CDFW and implement all measures contained in the ITP issued by CDFW.

If Crotch's bumble bee is not found during the multiple rounds of focused surveys within suitable nesting, foraging, and/or overwintering habitat, it is recommended that a biological monitor be on-site during initial vegetation removal or ground disturbing activities that take place during the Queen and Gyne Flight Period and the Colony Active Period (April to October).

Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp

Vernal pool fairy shrimp has the potential to be present in seasonal wetland habitat on-site. In the absence of protocol-level surveys, these species are assumed to be present on-site. Project construction activities could result in destruction of habitat for these species due to ground disturbance and/or siltation into wetlands, which would be considered a significant impact and take of a federally listed species. However, Mitigation Measure BIO-6 would ensure impacts to special status vernal pool invertebrates are addressed through Section 7 consultation with USFWS (if the project has a federal nexus) or preparation of a Habitat Conservation Plan Under Section 10 of the FESA if listed vernal pool invertebrate species are determined to be present on-site. As outlined in Mitigation Measure BIO-6, presence of these species on-site could be determined through conducting protocol-level surveys for listed vernal pool invertebrates prior to the start of project construction, or the project applicant could decide to assume presence in the absence of protocol-level surveys. In addition, Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 would require a qualified biologist to conduct an environmental awareness training prior to the start of construction and general construction BMPs to be implemented, as previously

described. With implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 and BIO-6, the impact on special-status vernal pool invertebrates would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure BIO-6: Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp

Vernal pool fairy shrimp are assumed to be present in suitable habitat on-site within their range unless a complete protocol-level survey consisting of one wet-season survey and one dry-season survey results in no evidence of the listed species. If protocol surveys are conducted, surveys shall follow the 2017 *USFWS Survey Guidelines for the Listed Large Branchiopods* and shall be performed by a USFWS-approved branchiopod biologist.

- If the species are found to be absent from the survey results and the USFWS accepts the survey findings, then no mitigation for listed vernal pool invertebrates is likely required. If the species are present, or if the project applicant decides to assume presence without conducting the surveys, then mitigation for listed vernal pool invertebrates will be required for project-related impacts to suitable habitat. Assumed presence may be decided by the project applicant before construction, and mitigation for assumed presence will be determined by the USFWS.

- If mitigation for vernal pool invertebrates is required and the project has a federal nexus (e.g., is pursuant to a USACE permit, is federally funded, or occurs on federal land), impacts can be addressed through Section 7 consultation with the USFWS. If the project does not have a federal nexus, the project applicant, through coordination with the USFWS, can prepare a Habitat Conservation Plan under Section 10 of FESA. Possible mitigation opportunities include off-site preservation of occupied off-site habitat or the purchase of habitat credits at a qualified mitigation bank.

Special-Status Amphibians

California tiger salamander, western spadefoot, and California red-legged frog have the potential to occur in the grassland habitat of the project site during dispersal or aestivation. If special-status amphibians are aestivating or dispersing in the project site during construction, vegetation clearing, construction, excavation, or other activities and/or disturbances (e.g., noise, vibration, increased human activity), potentially significant adverse effects could occur including direct harm, loss of aestivation habitat, or by causing individuals to leave the burrows under suboptimal conditions, exposing them to stress, increased chance of predation, or greater risk of being crushed from construction activities. However, Mitigation Measure BIO-7 would require pre-construction special-status amphibian surveys to be conducted to determine the presence of individuals and/or burrows. If individuals are present during construction activities, all work in the immediate vicinity of the individual shall be halted, and relocation by an approved biologist may be necessary. In addition, Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 would require a qualified biologist to conduct an environmental awareness training prior to the start of construction and general construction BMPs to be implemented, as previously described. Further, to minimize inadvertent entrapment of wildlife, Mitigation Measure BIO-8 would be implemented, which requires general construction BMPs to ensure that construction equipment, materials, and activities are properly managed to prevent wildlife entry and potential injury or death. With implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3, BIO-7, and BIO-8, the impact to special-status amphibians would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure BIO-7: Pre-Construction Special-Status Amphibian Surveys

If feasible, all initial site grading and land disturbing activities shall be conducted outside of the breeding season for California red-legged frog, western spadefoot, and California tiger salamander. The breeding season is generally November to April for California red-legged frog, October to May for western spadefoot, and December to February for California tiger salamander. Work conducted between June and September will avoid all three species' breeding seasons.

- A qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-construction survey for California red-legged frog, western spadefoot, and California tiger salamander within 24 hours before the start of grading or land-disturbing activities. If the survey shows that there is no evidence of these species, then a letter report will be prepared to document the survey and will be provided to the project applicant, and no additional measures will be required. If development does not commence within 24 hours of the survey, or halts for more than seven days, then an additional survey is required before starting or resuming work.
    - If any of these species are observed during the survey, no work shall occur until CDFW and/or USFWS have been consulted to determine appropriate mitigation and avoidance measures.
- If suitable burrows that could support California tiger salamander are observed during the pre-construction survey, CDFW and USFWS shall be consulted regarding potential avoidance and minimization measures to implement during construction. Avoidance measures could include marking the burrows with pin flags and recording locations using a GPS unit with sub-meter accuracy for mapping. All burrows marked shall be avoided to the greatest extent possible and shall remain marked throughout the entire construction period of the area. An avoidance buffer of at least 50 feet shall be established for suitable burrows. Workers shall be made aware of burrow locations to avoid during construction, and burrow locations shall be marked on all project plans.
- If potentially suitable burrows are located within the construction zone that cannot be avoided by construction, the project proponent will consult with the wildlife agencies regarding potential measures for burrow excavation. Burrow excavation may require acquisition of an ITP and approved relocation plan in the event that burrows are actually occupied by California tiger salamander. Excavation of burrows shall be conducted as follows:
    - All excavations shall be conducted between April 1 and October 15 (during the non-breeding season for California tiger salamander). Excavation will be done with hand tools by a qualified biologist who has been approved by both USFWS and CDFW for the project to handle California tiger salamanders and monitored by a qualified biologist to determine if California tiger salamanders are present within the burrows.
    - Burrow excavation shall occur by slowly removing the burrow (including any side tunnels) using hand tools (e.g., shovel, digging bar, garden trowel, masonry trowel, etc.). If hand tools cannot be used safely due to soil compaction and/or extreme

burrow depth, burrows may be excavated using mechanical methods. Mechanical methods will include either hand power tools or a backhoe and/or hand tools (e.g., shovel, garden trowel, masonry trowel, etc.).

- All burrows (including side burrows) will be excavated to the endpoints, and the excavation will then be backfilled.

- All California tiger salamander salvaged from burrow excavation will be relocated according to the agency-approved California tiger salamander relocation Plan.

- Wildlife exclusion fencing, such as general silt fencing or other solid fencing, shall be installed around the project area before construction. Fencing shall be trenched into the soil at least six inches, and the soil must be carefully compacted against both sides of the fence for its entire length to prevent animals, such as California red-legged frog or California tiger salamander, from entering the construction area. Plywood cover boards need to be laid down with one edge in contact with the exclusion fence approximately every 100 feet along the perimeter of the silt fence to provide refuge for amphibians seeking cover. Exclusion fencing shall be inspected daily for the duration of construction to ensure it remains intact, and any holes, tears, or gaps shall be repaired immediately. Fencing shall be removed upon construction completion.

- If any of these species are observed within the project area during work, specifically within the construction zone, all work shall immediately halt in the vicinity of the animal. If the animal is in immediate danger, a USFWS or CDFW-approved biologist shall be obtained to relocate the animal outside of the construction zone, at a safe distance from all construction-related activities, and within suitable habitat. No one other than an approved biologist shall handle, take, or otherwise harass the animal. No work shall resume until the animal has moved or been removed from areas of potential disturbance.

Mitigation Measure BIO-8: Wildlife Entrapment Avoidance

The project applicant and/or construction contractor shall ensure that all project-related excavations shall be secured to prevent wildlife entry and entrapment.

- Holes and trenches shall be backfilled, securely covered, or fenced. Excavations that cannot be fully secured shall incorporate appropriate wildlife ramp(s) at a slope of no more than a 3:1 ratio (horizontal: vertical), or other means to allow trapped animals to escape.

- Biological monitors shall provide guidance to construction crews to ensure that wildlife ramps or other means are sufficient to allow trapped animals to escape.

- At the end of each work day, a biological monitor shall ensure that excavations have been secured or provided with appropriate means for wildlife escape.

- All pipes or other construction materials or supplies will be covered or capped in storage or laydown areas. No pipes or tubing will be left open either temporarily or permanently, except during use or installation.

- Any construction pipe, culvert, or other hollow materials will be inspected for wildlife before it is moved, buried, or capped. This type of inspection will be conducted to preclude or minimize potential impacts to all targeted species.

Special-Status Birds

Swainson's Hawk

No Swainson's hawks were observed during the biological field surveys, and no active or inactive nests were observed during the field survey. There is a moderate potential for foraging and breeding Swainson's hawk to occur within and around the Study Area. An individual mature oak (*Quercus* sp.) was located adjacent to the barren habitat in the Study Area, and blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) woodland abuts the west and north boundaries of the grassland within the Study Area. These trees could potentially provide nesting habitat, and are adjacent to grassland habitat, which can be used for foraging. The project site contains 6.45 acres of annual grassland (fallow field) which could provide suitable foraging habitat for Swainson's hawks. However, there is an abundance of high-quality nesting and foraging habitat outside of the Study Area which this species would be more likely to utilize.

However, vegetation clearing, grading, construction, and general ground-disturbance could result in potentially significant impacts to foraging and nesting habitat for this species. Mitigation Measure BIO-6 would require pre-construction surveys for Swainson's hawk during the nesting season to minimize disturbance to the species. In addition, Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 would require a qualified biologist to conduct an environmental awareness training prior to the start of construction and general construction BMPs to be implemented, as previously described. Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 and BIO-9, the impact on Swainson's hawk would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure BIO-9: Pre-Construction Swainson's Hawk Surveys

If construction activities will begin during the Swainson's hawk nesting season (March 20 to September 15), a qualified biologist shall conduct two pre-construction surveys within 0.25 mile of the project site using the methods described in the *Recommended Timing and Methodology for Swainson's Hawk Nesting Surveys in California's Central Valley* (Swainson's Hawk Technical Advisory Committee 2000). The first pre-construction survey shall occur between June 10 and July 30 of the year prior to construction. The second shall occur between January 1 and March 20 of the year of construction. All potential nest trees within 0.25 mile of the project site shall be visually examined for potential Swainson's hawk nests, as accessible. If no Swainson's hawk nests are identified on or within 0.25 mile of the project site, a letter report documenting the survey methodology and findings should be submitted to the project applicant, and no additional measures for Swainson's hawk are required. One clearance survey will be completed within 0.25 mile of the project site within 14 days prior to the beginning of ground disturbing activities. This final survey can be completed concurrently with the pre-construction nesting bird survey.

- If active or inactive Swainson's hawk nests (a nest becomes active once the first egg is laid and remains active until the fledged young are no longer dependent on the nest [USFWS 2018]) are found within 0.25 mile of the project site, a survey report shall be submitted to CDFW, and an avoidance and minimization plan shall be developed for approval by CDFW prior to the start of construction. The avoidance plan will identify measures to minimize

impacts to the active Swainson's hawk nest depending on the location of the nest relative to the project site. These measures may include the following:

- Establish a buffer zone and work schedule to avoid impacting the nest during critical periods. If possible, no work will occur within 200 yards of the nest while it is in active use. If work will occur within 200 yards of the nest, then construction will be monitored by a qualified biologist to ensure that no work occurs within 50 yards of the nest during incubation or within 10 days after hatching (Swainson's Hawk Technical Advisory Committee 2000);

- Have a biological monitor conduct regular monitoring of the nest during construction activities; and

- If the project biologist determines that the construction activities are disturbing the nest, the biologist shall have the authority to halt construction activities until CDFW is consulted regarding additional avoidance measures.

- If construction begins outside of the Swainson's hawk nesting season (September 16 – March 19), a nesting bird survey and environmental training for this species will not be required.

Non-Special-Status Protected Nesting Migratory Birds and Raptors

Non-special-status migratory birds and raptors are protected under federal, State, and/or local laws and policies, and have the potential to nest and forage within and adjacent to the project site. Although no active nests were observed during the field survey, the project site and adjacent properties contain suitable habitat to support a variety of nesting birds within trees, shrubs, grass, and on bare ground. If project construction takes place during the general nesting season (February 1 to August 31), protected nesting birds may be impacted. Active nests and nesting birds are protected by Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 of the CFGC and the MBTA. Vegetation clearing, grading, general ground-disturbance, and other construction activities could directly impact nesting and foraging habitat for protected bird species within the project site, and noise, vibration, and construction disturbance could impact bird species nesting adjacent to the project site. However, Mitigation Measure BIO-10 would require pre-construction nesting bird surveys to ensure that project construction would not result in substantial adverse effects to other non-special-status nesting migratory birds and raptors. In addition, Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 would require a qualified biologist to conduct an environmental awareness training prior to the start of construction and general construction BMPs to be implemented, as previously described. Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-3 and BIO-10, the impact to other non-special-status nesting migratory birds and raptors would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure BIO-10: Pre-Construction Nesting Bird Surveys

To avoid impacts to nesting birds, all ground disturbing activity and all vegetation clearing, including removal of trees and shrubs, should be completed between September 1 and January 31, if feasible. If construction activities take place outside of the nesting season, no mitigation measures for nesting birds are required.

- If vegetation removal and grading activities occur during the nesting season (February 1 to August 31), a qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-construction survey of the project footprint for active nests. Additionally, the surrounding 500 feet shall be surveyed for active raptor nests, where accessible. The pre-construction survey shall be conducted within 14 days before the commencement of ground-disturbing activities. If the pre-construction survey shows that there is no evidence of active nests, a letter report shall be prepared to document the survey, and no additional measures will be required. If construction does not commence within 14 days of the pre-construction survey, or halts for more than 14 days, an additional survey will be required before starting work.

    - If active nests are identified, a species-specific buffer shall be established by a qualified biologist around active nests and no construction activities within the buffer should be allowed until a qualified biologist has determined that the nest is no longer active (i.e., the nestlings have fledged and are no longer reliant on the nest, or the nest has failed). Encroachment into the buffer may occur at the discretion of a qualified biologist. Any encroachment into the buffer shall be monitored by a qualified biologist to determine whether nesting birds are being impacted. If avoidance behavior or distress is observed, the nest buffer may need to be expanded by the qualified biologist.

Impact Summary

The proposed project would have the potential to result in adverse effects on five special-status plant species and seven special-status wildlife species that have the potential to occur on-site. However, with implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-10, potential impacts to special-status species would be reduced to a level of less than significant. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in 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 CDFW or USFWS, and the impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Sensitive habitats include those that are of special concern to resource agencies or those that are protected under CEQA and/or Section 1600 of the CFGC (i.e., riparian areas). The project site does not contain riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities on the project site. Isolated wetlands are not jurisdictional aquatic resources pursuant to the CFGC, and the seasonal wetland within the project site is completely surrounded by upland habitat, isolated from other surface aquatic resources. Impacts to this isolated aquatic resource within the project site would not require a Streambed Alteration Agreement from CDFW.

In addition, sensitive habitats, including native and protected trees, are protected under specific policies outlined by Calaveras County. Implementation Measure COS-4D requires avoidance and/or mitigation to minimize potentially significant impacts on oak woodlands as a result of development in the County subject to discretionary entitlements and CEQA review. Tree removal is not anticipated under the project. However, in the event that oak woodland trees and/or canopy would be removed, Mitigation

Measure BIO-11 would require a certified arborist to conduct a survey of oak woodland canopy slated for removal and the project applicant would be required to conduct on-site tree replacement and/or off-site mitigation or compensation. Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-11, the proposed project would not result in a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities, and the impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure BIO-11: Oak Woodlands Removal and Protection Measures

If removal of oak woodland trees and/or canopy is required for project implementation, the project applicant shall enlist the services of a qualified professional (meaning a qualified biologist, botanist, arborist, or Registered Professional Forester) to conduct a survey of oak woodlands on the project site and to recommend options for avoidance and/or mitigation consistent with the provisions of PRC 21083.4. If a potentially significant impact to oak woodlands is identified, the following shall apply:

- The land area requiring mitigation shall be the cumulative land area within the development footprint of any future structures, plus any canopy cover that is removed beyond the footprint.

- The oak woodland on the project site shall be mapped and the extent of woodland canopy proposed to be removed as a result of the proposed project shall be identified.

- If avoidance is utilized for all or part of the mitigation, the oak woodland to be avoided by the project shall be protected by identifying the dripline of the oak woodland canopy to be preserved on all construction plans and by implementation of best management practices or other measures recommended by the qualified professional to prevent damage to the woodland to be preserved.

- The applicant shall replant all mature trees (including trees other than oaks) removed with a diameter at breast height greater than 4 inches at a minimum of 3:1 ratio. Replacement trees shall be of native origin and to the extent feasible, the trees shall be planted on-site.

- If on-site mitigation is not feasible, in-kind mitigation can be considered for an alternate location, or a donation to a local tree mitigation program or conservation fund, based on the recommendations of the qualified professional that the replacement habitat will provide similar habitat functions and values as the woodland habitat removed as a part of the project. Mitigation shall take place in Calaveras County.

- A Qualified Biologist shall supervise vegetation removal to ensure compliance with mitigation requirements and avoid impacting wildlife during removal.

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?

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. A total of 0.02 acre of aquatic resources has been identified on the project site consisting of one seasonal wetland. This resource was mapped as an isolated three-parameter wetland completely surrounded by annual grassland. This aquatic resource is not anticipated to be waters of the U.S. under the jurisdiction of USACE based on the lack of continuous

surface water connection to other jurisdictional aquatic features. The seasonal wetland is potentially a water of the State, pursuant to the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Implementation of the proposed project would result in permanent impacts to the 0.02 acre of potential jurisdictional aquatic resources through direct removal and fill, which may result in a substantial adverse effect.

Although not anticipated, if USACE takes jurisdiction over this resource as a water of the U.S., permits pursuant to Section 404 and Section 401 of the CWA would be required for dredge or fill activities occurring within the resource. If this feature is confirmed not to be waters of the U.S., a USACE Section 404 permit would not be required, and subsequently, a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from CVRWQCB would also not be required. However, as this resource would likely be considered a water of the State under the jurisdiction of the SWRCB, a notification of waste discharge to the SWRCB would be required prior to dredge or fill of this feature.

However, Mitigation Measure BIO-12 would require the ARD to be submitted to the USACE for confirmation that the seasonal wetland is not waters of the U.S. and would require applicable permits to be obtained and implementation of compensatory mitigation in coordination with the CVRWQCB. If the USACE determines that the seasonal wetland on-site is a waters of the U.S., then the project applicant would be required to obtain a permit from the USACE to allow for the fill of the wetland. With implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-12, the impact on protected wetlands would be less than significant.

> **Mitigation Measure BIO-12: Jurisdictional Delineation, Permitting, and Compensatory Mitigation**
>
> All required aquatic resource permits shall be obtained from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and/or Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB) (e.g., 404 Individual or Nationwide Permit, 401 Water Quality Certification) prior to approval of grading and building permits. In addition, an Approved Jurisdictional Delineation shall be obtained from the USACE to identify aquatic resources on-site within federal jurisdiction and a field verification shall be conducted by USACE to confirm jurisdictional boundaries. Compensatory mitigation shall occur at a minimum 1:1 ratio at an on- and/or off-site location through one or a combination of preservation, creation, restoration, and/or enhancement actions approved by the CVRWQCB.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact. Wildlife corridors link areas of suitable wildlife habitat that are otherwise separated by rugged terrain, changes in vegetation, or human disturbance. This fragmentation of habitat can also occur when a portion of one or more habitats is converted into another habitat; for instance, when woodland or scrub habitat is altered or converted into grasslands after a disturbance such as fire, mudslide, or construction activities. Wildlife corridors mitigate the effects of this fragmentation by (1) allowing animals to move between remaining habitats thereby permitting depleted populations to be replenished and promoting genetic exchange; (2) providing escape routes from fire, predators, and human disturbances, thus reducing the risk of catastrophic events (such as fire or disease) on population or local species extinction; and (3) serving as travel routes for individual animals as they move within their home ranges in search of food, water, mates, and other needs.

The project site is located in a transition zone where grassland and woodland habitats meet developed habitat. Although some wildlife may travel through the site on a local level to avoid crossing through the surrounding urban and commercial environments, the project site would generally not be considered an established wildlife migration corridor due to the lack of adequate cover. Further, open grassland and woodland habitat is common throughout the project area. As such, construction of the proposed commercial development would not result in a significant loss of movement opportunities for wildlife in the local vicinity. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Chapter 6, Conservation and Open Space Element, of the Calaveras County General Plan contains goals, policies, and implementation measures related to the preservation of biological resources. Specifically, Goal CO-3 aims to protect the diversity of native plants, fish, and wildlife species and their habitats in the County. Through preparation of the BRA and ARD for the proposed project and implementation of the mitigation measures identified under questions a) and c), the project would comply with General Plan Policies COS 3.2 and COS 3.3, which require new development to identify and mitigation impacts to wildlife habitat and wetlands consistent with State and federal regulations. In addition, Implementation Measure COS-4H requires development subject to environmental review under CEQA to identify and mitigate potentially significant impacts to special-status species as required by State and/or federal regulations. As discussed under questions a) and c), with implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-12, potential impacts to special-status species and protected wetlands would be reduced to a level of less than significant. Lastly, as discussed in greater detail under question b), oak woodlands are considered sensitive habitats in the County General Plan. Although tree removal is not anticipated under the project, in the event that oak woodland canopy on-site and/or overhanging the site is required, Implementation Measure COS-4D requires avoidance and/or mitigation to minimize potentially significant impacts on oak woodlands as a result of development in the County subject to discretionary entitlements and CEQA review. With implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-12, the impact on oak woodlands would be reduced to a level of less than significant.

For these reasons, the proposed project would not conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources with implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-12. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

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?

No Impact. The project is not located within an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan. Therefore, no impact would occur.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
a)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c)	Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	☐	☒	☐	☐

This section is based on a Cultural Resources Assessment (CRA) prepared by HELIX for the proposed project in December 2025 (HELIX 2025). The CRA is included in Appendix D to this IS/MND.

Environmental Setting

Area of Potential Effects

The Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the proposed project is defined as the geographic area where project activities may directly or indirectly cause changes in the character or use of historic properties of precontact or historic age, if any such properties exist. The APE for the proposed project is coterminous with the approximately 6.99-acre proposed project site.

Background Research

HELIX conducted background research of the APE and vicinity to identify cultural resources and the sensitivity for such resources. The background research included a California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) records search, a search of the sacred land files maintained by the California NAHC, and a review of aerial photographs and historic-era maps. Each source of information and the results obtained by HELIX are summarized below.

CHRIS Records Search

On October 3, 2025, staff at the Central California Information Center (CCIC) at California State University, Stanislaus, in Turlock, California, conducted a records search for the APE and a 0.25-mile radius. The records search was done to (1) identify prehistoric and historic-era resources within the search radius; (2) determine which portions of the APE have been previously studied; and (3) ascertain the potential for cultural resources and human remains to occur within the APE. The search included a review of USGS archaeological site location maps at the CCIC, resource records, and data from previous studies. The California Points of Historical Interest, California Historical Landmarks, National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), and California State Historic Resources Inventory were also reviewed. Historical maps and historical aerial photographs of the area were also examined.

Previous Studies

The CCIC records search identified 20 studies that have previously been conducted within a 0.25-mile radius of the APE. Four of these studies, CA-00123, CA-02212, CA-03561, and CA-07754, at least partially overlapped with the current APE, as summarized in Table 11, *Previous Studies Conducted Within One-Quarter Mile of the APE*, below.

Table 11: Previous Studies Conducted within One-Quarter Mile of the APE

Report (CA-)	Year	Author(s)	Title	Affiliation	Includes APE?
00123	1981	Decater, E.H.L.	Archaeological Survey Report for Pacific Telephone Company, Underground Cable Project (UE 1383 T), Highway 26 Valley Springs (P.M. 10.23) to Jenny Lind Boundary (P.M. 4.46), Calaveras County, California	Foundation of California State University, Sacramento	Yes
02212	1981	Crow, Leslie	Final Report of Phase l (Planning Phase) Central Sierra Historic Resource Inventory March 1981 [and] Final Report: Historic Resource Inventory, Phase II Central Sierra Planning Council (1981-1982)	Central Sierra Planning Council	Yes
03561	1999	Overly, S.A.	An Archaeological Survey Report for Proposed AC Overlay and Shoulder Backing of State Route 26, Calaveras County, California	Archaeological Research Center: CSU-Sacramento; for Caltrans District 10	Yes
07754	2013	Davis-King, S.	Historic Properties Survey Report for the Proposed AutoZone Store 6205 and Additional Land on Assessor's Parcel Numbers 046-016-071, 072, and 077 in Valley Springs, Calaveras County, California	Davis-King Associates	Yes
00142	1981	Derr, E.H.	Archaeological Survey Report for Pacific Telephone Company Underground Cable Project, Highway 12, Clements (Junction Highway 88) to San Andreas, Calaveras, and San Joaquin Counties, California. (Highway 12 P.M. 23.20/27.69; 0.00/18.16; Highway 49 P.M. 20.42/19.87) (# UE 1380T)	Foundation of California State University, Sacramento; for Pacific Telephone Co.	No
00338	1991	Peak & Associates, Inc.	Cultural Resource Assessment of Portions of the New Hogan/La Contenta Sewer and Water Assessment District, Calaveras County, California	Peak & Associates, Inc.	No

Report (CA-)	Year	Author(s)	Title	Affiliation	Includes APE?
01970	1993	Napton, L.K.	Cultural Resources Investigations of the Proposed Pacific Bell Fiber Optic Cable Installation Project, Amador, Calaveras and San Joaquin Counties, California	CSU Stanislaus, Institute for Archaeological Research; for Community Concepts, Inc., Mariposa, Ca	No
02953	1997	Napton, L.K.	Archaeological and Historical Cultural Resources Investigations of the Proposed Alpine Natural Gas Operating Company, Calaveras County Natural Gas Distribution Project, A.96-08-15 (Phase I: La Contenta/Rancho Calaveras), vicinity of Valley Springs, Calaveras County, California	CSU Stanislaus, Institute for Archaeological Research; for Community Concepts, Inc., Mariposa, Ca	No
03112	1997	Davis-King, S.	Archaeological Survey/T & S Gallagher, Valley Springs Sport and Fitness Center	Davis-King & Associates	No
03379	1994	Southern Pacific Transportation Co.	Historic Report (49 C.F.R. 1105.8) Southern Pacific Transportation Company Proposed Abandonment in San Joaquin and Calaveras Counties, California ICC Docket No. AB-12 (Sub-No. 155X)	Southern Pacific Transportation Co. (for Southern Pacific Lines and Interstate Commerce Commission)	No
04071	2000	Psota, S.	Historic Resource Evaluation Report for Cultural Resources on California State Highway 12 Between Southworth Road East of Wallace to the Intersection of Highway 26 in Valley Springs, Calaveras County, California, 10-CAL-12, KP 4.0/16.1	Anthropological Studies Center-Sonoma State University	No
04072	2000	Psota, S.	Archaeological Survey Report for Proposed Road Rehabilitation on California State Highway 12 between Southworth Road East of Wallace to the Intersection of Highway 26 in Valley Springs, Calaveras County, California, 10-CAL-12, KP 4.0/16.1	Anthropological Studies Center-Sonoma State University	No
04073	2000	Pavlik, B.	Historic Architectural Survey Report - MOU Short Form, California Department of Transportation, 10-CAL-12 PM 2.5/10.1 (KP 4.0/16.1) EA 10-379301	Bob Pavlik	No
04602	1999	Stewart, S.	Archaeological Survey Report for Proposed Road Rehabilitation on California State Highway 12, Calaveras County, California	Anthropological Studies Center, Sonoma State University; for Caltrans District 10	No

Report (CA-)	Year	Author(s)	Title	Affiliation	Includes APE?
04894	1996	Buckbee, E.	A Thumbnail Sketch of Valley Springs. Las Calaveras, Quarterly Bulletin of the Calaveras County Historical Society, Vol. XLIV, No. 2, January 1996, pages 16-20	N/A	No
05342	1975	Wagers, J.C.	The San Joaquin and Sierra Nevada Railroad. Las Calaveras, Quarterly Bulletin of the Calaveras County Historical Society, Vol. XI, No. 3, pages 81-90	Calaveras County Historical Society	No
06296	2006	Jensen, S.	Archaeological Inventory Survey, Calaveras County Water District's Proposed Wastewater Treatment Facility Improvements, 50-ac. Effluent Sprayfield and Force Main Construction, Valley Springs, Calaveras County, California	Genesis Society	No
07239	2010	Binning, J.D.	CA-CAL-1991 (Primary Number 05-003009) Data Recovery Plan Burson Rehab Project Calaveras County State Route 12 Post Miles 3.0/10.2 (KP 4.8/16.4) EA:10-37930	California Department of Transportation	No
07315	2010	Binning, J.D.	Burson Rehab Highway Project (10-CAL-12) (3.0/9.9 post miles)	N/A	No
07552	2012	Hosseinion, N.	Historic Property Survey Report, 10-CAL-STIP/RIM/GMAQ CML-5930 (036) PM 9.827-10.127 SR 12 / PM 10.132-10.,502 SR 26, Valley Springs, Calaveras County	Dokken Engineering	No

Previously Recorded Resources

The CCIC records search identified six previously documented cultural resources within 0.25-mile of the APE, none of which were located within the APE.

Historical Imagery Analysis

HELIX staff also examined historic-era maps and historic-era aerial photographs depicting the APE and immediate vicinity to better understand previous land uses and development within the APE and its surroundings. Maps examined included General Land Office maps depicting Township No. 4 North, Range No. 10 East Mount Diablo Meridian from 1870, USGS California Valley Springs 15-minute topographic quadrangle map from 1944, and USGS Valley Springs, California 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map from 1962. The findings from this historic-era map analysis are provided in Table 12, *Summary of Findings from Historic-Era Maps Depicting the APE*, below.

Table 12: Summary of Findings from Historic-Era Maps Depicting the APE

Map Edition	Features Depicted
GLO map depicting Township No. 4 North, Range No. 10 East Mount Diablo Meridian, Calif. (1870)	• "Stag Valley" depicted southwest of APE • Road depicted traversing west-northeast, south and east of APE • Road depicted traversing south-northeast, south of APE • Cosgrove River depicted traversing southwest-northeast, south and east of APE
USGS 15-minute *California Valley Springs* Quadrangle (1944)	• SRs 12 and 26 depicted west, north, and east of APE • Power line depicted traversing southwest-northeast, approximately 400 feet southeast of APE • Southern Pacific Railroad depicted approximately 780 feet west of APE • Present-day Hogan Dam Road depicted traversing easterly from SR 26, approximately 250 feet east of APE
USGS 7.5-minute *Valley Springs, California* Quadrangle (1962)	• Unknown structure depicted approximately 170 feet northeast of APE • Cosgrove Creek tributary depicted traversing northwest-southeast approximately 0.25-mile south of APE

Historic aerial photographs examined for this analysis included photographs taken in 1940, 1944, 1959, 1984, 1998, 2002, 2005, 1998, 2002, and 2005 (NETROnline 2025). The findings from this aerial imagery analysis are provided in Table 13, *Summary of Findings from Aerial Photographs Depicting the Current APE*, below.

Table 13: Summary of Findings from Aerial Photographs Depicting the Current APE

Aerial Photograph Edition	Features Depicted
Aerial Photograph from 1940	• California SR 12 and SR 26 are visible west/north and east/southeast of the APE, respectively • Present-day Hogan Dam Road visible southeast of APE • APE appears cleared and undeveloped • Development visible approximately 0.17 mile northeast of APE • Sparse tree scatter surrounds the APE ○ Thickest stand of trees exists immediately to the northeast
Aerial Photograph from 1944	• Land and surrounding area appear to undergo periodic flooding ○ "Ripples" visible in the ground formation • No other changes observed in the APE or vicinity since 1940.

Aerial Photograph from 1959	• Unnamed road visible traversing east-west through the APE, approximately 60 feet south of the northeastern boundary
	  ○ Traverses precisely between present-day SR 26 and the Southern Pacific Railroad
	• Rectangular structures visible approximately 0.28 mile northeast of APE, immediately west of Cosgrove Creek
	  ○ Land south of structures shows signs of clearing, all west of Cosgrove Creek
	• Structure visible immediately north of APE, along SR 26
	  ○ Present-day residence
	• No other changes observed in the APE or vicinity since 1944.

Aerial Photograph Edition	Features Depicted
Aerial Photograph from 1984	• Large reservoir (approximately 5.9 acres) visible in previously cleared land west of Cosgrove Creek • Present-day Mangili Road is visible approximately 250 feet south of APE • No other changes observed in the APE or vicinity since 1959.
Aerial Photograph from 1998	• Structures northeast and east of APE visible o Includes present-day Nove Way, Jean Street, and Main Street o Includes Valley Oaks Center • Unnamed road traversing east-west (initially observed in the aerial photograph from 1959) through APE no longer visible • Land immediately south of Mangili Road has been cleared and a structure is visible on that cleared land (structure is approximately 0.1 mile south of APE) • Land north of APE and south of SR 12 developed with structures visible on it • No other changes observed in the APE or vicinity since 1984.
Aerial Photograph from 2002	• Land south of Nove Way cleared and developed o 10 self-storage unit structures • Two objects visible in APE, approximately 200 and 230 feet south of northeastern boundary • No other changes observed in the APE or vicinity since 1998.
Aerial Photograph from 2005	• No changes observed in the APE or vicinity since 2002.

Native American Heritage Commission Sacred Lands File Search

On September 30, 2025, HELIX requested that the NAHC conduct a search of their Sacred Lands File (SLF) for the presence of Native American sacred sites or human remains in the vicinity of the APE. A written response received from the NAHC on October 1, 2025, stated that the results of the SLF search were negative. Twenty-two Native American contacts were recommended by the NAHC as potential sources of information related to cultural resources in the vicinity of the APE. The County will initiate consultation outreach to tribal organizations in accordance with the requirements of AB 52, as further discussed in Section 6.XVIII, Tribal Cultural Resources, of this IS/MND.

The initial correspondence between HELIX and the NAHC and associated documents are included in Appendix C of Appendix D.

Pedestrian Survey

Methods

HELIX surveyed the APE on October 16, 2025. The pedestrian survey involved the systematic investigation of the APE's ground surface by walking in parallel five-meter transects. During the pedestrian survey, the ground surface was examined for artifacts (e.g., flaked stone tools, tool-making debris, stone milling tools, fire-affected rock, prehistoric ceramics), soil discoloration that might indicate the presence of a prehistoric cultural midden, soil depressions, and features indicative of the former presence of structures or buildings (e.g., standing exterior walls, postholes, foundations, wells) or historic-era debris (e.g., metal, glass, ceramics). Ground disturbances such as landscape modifications and cut banks were also visually inspected. Representative survey photographs are found in Appendix D of Appendix D.

Results

At the time of the survey, vegetation within the survey area consisted of overgrown, dry grasses. Animal burrows were observed throughout the survey area, as well as visible snake trails in the grasses, suggesting the presence of snakes and rodents or other small animals. The topography of the APE consists of rolling hills with a gradual, southerly downward slope. Ground surface visibility ranged from poor to good in various portions of the survey area (approximately 10 to 90 percent); as much of the northern quarter had been cleared of vegetation, and some of the grasses had been flattened permanently by vehicular activity, however, much of the APE was covered in knee-high grasses (see Appendix D, Photographs 1 and 2, of Appendix D). Observed exposed soils consisted of a light brown sandy loam (Appendix D, Photograph 3, of Appendix D).

The APE is surrounded by a mixture of commercial, residential, and undeveloped land. Approximately 14.75 acres of land west of the APE remains undeveloped and possibly used for ranching and grazing, though pastoral activity was not observed during the survey. The APE is an open expanse with signs of grazing use. The field is comprised of uneven terrain covered in approximately 18 inch-tall, dried grass and one oak tree along the eastern boundary, approximately 480 feet south of the northeast corner of the APE. There are large commercially developed areas north, northeast, and east of the APE, and a smaller commercial area approximately 440 feet south of the APE. These commercial developments include the operations of a general goods store, an auto parts shop, a gas station, and a semitruck yard. There is a private residence immediately north of the APE with associated trailers parked on the property and no fence line to denote its southern boundary. Sparse modern trash was observed during the survey, including insulated paper cups and pieces of plastic, mostly in the eastern half of the APE. Black, rubber irrigation tubing was also observed throughout the APE.

Heavy vehicular disturbances were also noted throughout the APE, including a turnaround in the northeastern quadrant of the APE, at the eastern end of an unnamed dirt road, and multiple instances of other vehicle tracks in the grass (Appendix D, Photographs 4 and 5, of Appendix D). The vehicle(s) that formed these tracks were not observed during the survey. The dirt track traversing westward from the turnaround is approximately eight feet wide and traverses east-west through the northern quarter of the APE for approximately 226 feet. The APE's current condition suggests modern use of this dirt road, as there is no vegetation growing within the dirt road, and its tracks are well-defined within the bounds of the APE.

Milled lumber and barbed wire fence line were also noted along the entire eastern boundary of the APE, bordering SR 26. An opening to the field from SR 26, approximately 100 feet south of the northeastern corner of the APE, was also noted. The opening appears to have once utilized two, now rusted, metal gates, one of which is no longer attached to a fence post (Appendix D, Photograph 6, of Appendix D). These metal gates are situated north and south of the opening to the field from SR 26. The northern one is approximately 9 feet long and 4 feet tall, comprised of generic hardware including washers, eye screws, nuts, bolts, and twisted wire. Most of the southern gate is obscured by tall grass, and its dimensions are unknown, though they are likely similar to or the same as the northern gate. A fence line composed of milled lumber posts and barbed wire was observed, which traverses east-west through the northeastern quarter of the APE, approximately 10 feet north of the two-track mentioned previously (Appendix D, Photograph 6, of Appendix D). It does not appear to be associated with any current property line.

The pedestrian field survey identified a rectangular metal sign embossed with orange lettering that read "State of California/ Division of Highways/ SURVEY MONUMENT MARKER/ To disturb this monument is/ punishable by law" is posted just south of the fence line, within the APE (Appendix D of Appendix D, Photograph 7). It is located approximately 185 feet south of the residence located at 176 Highway 26, Valley Springs, CA, 95252, and approximately 100 feet west of SR 26. The sign is approximately 12 inches wide and 18 inches tall, standing approximately three feet off the ground. The rectangular portion of the sign is affixed to a channel post with four tamper-proof screws.

CRHR Eligibility

As the resource is likely older than 50 years, HELIX evaluated the Survey Monument Marker signpost identified in the APE for its eligibility for inclusion in the CRHR. The sign reads, "California Division of Highways," a department that was replaced by the California Department of Transportation in 1973, suggesting that this signpost predates 1973 (Caltrans 2025a). A summary of the evaluation is included in the response to questions a) and b) under Impact Analysis, below.

Impact Analysis

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

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. An evaluation of the signpost for under the CRHR significance criteria was conducted based on all available information and with respect to the history of survey monument marker signpost usage. Information gathered for this evaluation includes research into historic survey monument marker signpost form and function, specifically by studying the California Land Surveyors Association informational publications, in an attempt to better understand the object within the APE (California Land Surveyors Association 2016; Caltrans 2025b). This evaluation also involved requests for information pertaining to the signpost, which were sent directly to the Caltrans District 10 office. Caltrans did not respond to repeated inquiries, the last of which was made via telephone on October 29, 2025.

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

Research and field observations indicate that the signpost was installed before 1973, and no available information can confirm or refute the purpose of the signpost or the form of the marker it may have once represented. Research does not indicate that the signpost is of importance to the history or heritage of Calaveras County or the unincorporated community of Valley Springs. It is a mass-produced standardized piece of signage used by Caltrans, formerly the Division of Highways. No associated survey monument marker was observed within the vicinity of the signpost, rendering the signpost solely representative of a survey monument marker that is no longer present. With no conclusive evidence of its representation or purpose, this signpost is not found to be of particular importance to heritage in the area or the surrounding community.

The signpost is standing on the northern boundary of a rural two-track road, in the middle of a down fence line. This road is visible in historic-era aerial photographs as early as 1959, traversing west-east between the Southern Pacific Railroad and SR 26. However, the western half of this road became

indiscernible by 1984; the western half was rerouted by the installation of a hardware store lot by 1998, and the eastern half became intermittently ephemeral after 1998. Based on the lack of a specific, important association with the broad pattern of transportation history and cultural heritage in Calaveras County, the signpost does not meet standards of CRHR eligibility under Criterion 1.

CRHR Criterion 2: Is associated with the lives of persons important in local, California, or national history.

Research and field observations indicate that the object observed has no correlation with persons of the past who are important or significant to the cultural heritage of Calaveras County or the unincorporated community of Valley Springs. Based on available information, there is no definitive link between this object and persons of importance in local history. Further, there are no names or dates engraved, embossed, written, or carved into the object, eliminating the possibility of linking this object to a specific individual. Based on the lack of association with individuals important in history, the object does not meet the standards of CRHR eligibility under Criterion 2.

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

Research and field observations indicate that the object observed does not possess distinctive engineering or architectural features, nor does it represent the work of a master or possess high artistic values. The signpost possesses no indications of distinctive finishes or construction methods that would distinguish the materials or engineering style from a typical, ubiquitous, survey monument marker signpost used pre-1973. It is characterized by a galvanized metal sign with components produced using industrial techniques for mass production. Based on the lack of distinctive design or construction characteristics, the object does not meet the standards of CRHR eligibility under Criterion 3.

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

Research and field observations indicate that the object present in the APE does not possess information important to the precontact or historic era. As it is a mass-produced object, the research potential of the signpost is exhausted through the collection of its geographical location, and the identification of its production date (prior to 1973) and its installation by the California Division of Highways prior to 1973. Based on the lack of the potential to provide important information in prehistory or history, the object does not meet the standards of CRHR eligibility under Criterion 4.

Impact Summary

The CRA determined that, as the object does not meet the threshold of significance under any of the CRHR criteria, the signpost does not qualify as a historical resource or unique archaeological resource as defined in PRC Sections 21084.1 or 21083.2. The CCIC records search identified six previously documented cultural resources within 0.25-mile of the project site; however, none were located within the project site. No historical or archaeological resources were identified on the project site during the pedestrian surveys. However, in the event that previously unknown archaeological cultural resources are discovered during project construction, Mitigation Measure CUL-1, which requires construction activities to be halted if cultural resources are exposed, would be implemented. With implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1, the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the

significance of a historical or archeological resource, and the impact would be less than significant for questions a) and b).

Mitigation Measure CUL-1: Accidental Discovery of Cultural Resources

In the event that cultural resources are exposed during ground-disturbing activities, construction activities shall be halted within 100 feet of the discovery. Cultural resources could consist of but are not limited to stone, bone, wood, or shell artifacts, or features, including hearths, structural remains, or historic dumpsites. If the resources cannot be avoided during the remainder of construction, the retained archaeologist, who meets the Secretary of the Interior's *Professional Qualifications Standards*, shall assess the resource and provide appropriate management recommendations. If the discovery proves to be CRHR- or NRHP-eligible, additional documentation and analysis, such as data recovery excavation, may be warranted.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. No evidence of human remains was identified during pedestrian surveys of the project site. However, ground-disturbing activities during construction may have the potential to uncover previously unknown human remains. With implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-2, which requires adherence to PRC Section 5097.98 in the event of an accidental discovery of previously unknown human remains, the impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure CUL-2: Accidental Discovery of Human Remains

In the event of an accidental discovery or recognition of any human remains, PRC Section 5097.98 must be followed. Once project-related earthmoving begins and if there is a discovery or recognition of human remains, the following steps shall be taken:

1. There shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the specific location, or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent human remains until the Calaveras County Coroner is contacted to determine if the remains are Native American and if an investigation of the cause of death is required. If the coroner determines the remains are Native American, the coroner shall contact the NAHC within 24 hours, and the NAHC shall identify the person or persons it believes to be the "most likely descendant" of the deceased Native American. The most likely descendant may make recommendations to the landowner or the person responsible for the excavation work, for means of treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains, and any associated grave goods as provided in PRC Section 5097.98, or

2. Where the following conditions occur, the landowner or their authorized representative shall rebury the Native American human remains and associated grave goods with appropriate dignity either in accordance with the recommendations of the most likely descendent or on the project site in a location not subject to further subsurface disturbance:

    - The NAHC is unable to identify a most likely descendent or the most likely descendent failed to make a recommendation within 48 hours after being notified by the commission;

- The descendent identified fails to make a recommendation; or
- The landowner or their authorized representative rejects the recommendation of the descendent, and the mediation by the NAHC fails to provide measures acceptable to the landowner.

VI. ENERGY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Environmental Setting

California's electricity needs are satisfied by a variety of entities, including investor-owned utilities, publicly owned utilities, electric service providers and community choice aggregators. In 2024, the California power mix totaled 278,338 gigawatt hours (GWh), down 1 percent from 2023. Clean energy resources accounted for 62 percent of California's power mix, a 4 percent increase from 58 percent in 2023. In-State generation was 216,181 GWh in 2024, virtually unchanged from the 2023 value of 216,047 GWh. Imported energy decreased to 62,157 GWh, down 5 percent (3,361 GWh) from 2023 (CEC 2026a). Table 14, *California Electricity Sources*, provides a summary of California's electricity sources as of 2024.

Table 14: California Electricity Sources

Fuel Type	Percent of California Power
Coal	2.21
Large Hydro	11.06
Natural Gas	34.01
Nuclear	9.92
Oil	0.01
Other (Petroleum Coke/Waste Heat)	0.08
Total Non-GHG and Renewable Resources	62.23
Unspecified	1.46

Source: CEC 2026a

Natural gas provides the largest portion of the total in-State electricity generation in California, with nearly 45 percent of the natural gas burned in California used for electricity generation in a typical year. Much of the remainder is consumed in the residential, industrial, and commercial sectors for uses such as cooking, space heating, and as an alternative transportation fuel. In 2012, total natural gas demand in California for industrial, residential, commercial, and electric power generation was 2,313 billion cubic feet per year (bcf/year), up from 2,196 bcf/year in 2010 (CEC 2026b).

Transportation accounts for a major portion of California's energy budget. Automobiles and trucks consume gasoline and diesel fuel, which are nonrenewable energy products derived from crude oil. Gasoline is the most used transportation fuel in California, with 97 percent of all gasoline being consumed by light-duty cars, pickup trucks, and sport utility vehicles (SUVs). In 2024, 13.4 billion gallons of gasoline were sold in California (CEC 2026c). Diesel fuel is the second most consumed fuel in California, used by heavy-duty trucks, delivery vehicles, buses, trains, ships, boats, and farm and construction equipment. In 2024, 3.5 billion gallons of diesel were sold in California (CEC 2026d).

Impact Analysis

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Development within the project site would use electricity for lighting, heating, and cooling. Electricity generation typically entails the combustion of fossil fuels, including natural gas and coal, which is then transmitted to end users. The project would be required to comply with all applicable City and State energy efficiency measures, including the State Building Energy Efficiency Standards – Title 24, Part 6, and California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) – Title 24 Part 11. Depending on building size, Title 24 Part 6 includes the requirement to install photovoltaic systems (i.e., solar panels) on project building roofs and install battery energy storage systems.

As discussed in Section 6.VIII, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, the significance of project GHG emissions is determined by whether the project would comply with three performance standards, consistent with the CARB 2022 Scoping Plan Appendix D, regardless of the project's emission levels:

1. All project buildings shall be all electric, with no natural gas use or natural gas infrastructure.

2. For all project parking lots, install EV parking spaces and charging equipment meeting the applicable CALGreen Tier 2 standards in effect at the time project permits are issued.

3. The project shall result in no net increase in regional VMT.

For performance standard 1 regarding all electric buildings, the project buildings would be required to all be electric and would not include the use of natural gas or natural gas infrastructure. As discussed in Section 6.VIII, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would enforce this requirement for the project to include all electric buildings. For performance measure 2 regarding CALGreen Tier 2, the project would be required to install EV parking spaces and charging equipment that meets the applicable CALGreen Tier 2 standards. As discussed in Section 6.VIII, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Mitigation Measure GHG-2 would enforce this requirement for the project to meet applicable CALGreen Tier 2 standards for EV parking spaces and charging equipment. For performance standard 3 regarding VMT, per the TIS prepared for the proposed project, the project would be local serving retail and implementation of project would not result an increase in regional VMT (W-Trans 2026).

Implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would reduce project operational energy source GHG emissions related to natural gas combustion. Implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-2 would not have a direct quantifiable effect on project GHG emissions; however, it would have an indirect effect on regional GHG emission reductions and transportation fuel use reductions by providing additional EV charging facilities and encouraging EV adoption. Because project GHG emissions and project energy use

are closely related, with Mitigation Measures GHG-1 and GHG-2, implementation of the project would not result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. The impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed under question a), the proposed project would be required to comply with all applicable County and State energy efficiency measures, including the State Building Energy Efficiency Standards – Title 24, Part 6, and CALGreen – Title 24 Part 11. In addition, by eliminating natural gas from project building designs and installing solar panels and battery energy storage systems per Title 24 Part 6, the project would support the mandates of SB 100 which requires the State to achieve 60 percent of electricity generate from renewable sources by 2030 and 100 percent of electricity generated by zero carbon renewable sources by 2045. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency, and the impact would be less than significant.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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.	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv. Landslides?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☒	☐	☐
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Environmental Setting

Regional Geology

Calaveras County is located within the Sierra Nevada foothills. The terrain ranges from low rolling foothills in the western portion of the County to rugged high mountains, with elevations over 8,000 feet, in the east. The County lies within the geologic region of California referred to as the Sierra Nevada geomorphic province. The Sierra Nevada geomorphic province is a tilted fault block approximately 400 miles long that extends from the eastern slope to the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. The Sierra Nevada geomorphic province overlies metamorphic bedrock that contains gold-bearing veins in the

northwest trending Mother Lode. The Mother Lode region in the Sierra Nevada extends through Calaveras County and ends in Mariposa County (County 2018).

Seismicity and Fault Zones

The 1972 Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act required the State Geologist to establish regulatory "Earthquake Fault Zones" around the surface traces of active faults, in order to mitigate the hazard of surface fault rupture to structures for human occupancy. For the purposes of the Act, an active fault is one that has ruptured in the last 11,000 years. The Act only addresses the hazard of surface fault rupture and is not directed toward other earthquake hazards. Calaveras County is not located within or adjacent to an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone (County 2018; DOC 2025b).

The Foothills Fault System traverses the western portion of the County. The nearest potentially active faults (Quaternary and Late Quaternary) are the Bear Mountains Fault Zone and the Melones Fault Zone, which generally frame the Foothills Fault System. The Waters Peak fault of the Bear Mountains Fault Zone passes through Valley Springs. However, based on the Probabilistic Seismic Hazard Assessment completed by the California Geological Survey (CGS), peak ground acceleration (pga) in Calaveras County has the potential to reach or exceed less than 0.1 to 0.2 g, which equates to one chance in 475 of being exceeded each year. As such, Calaveras County could result in a shaking intensity value of I, II, or III, which indicates weak shaking that few people recognize as earthquakes when felt (County 2018).

Other Geologic Hazards

Liquefaction

Liquefaction is the sudden temporary loss of shear strength in saturated, loose to medium-dense, granular sediments subjected to ground shaking. Liquefaction generally occurs when seismically-induced ground shaking causes soil pore water pressure to increase to a point equal to the overburden pressure. Liquefaction causes foundation failure of buildings and other structures due to the reduction of foundation bearing strength. The potential for liquefaction depends on the duration and intensity of earthquake shaking, particle size distribution of the soil, density of the soil, and elevation of the groundwater (County 2018).

Landslide

A landside is the breaking away and gravity-driven downward movement of hill slope materials, which can travel at speeds ranging from fractions of an inch per year to tens of miles per hour depending on the slope steepness and water content of the rock/soil mass. Landslides in Calaveras County tend to occur with the greatest frequency on steep slopes. Generally, areas of steeper slopes and increased landslide risk are located in the more mountainous eastern portion of the County (County 2021).

Soils

The NRCS mapped two soil units within the project site: Amador sandy loam, 2-15 percent slopes and Urban land-Amador Complex, 2-15 percent slopes. The general characteristics and properties associated with these soils are described below (USDA 2025):

- **Amador sandy loam, drained, 2-15 percent slopes:** This soil type typically occurs on low hills at elevations between 200 and 480 feet amsl. It is a residual soil formed by the weathering of bedrock in place. A typical soil profile is sandy loam (0-15 inches) and bedrock (15-25 inches). The layer of sandy loam has a moderately high to high capacity to transmit water, but the bedrock permeability capacity can range from low to moderately low. These soils are typically non-saline to very slightly saline and are considered well drained. These soils are used for pasture and livestock grazing, and support vegetation that is primarily annual grasses and forbs. This soil type is considered non-hydric with no minor hydric components and makes up the majority of the project site (89.7 percent). This soil has a Linear Extensibility Percentage (LEP) of 1.4 percent, which indicates a low shrink-swell potential.

- **Urban land-Amador Complex, 2-15 percent slopes:** This soil type typically occurs on low hills at elevations between 590 and 1,050 feet amsl. It is a type of residual soil formed by the weathering of bedrock in place. A typical soil profile is sandy loam (0-15 inches) and bedrock (15-25 inches). The layer of sandy loam has a moderately high to high capacity to transmit water, but the bedrock permeability capacity can range from very low to moderately low. These soils are typically non-saline to very slightly saline and are considered well drained. Amador soil is typically non-saline to very slightly saline and are considered well drained. This soil type is considered non-hydric, but has one minor hydric component. Soils classified under the category of “Urban land” generally describes anthropogenically disturbed soil material that typically has a non-agricultural surface layer, is derived from man-made materials, sealed by impervious surfaces, or altered by physical disturbances and management (Pouyat et al. 2020). The small portion of the project site (10.3 percent) containing the paved road and road shoulder is classified under this soil complex.

Linear extensibility is used to determine the shrink-swell potential of soils. The shrink-swell potential is low if the soil has a linear extensibility of less than 3 percent; moderate if 3 to 6 percent; high if 6 to 9 percent; and very high if more than 9 percent. If the linear extensibility is more than 3, shrinking and swelling can cause damage to buildings, roads, and other structures and to plant roots (USDA 2008).

Impact Analysis

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

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

   ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less Than Significant Impact. The County is not within, and does not cross, an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. The nearest Alquist Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones are the Green Valley Fault Zone and the Concord Fault Zone, located approximately 70 miles west of the Valley Springs (DOC 2025b). The Waters Peak fault of the Bear Mountains Fault Zone, which is a potentially active fault (Quaternary and Late Quaternary, passes through Valley Springs. However, the Draft EIR prepared for the General Plan Update determined that fault rupture and seismic ground shaking would not pose a risk to new development in the County (County 2018).

In addition, the proposed project would be required to be constructed in accordance with the California Building Code (CBC) standards, which governs the design and construction of all building occupancies and associated facilities and equipment throughout California. In addition, the CBC governs development in potentially seismically active areas and contains provisions to safeguard against major structural failures or loss of life caused by earthquakes or other geologic hazards. Therefore, as there are no Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones in the County, and as the risk of surface fault rupture within the County is considered low, the proposed project would not cause potential adverse effects involving rupture of a known earthquake fault or strong seismic ground shaking. The impact would be less than significant for questions a.i) and a.ii).

iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Less Than Significant Impact. Areas at risk due to the effects of liquefaction are typically those with a high groundwater table and underlying loose to medium-dense, granular sediments, particularly younger alluvium and artificial fill. The project site is not located within a liquefaction zone mapped on the CGS's Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation (DOC 2025b). The Draft EIR prepared for the General Plan Update determined that, as Calaveras County is not located in a seismic hazard zone, the County is not considered to be at risk from liquefaction hazards (County 2018). Therefore, the proposed project would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects involving seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction. The impact would be less than significant.

iv. Landslides?

Less Than Significant Impact. Landslide susceptibly can be characterized by looking at both slope class and rock strength. Landslide susceptibility classes express the generalization that on very low slopes, landslide susceptibility is low even in weak rock, and that landslide susceptibility increases with slope and in weaker rocks. The project site is relatively flat with elevations ranging between 633 and 682 feet amsl and lacks steep slopes. The project site is not located within a landslide zone mapped on the CGS's Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation, nor included on the U.S. Landslide Inventory and Susceptibility map (DOC 2025b; USGS 2025). Therefore, the proposed project would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects involving landslides, and the impact would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. Construction activities associated with the proposed project would involve excavation and other soil disturbing activities that could have the potential to temporarily increase erosion and sedimentation rates above existing conditions. However, the proposed project would be required to adhere to the provisions of the Grading and Drainage Ordinance in Chapter 15.05 of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances, which regulates grading, drainage, and other earthwork activities and requires implementation of erosion and sedimentation control measures to protect water quality and reduce discharge of pollutants. In addition, as the proposed project would disturb more than one acre of land, project construction activities would be regulated by the CVRWQCB and are subject to the requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Permit Order 2009-0009-DWQ adopted on September 2, 2009, (as amended by 2010-0014-DWQ and 2012-006-DWQ), including preparation and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) during construction. The SWPPP must include details of how the sediment and erosion control best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented to reduce soil erosion during construction

activities. Therefore, with preparation of a SWPPP and adherence to existing regulations, the proposed project would not result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil, and the impact would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Unstable geologic units are those that lack the integrity to support human-made improvements such as buildings and roadways. Major problems associated with such units include settlement, lurch cracking, differential settlement, and expansion (County 2018). As discussed above in the responses to questions a.i) through a.iv), the project site is not at risk of surface fault rupture, strong seismic ground shaking, or seismic-related ground failure including liquefaction or landslide, as there are no Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones in the County. Further, the project site is not located within a liquefaction or landslide zone as mapped on the CGS's Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation, and it not included on the U.S. Landslide Inventory and Susceptibility map (DOC 2025b; USGS 2025). However, as required by Policy S 4.4 of the General Plan Safety Element, the proposed project would be required to conduct a site-specific geological study to evaluate the extent of potential geological hazards on the project site, and to identify measures to reduce potential hazards in accordance with the CBC. Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would be incorporated into the proposed project to ensure compliance with Policy S 4.4 of the General Plan Safety Element. Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1, the potential impact related to unstable geological units or soil would be less than significant.

> **Mitigation Measure GEO-1: Conduct a Site-Specific Geological Study and Implement the Recommendations**
>
> In accordance with Policy S 4.4 of the Calaveras County General Plan Safety Element, a site-specific geological study shall be prepared by the project applicant and approved by the County prior to the issuance of grading permits. The geological study shall, at minimum, verify the presence or absence and extent of geological hazards, including expansive soils on the project site, and shall identify measures to reduce those hazards to an acceptable level in accordance with California Building Code (CBC).

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?

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The project site consists of Amador sandy loam, 2-15 percent slopes, and Urban land-Amador Complex, 2-15 percent slopes, both of which are considered well drained. Amador sandy loam, 2-15 percent slopes, has an LEP of 1.4 percent, which indicates a low shrink-swell potential. Urban land-Amador Complex, 2-15 percent slopes, does not have a mapped LEP (USDA 2025). If the linear extensibility is more than 3, shrinking and swelling can cause damage to buildings, roads, and other structures and to plant roots (USDA 2008). Therefore, based on a desktop review of soils on-site, the project site does not contain soil with a high shrink-swell potential. However, as discussed above in the response to question c), the proposed project would be required to conduct a site-specific geological study to evaluate the extent of potential geological hazards and to identify measures to reduce potential hazards in accordance with the CBC, as required by Policy S 4.4 of the General Plan Safety Element. Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would be incorporated into the proposed

project to ensure compliance with Policy S 4.4 of the General Plan Safety Element and to minimize potential impacts related to expansive soils on-site. In addition, Section 1808.6 of the CBC requires design features for foundations of buildings and structures in areas subject to expansive soils. Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1, the potential impact related to expansive soils would be less than significant.

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

No Impact. Wastewater generated by the proposed project would be treated by CCWD. The project would not require the use of septic tanks or an alternative wastewater disposal system. Therefore, no impact would occur.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. No known paleontological resource studies have been conducted on the project site, nor is the project site known to contain paleontological resources. However, there is potential for currently unknown paleontological and unique geologic features to occur on the project site. Project construction activities such as grading and excavation would directly destroy a unique paleontological resource or geologic feature. As the site has an undetermined sensitivity for the presence of paleontological resources or unique geologic features, Mitigation Measure GEO-2 would be implemented in the event that a previously unknown paleontological resource is discovered during construction. With implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-2, the impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure GEO-2: Avoid and Minimize Impacts to Paleontological Resources

In the event paleontological or other geologically sensitive resources (such as fossils or fossil formations) are identified during any phase of project construction, all excavations within 100 feet of the find shall be temporarily halted until the find is examined by a qualified paleontologist, in accordance with Society of Vertebrate Paleontology standards. The paleontologist shall notify the appropriate representative at the County who shall coordinate with the paleontologist as to any necessary investigation of the find. If the find is determined to be significant under CEQA, the County shall implement those measures which may include avoidance, preservation in place, or other appropriate measures, as outlined in Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21083.2.

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☒	☐	☐

This section is based on an Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Technical Report prepared by HELIX for the proposed project in June 2026 (HELIX 2026a). The report is included in Appendix A to this IS/MND.

Environmental Setting

Global climate change refers to changes in average climatic conditions on Earth, including temperature, wind patterns, precipitation, and storms. Global temperatures are moderated by atmospheric gases. These gases are commonly referred to as GHGs because they function like a greenhouse by letting sunlight in but preventing heat from escaping, thus warming the Earth's atmosphere.

GHGs are emitted by natural processes and human (anthropogenic) activities. Anthropogenic GHG emissions are primarily associated with: (1) the burning of fossil fuels during motorized transport, electricity generation, natural gas consumption, industrial activity, manufacturing, and other activities; (2) deforestation; (3) agricultural activity; and (4) solid waste decomposition.

The temperature record shows a decades-long trend of warming, with Earth's average surface temperature in 2024 confirmed as the warmest on record. Per scientists at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's [NASA's] Goddard Institute for Space Studies, global temperatures in 2025 were around 2.1 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) higher than the 1951-1980 average and 0.2°F cooler than 2024 (NASA 2026). GHG emissions from human activities are the most significant driver of observed climate change since the mid-20th century (United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] 2013). The IPCC constructed several emission trajectories of GHGs needed to stabilize global temperatures and climate change impacts. The statistical models show a "high confidence" that temperature increase caused by anthropogenic GHG emissions could be kept to less than two degrees Celsius relative to pre-industrial levels if atmospheric concentrations are stabilized at about 450 parts per million (ppm) carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) by the year 2100 (IPCC 2014).

Methodology

See Section 6.III, Air Quality, for a discussion on the methodology for calculations criteria pollutant and GHG emissions.

Significance Criteria

The determination of significance is governed by CEQA Guidelines 15064.4, entitled "Determining the Significance of Impacts from Greenhouse Gas Emissions." CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4(a) states, "[t]he determination of the significance of greenhouse gas emissions calls for a careful judgment by the lead agency consistent with the provisions in Section 15064. A lead agency should make a good-faith effort, based to the extent possible on scientific and factual data, to describe, calculate or estimate the amount of greenhouse gas emissions resulting from a project. A lead agency shall have discretion to determine, in the context of a particular project, whether to … [use a quantitative model or qualitative model]" (emphasis added). In turn, CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4(b) clarifies that a lead agency should consider "Whether the project emissions exceed a threshold of significance that the lead agency determines applies to the project." Therefore, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4, the GHG emissions analysis for the project appropriately relies upon a threshold based on the exercise of careful judgement and is appropriate in the context of this project.

Neither the County nor the CCAPCD have adopted GHG emissions thresholds of significance that would be applicable to implementation of the project. The County Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan (GHGRP) has not been adopted and is not a qualified GHG reduction strategy for streamlining the analysis of project GHG impacts pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5. Therefore, this analysis relies on performance-based thresholds developed from the 2022 CARB Scoping Plan. Per Appendix D, Local Actions, to the 2022 Scoping Plan, GHG emissions efforts taken by local governments should focus on three strategy areas: transportation electrification; VMT reduction; and building decarbonization. By prioritizing climate action in these areas, local governments will be addressing the largest sources of emissions under their authority and meaningfully tackling climate change, as well as aligning with State climate goals and protecting public health and welfare (CARB 2022b). Other air districts including the Bay Area Air District and the SMAQMD, have adopted performance-based GHG emissions thresholds based on the 2022 CARB Scoping Plan key strategy areas for local action (Bay Area Air District 2023b; SMAQMD 2021). Based on the 2022 CARB Scoping Plan Appendix D, project GHG emissions would have less than significant impacts if the project would comply with the following performance standards (CARB 2022b):

1. All project buildings shall be all electric, with no natural gas use or natural gas infrastructure.

2. For all project parking lots, install EV parking spaces and charging equipment meeting the applicable CALGreen Tier 2 standards in effect at the time project permits are issued.

3. The project shall result in no net increase in regional VMT.

Impact Analysis

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

Construction Emissions

Project construction GHG emissions were estimated using CalEEMod model. Emissions of GHGs related to the construction of the project would be temporary. As shown in Table 15, *Construction GHG*

Emissions, total construction GHG emissions associated with implementation of the project are estimated at 492.9 MT CO_2e. The CCAPCD has not adopted GHG thresholds for construction emissions. To ensure construction emissions are accounted for, the total project construction emissions are amortized (i.e., averaged) over 30 years and added to project operational emissions. Averaged over 30 years, the proposed construction activities would contribute approximately 16.5 MT CO_2e emissions per year.

Table 15: Construction GHG Emissions

Year	Emissions (MT CO_2e)
2027	444.1
2028	51.1
Total[1]	495.2
Amortized Construction Emissions[2]	16.5

Source: CalEEMod (output data is provided in Appendix A of Appendix A)
[1] Totals may not sum due to rounding.
[2] Construction emissions are amortized over the anticipated project lifespan of 30 years.
GHG = greenhouse gas; MT = metric tons; CO_2e = carbon dioxide equivalent

Operational Emissions

Operational GHG emissions were estimated using CalEEMod model. Per the project TIS, the project would be considered local serving and would not result in an increase in regional VMT. Although the project would not result in an increase in regional mobile source emissions, mobile source operational GHG emissions were calculated for informational purposes and would be 3,968 MT CO_2e per year for the first full year of project operation (2029).

GHG emissions resulting from implementation of the project in 2029 are shown in Table 16, *Unmitigated Operational GHG Emissions*.

Table 16: Unmitigated Operational GHG Emissions

Year	Emissions (MT CO_2e)
Area	0.3
Energy	182.0
Water/Wastewater	8.4
Solid Waste	46.7
Refrigerants	122.2
Amortized Construction (30 years)	16.5
Total[1]	376.1

Source: CalEEMod (output data is provided in Appendix A of Appendix A).
[1] Total may not sum due to rounding.

The significance of project GHG emissions is determined by whether the project would comply with three performance standards, consistent with the CARB 2022 Scoping Plan Appendix D, regardless of the project's emission levels:

1. All project buildings shall be all electric, with no natural gas use or natural gas infrastructure.

2. For all project parking lots, install EV parking spaces and charging equipment meeting the applicable CALGreen Tier 2 standards in effect at the time project permits are issued.

3. The project shall result in no net increase in regional VMT.

For performance standard 3 concerning VMT, per the project TIS, the project would be local serving retail and implementation of project would not result an increase in regional VMT. However, Mitigation Measures GHG-1 and GHG-2 would be required to enforce implementation of standards 1 (all electric buildings) and 2 (CALGreen Tier 2).

Implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-1 would reduce project operational energy source GHG emissions related to natural gas combustion. Implementation of Mitigation Measure GHG-2 would not have a direct quantifiable effect on project GHG emissions. However, it would have an indirect effect on regional GHG emission reductions by providing additional EV charging facilities and encouraging EV adoption. Project operational GHG emissions in 2029, with implementation of mitigation are shown in Table 17, *Mitigated Operational GHG Emissions.*

Table 17: Mitigated Operational GHG Emissions

Year	Emissions ($MT CO_2e$)
Area	0.3
Energy	95.4
Water/Wastewater	8.4
Solid Waste	46.7
Refrigerants	122.2
Amortized Construction (30 years)	16.5
Total[1]	**292.9**

Source: CalEEMod (output data is provided in Appendix A of Appendix A).

[1] Total may not sum due to rounding.

Summary

With Mitigation Measures GHG-1 and GHG-2, implementation of the project would not generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment. The impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Mitigation Measure GHG-1: Prohibition of Natural Gas Use

To ensure compliance with the California Air Resources Board 2022 Scoping Plan, the County shall require and verify the specification on the applicable plans that no natural gas appliances or natural gas plumbing are included in new project building prior to project design approval.

Mitigation Measure GHG-2: Electric Vehicle Parking

To ensure compliance with the California Air Resources Board 2022 Scoping Plan, the County shall require and verify the specification on the applicable plans that new project parking lots shall meet the current CALGreen Tier 2 electric vehicle parking standards applicable at the time of issuing permits.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The project was analyzed for conflicts with the State's GHG emissions reduction mandates enacted by AB 32, SB 32, and AB 1279, as implemented by the CARB 2022 Scoping Plan.

There are numerous State plans, policies, and regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. The principal overall State plan and policy is AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. The quantitative goal of AB 32 is to reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. SB 32 requires further reductions of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. Beyond 2030, AB 1279 aims to achieve carbon neutrality in the state by 2045. The 2022 Scoping Plan lays out a path for achieving the regulatory requirements of AB 32, SB 32, and AB 1279. Statewide plans and regulations such as GHG emissions standards for vehicles (AB 1493), the LCFS, and regulations requiring an increasing proportion of electricity to be generated from renewable sources are being implemented at the statewide level; as such, compliance at the project level is not addressed.

Per Appendix D to the 2022 Scoping Plan, GHG emissions efforts taken by local governments should focus on three strategy areas: transportation electrification; VMT reduction; and building decarbonization. Per the project TIS, the project would be local serving retail and would not result an increase in regional VMT. However, Mitigation Measures GHG-1 and GHG-2 would be required to enforce implementation of standards 1 (all electric buildings) and 2 (CALGreen Tier 2). With the implementation of Mitigation Measures GHG-1 and GHG-2, the project would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs. The impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
a)	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b)	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c)	Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d)	Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e)	For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard 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?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Environmental Setting

Hazardous Sites

The Hazardous Waste and Substances Sites (Cortese) List is a planning document used by the State, local agencies, and developers to comply with CEQA requirements in providing information about the location of hazardous materials release sites. Section 65962.5(a)(1) of the Government Code requires the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) to compile and submit to the Secretary for Environmental Protection a list of all hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action pursuant to Section 25187.5 of the Health and Safety Code (HSC). According to the DTSC's EnviroStor Database, there are no hazardous waste sites on the project site. The nearest open hazardous materials site is located approximately four miles northwest of the project site (DTSC 2025).

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) maintains the GeoTracker Database, which was developed pursuant to AB 592 and SB 1189. GeoTracker is used by the State Board, regional boards, and local agencies to track and archive compliance data from authorized or unauthorized discharges of waste to land, or unauthorized releases of hazardous substances from UST. Government Code Section 65962.5(c) requires the SWRCB to submit to the Secretary for Environmental Protection a list USTs with unauthorized releases, solid waste disposal sites with hazardous waste migration, and cleanup or abatement sites. There are no sites mapped by GeoTracker on the project site. The nearest open site is a Cleanup Program Site, located approximately four miles northwest of the project site (SWRCB 2025).

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), commonly known as Superfund, was enacted by Congress on December 11, 1980. CERCLA was subsequently amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) on October 17, 1986. The National Priorities List (NPL) is the list of sites of national priority among the known releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants throughout the United States and its territories. The NPL is intended primarily to guide the USEPA in determining which sites warrant further investigation. The nearest Superfund site is located approximately 12 miles north of the project site in Jackson, which is associated with the Argonaut Mine (USEPA 2025).

Airport Hazards

Airport hazards include physical flight hazards (e.g., structures or power transmission lines obstructing air space) as well as hazards associated with airport operations, including aircraft accidents during takeoff and landing due to light and glare, electronic interference, and wildlife hazards. The Calaveras County Airport/Maury Rasmussen Field is currently the only public use, general aviation airport in the County, which is located south of San Andreas, approximately 10 miles southeast of the project site (County 2018).

The Calaveras County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) adopted the County's current Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) in 2010. The purpose of the ALUCP is to promote compatibility between Calaveras County Airport and the land uses surrounding it to the extent that these areas have not already been devoted to incompatible uses, and to protect public health, safety, and welfare by ensuring the orderly expansion of airports and the adoption of land use measures that minimize the public's exposure to excessive noise and safety hazards (County 2010).

Wildland Fire Hazards

PRC 4201-4204 directs CAL FIRE to map fire hazard within State Responsibility Areas (SRA) based on fuel loading, slope, fire weather, and other relevant factors present, including areas where winds have been identified by the department as a major cause of wildfire spread. These zones, referred to as Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ), classify a wildland zone as Moderate, High, or Very High fire hazard based on the average hazard across the area included in the zone. Per CAL FIRE's Fire Hazard Severity Zones in State Responsibility Area online map, dated September 29, 2023, the project site is located within an SRA, is classified as High FHSZ, and is immediately surrounded by lands classified and High and Very High FHSZ (CAL FIRE 2025).

Fire Protection

The project site is located within the Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection District (Cal-Co Fire) service area, which encompasses 163 square miles and serves over 15,000 people in the northwestern corner of

the County. Cal-Co Fire has three fully equipped stations: Company 1 is located approximately 3.5 miles west of the project site; Company 2 is located approximately 0.25 mile north of the project site; and Company 3 is located approximately 5.5 miles southwest of the project site (Cal-Co Fire 2025).

Cal-Co Fire uses a response time goal of four minutes. The actual response time from dispatch to on-scene is approximately nine minutes in rural areas of the Cal-Co Fire service area and three to four minutes within the developed areas of Jenny Lind and Valley Springs (County 2018).

CAL FIRE provides protection against wildland fires, such as forest and grassland fires, in areas within the County designated as an SRA. CAL FIRE's Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit has several fire stations in the County, including the Valley Springs Forest Fire Station located approximately 1.6 miles southeast of the project site.

Certified Unified Program Agency

SB 1082 (1993) required the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to establish a "unified hazardous waste and hazardous materials management" regulatory program (Unified Program), which consolidates, coordinates, and makes consistent the following six existing programs:

- Hazardous Materials Release Response Plans and Inventories (Business Plans)
- California Accidental Release Prevention (CalARP) Program,
- UST Program,
- Aboveground Petroleum Storage Act (APSA) Program,
- Hazardous Waste Generator and Onsite Hazardous Waste Treatment (tiered permitting) Programs,
- California Fire Code: Hazardous Material Management Plans and Hazardous Material Inventory Statements.

The Calaveras County Environmental Health Department (CCEHD) has been certified by CalEPA to implement the Unified Program as a Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA). As the CUPA, CCEHD must establish a program that consolidates, coordinates, and makes consistent the administrative requirements, permits, inspection activities, enforcement activities, and hazardous waste and hazardous materials fees.

Emergency Response and Evacuation

The Calaveras County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP), most recently updated in 2021, contains information to guide and coordinate mitigation activities and decisions to mitigate future emergencies and hazards in the County (County 2021). The Calaveras County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), most recently updated in 2024, outlines the planned responses to emergencies associated with natural or human-caused disasters and emergencies in the County. The EOP identifies the following significant highways and prime arterials within Calaveras County that would serve as the primary evacuation routes in the event of an emergency: SR 49, SR 26, SR 4, SR 12, O-Byrnes Ferry Road, Parrotts

Ferry Road, Milton Road, Murphys Grade Road, Railroad Flat Road, and Pardee Dam Road. The EOP also contains a map of numerous other priority corridors in the County (County 2024).

Impact Analysis

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

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

Construction

Construction activities would involve the limited transport, storage, use, and/or disposal of hazardous materials, such as for the temporary fueling and servicing of construction equipment on-site. The routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials during construction would be required to comply with existing local, State, and federal regulations that minimize potential hazards to the public or environment. However, in the event of an accidental spill of potentially hazardous materials during construction, the project could result in potential hazards to the environment, including degradation of water quality and impacts to habitats. Mitigation Measure BIO-3 contains BMPs that would ensure that equipment storage, fueling, and staging areas would be located on upland sites to minimize potential hazards to the environment in the event of an accidental spill. In addition, this measure would require project-related spills to be reported to the appropriate entities, including the CVRWQCB which would have oversight of the project site in the event of the release of hazardous contaminants. See Section 6.IV, Biological Resources, for Mitigation Measure BIO-3.

The project site is currently undeveloped and used for cattle grazing. The project site is not known to have involved previous land uses associated with hazardous materials, such as agricultural pesticides, asbestos, or lead-based paint. As discussed in greater detail in the response to question d), the project is not located on or adjacent to a known hazardous materials site. As such, the potential for the project site to contain hazardous materials is low. In addition, as the proposed project is undeveloped and would not require demolition of any structures, potential risks associated with asbestos and lead-based paint would not occur. The routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials during construction would be required to adhere to existing local, State, and federal regulations that would minimize the potential for hazards to the public or environment. Therefore, construction of the proposed project would not 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. Therefore, construction-related impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated for questions a) and b).

Operation

Project operation would involve typical commercial operations for the proposed drive-through coffee shop, ARCO convenience store, gas station, car wash, drive-through fast-food restaurant, diner, and oil change shop. During operation of the proposed gas station, it is estimated that the maximum annual throughput of gasoline would be up to 12,000,000 gallons. The car wash would have 24-hour operational hours and would serve up to eight vehicles per hour, or up to 46,720 vehicles per year.

CalEPA oversees the Statewide implementation of the Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP) program, which aims to minimize public health and safety risks and impacts to the environment from a release of hazardous materials. CCEHD has been certified by CalEPA to implement the Unified Program as the CUPA, and implements the HMBP program at the local level. As outlined in Mitigation Measure HAZ-1, the proposed project would be required to submit an HMBP to the CCEHD, as the local CUPA, which would provide details regarding the on-site use and storage of fuels and hazardous substances to prevent harm to public health, safety, and the environment involving the release of hazardous materials. The HMBP would be required to document the on-site use and storage of fuels and hazardous materials in quantities equal or greater than 55 gallons of a liquid, 500 pounds of a solid, 200 cubic feet of flammable compressed gas, or 1,000 cubic feet of non-flammable gas.

In addition, the proposed project would be required to comply with Chapter 8.18, Storage In Underground Tanks, of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances, which implements the provisions of Chapters 6.7 and 6.75, Division 20 of the Health and Safety Code (Section 25280, et seq.), Title 23, Division 3, Chapter 16 of the CCR (Section 2610 et seq.), and SWRCB regulations regarding the regulation of underground storage of hazardous substances. In California, hazardous waste transporters must comply with the California Vehicle Code, California Highway Patrol (CHP) Regulations (CCR Title 13); the California State Fire Marshal Regulations (CCR Title 19); U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations, Title 49, CFR; and USEPA Regulations, Title 40 CFR. As such, compliance with the numerous existing regulation and preparation of a HMBP, as required by Mitigation Measure HAZ-1, would safeguard operations involving hazardous materials, and would ensure that the project would not result in the release of such materials into the environment. Therefore, operational activities that require transport, storage, use, and/or disposal of hazardous materials would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment, and the project would not create a significant hazard through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment. Therefore, operations-related impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated for questions a) and b).

Impact Summary

The proposed project would be subject to numerous local, State, and federal regulations pertaining to the use, storage, and transport of hazardous materials. Mitigation Measure BIO-3 contains BMPs that would be implemented to minimize potential hazards to the environment in the event of an accidental spill. Mitigation Measure HAZ-1 would require an HMBP to be prepared, which would provide details regarding the on-site use and storage of fuels and hazardous substances to prevent harm to public health, safety, and the environment involving the release of hazardous materials. As such, construction and operation of the proposed project would not 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. Therefore, the impact for questions a) and b) would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Mitigation Measure HAZ-1: Preparation of a Hazardous Materials Business Plan

Prior to issuance of building permit(s), the project applicant shall prepare and submit a Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP) to the Calaveras County Environmental Health Department (CCEHD), acting as the local Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA), for review and approval. The HMBP shall be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the CCEHD and the Hazardous Materials Release Response Plan and Inventory Act of 1985 (Health and

Safety Code Sections 25500-25547). The HMBP shall include, but is not limited to, a hazardous material inventory, emergency response procedures, training program information, and basic information on the location, type, quantity, and health risks of hazardous materials stored, used, or disposed of at the proposed project site, and procedures for handling and disposing of unanticipated hazardous materials encountered during construction. The HMBP shall also include an inventory of the hazardous waste generated on-site and will specify procedures for proper disposal.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The nearest school to the project site is Valley Springs Elementary School, approximately 0.27 mile northwest of the site. However, as discussed above in the response to questions a) and b), the proposed project would be subject to numerous local, State, and federal regulations pertaining to the use, storage, and transport of hazardous materials, which would minimize the potential for accidental release of hazardous materials, substances, or waste into the environment. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in significant hazards to the public or to an existing school, and the impact would be less than significant.

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

No Impact. The proposed project would not be located on a hazardous materials site pursuant to the Government Code Section 65962.5. According to the DTSC's EnviroStor Database, there are no hazardous waste sites on the project site, and the nearest open hazardous materials site is located approximately four miles to the northwest (DTSC 2025). In addition, there are no sites mapped by SWRCB's GeoTracker Database on the project site, and the nearest open site is a Cleanup Program Site, located approximately four miles to the northwest (SWRCB 2025). Lastly, there are no Superfund sites mapped by the USEPA NPL located on the project site, and the nearest Superfund site is located approximately 12 miles north of the project site in Jackson. Therefore, as the project would not be located on or in the vicinity of a hazardous materials site, no impact would occur.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact. The nearest public use general aviation airport to the project site is the Calaveras County Airport/Maury Rasmussen Field, which is located south of San Andreas, approximately 10 miles southeast of the project site. According to the 2010 ALUCP, the project site is located over eight miles outside of the overall Airport Influence Area for the Calaveras County Airport. The nearest private airstrips to the project site are the Howard Private Airport and the Comanche Skypark Airport-CA 19, both of which are located in Ione, approximately seven miles northwest of the project site. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area, and the impact would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The County EOP identifies several significant highways, prime arterials, and priority corridors within Calaveras County that would serve as the primary evacuation routes in the event of an emergency. These evacuation routes in the project vicinity include SR 12, SR 26, Hogan Dam Road, and Paloma Road (County 2024). The proposed project would include the construction of two private driveways and one public County road off of SR 26, as well as trenching to connect with existing utilities within SR 26 ROW, which may require temporary lane closures along SR 26 and could have the potential to impede or interfere with emergency access routes or services. The proposed project would require an Encroachment Permit from Caltrans District 10 for encroachment within SR 26 ROW, which would be submitted to Caltrans along with a Traffic Control Plan (TCP), as outlined in Mitigation Measure HAZ-2. The TCP would be required to be prepared in accordance with Caltrans guidelines and would contain standard traffic control measures to ensure safe and efficient traffic flow on SR 26 during construction. Therefore, with preparation of an Encroachment Permit and TCP, project construction would not substantially interfere with emergency access routes in the event of an emergency. Once operational, vehicle travel on the proposed driveways and public road would not substantially interfere with traffic along SR 26 or other roads in the project area in the event of an emergency such that evacuation would be impaired. As part of the Encroachment Permit process, Caltrans would ensure the driveway and road encroachments would be compatible with the primary uses of SR 26 and meet Caltrans' commercial driveway and public road approach requirements. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not physically interfere with emergency evacuations routes outlined in the County EOP, and the impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Mitigation Measure HAZ-2: Prepare a Traffic Control Plan

To manage traffic during project construction, the project applicant shall submit a Traffic Control Plan (TCP) to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), District 10, during submittal of the Encroachment Permit for encroachment into State Route (SR) 26 right-of-way. The applicant shall consult with Caltrans prior to initiation of construction activities that may affect area traffic (such as construction staging necessitating lane closure, trenching, etc.) to ensure that the TCP is prepared in conformance with applicable code and ordinance requirements for emergency access. The construction contractor shall implement appropriate traffic controls identified in the TCP in accordance with the California Vehicle Code and other State and local requirements to avoid or minimize impacts on traffic during construction.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed project is located within an SRA, is classified as High FHSZ, and is immediately surrounded by lands classified and High and Very High FHSZ (CAL FIRE 2025). The degree of hazard in wildland areas depends on variables including temperature, wind, and moisture, the amount of dryness and arrangement of vegetation, slope steepness, proximity to human activities, accessibility of firefighting equipment, and fuel clearance around structures. The project site is undeveloped and currently used for cattle grazing and comprised primarily of annual grassland. The project site is relatively flat with elevations ranging between 633 and 682 feet amsl.

Construction

Project construction activities could increase the risk of wildfire, as the use of flammable fuels, such as diesel and gasoline, and spark-producing equipment could ignite dry vegetation, especially during the warmer, dry months between June and October. However, construction activities would be required to comply with existing regulations related to fire safety and wildfire suppression. In addition, Mitigation Measure HAZ-3 would be implemented to reduce the risks of wildfire during construction. Mitigation Measure HAZ-3 would require the removal of dried vegetation or other combustible materials on-site to the extent feasible to reduce the potential of wildland fires by providing a clearing, reducing fire fuels, and removing fire sustaining litter. This measure would also require spark arrestors or turbo chargers (which eliminate sparks in exhaust) and fire extinguishers for all heavy equipment used on-site during construction. With implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-3, project construction would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.

Operation

Operation of the proposed project would result in increased human presence on-site, which would increase the potential for wildland fires and exposure of people or structures to risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. However, the proposed project would be required to adhere to existing regulations and requirements related to fire safety, including maintaining defensible space and setbacks. The project would be required to comply with the CBC Chapter 7A, Materials and Construction Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure, which prescribes building materials and construction methods for new buildings in any FHSZ or Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area. In addition, PRC Section 4291 requires property owners to maintain clearance of flammable vegetation within 100 feet of structures in order to reduce the risk of fire.

The project would also be required to adhere to all provisions of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances related to fire hazards, including Chapter 8.08, Hazardous Fire Areas, which establishes safeguards and regulations related to recreational, residential, commercial, industrial, and other activities that could increase the threat of fire hazard; and 15.08, Calaveras Fire Mitigation Fee Ordinance, which requires new development in the unincorporated areas of the County to pay its fair share to maintain the pre-existing level of service, thereby mitigating the impact of development on fire protection service. Other applicable provisions of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances include Chapter 15.09, Fire Regulations for State Responsibility Areas, which adopts PRC Section 4290 Fire Safe Regulations for State Responsibility Areas, and Chapter 15.10, Defensible Space Requirements, which adopts PRC Sections 4291 – 4299. Specifically, PRC Sections 4291 – 4299 sets defensible space requirements around buildings and structures from 30 feet to 100 feet for any person that owns, leases, controls, operates, or maintains a building or structure in, upon, or adjoining any mountainous area, forest-covered lands, brush-covered lands, grass-covered lands, or any land that is covered with flammable material. In addition, the nearest fire station to the project site is Company 2 of the Cal-Co Fire, which is located approximately 0.25 mile north of the project site. Therefore, with adherence to existing regulations and requirements pertaining to wildfire prevention, project operation would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.

Impact Summary

In conclusion, with implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-3 and adherence to existing regulations pertaining to wildfire prevention, the proposed project would not expose people or structures to a

significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Mitigation Measure HAZ-3: Wildland Fire Prevention During Construction

The project applicant or designated contractor shall ensure that standard fire prevention best management practices (BMPs) are implemented during all construction activities, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Emergency fire kits shall be kept on-site during construction, and all construction personnel shall be trained in basic fire prevention techniques. The training shall include, but is not limited to, the proper use and storage of flammable materials, use of fire extinguishers, and best construction practices to prevent wildland fires during construction.

- All heavy equipment shall be required to include mechanisms for fire suppression, including spark arresters or turbo-charging (which eliminates sparks in exhaust) and fire extinguishers.

- All areas in which work will be completed using spark-producing equipment, including staging areas and areas slated for development, shall be cleared of dried vegetation and/or all other materials that could serve as fire fuel. These areas shall be kept clear of combustible materials during construction in order to maintain a fire break.

- Work crews shall be required to park vehicles away from flammable vegetation such as dry grass and brush. At the end of each workday, heavy equipment shall be required to be parked over mineral soil, asphalt, or concrete, where available, to reduce the risk of fire.

- Smoking shall be prohibited at the project site, except within designated areas. Smoking shall be prohibited within 30 feet of any combustible material storage area (including fuels, gases, and solvents). Smoking shall be prohibited in any location during a Red Flag Warning issued by the National Weather Service for the project area.

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
a)	Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b)	Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c)	Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
	i. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	☐	☐	☒	☐
	ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off- site?	☐	☐	☒	☐
	iii. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional resources of polluted runoff?	☐	☐	☒	☐
	iv. Impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d)	In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e)	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Environmental Setting

Surface Water

Calaveras County contains three major rivers: the Mokelumne, Calaveras, and Stanislaus rivers. The rivers carry runoff from the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada westward across Calaveras County, and into the Central Valley. The project site is in the Lower Calaveras watershed. The Calaveras River originates in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and extends west-southwest approximately 60 miles before terminating at the San Joaquin River. Within the County, the Calaveras River runs in two forks (North and South). The river is fed almost entirely by rainfall and encompasses approximately 550 square miles. Below New Hogan Dam, in the Lower Calaveras watershed, the main tributaries conveying runoff in the County are the Cosgrove, Indian, and South Gulch Creeks. The New Hogan Reservoir is located

approximately 1.3 miles southeast of the project site and is located along the Calaveras River. It is owned and managed by the USACE and was constructed for purposes of flood control and water supply (County 2018).

The terrain on the project site is generally flat with elevations ranging from approximately 633 and 682 feet amsl, and there is a slight decline in elevation from the north to the south. The project site is in the Upper Calaveras watershed (HUC8 18040011). There is one depressional feature identified as a seasonal wetland on-site, as discussed in greater detail in Section 6.IV, Biological Resources. Drainage within the project site would be expected to flow downslope to the south of the site towards Cosgrove Creek, which flows northeast to southwest approximately 800 feet southeast of the site.

As discussed in Section 6.XIX, Utilities and Service Systems, the proposed project would receive water services from CCWD's Jenny Lind System, which would serve the proposed project site. The Jenny Lind System receives surface water from New Hogan Reservoir through a non-Central Valley Project (CVP) contract with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). The diversion point is an infiltration gallery located on the lower Calaveras River, approximately one mile downstream of the New Hogan Dam. The Jenny Lind Water Treatment Plant (WTP) serves the area with an existing capacity of 6.0 million gallons per day (mgd), with plans to expand the plant capacity to meet near-term and long-term demands. Water from the Calaveras River system at New Hogan Reservoir is subject to agreements with the BOR and Stockton East Water District (SEWD), which allocates 43.5 percent of the yield to CCWD, typically estimated at a total of 31,278 acre-feet per year (AFY) (County 2018).

Groundwater

In 2014, the California legislature, including AB 1739, SB 1168, and SB 1319, enacted the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) in response to the continued overdraft of California's groundwater resources, requiring local agencies to form groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) for the high and medium basins, and to develop and implement groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs) to avoid undesirable results and mitigated overdraft from groundwater basins within 20 years. Bulletin 118, "California's Groundwater," published by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), defines the recognized groundwater basins and subbasins throughout the State.

Valley Springs is located within the San Joaquin Valley – Eastern San Joaquin Subbasin (Basin No. 5-022.01), which is the only defined groundwater basin within the County. This groundwater basin underlies the northwestern corner of the County. The Eastern San Joaquin Subbasin is a high priority subbasin and is critically overdrafted (DWR 2025). The GSP for the Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Subbasin was prepared in 2022 and was subsequently amended in 2024 by the Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Authority (ESJGA), which is comprised of 16 GSAs (ESJGA 2024).

Flood Hazards

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides information on flood hazard and frequency for cities and counties on its Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). FEMA identifies designated zones to indicate flood hazard potential. The project site is located within two FIRM Panels: 06009C0354F in the north and 06009C0362F in the south, both effective May 16, 2017. The project site is not located within a flood hazard zone (FEMA 2025).

Impact Analysis

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

Construction

Project construction would involve ground disturbing activities such as vegetation clearing, grading, and trenching. Disturbed soils are typically more susceptible to erosion from rain and wind, which, in the absence of preventative measures, can lead to mobilization of sediments and silt through runoff. In addition, fueling or maintenance of construction vehicles within the project site could pose a risk of accidental spills or releases of fuels, oils, trash, or other potentially toxic materials. Drainage within the project site would be expected to flow downslope to the south of the site towards Cosgrove Creek, which flows northeast to southwest approximately 800 feet southeast of the site.

However, as discussed in Section 6.VII, Geology and Soils, the project would result in more than one acre of ground disturbance and would, therefore, be subject to the requirements of the NPDES Construction Permit, including preparation and implementation of a SWPPP during construction. The primary objectives of the SWPPP are to (1) identify pollutant sources that may affect the quality of stormwater associated with construction activity and (2) identify, construct, and implement stormwater pollution prevention measures to reduce pollutants in stormwater discharges during and after construction. The SWPPP is required to include a description of potential pollutants and the manner in which sediments and hazardous materials present on-site during construction (including vehicle and equipment fuels) would be managed. Mitigation Measure BIO-3 contains construction BMPs, including implementation of a SWPPP, and proper management of equipment and materials storage and use to prevent potential runoff of pollutants that may impact the quality of receiving waters, such as Cosgrove Creek.

Additionally, the proposed project would be required to adhere to the provisions of the Grading and Drainage Ordinance in Chapter 15.05 of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances, which regulates grading, drainage, and other earthwork activities and requires implementation of erosion and sedimentation control measures to protect water quality and reduce discharge of pollutants. With adherence to these existing regulations, project construction would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality. Therefore, construction-related impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Operation

During operation, common urban runoff pollutants such as sediment, trash, organic contaminants, nutrients, trace metals, oil, and grease could affect the quality of receiving waters, such as Cosgrove Creek which is approximately 800 feet southeast of the project site. However, the proposed on-site stormwater system would include BMPs to prevent pollutants from leaving the project site and maintain runoff at a pre-development rate. The proposed stormwater system would maintain the existing northwesterly to southeasterly drainage pattern on-site and would consist of curb cuts and swales, open grates, underground storm drain lines, three bioretention ponds, and one detention basin. The three proposed bioretention ponds would be constructed with engineered biofiltration media and sandy loam topsoil and vegetated with low-growing native grasses and/or a native no-mow fescue blend to remove pollutants prior to infiltration and increase infiltration. Flows from the three proposed bioretention

ponds would be conveyed via underground 8-inch storm drain lines to the 8,695-sf detention basin located in the southeastern corner of the site. This basin would be hydroseeded with native grasses and serve as the central stormwater management facility for the site.

The proposed bioretention ponds, detention basin, and swales would incorporate energy dissipation structures and other erosion control measures to prevent scour. Final discharge from the southern infiltration basin would be released at a pre-development rate through a new 12-inch storm drain line into the existing CPUD drainage infrastructure on SR 26. The proposed stormwater system would be designed in compliance with Section 12.02.210, Drainage, of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances and Chapter 800 of the Caltrans Highway Design Manual. Therefore, through project design and compliance with existing regulations pertaining to stormwater and water quality, project operation would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality. The impact during project operation would be less than significant.

Impact Summary

With implementation of a SWPPP during construction activities, adherence to existing stormwater management design regulations, and implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-3, construction and operation of the proposed project would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project would receive water supplies from the CCWD's Jenny Lind WTP, which obtains surface water from New Hogan Reservoir through a non-CVP contract with the BOR. The proposed project would not utilize water supplies from groundwater wells, as groundwater has historically not been a long-term reliable source of water supply for large areas of the CCWD (County 2018).

Development of the proposed project would result in the creation of new impervious surfaces (e.g., roofs, sidewalks, roadways, and other paved surfaces) that could potentially interfere with groundwater recharge. However, as discussed above in the response to question a), the project would construct a stormwater system that would be designed to maintain the existing northwesterly to southeasterly drainage pattern on-site and would include three bioretention ponds and one detention basin. The three proposed bioretention ponds would be constructed with engineered biofiltration media and sandy loam topsoil and vegetated with low-growing native grasses and/or a native no-mow fescue blend to remove pollutants prior to infiltration and increase infiltration. Flows from the three proposed bioretention ponds would be conveyed via underground 8-inch storm drain lines to the 8,695-sf detention basin located in the southeastern corner of the site. As stormwater would be contained and allowed to infiltrate on-site, the new impervious surfaces created under the proposed project would not substantially interfere with groundwater recharge or impede sustainable groundwater management of the San Joaquin Valley – Eastern San Joaquin Subbasin. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

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

i. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section 6.VII, Geology and Soils, project construction would involve excavation and other soil disturbing activities that could have the potential to temporarily increase erosion and sedimentation rates above existing conditions. However, the proposed project would be required to adhere to the provisions of the Grading and Drainage Ordinance in Chapter 15.05 of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances, which regulates grading, drainage, and other earthwork activities and requires implementation of erosion and sedimentation control measures to protect water quality and reduce discharge of pollutants. In addition, as the proposed project would disturb more than one acre of land, project construction activities would be regulated by the CVRWQCB and are subject to the requirements of the NPDES General Construction Permit, including preparation and implementation of a SWPPP during construction. The SWPPP must include details of how the sediment and erosion control BMPs would be implemented to reduce soil erosion during construction activities. Therefore, with preparation of a SWPPP and adherence to existing regulations, the proposed project would not result in substantial soil erosion or siltation on- or off-site, and the impact would be less than significant.

ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off- site?

iii. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional resources of polluted runoff?

Less Than Significant Impact. As previously discussed in the responses to questions a) and b), implementation of the proposed project would create new impervious surfaces on a currently undeveloped site, which would alter the existing drainage of the site and could increase the flow of stormwater runoff. However, the proposed on-site stormwater system would include BMPs to prevent pollutants from leaving the project site and maintain runoff at a pre-development rate. The proposed stormwater system would ensure that the project would not result in substantial flooding on-or off-site, exceed the capacity of stormwater drainage systems, or result in polluted runoff. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant for questions c.ii) and c.iii).

iv. Impede or redirect flood flows?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is not located within a flood hazard zone. Although the project would alter the existing drainage pattern of the site through grading and addition of impervious surfaces as discussed above in the responses to questions a) and c.i) through c.iii), the project would not impede or redirect flood flows, as the proposed on-site stormwater system would be designed to maintain runoff at a pre-development rate. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project is not located within a flood hazard zone. The site is located over 115 miles east of the Pacific Ocean, and, therefore, is not within a tsunami hazard zone. A seiche is a long-wavelength, large-scale wave action set up in a closed body of water such as a lake or reservoir, typically as a result of seismic activity. However, due to distance from the New Hogan

Reservoir, and as seismic activity affecting the County is considered low, the project is not within a seiche zone. Therefore, the proposed project would not risk release of pollutants due to project inundation, and the impact would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed in the response to question a), through implementation of a SWPPP during construction activities and adherence to existing stormwater management design regulations, the proposed project would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality. As discussed in the response to question b), the proposed project would use surface water supplied by CCWD and would construct a stormwater system to contain and allow water to infiltrate on-site; as such, the proposed project would not substantially interfere with groundwater recharge or impede sustainable groundwater management of the San Joaquin Valley – Eastern San Joaquin Subbasin. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan, and the impact would be less than significant.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
a)	Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b)	Cause 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?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Environmental Setting

The 6.99-acre project site is located on a 32.3-acre legal parcel with a Tax Rate Area line dividing the parcel into APNs 046-016-091 and 046-016-092. The legal parcel is currently zoned C2/M4 (General Commercial/Business Park) and has a General Plan land use designation of Industrial (I)/Commercial (C).

Impact Analysis

a) Physically divide an established community?

Less Than Significant Impact. The project site is currently undeveloped and is bordered by a single-family residence and commercial land uses to the north, SR 26 and commercial land uses to the east, commercial land uses and undeveloped land to the south, and undeveloped land and SR 12 to the west. The proposed project would not include design features that would divide an established community. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

b) Cause 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?

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The project applicant is seeking a General Plan amendment and zoning amendment for the subject parcel. The current zoning would be amended from C2/M4 (General Commercial/Business Park) to C2 (General Commercial), and the current land use would be amended from Industrial (I)/Commercial (C) to Commercial (C).

The Commercial (C) land use designation applies to commercial or office uses in areas with adequate public infrastructure (water, sewer, roads). Typical uses include general commercial (e.g., retail, stores, and services), professional business offices, employment centers, service commercial (e.g., automotive-related, large equipment sales, building maintenance services, construction sales and services, and storage/warehousing), public and quasi-public, and other similar and compatible uses. This land use designation has a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 1.0. The C2 (General Commercial) base zone implements the C (Commercial) land use designation. The project would require approval of CUP 2025-031 to allow for the proposed gas station, convenience store, car wash, and drive-throughs in the General Commercial (C2) zone. The proposed restaurant and oil change facility would be permitted by right in the General Commercial (C2) zone.

Table 18, *Plan Consistency Evaluation*, below provides an evaluation of the project's consistency with applicable goals and policies from the County General Plan and VSCP (County 2019; County 2016).

Table 18: Plan Consistency Evaluation

Plan Goals	Policies	Evaluation
Calaveras County General Plan		
Goal LU-1: Development of existing communities to provide a mix of uses including a wide range of residential, commercial, visitor-serving and job-generating uses that facilitate their development as independent and economically viable communities.	**LU Policy 1.2:** Support growth in and around existing communities while protecting and enhancing community and neighborhood character.	The project would create new jobs in Valley Springs, which could aid in balancing the jobs-to-housing ratio in the community. The project would enhance community character while providing economic benefits to Valley Springs. The project would be consistent with LU Policy 1.2.
Goal LU-3: A pattern of growth and development that effectively utilizes the planned provision of infrastructure, facilities, and public services.	**LU Policy 3.6:** Development shall adhere to the density, land use intensity, and water and sewage disposal standards set forth in Table LU-1.	The project would be adjacent to other commercial and retail land uses in the community. The project would not exceed the 1.0 FAR and would connect to existing public water and sewer infrastructure in the area *(See Section 6.XIX, Utilities and Service Systems).* The project would be consistent with LU Policy 3.6.
Goal LU-4: High quality, well-designed development that is compatible with surrounding uses and is integrated with the community and the physical environment in which it is located.	**LU Policy 4.3:** Ensure new development is designed in a manner that is compatible with surrounding land uses through design and buffering, addressing potential impacts from noise, lighting, and traffic.	The project would be compatible with existing commercial development in the project vicinity and would be designed to minimize and avoid potential impacts related to noise, lighting, and traffic *(See Sections 6.XIII, Noise; 6.I, Aesthetics; and 6.XVII, Transportation; and Mitigation Measures NOI-1 and TRA-1 through TRA-5).* The project would be consistent with LU Policy 4.3.
	LU Policy 4.7: New non-residential development shall be designed to integrate with and enhance the community and surrounding uses by utilizing compatible architecture and site design.	The visual character and quality of the project would be largely similar to and compatible with existing commercial development in the vicinity. The project would enhance the surrounding community and commercial area and would adhere to development standards for the C2 zone set forth in Chapter 17.06 of the County Code of Ordinances. The project would be consistent with LU Policy 4.7.

Plan Goals	Policies	Evaluation
	LU Policy 4.8: New development shall provide pedestrian and vehicle interconnectedness.	Internal pedestrian facilities and crosswalks would provide circulation throughout the site. A sidewalk with ADA ramps would be located along the project frontage between the north and south driveways. Internal drive aisles would provide vehicular circulation throughout the project site *(See Section 6.XVII, Transportation, and Mitigation Measure TRA-3).* The project would be consistent with LU Policy 4.8.
	LU Policy 4.10: Retain the rural nature of the county's communities and dark skies by controlling light pollution (glare, light trespass, and night sky glow.)	The project's sources of light and glare would be largely similar to and compatible with existing commercial development in the project vicinity. All lighting would include shields to direct light downwards toward to prevent off-site light spillage and keep glare away from the adjacent properties and rights-of-way, as required by Section 17.16.100, Lighting and Illumination, of the County Code of Ordinances *(See Section 6.I, Aesthetics).* The project would be consistent with LU Policy 4.10.
Goal LU-5: A strong and diversified economic base through the creation, retention, expansion and attraction of business, agriculture, and industry.	**LU Policy 5.4:** Encourage attraction of new compatible business and industry to the county.	The project would create new jobs and economic benefits to Valley Springs. The proposed commercial development would be compatible with other commercial development and businesses in the vicinity. The project would be consistent with LU Policy 5.4.
	LU Policy 5.5: Revitalize existing community centers by encouraging a mixed use concentration of retail, entertainment, arts, housing and services to support job and economic growth.	The project would not construct new housing, as the project is located within an area of Valley Springs with primarily commercial development and is zoned C2. The project would support economic growth and would be adjacent to existing commercial development to minimize sprawl. The project would be consistent with LU Policy 5.5.
	LU Policy 5.9: Encourage and facilitate the renovation and reuse of underutilized and vacant parcels, industrial sites, buildings, and retail centers.	The project site is undeveloped and currently used for cattle grazing. The project is adjacent to existing commercial development and would minimize sprawl while diversifying the economic base. The project would be consistent with LU Policy 5.9.

Plan Goals	Policies	Evaluation
Valley Springs Community Plan		
Land Use	**CPVS 1.5:** Encourage the use of shared parking, pedestrian connections, and clustering of commercial development.	The project would cluster new commercial development on one site, including a drive-through coffee shop, ARCO convenience store, gas station, car wash, drive-through fast-food restaurant, diner, and oil change. The clustered commercial development would facilitate shared parking and pedestrian connections throughout the site *(See Section 6.XVII, Transportation, and Mitigation Measure TRA-3)*. The project would be consistent with CPVS 1.5.
Economic Development	**CPVS 3.1:** Expand Valley Springs' economic base and diversity with local businesses that provide shopping, services, and jobs in the Town Center that better serve the needs of residents and businesses.	The project would create new jobs and provide new economic opportunities and benefits to Valley Springs. The project would expand the community's economic base and diversity of businesses and services. The project would be consistent with CPVS 3.1.

As shown in Table 18, the project would be consistent with the County General Plan and VSCP. Implementation of Mitigation Measures NOI-1 and TRA-1 through TRA-5 would minimize and avoid potential impacts related to noise and traffic (General Plan LU Policy 4.3). In addition, Mitigation Measure TRA-3 would require the project to include the construction of sidewalks along the entire project frontage, which would ensure the proposed project would not conflict with existing policies addressing pedestrian facilities (General Plan LU Policy 4.8). Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measures NOI-1 and TRA-1 through TRA-5, the project would not conflict with a land use plan, policy, or regulation, and the impact would be reduced to less than significant.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

At least 26 minerals have been produced commercially within the County. Gold, copper, limestone, and limestone products account for the greatest contribution towards the County's total mineral production. Other mineral commodities that have been produced in quantity include zinc, silver, lead, chromite, clay, stone, sand, and gravel. In addition, numerous mineral commodities have not been mined commercially, but are known to be present within the County (County 2018).

The DOC's Division of Mine Reclamation (DMR) compiles data on the current status of mines and the commodities produced. The DOC's CGS produces Mineral Land Classification (MLC) studies that identify areas with potentially important mineral resources that should be considered in local and regional planning. There are no mineral resource recovery sites on the project site, nor is the project site located within an MLC (DOC 2025c; 2025d).

Impact Analysis

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

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

No Impact. There are no known mineral resources located on the project site. Additionally, there are no mineral resource recovery sites on the project site, nor is the project site located within an MLC (DOC 2025c; 2025d). The proposed project would not 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 or the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site. Therefore, no impact would occur for questions a) and b).

XIII. NOISE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

This section is based on a Noise and Vibration Technical Report prepared by HELIX for the proposed project in June 2026 (HELIX 2026d). The report is included in Appendix E to this IS/MND.

Environmental Setting

Noise Metrics

Noise is generally defined as unwanted sound. Sound, traveling in the form of waves from a source, exerts a sound pressure level (referred to as sound level) that is measured in decibels (dB), which is the standard unit of sound amplitude measurement. The dB scale is a logarithmic scale that describes the physical intensity of the pressure vibrations that make up any sound, with 0 dB corresponding roughly to the threshold of human hearing and 120 to 140 dB corresponding to the threshold of pain. Pressure waves traveling through air exert a force registered by the human ear as sound.

Sound pressure fluctuations can be measured in units of hertz (Hz), which correspond to the frequency of a particular sound. Typically, sound does not consist of a single frequency, but rather a broad band of frequencies varying in levels of magnitude. When all the audible frequencies of a sound are measured, a sound spectrum is plotted consisting of a range of frequency spanning 20 to 20,000 Hz. The sound pressure level, therefore, constitutes the additive force exerted by a sound corresponding to the sound frequency/sound power level spectrum. The typical human ear is not equally sensitive to all frequencies of the audible sound spectrum.

As a consequence, when assessing potential noise impacts, sound is measured using an electronic filter that deemphasizes the frequencies below 1,000 Hz and above 5,000 Hz in a manner corresponding to the human ear's decreased sensitivity to extremely low and extremely high frequencies. This method of frequency weighting is referred to as A-weighting and is expressed in units of A-weighted decibels (dBA).

A-weighting follows an international standard methodology of frequency deemphasis and is typically applied to community noise measurements.

An individual's noise exposure is a measure of noise over a period of time. While a noise level is a measure of noise at a given instant in time, community noise varies continuously over a period of time with respect to the contributing sound sources of the community noise environment. Community noise is primarily the product of many distant noise sources, which constitute a relatively stable background noise exposure, with the individual contributors unidentifiable. The background noise level changes throughout a typical day, but does so gradually, corresponding with the addition and subtraction of distant noise sources such as traffic. What makes community noise variable throughout a day, besides the slowly changing background noise, is the addition of short-duration, single-event noise sources (e.g., aircraft flyovers, motor vehicles, sirens), which is readily identifiable to the individual.

These successive additions of sound to the community noise environment change the community noise level from instant to instant, requiring the measurement of noise exposure over a period of time to legitimately characterize a community noise environment and evaluate cumulative noise impacts. This time-varying characteristic of environmental noise is described using statistical noise descriptors. The most frequently used noise descriptors are summarized below:

L_{EQ}: The L_{EQ}, or equivalent sound level, is used to describe noise over a specified period of time in terms of a single numerical value; the L_{EQ} of a time-varying signal and that of a steady signal are the same if they deliver the same acoustic energy over a given time. The L_{EQ} may also be referred to as the average sound level.

L_{MAX}: The maximum, instantaneous noise level experienced during a given period of time.

L_{MIN}: The minimum, instantaneous noise level experienced during a given period of time.

L_{DN}: Also termed the DNL, the L_{DN} is the average A-weighted noise level during a 24-hour day, obtained after an addition of 10 dBA to measured noise levels between the hours of 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. to account nighttime noise sensitivity.

CNEL: CNEL, or Community Noise Equivalent Level, is the average A-weighted noise level during a 24-hour day that is obtained after an addition of 5 dBA to measured noise levels between the hours of 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and after an addition of 10 dBA to noise levels between the hours of 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. to account for noise sensitivity in the evening and nighttime, respectively.

An important way of predicting a human reaction to a new noise environment is the way it compares to the existing environment to which one has adapted (i.e., comparison to the ambient noise environment). In general, the more a new noise level exceeds the previously existing ambient noise level, the less acceptable the new noise level will be judged by those hearing it. Outside of the laboratory, a 3 dBA change in noise levels is considered to be a barely perceivable difference. A change in noise levels of 5 dBA is considered to be readily perceivable, and a change of 10 dBA is subjectively heard as doubling of the perceived loudness.

These relationships occur in part because of the logarithmic nature of sound and the decibel system. The human ear perceives sound in a non-linear fashion; hence the decibel scale was developed. Because the decibel scale is based on logarithms, two noise sources do not combine in a simple additive fashion,

but rather logarithmically. For example, if two identical noise sources produce noise levels of 50 dBA, the combined sound level would be 53 dBA, not 100 dBA.

Noise levels from a particular source generally decline as distance to the receptor increases. Other factors, such as the weather and reflecting or barriers, also help intensify or reduce the noise level at any given location. A commonly used rule of thumb for roadway noise is that for every doubling of distance from the source, the noise level is reduced by about 3 dBA at acoustically "hard" locations (i.e., the area between the noise source and the receptor is nearly complete asphalt, concrete, hard-packed soil, or other solid materials) and 4.5 dBA at acoustically "soft" locations (i.e., the area between the source and receptor is normal earth or has vegetation, including grass). Noise from stationary or point sources is reduced by about 6 to 7.5 dBA for every doubling of distance at acoustically hard and soft locations, respectively. Noise levels may also be reduced by intervening structures–generally, a single row of buildings between the receptor and the noise source reduces the noise level by about 5 dBA, while a solid wall or berm reduces noise levels by 5 to 10 dBA.

Calaveras County Noise Regulations

County Code of Ordinances

Chapter 9.02, Noise Control, of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances contains the following sections that regulate noise in the County.

The Calaveras County Code of Ordinances Section 9.02.060(D) exempts construction noise from the noise ordinance standards provided that all construction in or adjacent to residential areas shall be limited to the daytime hours between 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., unless otherwise subject to conditions in a valid discretionary land use permit that addresses construction noise associated with the project.

Section 9.02.030(A), Sound level limitations, states the following:

> *No person shall cause, allow, or permit the operation of any sound source on property or any public space or public right-of-way in such a manner as to create a sound level that exceeds the levels listed in Table 1* [reproduced as Table 19 below]*. If all provisions of Subsection 9.02.060D. are complied with, this section shall not apply to construction equipment used in connection with construction operations.*

Table 19: Exterior Noise Level Standards

	Sound Level (A-Weighted) Decibels	
Land Use Type[1]	***7:00 a.m.—10:00 p.m.[2]***	***10:00 p.m.—7:00 a.m.***
Residential	60	50
Commercial	70	60
Industrial (Industry)	75	65

Source: Calaveras County Code of Ordinances

Notes: Each of the sound level standards specified in Table 1 shall be reduced by five dBA for pure tone noises. However, in no case shall the exterior noise level standard be lower than the ambient sound level plus five dBA.

[1]As defined in Title 17 of the Calaveras County Code.

[2]Subsection 9.02.050E provides an extension to midnight on Friday and Saturday for the events listed in the provision.

General Plan Noise Element

The Calaveras County General Plan Noise Element is intended to maintain the rural atmosphere that attracts visitors, residents, and businesses to Calaveras County while establishing consistent and predictable noise standards for new development. The Noise Element provides a framework for addressing potential noise conflicts between existing and proposed new land uses and serves as a guide for compliance with California's noise insulation standards. The primary objective of the Noise Element is to identify noise sources and minimize exposure of residents, visitors, and businesses to excessive noise (County 2019).

The General Plan Noise Element has the following applicable goals and associated policies for addressing noise issues in the community:

- **Goal N-1:** Noise levels consistent with the County's rural atmosphere and that maintain compatibility between differing land uses, and protect the health and well-being of residents, visitors and businesses

    - Policy N 1.2: Evaluate the potential impacts of noise on and from existing and planned land uses and public and private transportation facilities during the development review process using noise thresholds set forth in Tables N-2 and N-3. (IM N-1C and N-1E)

    - Policy N 1.3: Determine that a potentially significant adverse noise-related impact exists when a non-transportation related project (excluding temporary initial construction noise) has the potential to increase the overall ambient noise levels at the receiving land use by 3 dB or more when the ambient noise levels exceed the standards in Table Noise-2. (IM N-1E)

    - Policy N 1.4: Determine that a potentially significant adverse noise-related impact exists when a project generating transportation noise (excluding temporary initial construction noise) has the potential to do one or more of the following:

        - Where existing traffic noise levels are less than 60 dB Ldn at the outdoor activity areas of noise-sensitive uses, a +5 dB Ldn increase in noise levels due to roadway improvement projects will be considered significant; and

        - Where existing traffic noise levels range between 60 and 65 dB Ldn at the outdoor activity areas of noise-sensitive uses, a +3 dB Ldn increase in noise levels due to roadway improvement projects will be considered significant; and

        - Where existing traffic noise levels are greater than 65 dB Ldn at the outdoor activity areas of noise-sensitive uses, a + 1.5 dB Ldn increase in noise levels due to roadway improvement projects will be considered significant. (IM N-1C and N-1E)

    - Policy N.1.14: Limit the use of heavy-duty vibration-generating construction equipment, such as vibratory rollers, within close proximity of existing buildings, particularly buildings of weak structural integrity and/or historical significance to ensure that groundborne vibration shall not exceed 0.2 in/sec PPV at the nearest sensitive receptor. For construction projects where vibration-intensive activities are anticipated, a

designated person shall be responsible for registering and investigation claims of excessive vibration. The contact information of such person shall be clearly posted on the construction site.

Impact Analysis

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?

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed project would generate noise levels during project construction and operation, as discussed below.

Construction

Construction of the project is anticipated to occur over an approximately 14-month period starting in as early as July 2028 and ending in September 2029. Project construction activities would include demolition, site preparation, grading/excavation for underground utilities and USTs, paving, building construction, and architectural coating (e.g., painting). The project would produce varying noise levels during project construction depending on the location and equipment used. Table 20, *Construction Noise Levels*, shows the calculated noise level for each phase of project construction.

Table 20: Construction Noise Levels

Construction Phase/Activity	Equipment Used	Average Distance to Nearest Property Boundary Line (feet)	Resulting 1-Hour L_{EQ} at Nearest Residential Property Boundary Line (dBA)
Demolition	Concrete/Industrial Saw, Excavator, Rubber-Tired Dozer, Water Truck	115	79.8
Site Preparation	Dozer, Backhoe, Water Truck	280	70.2
Grading/Underground Utilities	Excavator, Grader, Dozer, Backhoe, Water Truck	280	71.2
Paving	Paver, Roller	55	78.8
Building Construction	Crane, Forklift[1], Generator Set, Backhoe, Welder	55	83.2
Architectural Coating	Air Compressor	55	72.9

Source: HELIX 2026d

[1]Forklifts are not included in the RCNM equipment list. Therefore, forklifts were modeled as front-end loaders, which perform similar multi-task functions but are typically larger and noisier than forklifts.

dBA = A-weighted decibels; L_{EQ} = time-averaged noise level

The Calaveras County Code of Ordinances Section 9.02.060 (D) exempts construction noise from the noise ordinance standards provided that all construction in or adjacent to residential areas shall be limited to the daytime hours between 7:00 A.M to 6:00 P.M., unless otherwise subject to conditions in a valid discretionary land use permit that addresses construction noise associated with the project.

Although the General Plan and Calaveras County Code of Ordinances Section 9.02.060(D) limit normal construction hours, the County has not adopted a construction noise limit. Therefore, this analysis uses the same standard of significance as used in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared for the

General Plan, which is based on the FTA's construction noise general assessment methodology. Construction noise would be potentially significant if it would exceed 90 dBA LEQ during daytime hours (7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.) or 80 dBA LEQ during nighttime hours (6:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.), measured at the nearest residential land use (FTA 2018; County 2018).

Project construction would be limited to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Therefore, as shown in Table 20, the project would not exceed the County's standards for construction noise at nearby residential land uses, and the impact during construction would be less than significant.

Operation

On-Site Noise

Noise generated on-site during project operation would include drive-through vehicle queuing, drive-through order boards and intercoms, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning [HVAC] systems, and car wash dryer and vacuum systems. All operations were conservatively assumed to operate 24 hours a day. A typical car wash cycle lasts for approximately five minutes with a dryer run time of approximately one minute per cycle. It is conservatively assumed that the car wash would operate at 75 percent of its maximum capacity during nighttime hours. Project operational noise sources would be similar to typical daytime noise sources from existing commercial developments in the project vicinity. These sources were analyzed using CadnaA noise modeling software (HELIX 2026d).

The closest operational noise sources to the single-family residence located to the north of the project would be those associated with the drive-through coffee shop. These sources include HVAC and drive-through intercom systems. Additional noise sources, including typical commercial/retail HVAC systems for each of the additional buildings and car wash dryer and vacuum systems, have been modeled with receivers placed at the property line of surrounding land uses. Per Section 9.02.030 of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances, noise generated on-site during project operation would be significant if maximum noise levels generated by the project's stationary sources would exceed 60 dBA at the property line of residential land uses or 70 dBA at the property line of commercial land uses during the daytime hours of 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., or a nighttime limit of 50 dBA at residential property lines and 60 dBA at commercial property lines.

Two noise measurement receivers were placed at the highest noise level points at the residential property line to the north (R1 and R2) and one at the commercial property line to the east (R3). R1 was placed near the northwest corner, and R2 was placed near the northeast nearest to SR 26. The measurement locations are shown on Figure 4 of Appendix E. The noise levels of these receivers are compared to the County standard in Table 21, *Operational Noise*.

Table 21: Operational Noise

Location	Daytime Level (dBA L_{EQ})	Daytime Limit (dBA)	Nighttime Level (dBA L_{EQ})	Nighttime Limit (dBA)
R1 – north residential property line	50.5	60	46.9	50
R2 – north residential property line nearest SR 26	57.3	60	**55.6**	50
R3 – east commercial property line	59.8	70	58.1	60

Bold text indicates a threshold would be exceeded without mitigation.

Based on the modeling results, the highest project noise levels would be generated by the drive-through order board speaker and the car wash dryer system. As shown in Table 21, of the three noise measurement receiver locations, one would exceed the noise limits set forth in Section 9.02.030 of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinance. At R2, project operation would result in a nighttime noise level of 55.6 dBA L_{EQ}, which would exceed the County noise limit of 50 dBA L_{EQ} at the property line of residential land uses. As currently designed, this would result in a potentially significant impact. However, R2 daytime noise levels would be below the limit, and noise levels at both R1 and R3 would be below the daytime and nighttime limits.

To reduce nighttime noise levels at R2, Mitigation Measure NOI-1 would require construction of a 6-foot-high noise barrier along the entire length of the common property line between the project site and residential property on the northern side of the project site. Construction of this noise barrier in accordance with the specifications outlined in Mitigation Measure NOI-1 would reduce nighttime noise levels at R2 to 49.4 dBA L_{EQ}, which would be below County noise limit of 50 dBA L_{EQ} at the property line of residential land uses. In addition, although daytime noise levels at R2 and daytime and nighttime noise levels at R1 would not exceed County standards, construction of this noise wall would further reduce noise levels at these locations. Therefore, with the implementation of Mitigation Measure NOI-1, the impact related to the project's stationary noise source would be reduced to less than significant.

Traffic Noise

A 3 dBA increase in ambient noise level represents a doubling of noise energy and the detectable increase threshold for noise in typical outdoor environments. Therefore, a 3 dBA increase in traffic noise levels would require an approximate doubling of traffic volumes.

According to the TIS prepared for the project, the existing traffic volumes during the a.m. peak hour at nearby roadways are 1,337 trips along SR 26 south of Mangili Road, 1,322 trips along SR 12 east of Laurel Street, 602 trips along SR 12 west of Laurel Street, 350 trips along Laurel Street north of SR 26, 133 trips Nove Way east of SR 26, and 60 trips to Jean Street east of SR 26 (W-Trans 2026). According to the project trip distribution analysis, full buildout of the project would add 57 a.m. peak hour trips to SR 26 south of Mangili Road, 52 trips to SR 12 east of Laurel Street, 42 trips to SR 12 west of Laurel Street, 12 trips to Laurel Street north of SR 26, 7 trips to Nove Way east of SR 26, and 3 trips to Jean Street east of SR 26. Therefore, the project would not double traffic volumes on area roads and the increase in ambient traffic noise as a result of full project buildout would be less than 3 dBA. Therefore, the impact related to traffic noise generated by the project would be less than significant.

Summary

Project construction would be limited to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and the project would not result in a temporary increase in ambient noise levels above established County standards during construction. As project operation would not double traffic volumes on area roads, the increase in ambient traffic noise as a result of full project buildout would be less than 3 dBA, and, therefore, would not represent a detectable increase in noise in typical outdoor environments. The project's stationary noise sources would result in an exceedance of the County's noise limit of 50 dBA L_{EQ} at residential properties along the project's northern property line at nighttime; however, Mitigation Measure NOI-1 would require construction of a 6-foot-high noise barrier, which would reduce nighttime noise levels to a level of less than significant. Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measure NOI-1, the project would not generate a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the

project in excess of standards set forth in Section 9.02.030 of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances. The impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Mitigation Measure NOI-1: Noise Barrier

Project operational noise would exceed the County's nighttime standard of 50 dBA at the northern property line. Noise reduction for noise-sensitive land uses (NSLU) near the northern property line shall be accomplished through the construction of a 6-foot-high noise barrier (wall). The sound wall shall be installed along the entire length of the common property line between the project site and residential property on the northern side of the project site. The noise barrier must be solid and constructed of masonry, wood, plastic, fiberglass, steel, or a combination of those materials, as long as there are no cracks or gaps, through or below it. Any seams or cracks must be filled or caulked. If wood is used, it can be tongue and groove and must be at least one-inch total thickness or have a density of at least 3½ pounds per square foot. Prior to issuance of building permits, the County shall ensure that the project plans include a noise barrier that meets the specifications outlined above.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The primary potential for generation of groundborne vibration would occur during project construction, specifically the use of a vibratory roller for compaction of aggregate and asphalt for the project driveways and parking lots. The Calaveras County General Plan Noise Element establishes a threshold of 0.2 inch per second peak particle velocity (PPV) at the nearest sensitive receptor (County 2019).

Construction may require the use of a vibratory roller, which may be used for compaction of soil beneath building foundations and could be used within 100 feet of the closest off-site residence north of the project site. The use of a vibratory roller would generate approximately 0.026 inch per second PPV at a distance of 100 feet, which is substantially lower than the County threshold of 0.2 inch per second. Additionally, off-site exposure to such groundborne vibration would be temporary as it would be limited to the short-term construction period. Temporary vibration impacts associated with project construction would be less than significant.

Finally, the project does not propose any major, new or expanded infrastructure such as mass transit, highways or major roadways, or intensive extractive industry that could generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels on-site or in the surrounding area. Therefore, the project would not result in the generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels, and the impact would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The nearest public use general aviation airport to the project site is the Calaveras County Airport/Maury Rasmussen Field, which is located south of San Andreas, approximately 10 miles southeast of the project site. According to the 2010 ALUCP, the project site is located over eight miles outside of the overall Airport Influence Area for the Calaveras County Airport. The nearest private airstrips to the project site are the Howard Private Airport and the Comanche Skypark Airport-CA 19, both of which are located in Ione, approximately seven miles northwest of the project site. Therefore,

implementation of the proposed project would not result in excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area, and the impact would be less than significant.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2020 Decennial Census, Calaveras County had a Countywide population of 45,292 people and a total of 27,579 housing units (Census Bureau 2025a). The County's 2019-2027 Housing Element Update estimates that the Countywide population will increase to approximately 50,259 people by the year 2060; however, the Draft EIR prepared for the General Plan Update determined that buildout under the General Plan would increase the total population in the County to up to 117,045 people (County 2019; County 2018). The buildout estimate represents the "carrying capacity" and represents how much development could potentially occur within the County over the life of the General Plan based on the General Plan Land Use Map.

Valley Springs is a Census Designated Place in unincorporated Calaveras County. In the 2020 Decennial Census, Valley Springs had an estimated population of 3,779 people and 279 housing units (Census Bureau 2025b).

Impact Analysis

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)?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project would not include the construction of new housing units; however, the project would include the construction of a drive-through coffee shop, an ARCO convenience store with six fuel pumps and a car wash tunnel, drive-through fast-food restaurant, and a diner. The Arco convenience store and gas station would have up to 20 employees, and the fast-food restaurant is expected to have between 30 and 50 employees. The hours of operation and number of employees for the drive-through coffee shop, diner, and oil change shop are currently unknown and may vary depending on future tenants and vendors.

The proposed project could result in direct population growth through the creation of new jobs in Valley Springs; however, it is anticipated that the majority of jobs would be filled by existing residents in Valley Springs and/or immediate surrounding communities within the County.

The Draft EIR prepared for the County General Plan Update determined that, in 2013, the County had a jobs-to-housing balance ratio of 0.42 (8,020 jobs/19,260 total civilian labor force). Based on U.S. Census Bureau data in 2024, the County had a jobs-to-housing balance ratio of 0.31 (7,149 jobs/22,833 total civilian labor force), which indicates that the jobs-to-housing balance ratio has decreased in recent years. A ratio of 1.0 indicates a balance, while a ratio greater than 1.0 indicates a net in-commute, and a ratio less than 1.0 indicates a net out-commute (County 2018). The proposed project would create new jobs and provide economic benefits in Valley Springs, which could aid in balancing the jobs-to-housing ratio in the community. Further, as buildout under the County General Plan would increase the total population of the County to up to 117,045 people, the proposed project would not result in substantial unplanned population growth beyond what has been planned for in the General Plan. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. The project site is currently undeveloped and is currently used for cattle grazing. The project site is bordered by a single-family residence and commercial land uses to the north, SR 26 and commercial land uses to the east, commercial land uses and undeveloped land to the south, and undeveloped land and SR 12 to the west. As the project site is undeveloped, implementation of the proposed project would not displace existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. Therefore, no impact would occur.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
a) Fire protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Police protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Schools?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Parks?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Environmental Setting

Fire Protection

The project site is located within the Cal-Co Fire service area, which encompasses 163 square miles and serves over 15,000 people in the northwestern corner of the County. Cal-Co Fire has three fully equipped stations: Company 1 is located approximately 3.5 miles west of the project site; Company 2 is located approximately 0.25 mile north of the project site; and Company 3 is located approximately 5.5 miles southwest of the project site (Cal-Co Fire 2025).

Cal-Co Fire uses a response time goal of four minutes. The actual response time from dispatch to on-scene is approximately nine minutes in rural areas of the Cal-Co Fire service area and three to four minutes within the developed areas of Jenny Lind and Valley Springs (County 2018).

CAL FIRE provides protection against wildland fires, such as forest and grassland fires, in areas within the County designated as an SRA. CAL FIRE's Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit has several fire stations in the County, including the Valley Springs Forest Fire Station located approximately 1.6 miles southeast of the project site.

Police Protection

The Calaveras County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement services to the unincorporated areas of the County. The Calaveras County Sheriff's Department consists of the main sheriff's office and County Jail located in San Andreas at the Government Center, as well as five substations. The Valley Springs Substation is located approximately 700 feet north of the project site. The Sheriff's Department runs the Office of Emergency Services (OES), the Marine Safety, Hazardous Materials (Haz Mat) Team,

and the Explosives Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Unit, which are all located at the County Airport (County 2018).

Schools

The project site is within the Calaveras Unified School District. The nearest schools to the project site include Valley Springs Elementary School, approximately 0.27 mile northwest of the site; Toyon Middle School, approximately 4.2 miles northeast of the site; and Jenny Lind Elementary School, approximately 4.3 miles southwest of the site.

Parks

Local recreational facilities in the project vicinity include the Valley Springs Memorial Park and Jenny Lind Veterans Memorial Park, both located approximately 0.5 mile northwest of the project site within the Jenny Lind Veterans District. New Hogan Reservoir is located approximately 1.3 miles southeast of the project site, which is owned and managed by USACE and provides boating, swimming, fishing, picnicking, and camping opportunities (County 2018).

Other Public Facilities

The Calaveras County Library System is a Countywide system consisting of a central library located in San Andreas and seven branch facilities, including one branch in Valley Springs, approximately 0.3 mile northwest of the project site.

Calaveras County is served by Mark Twain St. Joseph's Hospital (MTSJH) located in San Andreas. MTSJH is a 48-bed hospital providing inpatient acute care and emergency services. The County is divided into three ambulance response areas, and the majority of ambulance services in the County are provided by the American Legion Ambulance Service (County 2018).

Impact Analysis

a) Fire protection?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project is located within the Cal-Co Fire service area, and the nearest fire station is Company 2, which is located approximately 0.25 mile north of the project site. Additionally, CAL FIRE's Valley Springs Forest Fire Station is located approximately 1.6 miles southeast of the project site. Operation of the proposed commercial project would result in an incremental demand in fire protection services; however, this demand would be minimal and would not overburden existing services. The project would be required to adhere to all provisions of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances that minimize fire hazards, including Chapter 8.08, Hazardous Fire Areas, which establishes safeguards and regulations related to recreational, residential, commercial, industrial, and other activities that could increase the threat of fire hazard; and 15.08, Calaveras Fire Mitigation Fee Ordinance, which requires new development in the unincorporated areas of the County to pay its fair share to maintain the pre-existing level of service, thereby mitigating the impact of development on fire protection service. Other applicable provisions of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances include Chapter 15.09, Fire Regulations for State Responsibility Areas, which adopts PRC Section 4290 Fire Safe Regulations for State Responsibility Areas, and Chapter 15.10, Defensible Space Requirements, which adopts PRC Sections 4291 – 4299. Specifically, PRC Sections 4291 – 4299 sets defensible space requirements around buildings and structures from 30 feet to 100 feet for any person that owns, leases,

controls, operates, or maintains a building or structure in, upon, or adjoining any mountainous area, forest-covered lands, brush-covered lands, grass-covered lands, or any land that is covered with flammable material. Therefore, the proposed project would not require the construction or expansion of fire protection facilities in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives. The impact related to fire protection would be less than significant.

b) Police protection?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project would receive law enforcement services from the Calaveras County Sheriff's Department. The Valley Springs Substation is located approximately 700 feet north of the project site. The proposed project would include exterior building lighting and parking lot lighting for security purposes to reduce potential criminal activity on-site. As such, operation of the proposed commercial project would result in an incremental demand in police protection services; however, this demand would be minimal and would not overburden existing services. Therefore, the proposed project would not require the construction or expansion of police protection facilities in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives. The impact related to police protection would be less than significant.

c) Schools?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section 6.XIV, Population and Housing, the proposed project would not induce substantial population growth beyond what has been planned for in the County General Plan. The project site is within the Calaveras Unified School District. The nearest schools to the project site include Valley Springs Elementary School, approximately 0.27 mile northwest of the site; Toyon Middle School, approximately 4.2 miles northeast of the site; and Jenny Lind Elementary School, approximately 4.3 miles southwest of the site. As the proposed project would not induce substantial population growth, operation of the proposed would not require the construction or expansion of schools in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives. The impact related to schools would be less than significant.

d) Parks?

e) Other public facilities?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section 6.XIV, Population and Housing, the proposed project could result in direct population growth through the creation of new jobs in Valley Springs; however, it is anticipated that the majority of jobs would be filled by existing residents in Valley Springs and/or immediate surrounding communities. The proposed project would not induce substantial population growth beyond what has been planned for in the County General Plan. As such, the project would not require the construction or expansion of parks or other public facilities, including libraries or emergency services. At the time of issuance of a building permit, the proposed project would be required to contribute its fair share of public facilities fees, as stipulated in Chapter 15.07, Public Facilities Fees, of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances. Therefore, the impact related to parks and other public facilities would be less than significant for questions d) and e).

XVI. RECREATION

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Environmental Setting

Local recreational facilities in the project vicinity include the Valley Springs Memorial Park and Jenny Lind Veterans Memorial Park, both located approximately 0.5 mile northwest of the project site within the Jenny Lind Veterans District. New Hogan Reservoir is located approximately 1.3 miles southeast of the project site, which is owned and managed by USACE, and provides boating, swimming, fishing, picnicking, and camping opportunities (County 2018).

Impact Analysis

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

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section 6.XIV, Population and Housing, the proposed project would not induce substantial population growth beyond what has been planned for in the County General Plan. At the time of issuance of a building permit, the proposed project would be required to contribute its fair share of public facilities fees, as stipulated in Chapter 15.07, Public Facilities Fees, of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially 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. The impact would be less than significant.

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

No Impact. The proposed project includes the construction of a coffee shop, ARCO convenience store, car wash, fast-food restaurant, diner, and oil change shop. The project does not include recreational facilities and would not require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment. Therefore, no impact would occur.

XVII. TRANSPORTATION

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
a)	Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b)	Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c)	Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d)	Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☒	☐	☐

This section is based on a TIS prepared by W-Trans for the proposed project in March 2026 (W-Trans 2026). The TIS is included within Appendix F to this IS/MND.

Environmental Setting

Transportation Impact Methodology

For purposes of the transportation impact analysis, the "Baseline Plus Project" operating scenario is used, which includes baseline operating conditions in combination with projected conditions under the proposed project. In this case, the "Baseline" includes existing operating conditions in the project area, plus projected operating conditions from relevant nearby pending and approved projects, which includes one approved project – the North Vista Plaza – a 156-lot residential subdivision approximately 1.5 miles south of the project site.

Study Intersections

Operating conditions during the a.m. and p.m. peak periods were evaluated to capture the highest potential impacts for the proposed project as well as the highest volumes on the local transportation network. The morning peak hour occurs between 7:00 and 9:00 a.m. and reflects conditions during the home to work or school commute, while the p.m. peak hour occurs between 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. and typically reflects the highest level of congestion during the homeward bound commute (W-Trans 2026). Counts were obtained for the following study intersections on November 12, 2025:

- **SR 26-Laurel Street/SR 12** is a four-legged intersection with all-way stop control. SR 26 and SR 12 are two-lane highways, while Laurel Street is a two-lane local road. There are bicycle lanes on SR 12, and marked crosswalks on the west, north, and east legs.

- **SR 26/Jean Street** is a four-way intersection with no controls posted though traffic on the Jean Street and Sender's Market Ace Hardware driveway approaches have de facto stops. SR 26 is a three-lane highway, with one travel lane in each direction and a two-way left-turn lane. Jean

Street is a local road that provides access to a series of driveways for businesses on the east side of SR 26.

- **SR 26/Nove Way** is a tee intersection with stop control on Nove Way, which provides local access to businesses on the east side of SR 26.

- **SR 26/Hogan Dam Road** is a wye intersection, with free-flowing approaches to SR 26 and controlled stop at Hogan Dam Road. The Hogan Dam Road approach is acute, approximately 30 degrees from SR 26, and forms a greater triangle shape with the SR 26/Hogan Dam Road-Mangili Road intersection such that left turns from Hogan Dam Road onto SR 26 or right turns from northbound SR 26 onto Hogan Dam Road are rare. Both SR 26 and Hogan Dam Road are two-lane highways.

- **SR 26/Hogan Dam Road-Mangili Road** is a four-legged intersection with stop controls on the Hogan Dam Road and Mangili Road approaches only. All roads are two lanes.

Trip Generation

The anticipated trip generation for the proposed project was estimated using standard rates published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) in Trip Generation Manual, 12th Edition, 2025, for “Coffee/Donut Shop with Drive-Through Window” (LU #937), “Convenience Store/Gas Station” (LU #945), “Fast-Food Restaurant with Drive-Through Window” (LU #934), “Quick Lubrication Vehicle Shop” (LU #941), and “High-Turnover (Sit-Down) Restaurant” (LU #932). Note that trip generation for the drive-through car wash attached to the gas station was not considered separately as gas station car wash tunnels tend to be patronized by users of the gas station, so its trip generation would be captured by the trip generation of the gas station overall (W-Trans 2026).

Traffic associated with a mixed-use development has several different trip components. Some trips are made without leaving the site as employees or customers of one establishment patronize other uses on the site, for instance people getting gas eating at the fast-food restaurant, or employees at the oil changers getting drinks from the coffee shop. These trips are called “internal capture” trips. The Trip Generation Handbook includes data and standard methodologies that can be applied to determine the proportion of internal trips that may occur within a development area that includes a variety of land uses. A five-percent rate was applied to the coffee shop, fast food, and oil change uses to estimate that one in 20 patrons or employees of these uses would visit another use on the site before leaving. For the gas station, the estimated rate was ten percent, or one-in-ten site users. The diner was conservatively estimated to only attract off-site trips given its more primary nature of patronage (W-Trans 2026).

Some portion of the traffic would be drawn from existing traffic on nearby streets. These vehicle trips are not considered "new," but are instead comprised of drivers who are already driving on the adjacent street and choose to make an interim stop. These trips are referred to as “pass-by.” The percentage of these pass-by trips was based on information provided in the Trip Generation Manual for the daily, a.m. peak hour, and p.m. peak hour for the coffee shop use, the a.m. and p.m. peak hours for the gas station with convenience store and fast-food restaurant uses, and the p.m. peak hour for the diner use. Pass-by trip rates for the oil change land use were not included in the manual, so a peak hour rate of 40 percent was chosen, which is conservatively lower than the pass-by rates for the other four land uses. The daily pass-by rates for the gas station with convenience store, fast food restaurant, oil change, and diner land uses were conservatively estimated to be half of the measured peak hour pass-by rates. The pass-by

rates were applied to the estimated trip generation after the internal capture trips were deducted (W-Trans 2026).

Based on application of these rates and assumptions, the proposed project is expected to generate an average of 5,780 trips per day, including 536 a.m. peak hour trips and 478 trips during the p.m. peak hour. After deductions are taken into account for internal capture and pass-by trips, the project would be anticipated to generate a daily average of 3,461 trips, including 173 trips during the morning peak hour and 158 evening peak hour trips (W-Trans 2026).

Trip Distribution

Given the high proportion of site users who would access the site while traveling to and from other destinations, the trip distribution assumptions were developed based on the relative ratios of traffic flowing into and out of the project area. For example, 33 percent of traffic entering or leaving the study area did so on SR 26 from/to the south of Mangili Road, so 33 percent of project traffic was assumed to route this way as well. Application of these distribution assumptions (with manual adjustments for rounding) and the resulting trips are shown in Table 22, *Trip Distribution Assumptions*, below (W-Trans 2026).

Table 22: Trip Distribution Assumptions

Route	Percent	Daily Trips	A.M. Peak	P.M. Peak
SR 26 south of Mangili Road	33	1,143	57	53
SR 12 east of Laurel Street	30	1,038	52	47
SR 12 west of Laurel Street	24	831	42	38
Laurel Street north of SR 26	7	242	12	11
Nove Way east of SR 26	4	138	7	6
Jean Street east of SR 26	2	69	3	3
Total:	**100**	**3,461**	**173**	**158**

Source: W-Trans 2026

Vehicle Queuing

The County maintains traffic queuing standards in the 2019 Traffic Impact Analysis Guidelines. Per these Guidelines, 95th percentile queues are to be assessed for each lane approaching a study intersection. Queuing impacts are considered substantial if the addition of project traffic causes queues to:

1. Substantially exceed the available storage capacity and extend through the adjacent street intersection;
2. Substantially extend through right or left-turn pocket;
3. Substantially extend in the through lane blocking a right- or left-turn pocket; or if
4. Queues result in insufficient sight distance conditions.

The projected 95th percentile queues for each lane at the four-way intersection at SR 26/Laurel Street and SR 12 were determined using methodologies published in the Transportation Research Board's 2022 Highway Capacity Manual (HCM), Seventh Edition. This results in estimated queue lengths in terms of vehicles, which were converted to feet using an industry-standard length of 25 feet per vehicle. Only the intersection at SR 26/Laurel Street and SR 12 was assessed, as the other study intersections have free-flowing conditions on SR 26 and stop controls with relatively low volumes for the side streets. As such, the queues estimated for these locations generally are under 50 feet (W-Trans 2026).

The northbound right-turn lane at the SR 26/Laurel Street and SR 12 intersection extends 200 feet from the intersection. Under the Baseline Plus Project scenario, the queue in the northbound through/left-turn lane would exceed this capacity by one vehicle, or 25 feet, for the a.m. peak hour. On the westbound approach, the left-turn lane is 280 feet long, which would be exceeded by 78 feet during the p.m. peak hour under Baseline Plus Project conditions (W-Trans 2026).

Traffic Signal Warrants

A signal warrant analysis was performed to determine potential need for a traffic signal at the five study intersections and two additional project driveway locations. Chapter 4C of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA-MUTCD) provides guidance on when a traffic signal should be considered. There are nine different warrants, or criteria, presented, as follows:

- Warrant 1, 8-Hour Vehicular Volume
- Warrant 2, 4-Hour Vehicular Volume
- Warrant 3, Peak Hour Volume
- Warrant 4, Pedestrian Volume
- Warrant 5, School Crossing
- Warrant 6, Coordinated Signal System
- Warrant 7, Crash Experience
- Warrant 8, Roadway Network
- Warrant 9, Intersection Near a Grade Crossing

Warrant 3, which is often the first warrant to be met, has a notice that this signal warrant shall be applied only in unusual cases, such as office complexes, manufacturing plants, industrial complexes, or high-occupancy vehicle facilities that attract or discharge large numbers of vehicles over a short time. Under the Peak Hour Warrant the need for a traffic control signal shall be considered if an engineering study finds that the criteria in either of the following two categories are met:

A. If all three of the following conditions exist for the same one hour (any four consecutive 15-minute periods) of an average day:

    1. The total stopped time delay experienced by the traffic on one minor-street approach (one direction only) controlled by a STOP sign equals or exceeds: four vehicle-hours for a one-lane approach; or five vehicle-hours for a two-lane approach, and

    2. The volume on the same minor-street approach (one direction only) equals or exceeds 100 vehicles per hour for one moving lane of traffic or 150 vehicles per hour for two moving lanes, and

    3. The total entering volume serviced during the hour equals or exceeds 650 vehicles per hour for intersections with three approaches or 800 vehicles per hour for intersections with four or more approaches.

B. The plotted point representing the vehicles per hour on the major street (total of both approaches) and the corresponding vehicles per hour on the higher-volume minor-street approach (one direction only) for one hour (any four consecutive 15-minute periods) of an

average day falls above the applicable curve in Figure 4C-3 for the existing combination of approach lanes.

For the purposes of this study, Warrant 3, the Peak Hour volume warrant, which determines the need for traffic control based on the highest volume hour of the day, was used as an initial indication of traffic control needs. The use of this signal warrant is common practice for planning studies. Other warrants, which are more generally applicable to existing traffic issues, require collection of traffic volumes for the highest four or eight hours of the day, review of the collision history, and evaluation of the system surrounding the location (W-Trans 2026).

Warrant 3 can be satisfied by meeting the conditions Category A or Category B. For Category A, Condition 2 requires at least 100 vehicles per hour from a one-lane minor street approach, and 150 vehicles per hour from a two-lane approach. For Category B, the applicable curve for an isolated area of fewer than 10,000 residents (which applies to Valley Springs), bottoms out at 75 vehicles per hour on one approach of the minor street regardless of how many vehicles are on the major street. Therefore, by inspection any intersection with fewer than 75 vehicles approaching from each side of a minor street will not satisfy Warrant 3. This condition applies under all volume scenarios assessed for SR 26/Hogan Dam Road, SR 26/Mangili Road-Hogan Dam Road, and the project's north driveway and south driveway. It also applies to SR 26/Jean Street for all a.m. peak hour volume scenarios without or with project traffic added, as well as SR 26/Nove Way for all a.m. peak hour volume scenarios without project traffic (W-Trans 2026).

Under Existing Conditions (without project) volumes for both peak hours, a traffic signal is warranted at the SR 26/Laurel Street and SR 12 intersection. As the Existing Conditions scenario contains the lowest vehicle volumes, a traffic signal would therefore be warranted at the SR 26/Laurel Street and SR 12 intersection under the Baseline Plus Project scenario. Similarly, traffic signals are warranted at the SR 26 and Jean Street intersection and at the SR 26 and Nove Way under Existing Conditions volumes during the p.m. peak hour, and therefore, are also warranted under the Baseline Plus Project scenario (W-Trans 2026).

Existing Transportation Facilities and Conditions

Roads

The following roads in the vicinity of the proposed project provide local circulation in the vicinity of the project and throughout the County and greater region:

- **SR 26** is a State highway that runs northeast-southwest from SR 88 near Pioneer, Amador County to SR 99 in Stockton, San Joaquin County. In the vicinity of the project, it is a two-lane highway that intersects with SR 12 and Laurel Street, and runs east concurrent with SR 12.

- **SR 12** is State highway that runs east-west from SR 49 near San Andreas, Calaveras County to SR 116 in Sebastopol, Sonoma County. In the vicinity of the project, it is a two-lane highway that intersects SR 26 and Laurel Street, and runs east concurrent with SR 26.

- **Hogan Dam Road** runs north-south in Calaveras County from the wye intersection with SR 26 to its intersection with Hunt Road. In the vicinity of the project, it is a paved two-lane road.

Pedestrian Facilities

Pedestrian facilities generally include sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signal phases, curb ramps, curb extensions, and various streetscape amenities such as lighting, benches, etc. Existing pedestrian facilities in the project area include a discontinuous network of sidewalks in the vicinity of the proposed project, with existing gaps and obstacles that inhibit convenient and continuous access for pedestrians.

Bicycle Facilities

Caltrans' 2025 Highway Design Manual classifies bikeways into four categories:

- **Class I Multi-Use Path:** a completely separated right-of-way for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians with cross flows of motorized traffic minimized.
- **Class II Bike Lane:** a striped and signed lane for one-way bike travel on a street or highway.
- **Class III Bike Route:** signing only for shared use with motor vehicles within the same travel lane on a street or highway.
- **Class IV Bikeway:** also known as a separated bikeway, a Class IV Bikeway is for the exclusive use of bicycles and includes a separation between the bikeway and the motor vehicle traffic lane. The separation may include, but is not limited to, grade separation, flexible posts, inflexible physical barriers, or on-street parking.

In the project area, Class II bike lanes exist on Daphne Street between Pine Street and Rose Street and on SR 12, between 100 feet west of SR 12 and 830 feet east of SR 12. A small section of Class I shared-use path exists on Paloma Road. Class IV bikeway facilities are planned along SR 12 between Pine Street and Lime Creek Road as well as on SR 26 between SR 12 and Hogan Dam Road (north), with a Class I multi-use path extending to Silver Rapids Road. Bicyclists ride in the roadway and/or on sidewalks along all other streets within the project study area (CCOG 2026).

Transit Facilities

Calaveras Connect provides fixed route bus service in Valley Springs and Calaveras County. Calaveras Connect's Red Line provides regional service to destinations throughout Calaveras County and stops at the intersection of SR 26 and Jean Street. The Red Line operates Monday through Friday with approximately one-hour headways between 6:10 a.m. and 7:50 p.m. The project site is about 600 feet south of the nearest public transit stop at the Sender's Market Ace Hardware. Dial-a-ride, also known as paratransit, or door-to-door service, is available for those who are unable to independently use the transit system due to a physical or mental disability. Calaveras Connect's Direct-Connect Dial-a-Ride is designed to serve the needs of individuals with disabilities within Valley Springs and the greater Calaveras County area.

Vehicle Collision History

The collision history for the project area was reviewed to determine any trends or patterns that may indicate a safety issue. Collision rates were calculated based on records available from the California Highway Patrol as published in their Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) reports (January 1st, 2020, through December 31st, 2024). The calculated collision rates for the study

intersections were compared to average collision rates for similar facilities statewide, as indicated in Caltrans' 2023 Collision Data on California State Highways. These average rates statewide are for intersections in the same environment (urban, suburban, or rural), with the same number of approaches (three or four), and the same controls (all-way stop, two-way stop, or traffic signal).

Of the study intersections in the project area, only the intersection at SR 26/Laurel Street and 12 had a collision rate higher than the statewide average for similar facilities. Of the 23 collisions reported at this location between 2020 and 2024, 14 were broadside. Of the 14 broadside collisions reported, 13 of them were due to either failing to properly stop and/or yield right-of-way at the all-way stop-controlled intersection. The one other broadside collision was attributed primarily to improper turning. There were also four rear-end collisions at this intersection, with three attributed to speed and the fourth to unsafe starting (W-Trans 2026).

Baseline Level of Service

While level of service (LOS) was the previous measure of impact analysis, recent State legislation (SB 743, codified as PRC Section 21099) now mandates that environmental impact analysis utilize a different metric: vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The County utilizes the VMT metric for environmental review under CEQA; however, LOS still has applicability in General Plan policy as a measure of travel convenience, comfort, and safety (County 2019). LOS is a general measure of traffic operating conditions whereby a letter grade, from A (the best) to F (the worst), is assigned. The grades represent the perspective of drivers and are an indication of the comfort and convenience associated with driving (County 2019). The LOS grades are generally defined as follows:

- LOS A represents free-flow travel with an excellent level of comfort and convenience and the freedom to maneuver.
- LOS B has stable operating conditions, but the presence of other road users causes a noticeable, though slight, reduction in comfort, convenience, and maneuvering freedom.
- LOS C has stable operating conditions, but the operation of individual users is significantly affected by the interaction with others in the traffic stream.
- LOS D represents high-density, but stable flow. Users experience severe restriction in speed and freedom to maneuver, with poor levels of comfort and convenience.
- LOS E represents conditions at or near capacity. Speeds are reduced to a low but relatively uniform value. Freedom to maneuver is difficult with users experiencing frustration and poor comfort and convenience. Unstable operation is frequent, and minor disturbances in traffic flow can cause breakdown conditions.
- LOS F represents forced or breakdown conditions. This condition exists whenever the volume of traffic exceeds capacity of the roadway. Long queues can form behind these bottleneck points with queued traffic traveling in a stop-and-go fashion (County 2019).

Per General Plan Circulation Policy 2.2, LOS C or better is acceptable except in community areas, of which Valley Springs is a part, where LOS D or better is considered acceptable (County 2019). A project would be considered to result in deficient operations if it would cause an intersection to worsen from an acceptable LOS to an unacceptable one, or if the project would contribute traffic towards an

intersection already operating deficiently without the addition of project traffic. If a deficiency occurs, the project must improve operations to an acceptable level (W-Trans 2026).

LOS operating conditions for the Baseline scenario were determined based on existing conditions plus the approved North Vista Plaza residential subdivision. Table 23, *Baseline Peak Hour Intersection Level of Service*, below summarizes the potential traffic associated with this approved project added to the existing volumes during peak a.m. and p.m. conditions. As shown in Table 23, under Baseline conditions, the SR 26/Mangili Road and Hogan Dam Road intersection operate at LOS E (deficient).

Table 23: Baseline Peak Hour Intersection Level of Service

Study Intersection	A.M. Peak Hour		P.M. Peak Hour	
	Delay	LOS	Delay	LOS
1. SR 26/Laurel Street and SR 12	27.2	D	28.3	D
2. SR 26 and Jean Street, *westbound approach*[1]	20.8	C	17.9	C
3. SR 26 and Nove Way, *westbound approach*[1]	20.3	C	20.3	C
4. SR 26 and Hogan Dam Road, *westbound approach*[1]	19.3	C	12.5	B
5. SR 26/Mangili Road and Hogan Dam Road, *westbound approach*[1]	47.2	E	39.3	E

Source: W-Trans 2026

Notes: Delay is measured in average seconds per vehicle; LOS = level of service

[1] Results for the worst movement at minor approaches to two-way stop-controlled intersections

Circulation System Plans, Programs, and Policies

General Plan and Valley Springs Community Plan Policies

The Land Use Element and Circulation Element of the General Plan contain the following policies related to the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, which would be applicable to the proposed project (County 2019):

- **Land Use Policy 4.8:** New development shall provide pedestrian and vehicle interconnectedness.

- **Circulation Policy 1.8:** Require new development to be responsible for all off-site circulation improvements necessary to mitigate a project's transportation impacts (including safety, pedestrian and bicycle mobility, public transit, and level of service-related impacts).

- **Circulation Policy 2.1:** Require new development that has a potentially significant traffic impact to conduct a transportation impact analysis consistent with the County's Traffic Impact Study Guidelines to verify the ability of the County-maintained roadway system to accommodate traffic growth generated by that development.

- **Circulation Policy 2.2:** Road impacts created by new development shall not reduce the minimum level of service (LOS) below D for roadways and intersections in Community Areas (as indicated on the General Plan Land Use Diagram – Figure LU-1) and in the City of Angels Camp or below LOS C on County-maintained roadway outside of Community Areas, except as specified below where LOS D is acceptable, assuming that roadway safety is addressed consistent with Circulation Policy 2.1.

    - SR 26 from the San Joaquin County line to Silver Rapids Road

Additional exceptions to this policy may be allowed by the Board of Supervisors on a case-by-case basis, for roadways outside of the City of Angels Camp, where reducing the level of service would result in a clear public benefit in furtherance of public health, safety, and welfare. Exceptions to the LOS standards may include, but are not limited to, the following circumstances:

  - Improvements necessary to achieve the LOS standard result in significant impacts to a unique historical resource or adversely impact areas of historic significance,
  - Improvements necessary to achieve the LOS standard result in impacts to a sensitive environmental area, or
  - Improvements necessary to achieve the LOS standard would prohibit or significantly impair the County's implementation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

- **Circulation Policy 5.2:** Bicycle and pedestrian access and circulation shall be designed into new development projects where applicable to enhance internal circulation and interconnectivity with surrounding land uses and to implement any adopted bicycle and/or pedestrian plan.

In addition, the Valley Springs Community Plan (VSCP) includes the following policy related to the circulation system (County 2016):

- **CPVS Policy 1.6:** Incorporate into commercial development design, where practicable, trails and pedestrian paths, connections to community-wide trails, setbacks and open space for the purposes of storm-water retention, existing native trees and vegetation and viewsheds.

Valley Springs Town Center Connectivity Plan

The Valley Springs Town Center Connectivity Plan (Connectivity Plan) was prepared in 2020 by the Calaveras County Council of Governments (CCOG) to identify existing safety and circulation issues in Valley Springs, and to identify ways to improve multimodal safety, accessibility, and efficient local and regional access. Pedestrian facilities and improvements identified in the Connectivity Plan include sidewalks on both sides of Laurel Street, SR 12, and SR 26 to Mangili Road, and crosswalks on the north and east legs of SR 26/Nove Way, along with a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) for the north leg crosswalk (CCOG 2020).

Calaveras Active Transportation and Recreational Trails Plan

The Calaveras Active Transportation and Recreational Trails Plan (ATRTP) was prepared by CCOG in 2026 to identify existing deficiencies in the circulation system, and to outline ways to create a connected network of pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian infrastructure that links communities, schools, parks, employment centers, and recreational destinations throughout the County. The ATRTP reprises the pedestrian facility improvements identified in the 2020 Connectivity Plan, and also identifies Class IV separated bikeways on both sides of SR 26 in Valley Springs (CCOG 2026).

Impact Analysis

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

Transit Facilities

Calaveras Connect's Red Line provides fixed-route regional bus service to destinations throughout Calaveras County and stops at the intersection of SR 26 and Jean Street, near the Sender's Market Ace Hardware approximately 600 feet north of the project site. The Red Line operates Monday through Friday with approximately one-hour headways between 6:10 a.m. and 7:50 p.m. The Calaveras Connect 2020-2025 Short-Range Transit Plan does not identify modifications to existing transit service in the vicinity of the project site. The proposed project would not modify SR 26 in a manner that would inhibit existing transit service in the project vicinity. Therefore, the impact on transit facilities would be less than significant.

Bicycle Facilities

The 2026 ATRTP identifies Clas IV separated bikeways on both sides of SR 26 in the project vicinity. The project frontage would include the installation of a curb and landscaping area adjacent to the existing southbound travel lane on SR 26, with no shoulder. As the project would be constructed right up to the existing southbound travel lane on SR 26, future widening of the road to accommodate the planned Class IV separated bikeway would be inhibited. The project, as currently designed, would conflict with the 2026 ATRTP, which would be a potentially significant impact. Mitigation Measure TRA-1 would require the project frontage to be offset from SR 26 a sufficient distance to enable future construction of the Class IV bikeway.

In addition, the CALGreen Code 5.106.4.1.1-5.106.4.1.2 requires short-term bicycle parking (such as bike racks) to be constructed at a rate of five percent of vehicle parking spaces, with a minimum of two short-term bicycle parking spaces. These spaces are to be within 200 feet of a visitor entrance and readily visible to passers-by. For long-term bicycle parking (such as lockers or indoor racks), the rate is also five percent of vehicle parking spaces with a minimum of one space, and long-term bicycle parking is only required for buildings with ten or more tenant-occupants, which are defined as residents or employees but not customers or other transient visitors. The project would include a total of 103 vehicle parking spaces, which would require at least five short-term bicycle parking spaces to be provided on-site. However, when considering each proposed land use independently, this would increase to 10 bicycle parking spaces, with two short-term spaces dedicated to each land use and located within 200 feet of a visitor entrance in a visible location. Although it is not currently known how many employees each proposed land use would have, any use with ten or more employees would require at least one long-term bicycle parking space. The proposed project would result in a potentially significant impact if sufficient bicycle parking spaces are not provided. Mitigation Measure TRA-2 would be implemented and would require the construction of sufficient short- and long-term bicycle parking spaces pursuant to CALGreen Code 5.106.4.1.1-5.106.4.1.2.

Circulation Policy 5.2 from the General Plan and Policy 1.6 from the VSCP require that new development incorporate integrated and interconnected bicycle facilities, including internal pathways and external linkages, consistent with applicable plans, and include design features that support multimodal

circulation, connectivity, and access. With implementation of Mitigation Measures TRA-1 and TRA-2, as summarized above, the project would not conflict with applicable policies related to bicycle facilities.

Pedestrian Facilities

The 2020 Connectivity Plan and 2026 ATRTP identifies circulation improvements in the project vicinity, including sidewalks along both sides of SR 26, crosswalks on the north and east legs of SR 26/Nove Way, and an RRFB for the north leg crosswalk. The project would include the construction of sidewalks with ADA ramps along the project frontage to SR 26 between the north and south driveways. Based on the current project design, the project would conflict with the 2020 Connectivity Plan and 2026 ATRTP if sidewalks are not included along the entirety of the project frontage, which would be a potentially significant impact. However, Mitigation Measure TRA-3 would require the project to include the construction of sidewalks along the entire project frontage, which would ensure the proposed project would not conflict with existing plans addressing pedestrian facilities.

Land Use Policy 4.8 and Circulation Policy 5.2 from the General Plan, and Policy 1.6 from the VSCP require that new development incorporate integrated pedestrian facilities, including internal pathways and external linkages, consistent with applicable plans, and include pedestrian paths that support multimodal circulation, connectivity, and access. With implementation of Mitigation Measure TRA-3, as summarized above, the project would not conflict with applicable policies related to pedestrian facilities.

Roadway Facilities

Circulation Policy 1.8 from the General Plan requires new development to be responsible for all off-site circulation improvements necessary to mitigate a project's transportation impacts, including safety, pedestrian and bicycle mobility, public transit, and level of service-related impacts. As discussed in greater detail in the evaluations under question c), Mitigation Measure TRA-4 would require the project to include the construction of right-turn lanes along SR 26 for each of the project entrances in coordination with the County and Caltrans, and Mitigation Measure TRA-5 would require the project applicant to contribute a proportional share for the construction of a traffic signal and/or other capacity enhancements at two study intersections. With contribution towards these off-site improvements, the project would be consistent with Circulation Policy 1.8 related to off-site roadway safety and mobility improvements.

Roadway Capacity (Level of Service)

The County utilizes the VMT metric for environmental review under CEQA; however, LOS still has applicability in General Plan policy as a measure of travel convenience, comfort, and safety (County 2019). Valley Springs is located within a community area where LOS D or better is considered acceptable. As such, the project would result in a potentially significant impact if it would cause an intersection to worsen from acceptable (LOS D or better) to unacceptable (LOS E or F), or if the project would worsen conditions at an intersection already operating deficiently. If a deficiency occurs, the project must improve operations to an acceptable level.

As shown in Table 24, *Baseline Plus Project Peak Hour Intersection Level of Service*, below, operations at SR 26-Laurel Street/SR 12 overall and for the minor street approaches to SR 26/Nove Way would degrade from acceptable LOS C or D (acceptable) to LOS E (unacceptable) during both peak hours with the addition of project traffic to Baseline volumes. It should be noted that the worst movement

approaching the intersection at SR 26/ Mangili Road and Hogan Dam Road operate at LOS E under the Baseline scenario and would operate at LOS E (P.M. peak hour) and LOS F (A.M. peak hour) under the Baseline plus Project scenario. However, there would be fewer than 25 vehicles approaching SR 26 from either minor street at this intersection, as compared to over 1,500 vehicles on SR 26 itself. Therefore, the high delay for the minor street approaches to the SR 26/Mangili Road and Hogan Dam Road intersection was considered acceptable given the few vehicles overall affected relative to the countermeasures that would be required to improve conditions to an acceptable level (W-Trans 2026).

Table 24: Baseline Plus Project Peak Hour Intersection Level of Service

Study Intersection	Baseline Conditions				Baseline Plus Project			
	A.M. Peak Hour		P.M. Peak Hour		A.M. Peak Hour		P.M. Peak Hour	
	Delay	LOS	Delay	LOS	Delay	LOS	Delay	LOS
1. SR 26/Laurel Street and SR 12	27.2	D	28.3	D	36.4	E	37.2	E
With traffic signal control					*13.1*	*B*	*11.6*	*B*
2. SR 26 and Jean Street, *westbound approach*[1]	20.8	C	17.9	C	22.8	C	19.5	C
3. SR 26 and Nove Way, *westbound approach*[1]	20.3	C	20.3	C	39.2	E	35.8	E
With traffic signal control					*7.6*	*A*	*8.3*	*A*
4. SR 26 and Hogan Dam Road, *westbound approach*[1]	19.3	C	12.5	B	20.0	C	12.8	B
5. SR 26/Mangili Road and Hogan Dam Road, *westbound approach*[1]	47.2	E	39.3	E	52.0	F	42.6	E

Source: W-Trans 2026

Notes: Delay is measured in average seconds per vehicle; LOS = level of service

[1] Results for the worst movement at minor approaches to two-way stop-controlled intersections

In the absence of mitigation, the project would degrade operations at two intersections to unactable LOS, which would result in a potentially significant impact due to conflicts with General Plan Circulation Policy 2.1 and Policy 2.2. However, as shown in Table 24 above, the installation of traffic signals would improve conditions at the SR 26/Laurel Street and SR 12 intersection to LOS B, and at the SR 26 and Nove Way intersection to LOS A. Mitigation Measure TRA-5 would require the project applicant to contribute a proportional share for the construction of a traffic signal and/or other capacity enhancements at these two study intersections. With contribution towards these off-site improvements, the project would be consistent with Circulation Policy 2.1 and 2.2 related to LOS.

Impact Summary

The proposed project would not conflict with existing transit service provided by Calaveras Connect in the project vicinity, and the impact on transit facilities would be less than significant. However, based on the current project design, the project would result in potentially significant impacts on bicycle and pedestrian facilities due to conflicts with 2020 Connectivity Plan, 2026 ATRTP, and the CALGreen Code 5.106.4.1.1-5.106.4.1.2. However, with implementation of Mitigation Measures TRA-1 through TRA-5, the impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure TRA-1: Offset to Accommodate Future Bikeway

Prior to issuance of building permits, the applicant shall demonstrate on the final construction documents that the project frontage is offset a sufficient distance from the southbound travel lane on SR 26 to allow for future construction of a Class IV bikeway, as identified in the 2026 Calaveras Active Transportation and Recreational Trails Plan (ATRTP). This offset distance shall be established in coordination with the County and/or Caltrans.

Mitigation Measure TRA-2: On-Site Bicycle Parking Spaces

Prior to issuance of building permits, the applicant shall demonstrate on the final construction documents that the project will include or exceed the minimum number of short- and long-term bicycle parking spaces as required in the CalGreen Code 5.106.4.1.1-5.106.4.1.2.

Mitigation Measure TRA-3: On-Site Pedestrian Facilities

Prior to issuance of building permits, the applicant shall demonstrate on the final construction documents that a frontage sidewalk will be constructed along the entire frontage along the southbound travel lane on SR 26.

Mitigation Measure TRA-4: Construct Right-Turn Lanes

Prior to issuance of building permits, the applicant shall include right-turn lanes along SR 26 at each of the project entrances in the final construction documents. Depending on the ultimate design of these facilities, additional right-of-way may need to be dedicated to accommodate all design requirements for the facilities and/or the planned Class IV separated bikeway.

Mitigation Measure TRA-5: Fair-Share Contribution Towards Traffic Signals

Prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy for the project, the applicant shall contribute a proportional share towards the installation of traffic signals at the SR 26/Laurel Street and SR 12 intersection and the SR 26 and Nove Way intersection. The proportional share is calculated at 27.3 percent towards the SR 26/Laurel Street and SR 12 intersection and 48.5 percent towards the SR 26 and Nove Way intersection.

b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

Less Than Significant Impact. The County has not yet adopted a standard of significance for evaluating vehicle miles traveled (VMT); therefore, guidance provided by LCI – formerly the Office of Planning and Research – in the 2018 Transportation Impacts (SB 743) CEQA Guidelines Update and Technical Advisory was used. LCI's guidance for retail land uses was applied to evaluate VMT for the proposed project.

The Technical Advisory indicates that retail projects should generally be analyzed by examining total VMT, with an increase in total regional VMT being considered a significant impact. In the Technical Advisory section outlining project screening, LCI indicates that local-serving retail may generally be presumed to have a less than significant VMT impact and can generally be screened from further VMT analysis. LCI based this presumption on substantial research demonstrating that adding local-serving retail uses typically improves destination accessibility to customers, often reducing trip distances since customers need to travel shorter distances than they previously did. The total demand for retail in a

region also tends to hold steady; adding new local-serving retail typically shifts trips away from another use rather than adding entirely new shopping trips to the region.

LCI cites a size of 50,000 square feet or greater as being a potential indicator of regional-serving retail (versus local-serving) that would typically require a quantitative VMT analysis. As summarized in Table 1, Section 3.1 of this IS/MND, the total proposed building floor area would include 17,521 total square feet; therefore, the project would be consistent with LCI's guidance for local-serving retail and can be presumed to have a less than significant impact on VMT. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3(b), and the impact related to VMT would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

Sight Distance

Sight distance along SR 26 at the three proposed entrance locations was evaluated based on sight distance criteria contained in the Caltrans Highway Design Manual. Sight distances at the proposed entrances were field measured, along with the prevailing speed of drivers on SR 26 passing the project site. The posted speed limit is 35 mph; however, the critical (85th percentile) speed was measured as 40 mph for northbound traffic and 41 mph in the southbound direction. For 35 mph, the minimum stopping sight distance needed is 250 feet, which increases to 300 feet for 40 mph and 360 feet for 45 mph. Field measurements indicate that sight distances at the proposed entrance locations are over 500 feet in both directions, as well as sight distance for drivers following a vehicle slowing down to turn into the site. As this is greater than the minimum stopping sight distance needed at 45 mph, which is higher than the posted speed limit and measured critical speed of traffic, the available sight distances on SR 26 are adequate. Therefore, sight distance would not result in roadway hazards.

Site Access

As there is an existing two-way left-turn lane on SR 26 adjacent to the project site, dedicated space for vehicles turning left into the site is already available. The need for right-turn lanes or tapers along SR 26 at each of the three site entrances was evaluated based on criteria contained in the Transportation Research Board's Intersection Channelization Design Guide contained in the National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report No. 279. A right-turn lane would consist of a lane installed to the right of the travel lane and would be a minimum of ten feet wide, plus a shoulder where not adjacent to a curb. A right-turn taper is a shoulder area that gets progressively wider as the motorist drives toward the intersection. Both improvements are meant to provide an area for motorists turning right to move out of the traffic lane without impeding through traffic.

Based on the site access evaluation, a right-turn lane into the project site would be warranted at each of the proposed entrances. The project would result in a potentially significant impact related to roadway hazards because right-turn lanes are not included in the current project design. However, Mitigation Measure TRA-4 would require the project to include the construction of right-turn lanes for each of the project entrances in coordination with the County and Caltrans. Implementation of Mitigation Measure TRA-4 would reduce the impact to a level of a less than significant.

Vehicle Queuing

The northbound right-turn lane at the SR 26/Laurel Street and SR 12 intersection extends 200 feet from the intersection. Under the Baseline Plus Project scenario, the queue in the northbound through/left-turn lane would exceed this capacity by one vehicle, or 25 feet, for the a.m. peak hour. On the westbound approach, the left-turn lane is 280 feet long, which would be exceeded by 78 feet during the p.m. peak hour under Baseline Plus Project conditions. Based on the County's 2019 Traffic Impact Analysis Guidelines, the project would result in a potentially significant safety impact due to vehicle queuing at the SR 26/Laurel Street and SR 12 intersection. However, construction of a traffic signal, as discussed in greater detail in the following analysis, would reduce vehicle queue lengths at this intersection to be within the available stacking capacity. Mitigation Measure TRA-5 would be implemented, which would require the project applicant to contribute a proportional share for the construction of a signal and/or other capacity enhancements for each intersection.

Traffic Signal Warrants

The installation of traffic signal controls at the SR 26/Laurel Street and SR 12 intersection and the SR 26 and Nove Way intersection would already be warranted during the p.m. peak hour under the Existing Conditions scenario without the project. However, the addition of project traffic would further strain the uncontrolled intersections including outside the peak hours, which would present a potentially significant impact. Therefore, because the proposed project would exacerbate already-deficient conditions at these two intersections, Mitigation Measure TRA-5 would be implemented, which would require the project applicant to contribute a proportional share for the construction of a signal and/or other capacity enhancements for each intersection.

As discussed above under the vehicle queuing analysis, installation of traffic signal controls at the SR 26/Laurel Street and SR 12 intersection would mitigate queuing impacts and operational deficiencies and would also improve safety. Research demonstrates that installation of a traffic signal at a relatively rural setting all-way-stop controlled intersection reduces the average collision rate by 44 percent, and the broadside collision rate specifically by 77 percent. Likewise, traffic signal controls would eliminate the project's operational deficiencies at the SR 26 and Nove Way intersection, and would enhance access to and from the project, including pedestrian access.

Although a traffic signal is warranted at the SR 26 and Jean Street intersection, the CA-MUTCD notes in Section 4C.01 paragraph 3, that "the satisfaction of a traffic signal warrant or warrants shall not in itself require the installation of a traffic control signal." Paragraph 20 further elaborates that a traffic signal being warranted is only one factor to consider, a warrant being satisfied is not an overriding consideration, and that other factors should be considered in determining if installation of traffic signal controls is appropriate. Therefore, as this intersection would not have operational or queuing issues, does not have an identified safety concern, and does not have pedestrian crossing improvements planned nor would directly serve the project site, a signal would not be required. Further, a signal at this location may interrupt the progression of traffic flow as it would be approximately 600 feet south of the SR 26/Laurel Street and SR 12 intersection and 850 feet north of the SR 26 and Nove Way intersection. Without this signal, the other two signals would be over a quarter mile apart, enabling better progression along the corridor. For these reasons, installation of traffic signal controls at the SR 26 and Jean Street intersection, though warranted, would not be required.

Impact Summary

Sight distances at the proposed entrance locations are over 500 feet in both directions, as well as sight distance for drivers following a vehicle slowing down to turn into the site, which is greater than the minimum stopping sight distance needed at 45 mph. Therefore, sight distance on SR 26 would be adequate and would not result in roadway hazards. However, the proposed project would result in potentially significant safety hazards related to site access and vehicle queuing, which would be minimized to a level of less than significant with implementation of Mitigation Measures TRA-4 and TRA-5. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Vehicular access to the project site would be provided via three entrances off SR 26, including two proposed 35-foot-wide driveways and one proposed 47-foot-wide public County roadway. The public County roadway would extend 352 linear feet into the project site before terminating at a three-way stop. The two proposed 35-foot-wide driveways would lead to internal drive aisles that would connect to the three-way stop and would provide circulation throughout the project site. The proposed site design would provide several points of entrance to the site and would be designed to be navigable by emergency vehicles. In addition, the proposed project design would be required to be reviewed by Cal-Co Fire to ensure adequate emergency access on-site.

As previously discussed in the response to question c), project traffic would result in queuing beyond available capacity (resulting in gridlock) at the SR 26/Laurel Street and SR 12 intersection, which would impede emergency response times and off-site emergency access. However, installation of traffic signal controls at the SR 26/Laurel Street and SR 12 intersection would mitigate queuing impacts and operational deficiencies. Mitigation Measure TRA-5 would require the project applicant to contribute a proportional share for the construction of a traffic signal and/or other capacity enhancements at this intersection. Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measure TRA-5, the project would not result in inadequate off-site emergency access, and the impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code 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.	☐	☐	☒	☐

Environmental Setting

Tribal Cultural Resources Overview

Assembly Bill 52

CEQA, as amended in 2014 by AB 52, requires that lead agencies provide notice to California Native American tribes that have requested notice of projects subject to CEQA review, and consult with tribes that responded to the notice within 30 days of receipt with a request for consultation. Section 21073 of the PRC defines California Native American tribes as "a Native American tribe located in California that is on the contact list maintained by the NAHC for the purposes of Chapter 905 of the Statutes of 2004." This includes both federally and non-federally recognized tribes.

The purpose of consultation is to identify Tribal Cultural Resources (TCRs) that may be significantly impacted by the proposed project, and to allow the County to avoid or mitigate significant impacts prior to project approval and implementation. Section 21074(a) of the PRC defines TCRs for the purpose of CEQA as:

Sites, features, places, cultural landscapes (geographically defined in terms of the size and scope), sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either of the following:

(a) included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources; and/or,

(b) included in a local register of historical resources as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 5020.1; and/or,

(c) 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 Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Section 5024.1 for the purposes of this paragraph, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

As criteria a) and b) also meet the definition of a historical resource under CEQA, a TCR may also require additional consideration as a historical resource. TCRs may or may not exhibit archaeological, cultural, or physical indicators and can only be identified by a culturally affiliated tribe, which has been determined under State law to be the subject matter expert for TCRs.

Senate Bill 18

SB 18 was signed into law in September 2004 and became effective in March 2005. SB 18 (Burton, Chapter 905, Statutes of 2004) requires city and county governments to consult with California Native American tribes early in the planning process with the intent of protecting traditional tribal cultural places. SB 18 consultation applies to general plan or specific plan adoptions or amendments, and the associated dedication of open space. Resources subject to this requirement include any of the following:

- Native American sanctified cemetery, place of worship, religious or ceremonial site, or sacred shrine (PRC Section 5097.9); and/or
- a Native American historic, cultural, or sacred site, that is listed or may be eligible for listing in the CRHR pursuant to PRC Section 5024.1, including any historic or prehistoric ruins, any burial ground, any archaeological or historic site, any inscriptions made by Native Americans at such a site, any archaeological or historic Native American rock art, or any archaeological or historic feature of a Native American historic, cultural, or sacred site (PRC Section 5097.995, as subsequently amended and recoded as 5097.993).

The purpose of involving tribes at the early stage of planning efforts is to allow consideration of tribal cultural places in the context of broad local land use policy before project-level land use decisions are made by a local government. Although SB 18 is not a CEQA issue, the consultation regarding tribal cultural places can overlap with the AB 52 consultation, so a summary of SB 18 consultation is included herein. Under SB 18, tribes are afforded 90 days to request consultation.

Tribal Consultation

In accordance with AB 52 and SB 18 requirements, the County mailed tribal consultation letters to the following five tribes on December 26, 2025:

- Calaveras Ban of Mi-Wuk Indians
- California Valley Miwok Tribe
- Ione Band of Miwok
- Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wik Indians
- Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California

Each tribe was provided with a brief description of the proposed project and its location, including a description of the proposed General Plan amendment, as well as the CRA prepared for the proposed project (included as Appendix D to this IS/MND). The 30-day response period for consultation under AB 52 ended January 26, 2025, and the 90-day response period for consultation under SB 18 ended March 26, 2026.

Impact Analysis

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

   i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k)?

   ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?

Less Than Significant Impact. During the AB 52 and SB 18 consultation period for the project, the County received one comment from the California Valley Miwok Tribe dated December 31, 2025. The letter from the California Valley Miwok Tribe indicated that the tribe had no comments regarding the proposed General Plan Amendment or proposed commercial development of the project site. No responses were received from the other four tribes listed above, and none of the tribes requested formal agency-to-agency consultation. In addition, no tribal cultural resources were identified during the consultation period. Therefore, as no tribal cultural resources were identified during the consultation periods, the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical or archeological resource, and the impact on tribal cultural resources would be less than significant for questions a.i) and a.ii).

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
a)	Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b)	Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c)	Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d)	Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e)	Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Environmental Setting

Water

CCWD is the largest public water purveyor in the County in terms of service area, number of customers served, and amount of water delivered. Combined, CCWD provides water and/or wastewater service through 17,000 water and wastewater connections within the County. While the CCWD's service area boundaries are coterminous with the County's boundaries, CCWD does not provide water and/or wastewater services to all communities in the County (County 2018).

In 2015, CCWD provided eight water services to nearly 17,000 municipal, residential, and commercial customers through six independent water systems located throughout the County, one of which is the Jenny Lind System, which would serve the proposed project site. The Jenny Lind System receives surface water from New Hogan Reservoir through a non-CVP contract with BOR. The diversion point is an infiltration gallery located on the lower Calaveras River, approximately one mile downstream of the New Hogan Dam. The Jenny Lind WTP serves the area with an existing capacity of 6.0 mgd, with plans to expand the plant capacity to meet near-term and long-term demands. Water from the Calaveras River system at New Hogan Reservoir is subject to agreements with the BOR and SEWD, which allocate 43.5 percent of the yield to CCWD, typically estimated at a total of 31,278 AFY (County 2018).

Wastewater

CCWD provides wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal services to 14 service areas/communities in the County, including the La Contenta area, which includes the proposed project site. The La Contenta wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) consists of a bar screen, activated sludge, secondary clarifier, sand filters and ultraviolet disinfection. Treated effluent is stored in two reservoirs during wet months and used as golf course irrigation during dry months. The collection system consists of about 18 miles of pipeline in addition to two miles of force main (County 2018).

Stormwater

Due to the rural nature of the County, few discrete stormwater outlets exist, as most stormwater runoff from within the County sheet flows into roadside drainage ditches that discharge collected stormwater to various natural drainages as determined by local topography. Existing stormwater infrastructure in the project vicinity includes a human-made drainage ditch parallel to SR 26.

Natural Gas and Electricity

Natural gas and electric services in Calaveras County are primarily provided by PG&E. PG&E natural gas pipelines and major electric transmission lines traverse the northwestern portion of the County. The Salt Springs Reservoir, located along the Calaveras/Amador county line, is owned and operated by PG&E for hydroelectric power purposes. PG&E expands the distribution system as needed to accommodate growth in the County (County 2018).

Solid Waste

Solid waste collection in the County is provided by Calaveras County Integrated Waste Management. Several solid waste facilities and transfer stations exist within the County, including the Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility and transfer stations at Avery, Copperopolis, Paloma, Red Hill, San Andreas, and Wilseyville.

The Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility encompasses an active Class II landfill, a transfer station, several recycling programs, and a household hazardous waste facility. The vast majority of the solid waste generated within the County is disposed of at the Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility (County 2018). The landfill has a total permitted capacity of 7,651,000 CY and has a maximum daily throughput of 500 tons. The California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) estimates that the landfill will remain open until 2035 (CalRecycle 2025).

Impact Analysis

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The project would require the construction of new water, wastewater, stormwater drainage, electricity, natural gas, and telecommunication facilities on-site.

Water

A proposed 12-inch water main would supply water to the project site and would connect to the existing CCWD public water main located parallel to SR 26. The proposed pressurized water distribution system would loop throughout the site to provide potable water, irrigation, and fire suppression (sprinkler) service connections to each of the proposed buildings. Individual water meter and backflow prevention devices would be installed at each of the proposed parcels based on the projected flow demand and capacity requirements of the proposed uses. Fire hydrants would be located throughout the project site to provide fire protection coverage to each of the proposed buildings.

As discussed below in the response to question b), CCWD would provide water services to the project site; however, LAFCO approval would be required for a service area adjustment for CCWD to provide water services to the entire project site, as APN 046-016-091 is currently located within the SOI and service boundary of the VSPUD for water services.

Wastewater

A proposed 8-inch sanitary sewer main would be installed on-site and would connect to existing sewer infrastructure parallel to SR 26. The proposed sewer main would extend throughout the project site to provide sanitary sewer and grease waste connections to each of the proposed buildings. The sewer system would include a reclaimed water system, grease interceptors, and water-oil separators to manage wastewater generated by commercial uses, including building operations, trash enclosures, and car wash. These components would be designed to pre-treat wastewater by removing solids, grease, and other contaminants prior to discharge into the CCWD sewer system.

As discussed below in the response to question c), CCWD would provide wastewater services to the project site; however, LAFCO approval would be required for a service area adjustment for CCWD to provide water services to the entire project site, as APN 046-016-091 is currently located within the SOI and service boundary of the VSPUD for wastewater services.

Stormwater

The proposed stormwater system would consist of curb cuts and swales, open grates, underground storm drain lines, three bioretention ponds, and one detention basin. The three proposed bioretention ponds would be constructed with engineered biofiltration media and sandy loam topsoil and vegetated with low-growing native grasses and/or a native no-mow fescue blend to remove pollutants prior to infiltration and increase infiltration. Flows from the three proposed bioretention ponds would be conveyed via underground 8-inch storm drain lines to the 8,695-sf detention basin located in the southeastern corner of the site. This basin would be hydroseeded with native grasses and serve as the central stormwater management facility for the site. The proposed stormwater system would be designed to maintain the existing northwesterly to southeasterly drainage pattern on-site.

The proposed stormwater system would be designed to maintain the existing northwesterly to southeasterly drainage pattern on-site.

The proposed bioretention ponds, infiltration basin, and swales would incorporate energy dissipation structures and other erosion control measures to prevent scour. Final discharge from the southern infiltration basin would be released at a pre-development rate through a new 12-inch storm drain line into the existing CPUD stormwater infrastructure on SR 26.

Electricity and Natural Gas

Electric power to the project site would be provided by PG&E. No natural gas utilities are proposed. The existing distribution system to the east of SR 26 would be trenched under the road to bring service to the project site. A transformer, switchgear, and meter would be installed for each of the four parcels.

The Draft EIR prepared for the General Plan Update determined that buildout of the Draft General Plan would increase demand for these services; however, this demand would be accommodated by PG&E. While PG&E may expand service and increase energy supplies to respond to increasing demand from buildout of the Draft General Plan, such expansion would not result in adverse impacts on regional energy supplies, energy resources, or the need for substantial new or altered energy or natural gas utilities (County 2018).

Impact Summary

The proposed project would require the construction of new water, wastewater, stormwater drainage, and electricity facilities on-site. However, the project would not require the relocation or construction of new or expanded utilities off-site, as demonstrated above. As such, the proposed utilities would not result in significant environmental effects off-site, and the impact would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. A proposed 12-inch water main would supply water to the project site and would connect to the existing CCWD public water main located parallel to SR 26. The proposed pressurized water distribution system would loop throughout the site to provide potable water, irrigation, and fire suppression (sprinkler) service connections to each of the proposed buildings. Individual water meter and backflow prevention devices would be installed at each of the proposed parcels based on the projected flow demand and capacity requirements of the proposed uses. Fire hydrants would be located throughout the project site to provide fire protection coverage to each of the proposed buildings.

SB 610, as codified in the California Water Code (CWC) Division 6, Part 2.10 (Sections 10910-10915) requires preparation of a Water Supply Assessment (WSA) for “water-demand projects”. CEQA Guidelines Section 15155(a)(1) provides definitions for water-demand projects. Subsection (B) includes shopping centers or business establishments employing more than 1,000 persons or having more than 500,000 square feet of floor space. As the proposed project would not employ more than 1,000 persons and would include 17,521 sf of commercial space, the project would be considered a water-demand project and would not require preparation of a WSA per the CWC.

Based on a preliminary review of the proposed project’s plans, and as documented in a letter dated January 6, 2026, CCWD approved the proposed development and indicated that the project would receive water services from CCWD (CCWD 2026). Although the CCWD would supply water to the project, the portion of the project site that is located on APN 046-016-091 is currently located within the SOI and service boundary of the VSPUD for water services. LAFCO approval would be required for a service area adjustment for CCWD to provide water services to the entire project site. Therefore, as CCWD has indicated that there would be adequate water supplies to provide new water service to the proposed project, the impact would be less than significant.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact. A proposed 8-inch sanitary sewer main would be installed on-site and would connect to existing sewer infrastructure parallel to SR 26. The proposed sewer main would extend throughout the project site to provide sanitary sewer and grease waste connections to each of the proposed buildings. The sewer system would include a reclaimed water system, grease interceptors, and water-oil separators to manage wastewater generated by commercial uses, including building operations, trash enclosures, and car wash. These components would be designed to pre-treat wastewater by removing solids, grease, and other contaminants prior to discharge into the CCWD sewer system.

Based on a preliminary review of the proposed project's plans, and as documented in a letter dated January 6, 2026, CCWD approved the proposed development and indicated that the project would receive wastewater services from CCWD. Although CCWD would supply wastewater services for the project site, a portion of the project site that is located on APN 046-016-091 is currently located within the VSPUD's SOI and service boundary for wastewater services. Approval from LAFCO would be required for a service area adjustment for CCWD to provide wastewater service to the entire project site. Therefore, as CCWD has indicated that there would be adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand on wastewater services, the impact would be less than significant.

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

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

Less Than Significant Impact. The Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility's landfill is the nearest landfill to the project site. The landfill has a permitted capacity of 7,651,000 CY and has a maximum daily throughput of 500 tons. The landfill is estimated to remain open until 2035 (CalRecycle 2025). The Draft EIR prepared for the General Plan Update determined that the landfill would have adequate capacity to serve buildout under the General Plan through the planning horizon of 2035 (County 2018). As the landfill serving the project area is of sufficient capacity to accommodate solid waste needs, the potential impact related to landfill capacity would be less than significant. Solid waste disposal must follow the requirements of the contracted waste hauler and disposal facility, which are required to follow federal, State, and local statues and regulations related to the collection and disposal of solid waste. The proposed project would be required to comply with all State and local waste diversion requirements regarding trash and recycling. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant for questions d) and e).

XX. WILDFIRE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Environmental Setting

Wildfire Hazards

PRC 4201-4204 directs CAL FIRE to map fire hazard within SRA based on fuel loading, slope, fire weather, and other relevant factors present, including areas where winds have been identified by the department as a major cause of wildfire spread. These zones, referred to as FHSZ, classify a wildland zone as Moderate, High, or Very High fire hazard based on the average hazard across the area included in the zone. Per CAL FIRE's Fire Hazard Severity Zones in State Responsibility Area online map, dated September 29, 2023, the project site is located within an SRA and is classified as High FHSZ and is immediately surrounded by lands classified and High and Very High FHSZ (CAL FIRE 2025).

Impact Analysis

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The County EOP identifies several significant highways, prime arterials, and priority corridors within Calaveras County that would serve as the primary evacuation routes in the event of an emergency. These evacuation routes in the project vicinity include SR 12, SR 26, Hogan Dam Road, and Paloma Road (County 2024). The proposed project would include the construction of two private driveways and one public County road off of SR 26, as well as trenching to connect to existing utilities within SR 26 ROW, which may require temporary lane closures along SR 26 and could have the potential to impede or interfere with emergency access routes or services. The

proposed project would require an Encroachment Permit from Caltrans District 10 for encroachment within SR 26 ROW, which would be submitted to Caltrans along with a Traffic Control Plan (TCP), as outlined in Mitigation Measure HAZ-2. The TCP would be required to be prepared in accordance with Caltrans guidelines and would contain standard traffic control measures to ensure safe and efficient traffic flow on SR 26 during construction. Therefore, with preparation of an Encroachment Permit and TCP, project construction would not substantially interfere with emergency access routes in the event of an emergency. Once operational, vehicle travel on the proposed driveways and public road would not substantially interfere with traffic along SR 26 or other roads in the project area in the event of an emergency such that evacuation would be impaired. As part of the Encroachment Permit process, Caltrans would ensure the driveway and road encroachments would be compatible with the primary uses of SR 26, and meet Caltrans' commercial driveway and public road approach requirements. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not physically interfere with emergency evacuations routes outlined in the County EOP, and the impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

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?

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed project is located within an SRA, is classified as High FHSZ, and is immediately surrounded by lands classified and High and Very High FHSZ (CAL FIRE 2025). The degree of hazard in wildland areas depends on variables including temperature, wind, and moisture, the amount of dryness and arrangement of vegetation, slope steepness, proximity to human activities, accessibility of firefighting equipment, and fuel clearance around structures. The project site is undeveloped and currently used for cattle grazing. The project site is relatively flat with elevations ranging between 633 and 682 feet amsl.

Construction

Project construction activities could increase the risk of wildfire, as the use of flammable fuels, such as diesel and gasoline, and spark-producing equipment could ignite dry vegetation, especially during the warmer, dry months between June and October. However, construction activities would be required to comply with existing regulations related to fire safety and wildfire suppression. In addition, Mitigation Measure HAZ-3 would be implemented to reduce the risks of wildfire during construction and would require the removal of dried vegetation or other combustible materials on-site to the extent feasible to reduce the potential of wildland fires by providing a clearing, reducing fire fuels, and removing fire sustaining litter. This measure would also require spark arrestors or turbo chargers (which eliminate sparks in exhaust) and fire extinguishers for all heavy equipment used on-site during construction. With implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-3, project construction would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, and the impact would be less than significant.

Operation

Project operation would involve typical commercial operations for the proposed drive-through coffee shop, ARCO convenience store, gas station, car wash, drive-through fast-food restaurant, diner, and oil change shop. During operation of the proposed gas station, it is estimated that the maximum annual throughput of gasoline would be up to 12,000,000 gallons.

Operation of the proposed project would result in increased human presence on-site compared to existing conditions, which would increase the potential for wildland fires and exposure of people or structures to risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. However, the proposed project would be required to adhere to existing regulations and requirements related to fire safety, including maintaining defensible space and setbacks. The project would be required to comply with the CBC Chapter 7A, Materials and Construction Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure, which prescribes building materials and construction methods for new buildings in any FHSZ or Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area. In addition, PRC Section 4291 requires property owners to maintain clearance of flammable vegetation within 100 feet of structures in order to reduce the risk of fire.

The project would also be required to adhere to all provisions of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances related to fire hazards, including Chapter 8.08, Hazardous Fire Areas, which establishes safeguards and regulations related to recreational, residential, commercial, industrial, and other activities that could increase the threat of fire hazard; and 15.08, Calaveras Fire Mitigation Fee Ordinance, which requires new development in the unincorporated areas of the County to pay its fair share to maintain the pre-existing level of service, thereby mitigating the impact of development on fire protection service. Other applicable provisions of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances include Chapter 5.09, Fire Regulations for State Responsibility Areas, and Chapter 15.10, Defensible Space Requirements, which adopt PRC Sections 4290 through 4299. With adherence to existing regulations and requirements pertaining to wildfire prevention, project operation would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

Impact Summary

In conclusion, with implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-3 and adherence to existing local and State regulations pertaining to wildfire prevention, the proposed project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed project would include construction of a drive-through coffee shop, an ARCO convenience store with six fuel pumps and a car wash tunnel, a drive-through fast-food restaurant, a diner, and an oil change shop. The project would provide 103 on-site parking spaces and three entrances off SR 26. The project also proposes various utility improvements, including expansion of water, wastewater, and electric infrastructure. As discussed under Section 6.XIX, Utilities and Service Systems, water and wastewater services would be extended into the project site off of existing CCWD infrastructure parallel to SR 26.

Vehicular access to the project site would be provided via three entrances off SR 26, including two proposed 35-foot-wide driveways and one proposed 47-foot-wide public County roadway. The 47-foot-wide roadway would be the primary entrance and would taper down to a 35-foot-wide public County roadway located in the central portion of the project site immediately across from Nove Way. The public County roadway would extend 352 linear feet into the project site before terminating at a three-way stop. The two proposed 35-foot-wide driveways would be located north and south of the proposed

public County roadway. The 35-foot-wide driveways would lead to internal drive aisles that would connect to the three-way stop and would provide circulation throughout the project site.

A proposed 12-inch water main would supply water to the project site and would connect to the existing CCWD public water main located parallel to SR 26. The proposed pressurized water distribution system would loop throughout the site to provide potable water, irrigation, and fire suppression (sprinkler) service connections to each of the proposed buildings. Individual water meter and backflow prevention devices would be installed at each of the four parcels based on the projected flow demand and capacity requirements of the proposed uses. Fire hydrants would be located throughout the project site to provide fire protection coverage to each of the proposed buildings.

A proposed 8-inch sanitary sewer main would be installed on-site and would connect to existing sewer infrastructure parallel to SR 26. The proposed sewer main would extend throughout the project site to provide sanitary sewer and grease waste connections to each of the proposed buildings. The sewer system would include a reclaimed water system, grease interceptors, and water-oil separators to manage wastewater generated by commercial uses, including building operations, trash enclosures, and car wash. These components would be designed to pre-treat wastewater by removing solids, grease, and other contaminants prior to discharge into the CCWD sewer system.

Electric power to the project site would be provided by PG&E. No natural gas utilities are proposed. The existing distribution system to the east of SR 26 would be trenched under the road to bring service to the project site. A transformer, switchgear, and meter would be installed for each of the four parcels.

Construction

As discussed above in the response to question b), project construction activities may temporarily exacerbate wildfire risks, which could result in temporary impacts to the environment in the event of a wildfire on-site. However, Mitigation Measure HAZ-3 would be implemented to reduce the risks of wildfire during construction, which would require the removal of dried vegetation or other combustible materials on-site to the extent feasible to reduce the potential of wildland fires by providing a clearing, reducing fire fuels, and removing fire sustaining litter. This measure would also require spark arrestors or turbo chargers (which eliminate sparks in exhaust) and fire extinguishers for all heavy equipment used on-site during construction. Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-3, construction of the proposed project and associated infrastructure would not substantially exacerbate fire risk or result in significant impacts to the environment, and the impact would be less than significant.

Operation

During operation of the proposed gas station, it is estimated that the maximum annual throughput of gasoline would be up to 12,000,000 gallons. Once operational, the proposed project would be required to adhere to existing regulations and requirements related to fire safety, including maintaining defensible space and setbacks. The project would be required to comply with the CBC Chapter 7A, Materials and Construction Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure, which prescribes building materials and construction methods for new buildings in any FHSZ or Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area. In addition, PRC Section 4291 requires property owners to maintain clearance of flammable vegetation within 100 feet of structures in order to reduce the risk of fire.

The project would also be required to adhere to all provisions of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances related to fire hazards, including Chapter 8.08, Hazardous Fire Areas, which establishes safeguards and regulations related to recreational, residential, commercial, industrial, and other activities that could increase the threat of fire hazard; and 15.08, Calaveras Fire Mitigation Fee Ordinance, which requires new development in the unincorporated areas of the County to pay its fair share to maintain the pre-existing level of service, thereby mitigating the impact of development on fire protection service. Other applicable provisions of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances include Chapter 5.09, Fire Regulations for State Responsibility Areas, and Chapter 15.10, Defensible Space Requirements, which adopt PRC Sections 4290 through 4299. With adherence to existing regulations and requirements pertaining to wildfire prevention, operation of the proposed project and associated infrastructure would not substantially exacerbate fire risk or result in significant impacts to the environment, and the impact would be less than significant.

Impact Summary

In conclusion, with implementation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-3 and adherence to existing regulations pertaining to wildfire prevention, implementation of the proposed project and associated infrastructure would not substantially exacerbate fire risk or result in significant impacts to the environment, and the impact would be less than significant.

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

Less Than Significant Impact. Following wildfire events, secondary fire hazard risks have the potential occur due to unstable and exposed slopes, such as flooding, landslides, erosion, and debris flows. However, as discussed in Section 6.VII, Geology and Soils, the project site is not located within a mapped liquefaction or landslide zone (DOC 2025b). Further, the project site lacks steep slopes and is surrounded by relatively flat land. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not 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. The impact would be less than significant.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b)	Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of past, present and probable future projects)?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c)	Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Impact Analysis

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?

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Based on the preceding analyses contained in Sections 6.IV, Biological Resources; 6.V, Cultural Resources; and 6.VII, Geology and Soils, the proposed project would incorporate Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-12, CUL-1 and CUL-2, and GEO-2 to reduce the potential impacts to biological, cultural, and paleontological resources to a less than significant level. Therefore, with implementation of these mitigation measures, the project would not 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. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. There is one approved project in the project vicinity – the North Vista Plaza – a 156-lot residential subdivision approximately 1.5 miles south of the project site. However, as evaluated in Sections 6.I through 6.XX of this IS/MND, the proposed project would not result in substantial adverse effects with incorporation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-12, CUL-1 and CUL-2, GEO-1 and GEO-2, GHG-1 and GHG-2, HAZ-1 through HAZ-3, NOI-1, and TRA-1 through TRA-5. With implementation of these mitigation measures, the project would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts in combination with past, present, and probable future projects in the County. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. As described in Sections 6.VII, Geology and Soils; 6.IX, Hazards and Hazardous Materials; 6.XIII, Noise; 6.XVII, Transportation; and 6.XX, Wildfire, the proposed project would not result in substantial environmental effects that would cause substantial direct or indirect adverse effects on human beings with implementation of Mitigation Measures GEO-1, HAZ-1 through HAZ-3, NOI-1, and TRA-4 and TRA-5. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

7.0 MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) has been prepared by the County per Section 15097 of the CEQA Guidelines. The MMRP is available as Appendix G to this IS/MND.

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