Mitigated Negative Declaration

Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department
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State Clearinghouse Number:
Permit Sonoma File Number: **MNS21-0004**
Prepared by: Joshua Miranda
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Pursuant to Section 15071 of the State CEQA Guidelines, this proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and the attached Initial Study with identified mitigation measures and monitoring constitute the environmental review conducted by the County of Sonoma as the lead agency for the proposed project

Project Name:	Cavedale Minor Subdivision
Owner/Applicant:	Anthony and Maria Cassel Trust
Consultant:	Adobe Associates, Inc.
Project Location:	150 Cavedale Road, Sonoma
Assessor Parcel Number:	056-602-002
General Plan Land Use:	Rural Residential (RR) with 5-acres per dwelling unit density
Zoning Designation:	Rural Residential with 5-acres per dwelling unit density (RR B6 5), Flood plain (F2), Riparian corridor with 50-foot setbacks (RC50/50), and Scenic Resources (SR)
Decision Body:	Sonoma County Zoning Administrator (ZA)
Appeal Body:	Sonoma County Board of Supervisors (BOS)
Project Description:	**See Item III, below**

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

This project potentially affects the following environmental factors as discussed within the attached Initial Study. Those checked under "Yes" involve at least one impact identified as either "Potentially Significant" or "Less than Significant with Mitigation". Those checked under "No" involve either "No Impact" or has been determined "Less than Significant".

Table 1. Summary of Environmental Factors

Environmental Factors		Abbreviation	Yes	No
1.	Aesthetics	VIS		X
2.	Agricultural & Forest Resources	AGR		X
3.	Air Quality	AIR		X
4.	Biological Resources	**BIO**	X	
5.	Cultural Resources	**CUL**		X
6.	Energy	ENG		X
7.	Geology and Soils	**GEO**		X
8.	Greenhouse Gas Emission	GHG		X
9.	Hazards and Hazardous Materials	HAZ		X
10.	Hydrology and Water Quality	**HYD**	X	
11.	Land Use and Planning	USE		X
Environmental Factors (continued)		**Abbreviation**	**Yes**	**No**

12.	Mineral Resources	MIN		X
13.	Noise	NOI	X	
14.	Population and Housing	POP		X
15.	Public Services	PUB		X
16.	Recreation	REC		X
17.	Transportation and Traffic	TRA		X
18.	Tribal Cultural Resources	**TCR**	X	
19.	Utility and Service Systems	UTL		X
20.	Wildfire	FRE		X
21.	Mandatory Findings of Significance		X	

RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

The following table lists the other public agencies whose approval may be required to construct and/or operate the project, or who have jurisdiction over resources potentially affected by the project.

Table 2. Responsible Agencies / Other Permits Required

Agency	Activity	Authorization
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers	Dredge or fill potential on US waters / wetlands	Clean Water Act, Section 401
Regional Water Quality Control Board (San Francisco Bay)	Discharge potential into State waters / wetlands	California Clean Water Act (Porter Cologen)
Regional Water Quality Control Board (San Francisco)	Dredge or fill potential on State waters / wetlands	Clean Water Act, Section 404
State Water Resources Control Board	Generating stormwater	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Lake or streambed alteration agreement	Fish and Game Code, Section 1600
Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District (NSCAPCD)	Stationary air emissions	

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDING

Based on the evaluation in the attached Expanded Initial Study, I find that the project described above will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment, provided that the mitigation measures identified in the Initial Study are included as conditions of approval for the project and a Mitigated Negative Declaration is proposed. The applicant has agreed in writing to incorporate identified mitigation measure into the project plans.

Prepared by: Joshua Miranda

October 9, 2026
Date

October 9, 2026

I. INTRODUCTION

The project applicant, Adobe Associates proposes a Minor Subdivision of an existing single 12.89-acre parcel into one parcel of 4.46 acres and a designated remainder of 8.43 in size. A referral letter was sent to the appropriate local, state and federal agencies and interest groups who may wish to comment on the project.

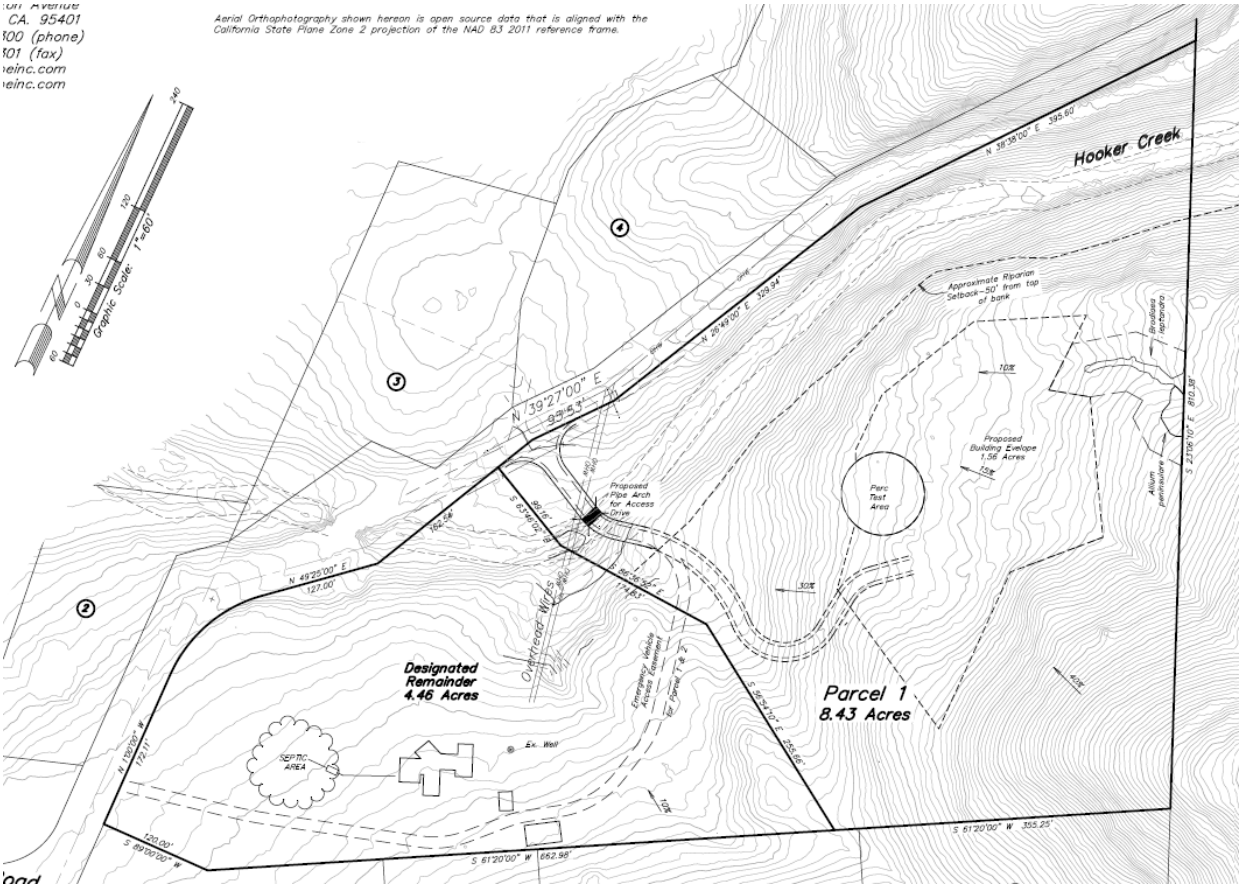
This report is the Initial Study required by the California Environment al Quality Act (CEQA). The report was prepared by Joshua Miranda, Project Review Planner with the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department, Project Review Division. Information on the project was provided by the property owner, and on behalf of the property owner by Adobe Associates. This initial study provides analysis and conclusions based on technical studies submitted as part of the project. The referenced studies are available for review and listed with appropriate website and file download locations under Section VI (Document Sources) below. A referral letter addressed to appropriate local, state and federal agencies and interest groups with potential interest in commenting on the project was sent prior to the original circulation of this environmental document. Copies of the agency referral comments are also available for review as noted within the Document Sources section. For general inquiries regarding this project, please contact the Project Planner at Joshua.Miranda@sonomacounty.gov.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a Minor Subdivision of an existing 12.89-acre parcel into one parcel of 4.46 acres and a designated remainder of 8.43. The application does not include a request to develop the newly created parcel. The existing parcel is developed with one primary dwelling, residential accessory structures, private well and septic systems, and graded road improvements ensuring all structures are accessible by motor vehicles including driveways and parking. The existing parcel has one existing septic system for the primary dwelling. A single existing well onsite supports the existing development. The existing main residence and development will be located on the designated remainder.

The proposed designated remainder will contain all the existing development including the primary single-family residence, private well and sewage disposal system, a garage, and a barn. Existing impervious surfaces account for approximately 15,9100-square-feet (3.65 acres). The property is accessed from Cavedale Road by way of an existing gravel driveway at the westerly corner of the parcel.

Proposed Parcel 1 is undeveloped land consisting of oak woodland, chaparral, and riparian woodland associated with Hooker Creek. This undeveloped parcel consists of open grassland with scattered oak, madrone, and manzanita. Ground slopes generally range from 10 to 15 percent around the proposed driveway location and building envelope area and upward of 40 to 50 percent toward the southeasterly and northwesterly boundaries of the property.



The tentative map identifies a 1.56-acre building envelope area to support future development potential on the new parcel. The proposed building envelope is located on a westerly sloping area mostly covered with grasses and brush. The topography within the building envelope area is generally on the order of 6:1 to 8:1. The flanks of the ridge on the south and east are generally steeper.
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Anticipated build-out potential for the new parcel includes approximately 15,000-square-feet of new impervious surface, including future construction of a new primary residence, accessory dwelling unit, detached garage, domestic well and septic system, driveway and bridge crossing improvements, with associated hardscape.

Access for the new parcel is proposed from Cavedale Road via a pipe arch bridge crossing Hooker Creek. The proposed driveway entrance is located approximately 220 feet northeasterly of the Cavedale Road crossing of Hooker Creek. The driveway then traverses the lower elevation of site at a grade of approximately 15% to reach the central and more leveled easterly portion of the property. The general cross slopes average approximately 10-15% downward in a northwesterly direction toward Hooker Creek and Cavedale Road. This area contains acceptable area(s) for private sewage disposal system, an area for Building Envelope generally 175’ by 325’. Water service will be provided by a private well.

Development Standards

All new development will conform to Sonoma County zoning requirements for Rural Residential (RR), and current standards for site grading, storm water management, emergency vehicle access, and water storage for fire suppression. The County’s Rural Residential (RR) zoning designation for the property provides for allowable lot creation and development potential conforming to the following standards:

Maximum density:	1 primary dwelling per 5 acres (12.89 acres / 0.5 = 2 primary dwellings);
Minimum lot standards:	1.5-acre parcel size / 80-foot lot width;
Building setbacks:	45 feet from street centerline, 20 feet from front, rear, and street side lot lines, and 5 feet from interior side lot line;
Riparian setback:	50 feet from top of bank for all buildings and improvements

Minimum septic size: 3-bedroom capacity with 200% reserve area footprint
Minimum well footprint: 10 feet x 10 feet

III. Setting

The 12.89-acre project site is located at 150 Cavedale Road, Sonoma and is composed of one legal parcel. It is located approximately 1.74 miles north of the unincorporated community of Boyes Hot Springs, and 2.78 acres north of the City of Sonoma. Neighboring land uses consist primarily of developed rural-residential parcels between one and five acres in size to the north, west, and south, with substantially larger parcels of 50 acres or more toward the higher elevations to the east.

The Sonoma County General Plan Land Use Map designates the project site as Rural Residential (RR 5) with a density requirement of five acres per dwelling unit. The corresponding zoning district is RR B6 5, with a combining district designation for Floodplain (F2), Riparian Corridor (RC50/50), and Scenic Resource (SR). The RC designation establishes a 50-foot setback requirement from the top of creek bank along Hooker Creek.

The project is located in a “Very High” fire hazard severity zone with the State Responsibility Area, and is served by the Cal Fire Glen Ellen station.

The natural topography of the property slopes to the west at about 6:1 to 10:1 (horizontal to vertical) with steeper portions in the higher elevations along the eastern boundary of the parcel. Hooker Creek flows to the west/southwest along the northern portions of the parcel parallel to and within 100 feet of the Cavedale Road southerly side roadway frontage. The creek is within a steep ravine ranging from a few feet deep to 75 feet in the eastern portions. The ravine slopes to the creek at about 1:1 with some vertical rock cliffs

Vegetation on site consists oak woodland, chaparral, and riparian woodland associated with Hooker Creek containing grasses, brush, with scattered oak trees beyond the building area. Hard rock boulders (rhyolite and andesite) are exposed on the surface throughout the site. The site was burned in the 2017 Nuns fire that occurred in southern Sonoma County.

The site is within a Zone 3 Marginal Groundwater area and is not located within a priority groundwater basin.

IV. ISSUES RAISED BY THE PUBLIC OR AGENCIES.

Agency Referral

A referral packet was drafted and circulated to inform and solicit comments from selected relevant local, state and federal agencies; and to special interest groups that were anticipated to take interest in the project. The Northwest Information Center requested a cultural resources study, which was subsequently prepared by William Roop, and Eileen Barrow. No other issues were raised by the referral agencies.

Tribal Consultation under AB 52

Referrals were sent to the following Tribes:

Cloverdale Rancheria of Pomo Indians
Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians
Mishewal Wappo Tribe of Alexander Valley
Middletown Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians
Lytton Rancheria of California
Kashia Pomos Stewarts Point Rancheria
Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria

Permit Sonoma received one request for consultation for the project and is discussed in the Tribal Cultural Resources section below.

Public Comments

A neighborhood notice was sent to adjacent property owners prior to the publication of this document. No issues were raised by neighbors.

V. OTHER RELATED PROJECTS

There are no known private or public projects in the area that would affect the proposed project.

VI. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONEMENTAL IMPACTS

This section analyzes the potential environmental impacts of this project based on the criteria set forth in the State CEQA Guidelines and the County's implementing ordinances and guidelines. For each item, one of four responses is given:

- **No Impact:** The project would not have the impact described. The project may have a beneficial effect, but there is no potential to create or add increment to the impact described.
- **Less than Significant**: The project would have the impact described, but the impact would not be significant. Mitigation is not required, although the project applicant may choose to modify the project to avoid the impacts.
- **Less Than Significant with Mitigation**: The project would have the impact described, and the impact could be significant. One or more mitigation measures have been identified that will reduce the impact to a less than significant level.
- **Potentially Significant Impact:** The project would have the impact described, and the impact could be significant. The impact cannot be reduced to less than significant by incorporating mitigation measures. An environmental impact report must be prepared for this project.

Each question was answered by evaluating the project as proposed, that is, without considering the effect of any added mitigation measures. The Initial Study includes a discussion of the potential impacts and identifies mitigation measures to substantially reduce those impacts to a level of insignificance where feasible. All references and sources used in this Initial Study are listed in the Reference section at the end of this report and are incorporated herein by reference.

The Project Applicant has agreed to accept all mitigation measures listed in this Initial Study as conditions of approval for the proposed project, and to obtain all necessary permits, notify all contractors, agents and employees involved in project implementation and any new owners should the property be transferred to ensure compliance with the mitigation measures.

VII. SOURCE DOCUMENTS

The following documents were referenced or developed in preparation of the Initial Study checklist, and are hereby incorporated as part of this publication. Items 1 through 4 may be downloaded from the link location referenced below. All other documents are available by reference at the Permit and Resource Management Department via PermitSonoma.org, or as listed on the website of the Individual public agency referenced below.

Available for download at: https://share.sonoma-county.org/link/PRowNvr1aXk/

1. Project Application: Proposal Statement and Tentative Map
2. Project Technical Reports:
    a. Biological Resources Assessment, Ms. Lucy Macmillan, M.S., Environmental Scientist, September 29, 2021
    b. Geotechnical Reconnaissance, Bauer Associates, September 27, 2021

c. Groundwater Report, O'Connor Environmental, May 31, 2024
d. Stormwater Control Plan

Available by reference on Permit Sonoma website: https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Permit-Sonoma/

3. Sonoma County General Plan and EIR
4. Sonoma County Zoning Ordinance
5. Tree Protection and Replacement Ordinance (Ordinance No. 4014); Sonoma County.
6. Heritage or Landmark Tree Ordinance (Ordinance No. 3651); Sonoma County.
7. Sonoma County Aggregate Resources Management Plan and Program EIR, 1994
8. Streamside Conservation Plan and Zoning Permit submittal guide and attachments

Available by reference on Public Agency website

9. Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zones; State of California; 1983.
   www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/alquist-priolo
10. BAAQMD CEQA Guidelines; Bay Area Air Quality Management District
    www.arb.ca.gov/
11. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA
    www.califaep.org/docs/2020_ceqa_book.pdf
12. California Environmental Protection Agency
    www.calepa.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/corteseList/default.htm;
13. California Regional Water Quality Control Board
    geotracker.swrcb.ca.gov/;
14. California Department of Toxic Substances Control Management Board
    https://dtsc.ca.gov/dtscs-cortese-list/
15. North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
    https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/
16. Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), September 2014.
    https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/SGMA-Groundwater-Management
17. Santa Rosa Plain Watershed Groundwater Management Plan, Advisory Panel, 2014
    https://rpcity.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=4&clip_id=518&meta_id=43080

1. AESTHETICS:

Would the project:

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

The subject parcel is located at the base of a scenic hillside resource and is within 0.13 miles of the Sonoma Highway scenic corridor to the west. The existing terrain ranges in elevation from 240 feet along the Hooker Creek and Cavedale Road to 400 feet at the easterly corner of the parcel. Beyond the parcel, the elevation continues another 0.4 miles to 700 feet at the nearest knoll. The visible hillside elevations as seen from the scenic highway corridor and surrounding valley generally begin at 320 feet. The proposed tentative map locates the building envelope for the new parcel at around 280 to 300 feet in elevation where the site is generally screened from site by existing topography and natural vegetation.

Impact:
Less than Significant Impact.

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

The parcel is located within 0.13 miles of a state scenic highway, though is not visible from the

highway. The project does not include removal of historic trees or redwoods and would not involve removal of unique rock outcroppings and therefore is not expected to result in any significant impacts to scenic resources. The project site is not included in the Historic District (HD) overlay zone.

Impact:
No Impact

c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

The proposed building envelope on the new parcel is located at the lower elevations of the existing terrain such that new residential development consisting of a single-family residence and possible accessory dwelling unit will be generally screened from public view by existing topography and natural vegetation.

Impact:
Less than Significant Impact

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

New residential structures and uses introduce additional sources of light and glare that may potentially affect nighttime views for developed single-family properties located within the immediate vicinity of the project site. The proposed subdivision allows development potential for construction of one primary residence. The maximum build out scenario at this level equates to one new residential light source on 8.43 acres. Based on this maximum possible distribution of new lighting sources, the project is not likely to create a source of lighting or glare that would be considered in any way substantial to the surrounding uses.

Additionally, the County's Open Space and Resource Conservation element of its General Plan provides for the minimization of glare onto adjacent properties and into the night sky. This outdoor lighting policy prohibits continuous all night exterior lighting in rural areas, and requires that new development utilize light fixtures which shield the light source, are cast downward, and are no more than the minimum height and power necessary to adequately light the proposed use.

The Project Review section of Permit Sonoma is responsible for enforcing compliance with the County's outdoor lighting policy through the review and issuance of individual building permits for new development, including new single-family homes. Project Review staff evaluates exterior lighting plans as part of the permitting process and either confirms policy compliance, or specifies required plan revisions to achieve compliance before clearing the permit for issuance. Standard review procedures include verifying exterior lighting fixtures are low mounted, downward casting and fully shielded to prevent glare, located away from the periphery of the property ensuring no spill over occurs onto adjacent properties or into the night sky. Project review staff also confirms there are no flood lights permitted, that all parking lot and street lights consist of full cut-off fixtures, and that permitted security lighting is motion sensor activated

Based on the County's enforcement of its outdoor lighting policy, which works to minimize glare onto adjacent properties and into the night sky through implementation of standard permitting practices through its review of exterior lighting plans for new single-family homes, and based on the parcel size and limited number of new residential light generating sources proposed, the potential for one new primary residence with a detached accessory unit generating a cumulative lighting source over 4.46 acres in a manner that adversely affects nighttime views for surrounding uses is unrealistic. The potential for the project to create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime view in the area is therefore, less than significant.

Impact:
Less than Significant Impact

2. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES:

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

Would the project:

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

The parcel is not designated as Prime or Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance on the Important Farmland maps. It is designated as Urban Lands reflecting the existing use of the site. There are already a considerable number of small parcels and lack of significant agricultural operations in the area.

The project site is in the Rural Residential zoning district which allows for residential use and is not included in a Williamson Act contract.

Impact:
No Impact

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

The project site is zoned RR (Rural Residential), which allows for single family residential development and accessory agricultural uses. The site is not subject to a Land Conservation contract.

Significance Level:
No Impact

c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 4526) or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g)?

The project is not forest land, is not zoned Timberland Production (TP), or located near forest land or lands zoned TP. Therefore, the project will not conflict with or have any effect on forest lands or lands zoned TP.

Significance Level:
No Impact

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

See the comment under section 2(c) above.

Significance Level:
No Impact

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?

The project does not involve other changes in the environment that could result in the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or forest land to non-forest use.

Significance Level:
No Impact

3. AIR QUALITY:

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

Would the project:

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

The project is within the jurisdiction of the Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District (NSCAPCD). The NSCAPCD does not have an adopted air quality plan. The District has not adopted thresholds of significance, but the Bay Area Air Quality Management District has developed thresholds of significance specifically for local plans. Consistency with the most recently adopted Clean Air Plan (CAP) is referenced within the following responses.

Impact:
No Impact

b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?

State and Federal standards have been established for the “criteria pollutants”: ozone precursors, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide and particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$).
The pollutants NOx (nitrogen oxides) and reactive organics form ozone in the atmosphere in the presence of sunlight. The principal source of ozone precursors is vehicle emissions, although stationary internal combustion engines must also be considered a source. Detailed NOx and hydrocarbon air quality analysis is generally not recommended for projects generating less than 2,000 vehicle average daily traffic (adt). Given the low traffic generation of the project (60 adt) relative to the screening criteria, ozone precursor emissions would be less than significant.

Detailed air quality analysis for carbon monoxide is generally not recommended unless a project would generate 10,000 or more vehicle trips a day, or contribute more than 100 vehicles per hour to intersections operating at LOS D, E or F with project traffic. Given the low traffic generation of the project (60 adt) relative to the screening criteria, carbon monoxide emissions would be less than significant.

Wood smoke from fireplaces and wood stoves are sources of fine particulate matter. Wood smoke is a major contributor to reduced visibility and reduced air quality on winter evenings in both urban and rural areas. Sonoma County building regulations restrict fireplaces to natural gas fireplaces, pellet stoves and EPA-Certified wood burning fireplaces or stoves. With the restriction on fireplace design, fine particulate emissions form this project be a Less than Significant.

Impact:
Less than Significant Impact

c) 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

The project will not have a cumulative effect on ozone because it will not generate substantial traffic which could otherwise result in substantial emissions of ozone precursors (ROG and NO_x). The project will have no long-term effect on $PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10}, because all surfaces will be paved gravel, landscaped or otherwise treated to stabilize bare soils, and dust generation will be insignificant. However, construction activities have the potential to generate short-term impacts related to uncontrolled dust emission. Such emissions could be potentially significant at the project level if not properly controlled through use of best management practices. Since Permit Sonoma currently requires and enforces implementation of dust control measures as standard practice during site construction, including requirements for routine spraying of active construction, staging and stockpile areas, containment requirements for transportation of loose material such as sand and soil, and proper maintenance of paved roadway areas near site entrances to minimize accumulation and/or tracking of loose material, any volume of uncontrolled dust emission escaping off-site during permitted construction hours, airborne, waterborne or otherwise, would be considered negligible and any related impact therefore, less than significant.

Although the project will generate some ozone precursors from new vehicle trips, the project will not have a cumulative effect on ozone because its estimated contribution of additional vehicle trips are not substantial enough to create significant new emissions of ozone precursors (ROG and NOx), and because the County employs use of best management practices for controlling dust emissions during site construction activities to ensure potential short-term construction related impacts are also less than significant.

Impact:
Less than Significant Impact

d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Construction of individual projects would involve activities that result in air pollutant emissions. Construction activities would temporarily create emissions of dust, fumes, equipment exhaust, and other air contaminants. Construction activities within the NSCAPCD portion of the county are regulated by the public nuisance provisions of NSCAPCD Rule 400 (General Limitations), the plume opacity limitations contained in NSCAPCD Rule 410 (Visible Emissions), and the dust suppression provisions of NSCAPCD Rule 430 (Fugitive Dust Emissions). The BAAQMD CEQA Guidelines contain construction dust mitigation measures that are applied to individual development proposals through the environmental review process.

Sensitive receptors include nearby residential neighborhoods within 1,000 feet of the project site. Individual site development and related construction activities will not cause any significant concentrations of pollutants as supported in the analysis above under Sections 3(b) and (c), nor would the project not become a receptor after construction. Arnold Drive is below the BAAQMD threshold of 20,000 vehicles a day and the project is not anticipated to increase the amount of vehicles to reach this threshold either.

The preceding information supports the conclusion of there being no long term increase in emissions resulting from the project. However, significant short term dust emissions resulting from project construction could affect nearby residents if not property addressed. Standard measures are employed for all construction sites, while enhanced measures are employed at large sites or at sites near sensitive receptors. Highway construction projects are subject to Caltrans's Special Provisions and Standard Specifications that include requirements to minimize or eliminate dust through the application of water or dust palliatives.

As Permit Sonoma currently requires and enforces implementation of effective dust control measures during site construction as standard practice, including for permitted development activities resulting from the proposed subdivision, any potentially uncontrolled volume of dust emissions escaping off-site during construction of the project would be insignificant.

Impact:
Less than Significant Impact

e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?
Construction equipment may generate odors during project construction. The impact would be less than significant and it would be a short-term impact that ceases upon completion of the project.

Impact:
Less than Significant Impact

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES:

A Biological Resources Assessment for the project has been prepared by Environmental Scientist, Lucy Macmillan, dated September 29, 2021. The biological report identifies existing site characteristics consistent with the presence of riparian habitat associated with Hooker Creek that may support sensitive wildlife on the subject property. The report also initial site development impacts affecting riparian habitat and supported wildlife which if not properly mitigated, may be potentially significant. The report concludes with recommendations for reducing potential impacts in biological resources to less than significant levels. The recommendations are incorporated into the mitigation measures identified below.

Regulatory Framework

The following discussion identifies federal, state and local environmental regulations that serve to protect sensitive biological resources relevant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process.

Federal

Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA)

FESA establishes a broad public and federal interest in identifying, protecting, and providing for the recovery of threatened or endangered species. The Secretary of Interior and the Secretary of Commerce are designated in FESA as responsible for identifying endangered and threatened species and their critical habitat, carrying out programs for the conservation of these species, and rendering opinions regarding the impact of proposed federal actions on listed species. The USFWS and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) are charged with implementing and enforcing the FESA. USFWS has authority over terrestrial and continental aquatic species, and NOAA Fisheries has authority over species that spend all or part of their life cycle at sea, such as salmonids.

Section 9 of FESA prohibits the unlawful "take" of any listed fish or wildlife species. Take, as defined by FESA, means "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such action." USFWS's regulations define harm to mean "an act which actually kills or injures wildlife." Such an act "may include "significant habitat modification or degradation where it actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding or sheltering" (50 CFR § 17.3). Take can be permitted under FESA pursuant to sections 7 and 10. Section 7 provides a process for take permits for federal projects or projects subject to a federal permit, and Section 10 provides a process for incidental take permits for projects without a federal nexus. FESA does not extend the take prohibition to federally listed plants on private land, other than prohibiting the removal, damage, or destruction of such species in violation of state law.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA)

The U.S. MBTA (16 USC §§ 703 et seq., Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Part 10) states it is "unlawful at any time, by any means or in any manner, to pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill; attempt to

take, capture or kill; possess, offer for sale, sell, offer to barter, barter, offer to purchase, purchase, deliver for shipment, ship, export, import, cause to be shipped, exported, or imported, deliver for transportation, transport or cause to be transported, carry or cause to be carried, or receive for shipment, transportation, carriage, or export any migratory bird, any part, nest, or egg of any such bird, or any product, whether or not manufactured, which consists, or is composed in whole or in part, of any such bird or any part, nest or egg thereof…" In short, under MBTA it is illegal to disturb a nest that is in active use, since this could result in killing a bird, destroying a nest, or destroying an egg. The USFWS enforces MBTA. The MBTA does not protect some birds that are non-native or human-introduced or that belong to families that are not covered by any of the conventions implemented by MBTA. In 2017, the USFWS issued a memorandum stating that the MBTA does not prohibit incidental take; therefore, the MBTA is currently limited to purposeful actions, such as directly and knowingly removing a nest to construct a project, hunting, and poaching.

The Clean Water Act (CWA)

The CWA is the primary federal law regulating water quality. The implementation of the CWA is the responsibility of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). However, the EPA depends on other agencies, such as the individual states and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), to assist in implementing the CWA. The objective of the CWA is to "restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters." Section 404 and 401 of the CWA apply to activities that would impact waters of the U.S. The USACE enforces Section 404 of the CWA and the California State Water Resources Control Board enforces Section 401.

Section 404.

As part of its mandate under Section 404 of the CWA, the EPA regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into "waters of the U.S.". "Waters of the U.S: include territorial seas, tidal waters, and non-tidal waters in addition to wetlands and drainages that support wetland vegetation, exhibit ponding or scouring, show obvious signs of channeling, or have discernible banks and high-water marks. Wetlands are defined as those areas "that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions" (33 CFR 328.3(b)). The discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. is prohibited under the CWA except when it is in compliance with Section 404 of the CWA. Enforcement authority for Section 404 was given to the USACE, which it accomplishes under its regulatory branch. The EPA has veto authority over the USACE's administration of the Section 404 program and may override a USACE decision with respect to permitting. Substantial impacts to waters of the U.S. may require an Individual Permit's Projects that only minimally affect waters of the U.S. may meet the conditions of one of the existing Nationwide Permits, provided that such permit's other respective conditions are satisfied. A Water Quality Certification or waiver pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA is required for Section 404 permit actions (see below).

Section 401.

Any applicant for a federal permit to impact waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the CWA, including Nationwide Permits where pre-construction notification is required, must also provide to the USACE a certification or waiver from the State of California. The "401 Certification" is provided by the State Water Resources Control Board through the local Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The RWQCB issues and enforces permits for discharge of treated water, landfills, storm-water runoff, filling of any surface waters or wetlands, dredging, agricultural activities and wastewater recycling. The RWQCB recommends the "401 Certification" application be made at the same time that any applications are provided to other agencies, such as the USACE, USFWS, or NOAA Fisheries. The application is not final until completion of environmental review under the CEQA. The application to the RWQCB is similar to the pre-construction notification that is required by the USACE. It must include a description of the habitat that is being impacted, a description of how the impact is proposed to be minimized and proposed mitigation measures with goals, schedules, and performance standards. Mitigation must include a replacement of functions and values, and replacement of wetland at a minimum ratio of 2:1, or twice as many acres of wetlands provided as are removed. The RWQCB looks for mitigation that is on site and in-kind, with functions and values as good as or better than the water-based habitat that is being

removed.

State

California Endangered Species Act (CESA)

Provisions of CESA protect state-listed threatened and endangered species. The CDFW is charged with establishing a list of endangered and threatened species. CDFW regulates activities that may result in "take" of individuals (i.e., "hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill"). Habitat degradation or modification is not expressly included in the definition of "take" under the California Fish and Game Code (CFGC), but CDFW has interpreted "take" to include the killing of a member of a species which is the proximate result of habitat modification.

Fish and Game Code 1600-1602

Sections 1600-1607 of the CFGC require that a Notification of Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSAA) application be submitted to CDFW for "any activity that may substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow or substantially change the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake." CDFW reviews the proposed actions in the application and, if necessary, prepares a LSAA that includes measures to protect affected fish and wildlife resources, including mitigation for impacts to bats and bat habitat.

Nesting Birds

Nesting birds, including raptors, are protected under CFGC Section 3503, which reads, "It is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation made pursuant thereto." In addition, under CFGC Section 3503.5, "it is unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds in the orders Falconiformes or Strigiformes (birds-of-prey) or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation adopted pursuant thereto". Passerines and non-passerine land birds are further protected under CFGC 3513. As such, CDFW typically recommends surveys for nesting birds that could potentially be directly (e.g., actual removal of trees/vegetation) or indirectly (e.g., noise disturbance) impacted by project-related activities. Disturbance during the breeding season could result in the incidental loss of fertile eggs or nestlings, or otherwise lead to nest abandonment. Disturbance that causes nest abandonment and/or loss of reproductive effort is considered "take" by CDFW.

Non-Game Mammals

Sections 4150-4155 of the CFGC protects non-game mammals, including bats. Section 4150 states "A mammal occurring naturally in California that is not a game mammal, fully protected mammal, or fur-bearing mammal is a nongame mammal. A non-game mammal may not be taken or possessed except as provided in this code or in accordance with regulations adopted by the commission". The non-game mammals that may be taken or possessed are primarily those that cause crop or property damage. Bats are classified as a non-game mammal and are protected under the CFGC.

California Fully Protected Species and Species of Special Concern

The classification of "fully protected" was the CDFW's initial effort to identify and provide additional protection to those animals that were rare or faced possible extinction. Lists were created for fish, amphibians and reptiles, birds, and mammals. Most of the species on these lists have subsequently been listed under CESA and/or FESA. The Fish and Game Code sections (fish at §5515, amphibians and reptiles at §5050, birds at §3503 and §3511, and mammals at §4150 and §4700) dealing with "fully protected" species state that these species "…may not be taken or possessed at any time and no provision of this code or any other law shall be construed to authorize the issuance of permits or licenses to take any fully protected species," although take may be authorized for necessary scientific research. This language makes the "fully protected" designation the strongest and most restrictive regarding the "take" of these species. In 2003, the code sections dealing with "fully protected" species were amended to allow the CDFW to authorize take resulting from recovery activities for state-listed species.

California Species of Special Concern (CSC) are broadly defined as animals not listed under the FESA or CESA, but which are nonetheless of concern to the CDFW because they are declining at a rate that could result in listing or because they historically occurred in low numbers and known threats to their persistence currently exist. This designation is intended to result in special consideration for these animals by the CDFW, land managers, consulting biologists, and others, and is intended to focus attention on the species to help avert the need for costly listing under FESA and CESA and cumbersome recovery efforts that might ultimately be required. This designation also is intended to stimulate collection of additional information on the biology, distribution, and status of poorly known at-risk species, and focus research and management attention on them. Although these species generally have no special legal status, they are given special consideration under the CEQA during project review.

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The intent of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Porter-Cologne) is to protect water quality and the beneficial uses of water, and it applies to both surface and ground water. Under this law, the State Water Resources Control Board develops statewide water quality plans, and the RWQCBs develop basin plans that identify beneficial uses, water quality objectives, and implementation plans. The RWQCBs have the primary responsibility to implement the provisions of both statewide and basin plans. Waters regulated under Porter-Cologne, referred to as “waters of the State,” include isolated waters that are not regulated by the USACE. Projects that require a USACE permit, or fall under other federal jurisdiction, and have the potential to impact waters of the State are required to comply with the terms of the Water Quality Certification Program. If a proposed project does not require a federal license or permit, any person discharging, or proposing to discharge, waste (e.g., dirt) to waters of the State must file a Report of Waste Discharge and receive either waste discharge requirements (WDRs) or a waiver to WDRs before beginning the discharge.

Local

Sonoma County General Plan

The *Sonoma County General Plan 2020* Land Use Element and Open Space & Resource Conservation Element both contain policies to protect natural resource lands including, but not limited to, watershed, fish and wildlife habitat, biotic areas, and habitat connectivity corridors.

Riparian Corridor Ordinance

The RC combining zone is established to protect biotic resource communities, including critical habitat areas within and along riparian corridors, for their habitat and environmental value, and to implement the provisions of the General Plan Open Space and Resource Conservation and Water Resources Elements. These provisions are intended to protect and enhance riparian corridors and functions along designated streams, balancing the need for agricultural production, urban development, timber and mining operations and other land uses with the preservation of riparian vegetation, protection of water resources, floodplain management, wildlife habitat and movement, stream shade, fisheries, water quality, channel stability, groundwater recharge, opportunities for recreation, education and aesthetic appreciation and other riparian functions and values.

Valley Oak Habitat (VOH) Combining District

The VOH combining district is established to protect and enhance valley oaks and valley oak woodlands and to implement the provisions of *Sonoma County General Plan 2020* Resource Conservation Element Section 5.1. Design review approval may be required of projects in the VOH, which would include measures to protect and enhance valley oaks on the project site, such as requiring that valley oaks shall comprise a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the required landscape trees for the development project.

Oak Woodland (OAK) Combining District

The Oak Woodland (OAK) Combining District is established to protect, preserve, and enhance oak trees and oak woodlands, and to implement the provisions of Sonoma County General Plan 2020 Open Space

and Resource Conservation Element Section 3.1, Policy OSRC-7l and OSRC-7m. This is achieved by prohibiting the removal of native oak trees within oak woodlands on parcels with at least one-half acre of the Oak Woodland Combining District, with limited exceptions for certain listed land uses that the county has determined promote public, health, safety, and welfare, including uses related to hazard reduction or removal, conservation, agriculture, pest control, and residential maintenance. Where proposed oak woodland removal is subject to a discretionary permit process, mitigation measures to address loss of trees would apply, such as measures to ensure no net loss of oak woodlands or, for the highest quality woodlands, would provide a unique public benefit equal to or greater than the value associated with removed oaks.

Sonoma County Tree Protection Ordinance

The Sonoma County Tree Protection Ordinance (Sonoma County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 26, Article 88, Sec. 26-88-015 establishes policies for protected tree species in Sonoma County. Protected trees are defined (Chapter 26, Article 02, Sec. 26- 02-140) as the following species: big leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*), blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*), coast live oak (Quercus *agrifolia*), interior live oak (*Quercus wislizenii*), madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*), oracle oak (*Quercus morehus*), Oregon oak (*Quercus garryana*), redwood (Sequoia sempervirens), valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), California bay (*Umbellularia california*), and their hybrids.

Project Analysis

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.

Background:

Special-Status Species

Special-status species include those plant and wildlife species that have been formally listed, are proposed as endangered or threatened, or are candidates for such listing under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) or California Endangered Species Act (CESA). These acts afford protection to both listed and proposed species. In addition, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Species of Special Concern, which are species that face extirpation in California if current population and habitat trends continue, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (The Service) Birds of Conservation Concern, and CDFW special-status invertebrates, are all considered special-status species. Although CDFW Species of Special Concern generally have no special legal status, they are given special consideration under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In addition to regulations for special-status species, most birds in the United States, including non-status species, are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. Plant species on California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants with California Rare Plant Ranks (Rank) of 1 and 2 are also considered special-status plant species and must be considered under CEQA. Bat species designated as “High Priority” by the Western Bat Working Group (WBWG) qualify for legal protection under Section 15380(d) of the CEQA Guidelines. Species designated High Priority” are defined as “imperiled or are at high risk of imperilment based on available information on distribution, status, ecology and known threats.

Endangered Species Act

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended (16 USC 1531 *et seq*.) was enacted to provide a means to identify and protect endangered and threatened species. Under the Section 9 of the ESA, it is unlawful to take any listed species. “Take” is defined as harassing, harming, pursuing,

hunting, shooting, wounding, killing, trapping, capturing, or collecting a listed species. “Harass” is defined as an intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering. “Harm” is defined as an act which actually kills or injures fish or wildlife and may include significant habitat modification or degradation which actually kills or injures fish or wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, spawning, rearing, migrating, feeding, or sheltering. Actions that may result in “take” of a federal-listed species are subject to The Service or National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) permit issuance and monitoring. Section 7 of ESA requires federal agencies to ensure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by the agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat for such species. Any action authorized, funded, or carried out by a federal agency or designated proxy (e.g., Army Corps of Engineers) which has potential to affect listed species requires consultation with The Service or NOAA Fisheries under Section 7 of the ESA.

Critical Habitat

Critical habitat is a term defined in the ESA as a specific geographic area that contains features essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that may require special management and protection. The ESA requires federal agencies to consult with the USFWS to conserve listed species on their lands and to ensure that any activities or projects they fund, authorize, or carry out will not jeopardize the survival of a threatened or endangered species. In consultation for those species with critical habitat, federal agencies must also ensure that their activities or projects do not adversely modify critical habitat to the point that it will no longer aid in the species’ recovery. In many cases, this level of protection is similar to that already provided to species by the ESA jeopardy standard. However, areas that are currently unoccupied by the species but which are needed for the species’ recovery are protected by the prohibition against adverse modification of critical habitat.

Essential Fish Habitat

Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) is regulated through the NMFS, a division of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Protection of Essential Fish Habitat is mandated through changes implemented in 1996 to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) to protect the loss of habitat necessary to maintain sustainable fisheries in the United States. The Magnuson-Stevens Act defines Essential Fish Habitat as "those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity" [16 USC 1802(10)]. NMFS further defines essential fish habitat as areas that "contain habitat essential to the long-term survival and health of our nation's fisheries" Essential Fish Habitat can include the water column, certain bottom types such as sandy or rocky bottoms, vegetation such as eelgrass or kelp, or structurally complex coral or oyster reefs. Under regulatory guidelines issued by NMFS, any federal agency that authorizes, funds, or undertakes action that may affect EFH is required to consult with NMFS (50 CFR 600.920).

Special-Status Plants

The biological report assesses the potential for special status plant species occurring on site based on the consultant’s March 2021 field survey and a database query of the CNDDB and the CNPS Electronic Inventory within a 9-quad of the property. The consultant notes observed oak woodland and riparian corridor habitat as supporting moderate potential for certain native species to occur on site. The report recommends a follow-up survey be conducted during the preceding spring before construction to determine potential presence and required avoidance for the rare plant species listed in Appendix A, Table 2 of the report, which include the following.

Moderate Potential for Occurrence:

- Baker’s navarretia (Navarretia leucocephala ssp. Bakeri)
- Bent-flowered fiddleneck (Amsinckia lunaris)
- Big-scale balsamroot (Balsamorhiza macrolepis)

- Calistoga ceanothus (Ceanothus divergens)
- Clara Hunt's milk-vetch (Astragalus claranus)
- Cobb Mountain lupine (Lupinus sericatus)
- Dwarf downingia (Downingia pusilla)
- Franciscan onion (Allium peninsulare var. franciscanum)
- Green jewelflower (Streptanthus hesperidis CRPR 1B.2
- Hayfield tarweed (Hemizonia congesta ssp. Congesta)
- Holly-leaved ceanothus (Ceanothus purpureus)
- Lyngbye's sedge (Carex lyngbyei) CRPR 2B.2 (March)
- Marin western flax (Hesperolinon congestum)
- Mead's owls-clover (Castilleja ambigua var. meadii)
- Narrow-anthered brodiaea (Brodiaea leptandra [B. californica var. leptandra])
- Oval-leaved viburnum (Viburnum ellipticum) CRPR 2B.3 May-June
- Pappose tarplant (Centromadia [Hemizonia] parryi ssp. Parryi)
- Petaluma popcorn-flower (Plagiobothrys mollis var. vestitus)
- Rincon Ridge ceanothus (Ceanothus confusus)
- Rincon ridge manzanita (Arctostaphylos stanfordiana ssp. Decumbens)
- Sonoma alopecurus (Alopecurus aequalis var. sonomensis)
- Sonoma beardtongue (Penstemon newberryi var. sonomensis)
- Sonoma ceanothus (Ceanothus sonomensis)
- Tiburon buckwheat (Eriogonum luteolum var. caninum)
- Two-fork clover (Trifolium amoenum)

Special-Status Wildlife

The applicant's biotic consultant conducted a reconnaissance-level habitat assessment to determine the nature and extent of habitat types within and adjacent to the project site. Based on the field assessment and on information provided by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB, 2021), it is determined that the site provides potential habitat to support special-status species, including nesting birds, maternity roosting bats, Pacific pond turtle, California giant salamander, and red-bellied newt. Section 4.d below addresses potential project impacts concerning nesting birds.

Special-status Bats

The large oak trees on the project site provide potential roosting habitat for various special-status bat species known to occur in the project region including but not limited to pallid bat (Antrozous pallidus), Pacific western big- eared bat (Corynorhinus townsendii townsendii), and long-eared myotis (Myotis evotis). These bat species are California Species of Special Concern and may roost in mature trees, snags, crevices, cavities, and foliage within this habitat. Maternity roosting for bats is April through November.

California Giant Salamander

Hooker Creek provides potential habitat for California giant salamander (Dicamptodon ensatus), which is listed as a Species of Special Concern by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The California giant salamander is know from coastal forests near streams and seeps from Mendocino County south to Monterey County and east to Napa County. Adults may be found under rocks, logs and other debris adjacent to water sources. Aquatic larvae are found in cold, clear streams, sometimes in lakes or ponds (CNDDB, 2017). The Hooker Creek is known to provide supporting habitat for this species and impacts of initial site development resulting from the project may have adverse effects on its movement if present. The project biologist recommends special fencing prohibiting access to active construction areas for the Pacific Pond Turtle, Giant California Salamander and the red-bellied newt species to reduce potential impacts to less than significant levels. Appropriate mitigation measures addressing this matter are listed below..

Pacific Pond Turtle

The California Department of Forestry and Wildlife (CDFW) identifies Pacific Pond Turtle (PPT) as the only freshwater turtle native to California and a species of Special Concern. The species primarily requires suitable aquatic habitat throughout the year. The biotic consultant notes Hooker Creek provides such habitat, though during nesting season (late April through July), females are known to venture out well beyond their primary aquatic habitat. Studies have shown PPT venturing up to 300 feet away from water to excavate a nest, lay eggs, and bury the eggs for incubation and protection. Nests are typically well-concealed and hatchlings generally emerge in late fall, though may overwinter in the nest until nearly spring the following year.

The County's riparian corridor regulations provide adequate ongoing protection for PPT, including throughout and up to 50 feet beyond the outer banks of its primary habitat along Hooker Creek. The County prohibits development and improvements from occurring within 50 feet from the top of bank along both sides of the creek. Between late April and July, however, the species is known to venture out, establish, and leave behind well concealed nesting sites located well beyond the protection of the riparian corridor boundary. Project areas planned for site development within 250 feet of the riparian corridor may therefore contain concealed nests. Grading and construction activities planned for areas that may contain a hidden PPT nest would have the potential to adversely disturb that nest, which could have potentially significantly impacts on the reproduction and livelihood of the species.

The biotic report provides recommendations based on best practices for minimizing impacts to sensitive wildlife species with particular movement patterns and nesting behaviors. The recommendations explain how measures may be taken for enclosing and securing areas planned for construction just before and during an anticipated time of the year that when correctly done will effectively protect well nesting sites where left well concealed by Pacific Pond Turtle, from coming into contact with areas planned for ground disturbance activities. The protective fencing is also noted as serving in the same manor to prevent California giant salamander and red-bellied newt from entering areas planned for disturbance activities.

Impact:
Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation

Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Rare Plant Species:
NOTE ON THE MAP AND IMPROVEMENT PLANS: "Prior to development on proposed parcel 1, the developer shall complete a survey of the proposed development areas, including access, building envelope, and septic related footprints, during the preceding spring before construction to determine on site presence and location of any rare plant species listed in Appendix A, Table 2 of the September 29, 2021, Biological Resources Assessment for the project, and submit the results of the completed pre-construction rare plant survey as part of the initial grading permit."

Mitigation Monitoring BIO-1 Rare Plant Species:
Permit Sonoma staff shall review the map to ensure that the note is shown correctly, and on the plans related to the development permits before Permit Sonoma will allow recordation of the map. Prior to issuance of any building or grading permit(s), staff shall ensure that the survey is reviewed for potential impacts to rare plant species and the ground disturbing activities conform to the recommendations of the completed survey results.

Mitigation Measure Mitigation BIO-2: Roosting Bats:
NOTE ON THE MAP AND IMPROVEMENT PLANS: "The site provides potential habitat for special-status bats. April through November is the maternity roosting season for this species. Prior to any initial site development or related ground disturbances planned between May 1 and August 31, the applicant shall retain a qualified biologist to implement and confirm completion of the following activities:

a. A maternity bat roost assessment of trees shall be conducted within 100 feet of construction project site to determine the likelihood of occurrence for maternity roosting bats on site.

b. If potential species occurrence is detected, nighttime emergence surveys shall be be performed for confirmation If species presence is confirmed, the biologist shall establish an appropriate exclusion zone around the maternity roost area.

Mitigation Monitoring BIO-2:
Prior to allowing the map to record Permit Sonoma staff shall review the map to ensure that the note is shown correctly on the map. Prior to issuance of any building or grading permit(s), staff shall ensure that the preconstruction survey for roosting bats has been completed. Prior to issuance of building or grading permits, staff shall verify that construction monitoring has been conducted and that any measures recommended by the biologist to avoid sensitive habitat or species, as identified in the monitoring report have been complied with.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3 Pacific Pond Turtle:
NOTE ON THE MAP AND IMPROVEMENT PLANS: "To prevent Pacific Pond Turtle from nesting within proposed development areas, a wildlife exclusion fence should be installed in areas within 250 feet of the top of bank of Hooker Creek prior to the nesting season (beginning mid-April). This fence also serves to prevent California giant salamander and red-bellied newt from entering areas planned for disturbance activities, and should be maintained during all project activities.

a. The exclusion fence should be installed such that the fabric is a minimum of 46 inches above ground and the fabric should be buried 4-6 inches below ground.
b. The exclusion fence posts should be located on the Study area (work side) of the fence with the fabric on the outside of the Study area relative to the stakes.
c. Pre-construction surveys should be performed within 48 hours of initiation of Project activities, including exclusion fence installation and initial ground disturbing activities.
d. No construction activities will occur during rain events, defined as ¼ inch of rain falling within a 24-hour period. Construction activities may resume 24 hours after the end of the rain event."

Mitigation Monitoring BIO-3:
Prior to allowing the map to record Permit Sonoma staff shall review the map to ensure that the note is shown correctly on the map. Permit Sonoma shall not issue permits for ground disturbing activities until after the site has been surveyed by a qualified biologist to ensure proper fencing and buffers are in place for protection of sensitive wildlife prior to issuance.

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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Site development resulting from the proposed subdivision is subject to County regulations for the protection of riparian corridors. The Sonoma County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance provide for the protection of riparian habitat through establishment and implementation of streamside conservation areas for designated Riparian Corridors (RC). The RC designation generally prohibits development encroachment within streamside conservation areas as established from the top of bank by zoning setback requirements for each side of the stream

Riparian Sensitivity
The property contains a riparian corridor (RC50) designation for Hooker Creek. The creek flows from the northeast hills and along the westerly boundary of Lot 1 parallel to Cavedale Road. The creek crosses under Cavedale Road near the southerly boundary of Lot 1 and continues westward toward Highway 12 and ultimately, to Sonoma Creek.

Hooker Creek contains a meandering pattern with small and large rocks and bedrock as a substrate. Much of the vegetation within the creek corridor was burned during the fire in 2017. Plants observed during the 2021 spring survey include riparian natives such as willow (Salix spp.), buckeye (Aesculus California), coast live oak (Quercus agrifolia), madrone (Arbutus menziessi), toyon (Heteromeles arbutifolia), black oak (Quercus velutina), and poison oak (Toxicodendron diversilobum).

An ephemeral tributary drains to Hooker Creek on the southern portion of the property. This tributary meanders down the hillslope north of the existing residence and measures about 3-4 feet wide.

The established setback requirement for Hooker Creek is 50 feet. Potential impacts of new site development on riparian habitat and supported wildlife occurring within the streamside conservation area require County approval of a streamside conservation plan specifying new planting of native vegetation and trees alongside the creek bank as mitigation for any area of disturbance. Potential impacts to Hooker Creek or the ephemeral tributary also require authorization and associated mitigation from the Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. This includes the construction of an arch bridge over Hooker Creek to Parcel 1

Creek Crossing

The project proposes a 14-foot wide bridge crossing over Hooker Creek to provide site access to the proposed parcel from Cavedale Road. The point of access on Cavedale Road is at the 239-foot elevation mark, approximately 220 feet northeast of the roadway overcrossing of the creek.

The design scope of the creek crossing for the project consists of a 19-foot-wide, 8.3-foot-tall open arch structure (pipe arch) installed into the streambed, building up the outer creek banks with supporting retaining walls and imported fill material to match the street and opposite site landing elevations, and constructing a 14-foot-wide driveway overtop. The combined pipe arch crossing and raised bank alignment extends the access driveway approximately 190 feet from Cavedale Road to the 249-foot elevation mark on the opposite easterly slope of the project site. The central arch span over the streambed is approximately 25 feet in length. The raised outer bank spans make up the difference, including a 130-foot section on the Cavedale side and a 135-foot section on the easterly project side.

Building Sites

Beyond the bridge crossing and riparian corridor the proposed driveway will traverse the site at approximately 15% to access the proposed building envelope. The tentative map locates the development envelope in this area to accommodate potential building and septic footprints within the more level areas in the central and easterly portion of the property and outside the streamside conservation boundary of the creek. The general cross slopes within the building envelop area average approximately 10-15% in a northwesterly direction downward toward Hooker Creek and Cavedale Road. Required storm water and drainage improvements for the development site are discussed within the Hydrology section of this Initial Study.

Riparian Impacts

The proposed envelope for supporting site development and new single-family construction is located approximately 100 feet to the east of the streamside conservation boundary and not anticipated to adversely affect sensitive riparian habitat identified near the creek, nor sensitive wildlife that may rely on those areas for supporting habitat.

The proposed bridge crossing and initial driveway footprint results in the permanent loss of existing riparian habitat, including approximately 1,600 square-feet. The placement of imported material to build up the creek banks for the bridge will disturb an additional 1,400 square-feet of riparian habitat. The permanent footprint and associated grading activities will require the removal of nine Live Oak trees, including seven trees between 14 and 20 inches in diameter and 2 trees under 6 inches in diameter.

The proposed bridge construction and related ground disturbances occurring within 50 feet of the creek bank will adversely affect existing riparian habitat and supported wildlife if not properly mitigated. Implementation of a County approved streamside conservation plan specifying the appropriate replanting of native vegetation and trees near the bridge crossing and along the stream banks of Hooker Creek will reduce potential impact levels to less than significant. A mitigation measure requiring applicant submittal of a zoning permit for review and approval of a streamside conservation plan is detailed below.

Agency Clearances
Additionally, bridge construction occurring within the streambed of Hooker Creek falls under jurisdiction of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Potential impacts resulting from footbridge abutments located within the creek bank shall be addressed through CDFW issuance of a Streambed Alteration Agreement pursuant to Section 1602 of the California Fish and Game Code. Appropriate mitigation measures requiring applicant confirmation of actively pursuing required clearances from all responsible agencies having jurisdiction over any potential riparian related impact resulting from project related activities occurring within streambed of Hooker Creek are specified below.

Impact:
Less than Significant with Mitigation
BIO-4, BIO-5, BIO-6

Mitigation

Mitigation BIO-4: Riparian Corridor: NOTE ON MAP: "No site development or improvements shall occur within the 50-foot streamside conservation area established from the upper top of bank along either side of Hooker Creek, except as otherwise provided by County Code Section 26-65-040 or approved as part of a streamside conservation plan providing for the appropriate protection of biotic resources, water quality, floodplain management, bank stability, groundwater recharge, and other applicable riparian functions."

Monitoring BIO-4: Prior to allowing the map to record Permit Sonoma staff shall review the map to ensure that the note is shown correctly on the map.

Mitigation BIO-5 Streamside Conservation Plan: Applicant/owner shall submit a Zoning Permit detailing the implementation of a final streamside conservation plan mitigating construction impacts associated with installation of proposed access improvements within the riparian corridor boundaries of Hooker Creek. The conservation plan shall be prepared by a qualified professional specifying the planting of appropriate native vegetation and trees to support the enhancement and ongoing protection of both riparian and oak woodland habitat functions along the banks of Hooker Creek. The replanting specifications shall demonstrate consistency with the following minimum requirements:

a. *Restoration Size*. The minimum size of the restoration area shall be at least double the size of the total area of habitat loss: (permanent footprint area x 2); plus an equal amount for disturbed areas beyond the footprint (grading disturbed area x 1) = (total restoration area);
b. *Number of Trees*. The minimum number of oak trees required for replanting is as provided by the County's Tree Protection Ordinance under Code Section 26-88-015.
c. *Number of Plants*. The minimum number of understory plants required for planting is one plant per every 600 square feet of restoration area: (Restoration Area) x 0.006 = (total plants required);
d. *Maintenance Agreement*. Landowner shall sign and adhere to a Restoration Area Maintenance and Monitoring Agreement to ensure sufficient plant installation and irrigation for an initial period of five years from the time of initial planting.

Monitoring BIO-5: Permit Sonoma staff will withhold issuance of the development permits until a zoning permit specifying the required mitigation criteria for the streamside conservation plan is approved, and shall withhold planning clearance of final permit inspection for completed grading activities until completion of the streamside conservation plan with a signed maintenance agreement is conformed.

Mitigation BIO-6 Agency Clearance: Applicant/owner shall provide sufficient documentation of required clearances from all responsible agencies having jurisdiction over the permitting of any project related activities occurring within the streambed of Hooker Creek, including, but not limited, to the following agencies:

a. Army Corps of Engineers jurisdiction over Waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the CWA.
b. Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) jurisdiction under Section 401 of the CWA and/or the state Porter-Cologne Act;
c. California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdiction over aquatic habitat under Section 1600 of the CFGC, including requirement of a streambed Alteration Agreement for work occurring within the bed, bank or channel of the creek.

Monitoring BIO-6: Permit Sonoma staff shall not issue development permits for any ground disturbing activities on the new parcel until appropriate documentation or related correspondence confirming receipt of application for required approvals, or in pursuit thereof, from all responsible agencies having jurisdiction over the project is verified.

c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

Wetlands in the Sonoma Valley or in the southern part of the County may be habitat for the federally listed plants and deeper more pond-like wetlands can provide habitat for the California red-legged frog. Impacts on wetlands that are habitat for those species would be potentially significant, whether or not the species actually are present.

If the wetland does not provide suitable habitat for a State or federally listed species, the project would have a potentially significant impact if it substantially diminished the size or habitat value of the wetland. Whether the impact would "substantially diminish" the wetland should be determined by consulting with staff of the resource agencies or a professional biologist. California has a 'no net loss' policy for wetlands, which considers any loss significant and needing compensation. However, there are wetlands that have such marginal wildlife value (for example, some roadside ditches) that a loss in some cases could be considered as a less than significant impact.

On March 4, 2021 a wetland delineation on the project site. Hooker Creek was observed along the western side of the property adjacent to Cavedale Road. The creek flows from the hills in the north east to the west and eventually drains to Sonoma Creek west of Highway 12. The creek has a meandering pattern and small and large rocks and bedrock as a substrate. Water was flowing at the time of survey to a depth of 2 feet in some areas. At the approximate location of the proposed bridge crossing, the creek has an ordinary highwater mark of approximately 10 feet with the width of the riparian canopy measuring about 40 feet at this location. Further upstream the canopy broadens to about 120 feet.

Much of the vegetation within the creek corridor was burned during the fire in 2017. Plants observed included riparian natives such as willow (*Salix* spp.), buckeye (*Aesculus California*), coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), madrone (*Arbutus menziessi*), toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), black oak (*Quercus velutina*), and poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*).

An ephemeral tributary drains to Hooker Creek on the southern portion of the property. This tributar meanders down the hillslope north of the existing residence and measures about 3-4 feet wide.

Potential impacts to Hooker Creek or the ephemeral tributary would require authorization and associated mitigation from the Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. This includes the construction of an arch bridge over Hooker Creek to Parcel 1.

Impact:
Less than Significant with Mitigation
BIO-7

Mitigation

Mitigation BIO-7 Wetlands: Prior to issuance of any permits for fill or disturbance within any riparian or wetland conservation areas, the Applicant shall provide clearances from all responsible agencies having jurisdiction over the project, including, but not limited to:

a. Army Corps of Engineers jurisdiction over Waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the CWA.
b. Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) jurisdiction under Section 401 of the CWA and/or the state Porter-Cologne Act;
c. California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdiction over aquatic habitat under Section 1600 of the CFGC, including requirement of a streambed Alteration Agreement for work occurring within the bed, bank or channel of the creek.

Monitoring BIO-7: Permit Sonoma staff will not issue permits for ground disturbing activities within riparian or wetland conservation areas until clearances are received and until proper fencing and buffers are in place as recommended by a qualified biologist.

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?

The grasslands and trees on the project site provide habitat for a variety of nesting birds and raptors. Birds and raptors are protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (50 CFR 10.13). Their nest, eggs, and young are also protected under California Fish and Wildlife Code (§3503, §3503.5, and §3800). In addition, raptors such as the white-tailed kite (Elanus leucurus) are "fully protected" under Fish and Wildlife Code (§3511). Fully protected raptors cannot be taken or possessed (that is, kept in captivity) at any time. The site provides habitat for a variety for a variety of nesting birds and raptors. Therefore, if work will occur between February 1st and August 31st a qualified biologist should conduct pre-construction surveys of all potential nesting habitats within approximately 200 feet of project activities.

Impact:
Less than Significant with Mitigation
BIO-8

Mitigation

Mitigation BIO-8 Nesting Birds and Raptors: NOTE ON THE MAP AND IMPROVEMENT PLANS:

a. If initial ground disturbance or vegetation removal occurs during the breed season (March 1 through August 31), a qualified biologist will conduct a breed bird survey no more than 14 days prior to ground disturbance to determine any birds are nesting in trees adjacent to the Study area.
b. If active nests are found close enough to the Study area to affect breed success, the biologist will establish an appropriate exclusion zone around t nest. This exclusion zone may be modified depending upon the species, n location, and existing visual buffers. Once all young have become independent of the nest, vegetation removal and grading may take place in the form exclusion zone.
c. If initial ground disturbance is delayed or there is a break in Project activities greater than 14 days within the bird-nesting season, then a follow-up nest bird survey should be performed to ensure no nests have been established in the interim.

Monitoring BIO-8: Prior to allowing the map to record Permit Sonoma staff shall review the map to ensure that the note is shown correctly on the map. Permit Sonoma staff will not issue permits for ground disturbing activities until after the site has been surveyed by a qualified biologist to ensure proper fencing and buffers are in place prior to issuance.

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

Comment:
In April 2024, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors adopted Ordinance 6469 and Ordinance 6478 establishing the County's current tree protection measures and mitigation planting requirements for replacement of protected trees and Oak Woodland areas approved for removal with new development, including on lands subject to the Oak Woodland Combining District pursuant to Article 67 and for the individual removal of protected trees pursuant to Zoning Section 26-88-015. The following discusses required mitigation measures consistent with the County's current Ordinance provisions for addressing project impacts associated with the proposed removal of Oak woodland areas and individual protected trees.

Article 67 – Oak Woodland Combining District Compliance

The project proposes site access improvements and lot development activities resulting in the potential loss of existing Oak woodland habitat. The Ordinance refers to removed woodland acreage as "Type Conversion".

The County's Oak Woodland Combining District requires replacement of converted woodland areas to ensure no net loss of habitat. The Ordinance establishes mitigation ratios based on the habitat quality of converted woodland sites. Mitigation requirements range between three acres, two acres, and one acre of required woodland replacement for every acre converted, including ratios at 3:1 for Class I (Superior Oak habitat), 2:1 for Class II (Oak habitat), and 1:1 for Class III (Limited Quality Oak habitat). Woodland replacement requires on- or off-site replanting and ongoing monitoring of associated vegetative strata of the converted area, including canopy, subcanopy, shrub, herb and bryophyte.

Section 26-88-015 – Tree Protection Ordinance Compliance

The project proposes development activities requiring removal of or disturbance to protected trees. A total of nine protected trees located within the overlapping boundary of the Riparian Corridor and Oak Woodland combining district. The required streamside conservation plan for the proposed bridge crossing addresses mitigation requirements for tree replacement referencing the County's Tree Protection Ordinance under Section 26-88-015.

The County's Tree Protection Ordinance requires replanting of protected trees in accordance with the provisions specified under Code Section 26-88-015. The provisions require replanting of the same native species based on replacement ratios and planting size requirements determined by the size of each removed tree. For development of the bridge crossing within the riparian zone, the removal of protected trees shall be replaced according to the ratios provided by the Ordinance. The arboreal value (the A.V.) is used to calculate the replacement number.

Mitigation BIO-10 provides the implementation details for incorporating tree replacement ratios and planting sizes requirements into the project consistent with the County's current zoning provisions. Replacing the loss of protected tree resources as provided by current zoning standards reduces the associated level of impact proposed by the project to less than significant.

Tree Protection Measures

Proposed tree removals and related development activities for the project may adversely impact nearby protected trees and adjacent Oak woodland areas not planned for removal or conversion. Mitigation BIO-9 below specifies the implementation of required protection measures to minimize potential adverse impacts on remaining protected trees and woodland areas to a less than significant level, including on adjacent lands

Impact:
Less than Significant with Mitigations
BIO-9, BIO-10

Mitigation

Mitigation BIO-9 Tree Protection Standards: Permit applications involving disturbance on or within the protected perimeter of retained protected trees, including on adjacent lands and as identified for preservation in the project tree inventory report prepared by Horticultural Associates, updated June 2025, shall be subject to the following construction standards prior to initiating development activities, unless the director waives one (1) or more standards.

a. Protected trees, their protected perimeter and whether they are to be retained or removed are to be clearly shown on all improvement plans. A note shall be placed on the improvement plans as follows: NOTE ON PLANS: "Construction is subject to requirements established by Sonoma County to protect certain trees."
b. Before the start of any clearing, excavation, construction or other work on the site, every tree designated for protection on the approved site plan shall be clearly delineated with a substantial barrier (steel posts and barbed wire, chain link fencing, orange construction fencing, or other exclusionary barrier) at the protected perimeter or limits established during the permit process. All trees to be removed shall be clearly marked and the delineated protection perimeter shall remain in place for the duration of all work.
c. A 4-inch layer of chipped bark mulch shall be placed over the soil surface within the fenced dripline prior to installing temporary fencing. A scheme shall be established for the removal and disposal of brush, earth and other debris as to avoid injury to any protected tree.
d. For trees specifically identified for preservation in the project tree inventory report, pruning activities to clean the canopy shall be completed per International Society of Arboriculture pruning standards.
e. Underground trenching for utilities shall avoid tree roots within the protected perimeter. If avoidance is impractical, tunnels should be made below major roots. If tunnels are impractical and cutting roots is required, it shall be done by hand-sawn cuts after hand digging trenches. Trenches shall be consolidated to serve as many units as possible.
f. Compaction within the protected perimeter shall be avoided.
g. Paving with either concrete or asphalt over the protected perimeter should be avoided. If paving over the protected perimeter cannot be avoided, affected trees shall be treated as removed for purposes of calculating arboreal values.
h. Permit applications proposing the unplanned removal of one (1) or more protected shall demonstrate that no feasible options are available to avoid removal or impacts to protected trees.
i. For trees located within or adjacent to septic system boundaries and identified for preservation, the tree protection guidelines for drip irrigation septic system installation as provided in the project tree inventory report shall be followed accordingly.
j. If any damage to a protected tree should occur during or as a result of work on the site, the county shall be promptly notified of such damage. If a protected tree is damaged so that it cannot be preserved in a healthy state, the planning director shall require replacement in accordance with the arboreal value chart. If on-site replacement is not feasible, the applicant shall pay the in-lieu fee to the tree replacement fund.

Monitoring BIO-9: Permit Sonoma Planning shall not clear for issuance any permit(s) for ground-disturbing activities until verifying the applicant's submittal of an appropriate plan or other related materials demonstrating compliance with the mitigation requirements identified under BIO-5.

Mitigation BIO-10 Protected Tree Removals: The proposed removal of protected trees in areas shall be replanted of the same native species at replacement ratios consistent with the provisions under Section 26-88-015 of the Sonoma County Code.

a. The arboreal value (AV) identified in the Preliminary Tree removal Program and associated Tree Inventory Report for the project shall be used to calculate the required replacement number or in-lieu fee payment for each removed tree.
b. Applicant/owner shall submit a final mitigation plan identifying the location of mitigation plantings on-site, off-site, or on a combination thereof, and a plan for monitoring the success of each replanted tree. All replacement trees must come from nurseries where they have been irrigated.
c. Where off-site mitigation plantings are planned, in whole or part, submit evidence acceptable to the director that suitable on-site locations are not available. Where mitigation plantings are utilized, and

off-site planting is permitted, off-site locations that are geographically close to the on-site location of tree removal are encouraged, including on other lots within the subdivision.

d. Monitoring shall be required for a period of seven years to ensure the success of replanted tress. An annual report identifying the status of mitigation plantings' success shall be prepared and submitted to Permit Sonoma Planning, including confirmed replacement of any mortality that should occur during the reporting period.

Monitoring BIO-10: Planning staff shall verify of (a) owner/applicant's submittal of the Final Mitigation Plan before clearing issuance of any permits for development of the new parcel, including improvements relating to septic system, site access, storm water control, and building envelope construction, and (b) owner/applicant's submittal of sufficient evidence demonstrating completion of the required tree replacements before granting final occupancy.

Mitigation BIO-11 Oak Woodland Conversion: Owner/applicant shall apply for a zoning permit prior to the permitting of required access improvements for the eligible one-time Oak Woodland Impact or Type Conversion of up to 0.5 acres. The required zoning permit shall include a site plan identifying all footprint areas replaced by permanent improvements within the OAK Woodland boundary, including related structures, driveway access, stormwater control features, well and septic facilities, etc. The eligible Type Conversion shall be subject to the following standards and requirements:

a. All Woodland Impact or Type Conversion activities shall be completed within two years of approval of the zoning permit.
b. No sites of rare, threatened or endangered plants or animals shall be disturbed, threatened or damaged, as determined by a qualified professional.
c. The project shall not impact significant historical or archeological sites, as determined by a cultural resources study. If project has potential to impact historical or archaeological sites, as determined by a cultural resources study, avoidance measures shall be recommended and incorporated into project design or project shall be redesigned to avoid impacts.
d. No ministerial Oak Woodland conversion shall include the cutting or removal of any native oaks greater than 36" DBH unless a registered professional forester or arborist certifies in writing that the tree poses a serious danger to persons or property.
e. No conversion activities shall be conducted during the wet weather period or during wet conditions.
f. No ministerial Oak Woodland conversion shall be conducted without a valid on-site copy of the zoning permit issued for the conversion.
g. Subsequent Woodland Impact or Type Conversion of Oak Woodlands shall be subject to discretionary review.
h. The applicant shall submit any other information that the Director deems necessary to make a decision on the application.

Monitoring BIO-11: Permit Sonoma staff shall not issue development permits until a zoning permit specifying conversion areas replaced by permanent improvements is approved.

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?

Habitat Conservation Plans and natural community conservation plans are site-specific plans to address effects on sensitive species of plants and animals. The project site is not located in an area subject to a habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. There are very few Habitat Conservation Plans in Sonoma County-they would only affect certain land in timber production areas in the northwest county (for spotted owl) and in the lower Petaluma River/Sonoma Creek watershed (for saltmarsh harvest mouse/black rail/clapper rail).

Impact:
No Impact

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES:

The applicant submitted an archaeological resources evaluation of the project site prepared by William Roop of Archaeological Resource Service, June 1, 2021. The report was then peer reviewed for adequacy in January 2025, by Eileen Barrow of Eileen Barrow and Associates. The findings and conclusions submitted in this report form the bases for the responses below. The report and the peer review are both not available for download or public review.

Would the project:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?

William Roop and Eileen Barrow conducted a Cultural Resource Assessment and peer review of the Cultural Resource Assessment, respectively. The assessment and peer review conducted a field investigation and archival research of the project site to determine if historical resources were present. Based on the archival research, the existing single-family dwelling, barn, and garage do not meet the criteria to be considered a historic resource and added to the California Register. There is an existing stone fence onsite that has not been formally evaluated for eligibility criteria for addition on the California register, however the proposed project does not propose to remove, or alter the stone fence.

Impact:
Less than Significant Impact

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

An archeological study was performed on site and found no presence of existing historical resources.There are no known archaeological resources on the site, but the project could uncover such materials during future construction. Although the project has a low possibility of containing unrecorded archaeological sites and no impacts to archaeological resources are anticipated, the County has a standard “accidental discovery” condition of approval that work be halted if unanticipated buried cultural resources are encountered during construction. The condition is applied to all permits that involve ground disturbance, and requires that the following notes be printed on all grading and building permit plans involving ground disturbing activities:

> “If prehistoric or historic archaeological resources, paleontological resources, or tribal cultural resources are encountered during ground-disturbing work, all work in the immediate vicinity shall be halted and the operator must immediately notify the Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD) – Project Review staff of the find. The applicant shall be responsible for the cost to have a qualified paleontologist, archaeologist or tribal cultural resource specialist under contract to evaluate the find and make recommendations to protect the resource in a report to PRMD. Paleontological resources include fossils of animals, plants or other organisms. Prehistoric resources include humanly modified stone, shell, or bones, hearths, firepits, obsidian and chert flaked-stone tools (e.g., projectile points, knives, choppers), midden (culturally darkened soil containing heat-affected rock, artifacts, animal bone, or shellfish remains), stone milling equipment, such as mortars and pestles, and certain sites features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe. Historic resources include all by-products of human use greater than fifty (50) years of age including, backfilled privies, wells, and refuse pits; concrete, stone, or wood structural elements or foundations; and concentrations of metal, glass, and ceramic refuse. If human remains are encountered, work in the immediate vicinity shall be halted and the operator shall notify PRMD and the Sonoma County Coroner immediately. At the same time, the operator shall be responsible for the cost to have a qualified archaeologist under contract to evaluate the discovery. If the human remains are determined to be of Native American origin, the Coroner must notify the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours of this identification so

that a Most Likely Descendant can be designated and the appropriate measures implemented in compliance with the California Government Code and Public Resources Code."

Therefore, the proposed project would not result in substantial adverse change in the change in the significance of archaeological resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5

Impact:
Less than Significant Impact.

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

The archeological study prepared for the site did not uncover any paleontological resources or sites. No unique geologic features are known to exist on the subject property or within in its near vicinity of

Impact:
No Impact

d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

In the unlikely event the site contains a burial site, compliance with California Health and Safety Code 7050.5, Sonoma County Code Section 11-14-050 of the Sonoma County Construction Grading and Drainage Code and the accidental discovery standard condition noted above would ensure necessary steps are taken to protect resources discovered accidentally during ground disturbing activities.

Significance Level:
Less than Significant Impact.

6. ENERGY:

As described in the General Plan 2020 EIR, average energy uses in Sonoma County consist primarily of petroleum, natural gas, and electricity. Sonoma County's main provider of electricity, PG&E, draws on a variety of state and local energy sources to feed its regional power grids, including geothermal, natural gas, hydroelectric, nuclear, and oil. Significant users of electricity within the county include the County General Services Department, the County Department of Transportation and Public Works, and the Sonoma County Water Agency.

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?

The proposed project includes a subdivision and new residential development is not proposed at this time. Short-term energy demand would result from potential future construction activities, including energy needed to power worker and vendor vehicle trips, and construction equipment. Long-term energy demand would result from operation of potential new residential or agricultural structures, which would include activities such as lighting, heating, and cooling of structures. Although implementation of the project could result in a net increase in energy usage, the increase would not be wasteful nor inefficient because of energy-efficient building design required by Title 24 of the California Building Code.

Impact:
Less than Significant Impact

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

The County of Sonoma has not adopted a local renewable energy plan; however, the General Plan includes a variety of policies intended to encourage development of renewable energy systems, while protecting sensitive resources and ensuring neighborhood compatibility. Although renewable energy is encouraged, there is no requirement to develop renewable energy sources for subdivisions resulting in a total of two lots or single-family residential development projects, outside of meeting Title 24 requirements discussed above. Additionally, the project is not located in an identified area designated for renewable energy productions nor would the project interfere with the installation of any renewable energy systems. Therefore, the project would not conflict with or obstruct with applicable State and local plans for promoting use of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Impact:
Less than Significant

7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS:

Would the project:

a) Expose people or structures to 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.

The project site is not within a fault hazard zone as defined by the Alquist-Priolo fault maps.

Impact:
No Impact

ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?

All of Sonoma County is subject to seismic shaking that would result from earthquakes along the San Andreas, Healdsburg-Rodgers Creek, and other faults. Check ABAG map. Predicting seismic events is not possible, nor is providing mitigation that can entirely reduce the potential for injury and damage that can occur during a seismic event. However, using accepted geotechnical evaluation techniques and appropriate engineering practices, potential injury and damage can be diminished, thereby exposing fewer people and less property to the effects of a major damaging earthquake. The design and construction of future dwellings on new parcels are subject to load and strength standards of the California Building Code (CBC), which take seismic shaking into account. Project conditions of approval require that building permits be obtained for all construction and that the project meet all standard seismic and soil test/compaction requirements. The project would therefore not expose people to substantial risk of injury from seismic shaking.

Impact:
Less than Significant

iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

The project site is located within an area subject to liquefaction as shown on the Sonoma County Relative Hazard from Seismic Shaking map. Strong ground shaking during an earthquake can result in ground failure and/or settlement such as that associated with soil liquefaction, and can also cause deformation of slopes, particularly fill slopes. Therefore the property has the potential to experience liquefaction and settlement during a seismic event. All structures will be required

to meet building permit requirements, including seismic safety standards and soil test/compaction requirements. Based on standard permitting requirements, the project will have no significant risk of loss, injury or death from seismic ground failure or liquefaction.

Impact:
Less than Significant

iv. Landslides?

Steep slopes characterize much of Sonoma County, particularly the northern and eastern portion of the County. Where these areas are underlain by weak or unconsolidated earth materials landslides are a hazard. The project site has a natural topography of slopes to the west at about 6:1 to 10:1 (horizontal to vertical) with steeper portions in the higher elevations along the eastern boundary of the parcel. Hooker Creek flows to the west/southwest along the northern portions of the parcel The design and construction of new structures are subject to engineering standards of the California Building Code (CBC), which consider soil properties, seismic shaking and foundation type. Project conditions of approval require that building and grading permits be obtained for all construction and that the project meet all standard seismic and soil test/compaction requirements, therefore potential impacts from landslides are reduced to less than significant.

Impact:
Less than Significant

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

Future project related construction could involve grading, cuts and fills which require the issuance of a grading permit. Improper grading, both during and post construction, has the potential to increase the volume of runoff from a site which could have adverse downstream flooding and further erosional impacts, and increase soil erosion on and off site which could adversely impact downstream water quality. Erosion and sediment control provisions of the Drainage and Storm Water Management Ordinance (Chapter 11, Sonoma County Code) and Building Ordinance (Chapter 7, Sonoma County Code) requires implementation of flow control best management practices to reduce runoff. The Ordinance requires treatment of runoff from the two-year storm event. Required inspection by Permit Sonoma staff insures that all grading and erosion control measures are constructed according to the approved plans. These ordinance requirements and adopted best management practices are specifically designed to maintain potential water quantity impacts at a less than significant level during and post construction.

In regard to water quality impacts, County grading ordinance design requirements, adopted County grading standards and best management practices (such as silt fencing, straw wattles, construction entrances to control soil discharges, primary and secondary containment areas for petroleum products, paints, lime and other materials of concern, etc.), mandated limitations on work in wet weather, and standard grading inspection requirements, are specifically designed to maintain potential water quality impacts at a less than significant level during project construction.

Issuance of a grading permit requires the applicant to prepare and conform to an erosion prevention/sediment control plan which clearly shows best management practices to be implemented, limits of disturbed areas, vegetated areas to be preserved, pertinent details, notes, and specifications to prevent damages and minimize adverse impacts to the environment. Tracking of soil or construction debris into the public right-of-way shall be prohibited. Runoff containing concrete waste or by-products shall not be allowed to drain to the storm drain system, waterway(s), or adjacent lands.

For post construction water quality impacts, adopted grading permit standards and best

management practices require that storm water to be detained, infiltrated, or retained for later use. Other adopted water quality best management practices include storm water treatment devices based on filtering, settling or removing pollutants. These construction standards are specifically designed to maintain potential water quality grading impacts at a less than significant level post construction.

The County adopted grading ordinances and standards and related conditions of approval which enforce them are specific, and also require compliance with all standards and regulations adopted by the State and Regional Water Quality Control Board, such as the Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) requirements, Low Impact Development and any other adopted best management practices. Therefore, no significant adverse soil erosion or related soil erosion water quality impacts are expected given the mandated conditions and standards that need to be met. See further discussion of related issues (such as maintenance of required post construction water quality facilities) refer to the Hydrology and Water Quality.

Impact:
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?

The project site is subject to seismic shaking and other geologic hazards as described in section 6(a)(ii), 6(a)(iii) and (6)(a)(iv), above. However, site specific geologic investigation will be conducted through the site development permitting process, which require construction techniques that account for site specific conditions.

Impact:
Less than Significant Impact

d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?

Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code is an index of the relative expansive characteristics of soil as determined through laboratory testing. For the proposed project, soils at the site have not been tested for their expansive characteristics. No substantial risks to life or property would be created from soil expansion at the proposed project, even if it were to be affected by expansive soils.

Impact:
Less than Significant

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?

The proposed parcel has been tested for a new private sewage disposal system. The tentative map identifies the proposed septic location and required reserve area.

Preliminary documentation provided by the applicant and reviewed by the Permit Sonoma Project Review Health Specialist indicates that the soils on site would be expected to support new septic system. The Permit Sonoma Environmental Health Division of the Project Review Section has forwarded standard conditions of approval to ensure proper installation and maintenance of required systems in accordance with County regulations and current best management practices.

Impact:
Less than Significant

8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS:

Would the project:

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

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District has adopted a significance threshold of 1,100 metric tons of C02e per year for land use projects. Emissions are caused by natural gas combustion, electricity use, on-road vehicles, water use, wine fermentation, carbon sequestration, and existing emissions. For purposes of the Negative Declaration, the project would only be considered to have a significant impact on greenhouse gases if it would conflict with the state goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in California to 1990 levels by 2020, as set forth by the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. There is currently no indication that the project would conflict with the Act's timeline.

The Community Climate Action Plan has provided the following four major categories of solutions that will reduce greenhouse gases if they are implemented: (1) improve efficiency in energy and water use, (2) shift transportation from fossil fuel vehicles to transit, walking, bicycling, etc. (3) invest in local renewable energy sources, and (4) protect forests and farmlands, sequester carbon, and convert waste into energy. As noted below some of these strategies are already required. Additional measures will be conditioned based on voluntary compliance by the applicant. Mandated and voluntary compliance will ensure compliance with federal, state, and, local greenhouse gas reduction targets.

The Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department supports the use of the BAAQMD's GHG thresholds to determine the significance of GHG emissions. In addition, the County requires compliance with the General Plan Open Space and Resource Conservation Element Objective OSRC-14.4, which states "reduce GHG emissions by 25 percent below 1990 levels by 2015." Projects can demonstrate compliance with this general plan objective by complying with the BAAQMD GHG threshold and implementing mitigation measures that exceed the green building code.

Maximum development potential resulting from the project is limited to one single-family residence plus one detached accessory dwelling unit which does not represent a type and intensity of use and demand known or anticipated to exceed the GHG significance thresholds established by BAAQMD,

Impact:
Less than Significant

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

Maximum development potential resulting from the project is limited to one single-family residence plus one detached accessory dwelling unit which does not represent a type and intensity of use and demand known or anticipated to exceed the GHG significance thresholds established by BAAQMD, The proposed project will not therefore conflict with a plan or policy regarding greenhouse gas emissions.

Impact:
Less than Significant

9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:

Would the project:

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

Construction will require use of fuels and other hazardous materials. Improper storage or handling of these materials could result in spills. The impact can be reduced to less than significant by requiring standard approved construction methods for handling hazardous materials.

Impact:
Less than Significant

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?

During construction there could be spills of hazardous materials. Current construction best management practices are in place to ensure proper handling of hazardous materials. These practices are applied and enforced through issuance and inspection of the building permit by Permit Sonoma. The potential for hazardous spills occurring is therefore less than significant.

Impact:
Less than Significant

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

This project is for a residential subdivision. Maximum development potential resulting from this subdivision includes future construction of one new primary residence plus one detached accessory dwelling unit. This type and intensity of development is not known to generate hazardous emissions, materials, substances, or waste that would adversely affect sensitive receptors adjacent to or within the vicinity of the project site.

Impact:
No Impact

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?

The project site was not identified on, or in the vicinity of, any parcels on lists compiled by the California Environmental Protection Agency, Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Department of Toxic Substances, and the California Integrated Waste Management Board. (8)

Impact:
No Impact

e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

The site is not within an airport land use plan as designated by Sonoma County.

Impact:
No Impact

f) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

There are no known private airstrips within the vicinity of the proposed project.

Impact:
No Impact

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

The project would not impair implementation of, or physically interfere with the County's adopted emergency operations plan. There is no separate emergency evacuation plan for the County. In any case, the project would not change existing circulation patterns significantly, and would have no effect outside the area.

Impact:
No Impact

h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas of where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

The Sonoma Valley Fire Protection District serves the project site with its nearest station located one mile away to the south east at 877 Center Street, Sonoma. The project site is located within a very high wildfire risk area.

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Fire Safe Regulations, 14 California Code of Regulations, § 1273.00, require developments in the State Responsibility Area to provide for safe access for emergency wildfire equipment and civilian evacuation concurrently. The applicant has requested an exception to standards to provide the same practical effect pursuant to 14 California Code of Regulations § 1270.07 due to environmental conditions and physical site limitations. In December of 2025, the Sonoma County Fire Marshall reviewed the existing conditions of the project, and the project description and approved an exception to the Board of Forestry standards and made a finding that the alternative methods to mitigate road width restrictions and provide the same practical effect of defensible space, access for emergency vehicles, and safe civilian evacuation will be provided for by the project.

The project conditions of approval will additionally also require that the subdivision and its resulting development potential comply with Fire Safe Standards, including evidence of an emergency water storage supply for development of the new parcel, and standard fire protection measures such as installation of building sprinklers, alarm systems, extinguishers, vegetation management, hazardous materials management and management of flammable or combustible liquids and gases.

Impact:
Less than significant

10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY:

Would the project:

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?

The minor subdivision proposal provides for the creation of one additional parcel supporting development potential for one new single-family home and two accessory dwelling unit. Associated grading improvements for driveway and building pad construction will resulting in the disturbance of soil that may also cause erosion. The storm water control prepared for the project by Adobe Associates, dated June 2, 2020, estimates approximately 0.35 acres, or 15,000 square-feet of new impervious surface, which could affect the quantity and/or quality of storm water run-off.

County development practices require the applicant to record and follow an Operation and Maintenance Plan, and to accept responsibility for interim operation and maintenance of stormwater treatment and flow-control facilities until such responsibility is formally transferred to a subsequent owner. Some maintenance requirements for the landscape areas and Bioretention facilities will include general cleanup to remove any trash and debris that has collected, prune plants to maintain the design surface elevation, control weeds using manual methods or natural herbicides, add mulch as needed.

The project site is located in an area subject to the San Francisco Bay RWQCB Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) Permit. The proposed project estimates approximately 15,000square-feet of new impervious surface and must therefore meet the requirements of the Sonoma County Storm Water Quality Ordinance.

Low Impact Development (LID):

- A site design strategy of BMPs that mimics the pre-development site hydrology
- In general replaces Standard Urban Storm Water Management Plan (SUSMP) requirements (SUSMP terminology is in current LID Manual)
- Applies to all projects in North Coast and San Francisco Bay RWQCB regulatory areas

Permit Sonoma requires as part of the development of each individual lot that the applicant implement Low Impact Development (LID), a site design strategy of BMPs that mimics the pre-development site hydrology through features that promote storm water infiltration, interception, reuse, and evapotranspiration. LID techniques include use of small scale landscape-based BMPs such as vegetated natural filters and bioretention areas (e.g., vegetated swales and raingardens) to treat and filter storm water runoff. LID also requires preservation and protection of sensitive environmental features such as riparian buffers, wetlands, woodlands, steep slopes, native vegetation, valuable trees, flood plains, and permeable soils.

Permit Sonoma also requires that the applicant submit as part of the *Grading Permit Required Application Contents* (GRD-004).an erosion prevention/sediment control plan demonstrating implementation of best management practices, limits of disturbed areas/total work, vegetated areas to be preserved, pertinent details, notes, and specifications to prevent damages or minimize adverse impacts to the surrounding properties and the environment. Tracking of soil or construction debris into the public right-of-way is prohibited, as is runoff containing concrete waste or by-products draining to the storm drain system, waterway(s), or adjacent lands.

As Permit Sonoma applies and enforces storm water Low Impact Development (LID) regulations and standard erosion prevention/sediment control measures through its issuance and inspection of grading permits for new lot development, the project's potential for violating current water quality standards post-construction storm water discharge requirements is less than significant.

Impact:
Less than significant

b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?

The applicant has consulted O'Connor Environmental, INC to evaluate the adequacy of the existing and projected groundwater supply and recharge capacity for serving each proposed lot of the project. The Consult notes the ground water report has been prepared per Sonoma County Policy and Procedure 8-1-14. On June 4, 2024, Permit Sonoma's Staff Geologist reviewed the updated hydrogeologic report and agreed with the report, finding the analysis well documented and of appropriate detail and effort to support the findings. No further information was requested. The Consultant's analysis and conclusions are summarized below.

The project recharge area, which also represents the project aquifer and the project impact area, consists of a 177-acre area primarily rural residential with approximately 37 primary residences, 9 secondary residences,14 pools, and 13.8 acres of vineyard. The existing groundwater demand within the project recharge area is estimated at 33.15 acre-foot per year (acre-ft/yr). Of this, 0.50 acre-ft/yr comes from the existing condition of the project parcel. The remaining 32.65 acre-ft/yr comes from neighboring parcels, of which approximately 72% derives from residential uses.

The proposed subdivision will result in one new parcel within the project recharge area, it is reasonable to assume that the new parcel will be developed in the future with a new single-family dwelling and accessory dwelling unit. Based on these potential additional uses, it is estimated that water demand within the project recharge area will increase by up to 0.85 acre-ft/yr to 34.00 acre-ft/yr. Water demand on the subdivided project parcel is estimated to increase to 1.35 acre-ft/yr. The subject property accounts for 1% of the project recharge area and the new water use after the proposed project will account for approximately 4% of the proposed demand within the project recharge area. The report estimated groundwater storage (372-acre feet) and average year recharge (47.2-acre feet/year) to be greater than proposed water demands (40.7-acre feet) of the cumulative impact area at full build-out under current zoning. The project itself is expected to increase groundwater use by roughly 0.85-acre feet/year.

Water use from the project well is not anticipated to increase as part of the proposed project. The proposed primary and secondary residence on Parcel 1 will obtain groundwater from a new well. The new well serving Parcel 1 will utilize groundwater from the local bedrock aquifer that is potentially interconnected with surface flow of Hooker Creek that is most likely to persist in the downstream reaches of Hooker Creek on alluvial fan landforms. To address these potential impacts mitigation measures HYDRO 1 and 2 are recommended below.

The report concluded that there is available groundwater to support the proposed use and little potential to negatively impact groundwater resources, water levels in neighboring wells, and surface waters. Project conditions of approval require that the applicant construct new wells in conformance with Sonoma County Water Well Construction Standards (Chapter 25B) for annular seal and setbacks and demonstrate compliance with Sonoma County's Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance.

Impact:
Less than significant with Mitigation

Mitigation

Mitigation HYDRO-1 NOTE ON MAP: **"**Well construction for Parcel 1 shall be no closer than 100 feet away from the top of bank of Hooker Creek."

Monitoring HYDRO-1: Permit Sonoma staff shall review the map to ensure that the note is shown correctly, and on the plans related to the development permits before Permit Sonoma will allow recordation of the map.

Mitigation HYDRO-2 NOTE ON MAP: **"**The screened interval of the well construction for Parcel 1 shall be a depth of at least 75 feet below the ground surface."

Monitoring HYDRO-2: Permit Sonoma staff shall review the map to ensure that the note is shown correctly, and on the plans related to the development permits before Permit Sonoma will allow recordation of the map.

c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

The project includes grading, cuts and fills which require the issuance of a grading permit.

Unregulated grading during construction has the potential to increase soil erosion from a site which could have adverse downstream flooding and further erosional impacts, and which could adversely impact downstream water quality.

However, in regard to potential soil erosion, County grading ordinance and adopted best management practices require grading applications and issued permits to depict and install adequate erosion prevention and sediment control best management practices. Required inspection by County inspectors insures that all work is constructed according to the approved plans. These ordinance requirements and adopted best management practices are specifically designed to maintain potential project water quantity impacts at a less than significant level during and post construction.

The proposed project has been designed and/or conditioned to prevent and/or minimize the discharge of pollutants or waste from the project site during construction. There are numerous storm water best management practices that can be utilized to accomplish this goal. These include measures such as silt fencing, straw wattles, and construction entrances to control soil discharges. Storm water best management practices also include primary and secondary containment for petroleum products, paints, lime and other materials of concern.

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Impact:
Less than Significant

d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?

This site is not subject to flooding according to submitted drainage reports and monitoring of Dowel Creek. To address drainage design and prevent flooding, the applicant is required to submit a final drainage report for the proposed project. A typical drainage report will include a project narrative, on- and off-site hydrology maps, hydrologic calculations, hydraulic calculations, pre- and post-development analysis for all existing and proposed drainage facilities. The drainage report shall abide by and contain all applicable items in the Drainage Report Required Contents (DRN-006) handout to ensure proper implementation of best management practices for minimizing potemtial impacts to less than significant levels.

Impact:
Less than Significant

e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

The proposed project has been designed to prevent and/or minimize drainage impacts through the proper design and installation of a storm water drainage system. Drainage impacts typically include storm water intrusion into structures, flooding of local roadways, soil erosion, standing water, and nuisance conditions for property owners and neighbors. Storm water drainage systems may take many forms such as site grading, swales, ditches, small or single run drain pipes, a piping system or network, or a combination of all these. Drainage systems should also integrate storm water treatment and flow control storm water best management practices discussed above.

The County has identified the preliminary location, type and approximate size of drainage improvements. The preliminary design includes an analysis of the existing downstream drainage conditions to determine if downstream or off-site drainage improvements are needed to properly handle anticipated runoff in compliance with the adopted Sonoma County Water Agency Flood Control Design Criteria.

At the time of improvement plan submittal or grading or drainage permit application, the applicant shall submit a final drainage report for the proposed project. A typical drainage report will include a project narrative, on- and off-site hydrology maps, hydrologic calculations, hydraulic calculations,

pre- and post-development analysis for all existing and proposed drainage facilities. The drainage report shall abide by and contain all applicable items in the Drainage Report Required Contents (DRN-006) handout to ensure proper implementation of best management practices for minimizing potemtial impacts to kess than significant levels..

Impact:
Less than Significant

f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?

The County has adopted setbacks from riparian corridors for grading, structures, and other developments. The distances for these setbacks vary based on several factors including the type of riparian corridor, stream type, stream depth, soil type, natural slope of the site, and the type of wetland. Setbacks are specified in County Code Chapters 11 and 26, in the Sonoma County General Plan and in the Sonoma County Water Agency Flood Control Design Criteria. The setback with the largest distance or the most stringent setback applies to the project. Each project shall be analyzed to determine which setback is the controlling or most stringent setback. Hooker Creek exists on-site. The Sonoma General Plan and Zoning Ordinance designate this creek as a riparian corridor and establish a streamside setback requirement of 50 feet measured from the top of the upper bank on either side of the creek. Required creek setbacks and implementation of LID stormwater features will ensure water quality is not adversely impacted.

Impact:
Less than significant

g) Place housing within a 100-year hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood hazard Boundary of Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?

The proposed project has been conditioned to prevent and/or minimize impacts to the project from flood events and has been conditioned to prevent and/or minimize impacts to the floodplain. Floodplains are defined as Special Flood Hazard Areas depicted by FEMA on the most recent edition of their Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

Impact:
Less than significant

h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?

The project site is not located in a flood hazard area.

Impact:
No Impact

i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?

The project site is not located in an area subject to flooding as a result of dam failure.

Impact:
No Impact

j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?

The project is not subject to seiche or tsunami. The project site is not located in an area subject to seiche or tsunami. Seiche is a wave in a lake triggered by an earthquake, and here are no lakes in the vicinity of the project. Mudflow can be triggered by heavy rainfall, earthquakes or volcanic eruption, however the project is not located in an area that is at risk for landslides or mudflow.

Impact:
No Impact

11. LAND USE AND PLANNING:

Would the project:

a) Physically divide an established community?

The proposal does not physically divide any established communities. Existing neighborhoods that may be construed as forming an established community are located on the opposite east side of Arnold Drive from the project site and the physical disposition of the immediate residential properties surrounding the site does not change as result of the proposed subdivision.

Impact:
No Impact

b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

The project proposes to subdivide a 12.89 acre parcel which has a RR - Low Density Residential zoning and Rural Residential General Plan land use designation. The General Plan land use designation and the zoning of the parcel call for a density of one residential unit 5 acres. The project as proposed results in parcels which are more consistent with the General Plan land use designation and the zoning of the parcel.

Impact:
No Impact

c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?

Habitat conservation plans and natural community conservation plans are site-specific plans to address effects on sensitive species of plants and animals. The project site is not located in an area subject to a habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. This topic is also discussed under Section 4.f. above.

Impact:
No Impact

12. MINERAL RESOURCES:

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?

There is no known mineral resource on the project site.

Impact:
No Impact

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?

The project site is not a mineral resource recovery site.

Impact:
No Impact

13. NOISE:

Would the project:

a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

The Noise Element of the Sonoma County General Plan establishes goals, objectives and policies including performance standards to regulate noise affecting residential and other sensitive receptors. The general plan sets separate standards for transportation noise and for noise from non-transportation land uses. The General Plan requires that noise shall be controlled in accordance with Table NE-2 (or an adjusted Table NE-2 with respect to ambient noise as described in General Plan 2020, Policy NE-1c,) as measured at the exterior property line of any affected residential or sensitive land use:

TABLE NE-2: Maximum Allowable Exterior Noise Exposures

Hourly Noise Metric[1], dBA	Daytime (7am -10pm)	Nighttime (10pm - 7am)
L50 (30 minutes in any hour)	50	45
L25 (15 minutes in any hour)	55	50
L08 (4 minutes 48 seconds in any hour)	60	55
L02 (72 seconds in any hour)	65	60

[1] The sound level exceeded n% of the time in any hour. For example, the L50 is the value exceeded 50% of the time or 30 minutes in any hour; this is the median noise level. The L02 is the sound level exceeded 1 minute in any hour.

The project is located within a rural residential and agricultural area. The project, consisting of the construction of new residential uses, would not generate noise sources that would expose sensitive receptors to levels in excess of any standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies. However, construction activities occurring during the individual lot development may generate potential temporary noise levels exceeding County standards if not properly mitigated. Permit Sonoma recommends the following measures be implemented during development of each lot to ensure construction related noise levels do not exceed County standards as identified above.

Impact:
Less than Significant with Mitigation

Mitigation

Mitigation NOI-1 Reduce Construction Noise Levels: NOTE ON MAP AND PLANS: "All plans and specifications or construction plans shall include the following notes:

a) All internal combustion engines used during construction of this project will be operated with mufflers that meet the requirements of the State Resources Code, and, where applicable, the Vehicle Code. Equipment shall be properly maintained and turned off when not in use.
b) Except for actions taken to prevent an emergency, or to deal with an existing emergency, all construction activities shall be restricted to the hours of 7:00 am and 5:00 pm on weekdays and

9:00 a.m. and 5:00 pm on weekends and holidays. If work outside the times specified above becomes necessary, the applicant shall notify the Permit Sonoma Project Review Division as soon as practical.

c) There will be no start-up of machines nor equipment prior to 7:00 am, Monday through Friday or 9:00 am on weekends and holidays; no delivery of materials or equipment prior to 7:00 am nor past 5:00 pm Monday through Friday or prior to 9:00 am nor past 5:00 pm on weekends and holidays and no servicing of equipment past 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, or weekends and holidays. A sign(s) shall be posted on the site regarding the allowable hours of construction, and including the developer- and contractors mobile phone number for public contact 24 hours a day or during the hours outside of the restricted hours.
d) Pile driving activities shall be limited to 8:00 am to 5:00 pm weekdays only.
e) Construction maintenance, storage and staging areas for construction equipment shall avoid proximity to residential areas to the maximum extent practicable. Stationary construction equipment, such as compressors, mixers, etc., shall be placed away from residential areas and/or provided with acoustical shielding. Quiet construction equipment shall be used when possible.
f) The developer shall designate a Project Manager with authority to implement the mitigation prior to issuance of a building/grading permit. The Project Managers 24-hour mobile phone number shall be conspicuously posted at the construction site. The Project Manager shall determine the cause of noise complaints (e.g. starting too early, faulty muffler, etc.) and shall take prompt action to correct the problem."

Monitoring NOI-1: Permit Sonoma Project Review Division staff shall ensure that the measures are listed on all site alteration, grading, building or improvement plans, and prior to issuance of grading or building permits. Permit Sonoma staff shall inspect the site prior to construction to assure that the signs are in place and the applicable phone numbers are correct. Any noise complaints will be investigated by Permit Sonoma staff. If violations are found, Permit Sonoma shall seek voluntary compliance from the permit holder, or may require a noise consultant to evaluate the problem and recommend corrective actions, and thereafter may initiate an enforcement action and/or revocation or modification proceedings, as appropriate.

b) Exposure of persona to or generation of excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels?

The project includes construction activities that may generate ground borne vibration and noise. These levels would not be significant because they would be short-term and temporary, and would be limited to daytime hours. There are no other activities or uses associated with the project that would expose persons to or generate excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels

Impact:
Less than Significant

c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

The project is located within a rural residential and agricultural area. The project, consisting of the construction of new residential uses, would generate noise sources not known to expose sensitive receptors to levels in excess of any standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies. Construction activities occurring during the individual lot development may generate noise levels exceeding County standard, though only temporarily. Permit Sonoma recommends measures be implemented as identified under Discussion 12.a above. This study contains no evidence of noise generators resulting in any permanent increase in ambient noise levels associated with potential residential development from this project

Impact:
Less than Significant

d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity

above levels existing without the project?

There will be potentially significant temporary noise impacts from the construction activities. This impact will cease when construction is finished. The construction immediately associated with this project would be in regards to the required infrastructure for the creation of new parcels, such as a private road to provide access and utilities. Further construction is anticipated as the individual parcels are developed. Mitigation Measure NOI 1 will reduce the noise impact from construction activities and hauling to less than significant.

Impact:
Less than Significant

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 expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

The site is not within an airport land use plan as designated by Sonoma County.

Impact:
No Impact

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

There are no known private airstrips within the project area.

Impact:
No Impact

14. POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Would the project:

a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

The potential maximum build out of the project includes one new primary residence plus one accessory dwelling unit. This is consistent with the current designated density of the parcel, which this project is not proposing to increase. Any impacts associated with population growth associated with the assigned density of the parcel would have been considered upon adoption of the General Plan.

Impact:
Less than Significant

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

No housing will be displaced by the project.

Impact:
No Impact

c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No people will be displaced by the project because the applicant is proposing to retain the existing residential unit and will accommodate its continual occupancy through conservation.

Impact:
No Impact

15. PUBLIC SERVICES:

Would the project:

a) 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 rations, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

i. Fire protection?

Comment:
The project site is in a State Responsibility Area (SRA) and receives fire protection and response service from Cal Fire. The nearest Cal Fire Station is in Glenn Ellen, approximately two miles from the project site. Existing public streets are available to provide required access to proposed building sites. The access parcel will accommodate proposed development of a 12 foot wide private driveway per current fire safe standards

Additionally, the County Fire Marshal has forwarded conditions of approval requiring that the all resulting development potential of the subdivision comply with Sonoma County's current Fire Safe Standards. Compliance with these standards requires demonstration of adequate provisions for emergency water storage supply and evidence of meeting standard required fire protection measures as part of the permitting process. New residential building interiors will be fire sprinklered. All building exteriors and sensitive vegetation and around habitable structures will be appropriately managed per current fire safe standards to minimize hazard risk for each new parcel.

Impact:
Less than Significant

ii. Police?

Comment:
The Sonoma County Sheriff will continue to serve this area. Increased demand on police protection service as a result of allowing development potential for one additional primary residence is not anticipated.

Impact:
Less than Significant

iii. Schools, parks, or other public facilities?

Comment:
The project is located within the Sonoma Valley Unified School District. Potential enrollment growth as a result of this project is not anticipated to necessitate a demand for additional facilities in the local surrounding schools. Increased service demands associated with schools or parks will be offset through intake of required development fees as these parcels develop, including school and park mitigation fees.

Impact:
Less than Significant

iv. Parks?

Comment:
The addition of one parcel and a designated remainder with a potential of six (6) residential units (2 primary and 4 accessory) does not introduce an increase in population that could impact local parks. Individual building permits include development fees to offset potential impacts to public services, including park mitigation fees.

Impact:
Less than Significant

v. Other public facilities?

Comment:
The addition of one parcel and a designated remainder with a potential for a maximum of 6 residential units (2 primary and 4 accessory) would not significantly impact other public facilities. The proposal is consistent with the General Plan land use designation for the parcel. Other potential impacts to public facilities associated with the parcel's assigned density were considered at the time of the adoption of the General Plan. Additionally, development impact fees as noted above will be required with individual building permits to offset potential impacts to public services.

Impact:
Less than Significant

16. RECREATION:

Would the project:

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

The potential additional number of residents that could result in the maximum build out of this project would not be large enough to significantly cause or accelerate substantial physical deterioration of parks or recreational facilities.

Impact:
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?

(See discussion 15.a)

Impact:
Less than Significant

17. TRANSPORTATION / TRAFFIC:

Would the project:

a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?

The proposed subdivision supports a maximum development potential consisting of two (2) primary single-family dwelling units and four (4) accessory dwelling units. Based on the national average of 9.5 daily trips generated per a single-family dwelling, the proposed subdivision could increase the amount of daily trip generations for the surroundings by up to 19 trips per day. This estimated increase would not conflict with any adopted plans, ordinances, or policies in regards to circulation. No obstructed sight lines from respective access frontages encumber the parcel configurations as proposed. The transportation element of the General Plan requires no additional circulation system improvements as a perquisite for the project, or for supporting general build-out potential as allowed under current density and zoning requirements for this area.

Impact:
Less than Significant

b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?

(See Discussion 16.a)

Impact:
Less than Significant

c) Result in change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?

The project would have no effect on air traffic patterns.

Impact:
No Impact

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

No design features that could increase hazards or incompatible uses are associated with this project. No obstructed sight lines appear to encumber the current parcel configurations as proposed from respective access frontages. The transportation element of the General Plan requires no additional improvements to the current circulation system to support build-out potential as allowed per current density and zoning requirements.

Impact:
Less than Significant

e) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Construction activities may result in temporary traffic delays possibly slowing emergency response vehicles or restricting access to residences or nearby businesses. This is a short-term construction related impact that will cease upon project completion.

Impact:
Less than Significant

f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?

See the discussion in section 16a. above..

Impact:
No Impact

g) Result in inadequate parking capacity?

The project would result in one parcel and one designated remainder, with sufficient area for parking for residential uses. No significant parking impacts would occur.

Impact:
Less than Significant

18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

State Regulations

CEQA requires that a lead agency determine whether a project could have a significant effect on historical resources and tribal cultural resources (PRC Section 21074 [a][1][A]-[B]). A historical resource is one listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR, PRC Section 21084.1), a resource included in a local register of historical resources (PRC Section 15064.5[a][2]), or any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that a lead agency determines to be historically significant (PRC Section 15064.5[a][3]).

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

Impacts to significant cultural resources that affect the characteristics of any resource that qualify it for the NRHP or adversely alter the significance of a resource listed in or eligible for listing in the CRHR are considered a significant effect on the environment. These impacts could result from physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of an historical resource would be materially impaired (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 [b][1]). Material impairment is defined as demolition or alteration in an adverse manner [of] those characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion or eligibility for inclusion in the CRHR (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5[b][2][A]).

California Public Resources Code

Section 5097.5 of the California PRC states: No person shall knowingly and willfully excavate upon, or remove, destroy, injure, or deface any historic or prehistoric ruins, burial grounds, archaeological or vertebrate paleontological site, including fossilized footprints, inscriptions made by human agency, or any other archaeological, paleontological or historical feature, situated on public lands, except with the express permission of the public agency having jurisdiction over such lands. Violation of this section is a misdemeanor. As used in this PRC section, “public lands” means lands owned by or under the jurisdiction of the State or any city, county, district, authority, or public corporation, or any agency thereof. Consequently, local agencies are required to comply with PRC 5097.5 for their own activities, including construction and maintenance, as well as for permit actions (e.g., encroachment permits) undertaken by others.

Codes Governing Human Remains

The disposition of human remains is governed by Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and PRC sections 5097.94 and 5097.98 and falls within the jurisdiction of the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). If human remains are discovered, the county coroner must be notified within 48 hours, and there should be no further disturbance to the site where the remains were found. If the coroner determines the remains are Native American, the coroner is responsible to contact the NAHC within 24 hours. Pursuant to PRC Section 5097.98, the NAHC will immediately notify those persons it believes to be most likely descended from the deceased Native Americans so they can inspect the burial site and make recommendations for treatment or disposal.

Would the project:

a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

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 § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

California Native American tribes were notified according to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1 on June 25, 2021. Permit Sonoma staff referred the project application to Native American Tribes within Sonoma County to request consultation under AB52. Notifications were sent to the Cloverdale Rancheria of Pomo Indians, Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians, Mishewal Wappo Tribe of Alexander Valley, Middletown Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians, Lytton Rancheria of California, Kashia Pomos Stewarts Point Rancheria, and Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria.

On June 28th, 2021, a representative for the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria Tribe requested consultation and additional information for this project. A peer review was done for the initial Cultural Resources Assessment submitted for the project where after a revised cultural resources assessment was submitted and reviewed by the Tribe. The assessment concluded that there were no known resources onsite however on-site construction and ground disturbing activities may result in accidental discovery resources and mitigation is required to reduce the risk of potential impact.

Consultation with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria resulted in Mitigation Measures TCR-1 & TCR-2 with agreement of both parties. Implementation of these Mitigation Measures will reduce potential impacts to cultural resources to a less than significant level.

Significance Level:
Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation.

Mitigation

Mitigation Measure TCR-1 NOTE ON MAP: The following note shall be printed on the parcel map:

"All building, septic, and/or grading permits shall have the following note printed on plan sheets:

a. In the event that tribal cultural resources are discovered at any time during grading, scraping, excavation, or other ground disturbing activity within the property, all work should be halted in the vicinity of the find and the applicant/operator must immediately notify Permit Sonoma Project Review

staff of the find. Paleontological resources include fossils of animals, plants or other organisms. Prehistoric resources include humanly modified stone, shell, or bones, hearths, firepits, obsidian and chert flaked-stone tools (e.g., projectile points, knives, choppers), midden (culturally darkened soil containing heat-affected rock, artifacts, animal bone, or shellfish remains), stone milling equipment, such as mortars and pestles, and certain sites features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe. Historic resources include all byproducts of human use greater than fifty (50) years of age including backfilled privies, wells, and refuse pits; concrete, stone, or wood structural elements or foundations; and concentrations of metal, glass, and ceramic refuse. Permit Sonoma staff will consult the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria to determine if the resources qualify as Tribal Cultural Resources (as defined in Public Resource Code § 21074). If determined to be a Tribal Cultural Resource, Permit Sonoma will further consult with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria and project proponents in order to develop and coordinate proper protection/mitigation measures required for the discovery. Permit Sonoma may refer the mitigation/protection plan to designated tribal representatives for review and comment. No work shall commence and or continue until a protection/mitigation plan is reviewed and approved by Permit Sonoma Project Review Staff. Mitigations shall include avoidance, removal, preservation and/or recordation in accordance with California law, including but not limited to PRC 21084.3.
b. If human remains are encountered, work in the immediate vicinity shall be halted and the operator shall notify Permit Sonoma and the Sonoma County Coroner immediately. At the same time, the operator shall be responsible for the cost to have a qualified archaeologist under contract to evaluate the discovery. If the human remains are determined to be of Native American origin, the Coroner must immediately notify the Native American Heritage Commission of this identification so that a Most Likely Descendant can be designated, and the appropriate measures implemented in compliance with the California Government Code and Public Resources Code."

Monitoring TCR-1: Prior to recordation, Permit Sonoma staff shall verify that the TCR-1 measures are noted on the subdivision map. Prior to issuance of any subsequent permits for site alterations, grading, building, or subdivision improvements, Permit Sonoma staff shall verify that the TCR-1 measures are noted on the project plans.

Mitigation Measure TCR-2 NOTE ON THE MAP: The following note shall be printed on the parcel map:

"The stacked stone wall segment located along the northwest edge, near Cavedale Road, of the proposed Designated Remainder must be avoided and undisturbed in all future development of the parcel.

Monitoring TCR-2: Prior to recordation, Permit Sonoma staff shall verify that the TCR-2 measures are noted on the subdivision map. Prior to issuance of any subsequent permits for site alterations, grading, building, or subdivision improvements, Permit Sonoma staff shall verify that the TCR-2 measures are noted on the project plans.

19. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS:

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?

Comment:
The project would not contribute to the need for construction of new water or expanded wastewater treatment facilities.

Significance Level:

Less than Significant Impact.

b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?

Sufficient water would be provided by on-site wells which will be located in a Class 3 groundwater availability area. See section 10(b) for a discussion of impacts to groundwater supply.
Impact:
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?

New septic systems would be constructed for future residential development. There would be no sewage treatment by an off-site provider.
Impact:
No Impact

Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

Both Sonoma Public Infrastructure and Permit Sonoma's Engineering Division have examined the project. While no specific impacts are foreseen, the applicants must have the overall storm water drainage plan examined and approved by both departments before the subdivision map can be recorded. The storm water drainage plan must be prepared by a registered Civil Engineer and must contain at a minimum a project narrative, on- and off-site hydrology maps, hydrologic calculations, hydraulic calculations, pre- and post-development analysis for all relevant existing and proposed drainage facilities. The drainage report shall abide by and contain all applicable items in the *Drainage Report Required Contents* (DRN-006) handout.

Impact:
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?

Sonoma County has a solid waste management program in place that provides solid waste collection and disposal services for the entire County. The program can accommodate the permitted collection and disposal of the waste that would result from the proposed project. The addition of two additional agricultural residential lots would not create solid waste in excess of the capacity of the County's solid waste system.

Significance Level:
Less than Significant Impact.

e) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Sonoma County has a solid waste management program in place that provides solid waste collection and disposal services. The program can accommodate the permitted collection and disposal of the waste that will result from the proposed project.

Impact:
No Impact

20. WILDFIRE:

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire severity zones, would the project:

a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Comment:
As discussed in section 9(g), the project site is designated a State Responsibility Area (SRA) and is within a "Very High" Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Sonoma County currently does not have an adopted emergency response plan or an emergency evacuation plan for this area with which the project could conflict.

Significance Level:
No Impact.

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?

Comment:
As discussed in section 9, the project site is in a designated Influence/Intermix Wildland Urban Interface Zone, "Very High" Fire Hazard Severity Zone in a State Responsibility Area. Topography, weather, and fuel (vegetation or structures) contribute to wildfire risk and behavior.

Potential wildfire fuel sources include grasslands, trees, vegetation, and structures (residential). As discussed in section 9, application of County and State fire safe standards, including requirements related to vegetation management and defensible space, will offset any increased wildfire risk presented by prevailing winds or onsite fuel to a less than significant level.

Significance Level:
Less than Significant Impact.

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 of that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?

Comment:
The proposed two lot subdivision does not include plans for construction for the housing units on the proposed lots. In the future, the lot may be further developed with residential and agricultural structures, which would necessitate the construction of emergency water sources and other utilities, in accordance with Sonoma County Code and state law. Infrastructure improvements for future site development will require building permits, which impose standards related to fire safety and are reviewed by Sonoma County Fire and Emergency Services. In order to record the Parcel Map, the access improvements will need to be complete. With the application of fire safe standards, the required access improvements will have a less than significant impact on fire risk.

Significance Level:
Less than Significant Impact.

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?

Comment:

Refer to section 7 (Geology and Soils).

Significance Level:
Less than Significant Impact.

21 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

Potential project impacts on special-status plant and fish/wildlife species, and habitat are addressed in section 4. Implementation of the required mitigation measures (Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through 11) would reduce these potential impacts to a less than significant level. Potentially significant impacts to hydrology and noise are reduced to a less than significant level through implementation of Mitigation Measures HYDRO-1 & 2, NOISE-1, and TCR-1 & 2.

Impact:
Less than Significant with Mitigation

b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?

No project impacts have been identified in this Initial Study that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable. The project would contribute to impacts related to biological resources, hydrology, tribal resources, and noise, which may be cumulative off-site, but mitigation measures would reduce project impacts to less than significant levels.

Impact
Less than Significant Impact

c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

The proposed project has the potential to cause adverse impacts on human beings, both directly and indirectly. However, all potential impact and adverse effects on humans were analyzed, and would be less than significant with the mitigation measures identified in the Initial Study and incorporated into the project.

Impact
Less than Significant Impact