PUBLIC DRAFT

INITIAL STUDY AND MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

SCH: 2026090845

FOR

Cally Dym
General Plan Amendment & Rezone
AT 7720 N Highway 1, Little River; APN: 121-280-15

File No. GP_2021-0002 & R_2021-0005

LEAD AGENCY:
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INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (California Public Resources Code §21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, §15000 et seq.), this Draft Initial Study (IS) has been prepared as documentation for a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the amendment of the Local Coastal Program (LCP), including Land Use Map No. 17 (Mendocino) and the coastal zoning map, to apply the Visitor Accommodations and Services (VAS) Inn/Bed and Breakfast Accommodation (*1C) combining district to the subject parcel (APN 121-280-15) currently zoned Rural Residential (RR5) (the "Project"). The project is located at 7720 N Highway 1, Little River; APN: 121-280-15. This Draft IS/MND includes a description of the Project; the location of the Project site; an evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of Project implementation; and written statement that an Environment Impact Report (EIR) is not required because the project will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment.

Pursuant to Section 15367 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the County of Mendocino is the Lead Agency for the Project. As the Lead Agency, The County of Mendocino has the principal responsibility for carrying out the project and has the authority to approve the Project and its accompanying environmental documentation. In addition to addressing the potential environmental impacts that would result from the Project, this Draft IS/MND serves as the primary environmental document for future activities associated with the Project, including discretionary approvals requested or required for Project implementation.

Questions in the Initial Study Checklist are provided with their respective answers based on analysis undertaken. An explanation for all checklist responses is included, and all answers take account of the whole action involved, including off site as well as on-site; cumulative as well as project level; indirect as well as direct; and construction as well as operational impacts. The explanation of each issue identifies (a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and (b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance. In the checklist the following definitions are used:

"**Potentially Significant Impact**" means there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant.

"**Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated**" means the incorporation of one or more mitigation measures can reduce the effect from potentially significant to a less than significant level.

"**Less Than Significant Impact"** means that the effect is less than significant, and no mitigation is necessary to reduce the impact to a lesser level.

"**No Impact"** means that the effect does not apply to the Project, or clearly will not impact nor be impacted by the Project.

PROJECT INFORMATION

FILE NUMBER:	GP_2021-0002 & R_2021-0005
OWNER/APPLICANT:	Cally Dym
AGENT:	Wynn Coastal Planning & Biology, Inc.
PROJECT LOCATION:	In the Coastal Zone, in the town of Little River, on the west side of State Route 1 (SR 1) 700± feet north of its intersection with Little River Airport Road (CR 404), located at 7720 N Highway 1, Little River; APN: 121-280-15.
TOTAL ACREAGE:	5.25± Acres

GENERAL PLAN: Rural Residential 5-Acre (RR:5)

ZONING: Rural Residential 5-Acre (RR:5)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15125, the Project Description is required to identify the existing baseline physical conditions. For this project, the baseline conditions include all existing development and the current parcel configuration. The Project would involve an amendment of the Local Coastal Program (LCP), including Land Use Map No. 17 (Mendocino) and the coastal zoning map, to apply the Visitor Accommodations and Services (VAS) Inn/Bed and Breakfast Accommodation (*1C) combining district to the subject parcel (APN 121-280-15) currently zoned Rural Residential (RR5). Reasonably foreseeable future development as a result of this amendment would include the development of an inn comprised of ten (10) visitor accommodation units. However, the applicant intends to build a five (5) unit Inn on the subject parcel.

The property is a blufftop lot on a relatively flat marine terrace. Much of the lot was previously used for animal raising. CDP 77-04 authorized the installation of a wood post and wire mesh fence, shed, and paddock area for horses. The lot also contains an existing 10,000-gallon concrete water tank and pump house. The lot was created by Coastal Development Permit 1-89-151, a minor subdivision of a previously 13± acre parcel, the other portion of which became APN: 121-280-16 to the south. That Coastal Development Permit also required that the applicant offer a dedication of land for vertical public access and an open space easement on APN: 121-280-16, which was eventually accepted by the Mendocino Land Trust in 2005. In 2010, the Mendocino Land Trust obtained a Coastal Development Permit to construct a trail within the vertical access easement, which is known as the Little River Blowhole Trail.

APN: 121-280-16 also contains an existing four (4) unit visitor accommodation facility that is considered a part of the Little River Inn, which includes several other properties in the vicinity, most notably the property at 7901 N Highway 1. According to the staff report for CDP 1-89-151, the applicant at that time provided evidence that the visitor accommodation facility had been in use since 1964. However, the staff report for CDP 77-04 notes that Building Permit No. F-7177 & Permit No. FB84-263, to *"change a single-family residence to a 4-unit visitor facility"*, was finalized on 11/28/1984.

Both properties are accessed via a forty (40) foot wide private roadway & public utility easement connected to State Route 1, which ends at a cul-de-sac whose center is on the property line between the two properties. The cul-de-sac has a radius of forty-five (45) feet. However, the actual paved encroachment and driveway from the existing visitor accommodation facility to State Route 1 does not appear to lie precisely within the easement. APN: 121-280-15 also has a small rectangular drainage easement in the northeastern corner.

The surrounding Land Uses and Zoning are detailed in the following table.

TABLE 1: ADJACENT LAND USE AND ZONING

	GENERAL PLAN	ZONING	LOT SIZES	USES
NORTH	Commercial (C)	Commercial (C)	1.16± Acres	Commercial
EAST	Commercial (C) & Rural Residential (RR:5)	Commercial (C) & Rural Residential (RR:5)	0.25-3.6± Acres	Residential, Visitor Accommodation
SOUTH	Rural Residential (RR:5)	Rural Residential (RR:5)	7.8± acres	Visitor Accommodation
WEST	N/A (Pacific Ocean)	N/A (Pacific Ocean)	N/A (Pacific Ocean)	N/A (Pacific Ocean)

Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required (e.g., permits, financial approval, or participation agreements): California Coastal Commission.

Pursuant to the consultation requirements of Assembly Bill (AB) 52, in July 2022, the County of Mendocino (County) provided formal notification to the California Native American tribes that requested notification of all new potential Negative Declarations within the County. The following tribes were notified: Cloverdale Rancheria, Redwood Valley Rancheria, and Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians.

PROJECT PLOT PLAN: See Page 6 of this document.

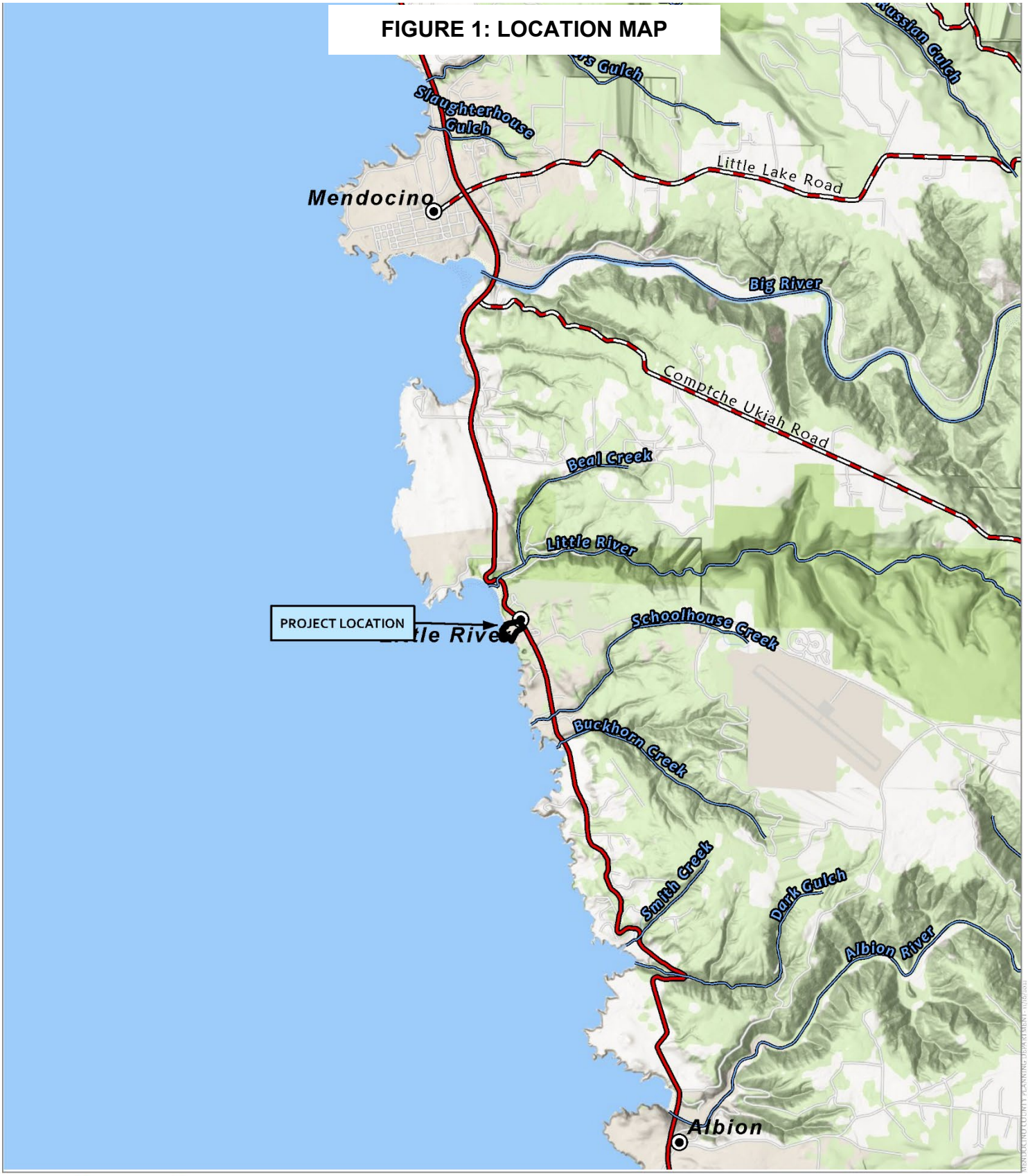


FIGURE 1: LOCATION MAP
Slaughterhouse Gulch
Russian Gulch
Little Lake Road
Mendocino
Big River
Comptche Ukiah Road
Beal Creek
Little River
PROJECT LOCATION
Little River
Schoolhouse Creek
Buckhorn Creek
Smith Creek
Dark Gulch
Albion River
Albion
CASE: GP 2021-0002 / R 2021-0005
OWNER: Cally Dym
APN: 121-280-15
APLCT: Cally Dym
AGENT: Amy Wynn, Wynn Coastal Planning & Biology
ADDRESS: 7720 N Highway 1, Little River
Major Towns & Places
Highways
Major Roads
0 2,000 4,000 Feet
0 0.35 0.7 Miles
1:50,000
LOCATION MAP

FIGURE 2: AERIAL IMAGERY

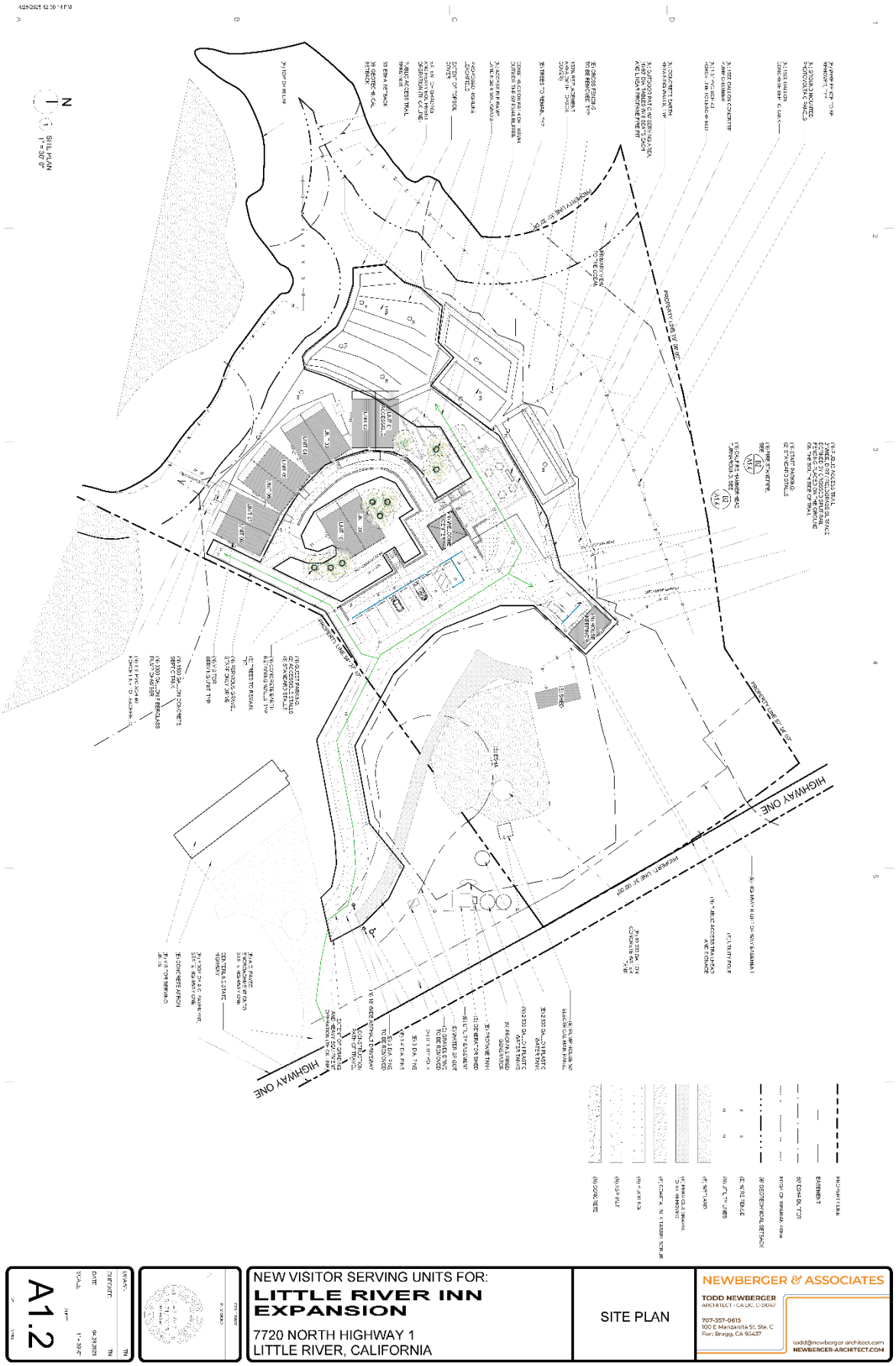
CASE: GP 2021-0002 / R 2021-0005
OWNER: Cally Dym
APN: 121-280-15
APLCT: Cally Dym
AGENT: Amy Wynn, Wynn Coastal Planning & Biology
ADDRESS: 7720 N Highway 1, Little River

Public Roads
Private Roads

0 250 500 Feet
0 0.045 0.09 Miles
1:6,000

AERIAL IMAGERY

FIGURE 3: SITE PLAN



ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

This project would potentially affect the environmental factors checked below, involving at least one impact that is "Potentially Significant" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

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

DETERMINATION

Based on this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

L Crowley	SEPTEMBER 29, 2026
Signature	Date
LIAM CROWLEY	PLANNER III
Printed Name	Title

5.1 AESTHETICS

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐

DISCUSSION: A "scenic vista" is defined *as a singular vantage point that offers high quality, harmonious, or visually interesting views of a valued landscape for the benefit of the public.* Scenic vistas are typically found along major highways or other public roads but may also occur in other areas accessible to the public.

"Scenic resources" include objects, features, or patterns within the landscape which are visually interesting or pleasing. Scenic resources can include trees, rock outcroppings, historic buildings, or other features. California Streets and Highways Code (SHC) Sections 260-284 establish the State Scenic Highway program for *"the protection and enhancement of California's natural scenic beauty".*[1] The Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) oversees this program, including a list of officially designated Scenic Highways and those deemed "eligible" for incorporation into the program. No highways in Mendocino County have been officially incorporated into the State Scenic Highway system. As such, there are no adopted Corridor Protection Programs in the county. However, the entirety of State Route 1 (SR-1) in Mendocino County, the portion of U.S. Route 101 (US-101) between Ukiah and Willits, all of State Route 20 (SR-20), and all of State Route 128 (SR-128) is listed as "eligible".[2] No National Scenic Byways are located in Mendocino County as designated by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation.[3]

Additionally, the County has two roadway segments designated as "heritage corridors" by California Public Resources Code Section 5077.5. The North Coast Heritage Corridor includes the entire segment of SR 1 in the county, as well as the segment of U.S. Highway 101 from the junction with SR 1 in Leggett, north to the Humboldt County line. The Tahoe-Pacific Heritage Corridor extends from Lake Tahoe to the Mendocino County coast. It includes the entire segment of SR 20 within the county and the segment of US 101 from the SR 20 junction north of Calpella to the SR 20 highway exit south of Willits. Mendocino County's General Plan Resource Management Goal RM-14's (Visual Character) objective is the *"protection of the visual quality of the county's natural and rural landscapes, scenic resources, and areas of significant natural beauty."*

The main source of daytime glare in the unincorporated portions of the Mendocino County is from sunlight reflecting from structures with reflective surfaces, such as windows. A nighttime sky in which stars are readily visible is often considered a valuable scenic/visual resource. In urban areas, views of the nighttime sky are being diminished by "light pollution." Two elements of light pollution may affect county residents: sky glow (a result of light fixtures that emit a portion of their light directly upward in the sky), and light trespass (poorly shielded or poorly aimed fixtures which cast light into unwanted areas, such as neighboring properties and homes). Different lighting standards are set by classifying areas by lighting zones (LZ). The 2000 Census classified the majority of Mendocino County as LZ2 (rural), which requires stricter lighting

[1] Streets and Highways Code, CA SHC § 260 (1969).
[2] Streets and Highways Code, CA SCH §263.2 to 263.8 (2019).
[3] U.S. Department of Transportation. Federal Highway Administration. *National Scenic Byways & All-American Roads*. Retrieved from https://fhwaapps.fhwa.dot.gov/bywaysp/States/Show/CA.

standards in order to protect these areas from new sources of light pollution and light trespass. Mendocino County's General Plan Resource Management Goal RM-15's (Dark Sky) objective is the *"protection of the qualities of the county's nighttime sky and reduced energy use."*

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, there are three "Urban Areas" in Mendocino County: Ukiah, Willits, and Fort Bragg. Some of these Urban Areas extend into the unincorporated portions of the County. The Census provides shapefiles for use in visualizing these Urban Areas. The following County regulations govern scenic quality:

- Mendocino County Code (MCC) Chapter 20.504 – Visual Resource and Special Treatment Areas
- Mendocino County Coastal Element Chapter 3.5 – Visual Resources, Special Communities and Archaeological Resources
- Ukiah Valley Area Plan Chapter 4 – Community Design
- Mendocino County General Plan Chapter 6 – Community Specific Policies

Mendocino County General Plan Policy DE-85: *"Viewshed preservation shall be considered when development is located in a highly scenic environment, adjacent to or atop a ridgeline or hill, and in similar settings."*

a) **Less than Significant Impact:** Views of the coast from public places in the vicinity of the project may be considered scenic vistas. The property is within a designated Highly Scenic Area as established by the County's Local Coastal Program (LCP). As such, any future development of the property would be subject to the development criteria outlined in Mendocino County Code section 20.504.015(C). Additionally, the property is within the Little River neighborhood and would therefore be subject to the development criteria outlined in section 20.504.020(C). These criteria require that development be subordinate to the natural setting. Future development of an inn would block some views of the ocean from State Route 1 due to the apparent necessity to place some structures atop a berm near the center of the property. However, future development of an inn must also be accompanied by the provision of a new coastal access trail in accordance with section 20.436.025. Development of a coastal trail would provide the public with new views of the coast. Additionally, section 20.504.015(C)(9) requires that tree thinning or removal be made a condition of permit approval in areas designated on LCP maps that unreasonably obstruct views to the coast. On this property, a group of non-native eucalyptus trees currently block views to the ocean and would be removed during future development of an inn. Therefore, impacts to visual resources would be balanced such that impacts to scenic vistas would be less than significant.

b) **No Impact:** The site is not in the vicinity of a scenic highway.

c) **Less than Significant Impact:** The property is in a non-urbanized area. As noted in (a) above, visual resource impacts would be balanced such that significant impacts would not occur.

d) **Less than Significant Impact:** Existing LCP regulations ensure that future development of an inn would not create significant impacts, particularly County Code section 20.504.035 which establishes exterior lighting regulations. Additionally, the applicant has proposed that future development would include only downcast and shielded exterior lighting.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **a Less than Significant Impact** on Aesthetics.

5.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒

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

DISCUSSION: The California Department of Conservation manages the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) which produces maps and statistical data used for analyzing impacts on California's agricultural resources. The FMMP mapping survey covers roughly 98% of privately owned land in the state. Each map is updated at approximately two-year intervals. Agricultural land is rated according to soil quality and irrigation status; the best quality land is called "Prime Farmland". Other critical designations include "Unique Farmland" and "Farmland of Statewide Importance." The most recent map covering Mendocino County was published in 2018.

The Williamson Act (officially the California Land Conservation Act of 1965) is a California law that provides relief of property tax to owners of farmland and open-space land in exchange for an agreement that the land will not be developed or otherwise converted to another use. The intent of the Williamson Act is to preserve a maximum amount of a limited supply of prime agricultural land to discourage premature and unnecessary conversion of prime agricultural land to urban uses.

The Timberland Production Zone (T-P) was established in 1976 in the California Government Code as a designation for lands for which the Assessor's records as of 1976 demonstrated that the "highest and best use" would be timber production and accessory uses. Public improvements and urban services are prohibited on T-P lands except where necessary and compatible with ongoing timber production. The original purpose of T-P Zoning District was to preserve and protect timberland from conversion to other more profitable uses and ensure that timber producing areas not be subject to use conflicts with neighboring lands.

Several zoning districts established by the Mendocino County Zoning Ordinance allow for agricultural uses. The Zoning Ordinance also establishes use types which are allowable by-right and conditionally in each zoning district. A zoning conflict may occur if a use is proposed which is not allowable in the corresponding zoning district. Mendocino County has adopted Policies and Procedures for Agricultural Preserves and Williamson Act Contracts, which were most recently amended in 2018. Among the policies and procedures are regulations concerning compatible and incompatible uses on lands under a Williamson Act contract.

Public Resources Code Section 12220(g) defines "forest land" as *"land that can support 10-percent native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits."*

Public Resources Code Section 4526 defines "timberland" as *"land, other than land owned by the federal government and land designated by the board as experimental forest land, which is available for, and capable of, growing a crop of trees of a commercial species used to produce lumber and other forest products, including Christmas trees. Commercial species shall be determined by the board on a district basis."* In this definition, "board" refers to the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Government Code Section 51104(g) defines "Timberland production zone" or "TPZ" as *"an area which has been zoned pursuant to Section 51112 or 51113 and is devoted to and used for growing and harvesting timber, or for growing and harvesting timber and compatible uses, as defined in subdivision (h)."*

a) **No Impact:** According to the FMMP, the property has a classification of Grazing Land (G) and Urban & Built-Up Land (D). As such, the property does not contain any prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of statewide importance.

b) **No Impact:** The site is not within an Agricultural zoning district or within a Williamson Act contract. The property has been within the Rural Residential General Plan Classification and zoning district since at least 1991.

c) **No Impact:** The site is not within a timber production zoning district and vegetation on the site of development does not meet the definition of forest land or timberland.

d) **No Impact:** Removal of non-native eucalyptus trees would occur as a result of the project, but the group of eucalyptus trees do not constitute "forest land".

e) **Less than Significant Impact:** No impacts to forestland would occur because none of the site meets the definition of forestland. The property was historically used for horse raising and the development of an inn would likely eliminate the majority of the property's agricultural capacity. The California Department of Conservation's Land Evaluation & Site Assessment (LESA) Model was used to determine the significance of agricultural land conversion based on soil resource quality, project size, water availability, surrounding agricultural land, and surrounding protected resource lands. The model determined that the impact of agricultural land conversion would not be significant, primarily due to the small project size and lack of surrounding agricultural land.[4]

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have a **Less than Significant Impact** on Agricultural and Forestry Resources.

5.3 AIR QUALITY

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☐	☒

DISCUSSION: Mendocino County is located within the North Coast Air Basin. Mendocino County Air Quality Management District (MCAQMD) is responsible for enforcing the state and federal Clean Air Act, as well as local air quality regulations. Air Districts in California develop regulations based on the measures identified in the Clean Air Act and its Clean Air plan as well as state regulations. In Mendocino County, these are known as the district "Rules and Regulations". These regulations establish the procedure for new point source emissions to obtain an air quality permit, air quality standards for new construction, and others. In 2005, MCAQMD adopted a Particulate Matter Attainment Plan which quantified past and present Particulate Matter levels and recommended control measures to reduce emissions. These control measures were incorporated into the District Rules and Regulations.

MCAQMD Rule 1-400 states: *"A person shall not discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other material that cause injury, detriment, nuisance or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public or that endanger the comfort, repose, health or safety of any such persons or the public or that cause or have a natural tendency to cause injury or damage to business or property."*

Rule 1-430 requires specific dust control measures during all construction operations, the grading of roads, or the clearing of land as follows:

[4] Results of the model are available on file at Planning & Building Services.

1) All visibly dry, disturbed soil road surfaces shall be watered to minimize fugitive dust emissions;

2) All unpaved surfaces, unless otherwise treated with suitable chemicals or oils, shall have a posted speed limit of 10 miles per hour;

3) Earth or other material that has been transported by trucking or earth moving equipment, erosion by water, or other means onto paved streets shall be promptly removed;

4) Asphalt, oil, water, or suitable chemicals shall be applied on materials stockpiles and other surfaces that can give rise to airborne dusts;

5) All earthmoving activities shall cease when sustained winds exceed 15 miles per hour;

6) The operator shall take reasonable precautions to prevent the entry of unauthorized vehicles onto the site during non-work hours; and

7) The operator shall keep a daily log of activities to control fugitive dust. In December, 2006, MCAQMD adopted Regulation 4, Particulate Emissions Reduction Measures, which establishes emissions standards and use of wood burning appliances to reduce particulate emissions. These regulations applied to wood heating appliances, installed both indoors and outdoors for residential and commercial structures, including public facilities. Where applicable, MCAQMD also recommends mitigation measures to encourage alternatives to woodstoves/fireplaces, to control dust on construction sites and unpaved access roads (generally excepting roads used for agricultural purposes), and to promote trip reduction measures where feasible. In 2007, the Air Resources Board (ARB) adopted a regulation to reduce diesel particulate matter (PM) and oxides of nitrogen (NOx) emissions from in-use (existing) off-road heavy-duty diesel vehicles in California. Such vehicles are used in construction, mining, and industrial operations. The regulation imposes limits on idling, requires a written idling policy, and requires disclosure when selling vehicles. Off-road diesel powered equipment used for grading or road development must be registered in the Air Resources Board DOORS program and be labeled accordingly. The regulation restricts the adding of older vehicles into fleets and requires fleets to reduce their emissions by retiring, replacing, or repowering older engines or installing Verified Diesel Emission Control Strategies. In 1998, the California Air Resources Board established diesel exhaust as an Air Toxic, leading to regulations for categories of diesel engines. Diesel engines emit a complex mixture of air pollutants, including both gaseous and solid material which contributes to PM2.5. All stationary and portable diesel engines over 50 horse power need a permit through the MCAQMD.

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Nonattainment Areas for Criteria Pollutants (Green Book), Mendocino County is in attainment for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).[5] In addition, Mendocino County is currently in attainment for all California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS). The County achieved attainment in 2021.[6] The Hydrogen Sulfide and Visibility Reducing Particles designations remain unclassified in Mendocino County.

For the purposes of CEQA, MCAQMD previously recommended that agencies use adopted Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) thresholds for projects in Mendocino County. However, MCAQMD has issued clarifications to resolve conflicts between District rules and BAAQMD thresholds. This includes the Indirect Source Rule, Stationary Source Emissions Levels, CO Standards, Greenhouse Gas rules, Risk Exposure, and Odor rule. More information can be found on the MCAQMD website.[7]

Mendocino County General Plan Policies RM-37, RM-38, and RM-49 relate to Air Quality.[8]

Per California Health and Safety Code (HSC) Section 42705.5, "sensitive receptors" include hospitals, schools, day care centers, and other locations that the district or state board may determine. According to the California Air Resources Board (CARB), sensitive receptors include *"children, elderly, asthmatics, and others who are at a heightened risk of negative health outcomes due to exposure to air pollution. The locations where these sensitive receptors congregate are considered sensitive receptor locations. Sensitive receptor locations may include hospitals, schools, and day care centers."*

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[5] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (2023). *Nonattainment Areas for Criteria Pollutants (Green Book)*. Retrieved from https://www.epa.gov/green-book.
[6] California Air Resources Board (2022). *2021 Amendments to Area Designations for State Ambient Air Quality Standards*. Retrieved from https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/rulemaking.
[7] Mendocino County Air Quality Management District (2013). *District Interim CEQA Criteria and GHG Pollutant Thresholds*. Retrieved from https://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/aqmd/.
[8] County of Mendocino (2009). *General Plan*. Retrieved from https://www.mendocinocounty.org/government/planning-building-services/plans/mendocino-county-general-plan.

Mendocino County also contains areas where naturally occurring asbestos (NOA) is known to occur. When asbestos fibers are disturbed, such as by grading and construction activities, the fibers can be released into the air. These fibers can cause serious health threats if inhaled. Ultramafic rocks are an indicator of possible asbestos minerals, including a rock known as serpentine. Serpentine and ultramafic rocks are common in the eastern belt of the Franciscan Formation in Mendocino County. Planning & Building Services uses a map derived from the California Bureau of Mines and Geology and the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to identify areas likely to have asbestos containing geologic features. MCAQMD has adopted policies for areas containing NOA. For projects in areas identified as potentially containing NOA, the District requires an evaluation and report by a State registered geologist to determine that any observed NOA is below levels of regulatory concern in the areas being disturbed. If it is determined that NOA is present at levels above regulatory concern, or the applicant chooses not to have the testing and evaluation conducted, MCAQMD requires that certain measures be implemented in accordance with Title 17 California Code of Regulations Section 93105.[9]

a) **Less than Significant Impact:** Indirect or cumulative impacts may occur if reasonably foreseeable future development would conflict with or obstruct implementation of MCAQMD regulations. A stationary source would not be created. Portable sources are not expected because the emitting source of future construction equipment would either be the motive power for moving the equipment or would otherwise be expected to be registered with CARB's Portable Equipment Registration Program. An indirect source would not be created because future development would result in only negligible emissions due to the temporary use of off-road construction equipment and construction of future structures. CalEEMod was used to estimate the average daily emissions of Reactive Organic Gases (ROG), Nitrogen oxides (NO_x), Carbon Monoxide (CO), and Particulate Matter (PM_{10}) during construction and operation of a future project that would include ten (10) visitor-serving units, a welcome center, and a housekeeping structure.

If future construction were to occur simultaneously, it would emit approximately 1 pound of ROG, 2 pounds of NO_x, 2 pounds of CO, and 27 pounds of PM_{10} per day during construction. The project would emit approximately 0.8 pounds of ROG, 0.5 pounds of NO_x, 3 pounds of CO, and 171 pounds of PM_{10} per day during operation. These values are below the threshold for indirect sources found in MCAQMD Rule 1-130. The project would not involve large grading operations. Therefore, written authorization from the District or a permit to operate prior to starting construction in accordance with Rule 1-200 and Rule 1-240 would not be required. Using CalEEMod, construction of the project was estimated to generate 84 metric tons of $CO2_e$ per year, while operation of the project was estimated to generate 120 metric tons of $CO2_e$ per year. Therefore, MCAQMD Rule 1-221 would not apply. The site is not an Air Toxics "Hot Spot" as regulated by Rule 1-280. Due to the low concentration of emissions, the project is not expected to result in a public nuisance in accordance with Rule 1-400 or a significant amount of particulate matter, fugitive dust, sulfur oxide, or geothermal emissions in accordance with Rule 1-420 through 1-455. Other Rules within District Regulations 1 would not apply. The project would not involve open outdoor burning. As such, District Regulations 2 would not apply. The project does not involve a gasoline dispensing facility, dry cleaning operation, residential burning, or stationary diesel engine. Therefore, District Regulations 3 would not apply. The project does not involve any wood burning appliances. Therefore, District Regulations 4 would not apply. The project does not involve an acid rain unit, solid waste incinerator, major source, or other source regulated by District Regulations 5. Therefore, the project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan.

b) **No Impact:** Mendocino County is in attainment under all applicable federal and state ambient air quality standards.

c) **Less than Significant Impact:** The property is bordered to the north by commercial use, to the east by residential and visitor accommodation uses, and to the south by visitor accommodation uses. Standard Best Management Practices (BMPs) and grading techniques would ensure that sensitive receptors are not exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations at the time of future construction, particularly due to the low amount of estimated pollutants per CalEEMod. Likewise, operation of the site is not expected to expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations due to the amounts estimated by CalEEMod being lower than established thresholds.

d) **No Impact:** The project is not located in an area mapped with serpentine soil or Naturally Occurring Asbestos (NOA). Inn uses are not expected to result in objectionable odors.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

[9] Mendocino County Air Quality Management District (2013). *Policies for Areas Containing Naturally Occurring Asbestos (NOA)*. Retrieved from https://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/aqmd

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **a Less than Significant Impact** on Air Quality.

5.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

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

DISCUSSION: In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15380, a species of animal or plant shall be presumed to be endangered, rare or threatened, as it is listed in:

- Sections 670.2 or 670.5, Title 14, California Code of Regulations
- Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations Section 17.11 or 17.12 pursuant to the Federal Endangered Species Act as rare, threatened, or endangered

The following may also be considered a special status species:

- Species that are recognized as candidates for future listing by agencies with resource management responsibilities, such as US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries, also known as NMFS), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
- Species defined by CDFW as California Species of Special Concern
- Species classified as “Fully Protected” by CDFW
- Plant species, subspecies, and varieties defined as rare or threatened by the California Native Plant Protection Act (California Fish and Game Code Section 1900, et seq.)
- Plant species listed by the California Native Plant Society (meeting the criteria in CEQA Guidelines Section 15380) according to the California Rare Plant Ranks (CRPR)
- Mountain lions protected under the California Wildlife Protection Act of 1990 (Proposition 117) and designated as a specially protected mammal in California.

The Mendocino County General Plan identifies four (4) “sensitive habitats”, including Serpentine Soils and Rock Outcrops, Pygmy Forest, Wetlands and Waters of the United States, and Old-Growth Forest. Table 4-A of the General Plan contains a list of locally identified “special-status species” found in Mendocino County. In addition, General Plan Section 4-10 identifies Coho salmon, Chinook salmon, and steelhead

trout as species for which habitat is found in large portions of Mendocino County. These species are of federal, state, and local concern.

The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) provides location and natural history information on special status plants, animals, and natural communities to the public, agencies, and conservation organizations. The data helps drive conservation decisions, aid in the environmental review of projects and land use changes and provide baseline data helpful in recovering endangered species and for research projects. Currently, CNDDB has 32 species listed for Mendocino County that range in listing status from Candidate Threatened to Endangered. Planning & Building Services uses CNDDB mapping to assist in identifying project-specific locations where special-status species have been found.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation tool (IPaC) provides site-specific information on federally listed species. In addition, the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory houses information on the status, extent, characteristics, and function of wetlands.

Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act establishes a program to regulate the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States. Section 404 requires a permit before dredged or fill material may be discharged unless the activity is exempt. Section 404 defines wetlands as *"those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstance do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bog, and similar areas."*

At the state level, the Porter-Cologne Act governs water quality through nine Regional Water Boards and the State Water Board. Mendocino County is within the jurisdiction of the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (the 'Board'). The Board regulates discharges under the Act through the issuance of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. The Porter-Cologne Act also requires adoption of regional water quality control plans. The North Coast Basin Plan was most recently adopted in 2018 and establishes water quality objectives, implementation measures, and monitoring programs for the region.

CDFW uses NatureServe's Heritage Methodology to assign global and state rarity ranks for natural communities. CDFW's Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program (VegCAMP) ranks California Natural Communities by their rarity and threat. Natural Communities with a rank of S1-S3 are considered Sensitive Natural Communities. The only comprehensive VegCAMP mapping completed in Mendocino County is that of Mendocino Cypress and Related Vegetation (Pygmy forest), Point Arena Stornetta Unit, and Garcia River.

Mendocino County General Plan Policy RM-28 and RM-29 relate to Biological Resources, including Action Item RM-28.1 regarding oak woodlands.[10] Mendocino County currently has two active Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the first of which provides protections for the Point Arena Mountain Beaver. The Fisher Family HCP (Permit #TE170629-0) covers 24 acres of coastal scrub and was adopted December 3, 2007, for a period of 50 years. The Fisher Family HCP applies to Assessor Parcel Number 027-211-02 located at 43400 Hathaway Crossing, Point Arena. The second HCP is Pacific Gas & Electric Company's Multiple Region Operations and Maintenance HCP. The HCP was issued in 2020 for a period of 30 years. The HCP includes protections for several species across multiple jurisdictions. Since 2003, the Mendocino Redwood Company (MRC) has managed the County's only Natural Community Conservation Plan which covers all lands owned by the MRC to preserve regionally important habitat.

Other regulations which apply to biological resources include the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and the Lake and Streambed Alteration Program. California Fish and Game Code (FGC) Section 3503.5 states *"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."*

California PRC Section 21083.4 requires, *"as part of the determination made pursuant to Section 21080.1, a county shall determine whether a project within its jurisdiction may result in a conversion of oak woodlands that will have a significant effect on the environment. For purposes of this section, "oak" means a native tree species in the genus Quercus, not designated as Group A or Group B commercial species pursuant to regulations adopted by the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection pursuant to Section 4526, and that is 5 inches or more in diameter at breast height."*

a) **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated:** Mendocino County Local Coastal Program regulations require that development maintain adequate buffers from "Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas" (ESHA) to avoid significantly degrading those areas. The definition of

[10] The County of Mendocino (2009). *General Plan*. Retrieved from https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/government/planning-building-services/plans/mendocino-county-general-plan.

ESHA includes listed and rare species. Several biological surveys were conducted on the property, including most recently in 2024. The surveys found several ESHA on the property. As shown on the submitted site plan, it is possible to site a 10-unit inn development that maintains at least 50-foot buffers from all identified ESHA, which by extension would avoid significant impacts to listed species. Additionally, the biological survey report recommends several measures to avoid indirect impacts that could occur, such as avoiding construction during bird nesting season, pre-construction surveys for bats, preventing construction during rain events where amphibians could be present, and cleaning heavy machinery before entering the site.

b) **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated:** The definition of ESHA includes sensitive natural communities and riparian areas, which were identified through the biological surveys. As mentioned in (a) above, 50-foot development buffers were established to avoid direct impacts to those areas, and several avoidance measures can be incorporated to avoid indirect impacts, including the use of construction fencing and straw wattles to prevent encroachment or discharges into the buffer areas.

c) **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated:** The definition of ESHA includes wetlands, which were identified along the northern property boundary through the biological surveys. As mentioned in (a) above, 50-foot development buffers were established to avoid direct impacts to those areas, and several avoidance measures can be incorporated to avoid indirect impacts, including the use of construction fencing and straw wattles to prevent encroachment or discharges into the buffer areas.

d) **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated:** The biological surveys found that migratory bird species may occupy the property for feeding, nesting, or breeding even though direct habitat modification would not occur, and as such recommended avoidance measures to prevent indirect impacts, including seasonal avoidance and nest avoidance. These measures would ensure that significant indirect impacts do not occur.

e) **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated:** Local policies include Local Coastal Program ESHA regulations. As noted above, the inn development would be consistent with those policies with certain mitigation measures incorporated.

f) **No Impact:** The project is not within or in the vicinity of a habitat conservation plan.

MITIGATION MEASURES: The mitigation measures listed below would be applied to a future Use Permit application to develop an inn on the site. They would not be applied to the proposed Land Use Map change and rezoning.

BIO-1: Seasonal avoidance: No nesting bird surveys are recommended if activity occurs in the non-breeding season (September to January). If development is to occur during the breeding season (February to August), a pre-construction survey is recommended within 14 days of the onset of construction to ensure that no nesting birds will be disturbed during development.

BIO-2: If active special status bird nests are observed, no ground disturbance activities shall occur within a 100-foot exclusion zone. These exclusion zones may vary depending on species, habitat and level of disturbance. The exclusion zone shall remain in place around the active nest until all young are no longer dependent upon the nest. A biologist should monitor active nest sites weekly during the breeding season to ensure the buffer is sufficient to protect the nest sites from potential disturbance.

BIO-3: Construction shall occur during daylight hours to limit disturbing construction noise and minimize artificial lights.

BIO-4: Construction will ideally occur between September 1st and October 31 after the young have matured and prior to the bat hibernation period. If it is necessary to disturb potential bat roost sites between November 1 and August 31, pre-construction surveys should be performed by a qualified biologist 14 days prior to the onset if development activities. Pre-construction bat surveys involve surveying trees, rock outcrops, and buildings subject to construction for evidence of bat use (guano accumulation, or acoustic or visual detections). If evidence of bat use is found, then biologists shall conduct acoustic surveys under appropriate conditions using an acoustic detector, to determine whether a site is occupied.

BIO-5: If active bat roosts are observed, no ground disturbance activities shall occur within a minimum 50-foot exclusion zone. These exclusion zones may vary depending on species, habitat and level of disturbance. The exclusion zone shall remain in place around the active roost until all young are no longer dependent upon the roost.

BIO-6: Within two weeks prior to construction activities, project contractors will be trained by a qualified biologist in the identification of the frogs and salamanders that occur along the Mendocino County coast.

Workers will be trained to differentiate between special status and common species and instructed on actions and communications required to be conducted in the event that special status amphibians are observed during construction.

BIO-7: During ground disturbing activities, construction crews will begin each day with a visual search around the staging and impact area to detect the presence of amphibians.

BIO-8: During construction and debris removal, any wood stockpiles should be moved carefully by hand in order to avoid accidental crushing or other damage to amphibians.

BIO-9: If a rain event occurs during the ground disturbance period, all ground disturbing activities will cease for a period of 48 hours, starting after the rain stops. Prior to resuming construction activities, trained construction crew member(s) will examine the site for the presence of special status amphibians. If no special status amphibians are found during inspections, ground-disturbing activities may resume. If a special status amphibian is detected, construction crews will stop all ground disturbing work and will contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) or a qualified biologist. Clearance from CDFW will then be needed prior to reinitiating work. CDFW will need to be consulted and will need to be in agreement with protective measures needed for any potential special status amphibians.

BIO-10: A suitable buffer should be established between special status plant communities and proposed development. A RBA has been conducted and a buffer distance of 50ft was found to be suitable to protect the special status resources present. No construction or materials staging shall occur within 50ft of the special status plant communities identified and mapped as presumed ESHA. Coordination with CDFW for concurrence that 50ft is an appropriate buffer distance is recommended.

BIO-11: An existing cattle/safety fence runs along the edge of the bluff. The Mendocino coast paintbrush, and headland wallflower are behind this existing fence so these presumed ESHAs are not expected to be impacted by development. No construction, materials stockpiling, or materials disposal shall occur beyond the existing bluff fence.

BIO-12: Stage all building materials and construction vehicles in upland areas greater than 50 feet from all ESHAs.

BIO-13: Straw wattles shall be installed along the 50ft ESHA buffers for the presumed Coastal Act wetland and riparian area, separating the wetlands/riparian and their buffer zones from the construction related impact area. Orange construction fencing shall be paired with the straw wattles around the delineated wetland, but the fencing is not necessary for the other wattle locations since contractors are not likely to accidently encroach into these areas. No materials storage, heavy equipment use or other impacts shall occur within the wetlands area. Straw wattles shall be properly installed to intercept liquids leaving the construction area. All wattles and orange construction fencing shall be maintained in a functional manner through the duration of construction and until all disturbed soil is stabilized.

BIO-14: Standard Best Management Practices shall be employed to assure minimization of erosion resulting from construction. Ground disturbance shall be limited to the minimum necessary and disturbed soil areas shall be stabilized as soon as feasible. Areas of bare soil should be seeded with native erosion control seed mix and/or covered with biodegradable erosion control materials (e.g. coconut fiber, jute, weed free straw).

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **a Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation** on Biological Resources.

5.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

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

DISCUSSION: In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5, "historical resource" includes the following:

- A resource listed in or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (Pub. Res. Code § 5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4850 et seq.).

- A resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or identified as significant in an historical resource survey meeting the requirements section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code, shall be presumed to be historically or culturally significant. Public agencies must treat any such resource as significant unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant.

    - "Local register of historic resources" means a list of properties officially designated or recognized as historically significant by a local government pursuant to a local ordinance or resolution.

- Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California may be considered to be an historical resource, provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record. Generally, a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be "historically significant" if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources (Pub. Res. Code § 5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4852) including the following:

    - Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage; or

    - Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past; or

    - Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or

    - Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

- The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, not included in a local register of historical resources (pursuant to section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code), or identified in an historical resources survey (meeting the criteria in section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code) does not preclude a lead agency from determining that the resource may be an historical resource as defined in Public Resources Code sections 5020.1(j) or 5024.1.

    - "Historical resource" includes, but is not limited to, any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which is historically or archaeologically significant, or is significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California.

A project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. "Substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource" means physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of a historical resource would be materially impaired.

The significance of a historical resource is materially impaired when a project:

- Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for, inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources; or

- Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources pursuant to section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or its identification in a historical resources survey meeting the requirements of section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code, unless the public agency reviewing the effects of the project establishes by a preponderance of evidence that the resource is not historically or culturally significant; or

- Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources as determined by a lead agency for purposes of CEQA.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 establishes procedures for addressing determinations of historical resources on archaeological sites and subsequent treatment of the resource(s) in accordance with PRC Section 21083.2. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 establishes procedures for the treatment of Native American human remains in environmental documents. PRC Section 21082 establishes standards for accidental discovery of historical or unique archaeological resources during construction.

The California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) houses the Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD). BERD files provide information regarding non-archaeological resources in OHP's inventory. Each resource listed in BERD is assigned a status code, which indicates whether resources have been evaluated as eligible under certain criteria. This tool provides information to assist in identifying potentially historic resources throughout the County.[11]

a-c) **No Impact:** MCC chapter 22.12, the "Archaeological Ordinance", provides that any CDP application be referred to the Northwest Information Center at Sonoma State University for literature review and establishes the process by which the Archaeological Commission reviews projects and surveys to ensure that impacts to resources are avoided or mitigated. Future development of an inn on the property under a Coastal Development Use Permit would be subject to referral and review under the Archaeological Ordinance. An archaeological survey was conducted on the property in 2021 and 2022. No cultural resources were identified as a result of the survey. The survey was presented to the Mendocino County Archaeological Commission at their meeting on March 17, 2022. The Commission unanimously accepted the survey.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have a **Less than Significant Impact** on Cultural Resources.

5.6 ENERGY

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy, or wasteful use of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☐	☒

DISCUSSION: California Senate Bill (SB) 350, known as the Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act of 2015, sets annual targets for energy efficiency and renewable electricity aimed at reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. SB 350 requires the California Energy Commission to establish annual energy efficiency targets that will achieve a cumulative doubling of statewide energy saving and demand reductions in electricity and natural gas end uses by January 1, 2030. This mandate is one of the primary measures to help the state achieve its long-term climate goal of reducing GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality, adopted by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), *"lays out a path to achieve targets for carbon neutrality and reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels no later than 2045, as directed by Assembly Bill 1279."*[12]

Title 24, Part 11 of the California Code of Regulations establishes the California Green Building Standards Code, known as 'CALGreen'. The purpose of this code is to enhance the design and construction of buildings and encourage sustainable construction practices as they relate to planning and design, energy efficiency, water efficiency and conservation, materials conservation and resource efficiency, and environmental quality. Unless specifically exempt, the CALGreen standards apply to the planning, design,

[11] California Department of Parks and Recreation (2023). Office of Historic Preservation. *Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD)*. Retrieved from https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=30338.
[12] California Air Resources Board (2022). *2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality*. Retrieved from https://ww2.arb.ca.gov.

operation, construction, use, and occupancy of newly constructed buildings or structures throughout the state. Mandatory standards for energy efficiency are adopted by the California Energy Commission every three years. In 2021, the Commission adopted the 2022 Energy Code, which includes Building Energy Efficiency Standards. The Code *"encourages efficient electric heat pumps, establishes electric-ready requirements for new homes, expands solar photovoltaic and battery storage standards, strengthens ventilation standards, and more."*

Project factors that may influence energy impacts include the following:

- Energy consuming equipment and process to be used during construction, operation, or demolition, including the energy intensiveness of materials and equipment.
- Fuel type and end use of energy.
- Energy conservation equipment and design features to be implemented.
- Energy supplies that would serve the project, such as a utility company.
- Vehicle trips to be generated, including estimated energy consumed per trip.

Factors that may lessen energy impacts include those that decrease overall per capita energy consumption; decreased reliance on fossil fuels such as coal, natural gas, and oil; and increased reliance on renewable energy sources.

Mendocino County General Plan Policy RM-55, and RM-57 relate to energy, including Action Item RM-55.1 and RM-55.2.[13] Ukiah Public Utilities is the only municipal utility in Mendocino County. Most residents receive electric service from Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E).

a) **No Impact:** Future construction would be required to comply with applicable building regulations, including CALGreen standards. These standards would minimize inefficient use of energy. Future development is expected to follow standard construction methods.

b) **No Impact:** Future construction would be required to comply with applicable building regulations, including CALGreen standards. These standards would minimize inefficient use of energy. Future development is expected to follow standard construction methods.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **No Impact** on Energy.

5.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:	☐	☒	☐	☐
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☒	☐	☐
iv) Landslides?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐

[13] The County of Mendocino (2009). *General Plan*. Retrieved from https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/government/planning-building-services/plans/mendocino-county-general-plan.

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☐	☒

DISCUSSION: The vast majority of Mendocino County is underlain by bedrock of the Franciscan Formation. Thick soil development and landslides often cover the underlying bedrock throughout the county. Due to the weak and deformed nature of the Franciscan rocks, they are prone to deep weathering and development of thick overlying soils. Soil deposits in swales and on the flanks of slopes often contain substantial amounts of clay and weathered rock fragments up to boulder size. These soils can be unstable when wet and are prone to slides. Human activities that affect vegetation, slope gradients, and drainage processes can contribute to landslides and erosion.

Areas susceptible to erosion occur throughout Mendocino County where surface soils possess low-density and/or low-strength properties. Slopes are another factor in soil erosion – the greater the slope, the greater the erosion hazard, especially if the soil is bare. Soils on nine (9) percent slopes and greater have a moderate erosion hazard, and soils on slopes greater than fifteen (15) percent have a high erosion hazard.

In 1991, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Soil Conservation Service, in partnership with several other agencies, published the Soil Survey of Mendocino County, Eastern Part, and Trinity County, Southwestern Part, California. The survey assigns different soils to Map Unit numbers. In 2002, the accompanying Soil Survey of Mendocino County, California, Western Part was published.

The California Geological Survey (CGS) houses the web-based California Earthquake Hazards Zone Application (EQ Zapp), which allows a user to check whether a site is in an earthquake hazard zone.[14] The California Department of Conservation also houses a general-purpose map viewer that contains layers displaying locations and data related to the California Landslide Inventory, the Seismic Hazards Program, Earthquake Shaking Potential, Historic Earthquakes, and others.

Development can result in soil erosion or loss of topsoil if project activities result in deep slope rills, gullies, or unmanageable accumulation of sediment. Ground disturbing activities most often result in impacts, including grading. Soil can be exposed during construction activities and increase the potential for soil erosion to occur, especially during storm events. Impervious surface areas would not be prone to erosion or siltation because no soil is included in these areas but increased impervious surfaces may impact surrounding hydrology and result in erosion impacts nearby.

Lateral spreading often occurs on gentle slopes or flat terrain and consists of lateral extension accompanied by shear or tensile fracture. Lateral spreading is often cause by liquefaction, which in turn is triggered by rapid ground motion from earthquakes or artificial activities. Bedrock or soil resting on materials that liquefy can undergo fracturing and extension and may then subside, translate, rotate, disintegrate, or liquefy and flow.

Subsidence refers to broad-scale change in the elevation of land. Subsidence is commonly caused by groundwater extraction, oil extraction, underground reservoir pumping of gas, dissolution of limestone aquifers (sinkholes), collapse of a mine, drainage of organic soil, or initial wetting of dry soil (hydrocompaction). The US Geological Survey (USGS) regularly publishes information on land subsidence in California, including a map showing areas of land subsidence due to groundwater pumping, peat loss, and oil extraction.[15]

[14] California Department of Conservation (2021). California Geological Survey. *EQ Zapp: California Earthquake Hazards Zone Application*. Retrieved from https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/geohazards/eq-zapp.
[15] U.S. Geological Survey. Liquefaction Susceptibility. Retrieved from https://earthquake.usgs.gov/education/geologicmaps/liquefaction.php.

The Mendocino County Local Agency Management Plan establishes standards for on-site treatment of wastewater, including site evaluation, design, construction, and monitoring requirements. The Plan is administered by the Division of Environmental Health.

Unique geologic features are rocks or formations which:

- Are the best example of their kind locally or regionally; or
- Embody the characteristics of a geologic principle that is exclusive to the locality or region; or
- Provide a key piece of information important in geology or geologic history; or
- Are a "type locality" of a geologic feature.

Impacts to unique geologic features could include material impairment through destruction or alteration, including grading, rock hunting, human encroachment, or permanent covering of the feature.

a) **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated:** A Geotechnical Investigation was conducted for the project, which noted that no evidence of recent faulting was observed or shown in the vicinity on published geologic maps. The Investigation notes that structures should be designed and/or constructed to resist the effects of strong ground shaking (on the order of Modified Mercalli Intensity IX) in accordance with current building codes. Therefore, existing regulations are sufficient to prevent substantial adverse effects from strong seismic ground shaking. The Investigation also included a liquefaction analysis, which indicated that the potential for liquefaction at the site during an earthquake was moderate. The Investigation recommends that the structure be supported on drilled piers or spread footings into competent supporting soils or bedrock. The Investigation also noted recent evidence of bluff erosion, likely a small landslide, at the bluff edge southwest of the proposed building site. The Investigation recommended that structures and leach fields be a minimum of 50 feet from the landslide. Therefore, a mitigation measure that requires compliance with the Investigation's requirements would prevent significant impacts due to liquefaction and the bluff landslide.

b) **Less than Significant Impact:** The Geotechnical Investigation did not reveal any additional impacts related to unstable or expansive soils. The implementation of standard Best Management Practices for future development would prevent significant soil erosion or loss of topsoil in accordance with Mendocino County Code Section 16.30.070(B).

c) **Less than Significant Impact:** The Geotechnical Investigation did not reveal any additional impacts related to unstable or expansive soils. The implementation of standard Best Management Practices for future development would prevent significant soil erosion or loss of topsoil in accordance with Mendocino County Code Section 16.30.070(B).

d) **Less than Significant Impact:** The Geotechnical Investigation did not reveal any additional impacts related to unstable or expansive soils. The implementation of standard Best Management Practices for future development would prevent significant soil erosion or loss of topsoil in accordance with Mendocino County Code Section 16.30.070(B).

e) **Less than Significant Impact:** A Site Evaluation Report and supplemental feasibility letter was provided by a soil scientist which confirmed that the property can support a septic system for a 10-unit inn that complies with County Division of Environmental Health standards.

f) **No Impact:** No unique geological features are known at the site. An archaeological survey of the property was completed which did not discover any paleontological resources.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

GEO-1: Development shall comply with the recommendations within the Geotechnical Investigation dated May 4, 2020 and the Geotechnical Report Update dated April 24, 2025.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated** on Geology and Soils.

5.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

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

DISCUSSION: Title 14 CCR Section 15064.4 establishes specific guidelines for determining the significance of impacts from greenhouse gas emissions. Lead agencies may choose to quantify greenhouse gas emissions resulting from a project or rely on a qualitative analysis or performance-based standards.

Mendocino County Air Quality Management District (MCAQMD) has adopted CEQA thresholds of significance for criteria air pollutants and GHGs and issued updated CEQA guidelines to assist lead agencies in evaluating air quality impacts to determine if a project's individual emissions would be cumulatively considerable. According to MCAQMD, these CEQA thresholds of significance are the same as those which have been adopted by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) with noted exceptions.

MCAQMD has not adopted a construction related emissions threshold. For projects other than stationary sources, the operational threshold is 1,100 Metric Tons of CO2e per year or 4.5 Metric Tons of CO2e per SP (residents + employees) per year. For stationary sources, the operational threshold is 10,000 Metric Tons of CO2e per year.

The California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) is a tool that can be used to quantify ozone precursors, criteria pollutants, and greenhouse gas emissions from construction and operation of development in California. The model is published by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association.[16]

MCAQMD and Mendocino County have not adopted any plans specifically aimed at reducing GHG emissions. However, General Plan Policy RM-50 and associated action items address GHG emissions: California Climate Policies related to GHG emissions include but are not limited to SB 32, AB 32, AB 1493, SB 100, SB 350, SB 375, SB 743, SB 604, and SB 1383.

a-b) **Less than Significant Impact:** Using CalEEMod, construction of the project was estimated to generate 84 metric tons of $CO2_e$ per year, while operation of the project was estimated to generate 120 metric tons of $CO2_e$ per year. These values are below the thresholds set by MCAQMD.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **Less than Significant Impact** on Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

5.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐

[16] California Air Pollution Control Officers Association. (2022). *CalEEMod* (Version 2022.1). https://www.caleemod.com/.

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites complied pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Impair implementation of, or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☒	☐

DISCUSSION: California Health and Safety Code states: "Hazardous material" means any material that, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment. "Hazardous materials" include, but are not limited to, hazardous substances, hazardous waste, and any material that a handler or the unified program agency has a reasonable basis for believing that it would be injurious to the health and safety of persons or harmful to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment (California Health and Safety Code Section25501 (m)).

Mendocino County has adopted a Hazardous Waste Management Plan to guide future decisions by the County and the incorporated cities about hazardous waste management. Policies in this General Plan emphasize source reduction and recycling of hazardous wastes and express a preference for onsite hazardous waste treatment over offsite treatment. The Hazardous Waste Management Plan proposed a number of hazardous waste programs and set forth criteria to guide the siting of new offsite hazardous waste facilities. However, to date, no facilities have been cited in the county. In 1997, the County Division of Environmental Health assumed responsibility for administering hazardous waste generation and treatment regulations. Solid Waste and Hazardous Waste and Materials Management Policy DE-203 states: *All development projects shall include plans and facilities to store and manage solid waste and hazardous materials and wastes in a safe and environmentally sound manner.*

The California Air Resources Board classifies asbestos as a known human carcinogen. Asbestos of any type is considered hazardous and may cause asbestosis and lung cancer if inhaled, becoming permanently lodged in body tissues. Exposure to asbestos has also been shown to cause stomach and other cancers. Asbestos is the general name for a group of rock-forming minerals that consist of extremely strong and durable fibers. When asbestos fibers are disturbed, such as by grading and construction activities, they are released into the air where they remain for a long period of time. Naturally occurring asbestos is an issue of concern in Mendocino County, which contains areas where asbestos-containing rocks are found. The presence of ultramafic rocks indicates the possible existence of asbestos mineral groups. Ultramafic rocks contain 90 percent or more of dark-colored, iron-magnesium-silicate minerals. Ultramafic rocks may be partially or completely altered to a rock known as serpentinite, more commonly called serpentine.

The Mendocino County Air Quality Management District enforces state regulations to reduce the effects of development projects involving construction sites and unpaved roads in areas tested and determined by a state-registered geologist to contain naturally occurring asbestos. Serpentine and ultramafic rocks are common in the eastern belt of the Franciscan Formation in Mendocino County. Small, localized areas of serpentine do occur in the coastal belt of the Franciscan Formation, but they are significantly less abundant.

Mendocino County's aviation system is composed of airports, privately owned aircraft of various types, privately operated aircraft service facilities, and publicly and privately operated airport service facilities. Most aircraft are privately owned, small single or twin-engine planes flown primarily for personal business. Six public use airports in Mendocino County provide for regional and interregional needs of commercial and general aviation. Actions involving areas around airports will continue to be evaluated for consistency with

the County's Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan and applicable federal regulations. Mendocino County's Airport Policy DE-167 states: *"Land use decisions and development should be carried out in a manner that will reduce aviation-related hazards (including hazards to aircraft, and hazards posed by aircraft)".*

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection divides the County into fire severity zones. These maps are used to develop recommendations for local land use agencies and for general planning purposes.

a) **Less than Significant Impact:** Some hazardous materials may be used during construction, such as paint, oil, and petroleum products, but these impacts would be intermittent and temporary. Some hazardous materials may be used routinely during operation of the development, such as cleaning products in the housekeeping structure, but the amount and concentration of these materials are not expected to create significant impacts to the public or the environment.

b) **Less than Significant Impact:** Some hazardous materials may be used during construction, such as paint, oil, and petroleum products, but these impacts would be intermittent and temporary. Some hazardous materials may be used routinely during operation of the development, such as cleaning products in the housekeeping structure, but the amount and concentration of these materials are not expected to create significant impacts to the public or the environment.

c) **No Impact:** The site is not within one quarter mile of a school.

d) **No Impact:** The site is not on any list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

e) **No Impact:** The site is within two (2) miles of the Little River Airport, but the site is not within the planning area of the Little River Airport within the Mendocino County Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

f) **No Impact:** The project would not interfere with an emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan because it would not physically block any emergency evacuation routes. As shown in the submitted site plan, a theoretical 10-unit inn development could include a hammerhead "T" turnaround within the parking area for emergency vehicles to access the site.

g) **Less than Significant Impact:** The property is within the Low Density Intermix Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) zones. This means that the area has lower-density housing mingled with undeveloped wildland vegetation. The property is within the jurisdiction of the Mendocino Fire Protection District and CAL FIRE. The property is within a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone as mapped by CAL FIRE. The project application was referred to those agencies, who did not respond with any comments. The project is expected to conform to CAL FIRE's State Minimum Fire Safe Regulations, including by providing a hammerhead "T" turnaround, adequately wide driveways paved with asphalt, and maintaining defensible space around structures.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **a Less than Significant Impact** on Hazards or Hazardous Materials.

5.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:	☐	☐	☒	☐
i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☒	☐	☐

DISCUSSION: Regulatory agencies include the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and the North Coast Regional Quality Control Board (NCRWQCB). The State Water Resources Control Board is responsible for implementing water quality standards in California. Water Code Section 13050(d) states: *"Waste includes sewage and any and all other waste substances, liquid, solid, gaseous, or radioactive, associated with human habitation, or of human or animal origin, or from any producing, manufacturing, or processing operation, including waste placed within containers of whatever nature prior to, and for purposes of, disposal."* Typical activities and uses that affect water quality include, but are not limited to, discharge of process wastewater from factories, confined animal facilities, construction sites, sewage treatment facilities, and material handling areas which drain into storm drains. Certain activities may require a Construction General Permit from SWRCB.

Water Code Section 1005.1 defines groundwater as *water beneath the surface of the ground, whether or not flowing through known and definite channels*. Both surface water and groundwater define a watershed, as they move from higher to lower elevations. In Mendocino County, groundwater is the main source for municipal and individual domestic water systems outside of the Ukiah Valley and contributes significantly to irrigation. The County's groundwater is found in two distinct geologic settings: the inland valleys and the mountainous areas. There are six identified major groundwater basins in Mendocino County. Groundwater recharge is the replacement of water in the groundwater aquifer. Recharge occurs in the form of precipitation, surface runoff that later enters the ground, and irrigation. Specific information regarding recharge areas for Mendocino County's groundwater basins is not generally available, but recharge for inland groundwater basins comes primarily from infiltration of precipitation and intercepted runoff in stream channels, and from permeable soils along the margins of valleys. Recharge for coastal groundwater basins takes place in fractured and weathered bedrock, coastal terraces, and along recent alluvial deposits and bedrock formations. If recharge areas are protected from major modification such as paving, building and gravel removal, it is anticipated that continued recharge will re-supply groundwater reservoirs.

Chapter 4.13 of the Mendocino County Coastal Element, Sustainability Policy Action number S-5.1, states new projects that *create or replace 2,500 square feet or more of impervious area shall implement site design measures to reduce stormwater runoff and increase groundwater recharge*. Mendocino County Code Title 16 establishes water and sewage regulations. It is primarily the responsibility of the Division of Environmental Health (EH) the implement these regulations, including permitting wells and septic systems. Chapter 16.30 establishes stormwater runoff pollution prevention procedures. The purpose of Chapter 16.30 is to *"protect and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of citizens, and protect and enhance the water quality of watercourses, water bodies, and wetlands in a manner pursuant to and consistent with the Federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1251 et seq.), and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (California Water Code Section 13000 et seq.) by reducing pollutants in storm water discharges to the maximum extent practicable and by prohibiting non-storm water discharges to the storm drainage system."*

The National Flood Hazard Layer maintained by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) can be used to review project impacts from flooding. The Department of Water Resources Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD) reviews and approves inundation maps prepared by licensed civil engineers and submitted by dam owners for hazardous dams and appurtenant structures. These maps are based on a hypothetical failure of a dam or appurtenant structure. DSOD maintains a web map that displays this information.

Projects may be subject to applicable regulations found in MCC Chapter 16.30. Section 16.30.040 prohibits elicit discharges. Section 16.30.070 requires implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to the maximum extent practical for reducing pollutants in stormwater.

a, e) **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated:** Future construction could involve earthwork activities, such as grading, excavation, and fill soils. Stormwater runoff from construction is a common pollutant to receiving waters, mostly due to sediment. Increased sediment in receiving waters could degrade water quality. The use of paint, solvents, oil, petroleum products, concrete and other construction materials could also be released and transported to receiving waters by stormwater runoff. As noted in the Biological Resources section above, Best Management Practices are recommended to avoid discharging pollutants into receiving waters, such as by installing straw wattles during construction along the edge of sensitive habitat buffers. As such, the same mitigation measures outlined in the Biological Resources section would mitigate the potential impact on water quality.

b) **Less than Significant Impact:** An existing well on the subject property currently supplies water to the five (5) visitor-serving units on the Van Damme property to the south (APN 121-280-16). The applicant originally submitted a Proof of Water test conducted in October 2018 which analyzed a proposed six (6) bedroom residence (see attachment E). The test report notes that a total of 850 gallons per day (gpd) of water is provided to the visitor-serving uses on the Van Damme property from the well on the subject property. The test report determined that a minimum of 2,960 gpd must be demonstrated to accommodate the originally proposed six (6) bedroom residence plus the existing visitor-serving units on the Van Damme property plus outdoor water use. The well pumped at a flow rate of 2.2 gallons per minute (gpm) during the test, or 3,168 gpd.

The applicant submitted a supplemental letter in 2024 addressing the additional water well production needs of a 10-unit inn design (see attachment I). The supplemental letter estimated that the new water demand of the site would be 1,200 gpd for ten (10) visitor-serving units, 50 gpd for patio wastewater, and 100 gpd for outdoor use for a total of 1,350 gpd. The supplemental letter estimated the existing water demand of the Van Damme property to be 700 gpd, for a total demand of 2,050 gpd for both properties. The letter states that according to Division of Environmental Health guidelines, minimum water production requirements for the creation of a parcel and for second residential units are typically 1.6 times the assigned daily use. Therefore, the total required well production for both properties was determined to be 3,280 gpd. Given the previously determined flow rate of 3,168 gpd, an additional 112 gpd would be necessary to accommodate a 10-unit inn. The letter notes that the properties currently have 12,500 gallons of water storage, with an additional 5,000 gallons of storage proposed for a total of 17,500 gallons. Given the substantial water storage capacity, the letter asserts that the properties have the capacity to serve a 10-unit inn in addition to existing uses.

Use of the existing well and additional water storage installation would not increase groundwater extraction significantly beyond existing conditions.

c) **Less than Significant Impact:** Surface drainage from the project site flows to the stream along the northern property boundary or to by sheet flow to the bluff edge. Development of a 10-unit inn would not require the alteration of the course of a stream or river. Development would increase impervious surfaces through the construction of inn units, other structures, and the asphalt driveway. Due to the amount of grading that would occur, an erosion control plan would be required to minimize the potential for soil erosion, which would be subject to the review and approval of the County Building Division. The property is not within a flood zone. Given the slope of the property, lack of flood zones, and proximity to the bluff edge, runoff is not expected to result in flooding.

d) **No Impact:** The project site is not within a flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zone.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None beyond those discussed in the Biological Resources section.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **a Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation** on Hydrology and Water Quality.

5.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☒	☐	☐

DISCUSSION: All lands within the unincorporated portions of Mendocino County are regulated by the General Plan and zoning ordinance with regards to land use. Several localized plans also regulate land uses in the County, including the Mendocino Town Plan, Ukiah Valley Area Plan, Gualala Town Plan, and community-specific policies contained within the General Plan. Discretionary projects are referred to several agencies with jurisdiction over aspects of the project as well as other interested parties.

a) **No Impact:** Development would be limited to the subject property and therefore would not physically divide an established community.

b) **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation:** The General Plan contains policies and regulations aimed at avoiding or mitigating environmental impacts. The Project has been determined to be consistent with applicable regulations as described elsewhere in this document. The same mitigation measures discussed elsewhere in this document would also apply to this document.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None beyond those described elsewhere in this document.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **a Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation** on Land Use and Planning.

5.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

DISCUSSION: The Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) of 1975 provides a comprehensive surface mining and reclamation policy to assure that adverse environmental impacts are minimized, and mined lands are reclaimed to a usable condition. SMARA also encourages the production, conservation, and protection of the state's mineral resources. SMARA requires the State Mining and Geology Board to adopt policies for the reclamation of mined lands and the conservation of mineral resources. SMARA also directs the State Geologist to identify and map non-fuel mineral resources of the state to show where economically significant mineral deposits occur and where they are likely to occur based upon the best available scientific data. No SMARA classification has yet occurred in Mendocino County.

The California Division of Mine Reclamation houses the Mines Online database, which maps the location and provides access to documents for several mines in Mendocino County. The most predominant minerals found in Mendocino County are aggregate resources, primarily sand and gravel. Three sources of aggregate materials are present in Mendocino County: quarries, instream gravel, and terrace gravel deposits. The demand for aggregate is typically related to the size of the population, and construction activities, with demand fluctuating from year to year in response to major construction projects, large development activity, and overall economic conditions. After the completion of U.S. 101 in the late 1960s, the bulk of aggregate production and use shifted primarily to residential and related construction. However, since 1990, use has begun to shift back toward highway construction. However, no specific sites have been

identified in the General Plan or Coastal Element as locally important mineral resource recovery sites beyond the general identification of quarries, instream gravel, and terrace gravel operations.

a) **No Impact:** The site does not contain any known mineral resources of value.

b) **No Impact:** No locally important mineral resources are known to occur on the project site.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **No Impact** on Mineral Resources.

5.13 NOISE

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) For a project located within the vicinity of private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

DISCUSSION: Acceptable levels of noise vary depending on the land use. In any one location, the noise level will vary over time, from the lowest background or ambient noise level to temporary increases caused by traffic or other sources. State and federal standards have been established as guidelines for determining the compatibility of a particular use with its noise environment. Mendocino County relies principally on standards in its Noise Element, its Zoning Ordinance, and other County ordinances, and the Mendocino County Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan to evaluate noise-related impacts of development. Land uses considered noise-sensitive are those in which noise can adversely affect what people are doing on the land. Churches, schools, and certain kinds of outdoor recreation are also usually considered noise sensitive.

Major noise sources in Mendocino County consist of highway and local traffic, railroad operations, airports, commercial and industrial uses, recreation, and community facilities. Highways with traffic that generates significant noise include State Route 101, 1, 20, 128, 162, 175, and 253. The only active railroad is the Skunk Train which runs between Fort Bragg and Willits. Public Airports include Ukiah Municipal, Willits Municipal (Ells Field), Round Valley Airport, Boonville Airport, Little River Airport, and Ocean Ridge Airport (Gualala). Major industrial sources of noise include lumber mills and timber production facilities. Other noise sources are identified in the General Plan. General Plan Policy DE-98, DE-99, and DE-105 relate to noise, including Action Item DE-99.2.[17]

a) **Less than Significant Impact:** Future development of an inn would create temporary noise during construction, but ongoing use after construction is not expected to create significant noise beyond the standards outlined in the General Plan and the Exterior Noise Limit Standards found in Appendix C of the County Code. Existing regulations and previously discussed mitigation measures would restrict noise, such as the requirement that construction occur during daylight hours.

b) **Less than Significant Impact:** Any groundborne vibration would be intermittent and temporary during future construction.

[17] The County of Mendocino (2009). *General Plan*. Retrieved from https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/government/planning-building-services/plans/mendocino-county-general-plan.

c) **No Impact:** The site is within two (2) miles of the Little River Airport, but the site is not within the planning area of the Little River Airport within the Mendocino County Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have a **Less than Significant Impact** on Noise.

5.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (e.g., by proposing new homes and/or businesses) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

DISCUSSION: The most recent census for Mendocino County was in 2020, with an estimated population of 87,497. The county has undergone cycles of population boom followed by periods of slower growth. For example, the county population increased by approximately 25 percent between 1950 and 1960, but barely grew from 1960 to 1970. Between 1990 and 2000, the population of Mendocino County increased 7.4 percent, a much slower rate of growth than the 20 percent increase from 1980 to 1990. Population growth slowed further from 2000 to 2007, increasing only 4.6 percent.

Mendocino County's Housing Element is designed to facilitate the development of housing adequate to meet the needs of all County residents. The Mendocino Council of Government's (MCOG) Regional Housing Needs Plan assigned the County a production goal of 2,552 housing unit for the unincorporated area between 2009 and 2014. Goals and policies were set forth in order to facilitate the development of these housing units at a range of sizes and types to address this need.

a) **Less than Significant Impact:** The project would not induce substantial population growth because it would allow development of visitor-accommodation uses, which would not increase the long-term population. If additional staff are hired at a 10-unit inn, some population growth may occur, but only a less-than-significant number.

b) **No Impact:** The project would not displace people or housing because it would not involve the demolition of housing and would not cease operation of any existing housing.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **a Less than Significant Impact** on Population and Housing.

5.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

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

WOULD THE PROJECT result in substantial adverse Physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Parks?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐

DISCUSSION: The Mendocino County Office of Emergency Services (OES) is the primary local coordination agency for emergencies and disasters affecting residents, public infrastructure, and government operations in the Mendocino County Operational Area. Fire protection services are provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE) or one of several local fire districts. Police protection is provided by the County Sheriff, California Highway Patrol, or city police. Several school districts and parks are located throughout the County. Other public facilities include roads, libraries, water and sewage treatment plants, airports, and animal control facilities. Projects may have an impact if they would cumulatively contribute to significant increased demand for public services such that new facilities would be required. General Plan Policy DE-179 establishes standards for the provision of parkland in the county. The amount of sufficient park space is determined by population.[18]

a-e) **Less than Significant Impact:** Future development would not result in the need for new or physically altered government facilities, including fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, or other public facilities because it would not result in substantial unplanned population growth. The lack of substantial population growth means that the demand for such services would not increase beyond existing conditions.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **a Less than Significant Impact** on Public Services.

5.16 RECREATION

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐

DISCUSSION: The County of Mendocino manages a variety of public recreation areas including Low Gap Park in Ukiah, Bower Park in Gualala, Mill Creek Park in Talmage, Faulkner Park in Boonville, Indian Creek Park and Campground in Philo, and the Lion's Club Park in Redwood Valley, all of which are operated by the Mendocino County Cultural Services Agency. Additionally, the County is host to a variety of state parks, reserves, and other state protected areas used for the purpose of recreation, with thirteen (13) locations along the coast and eight (8) in the inland areas.

a) **Less than Significant Impact:** Future development may cause more visitors to use nearby recreational facilities, such as Van Damme State Park. According to a Transportation Assessment submitted by the applicant, occupancy data from 11 nearby visitor-serving facilities *"indicate that the highest observed occupancy over any month was 66.9 percent of rooms occupied in December 2021. Excluding 2020 due to the effects of COVID-19, the average occupancy rate of rooms at the 11 properties was about 60 percent. The occupancy data indicates that throughout the course of the year, as well as even in peak months,*

[18] The County of Mendocino (2009). *General Plan*. Retrieved from https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/government/planning-building-services/plans/mendocino-county-general-plan.

substantial additional lodging capacity exists along the Mendocino County coast". Therefore, the proposed inn would more likely redistribute existing lodging demand. As such, the use of nearby recreational facilities would not substantially increase. The project would also include the development of a public access trail from the highway to the bluff edge, which may redistribute additional recreational demand onto the subject property.

b) **Less than Significant Impact:** The project would include the development of a public access trail from the highway to the bluff edge, which would provide passive recreational opportunities to the public, such as hiking. However, as discussed throughout this document, the development of an access trail would not result in significant environmental impacts.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **a Less than Significant Impact** on Recreation.

5.17 TRANSPORTATION

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

DISCUSSION: General Plan Policy DE-131, DE-148, DE-149, and DE-157 relate to transportation, including Action Item DE-138.1.[19] The Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) most recently adopted a Regional Transportation Plan on April 7, 2022. The Regional Transportation Plan is a long-range planning document that provides a vision of regional transportation goals, policies, objectives, and strategies. These may be relevant to individual projects when conducting environmental review.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 recommends *"specific considerations for evaluating a project's transportation impacts. Generally, vehicle miles traveled is the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. For the purposes of this section, "vehicle miles traveled" refers to the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project. Other relevant considerations may include the effects of the project on transit and non-motorized travel."* This section details appropriate methods for determining the significance of transportation impacts.

According to the 2018 Office of Planning and Research (OPR) Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA, *"many local agencies have developed screening thresholds to indicate when detailed analysis is needed. Absent substantial evidence indicating that a project would generate a potentially significant level of VMT, or inconsistency with a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) or general plan, projects that generate or attract fewer than 110 trips per day generally may be assumed to cause a less-than-significant transportation impact."*[20] The 2010 MCOG Travel Demand Forecasting Model estimates daily trip generation values for various land uses and geographic areas in Mendocino County and may be used to assist in determining whether projects exceed the screening threshold.[21]

The Mendocino County Department of Transportation (DOT) is responsible for the maintenance and operation of County maintained roads, bridges, and related features. The County Road and Development Standards apply to road improvements, project-related improvements in subdivisions, and other land development projects that require County approval. On state highways under CALTRANS jurisdiction, the Highway Design Manual establishes policies and procedures that guide state highway design functions.

[19] The County of Mendocino (2009). *General Plan*. Retrieved from https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/government/planning-building-services/plans/mendocino-county-general-plan.
[20] State of California. Governor's Office of Planning and Research. (2018). *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA*.
[21] Mendocino Council of Governments. (2010). *Final Model Development Report: MCOG Travel Demand Forecasting Model*.

Mendocino County Code Section 17-52, 53, and 54 establish lot design, configuration, access, and private road requirements for subdivisions.

a-c) **Less than Significant Impact:** Caltrans provided comments on both the LCP amendment and Coastal Development Use Permit applications related to this project. When commenting on the LCP amendment in 2022, Caltrans noted that *"there is a two-way left turn lane on Route 1 that transitions to a double-yellow centerline across the parcel frontage, which would be expected to affect the development of a new road approach (driveway), if one is desired."* Caltrans requested the opportunity to comment on any future development of the subject parcel, and noted that *"at that time, Caltrans will require additional details regarding ingress/egress, expected guest occupancy, hours of operation, etc."*

When commenting on the Use Permit application in 2023, Caltrans noted that they do not support a new access to the subject parcel due to sight distance requirements being difficult to meet along the subject parcel's frontage. This is consistent with the applicant's intent to share driveway access with the adjacent parcel to the south. Caltrans noted that the proposed shared driveway meets their standards for a commercial road approach. The access was most recently repaved in 2016. Caltrans requested that the applicant obtain an encroachment permit to formally recognize the shared ownership and future maintenance responsibility of the existing access but did not request any additional information as noted in the 2022 letter.

Comments from the Coastal Commission noted that the County should analyze the *"range of additional traffic [that] could be generated as a result of the proposed density increase from the current zoning of RR to *1C"*. According to the Mendocino Council of Government (MCOG) 2010 Travel Demand Forecasting Model, a hotel/motel/resort is expected to generate 8.17 trips per room. This value was sourced from the ITE Trip Generation Manual. Therefore, the increased density would be expected to create about 82 trips per day.

According to the Office of Planning & Research's 2018 Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA, *"absent substantial evidence indicating that a project would generate a potentially significant level of VMT, or inconsistency with a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) or general plan, projects that generate or attract fewer than 110 trips per day generally may be assumed to cause a less-than-significant transportation impact."* Therefore, staff would expect the project to generate a less-than-significant number of new trips per day within a CEQA context.

The applicant submitted a Transportation Assessment dated October 3, 2025. The assessment noted that new lodging land uses typically *"result in a redistribution of lodging demand, similar to other retail/goods and services land uses; if this is the case, then the trips to and from the proposed project are not new vehicle trips – rather, they are trips that would have been made regardless of the project and thus the project would have no effect on [Vehicle Miles Traveled]."* To confirm this presumption, the assessment reviewed Smith Travel Research occupancy data and Replica database trip length data. Based on those sources, the assessment concluded that *"the proposed project would not generate net new regional trips, and the trips coming to/from the project site would tend to be the same length or shorter than they otherwise would be. Therefore, the project's effect on VMT is expected to be a net reduction in VMT at the regional level, and the project's VMT impact is less-than-significant."*

Comments from the Coastal Commission also noted that *"the County should specify how left-turn movements against oncoming traffic along the highway can occur without compromising safety, traffic flow, and circulation"*, and that the traffic analysis *"should identify any required roadway improvements or traffic calming measures needed to accommodate the proposed rezone within this LCPA."*

Vehicles travelling northbound on State Route 1 must cross oncoming traffic to access the project site's shared driveway. The speed limit in this area is thirty-five (35) miles per hour. The nearest intersection is Little River Airport Road (CR 404). According to the 2008 State Route 1 Corridor Study Update, Little River Airport Road operated at Level of Service A. Between 2002-2006, one (1) collision occurred at this intersection for a rate of 0.07 collisions per million vehicles entering the intersection, which was below the statewide average of 0.22. Along the segment of State Route 1 between Little River Airport Road and Van Damme State Park, two (2) collisions occurred between 2002-2006 for a rate of 0.3 collisions per million vehicle miles, which was below the statewide average of 1.2. The Corridor Study Update recommended that a southbound left turn lane be installed at the Little River Airport Road intersection.

According to the 2024 State Route 1 Existing Conditions Traffic Highway Capacity Analysis, the Little River Airport Road intersection operated at level of service B. The nearest studied

roadway segment from Albion-Little River Road to Little River Airport Road operated at level of service A. 2014-2023

Comments from the Coastal Commission also noted that *"it will be especially important to address how vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian activity to and from the subject site could be accommodated without adversely impacting traffic and circulation."*

Bicycles are expected to use the existing shoulders along State Route 1. Without the need for improvements to State Route 1, cyclists could continue to use the existing shoulders as before. The most likely source of pedestrian activity to and from the site would be other nearby visitor accommodation uses, such as the Little River Inn, or public areas like Van Damme State Park. Currently, there are little to no sidewalks and no crosswalks in the area. There is a pedestrian warning sign just across the street from the subject property. The submitted Transportation Assessment also made the following recommendation:

The public access trail connection to Highway 1 is located near the existing Little River Market convenience store. It is likely that the public may desire to walk between the trailhead and the market, which would need to take place within the State right-of-way. Given the lack of pedestrian facilities, it is recommended that that project applicant work with the County and Caltrans to establish a more formal connection between compatible land uses to ensure the safe and efficient circulation of nonmotorized travelers.

Given the low number of new trips expected to be generated by the development of a 10-unit inn and the lack of comment from Caltrans, it is expected that turning movements could be made safely and that future highway improvements could be made without adversely impacting traffic and circulation.

d) **Less than Significant Impact:** The project would not result in inadequate emergency access because it would not physically block any emergency evacuation routes. As shown in the submitted site plan, a theoretical 10-unit inn development could include a hammerhead "T" turnaround within the parking area for emergency vehicles to access the site.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **a Less than Significant Impact** on Transportation.

5.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code §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 §5020.1(k)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code §5024.1? In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code §5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☐	☐	☒	☐

DISCUSSION: According to Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21074, "Tribal cultural resources" are either of the following:

- Sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either of the following:
    - Included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources.
    - Included in a local register of historical resources as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 5020.1. (*"a list of properties officially designated or recognized as historically significant by a local government pursuant to a local ordinance or resolution."*)
- A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Section 5024.1 (*(1) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patters of California's history and cultural heritage; (2) Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past; (3) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; (4) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history)*. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Section 5024.1 for the purposes of this paragraph, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.
- A cultural landscape that meets the criteria of subdivision (a) is a tribal cultural resource to the extent that the landscape is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape.
- A historical resource described in Section 21084.1, a unique archaeological resource as defined in subdivision (g) of Section 21083.2, or a "nonunique archaeological resource" as defined in subdivision (h) or Section 21083.2 may also be a tribal cultural resource if it conforms with the criteria of subdivision (a).

PRC Section 5020.1(k) defines a "local register of historical resources" as *"a list of properties officially designated or recognized as historically significant by a local government pursuant to a local ordinance or resolution."*

PRC Section 5024.1(c) establishes the following: *"A resource may be listed as a historical resource in the California Register if it meets any of the following National Register of Historic Places criteria:*

- *Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage.*
- *Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past.*
- *Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values.*
- *Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history."*

a) **Less than Significant Impact:** MCC chapter 22.12, the "Archaeological Ordinance", provides that any CDP application be referred to the Northwest Information Center at Sonoma State University for literature review and establishes the process by which the Archaeological Commission reviews projects and surveys to ensure that impacts to resources are avoided or mitigated. Future development of an inn on the property under a Coastal Development Use Permit would be subject to referral and review under the Archaeological Ordinance. An archaeological survey was conducted on the property in 2021 and 2022. No cultural resources were identified as a result of the survey. The survey was presented to the Mendocino County Archaeological Commission at their meeting on March 17, 2022. The Commission unanimously accepted the survey. The project application was referred to three local tribes, including the Cloverdale Rancheria, Redwood Valley Rancheria, and Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians. The tribes did not respond.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have a **Less than Significant Impact** on Tribal Cultural Resources.

5.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

DISCUSSION: Public sewer systems in Mendocino County are provided by cities, special districts, and some private water purveyors. There are 13 major wastewater systems in the county, four of which primarily serve the incorporated cities, but also serve some unincorporated areas. Sewage collected by the Brooktrails Township Community Services District and Meadowbrook Manor Sanitation District is treated at the City of Willits Wastewater Treatment Plant. The City of Ukiah's Wastewater Treatment Plant also processes wastewater collected by the Ukiah Valley Sanitation District. Sewage disposal in the remainder of the county is generally handled by private onsite facilities, primarily septic tank and leach field systems, although alternative engineered wastewater systems may be used.

Solid waste management in Mendocino County has undergone a significant transformation from waste disposal in landfills supplemented by transfer stations to a focus on transfer stations and waste stream diversion. These changes have responded to rigorous water quality and environmental laws, particularly the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (AB 939). The Act required each city and county to divert 50 percent of its waste stream from landfill disposal by the year 2000 through source reduction, recycling, composting, and other programs. Chapter 3 (Development Element) of the Mendocino County General Plan (2009) notes there are no remaining operating landfills in Mendocino County, and as a result, solid waste generated within the County is exported for disposal to the Potrero Hills Landfill in Solano County. The Potrero Hills Landfill has a maximum permitted throughput of 4,330 tons per day and a remaining capacity of 13.872 million cubic yards and is estimated to remain in operation until February 2048.

Mendocino County's Development Goal DE-21 (Solid Waste) states: *Reduce solid waste sent to landfills by reducing waste, reusing materials, and recycling waste.* Solid Waste and Hazardous Waste and Material Management Policy DE-201 states the County's waste management plan *shall include programs to increase recycling and reuse of materials to reduce landfilled waste.* Mendocino County's Environmental Health Division regulates and inspects more than 50 solid waste facilities in Mendocino County, including: 5 closed/inactive municipal landfills, 3 wood-waste disposal sites, 2 composting facilities, and 11 transfer stations.

a) **Less than Significant Impact:** The project would utilize an existing well for water supply and an existing power pole for electricity. Additional distribution lines would be installed underground below or near the proposed driveway. A large septic system would be installed to serve the development. As discussed throughout this document, these structures would not result in significant environmental impacts.

b) **Less than Significant Impact:** An existing well on the subject property currently supplies water to the five (5) visitor-serving units on the Van Damme property to the south (APN 121-280-16). The applicant originally submitted a Proof of Water test conducted in October 2018 which analyzed a proposed six (6) bedroom residence (see attachment E). The test report notes that a total of 850 gallons per day (gpd) of water is provided to the visitor-serving uses on the Van Damme property from the well on the subject property. The test report determined that a

minimum of 2,960 gpd must be demonstrated to accommodate the originally proposed six (6) bedroom residence plus the existing visitor-serving units on the Van Damme property plus outdoor water use. The well pumped at a flow rate of 2.2 gallons per minute (gpm) during the test, or 3,168 gpd.

The applicant submitted a supplemental letter in 2024 addressing the additional water well production needs of a 10-unit inn design (see attachment I). The supplemental letter estimated that the new water demand of the site would be 1,200 gpd for ten (10) visitor-serving units, 50 gpd for patio wastewater, and 100 gpd for outdoor use for a total of 1,350 gpd. The supplemental letter estimated the existing water demand of the Van Damme property to be 700 gpd, for a total demand of 2,050 gpd for both properties. The letter states that according to Division of Environmental Health guidelines, minimum water production requirements for the creation of a parcel and for second residential units are typically 1.6 times the assigned daily use. Therefore, the total required well production for both properties was determined to be 3,280 gpd. Given the previously determined flow rate of 3,168 gpd, an additional 112 gpd would be necessary to accommodate a 10-unit inn. The letter notes that the properties currently have 12,500 gallons of water storage, with an additional 5,000 gallons of storage proposed for a total of 17,500 gallons. Given the substantial water storage capacity, the letter asserts that the properties have the capacity to serve a 10-unit inn in addition to existing uses.

Use of the existing well and additional water storage installation would provide adequate water supply.

c) **No Impact:** The site is not within a sanitation district or the jurisdiction of any other wastewater service provider

d) **Less than Significant Impact:** Some solid waste would be generated by reasonably foreseeable future development of a 10 unit inn. The nearest transfer stations are approximately nine (9±) miles north in Caspar and eight (8) miles south in Albion, which transport waste to the Potrero Hills Landfill in Solano County, which is expected to remain in operation until 2048. Therefore, incremental contributions to solid waste throughput due to development would be minimal.

e) **Less than Significant Impact:** Solid waste generated by future development is expected to comply with applicable regulations, including the California Integrated Waste Management Act and Mendocino County Solid Waste Division.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **a Less than Significant Impact** on Utilities and Service Systems.

5.20 WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, **WOULD THE PROJECT:**	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a	☐	☐	☐	☒

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, **WOULD THE PROJECT:**	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage challenges?				

DISCUSSION: The County of Mendocino County adopted a *Mendocino County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan* (County EOP) on September 13, 2016, under Resolution Number 16-119. As noted on the County's website, the County EOP, which complies with local ordinances, state law, and stated and federal emergency planning guidance, serves as the primary guide for coordinating and responding to all emergencies and disasters within the County. The purpose of the County EOP is to "*facilitate multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional coordination during emergency operations, particularly between Mendocino County, local and tribal governments, special districts as well as state and Federal agencies*" (County of Mendocino – Plans and Publications, 2019).

a) **Less than Significant Impact:** The project would not impair an emergency response plan or evacuation plan because it would not physically block any emergency evacuation routes. As shown in the submitted site plan, a theoretical 10-unit inn development could include a hammerhead "T" turnaround within the parking area for emergency vehicles to access the site.

b) **Less than Significant Impact:** The property is within the Low Density Intermix Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) zones. This means that the area has lower-density housing mingled with undeveloped wildland vegetation. The property is within the jurisdiction of the Mendocino Fire Protection District and CAL FIRE. The property is within a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone as mapped by CAL FIRE. The project application was referred to those agencies, who did not respond with any comments. Although CAL FIRE did not formally respond to application referral, Planning & Building Services staff contacted CAL FIRE staff on August 20, 2026 to determine whether CAL FIRE would review the theoretical 10-unit inn plans for compliance with State Fire Safe Regulations. CAL FIRE staff stated it was their preference that only the actual development plans for the 5-unit inn be reviewed. This would occur during the Use Permit process. Nevertheless, Planning & Building Services staff reviewed the submitted plans against the State Fire Safe Regulations and found them to be consistent with property line setback, road width and surface, turnaround, and grade requirements.

c) **Less than Significant Impact:** Compliance with state fire safe regulations, including driveway standards, turnarounds, and defensible space maintenance, is not expected to result in significant environmental impacts, particularly because the development would maintain adequate buffers from nearby sensitive habitat.

d) **No Impact:** Runoff and drainage is expected to flow into the nearby stream or over the bluff edge and into the Pacific Ocean. Therefore, there would be no people or structures downstream.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **a Less than Significant Impact** on Wildfire.

5.21 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☒	☐	☐

WOULD THE PROJECT:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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).	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☒	☐	☐

DISCUSSION: Certain mandatory findings of significance must be made to comply with CEQA Guidelines §15065. The proposed project has been analyzed and it has been determined that it would not:

- Substantially degrade environmental quality;
- Substantially reduce fish or wildlife habitat;
- Cause a fish or wildlife population to fall below self-sustaining levels;
- Threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community;
- Reduce the numbers or range of a rare, threatened, or endangered species;
- Eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or pre-history;
- Achieve short term goals to the disadvantage of long term goals;
- Have environmental effects that will directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects on human beings; or
- Have possible environmental effects that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable when viewed in connection with past, current, and reasonably anticipated future projects.

a) **Less than Significant with Mitigation:** Based on discussion throughout this document, particularly in Sections 5.1, 5.3, 5.4, 5.7, and 5.17, there is some potential for impacts. However, these impacts can be made less than significant with the implementation of mitigation measures.

b) **Less than Significant:** Cumulative impacts were considered for applicable potential impacts as discussed throughout this document, including but not limited to Section 5.3 – Air Quality and 5.8 – Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Potential impacts were identified in these sections where it was determined that no significant cumulative effects would occur because of the Project.

c) **Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated:** Based on discussion throughout this document, potential adverse effects on human beings, both directly and indirectly, have been considered and found to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None beyond those described elsewhere in this document.

FINDINGS: The proposed project would have **a Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation** on Mandatory Findings of Significance.