



# ***Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration***

**Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department**  
2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
(707) 565-1900 FAX (707) 565-1103

## ***Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration***

Publication Date: August 12, 2021  
Public Review Period: 8/12/2021 to 9/13/2021  
State Clearinghouse Number:  
Permit Sonoma File Number: **PLP19-0009**  
Prepared by: Lauren Scott  
Phone: (510) 845-7549

Pursuant to Section 15071 of the State CEQA Guidelines, this proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and the attached Initial Study, including the identified mitigation measures and monitoring program, constitute the environmental review conducted by the County of Sonoma as lead agency for the proposed project described below:

<b>Project Name:</b>	<b>PLP19-0009, Hyatt Place Wine Country Hotel</b>
<b>Project Applicant/Operator:</b>	Scott Schellinger
<b>Project Location/Address:</b>	3750 North Laughlin Rd, Santa Rosa CA 95403
<b>APN:</b>	059-370-033
<b>General Plan Land Use Designation:</b>	Light Industrial (LI)
<b>Zoning Designation:</b>	Industrial Park (MP) 2 AC AVG (Two Acre Average) VOH (Valley Oak Habitat)
<b>Decision Making Body:</b>	Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
<b>Appeal Body:</b>	None
<b>Project Description:</b>	See Item III, below

## ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a “Potentially Significant Impact” or “Less than Significant with Mitigation” as indicated in the attached Initial Study and in the summary table below.

**Table 1. Summary of Topic Areas**

Topic Area	Abbreviation	Yes	No
Aesthetics	VIS		X
Agricultural & Forestry	AG		X
Air Quality	AIR	X	
Biological Resources	BIO	X	
Cultural Resources	CUL	X	
Energy	ENE		
Geology and Soils	GEO	X	
Greenhouse Gas Emission	GHG	X	
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	HAZ		X
Hydrology and Water Quality	HYDRO	X	
Land Use and Planning	LU		X
Mineral Resources	MIN		X
Noise	NOISE	X	
Population and Housing	POP		X
Public Services	PS		X
Recreation	REC		X
Transportation	TRAF	X	
Tribal Cultural Resources	TCR	X	
Utility and Service Systems	UTL		X
Wildfire	WILD		X

## RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

The following lists other public agencies whose approval is required for the project, or who have jurisdiction over resources potentially affected by the project.

**Table 2. Agencies and Permits Required**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Authorization</b>
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Filling wetlands	Clean Water Act, Section 404
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)	Incidental take permit for listed plant and animal species	Endangered Species Act
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Incidental take permit for listed plant and animal species	California Endangered Species Act
Regional Water Quality Control Board (North Coast)	Discharge or potential discharge to waters of the state; wetland dredge or fill	California Clean Water Act (Porter Cologne) – Waste Discharge requirements, general permit or waiver; Clean Water Act, Section 401 and 404
State Water Resources Control Board	Generating stormwater (construction, industrial, or municipal)	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requires submittal of NOI
Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD)	Stationary air emissions/ Green House Gas Emissions	BAAQMD Rules and Regulations (Regulation 2, Rule 1 – General Requirements; Regulation 2, Rule 2 – New Source Review; Regulation 9 – Rule 8 – NOx and CO from Stationary Internal Combustion Engines; and other BAAQMD administered Statewide Air Toxics Control Measures (ATCM) for stationary diesel engines
State Division of Aeronautics	Construction in airport safety zone	FAA Form 7460 letter of compliance

## ENVIRONMENTAL FINDING:

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



Prepared by: Lauren Scott

8/12/2021

Date



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## ***Initial Study***

### **I. INTRODUCTION:**

Sonoma County has received an application for a Planning Project to construct a 165-room, six-story hotel with a 176-seat rooftop restaurant at 3750 North Laughlin Road, Santa Rosa, California. The project seeks a Use Permit, Design Review Approval, an amendment to the Airport Industrial Area Specific Plan, and a Development Agreement. The project site is on a 4.18-acre vacant parcel (APN 059-370-033) located west of U.S. Route 101 and east of Charles M Schulz Airport. The property contains a developed building pad with no other site improvements. The project site is southeast and adjacent to the intersection of Airport Boulevard and North Laughlin Road. The project site is relatively flat and level and contains non-native annual grassland. A referral letter was sent to the appropriate local, state, and interest groups who may wish to comment on the project.

This report is the Initial Study required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Information on the project was provided by Scott Schellinger of CSW Land Solutions. Technical studies provided by qualified consultants are attached to this Expanded Initial Study to support the conclusions. Other reports, documents, maps, and studies referred to in this document are available for review at the Permit and Resources Management Department (Permit Sonoma). Please contact Lauren Scott, Contract Planner, at (510) 845-7549 for more information.

### **II. PROJECT LOCATION**

The project site encompasses one 4.18-acre parcel at 3750 North Laughlin Rd, Santa Rosa (APN 059-370-033). As shown on Figure 1, the project site is located in unincorporated Sonoma County, west of U.S. Route 101 and approximately 1,000 feet east of Charles M Schulz Airport. U.S. Route 101 (US 101) provides regional access to the project site. The project site is located at the southeastern corner of the intersection of North Laughlin Road and Airport Boulevard. The project parcel is part of the Westwind Business Park and is one of three remaining vacant parcels. According to the Sonoma County General Plan the project site is designated as "Limited Industrial" which is a category where the range or scale of industrial uses is limited. The Limited Industrial land use designation also includes industrial parks. The site is designated "Industrial Park" under the Sonoma County Airport Industrial Area Specific Plan. The project parcel is zoned Industrial Park (MP), with a 2-acre parcel average and a Valley Oak Habitat (VOH) overlay.

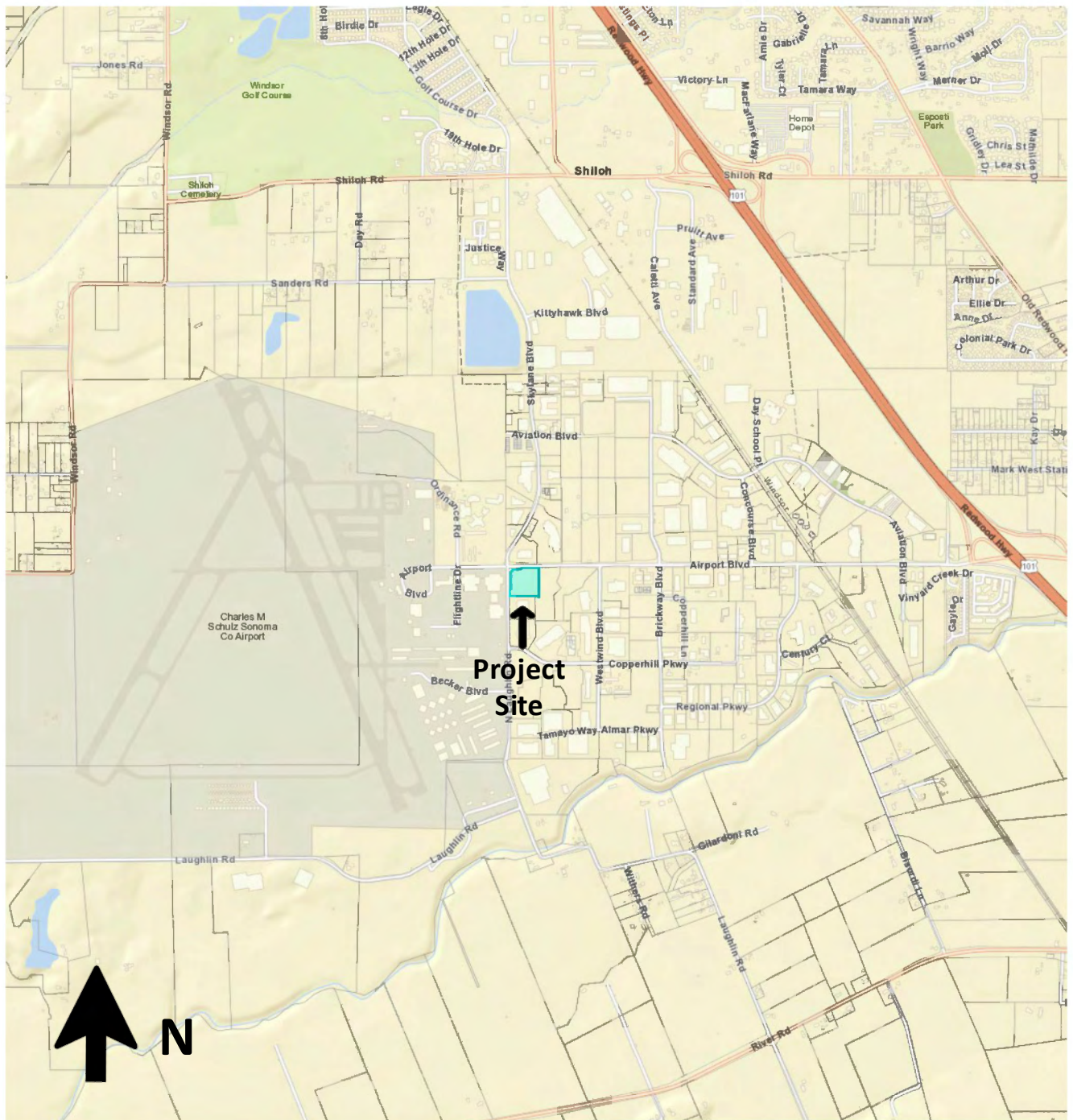
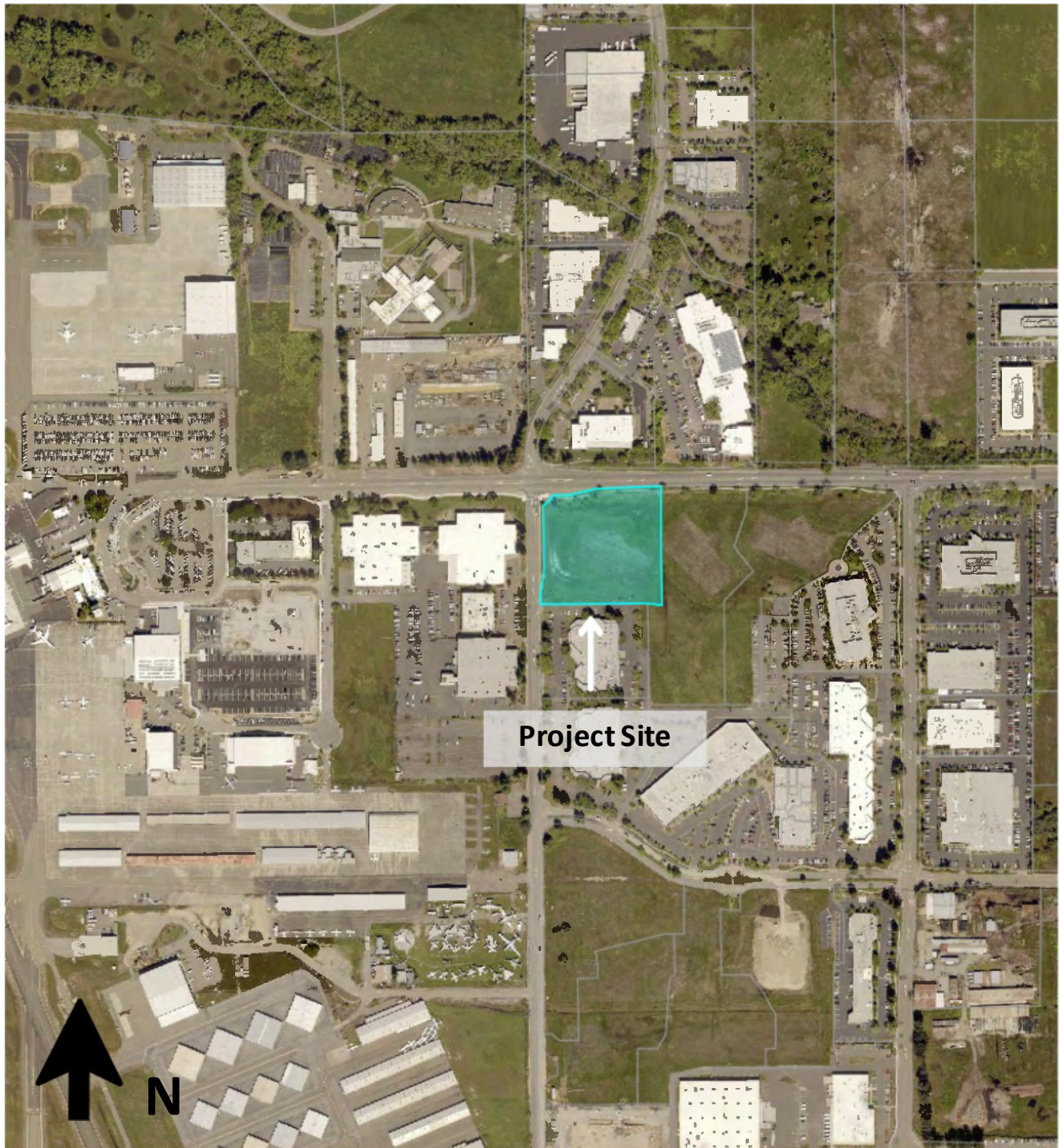


Figure 1. Project Site Vicinity  
(Permit Sonoma GIS, 2020)





*Figure 2. Project Site  
(Permit Sonoma GIS, 2020)*

### **III. SETTING**

The project site is in the center of Sonoma County, between Highway 101 and Charles M Schulz Airport. The project area is surrounded by the Town of Windsor to the north, the unincorporated communities of Larkfield-Wikiup to the east, the City of Santa Rosa to the southeast and Charles M Schulz Airport (Santa Rosa Airport) to the west. As shown on Figure 2, the project site is bounded by Airport Boulevard and a thermal processing equipment manufacturer to the north, vacant land to the east, an optical filter manufacturer to the south, and North Laughlin Road and a plastic molding manufacturer to the west. The project site is located in a largely developed area with industrial and office uses.

As it exists near the project site, Airport Boulevard is a 3-lane ( $\pm 54$  feet from curb to curb) arterial road that connects Highway 101 to Charles M Schulz Airport. North Laughlin Road is 3-lane ( $\pm 40$  feet from curb to curb) collector road that extends between Airport Boulevard and River Road. The project site is approximately 0.2 miles (1,056 feet) to the east of Charles M Schulz Airport. The Sonoma County Office of Education and Sonoma County Special Education School are located approximately 300 feet northeast of the site across Airport Boulevard. A Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) station is 0.7 miles to the east of the project site. The SMART and freight corridor runs directly through the Specific Plan Area in a north-south direction. There is an existing Class II bikeway along Airport Boulevard and a Sonoma County Transit stop located on the northern property boundary.

The project site is within the boundaries of the Sonoma County Airport Industrial Area Specific Plan and located within the Santa Rosa Plain. A majority of the land within the Specific Plan Area, including the project parcel, has been designated by the Association of Bay Area Governments ABAG as the Sonoma County Airport Employment Investment Area (EIA).

### **IV. EXISTING FACILITY**

The project site is undeveloped but does contain one 35,315 square foot gravel building pad and a concrete sidewalk along the northern parcel boundary (Figures 3 and 4). The project site was part of the Andromeda Constellation Subdivision, a phase of the Westwind Business Park. Approximately 0.28 acres of the project site has been previously developed and landscaped along the northern property line as part of the Westwind Business Park improvements. These improvements include a small developed and landscaped area along the northern parcel boundary consisting of planted landscape trees and a concrete sidewalk that provides pedestrian access along Airport Boulevard.

The majority of the project site contains non-native annual grassland. The project site contains 0.26 acres of seasonal wetlands occupying depressions in previously graded pad areas. The project site was subject to a jurisdictional wetland delineation and regulatory permitting



process to fill wetlands in the late 1990's and early 2000's; mitigation bank wetland credits were purchased, and portions of the site were graded and filled in 2003. An additional 0.26 acres of seasonal wetlands have formed since then. Vegetation in these areas consist mostly of California semaphore grass and perennial ryegrass. In 2017 new 404 permit and 401 water quality certification applications to fill 0.26 acre of wetlands and the purchase of additional wetland mitigation credits from an approved mitigation bank has been completed. The project site is generally flat, ranging from 114 to 120 feet above mean sea level.



*Figure 3. View of Project Site Facing North from the Southern Property Line  
(MIG, 2019)*



*Figure 4. View of Project Site Facing Southeast from the Western Property Line  
(MIG, 2019)*

## **V. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant is proposing to enter into a Development Agreement to develop a 165-room, six-story hotel with a 176-seat rooftop restaurant in a single building. The building would include an indoor swimming pool, conference rooms, and dining area. Parking for the hotel would be available onsite through 212 parking stalls. Additional parking may also be provided offsite via an agreement with the adjacent parcel to the south. Access to the parking lot and hotel would be provided via two driveways on North Laughlin Road. The project site would not connect directly to Airport Boulevard. The hotel would employ an estimated 45 employees and the rooftop restaurant an estimated 30 employees. Figure 5 shows the project site plan.

The footprint of the hotel would be L-shaped, with a length of 280 feet located perpendicular to the northern edge of the site, and a 70-to-100-foot width. The building would have a gross floor area of 116,571 square feet and six floors. The main entrance to the hotel would be on the western façade of the building, facing North Laughlin Road. Adjacent to the covered entrance is a 1,642 square foot outdoor seating area. The ground floor of the proposed building would contain an entrance lobby, kitchen, bar/café, lounge area, two meeting/conference rooms, offices for employees, indoor pool and spa (hot tub), and restrooms for a total of 22,468 square feet. Floors 2-5 would be organized according to the same general floor plan and contain 35 rooms arranged around a central hallway. The elevators and other service areas would be located towards the middle of each floor. The sixth floor would contain 17 rooms, outdoor deck, and the rooftop restaurant.

The exterior of the building would be contemporary and generally rectangular in shape. Figures 6 and 7 show renderings of the exterior. Seven building signs (totaling 612 square feet) are tentatively proposed at this time, two on the eastern elevation, three on the northern elevation facing Airport Boulevard, one on the southern elevation, and one on the western elevation facing North Laughlin Road. All seven of the signs would be affixed to the building/structures.

The project seeks a Use Permit, Design Review Approval, Specific Plan Amendment, and a Development Agreement to permit the Project as described. An amendment to the Airport Industrial Specific Plan is requested as part of this project to allow flexibility in design standards provided a project requesting a deviation from the design standards contained in the specific plan receives Design Review Committee approval, approval of a Use Permit, and in cases where an exception to the height standards is requested, issuance of a No Hazard Determination by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Specifically, the amendment is necessary to allow the proposed building to exceed a height of 50 feet as required by the Specific Plan, allow a commercial floor area ratio beyond 5% per development, and to allow a reduced setback from Airport Boulevard where 85 feet is currently required.

Access:

Primary access and egress for vehicles and trucks would be a driveway from North Laughlin Road. The driveway would allow for two-way traffic to enter and exit the site. Secondary access would be provided via a driveway in the southwestern portion of the site, also along North Laughlin Road.

No direct access is proposed from Airport Boulevard. Emergency fire services would access the building both from Airport Boulevard and via the project driveways.

Frontage Improvements:

Frontage improvements along North Laughlin Road and Airport Boulevard were previously made during the original business park subdivision. Improvements include sidewalks and landscaping. The sidewalk along North Laughlin Road would be altered and improved as part of project construction. Lane configuration on the northbound approach to Airport Boulevard/North Laughlin Road-Skylane Boulevard will be modified to change the existing left-turn lane to shared left-turn/through lane, allowing the existing through/right-turn lane to be dedicated to right turns only until a traffic signal or a roundabout is constructed. The existing bus stop located eastbound on Airport Boulevard would be improved as part of the project per the request of Sonoma County Transit.

Parking Lot:

The project would include construction of a parking lot surrounding the hotel building and connects to North Laughlin Road via two driveways. The developed area would total approximately three acres of impervious area. The project proposes a total of 212 vehicle parking spaces and 20 bicycle parking spaces for the hotel, restaurant, and meeting/conference rooms. This includes 198 standard parking spaces, eight electric vehicle charging stations, and seven ADA accessible spaces. Parking is located on the eastern, southern, and western side of the building. Additional parking may be provided offsite through an agreement with the neighboring business to the south of the project site. If provided and agreed to, this offsite parking would occur within the paved and striped parking lot on the parcel to the south (APN 059-370-003).

Landscaping:

A combination of native and non-native trees, shrubs, and plants would be used around the site, including on the perimeter of the site along North Laughlin Road and Airport Boulevard. Large shrubs and trees would be used in the parking lot landscape islands. Approximately 21% of the total lot area will be landscaped. Six different tree species and sixteen different shrub and plant varieties are proposed. A 'living wall' covered with creeping fig (*ficus pumila repens*) is proposed along the project's frontage on Airport Boulevard.

#### Stormwater Management:

The site has one storm drain inlet near the northeast corner of the project parcel that flows west via an existing 36" storm drain and enters the Sonoma County drainage network. The project site generally slopes to the northeast, with two existing flow lines which direct flows to the north and east (to the existing storm drain inlet) and to the east and north (to the existing storm drain inlet), where it enters public stormwater infrastructure. The proposed structures and features will consist of the onsite building, asphalt paving, sidewalks and walkways, trash enclosure, site lighting, landscaping, underground utilities, storm water management facilities, Low Impact Development (LID) features and related improvements.

The project includes a Low Impact Development (LID) plan that would create stormwater management features designed to capture one hundred percent of the onsite stormwater flows generated. Along the eastern property line, two concrete retaining walls will be constructed, which will function as headwalls to allow capture of the offsite stormwater run-on. The offsite run-off will be collected at two points in 30-inch diameter storm drain pipes and routed to the north and then west, along the north side of the building. Runoff from the hotel building roof downspouts and parking areas will be routed into planter boxes and raingardens for filtration and treatment of all stormwater runoff from the project site.

Treatment and retention for the parking lot and paved areas would be provided for in the proposed rainwater gardens located in adjacent landscaped areas. Treatment for the building would be provided through planters and a 36" pipe storm drain located beneath the parking lot.

#### Water & Sewer:

The project would receive water service from the Town of Windsor's municipal water system. Domestic wastewater disposal would be provided by the Airport/Larkfield/Wikiup Sanitation District.

#### Construction:

Project construction would include earthwork, grading, paving, building construction, and the installation of underground utilities (including water, sewer, storm drainage, electrical and irrigation facilities). Sanitary sewage disposal would be provided by a connection to the Airport/Larkfield/Wikiup Sanitation District sanitary sewer system. Water for the building would be supplied from the Windsor Water District. The proposed construction and improvements would disturb approximately four acres. The 0.26 acres of seasonal wetlands would be filled as part of the project and conservation credits have been previously purchased to offset this loss.

The table below provides a summary of the project.

**Table 3: Project Breakdown**

<b>Building Dimensions</b>	
Height	75'-0" (excluding mechanical equipment)
Gross Floor Area	116,571 square feet
<b>Site Surfacing Breakdown</b>	
Concrete Sidewalk	16,456 square feet
Parking Lot	76,279 square feet
Building	22,468 square feet
<b>Total Impervious</b>	<b>115,203 square feet</b>
Landscaping/Pervious Area	41,831 square feet
<b>Building Overview</b>	
Hotel Lodging	165 rooms
Hotel Kitchen and Cafe	2,602 square feet
Rooftop Restaurant	1,728 square feet (176 seats)
Conference/Meeting Rooms	1,398 square feet
Indoor Pool and Spa Room	2,266 square feet
<b>Parking Breakdown</b>	
Parking Spaces	212 spaces onsite
Bicycle Parking	1 bicycle space per 15 employees



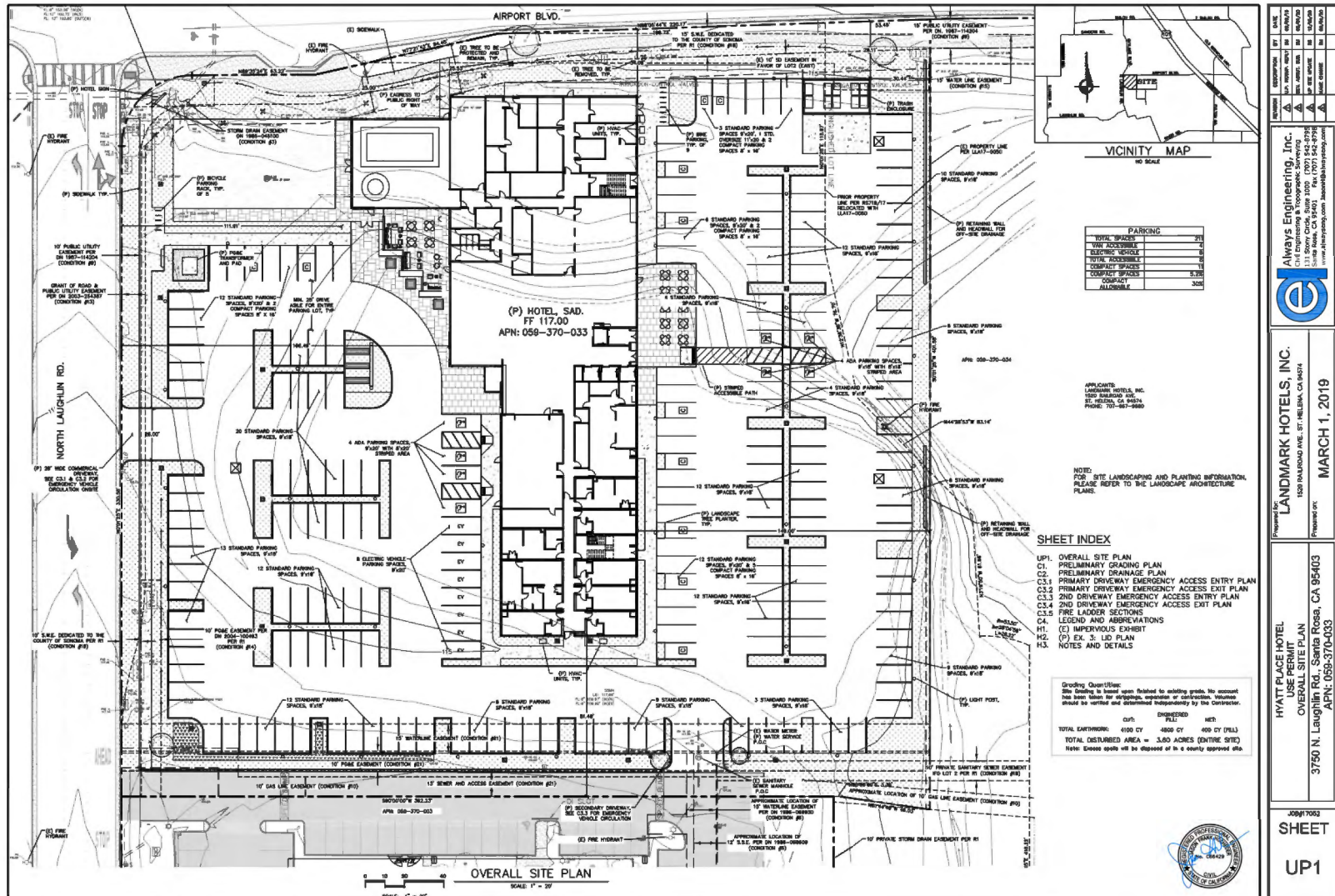


Figure 5. Proposed Project Site Plan  
(Always Engineering, Inc., 2021)





*Figure 6. Rendering of Proposed Project from N. Laughlin Road  
(Lowney Architecture, 2021)*





*Figure 7. Rendering of Proposed Project from Airport Boulevard  
(Lowney Architecture, 2021)*

## **VI. ISSUES RAISED BY THE PUBLIC OR AGENCIES**

A referral packet was drafted and circulated to inform and solicit comments from selected relevant local and state agencies; and to special interest groups that were anticipated to take interest in the project.

The project planner has received responses to the referral from the following agencies: Sonoma County Transit, Charles M. Schulz – Sonoma County Airport, Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Permit Sonoma Sanitation Section, Permit Sonoma Project Review Health Specialist, PG&E Plan Review, Sonoma County Department of Transportation & Public Works, Permit Sonoma Grading and Stormwater Section, the Northwest Information Center, Middletown Rancheria, Cloverdale Ranch of Pomo Indians, Graton Rancheria, Stewarts Point Rancheria Band of Kashia Pomo Indians, and Lytton Rancheria. The referral responses included several project use permit conditions of approval. The project and specific plan amendment were referred to the Airport Land Use Commission which made a determination of consistency with the Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan (CALUP) on June 18, 2021.

The project planner has not received any public comments.

## VII. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

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

**No Impact:** The project would not have the impact described. The project may have a beneficial effect, but there is no potential for the project to create or add increment to the impact described.

**Less Than Significant Impact:** The project would have the impact described, but the impact would not be significant. Mitigation is not required, although the project applicant may choose to modify the project to avoid the impacts.

**Potentially Significant Unless Mitigated:** The project would have the impact described, and the impact could be significant. One or more mitigation measures have been identified that will reduce the impact to a less than significant level.

**Potentially Significant Impact:** The project would have the impact described, and the impact could be significant. The impact cannot be reduced to less than significant by incorporating mitigation measures. An environmental impact report must be prepared for this project.

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

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



## 1. AESTHETICS

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

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

Comment:

The project is not in an area designated as visually sensitive by the Sonoma County General Plan (i.e., Scenic Landscape Unit, Scenic Corridor, Community Separator). The nearest designated scenic resource is Highway 101, about 1.2 miles east of the project site,<sup>1</sup> which does not afford views of the project due to existing development and vegetation. The project site is currently vacant and surrounded by existing industrial and office development.

While the requested specific plan amendment would introduce flexibility in the design guidelines of the Airport Industrial Area Specific Plan, projects requesting an exception to the design standards would be subject to review and approval by the Design Review Committee and must be found consistent with the applicable County zoning regulations. The requested specific plan amendment would therefore not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

Significance Level: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measure:

**Mitigation Measure VIS-1:** Final design and landscaping plans shall be submitted by the applicant for review by Permit Sonoma. Building shape, colors, textures, and materials shall be consistent with the surrounding environment. Screening vegetation shall be sufficient in quantity, type, size (height), and location. All County notes regarding specific design specifications/standards shall be added to construction drawings or otherwise incorporated into the project. (See Mitigation Measure VIS-2 for review of final lighting plans.)

Mitigation Monitoring:

**Mitigation Monitoring VIS-1:** Prior to project approval, Permit Sonoma shall review final design and landscaping plans to ensure consistency with General Plan, Municipal Code, and the Airport Industrial Specific Plan visual requirements. Building/grading permits shall not be approved for issuance by Permit Sonoma - Project Review Staff until any County notes are printed on the final project plans.

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<sup>1</sup> Sonoma County. General Plan 2020 Scenic Corridors, "Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation & Open Space District," [https://www.sonomaopenspace.org/wp-content/uploads/Scenic\\_ANSI\\_D\\_05152017.pdf](https://www.sonomaopenspace.org/wp-content/uploads/Scenic_ANSI_D_05152017.pdf), accessed August 12, 2020.

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

Comment:

State Scenic highways refer to those highways that are officially designated by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as scenic. There are no state scenic highways in the vicinity of the project area. Highway 101 to the east of the project area is designated a Scenic Corridor by the Sonoma County General Plan. Highway 101, which is approximately 1.2 miles east of the project site, is not a designated California Scenic Highway.<sup>2</sup>

Significance Level: No Impact

**c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?**

Comment:

The project is located in an urbanized area. The existing visual character of the site and its surroundings is a built environment, comprised of industrial and office uses. The proposed project would be consistent with the land use designation for the site and with the MP (Industrial Park) zoning development requirements.

While the requested specific plan amendment would allow for flexibility in design guidelines subject to review and approval by the Design Review Committee, the amendment is consistent with the Airport Industrial Area Specific Plan standards related to visual amenities. These include the preservation and protection of vegetative and wildlife habitat, enhancing and protecting the visual experience along Airport Boulevard to provide an attractive entranceway image, emphasizing rigorous design requirements to enhance the overall market attractiveness of the area, and establishing a system of signage, landscaping, lighting, and other design features for reasonable application throughout the planning area in order to identify, visual entrance and integrate the airport industrial area.

The visual character of the existing undeveloped site would be changed because introduction of project structures would clearly contrast with (stand out against) existing conditions. Consideration of the following measures related to project building characteristics (e.g., form, line, color, texture) would reduce project visual effects to a less-

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<sup>2</sup> Caltrans. Map Viewer website, "California Scenic Highways," <https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?layers=f0259b1ad0fe4093a5604c9b838a486a>, accessed August 12, 2020.

than-significant level. The proposed building would be six stories and a maximum of 85 feet in height (including rooftop equipment). Due to the height of the building, the project would be visible from surrounding public viewpoints.

Based on the Sonoma County “Visual Assessment Guidelines”<sup>3</sup>, the project site sensitivity would be considered “Low” because it is not located in a zone designated to protect scenic resources, the project site has slopes less than 20 percent, and the site is within an urban zoning designation with no significant natural vegetation or topography.

*Low: The site is within an urban land use designation and has no land use or zoning designations protecting scenic resources. The project vicinity is characterized by urban development or the site is surrounded by urban zoning designations and has no historic character and is not a gateway to a community. The project site terrain has visible slopes less than 20 percent and is not on a prominent ridgeline and has no significant natural vegetation of aesthetic value to the surrounding community.*

Based on County Visual Assessment Guidelines, the project is characterized as “Dominant” because it stands out against its setting and attracts attention away from the surrounding landscape.

*Dominant: Project elements are strong – they stand out against the setting and attract attention away from the surrounding landscape. Form, line, color, texture, and night lighting contrast with existing elements in the surrounding landscape.*

The project's visual effect on the visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings was determined based on County Visual Assessment Guidelines, Table 3: Thresholds of Significance for Visual Impact Analysis.

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<sup>3</sup> Sonoma County. “Visual Assessment Guidelines and Procedure,” January 2019  
<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Environmental-Review-Guidelines/Visual-AssessmentGuidelines/>, accessed August 12, 2020.

**Table 1-1. Thresholds of Significance for Visual Impact Analysis (Table 3, County Visual Assessment Guidelines)**

Sensitivity	Visual Dominance			
	<i>Dominant</i>	<i>Co-Dominant</i>	<i>Subordinate</i>	<i>Inevident</i>
<b>Maximum</b>	Significant	Significant	Significant	Less than significant
<b>High</b>	Significant	Significant	Less than significant	Less than significant
<b>Moderate</b>	Significant	Less than significant	Less than significant	Less than significant
<b>Low</b>	<b>Less than significant</b>	Less than significant	Less than significant	Less than significant

Considering the project site's "Low" visual sensitivity and the project's "Dominant" visual dominance, the project would be considered to have a "Less than significant" effect on the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

The proposed project received preliminary approval by the County Design Review Committee review on June 16, 2021, ensuring that the aesthetic qualities of the project are maximized, and visual impacts are minimized.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

The project design includes the use of a non-reflective roof that would be used to limit the amount of glare during daytime hours. The project proposes exterior lighting which would include exterior pole lighting for the parking lot and lights on the building. The project would include the use of "Dark Sky Compliant," fully shielded, downward facing lights which would be located at the lowest possible point to the ground in order to avoid light pollution, glare and unnecessary glow. Flood lights and uprights are not proposed.

Overall, lighting provisions incorporated into the project's design would minimize lighting effects on nighttime view in the area. However, as a condition of approval, the project would be required to comply with Section 26-82-030(g) of the County Code pertaining to lighting: "The color, size, height, lighting and landscaping of appurtenant signs and structures shall be elevated for compatibility with local architectural motif and the maintenance of view and vistas of natural landscapes, recognized historic landmarks, urban parks or landscaping. In addition, Section 26-82-030 (n) provides: "All lighting in parking areas shall be arranged to prevent direct glare or illumination onto adjacent properties."

Significance Level: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

**Mitigation Measures:**

**Mitigation VIS-2:** Prior to issuance of building permits, an exterior lighting plan shall be submitted for final Design Review by Permit Sonoma, which shows that: (1) exterior lighting is low mounted, downward casting, and fully shielded to prevent glare; (2) lighting is Dark Sky Compliant; (3) light fixtures shall not be located at the periphery of the property and shall not spill over onto adjacent properties or into the sky; (4) flood lights would not be used; (5) all parking lot and street lights would be full cut-off fixtures; and (6) security lighting shall be motion-sensor activated.

**Mitigation Monitoring:**

**Mitigation Monitoring VIS-2 (Ongoing)** Permit Sonoma shall not issue the Building Permit until final Design Review of the exterior lighting plan has been completed and the lighting plan is consistent with the approved plans and County standards. Permit Sonoma shall not sign off final occupancy of the Building Permit until a site inspection of the property has been conducted that indicates all lighting improvements have been installed according to the approved plans and conditions. If light and glare complaints are received, Permit Sonoma shall conduct a site inspection and require the property to be brought into compliance or initiate procedures to revoke or modify the permit.

## **2. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES**

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



**Would the project:**

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

Comment:

The project site and the surrounding parcels are designated as 'Urban and Built-Up Land' under the California Department of Conservation Division of Land Resource Protection Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.<sup>4</sup> The project site does not currently support agriculture operations and the project would have no impact on existing farmland.

Significance Level: No Impact

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

Comment:

The project site is not zoned for agricultural use, and is not part of or included in a Williamson Act contract.<sup>5</sup>

Significance Level: No Impact

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

Comment:

The project site is not within a Timberland Production zoning district, and is comprised of grasslands with less than a dozen landscaping trees around the perimeter of the site.<sup>6</sup> The project site is zoned Industrial Park and the project would not cause a rezoning of forest land or timberland zoned Timberland Production.

Significance Level: No Impact

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<sup>4</sup> California Department of Conservation. State of California. "California Important Farmland Finder," <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/>, accessed August 12, 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Sonoma County. Permit Sonoma GIS "Zoning and Land Use," <https://sonomacounty.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=06ac7fe1b8554171b4682dc141293962>, accessed August 12, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Sonoma County. Permit Sonoma GIS "Zoning and Land Use," <https://sonomacounty.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=06ac7fe1b8554171b4682dc141293962>, accessed August 12, 2020.

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

Comment:

The project site is not forest land and is not located near any forest land and would therefore not result in the loss of forest land.

Significance Level: No Impact

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

Comment:

The project site is designated Urban and Built-Up Land by the California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program<sup>7</sup> and does not contain existing or mapped forest land. The project does not involve other changes in the environment that could result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or forest land to non-forest use.

Significance Level: No Impact

### **3. AIR QUALITY**

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

The applicant submitted an Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Technical Report that was prepared by AECOM and dated July 2021.<sup>8</sup> The study provided the regulatory framework applicable to the project, estimated construction and operational emission associated with the project using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2020.4.0, and evaluated the potential for the project to result in impacts with regard to air quality and greenhouse gas emissions. As discussed in greater detail below, the Technical Report concludes that potentially significant impacts may be reduced to a less-than-significant level through the incorporation of mitigation measures. The Technical Report was found to be sufficient by Permit Sonoma Project Review staff based on the site-specific information available at the time of the analysis.

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<sup>7</sup> California Department of Conservation. State of California. "California Important Farmland Finder," <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/>, accessed August 12, 2020.

<sup>8</sup> AECOM, "Technical Report for the Proposed Hyatt Place Hotel Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions." July 2021.

**Would the project:**

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

Comment:

The proposed project would not conflict with nor obstruct implementation of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) *2017 Clean Air Plan*.<sup>9</sup> The *2017 Clean Air Plan* includes increases in regional construction, area, mobile, and stationary source activities, and operations in its emission inventories and plans for achieving attainment of air quality standards. Chapter 5 of the *2017 Clean Air Plan* contains the BAAQMD's strategy for achieving the plan's climate and air quality goals. This control strategy is the backbone of the *2017 Clean Air Plan*.

The proposed project consists of the construction and operation of a new hotel. The proposed project would not exceed the level of population or housing foreseen in county or regional planning efforts; therefore, it would not have the potential to substantially affect housing, employment, and population projections within the region, which are the basis of the *2017 Clean Air Plan* projections. The control measures in the *2017 Clean Air Plan* do not directly apply to the proposed project and, therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with the *2017 Clean Air Plan*. Furthermore, as described under b), below, the increase in regional emissions generated by the proposed project would be less than the BAAQMD's emissions thresholds. No impact would occur.

Significance Level: No Impact.

**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?**

Comment:

The proposed project would generate both short-term construction emissions and long-term operational emissions. As described in more detail below, the proposed project would not generate short-term or long-term emissions that exceed BAAQMD-recommended criteria air pollutant thresholds after the implementation of Mitigation Measure AIR-1.

The proposed project is located within the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin (Basin), where efforts to attain state and federal air quality standards are governed by the BAAQMD. Both the State of California and the federal government have established health-based ambient air quality standards (AAQS) for seven air pollutants (known as criteria pollutants). These

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<sup>9</sup> Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). *2017 Clean Air Plan: Spare the Air, Cool the Climate*. BAAQMD, Planning, Rules, and Research Division. April 19, 2017.

pollutants include ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), inhalable particulate matter with a diameter of 10 microns or less (PM<sub>10</sub>), fine particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 microns or less (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), and lead (Pb). The state has also established AAQS for additional pollutants. The AAQS are designed to protect the health and welfare of the populace within a reasonable margin of safety. Where the state and federal standards differ, California AAQS (CAAQS) are more stringent than the national AAQS (NAAQS). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), California Air Resources Board (CARB), and BAAQMD assess the air quality of an area by measuring and monitoring the amount of pollutants in the ambient air and comparing pollutant levels against NAAQS and CAAQS. Based on these comparisons, regions are classified into one of the following categories:

- **Attainment.** A region is “in attainment” if monitoring shows ambient concentrations of a specific pollutant are less than or equal to NAAQS or CAAQS. In addition, an area that has been re-designated from nonattainment to attainment is classified as a “maintenance area” for 10 years to ensure that the air quality improvements are sustained.
- **Nonattainment.** If the NAAQS or CAAQS are exceeded for a pollutant, the region is designated as nonattainment for that pollutant. It is important to note that some NAAQS and CAAQS require multiple exceedances of the standard for a region to be classified as nonattainment. Federal and state laws require nonattainment areas to develop strategies, plans, and control measures to reduce pollutant concentrations to levels that meet, or attain, standards.
- **Unclassified.** An area is unclassified if the ambient air monitoring data are incomplete and do not support a designation of attainment or nonattainment.

Air pollution levels are measured at monitoring stations located throughout the Basin. Table 3-1 summarizes the Basin’s attainment status for the CAAQS and NAAQS.<sup>10</sup>

The proposed project would generate both short-term construction emissions and long-term operational emissions. The project’s potential emissions were estimated using the CalEEMod, Version 2020.4.0.

### ***Construction Emissions***

Project construction would consist of site preparation, grading, building construction, paving and application of architectural coatings. The proposed project would result in the temporary and short-term generation of ROG and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions during construction

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<sup>10</sup> Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). 2017a. “Air Quality Standards and Attainment Status”. BAAQMD, Research & Data, Air Quality Standards & Attainment Status. January 5, 2017. Accessed on April 30, 2020 at <http://www.baaqmd.gov/research-and-data/air-quality-standards-and-attainment-status>.

activities. ROG and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions are primarily associated with exhaust from mobile equipment, including off-road construction equipment and on-road motor vehicles. Exhaust emissions from construction equipment and motor vehicles would also generate PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions. Earth and material disturbance activities such as building demolition, grading, and site preparation are the primary sources of fugitive PM emissions.

**Table 3-1: San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin Attainment Status**

Pollutant	Averaging Time	Attainment Status <sup>(A)</sup>	
		CAAQS	NAAQS
O <sub>3</sub>	1-Hour	N	--
	8-Hour	N	<b>N</b>
PM <sub>10</sub>	24-Hour	N	U
	Annual Average	N	--
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	24-Hour	--	<b>N</b>
	Annual Average	N	U/A
CO	1-Hour	A	A
	8-Hour	A	A
NO <sub>2</sub>	1-Hour	A	U <sup>(G)</sup>
	Annual Average	--	A
SO <sub>2</sub>	1-Hour	A	U <sup>(H)</sup>
	24-Hour	A	--
Sulfates	24-Hour	A	--
Lead	1-Hour	U	--
Visibility Reducing Particles	24-Hour	--	--

Source: BAAQMD 2017a.  
(A) A= Attainment, N=Nonattainment, U=Unclassified.

As shown in Table 3-2, construction emissions for the proposed project would result in average unmitigated daily emissions of approximately 6 pounds per day of ROG and 17 pounds per day of NO<sub>x</sub>. The maximum daily NO<sub>x</sub> emissions shown in Table 3-2 would not exceed the applicable BAAQMD threshold of significance (54 pounds per day of NO<sub>x</sub>).<sup>11</sup> Consistent with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) recommended thresholds of significance for construction-related emissions for ROG, NO<sub>x</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub> (exhaust

<sup>11</sup> AECOM, 2021.



only), and PM<sub>2.5</sub> (exhaust only), Table 3-2 presents average daily construction-related emissions.

**Table 3-2: Estimated Project Construction Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions (Unmitigated)**

Emissions Source	Pollutant Emissions (Average Pounds per Day)			
	ROG	NO <sub>x</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	PM <sub>2.5</sub>
Construction Emissions	5.72	17.16	0.81	0.76
<b>BAAQMD CEQA Threshold</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Potentially Significant Impact?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Source: AECOM 2021; (Table AQ-2).				

Although the proposed project's construction-related emissions would not exceed BAAQMD's construction threshold of significance, BAAQMD recommends that all projects involving construction activities, regardless of the significance determination, implement BAAQMD's Basic Construction Emission Control Practices.<sup>12</sup> BAAQMD's Basic Construction Emission Control Practices include such measures as watering the construction site twice daily, limiting vehicle speeds on unpaved roadways to 15 miles per hour, minimizing vehicle idling, covering haul trucks transporting soil, and cleaning paved roads. Accordingly, the County would implement **Mitigation Measure AIR-1**, which requires the implementation of the BAAQMD's Basic Construction Emission Control Practices. This would reduce the proposed project's potentially significant regional construction criteria air pollutant impact to less than significant.

### ***Operational Emissions***

Operational emissions can be distinguished according to their source, including mobile, energy, and area source emissions. Mobile-source emissions are those associated with vehicle trips, which for the proposed Project would include hotel guests, employee trips, and delivery trips. Area-source emissions are those associated with consumer products, periodic architectural coatings, and landscape maintenance activities. Energy use emissions are associated with building electricity and natural gas usage (non-hearth).

Estimated daily operational emissions for the proposed project are shown in Table 3-3. As shown in Table 3-3, ROG and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions are estimated to be approximately 10 and 12 pounds per day, respectively, compared to a threshold of 54 pounds per day for each pollutant. Therefore, the proposed project's long-term operational emissions would not exceed the BAAQMD's ROG or NO<sub>x</sub> thresholds of significance. Operational PM emissions are

<sup>12</sup> Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) 2017b. *California Environmental Quality Act Air Quality Guidelines*. San Francisco, CA. June 2010, updated May 2017.

shown in this table, as well, and be below applicable BAAQMD thresholds of significance. Consistent with the BAAQMD recommended thresholds of significance for operations-related emissions for ROG, NO<sub>x</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub> (exhaust only), and PM<sub>2.5</sub> (exhaust only), Table 3-3 presents both maximum annual and average daily emissions.

**Table 3-3: Estimated Project Construction Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions (Unmitigated)**

Emissions Source	Pollutant Emissions			
	ROG	NO <sub>x</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	PM <sub>2.5</sub>
Maximum Annual (tons per year)	1.84	2.12	0.06	0.05
BAAQMD Annual Threshold (tons per year)	10	10	15	10
Average Daily Emissions (pounds per day)	10.07	11.62	0.30	0.30
BAAQMD Daily Threshold (pounds per day)	54	54	82	54
<b>Exceeds Significance Threshold?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Source: AECOM 2021; (Table AQ-3).				

### **Conclusion**

As discussed above, the proposed project would not result in construction or operational emissions of criteria air pollutants that exceed BAAQMD thresholds of significance. In developing its CEQA significance thresholds, the BAAQMD considered the emission levels at which a project's individual emissions would be cumulatively considerable. The BAAQMD considers projects that result in emissions that exceed its CEQA significance thresholds to result in individual impacts that are cumulatively considerable and significant. Since the proposed project would not individually exceed any BAAQMD CEQA significance thresholds with application of **Mitigation Measure AIR-1**, the cumulative air quality impact would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Significance Level: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

### Mitigation Measures:

#### **Mitigation Measure AIR-1 Implement BAAQMD Basic Construction Emissions Control**

**Practices:** The County shall require the implementation of the following BAAQMD Basic Construction Emissions Control Practices during Project construction:

- All exposed surfaces (e.g., parking areas, staging areas, soil piles, graded areas, and unpaved access roads) shall be watered two times per day.
- All haul trucks transporting soil, sand, or other loose material off-site shall be covered.
- All visible mud or dirt track-out onto adjacent public roads shall be removed using wet power vacuum street sweepers at least once per day. The use of dry power sweeping is prohibited.

- All vehicle speeds on unpaved roads shall be limited to 15 miles per hour (mph).
- All roadways, driveways, and sidewalks to be paved shall be completed as soon as possible. Building pads shall be laid as soon as possible after grading unless seeding or soil binders are used.
- Idling times shall be minimized either by shutting equipment off when not in use or reducing the maximum idling time to 5 minutes (as required by the California airborne toxics control measure Title 13, Section 2485 of California Code of Regulations [CCR]). Clear signage shall be provided for construction workers at all access points.
- All construction equipment shall be maintained and properly tuned in accordance with manufacturer's specifications. All equipment shall be checked by a certified mechanic and determined to be running in proper condition prior to operation.
- Post a publicly visible sign with the telephone number and person to contact at the Lead Agency regarding dust complaints. This person shall respond and take corrective action within 48 hours. The Air District's phone number shall also be visible to ensure compliance with applicable regulations.

**c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?**

Comment:

Some populations are more susceptible to the effects of air pollution than the population at large; these populations are defined as sensitive air quality receptors. Sensitive receptors include children, the elderly, the sick, and the athletic. Land uses associated with sensitive receptors include residences, schools, playgrounds, childcare centers, athletic facilities, long-term health care facilities, rehabilitation centers, convalescent centers, and retirement homes. The nearest sensitive receptors are located at the at the Sonoma County Detention Center, approximately 750 feet northwest of the project site.

***Construction Emissions***

Construction-related activities would result in short-term emissions of diesel particulate matter (DPM) from the exhaust of off-road heavy-duty diesel equipment for site preparation (e.g., excavation, grading, and clearing); paving; application of architectural coatings; and other miscellaneous activities. Diesel PM was identified as a toxic air contaminant (TAC) by CARB in 1998. The potential cancer risk from the inhalation of DPM, as discussed below, is the TAC of concern related to construction activities.

With respect to the health impacts, the dose to which receptors are exposed is the primary factor used to determine health risk (i.e., potential exposure to TAC emission levels that exceed applicable standards). Dose is a function of the concentration of a substance or

substances in the environment and the duration of exposure to the substance. Dose is positively correlated with time, meaning that a longer exposure period would result in a higher exposure level for the maximally exposed individual. Thus, the risks estimated for a maximally exposed individual are higher if a fixed exposure occurs over a longer period of time.

According to the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, health risk assessments (HRA), which determine the exposure of sensitive receptors to TAC emissions, should be based on a 70-year exposure period; however, such assessments should be limited to the period and duration of activities associated with the subject project.

In the case of the proposed Project, construction activities are anticipated to last for a total of approximately 18 months, which would be approximately 5 percent of the minimal exposure time for a typical HRA. In addition, the surrounding land uses are industrial uses, with limited sensitive receptors that would be exposed to emissions generated during construction. The nearest sensitive receptors include individuals residing temporarily at the Sonoma County Detention Center approximately 750 feet northwest of the project site. Because of the limited emissions generated during construction activities (as shown in Table 3-2), the limited duration of construction, and distance from sensitive receptors, construction of the proposed project would not result in exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial TAC emissions.

### ***Operational Emissions***

Hotels do not typically generate substantial TAC emissions. Land uses that are more likely to generate substantial TAC emissions include industrial land uses that involve stationary sources and manufacturing processes. The proposed land use could involve trips coming to and leaving from the project site using diesel-fueled vehicles. However, the proportion of diesel-fueled vehicles is anticipated to be comparable to current baseline diesel vehicle population (i.e., Sonoma County average). In other words, the proposed project's land use is not the type of land use that would likely generate a higher proportion of diesel-fueled vehicles or heavy-duty trucks, which would be anticipated from land uses, such as distribution centers and heavy industrial projects. Thus, the proposed project's land use would not substantially increase the proportion of diesel-fueled vehicles coming to and leaving the project site above the countywide average.

The proposed project would generate less than one pound per day of PM<sub>2.5</sub> (see Table 3-3). Part of these PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions would be DPM; however, the majority of these emissions would be distributed over regional and local roads and would not be concentrated in one location as a constant source of TAC emissions from the Project site, such as a stationary source. Thus, the proposed project's minimal TAC emissions would be intermittent and dispersed throughout the region on local roadways and highways and would not expose a single receptor to all of its emissions. Because the proposed project's potential TAC

emissions (i.e., operational mobile-source emissions) would be intermittent and dispersed throughout local roadways, these emissions would not be proportionately higher than baseline mobile sources (i.e., not include a higher proportion of diesel-fueled vehicles than current levels) and would not expose a single receptor to the bulk of its emissions. Therefore, the proposed project's operational activities would not generate TAC concentrations at any site that would expose sensitive receptors to substantial TAC concentrations. Considering this information, the proposed project's operational activities would not generate substantial TAC emissions that would expose nearby sensitive receptors to substantial TAC concentrations.

### ***CO Hotspots***

Local mobile-source CO emissions and concentrations near roadway intersections are a direct function of traffic volume, speed, and delay. Transport of CO is extremely limited because it disperses rapidly with distance from the source under normal meteorological conditions. However, under specific meteorological conditions, CO concentrations near roadways and/or intersections may reach unhealthy levels with respect to local sensitive land uses, such as residential units, hospitals, schools, and childcare facilities.

BAAQMD has developed a screening threshold to determine if a project would cause an intersection to potentially generate a CO hotspot. The screening thresholds have been developed with conservative assumptions to avoid underestimating CO concentrations. Therefore, a project that would not exceed the screening thresholds would be highly unlikely to generate a CO hotspot and would not expose sensitive receptors to CO concentrations harmful to public health. According to this methodology, projects would have the potential to generate a CO hotspot if it did not contribute a substantial volume of vehicle trips to an intersection that exceeded 44,000 vehicles per hour. For intersections located in areas where vertical and/or horizontal mixing is substantially limited, the screening threshold is 24,000 vehicles per hour.

The highest hourly volume of vehicles at an intersection in the vicinity of the project site would occur under peak-hour cumulative plus proposed project conditions at the Airport Boulevard and U.S. 101 Southbound ramps intersection. The maximum hourly volume at this intersection would be approximately 3,329 vehicles per hour<sup>13</sup>, which would be substantially less than the 24,000 and 44,000 vehicles per hour screening threshold. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project is not expected to have the potential to generate CO hotspots.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant.

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<sup>13</sup> W-Trans. "Traffic Impact Study for the Hyatt Place Hotel," February 17, 2021.

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

Comment:

Construction of the project would generate typical odors associated with construction activities, such fuel and oil odors, asphalt paving odors and painting/coating odors. The odors generated by the project would be intermittent and localized in nature and would disperse quickly. The project would not generate odors during operation. Therefore, the project would not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people. No impact would occur.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant.

## **4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

The applicant submitted a biological resource assessment prepared by WRA Environmental Consultants, dated May 2020, and labeled Biological Assessment.<sup>14</sup> This study addresses listed species, evaluates wetland and riparian resources, and the Santa Rosa Plain. The project area has been part of the larger Westwind Business Park development which WRA Environmental Consultants reviewed as part of their assessment of the site. These previous studies include Landmark Hotel Group Hyatt Hotel Biological Resources Technical Report (WRA 2019)<sup>15</sup>, Biological Site Surveys (WRA December 2016, July 2019, August 2019), Jurisdictional Wetlands Determination (Corps of Engineers 7/13/2018), Aquatic Resources Inventory for Waters of the U.S., Waters of the State, and CDFW Streams (SFEI 2020), Rare plant surveys in 2016 (WRA unpublished). WRA biologists conducted site visits to observe existing conditions on the Project site in December 2016, on July 16, 2019, and on August 26, 2019. The Project Area was traversed on foot to determine (1) plant communities present within the Project Area, (2) whether existing conditions provide suitable habitat for any special-status plant or wildlife species, and (3) whether sensitive habitats are present. As discussed in greater detail below, the study concludes that potentially significant impacts may be reduced to a less than significant level through application of County standards or by incorporation of mitigation measures. The study area for this project's field survey is limited to the project site and additional approximate 8 acres in vacant land to the southeast of the site. The biological resource analysis was found to be sufficient by the project planner, based on the site-specific information available at the time of the analysis.

### **Regulatory Framework**

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<sup>14</sup> WRA Environmental Consultants, "Biological Assessment, Landmark Hotels, Inc., Hyatt Place Sonoma Wine County Project, Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California," May 2020.

<sup>15</sup> WRA Environmental Consultants, "Biological Resources Technical Report, Landmark Hotel Group, Hyatt Hotel Project, Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California," August 2019.

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

## **Federal**

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

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

***The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA):*** The MBTA (16 USC §§ 703 et seq., Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Part 10) states it is "unlawful at any time, by any means or in any manner, to pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill; attempt to take, capture or kill; possess, offer for sale, sell, offer to barter, barter, offer to purchase, purchase, deliver for shipment, ship, export, import, cause to be shipped, exported, or imported, deliver for transportation, transport or cause to be transported, carry or cause to be carried, or receive for shipment, transportation, carriage, or export any migratory bird, any part, nest, or egg of any such bird, or any product, whether or not manufactured, which consists, or is composed in whole or in part, of any such bird or any part, nest or egg thereof..." In short, under MBTA it is illegal to disturb a nest that is in active use, since this could result in killing a bird, destroying a nest, or destroying an egg. The USFWS enforces MBTA. The MBTA does not protect some birds that are non-native or human-introduced or that belong to families that are not covered by any of the conventions implemented by MBTA. In 2017, the USFWS issued a memorandum stating that the MBTA does

not prohibit incidental take; therefore, the MBTA is currently limited to purposeful actions, such as directly and knowingly removing a nest to construct a project, hunting, and poaching.

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

**Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy and Programmatic Biological Opinion:** The Santa Rosa Plain is located in central Sonoma County, bordered on the south and west by the Laguna de Santa Rosa, on the east by the foothills, and on the north by the Russian River. The Plain and adjacent areas are characterized by vernal pools, seasonal wetlands, and associated grassland habitat, which support – among other flora and fauna – the threatened California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*; CTS) and four endangered plant species: Burke’s goldfields (*Lasthenia burkei*), Sonoma sunshine (*Blennosperma bakeri*), Sebastopol meadowfoam (*Limnanthes vinculans*), and many-flowered navarretia (*Navarretia leucocephala* ssp. *plieantha*). These listed plants grow only in seasonal wetlands; CTS uses seasonal wetlands for breeding, and the surrounding uplands for dispersal, feeding, growth, maturation and maintenance of the juvenile and adult population (upland habitat).

The Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy (Conservation Strategy)<sup>16</sup> was developed to create a long-term conservation plan to mitigate for the potential adverse impacts of future development on federally-listed plants and animals in the Santa Rosa Plain. The Conservation Strategy protects and contributes to the recovery of Burke’s goldfields, Sonoma sunshine, Sebastopol meadowfoam, and CTS; and provides the biological framework upon which the Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO)<sup>17</sup> is based. Under the Conservation Strategy and PBO, vernal pools and most other seasonal wetlands on the Santa Rosa Plain are considered to be suitable habitat for Burke’s goldfields, Sonoma sunshine, and Sebastopol meadowfoam. Loss of such habitat is considered an adverse impact to all three species, regardless of whether or not

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<sup>16</sup> USFWS et al. 2005. Final Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy. Sacramento Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, County of Sonoma, Cities of Cotati, Rohnert Park, and Santa Rosa, Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation. December 1, 2005.

<sup>17</sup> USFWS. 2007. Programmatic Biological Opinion (Programmatic) for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Permitted Projects that Affect the California Tiger Salamander and Three Endangered Plant Species on the Santa Rosa Plain, California (Corps File No. 223420N). November 9, 2007. 41 pp. w/ Enclosures.



the species are actually present, because the habitat may retain a remnant seed bank for the species.

Projects that require U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) permit approval (such as the proposed project) can be appended to the PBO, and thereby provided individual take authorization, if the projects apply the PBO's mitigation ratios and adhere to all applicable avoidance and minimization measures in the PBO. The PBO potentially allows appendage of all projects on the Santa Rosa Plain, regardless of size or extent of impact, with the exception of projects that would affect occupied Burke's goldfields or Sonoma sunshine habitat with populations of 2,000 or greater plants. However, the final decision to allow appendage rests with USFWS which reserves the right to require a separate Section 7 consultation for any project based on the level of impacts, avoidance, and minimization or mitigation measures. The Corps and USFWS have also followed a policy to apply the PBO only to those projects with 3.0 acres or less of impacts to seasonal wetlands; larger projects typically require individual consultations with USFWS.

The Conservation Strategy identifies eight conservation areas for listed plants and CTS, one listed plant and CTS preserve system, and one listed plant conservation area. Conservation areas are lands where recovery and mitigation efforts should be directed to best protect and expand populations of the listed species. The Conservation Strategy also encourages the establishment of preserves within these areas; translocation of listed species; habitat improvement through wetland creation, restoration, and enhancement; and mitigation measures to reduce and compensate for impacts. Projects on the Santa Rosa Plain that potentially affect these federally-listed species should evaluate those impacts and implement mitigation measures based on recommendations in the Conservation Strategy.

Under the Conservation Strategy, the project site is beyond 1.3 miles and 2,200 feet from CTS breeding locations and vastly more than 500 feet from documented CTS adult occurrences. The Conservation Strategy and the associated PBO contain specific mitigation requirements applicable to these species.

**Section 404:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulates "Waters of the United States", including adjacent wetlands, under Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act. Waters of the United States include navigable waters, interstate waters, territorial seas and other waters that may be used in interstate or foreign commerce. Potential wetland areas are identified by the presence of: (1) hydrophytic vegetation, (2) hydric soils, and (3) wetland hydrology. All three parameters must be present, under normal circumstances, for an area to be designated as a jurisdictional wetland under the Clean Water Act. Areas that are inundated for sufficient duration and depth to exclude growth of hydrophytic vegetation are subject to Section 404 jurisdiction as "other waters" and are often characterized by an ordinary high-water mark (OHWM). The discharge of dredged or fill material into a Waters of the U.S. (including wetlands) generally requires a permit from the USACE under Section 404.

“Waters of the State” are regulated by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) under the State Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Waters of the State are defined by the Porter-Cologne Act as any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters, within the boundaries of the State. RWQCB jurisdiction includes “isolated” wetlands and waters that may not be regulated by the USACE under Section 404 (such as roadside ditches).

**Section 401:** Section 401 of the Clean Water Act specifies that any activity subject to a permit issued by a federal agency must also obtain State Water Quality Certification (401 Certification) that the proposed activity will comply with state water quality standards. If a proposed project does not require a federal permit but does involve dredge or fill activities that may result in a discharge to Waters of the State, the Water Board has the option to regulate the dredge and fill activities under its state authority through its Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) program.

**USFWS Recovery Plan for the Santa Rosa Plain:** In December 2016, USFWS adopted a formal Recovery Plan for the Santa Rosa Plain (Recovery Plan)<sup>18</sup> addressing recovery efforts necessary to protect and otherwise eventually recover the federally listed Sonoma County Distinct Population Segment of CTS and three vernal pool plants: Sonoma sunshine, Burke’s goldfields, and Sebastopol meadowfoam. All four species are confined almost entirely to the Santa Rosa Plain. The Recovery Plan and its objectives are implemented through cooperative CEQA lead agencies, and through federal agency (e.g., USACE) with USFWS via Section 7 of the FESA. Any federal nexus agency that consults with USFWS pursuant to Section 7 will obtain a letter of no effect or a Biological Opinion that provides or denies “incidental take authority.” Any conditions of a Biological Opinion issued to the USACE for a pending project are to become conditions of CWA Section 404 permit authorization.

Pursuant to the FESA incidental take includes loss of listed species’ habitat or harm that could occur to a federal listed species. An Incidental Take Permit allows an otherwise legally sanctioned activity to proceed even if there could be a collateral impact to a federal listed species. Similarly, any Section 10 FESA consultation with USFWS, which is allowed for in the FESA for all non-federal entities, that results in Incidental Take authority granted by USFWS to the non-federal entity, would otherwise include provisions for compliance with the objectives of the Recovery Plan. The USFWS has segmented the Santa Rosa Plain into “Core” and “Management Areas” where species preservation, and habitat enhancement and management must occur to recover these four listed species. Core areas comprise the heart of the species historical (and current) range and represent central blocks of contiguously occupied habitat that function to allow for dispersal, genetic interchange between populations, and

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<sup>18</sup> USFWS. 2016. Recovery Plan for the Santa Rosa Plain: *Blennosperma bakeri* (Sonoma sunshine); *Lasthenia burkei* (Burke’s goldfields); *Limnanthes vinculans* (Sebastopol meadowfoam); California Tiger Salamander Sonoma County Distinct Population Segment (*Ambystoma californiense*). U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Southwest Region, Sacramento, California. vi + 128 pp. June 20, 2016. Federal Register. Pages: 39945-39946.

metapopulation dynamics. Management areas are occupied habitat peripheral to the species' Core areas.

## **State**

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

***Fish and Game Code 1600-1602:*** Sections 1600-1607 of the California Fish and Game Code (CFGC) require that a Notification of Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSAA) application be submitted to CDFW for "any activity that may substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow or substantially change the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake." CDFW reviews the proposed actions in the application and, if necessary, prepares a LSAA that includes measures to protect affected fish and wildlife resources, including mitigation for impacts to bats and bat habitat.

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

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

property damage. Bats are classified as a non-game mammal and are protected under the CFGC.

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

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

**Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act:** The intent of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Porter-Cologne) is to protect water quality and the beneficial uses of water, as it applies to both surface and ground water. Under this law, the State Water Resources Control Board develops statewide water quality plans, and the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs) develop basin plans that identify beneficial uses, water quality objectives, and implementation plans. The RWQCBs have the primary responsibility to implement the provisions of both statewide and basin plans. Waters regulated under Porter-Cologne, referred to as “waters of the State,” include isolated waters that are not regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Projects that require a USACE permit, or fall under other federal jurisdiction, and have the potential to impact waters of the State are required to comply with the terms of the Water Quality Certification Program. If a proposed project does not require a

federal license or permit, any person discharging, or proposing to discharge, waste (e.g., dirt) to waters of the State must file a Report of Waste Discharge and receive either Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) or a waiver to WDRs before beginning the discharge.

## **Local**

***Sonoma County General Plan 2020 (Sonoma County 2008):*** The Sonoma County General Plan 2020 Land Use Element and Open Space & Resource Conservation Element both contain policies to protect natural resource lands including, but not limited to, watershed, fish and wildlife habitat, biotic areas, and habitat connectivity corridors.

***Sonoma County Tree Protection Ordinance:*** The Sonoma County Tree Protection Ordinance (Sonoma County Code of Ordinances, Sec. 26-88-010m) establishes policies for protected tree species in Sonoma County. Protected trees are defined (Chapter 26, Article 02, Sec. 26- 02-140) as the following species: big leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*), blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*), coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), interior live oak (*Quercus wislizenii*), madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*), oracle oak (*Quercus morehus*), Oregon oak (*Quercus garryana*), redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), California bay (*Umbellularia californica*), and their hybrids.

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

***Chapter 11 Grading Ordinance: Section 11-14-070: Removal of trees and other vegetation***  
Construction grading and drainage shall not remove or disturb trees and other vegetation except in compliance with the department's best management practices for construction grading and drainage and the approved plans and specifications. Construction grading and drainage shall be conducted in compliance with the following requirements:

- A. The limits of work-related ground disturbance shall be clearly identified and delineated on the approved plans and specifications and defined and marked on the site to prevent damage to surrounding trees and other vegetation.
- B. Trees and other vegetation within the limits of work-related ground disturbance that are to be retained shall be identified and protected from damage by marking, fencing, or other measures.

**Would the project:**

- a) **Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?**

Comment:

***Sensitive Biological Communities***

The Project Area contains 0.26 acres of seasonal wetland (verified by the Corps of Engineers) occupying depressions in previously graded pad areas. Plants of this community include mostly California semaphore grass (*Pleuropogon californicus*, OBL) and perennial ryegrass (FAC) with less frequent occurrences of Harding grass (FACU), pennyroyal (*Mentha pulegium*, OBL), vetch (FACU), cutleaf geranium (NL), slender rush (*Juncus tenuis*, FACW), tall flatsedge (*Cyperus eragrostis*, FACW), curly dock (*Rumex crispus*, FAC), and sow thistle (*Sonchus asper*, FAC). The dominance by wetland classified plant species and wetland hydrology during the winter establishes these areas as seasonal wetland. None of the listed endangered plants often found in seasonal wetlands and vernal pools of the Santa Rosa Plain (Burk's goldfields, Sebastopol meadowfoam, or Sonoma sunshine) have been observed in the 0.26 acres of seasonal wetlands that formed on the site since the original permitting process for the larger Westwind Business Park when seasonal wetlands at the site were filled. In 2017 new 404 permit and 401 water quality certification applications to fill 0.26 acre of wetlands that were determined to be on the site since the former grading was completed were submitted by the Westwind Business Park landowner to the Corps of Engineers and Regional Water Quality Control Board. The purchase of additional wetland mitigation credits from an approved mitigation bank has been completed and confirmed.<sup>19</sup> Listed plants were not observed during site surveys in December 2016, July 2019, or August 2019 nor during plant surveys during the previous permitting process (2003) and no occurrences have ever been recorded. A follow-up survey for Sonoma sunshine was conducted in April during the confirmed blooming period and no occurrences were recorded.

***Special-Status Plant Species***

Based upon a review of the resources and databases listed in Section 3.2.1 for the Healdsburg 7.5-minute USGS quadrangle which includes the Project Area, and the closest surrounding Sebastopol, Santa Rosa, Mark West Springs, Camp Meeker, and Guerneville

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<sup>19</sup> WRA Environmental Consultants. "Biological Resources Technical Report, Landmark Hotel Group, Hyatt Hotel Project, Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California," page 11, August 2019.

quadrangles, it was determined that 67 special-status plant species required to be reviewed under CEQA have been documented from the vicinity of the Project Area; special-status plant species documented from within 3 miles of the site are shown in Figure 4. Of the 67 special-status species identified as potentially occurring in the region, only one species, hayfield tarplant (*Hemizonia congesta ssp. congesta*) was initially ranked to have a Moderate Potential to occur in the Project Area. However, this species was later dismissed when it was determined not to be present during surveys conducted in July and August 2019. The remaining 66 special-status plant species were either unlikely or have no potential to occur within the Project Area for one or more of the following reasons:

- 1) The Project Area has been repeatedly and intensively altered from a natural state, by development, agricultural conversion, disking, or mowing, thereby eliminating the seedbank or diminishing establishment of the special-status plant(s);
- 2) The Project Area does not contain hydrologic conditions (e.g., perennial saline, freshwater marshes, and swamps) necessary to support the special-status plant(s);
- 3) The Project Area does not contain edaphic (soil) conditions (e.g., serpentine or volcanic substrate) necessary to support the special-status plant(s);
- 4) The Project Area does not contain vegetation communities (e.g., chaparral, coastal scrub, vernal pools) associated with the special-status plant(s);
- 5) Very unique pH characteristics, such as alkali wetlands are absent from the Project Area;
- 6) Competition from vigorous non-native invasive species (e.g., non-native annual grasses), likely precludes the species' ability to persist on-site;
- 7) This species was not observed during surveys or site visits which may have been conducted during the bloom period of the species.

All of listed plant species covered by the Santa Rosa Plain PBO, which include Burke's goldfields, Sonoma sunshine, and Sebastopol meadowfoam, are unlikely present within the Project Area due to the fact that they were not observed during site surveys in December 2016, July 2019, or August 2019 nor during plant surveys during the previous permitting process (2003) and no occurrences have ever been recorded. In addition, the grading of the Project Area and surrounding development have been continuing deterrents for colonization. Mitigation for listed plants was provided previously when Westwind Business Park obtained permits in the early 2000's and mitigation bank credits were purchased from approved mitigation banks. therefore, development of the project site would not result in any adverse impacts to special status plant species.

### ***Special Status Wildlife Species***

A total of 61 special-status wildlife species are known in the vicinity based upon review of the resources and database by WRA Environmental Consultants. One species has a

moderate potential to occur within the Project Area, which is white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*). This species may be affected both directly and indirectly by project activities if it is present.

#### White-Tailed Kite (*Elanus caeruleus*)

The white-tailed kite is a “Fully Protected” species under Section 3511 of the CFGC. Fully protected species may not be “taken” or possessed (i.e., kept in captivity) at any time. It is also protected under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (50 CFR 10.13). The white-tailed kite is typically found foraging in grassland, marsh, or cultivated fields where there are dense-topped trees or shrubs for nesting and perching. Although the surrounding terrain may be semiarid, kites often reside near water sources, where prey is more abundant. The particular characteristics of the nesting site do not appear to be as important as its proximity to a suitable food source. Kites primarily hunt small mammals, with California meadow voles (*Microtus californicus*) accounting from between 50-100% of their diet.

The vacant land immediately adjacent to the project site provides open habitat to support foraging as well as suitable trees for nesting. Accordingly, impacts to white-tailed kite are regarded as potentially significant pursuant to the CEQA. Implementation of **Mitigation Measure BIO-3** shall be implemented to reduce potential impacts to less than significant.

#### Nesting Birds and Bats

In addition to the special-status bird species noted above, non-status nesting migratory birds may nest in the grasslands or trees adjacent to the project site. Nesting birds may be directly or indirectly affected by initial grading activities with the project site. Special-status bat species have no potential to occur within the Project Area because there is no roosting or nesting opportunities since there are no structures and the landscape trees are too young/small to have suitable cavities. Implementation of **Mitigation Measure BIO-3** will reduce potential impacts to nesting birds to less than significant.

The biological reports and technical assessments prepared for the project determined that special-status bat species have no potential to occur within the Project Area because there is no roosting or nesting opportunities since there are no structures and the landscape trees are too young/small to have suitable cavities.

#### California Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*)

Although the project site is within designated critical habitat (the “Santa Rosa Plain Unit”) for California tiger salamander (CTS; *Ambystoma californiense*), this species is unlikely to occur in the project area, due to the lack of suitable wetland breeding habitat, lack of suitable upland dispersal and aestivation habitat, significant barriers to dispersal between the Project Area and the nearest documented extant breeding occurrence of the species, and no reported occurrences nearby. The site is more than 2.70 miles from the nearest



known CTS breeding ponds and adult observations at Alton Lane Mitigation Site and Alton North Conservation Bank and a virtually impassable array of obstacles to migration exists between the site and these observed locations. In general, there are few occurrences of CTS reported north of Santa Rosa Creek.

However, the project site is considered to be suitable aestivation habitat for CTS and development of the land requires mitigation according to the 2007 PBO, which would include purchase of mitigation bank credits from an approved mitigation bank. Because of the distance from a known CTS breeding pond area, the mitigation requirement is in a zone that requires a mitigation ratio of 0.2:1 (mitigation to impact). Although the entire project site will be developed, 0.05 acre of it is existing developed hardscape (sidewalk) which is not suitable habitat for CTS. Therefore, suitable CTS habitat is 0.05 acre less than the project parcel, and a 0.2:1 ratio calculates to 0.694 acre of required mitigation. **Mitigation Measure BIO-1** would reduce any impacts to CTS habitat to a less than significant level.

Level of Significance: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measures:

**Mitigation Measure BIO-1 California Tiger Salamander:**

The applicant shall purchase mitigation bank credits at the 0.2:1 mitigation ratio required for projects more than 1.3 miles from known breeding sites for a total of 0.694 acres of credits. Any conservation credits purchased for the project shall be approved by USFWS and CDFW prior to the purchase of the credits.

To ensure that migrating California Tiger Salamander (CTS) do not end up within the project site while mass grading and other ancillary grading for joint trenches, roadways, and foundation/driveway is underway, the developer shall surround the project site with CTS exclusion fencing while the project is under construction. Openings will allow for ingress and egress from the development site. This fencing shall be inspected daily by a qualified biologist or a trained construction manager daily while grading is occurring, should grading occur from October 1 through March 1. Cover boards consisting of 4 x 4-foot ½ inch plywood shall be placed every 100 feet along both sides of the exclusion fencing and shall be inspected by a USFWS and CDFW approved CTS biologist. If CTS is found trapped against the fence or under cover boards and must be moved, it shall only be moved by a qualified 10(a)(1)(A) federally permitted and a state permitted CTS biologist and as approved by USFWS and CDFW. Any such relocation would take place under measures as permitted by USFWS and CDFW in their Incidental Take Permits issued to the project that address impact to CTS.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-2: Avoidance Measures to Listed Species, Sensitive Habitats, and Surrounding Environment During Construction:** The following measures and practices shall be implemented prior to and during construction to minimize and avoid impacts to special

status species and sensitive communities. The following measures shall be noted on grading and building plans and a readily available copy with the construction foreman/manager:

- a) All ground disturbing activities will be restricted to the dry season, i.e., between April 15 – October 15.
- b) Erosion control measures will be utilized throughout all phases of operation where sediment runoff from exposed slopes threatens to enter all waters of the U.S. At no time will silt laden runoff be allowed to enter the channel or directed to where it may enter the stream. Erosion control structures will be monitored for effectiveness and will be repaired or replaced as needed. Appropriate erosion control measures will be installed around any stockpiles of soil or other materials which could be mobilized by rainfall or runoff.
- c) No fueling, cleaning, or maintenance of vehicles or equipment will take place within any areas where an accidental discharge to seasonal wetlands may occur.
- d) All equipment including excavators, trucks, hand tools, etc., that may have come in contact with invasive plants or the seeds of these plants, will be carefully cleaned before arriving on the site and will also be carefully cleaned before removal from the site to prevent spread of these plants.
- e) Construction disturbance or removal of vegetation will be restricted to the minimum footprint necessary to complete the work. The work area will be delineated where necessary with orange construction fencing to minimize impacts to habitat beyond the work limit. Project activities will avoid impacts to wetland vegetation to the greatest extent possible.
- f) Staging and storage areas for equipment, materials, fuels, lubricants, and solvents, will be located well outside of seasonal wetlands.
- g) Stationary equipment such as motors, pumps, and generators, located adjacent to aquatic features will be positioned over drip pans. Stationary heavy equipment will have suitable containment to handle a spill or leak. All activities performed near aquatic features will have absorbent materials designated for spill containment and cleanup activities on-site for use in an accidental spill.
- h) Any equipment or vehicles operated adjacent to aquatic features will be checked and maintained daily to prevent leaks of materials that could be deleterious to wildlife or habitat.
- i) Stockpiles of soil or other materials that can be blown by wind will be covered when not in active use. All trucks hauling soil, sand, and other loose materials will be covered.
- j) No other debris, rubbish, creosote-treated wood, soil, silt, sand, cement, concrete or washings thereof, or other construction-related materials or wastes will be allowed to enter into or be placed where they may be washed by rainfall

or runoff into the aquatic features. All such debris and waste will be picked-up daily and will be properly disposed of at an appropriate facility.

- k) Environmental awareness training program for all crews working on the site to include education on sensitive resources such as protected wildlife with the potential to occur within the Project Area, water quality, and environmental protection measures.
- l) Permittee will remove all temporary flagging, fencing, and/or barriers from the Project Area and vicinity of the channel upon completion of project activities.
- m) Areas of temporary ground disturbance will be revegetated using an appropriate erosion control seed mix (applicable to both sensitive and non-sensitive habitats) or will be covered with rock, wood chips, or other suitable erosion control materials as appropriate (applicable to non-sensitive habitats only).

**Mitigation Measure BIO-3: Avoid or Minimize Potential Impacts to Nesting Birds:**

The following measures shall be taken to avoid potential inadvertent destruction or disturbance of nesting birds on and near the project site as a result of construction-related activities (including but not limited to mobilization and staging, clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal, fence installation, demolition, and grading). The following measures shall be taken to avoid destruction or disturbance of nesting birds on and near the project site as a result of construction-related activities scheduled to occur during the nesting season:

- a) If construction-related activities are scheduled to occur during the nesting season (generally February 1 through August 31), a qualified biologist<sup>20</sup> shall conduct a habitat assessment and preconstruction nesting survey for active nesting no more than fourteen (14) days prior to initiation of work. Active nesting is present if a bird is sitting in a nest, a nest has eggs or chicks in it, or adults are observed carrying food to the nest. The qualified biologist conducting the surveys shall be familiar with the breeding behaviors and nest structures of birds known to nest in the project site. Surveys shall be conducted at the appropriate times of day during periods of peak activity (i.e., early morning or dusk) and shall be of sufficient duration to observe movement patterns. Surveys shall be conducted within the project area and 250 feet of the construction limits for nesting non-raptors and 1,000 feet for nesting raptors, as feasible. If the

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<sup>20</sup> A qualified biologist is an individual who possesses, at a minimum, a bachelor's or advanced degree, from an accredited university, with a major in biology, zoology, wildlife biology, natural resources science, or a closely related scientific discipline, at least two years of field experience in the biology and natural history of local plant, fish, and wildlife resources present at the project site, and knowledge of state and federal laws regarding the protection of sensitive and endangered species.

survey area is found to be absent of nesting birds, no further mitigation would be required. However, if project activities are delayed by more than fourteen (14) days, an additional nesting bird survey shall be performed.

- b) If pre-construction nesting bird surveys result in the location of active nests, no site disturbance (including but not limited to equipment staging, fence installation, clearing, grubbing, vegetation removal, fence installation, demolition, and grading) shall occur until a qualified biologist has established a temporary protective buffer around the nest(s). The buffer must be of sufficient size to protect the nesting site from construction-related disturbance and shall be established by a qualified ornithologist or biologist with extensive experience working with nesting birds near and on construction sites. No-work buffers will be placed at the discretion of the qualified biologist, dependent on species' and regulatory requirements. The nest buffer, where it intersects the project site, shall be staked with orange construction fencing or orange lath staking. Monitoring, by a qualified biologist, shall be required to ensure compliance with the relevant California Fish and Game Code requirements. Monitoring dates and findings shall be documented. Active nests found inside the limits of the buffer zones or nests within the vicinity of the project site showing signs of distress from project activity, as determined by the qualified biologist, shall be monitored daily during the duration of the project for changes in breeding behavior. If changes in behavior are observed (e.g., distress, disruptions), the buffer shall be immediately adjusted by the qualified biologist until no further interruptions to breeding behavior are detected. The nest protection buffers may be reduced if the qualified biologist determines in coordination with CDFW that construction activities would not be likely to adversely affect the nest. The qualified biologist and CDFW may agree upon an alternative monitoring schedule depending on the construction activity, season, and species potentially subject to impact. Construction shall not commence within the prescribed buffer areas until a qualified biologist has determined that the young have fledged or the nest site is otherwise no longer in use (i.e. predation or physical nest failure).
- c) A report of the findings will be prepared by a qualified biologist and submitted to the County prior to the initiation of construction-related activities that have the potential to disturb any active nests during the nesting season. The report shall include recommendations required for establishment of protective buffers as necessary to protect nesting birds. A copy of the report shall be submitted to the County and applicable regulatory agencies prior to the issuance of a grading permit.

- d) All hollow posts and pipes be capped to prevent wildlife entrapment and mortality. Metal fence stakes used on the Project site should be plugged with bolts or other plugging materials to avoid this hazard.

Mitigation Monitoring:

**Mitigation Monitoring BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-3:** The applicant shall be required to provide to Sonoma County proof that CTS conservation credits have been purchased prior to commencement of grading on the project site. In addition, Sonoma County will not issue permits for ground disturbing activities during the bird nesting season until after the site has been surveyed by a qualified biologist to ensure that no active bird nest disturbance or destruction will occur as a result of the project. If necessary, nest protection buffers will be fenced off and if nest buffers are reduced, active nest monitoring will be initiated during construction as noted in conditions above.

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

Comment:

The project site does not support riparian habitat or oak woodlands; therefore, no impacts to these sensitive natural communities would occur as a result of project development. However, as previously discussed, the project site supports 0.26-acres of seasonal wetlands, which also represents suitable federally-listed vernal pool plant habitat, that will be filled as a result of project development. In 2017 new 404 permit and 401 water quality certification applications to fill 0.26 acre of wetlands that were determined to be on the site since the former grading was completed were submitted by the Westwind Business Park landowner to the Corps of Engineers and Regional Water Quality Control Board. The purchase of additional wetland mitigation credits from an approved mitigation bank has been completed and confirmed.<sup>21</sup> Although the project site is located in a Valley Oak Combining District (VOH), there is only one valley oak planted near the parcel boundary which would not be removed or impacted as part of project construction with implementation of **mitigation measure BIO-5** (See Section 4.e). The project site does not contain any valley oaks.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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<sup>21</sup> WRA Environmental Consultants. "Biological Resources Technical Report, Landmark Hotel Group, Hyatt Hotel Project, Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California," page 11, August 2019.

- 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?**

Comment:

The proposed project would fill 0.26 acres of jurisdictional seasonal wetlands. The proposed project is part of the larger Westwind Business Park which has been under development for over three decades. Most of the business park has already been built out under authority of previously obtained permits, including 404 and 401 water quality certification applications, from regulatory agencies and with approved mitigation by purchase of mitigation bank credits for impacts and loss of wetlands habitat. Credits have previously been purchased for the fill of the seasonal wetlands onsite and no further mitigation is required.

Significance Level: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measure:

**Mitigation Measure BIO-4 Compliance with Section 404 Permit Provisions**

The applicant shall comply with all provisions of the Clean Water Act Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Permit provisions, including any best management practices, shall be noted on grading plans.

Mitigation Monitoring:

**Mitigation Monitoring BIO-4 Compliance with Section 404 Permit Provisions:** Prior to issuance of grading permits, Permit Sonoma staff shall verify that the mitigation measure is printed as a note on the grading plans.

- 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?**

Comment:

Wildlife corridors are linear and/or regional habitats that provide connectivity between or to other naturally vegetated open spaces. In the vicinity of the project site remaining open spaces are fractured by urbanization and other developments that include landscaping or that are otherwise actively used by humans. Wildlife corridors have several functions: 1) they provide avenues along which wide ranging animals can travel, migrate, and breed, allowing genetic interchange to occur; 2) populations can move in response to environmental changes and natural disasters; and 3) individuals can recolonize habitats from which populations have been locally extirpated. The project site is located within a human-altered, developed setting surrounded by paved roads and parking lots, commercial and industrial buildings, and landscaped areas.

Mark West Creek is over 2,500 feet from the project site and separated by several developed parcels and roadways. The project site does not have regional context between other open spaces, is located in a developed area, and adjacent to a major collector road (Airport Boulevard). While the project site may provide movement habitat for local wildlife, the site is relatively small and most resident wildlife that could be expected to use the project site would be those species highly adapted to living in development. Due to the urban nature of the project site, it is unlikely the site is part of a regional wildlife movement corridor, nor does it function as a native wildlife nursery site. **Mitigation Measure BIO-3** would reduce impacts to nesting birds. Therefore, the project would have a less-than-significant impact on native or migratory wildlife movement or the use of native wildlife nursery sites.

Significance Level: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measure:

**Mitigation Measure BIO-3**

Mitigation Monitoring:

**Mitigation Monitoring BIO-3**

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

Comment:

With implementation of **Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-5**, the project would be consistent with Sonoma County General Plan 2020 Land Use Element and Open Space & Resource Conservation Element's policies to protect natural resource lands including, but not limited to, watershed, fish and wildlife habitat, biotic areas, and habitat connectivity corridors. The project site does not support valley oak woodlands. Project implementation would not conflict with valley oak protection provisions of the General Plan Resource Conservation Element Section 5.1.

The project site is not located within a Riparian Corridor Combining Zone. Mark West Creek is located approximately 2,500 feet south of the project site, separated from the project site by an existing commercial development. The site is disturbed, dominated by non-native annual grassland habitat, and does not contain streams or riparian vegetation that would be impacted by project construction.

Potential Off-site Impacts

The project site is situated adjacent to a site that supports several native tree species greater than nine inches (9") in diameter at breast height that are protected by the Sonoma

County Tree Protection Ordinance. These species include valley oak (*Quercus lobata*). Project construction has the potential to result in inadvertent damage to the root systems and canopy of individual protected trees, resulting in a potentially significant impact. Implementation of **Mitigation Measure BIO-5** would reduce this potential impact to a less than significant level.

Significance Level: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measures:

**Mitigation Measure BIO-5 Protected Trees**

Pursuant to Sonoma County Zoning Regulations, Chapter 26, Article 88, the applicant shall implement the following tree protection methods to avoid inadvertent adverse construction-related impacts:

- a) Protected trees, their protected perimeters and whether they are to be retained or removed are to be clearly shown on all improvement plans. A note shall be placed on the improvement plans that "Construction is subject to requirements established by Sonoma County to protect certain trees as defined under Section 26-88-010(m) of the County Code."
- b) Before the start of any clearing, excavation, construction or other work on the site, every tree designated for protection on the approved site plan shall be clearly delineated with a substantial barrier (steel posts and barbed wire or chain link fencing) at the protected perimeter, or limits established during the permit process. The delineation markers shall remain in place for the duration of all work. All trees to be removed shall be clearly marked. A scheme shall be established for the removal and disposal of brush, earth and other debris as to avoid injury to any protected tree.
- c) Where proposed development or other site work must encroach upon the protected perimeter of a protected tree, special measures shall be incorporated to allow the roots to obtain oxygen, water and nutrients. Tree wells or other techniques may be used where advisable. No changes in existing ground level shall occur within the protected perimeter unless a drainage and aeration scheme approved by a certified arborist is utilized. No burning or use of equipment with an open flame shall occur near or within the protected perimeter (except for authorized controlled burns).
- d) No storage or dumping of oil, gasoline, chemicals or other substances that may be harmful to trees shall occur within the drip line of any tree, or any other location on the site from which such substances might enter the drip line.
- e) If any damage to a protected tree should occur during or as a result of work on the site, the County shall be promptly notified of such damage. If a protected tree is damaged so that it cannot be preserved in a healthy state, the planning director



shall require replacement in accordance with the arboreal value chart. If on-site replacement is not feasible, the applicant shall pay an in lieu fee to a tree replacement fund.

- f) The following design standards for protected trees shall be adhered to:
- i. Underground trenching for utilities should avoid tree roots within the protected perimeter. If avoidance is impractical, tunnels should be made below major roots. If tunnels are impractical and cutting roots is required, it shall be done by hand-sawn cuts after hand digging trenches. Trenches should be consolidated to serve as many units as possible.
  - ii. Compaction within the drip line or protected perimeter shall be avoided.
  - iii. Paving with either concrete or asphalt over the protected perimeter should be avoided. If paving over the protected perimeter cannot be avoided, affected trees shall be treated as removed for purposes of calculating arboreal values.

Mitigation Monitoring:

**Mitigation Monitoring BIO-5 Protected Trees**

Sonoma County staff shall periodically conduct site inspections during construction to ensure compliance with the above referenced measures. The County also shall verify post construction whether protected trees were damaged.

- 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?**

Comment:

There are no adopted habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans covering the project site. However, as discussed in Section 4.a, the project site is located in the Santa Rosa Plain, which is protected by a long-term conservation program designed to mitigate potential adverse effects on species such as CTS and listed plant species as a result of development in the area. The Conservation Strategy provides guidance as to USFWS's policies for reviewing projects that affect listed species on the Santa Rosa Plain. The Conservation Strategy provides the biological framework upon which the Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO) is based, and provides avoidance/minimization measures and required mitigation ratios for CTS and listed plants that are specifically incorporated into the PBO. Projects that will require Corps permit approval (such as the proposed project) may be appended to the PBO and thereby be provided individual take authorization, if the projects do the following: (1) apply the PBO's interim mitigation ratios, and (2) adhere to all applicable avoidance and minimization measures in the PBO. The proposed project would not affect any currently occupied habitat for listed plant species and therefore potentially qualifies for appendage to the PBO. However, the final decision to allow appendage rests

with USFWS which reserves the right to require a separate Section 7 consultation for any project based on the level of impacts, avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures.

Under the Conservation Strategy, the project site is within an area designated in the Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy and the Programmatic BO as “may affect listed plants and would likely affect CTS.” The Project Area is greater than 2,200 feet (and nearly 3 miles) from the nearest documented breeding habitat. The vast majority of CTS reported in uplands are within 2,200 feet of breeding habitat. The project would be developed in accordance with the guidelines applicable to this mapped area of the Conservation Strategy through implementation of **Mitigation Measure BIO-1 and BIO-2** which address potential impacts to CTS.

Significance Level: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measures:

**Mitigation Measures BIO-1 and BIO-2**

Mitigation Monitoring:

**Mitigation Monitoring BIO-1 and BIO-2**

## 5. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

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

Comment:

A Cultural Resources Study was completed for the project site by Tom Origer and Associates on October 23, 2018.<sup>22</sup> An intensive field survey of the project site was completed by Tom Origer on October 10, 2018. There are no existing buildings or structures located at the site and a review of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century maps show no buildings at the project site.

Significance Level: No Impact

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

Comment:

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<sup>22</sup> Tom Origer and Associates. “A Cultural Resources Study for the Airport Boulevard Hotel Project (APNs 059-370-033 and 059-370-034), Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California,” October 23, 2018.

There are no known archaeological resources on the site, but the project could uncover such materials during construction. Cultural resources records search results from the Northwest Information Center (NWIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), an archaeological field survey, and a Native American Sacred Lands File Search through the Native American Heritage Commission indicate that 30 studies have been conducted within a quarter mile of the study area.<sup>23</sup> These studies resulted in the formal documentation of two cultural resources located within a half-mile of the project area, but no cultural or historic resources are recorded within the project site. Additionally, the NWIC Record Search showed no prehistoric Native American Sites. Archival research indicates that the project site had not been previously subjected to a cultural resources study. There are no ethnographic sites described within one-half mile of the study area. A review of 19th and 20th century maps show no buildings within the study area, and no archaeological site indicators were observed during the October 10, 2018, site visit conducted as part of the cultural resources study.<sup>24</sup>

No prehistoric or historic resources or indicators were found during this survey. Determining the potential for buried deposits factors includes landform age, distance to water, slope of the APE, and archaeological data (Meyer and Kaijankoski 2017). The site lies on a geologic formation that dates to the mid-Pleistocene epoch. The greatest slope of the APE is 9% and the distance to a reliable water source is approximately 180 meters. Based on geologic formation age, analysis of the environmental setting, and incorporating Meyer and Kaijankoski (2017) analysis of sensitivity for buried sites, there is a very low potential (less than 1 on a scale of 1-10) for there to be buried archaeological site indicators within the project site. The study notes that there are no prehistoric or historic archaeological site indicators found during a field survey or archival research.

Undiscovered archaeological resources may be accidentally encountered during project implementation. As a standard condition of approval the proposed project would be required to comply with Section 11-14-050 of the Sonoma County Grading Ordinance which establishes uniformly applied development standards to reduce the potential for impact to cultural resources to a less than significant level by requiring that all work be halted in the vicinity where human remains or archaeological resources are discovered during construction grading and drainage and that the Director of Permit Sonoma and the County Coroner be notified to ensure compliance with state law regarding the proper disposition of human remains, including those identified as Native American. Similarly, if archaeological resources or suspected archaeological resources are discovered, the Director of Permit Sonoma shall notify the State Historic Preservation Office and Northwest Information Center at Sonoma State University and the permittee shall retain a qualified archeologist to evaluate the find to ensure proper disposition of the archaeological resources or suspected

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<sup>23</sup> Tom Origer and Associates, October 23, 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Tom Origer and Associates, October 23, 2018.

archaeological resources. The Director shall provide notice of the find to any tribes that have been identified as having cultural ties and affiliation with the geographic area in which the archaeological resources or suspected archaeological resources were discovered, if the tribe or tribes have requested notice and provided a contact person and current address to which the notice is to be sent. The Director may consult with and solicit comments from notified tribes to aid in the evaluation, protection, and proper disposition of the archaeological resources or suspected archaeological resources. Archaeological resources may include historic or prehistoric ruins, burial grounds, pottery, arrowheads, midden, or culturally modified soil deposits. Artifacts associated with prehistoric ruins may include humanly modified stone, shell, bone, or other cultural materials such as charcoal, ash, and burned rock indicative of food procurement or processing activities. Prehistoric domestic features may include hearths, fire pits, or floor depressions; mortuary features are typically represented by human skeletal remains.

Permit Sonoma staff referred the project application to Native American Tribes within Sonoma County to request consultation under AB 52. No requests for consultation were received. Representatives from the Cloverdale Ranch of Pomo Indians and Middletown Rancheria requested standard construction measures incorporated as conditions of approval and Lytton Rancheria responded requesting a mitigation measure be added to require tribal and/or archaeological monitoring of ground disturbance in native soils (Mitigation Measure TCR-1). See Section 18, Tribal Cultural Resources, for mitigation measures associated with project construction and impacts to unknown archaeological resources. **Mitigation Measure TCR-1** would reduce the project's potentially significant impacts on unknown onsite archaeological resources to less than significant.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measures:

**Mitigation Measure TCR-1:**

Mitigation Monitoring:

**Mitigation Monitoring TCR-1:**

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

Comment:

No burial sites are known in the vicinity of the project area. The site would be disturbed by grading and construction activities. However, based on landform age, analysis of the environmental setting, and incorporating Meyer and Kaijankoski (2017) analysis of sensitivity for buried sites, there is a low potential for buried archaeological site indicators

within the study area.<sup>25</sup> In the unlikely event the site contains a burial site, compliance with Sections 11-14-050 and 26-88-254(14) of the Sonoma County Code noted above and implementation of **Mitigation Measure TCR-1** would ensure necessary steps are taken to protect the resource.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measures:

**Mitigation Measure TCR-1**

Mitigation Monitoring:

**Mitigation Monitoring TCR-1**

## 6. ENERGY

### Would the project:

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

### Comment:

Construction activities associated with the proposed project would require the use of heavy-duty, off-road equipment and construction-related vehicle trips that would combust fuel, primarily diesel and gasoline. Heavy-duty construction equipment would be required to comply with CARB's airborne toxic control measures, which restrict heavy-duty diesel vehicle idling to five minutes. Since petroleum use during construction would be temporary and required to conduct development activities, it would not be wasteful or inefficient. The improvements to energy efficiency are in large part related to updates to the California Green Building Standards Code (2019). The project's potential emissions were estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), Version 2016.3.2. As estimated in CalEEMod<sup>26</sup>, the consumption rates for the proposed project were estimated based on square footage of the restaurant and hotel land uses (See Section 8). Although more electricity and natural gas would be consumed on an annual basis compared to the existing vacant lot, the proposed project's energy consumption would not be wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary. Implementation of **Mitigation Measure GHG-1** which includes energy reduction provisions for EV charging stations, an electric vehicle for hotel shuttle service, and requires the project to subscribe to a program through a local electricity provider that

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<sup>25</sup> Tom Origer and Associates, October 23, 2018.

<sup>26</sup> AECOM, "Technical Report for the Proposed Hyatt Place Hotel Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions." July 2021.

provides a power mix from clean sources, with a priority on a GHG-free option but also allowing for renewable sources, depending on local availability would reduce the project's usage of natural gas. This impact would be less than significant.

Significance Level: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measures:

**Mitigation Measure GHG-1**

Mitigation Monitoring:

**Mitigation Monitoring GHG-1**

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

Comment:

The proposed project would not conflict with nor obstruct a state or local plan adopted for the purposes of increasing the amount of renewable energy or energy efficiency. As described in section 6.a above, the project would comply with Title 24 Building Standards Code and Sonoma County Ordinance 7D2-1, which pertain to energy efficiency, and the proposed hotel would be constructed to the latest CalGreen Code,<sup>27</sup> which would make the proposed project compliant with state and local plans. This impact would be less than significant.

Significance Level: No Impact

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<sup>27</sup> California Green Building Standards Commission (CalGreen), 2019. Division 5.2. Available at: [https://up.codes/viewer/california/ca-green-code-2019/chapter/5/nonresidential-mandatory-measures#divider\\_5.2](https://up.codes/viewer/california/ca-green-code-2019/chapter/5/nonresidential-mandatory-measures#divider_5.2), accessed June 22, 2021.



## 7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:

- a) **Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:**
- i. **Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.**

Comment:

The project is not within a fault hazard zone, as defined by the Alquist-Priolo fault maps.<sup>28</sup>

Significance Level: No Impact

- ii. **Strong seismic ground shaking?**

Comment:

All of Sonoma County is subject to seismic shaking that would result from earthquakes along the San Andreas, Healdsburg-Rodgers Creek, and other faults. The design and construction of new structures are subject to engineering standards of the California Building Code (CBC), which take into account soil properties, seismic shaking and foundation type. Project conditions of approval require that building permits be obtained for all construction and that the project meet all standard seismic and soil test/compaction requirements. The project would therefore not expose people to substantial risk of injury from seismic shaking.

Significance Level: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measure:

**Mitigation Measure GEO-1**

All earthwork, grading, trenching, backfilling, and compaction operations shall be conducted in accordance with the County Subdivision Ordinance (Chapter 25, Sonoma County Code). All construction activities shall meet the California Building Code regulations for seismic safety. Construction plans shall be subject to review and approval of Permit Sonoma prior to the issuance of a building permit. All work shall be subject to inspection by Permit Sonoma

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<sup>28</sup> California Geologic Survey. California Department of Conservation, "Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation Map," accessed October 7, 2020. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/EQZApp/app/>

and must conform to all applicable code requirements and approved improvement plans prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

Mitigation Monitoring:

**Mitigation Monitoring GEO-1**

Building/grading permits for ground disturbing activities shall not be approved for issuance by Project Review staff until the above notes are printed on applicable building, grading and improvement plans. The applicant shall be responsible for notifying construction contractors about code requirement.

**iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?**

Comment:

A geotechnical investigation has been prepared by PJC & Associates, Inc. titled "Geotechnical Investigation: Proposed Hotel and Site Improvements."<sup>29</sup> The geotechnical investigation evaluated subsurface conditions at the site and developed geotechnical criteria for the design and construction of the proposed project. The site is located in the Coast Ranges Geomorphic Province of California. The structure of the northern Coast Ranges region is complex due to continuous tectonic deformation imposed over a long period of time. The site has been mapped to be underlain by early to late Pleistocene alluvial deposits (Qoa). These deposits are characterized to consist of heterogeneous deposits of alluvium, fan, and terrace deposits and generally consists of dissected sands, gravels, silts, and clays which likely extend to a great depth below the site. As part of the geotechnical investigation by PJC & Associates, Inc. boreholes were advanced to a depth of 34.5 feet to investigate the potential of liquefaction at the site. The borehole generally encountered sequences of fine-grained, plastic soils, and dense granular soils to a depth of 34.5 feet beneath the ground. Therefore, PJC & Associates concluded the risk of soil liquefaction at the site to be low.

Significance Level: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measure:

**Mitigation Measure GEO-2**

The design of all earthwork, cuts and fills, drainage, pavements, utilities, foundations and structural components shall conform with the specifications and criteria contained in the project geotechnical reports prepared by PJC & Associates. The geotechnical engineer shall submit an approval letter for the engineered grading plans prior to issuance of the grading permit. Prior to final of the grading permit the geotechnical engineer shall also inspect the construction work and shall certify to Permit Sonoma, prior to the acceptance of the

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<sup>29</sup> PJC & Associates, Inc. "Geotechnical Investigation, Proposed Hotel and Site Improvements, 3750 North Laughlin Road Santa Rosa, California," October 2018.

improvements or issuance of a certificate of occupancy that the improvements have been constructed in accordance with the geotechnical specifications.

Mitigation Monitoring:

**Mitigation Monitoring GEO-2**

Permit Sonoma Plan Check staff will ensure plans are in compliance with geotechnical requirements. Permit Sonoma inspectors will ensure construction is in compliance with geotechnical requirements.

**iv. Landslides?**

Comment:

Steep slopes characterize much of Sonoma County, particularly the northern and eastern portion of the County. Where these areas are underlain by weak or unconsolidated earth materials landslides are a hazard. If the project includes structures located in the footprint of a mapped landslide or within a landslide hazard area building or grading could destabilize slopes resulting in slope failure. The project would be located in a Class 0 Landslide Hazard Area according to the General Plan Public Safety Element, Figure PS-1d.<sup>30</sup> This area is characterized as having no slopes and weak rocks. Therefore, the project site would not be susceptible to landslides. All structures will be required to meet building permit requirements, including seismic safety standards and soil test/compaction requirements.

Significance Level: No Impact

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

Comment:

The project site is developed and generally level, which limits the potential for substantial soil erosion. The grading and excavation phase when soils are exposed has the highest potential for erosion. Ground-disturbing activities that would occur with implementation of the proposed project would include site-specific grading for foundations and building pads. Temporary erosion could occur during project construction. However, the project would involve ground disturbance of approximately one acre of lot area and would therefore be required to comply with erosion control standards administered by the San Francisco Bay RWQCB through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit process. The process requires preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan and implementation of nonpoint source control of stormwater runoff.

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<sup>30</sup> Sonoma County General Plan 2020, Public Safety Element, Figure PS-1d, Deep-Seated Landslide Hazard Areas, Accessed 8-20-2020 <http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147542632>

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

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

The County-adopted grading ordinances and standards and related conditions of approval also require compliance with all standards and regulations adopted by the State and Regional Water Quality Control Board, such as the Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) requirements, Low Impact Development measures, and any other adopted best management practices. Therefore, no significant adverse soil erosion or related soil erosion water quality impacts are expected given the mandated conditions and standards that need to be met. See further discussion of related issues (such as maintenance of required post construction water quality facilities) refer to the Hydrology and Water Quality Section 10.

Significance Level: Less than Significant 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?**

Comment:

The project site is subject to seismic shaking and other geologic hazards as described in item 6.a.ii, iii, and iv, above. Refer back to appropriate mitigation measures.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation:

**Mitigation Measures GEO-1 and GEO-2**

Mitigation Monitoring:

**Mitigation Monitoring GEO-1 and GEO-2**

**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?**

Comment:

Subsurface conditions at the site were investigated by drilling six exploratory boreholes to depths between 14.5 to 34.5 feet below the surface. Based on laboratory testing and knowledge of the soils, the artificial fill at the site exhibits moderate expansion potential and the alluvial soils exhibit medium plasticity characteristics and moderate expansion potential. With implementation of the measures identified in the geotechnical investigation, combined with conformance with standard CBC and other applicable State and local regulations (all of which shall be required as conditions of approval for the project), potential hazards from expansive soils would be less than significant.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

The project site is in an area served by the Airport-Larkfield-Wikiup Sanitation Zone public sewer; septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems are not proposed as part of the project.

Significance Level: No impact

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

Comment:

Paleontological resources include fossil remains, as well as fossil localities and rock or soil formations that have produced fossil material. No site surveys for paleontological resources have been conducted for the site. However, an on-line archival search of the University of California Museum of Paleontology (UCMP) in Berkeley, California, was conducted on August 10, 2020, which indicated no records of recorded fossil sites within the project site, although there are fossil sites recorded in project vicinity. Therefore, though there are no records of recorded fossil sites within the project site, the proposed project could disrupt, alter, or eliminate as-yet undiscovered paleontological resources that may be present in the under the project site. Implementation of the mitigation measure below would reduce impacts on paleontological resources to less-than significant levels.

Significance Level: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measures:

**Mitigation Measure GEO-3:** The following shall be noted on all grading and building plans. If paleontological resources are found, all earthwork in the vicinity of the find shall cease, and Permit Sonoma staff shall be notified so that the find can be evaluated by a qualified paleontologist. When contacted, a member of Permit Sonoma project review staff and paleontologist shall visit the site to determine the extent of the resource and to develop proper mitigation measures required for the discovery. No further grading in the vicinity of the find shall commence until a mitigation plan is approved and completed subject to the review and approval of the paleontologist and project review staff.

Mitigation Monitoring:

**Mitigation Monitoring GEO-3:** Prior to issuance of grading or building permits, Permit Sonoma staff shall ensure Mitigation Measure GEO-3 is noted on project plans. Permit Sonoma shall be consulted if a paleontological resource is discovered onsite, and shall review and approve paleontologist-recommended measures to recover or preserve any data or paleontological resources before ground-disturbing activities may continue.

## 8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

The applicant submitted an Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Technical Report that was prepared by AECOM and dated July 2021.<sup>31</sup> The study provided the regulatory framework applicable to the project, estimated construction and operational emission associated with the project using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2020.4.0, and evaluated the potential for the project to result in impacts with regard to air quality and greenhouse gas emissions. As discussed in greater detail below, potentially significant impacts may be reduced to a less-than-significant level through the incorporation of mitigation measures. The Technical Report was found to be sufficient by Permit Sonoma Project Review Staff, based on the site-specific information available at the time of the analysis.

**Greenhouse Gas Emissions Setting:**

Gases that trap heat in the atmosphere and affect regulation of the Earth's temperature are known as greenhouse gases (GHGs). The six most common GHGs are:

- Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)
- Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>)
- Nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O)
- Sulfur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>)

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<sup>31</sup> AECOM, "Technical Report for the Proposed Hyatt Place Hotel Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions". July 2021.

- Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)
- Perfluorocarbons (PFCs)

GHGs that contribute the climate change are a different type of pollutant than criteria or hazardous air pollutants, as previously discussed in Section 3, Air Quality, because climate change is global in scale, both in terms of causes and effects. Some GHGs are emitted to the atmosphere naturally by biological and geological processes such as evaporation (water vapor), aerobic respiration (carbon dioxide), and off-gassing from low oxygen environments such as swamps or exposed permafrost (methane); however, GHG emissions from human activities such as fuel combustion (e.g., carbon dioxide) and refrigerants use (e.g., hydrofluorocarbons) significantly contribute to overall GHG concentrations in the atmosphere, which affects climate regulation and results a changing climate globally. Examples of the effects of global climate change include rising temperatures, increased severe weather events such as drought and flooding.

GHGs can remain in the atmosphere long after they are emitted. The potential for a GHG to absorb and trap heat in the atmosphere is considered its global warming potential (GWP). The reference gas for measuring GWP is CO<sub>2</sub>, which has a GWP of one. By comparison, CH<sub>4</sub> has a GWP of 25, which means that one molecule of CH<sub>4</sub> has 25 times the effect on global warming as one molecule of CO<sub>2</sub>. Multiplying the estimated emissions for non-CO<sub>2</sub> GHGs by their GWP determines their carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e), which enables a project's combined global warming potential to be expressed in terms of mass CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Most often, GHG emissions associated with projects are referred to in terms of metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e, or MTCO<sub>2</sub>e.

In 1997, the United Nations' Kyoto Protocol was adopted in Kyoto, Japan, establishing an international treaty that set targets for reductions in emissions of four specific GHGs – CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O, and SF<sub>6</sub> – and two groups of gases – HFCs and PFCs. As previously mentioned, these GHGs are the primary GHGs emitted into the atmosphere by human activities.

The State of California has numerous regulations and executive directives aimed at reducing GHG emissions. In 2005, for instance, the governor issued Executive Order S-3-05, establishing statewide GHG emissions reduction targets. Executive Order S-3-05 provides for the following targets by 2010, emissions shall be reduced to 2000 levels; by 2020, emissions shall be reduced to 1990 levels; and by 2050, emissions shall be reduced to 80 percent below 1990 levels. In 2006, the California Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32) was signed into law. AB 32 codifies the statewide GHG emission reduction targets and required CARB to prepare a Scoping Plan that outlines the main State strategies for reducing GHGs. CARB approved a Scoping Plan in 2008 and updated it in 2014.

Executive Order B-30-15, 2030 Carbon Target and Adaptation, issued in April 2015, sets a target of reducing GHG emissions by 40 percent below 1990 levels in 2030. By directing state agencies to take measures consistent with their existing authority to reduce GHG emissions, this order



establishes coherence between the 2020 and 2050 GHG reduction goals set by AB 32 and seeks to align California with the scientifically established GHG emissions levels needed to limit global warming below two degrees Celsius.

To reinforce the goals established through Executive Order B-30-15, Senate Bill (SB) 32, and AB 197 were authorized in 2016. Senate Bill 32 (SB 32) made the GHG reduction target to reduce GHG emissions by 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 a requirement as opposed to a goal. AB 197 gives the Legislature additional authority over CARB to ensure the most successful strategies for lowering emissions are implemented, and requires CARB to, “protect the state’s most impacted and disadvantaged communities ...[and] consider the social costs of the emissions of greenhouse gases.”

The Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority prepared the *Climate Action 2020 and Beyond* (CA2020). CA2020 included a calculation of 1990 emissions in Sonoma County, as well as forecast emissions and forecast population and employment growth for the County.<sup>32</sup> Using data included in CA2020, adjusting these data to focus on land use related emissions only, factoring in forecast population and employment growth in the County, and adjusting the target to be consistent with the SB 32 statewide target for 2030, yields an efficiency threshold of 2.7 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e per service population (SP).

The efficiency metric of 2.7 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e/SP is appropriate for the proposed project, because it is based on an emissions profile and socioeconomic/land use growth characteristics that are representative of the project’s location (i.e., specific to Sonoma County). It accounts for land use growth within the County specifically, since it is derived from CA2020’s land use and GHG emissions forecasts. The 2.7 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e/SP efficiency metric represents what is needed for the County to achieve a 2030 target consistent with the state’s 2030 target per SB 32, based on the County’s land use and emissions profile.

**Would the project:**

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

Comment:

Global climate change is the result of GHG emissions worldwide; individual projects do not generate enough GHG emissions to influence global climate change. Thus, the analysis of GHG emissions is by nature a cumulative analysis focused on whether an individual project’s contribution to global climate change is cumulatively considerable.

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<sup>32</sup> Verano Hotel and Housing Project IS/MND. County of Sonoma. Available online at: <https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/2021060288>

### **Construction**

GHG emissions from construction activities are one-time, short-term emissions and therefore would not significantly contribute to long-term cumulative GHG emissions impacts. One-time, short-term emissions are converted to average annual emissions by amortizing them over the service life of a building. For buildings in general, it is reasonable to look at a 30-year time frame, since this is a typical interval before a new building requires the first major renovation.

GHG emissions generated by project construction were evaluated using CalEEMod and are shown in Table 8-1.

**Table 8-1: Estimated Project Construction GHG Emissions**

Year	CO <sub>2</sub> e (Metric Tons Per Year)
2021	119
2022	482
2023	51
Amortized Total Emissions (30 year)	21.75
Source: AECOM 2021; (Table AQ-9).	

The annual construction emissions for years 2021 through 2023 are based on the CalEEMod default construction schedule with the duration of each construction activity normalized to 30 years.

### **Operational**

Operational GHG emissions are estimated to be 2,248 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e per year, and operational plus amortized construction GHG emissions are estimated to be 2,270 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e per year, as shown in Table AQ-10, in the first operational year. This first operational year is compared to a significance threshold of 2.7 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e/SP, as discussed under the “Greenhouse Gas Emissions Summary and Background” provided earlier in this section.

**Table 8-2: Estimated Project GHG Emissions (Unmitigated)**

Sector	CO <sub>2</sub> e (Metric Tons Per Year)
Area	0.01
Energy	627
Mobile	1,542
Stationary	7
Waste	54

Water	19
Total	2,248
Operational + Amortized Emissions <sup>(A)</sup>	2,270
Service Population <sup>(B)</sup>	75
Project GHG Efficiency (MTCO <sub>2</sub> e/SP)	30.3
Sonoma Co SB 32-Based Significance Threshold (MTCO <sub>2</sub> e/SP)	2.7
Exceeds Significance Threshold?	Yes
Source: AECOM 2021; (Table AQ-10). (A) See Table 8-1. (B) Service Population includes the anticipated number of restaurant and hotel employees provided by the project (75).	

As shown in Table 8-2, the project would result in annual estimated GHG emissions of approximately 2,270 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e per year, for a GHG efficiency of 30.3 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e/SP. This value exceeds the 2.7 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e/SP threshold. As such, this is a potentially significant impact that requires mitigation.

Accordingly, the County would implement **Mitigation Measure GHG-1**, which requires, among other things: the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging for 10 percent of all standard parking spaces; EVs or other zero-emissions vehicles for hotel shuttle service; procuring the project's electricity through a local electricity provider that sources its electricity from clean sources (e.g., GHG-free and/or renewable sources); a general prohibition of natural gas except for the restaurant, water heater, and pool heater; and GHG emissions offsets with annual reporting requirements to reduce project GHG emissions in line with the 2.7 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e/SP threshold. The measure also allows the applicant the option to implement additional measures, including additional building features (e.g., solar panels) to reduce GHG emissions associated with project operation and reduce the need for offsets, provided such reductions are documented.

Table 8-2 shows the GHG emission reductions associated with the elements of **Mitigation Measure GHG-1**. For example, the emissions shown in Table 8-2 reflect the project subscribing to the local Sonoma Clean Power Clean Start program that reports a current emissions intensity of approximately 40 pounds per megawatt-hour and prohibiting the use of natural gas with the exception of the restaurant. Installation of EV charging stations will support the expanded availability and use of electric and hybrid vehicles; however, additional emissions reductions from this action are not accounted for beyond the mobile source emissions that already reflect an increase in electric and hybrid vehicles as part of the average fleet mix. Because the quantified emissions reductions identified in Table 8-2 do not achieve the Project GHG efficiency target, offsets are required. As noted, additional emissions reduction may be achieved if, in addition to use of the measures required by provisions (a) through (d) of Mitigation Measure GHG-1, the proposed Project incorporates

additional measures to reduce or off-set energy demand in implementation of provision (e) of Mitigation Measure GHG-1.

Mitigation Measure GHG-1 requires that the project annually demonstrate to the County the reduction achieved through provisions (a) through (e), and that if mitigation is not sufficient to achieve the identified performance standard, the project shall purchase and retire GHG emissions credits in an amount adequate to achieve the performance standard. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant with mitigation.

**Table 8-2: Estimated Project GHG Emissions (Mitigated)**

Sector	CO <sub>2</sub> e (Metric Tons Per Year)
Area	0.01
Energy	433
Mobile	1,542
Stationary	7
Waste	54
Water	15
Total	2,050
Operational + Amortized Emissions <sup>(A)</sup>	2,083
Service Population <sup>(B)</sup>	75
Project GHG Efficiency (MTCO <sub>2</sub> e/SP)	27.77
Sonoma Co SB 32-Based Significance Threshold (MTCO <sub>2</sub> e/SP)	2.7
Exceeds Significance Threshold?	Yes
Source: AECOM 2021; (Table AQ-11). (A) See Table 8-1. (B) Service Population includes the anticipated number of restaurant and hotel employees provided by the project (75).	

Significance Level: Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measures:

**Mitigation Measure GHG-1:** The following mitigations shall be required as part of the project in order to reduce GHG emissions associated with the project:

- (a) The project shall install EV charging stations at a minimum of 10 percent of all standard parking spaces and such parking spaces shall have a preferred location that is relatively closer to the main hotel entrance compared to non-EV charging station parking spaces.

- (b) The project shall use electric vehicles or other zero emissions vehicle for hotel shuttle service.
- (c) The project shall subscribe to a program through a local electricity provider that provides a power mix from clean sources, with a priority on a GHG-free option but also allowing for renewable sources, depending on local availability. For example, the EverGreen 100 percent renewable program available through Sonoma Clean Power, provided such a program is locally available at prices substantially equivalent to 2021 Sonoma Green Power prices, adjusted for CPI in future years.
- (d) The project shall prohibit the use of natural gas with the exception of the restaurant, the water heater, and the pool heater.
- (e) The project may implement such additional measures as it determines are feasible which, though they are too uncertain to support a projection of a specific number of reduced MT CO<sub>2</sub>e now, may reduce or offset emissions, as documented in the annual reports referenced below. The additional measures may include, but are not limited to the following on-site reduction measures, or off-site offset measures:
- Install solar PV panels in the parking area and/or on the rooftop;
  - Install solar hot water heaters;
  - Partner with rental car companies to offer discounted rentals to hotel guests for alternative-fueled vehicles;
  - Encourage or use of alternative-fueled vehicles by employees;
  - Provide EV car share; and/or
  - Add EV charging stations beyond that which is required by item (a).
- (f) The project shall purchase and retire GHG emissions credits annually in an amount sufficient to reduce the project's net amortized construction and operational emissions to less than 2.7 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e per service population through the end of the operational life of the project, or to an efficiency threshold for GHG emissions developed and adopted by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District or Sonoma County that is more stringent than 2.7 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e per service population.
- (g) The project shall monitor emissions on an ongoing basis and present a report annually to the County. The applicant shall provide proof annually that the emissions credits required by (f) have been purchased and retired on behalf of the project. This proof is required prior to issuance of the first certificate of occupancy for the first year of operation, and annually for every subsequent year of operations.
- (h) The amount of offsets required shall be determined based upon estimated emissions of 27.77 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e per service population, based on a service population of 75 for the first year of operation, and upon actual emissions during the prior year

(or the most recent prior 12-month period for which data is feasibly available) for subsequent years of operation. Purchase and retirement of credits can also occur for multiple years in advance.

- (i) In each annual report, the project shall provide a third-party verification concerning retired credits and the unique serial numbers of those credits showing that they have been retired. The County shall confirm receipt of verification reports and serial numbers prior to permit issuance. The verification report shall be approved by the County Permit & Resource Management Department. The project shall bear the cost of any peer review.
- (j) The retired credits must have been verified by an approved registry and be consistent with the requirements for compliance offset protocols as established by California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Section 95972. An approved registry is an entity approved by CARB to act as an “offset project registry” to help administer parts of the Compliance Offset Program under CARB’s Cap and Trade Regulation. GHG offset credits shall be real, verifiable, quantifiable, enforceable, permanent, and additional as set forth in California Health and Safety Code §38652(d)(1) and (d)(2) and as defined by California Code of Regulations, Title 17, sections 38562 and 95802. The reductions from the offset credits shall take effect in the following locations in order of priority to the extent feasible: (1) Sonoma County; and (2) the boundaries of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. If credits are not feasibly available from projects occurring within the County or Air District boundaries, then credits may be obtained for reduction measures in the state of California. All offset credits shall be verified by a third party accredited by CARB. In the unlikely event that an approved registry becomes no longer approved by CARB and the offset credits cannot be transferred to another approved registry, the Project applicant shall comply with the rules and procedures for retiring and/or replacing offset credits in the manner specified by the applicable Protocol, Standard or Methodology, including (to the extent required) by purchasing an equivalent number of credits to recoup the loss.

Mitigation Monitoring:

**Mitigation Monitoring GHG-1:** See the reporting requirements specified in provisions (g) and (i) of Mitigation Measure GHG-1.

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

Comment: The County does not have an adopted Climate Action Plan but has established GHG reduction goals. The project, by implementing current county codes and Mitigation

Measure GHG-1 would be consistent with local or state plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

Mitigation:

**See Mitigation Measure GHG-1.**

Mitigation Monitoring:

**See Mitigation Measure GHG-1.**

## **9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

### **Hazards and Hazardous Materials Setting:**

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was prepared by EBA Engineering in December 2016.<sup>33</sup> As part of the 2016 Phase I ESA, Environmental Data Resources, Inc. (EDR) was contracted to provide a database search of public lists of sites that generate, store, treat, or dispose of hazardous materials or sites for which a release or incident has occurred for the project site and surrounding area. Federal, state, and county lists were reviewed as part of the research effort.

A review of available historical information indicates that the project site and much of the surrounding area were utilized as part of the Santa Rosa Army Airfield (SRAAF) complex. In the early 1940's the SRAAF was created as an effort of war preparation as a training facility for aircraft. The airfield complex was a large facility and included the existing footprint of the Sonoma County Airport and lands extending to the east to Northwest Pacific Railroad right-of-way. The airfield complex included many structures and infrastructure including the airfield, aircraft maintenance and support facilities, vehicle maintenance and support facilities, barracks, offices and administrative facilities, roads and water and wastewater facilities.

The project site property was located within the cantonment area of the airfield complex which extended east of the airfield and contained several structures and site uses. The Jacobs Engineering (Jacobs, 1997) assessment of the former airfield complex provides an inventory of former structures at the project site that included several barracks and associated structures. The facility inventory as presented in the Jacobs Engineering report provides minimal detail of the historic structures and site uses that were present at the project site as part of the airfield complex. From this information, it appears that the project site was the location of officer barracks, latrine, and administration buildings. The Jacobs report further indicates that Building T-132 was part of the structures located in the area of the project site. The assessment

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<sup>33</sup> EBA Engineering. "Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Westwind Business Park Lot A, 3750 North Laughlin Road," December 7, 2016.

concluded that based available records that it was suspected that underground fuel storage tanks (USTs) were historically associated with the structure. Building T-132 was located to the south of the project site and was reportedly removed in 1954. The location of building T-132 was subsequently developed as one of the existing commercial buildings located to the south of the project site. The Jacobs Engineering report recommended that additional investigation consisting of a geophysical survey and other appropriate actions should be conducted at suspected UST locations.

In 2000 a limited Phase II environmental investigation was completed by EBA Engineering at the project site. The investigation included limited excavation of a magnetic anomaly that was identified during the completion of a geophysical survey. The work was conducted with oversight from the Sonoma County Department of Fire and Emergency Services (SCDFES) and was conducted primarily to identify the anomaly and to ensure that no USTs were present at the project site. During the investigation it was determined that the magnetic anomaly was due to the presence of a metallic remnant of a sewer system that was buried at the property. The findings from the work were reported to the SCDFES with a recommendation for no further work required.

The Jacobs Engineering report also indicates that the northeast corner of the project site is identified as having possibly been a location for ammunition disposal. The ammunition disposal site appears to have had little additional assessment. It should be further noted that the northern portion of the project site is partially developed along Airport Boulevard with curb, gutter and sidewalk and that there are building pads that have been constructed at the project site and the properties to the east. There is no record that indicates that ammunition has been discovered at the project site or neighboring properties.

A review of the efforts that were employed at the airfield complex in 1990's indicates that the cantonment area and the project site area specifically were reviewed for the presence of structures and beneficial use of former airfield assets. The report further concludes that no further action was warranted under the Former Used Defense site closure process for investigation of the project area which included the project site property.

While EDR did not identify the project site property as having issues of environmental concern, several mapped sites having environmental concerns were identified within a one-mile radius of the project site.

**Adjacent Properties:**

Several Adjacent properties were listed in the databases searched by EDR:

- Dragonfly Aviation – 2222 Airport Boulevard, Santa Rosa: The Dragonfly Aviation site is located approximately 600 feet southwest from the project site and is listed in databases and regulatory files as having completed an investigation for the use and



removal of USTs. In March 2008 a 6,000-gallon UST and an 8,000-gallon UST used to store aviation gasoline were removed from the site. Soil samples collected at the time of tank removal did not indicate any petroleum hydrocarbon constituents in soil above their respective reporting limits. No additional work was necessary and the site was subsequently granted closure following the removal of the tanks.

- Apex Above Ground Fuel Tanks – 2232 Airport Boulevard, Santa Rosa: The Apex above ground storage tanks (AST) site is located approximately 600 feet southwest of the project site and listed in databases for formerly having aboveground fuel tanks. Two 10,000-gallon aboveground tanks that were used to store jet fuel were removed from the site in March 2008. Soil samples collected from under the former tank containment structure and near the fuel product line and fuel dispenser island did not indicate any petroleum hydrocarbon constituents in soil above their respective reporting limits. No additional work was necessary and the site was subsequently granted closure following the removal of the tanks.
- Apex Aviation Knob Hill – 2274 Becker Boulevard, Santa Rosa: The Apex Aviation Knob Hill site is located approximately 1,400 feet southwest of the project site and is listed in databases for having completed an investigation related to former USTs. In March 2008 two 10,000-gallon aviation gasoline and one 10,000-gallon aviation jet fuel tanks in addition to a 2,500-gallon oil/water separator were removed from the site. Site closure was granted by the County of Sonoma Department of Health Services on April 15, 2009.
- Apex Aviation Cardlock – 2238 Airport Boulevard, Santa Rosa: The Apex Aviation Cardlock site is located approximately 1,500 feet southwest of the project site. The site is listed in regulatory files as having an active investigation related to former USTs. Two USTs were removed from the site in 2008. A closure letter from Sonoma County Department of Health Services dated December 21, 2010 indicates that the site has completed remediation action for the USTs.
- Airport Cardlock – 2200 Airport Boulevard, Santa Rosa: The Airport Cardlock site is located approximately 1,200 feet west of the project site and is listed in databases for having completed an investigation related to former USTs. In 1999 two 4,000-gallon automotive gasoline USTs were removed from the site. The Sonoma County Department of Health Services issued a case closure on May 27, 2003.
- Sonoma County Airport – 2244 Airport Boulevard, Santa Rosa: The Sonoma County Airport site is located approximately 1,400 feet northwest of the project site and is listed in databases and regulatory files for having completed an investigation related to former USTs. A Corrective Action Plan was prepared in March 2006 that proposed a monitoring natural attenuation sampling program to monitor for constituents of potential concern. Quarterly groundwater monitoring continued into late 2007 when case closure was requested. Site closure was granted on September 10, 2008 by the County of Sonoma Department of Health Services.

- Sonoma County Airport – 7400 Flightline, Santa Rosa: The Sonoma County Airport site is located approximately 1,400 feet northwest of the project site and is listed in databases and regulatory files for having completed an investigation related to a former UST. The UST was removed on July 15, 2010. Several phases of investigation were performed at the site that included the installation of soil boring and five groundwater monitoring wells. The wells were sampled for three quarters and ground water contaminant concentrations were shown to be decreasing with time. Based on these conditions site closure was granted on November 22, 2013, by the County of Sonoma Department of Health Services.
- Creams Auto Dismantlers and Scrap – 1588 Airport Boulevard, Santa Rosa: The Creams Auto Dismantling site is located approximately 2,000 feet east of the project site. The site has an adjoining parcel to the south that is known as All Trucks, also a commercial auto dismantler. Regulatory agency records indicate the Creams Auto Dismantler site was the primary location of the former auto pool during the use of the area as the SRAAF during WWII. A review of the groundwater data for Cream's indicates that the low levels of VOCs were detected in groundwater monitoring wells located to the northeast of the project site. The wells were reportedly removed after the groundwater portion of the investigation was closed by the NCRWQCB. The environmental investigation and cleanup of stormwater impacts will likely continue into the foreseeable future. From the available data there is no indication that the environmental impacts from the Cream's site have impacted the project site.

#### **Would the project:**

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

##### Comment:

Hotel uses typically do not involve the use or storage of large quantities of hazardous materials, other than those typically used for cleaning, maintenance, or landscaping. Therefore, operational impacts related to the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials would be less than significant. Construction activities may also include the temporary transport, storage, use, or disposal of potentially hazardous materials, including fuels, lubricating fluids, cleaners, solvents, or contaminated soils. If spilled, these substances could pose a risk to the environment and to human health. However, the transport, storage, use, or disposal of hazardous materials is subject to various federal, state, and local regulations designed to reduce risks associated with hazardous materials, including potential risks associated with upset or accident conditions. Hazardous materials would be required to be transported under U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations (U.S. DOT Hazardous Materials Transport Act, 49 Code of Federal Regulations), which stipulate the types of containers, labeling, and other restrictions to be used in the movement of such

material on interstate highways. In addition, the use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials are regulated through the Resources Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is responsible for implementing the RCRA program, as well as California's own hazardous waste laws. DTSC regulates hazardous waste, cleans up existing contamination, and looks for ways to control and reduce the hazardous waste produced in California. It does this primarily under the authority of RCRA and in accordance with the California Hazardous Waste Control Law (California Health and Safety Code Division 20, Chapter 6.5) and the Hazardous Waste Control Regulations (Title 22, CCR, Divisions 4 and 4.5). DTSC also oversees permitting, inspection, compliance, and corrective action programs to ensure that hazardous waste managers follow federal and State requirements and other laws that affect hazardous waste specific to handling, storage, transportation, disposal, treatment, reduction, cleanup, and emergency planning. Compliance with existing regulations would reduce the risk of potential release of hazardous materials during construction. Impacts would therefore be less than significant.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

- 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?**

Comment:

See Section 9.a, the proposed project would not include major construction-related hazardous materials. The project does not propose to use pesticides, herbicides or fungicides nor transport low-grade pesticides and fertilizers.

Significance Level: Less than Significant 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?**

Comment:

The nearest school is Sonoma County Special Education School located in the Sonoma County Office of Education building at 5340 Skylane Boulevard, approximately 300 feet north of the project site across Airport Boulevard. As described under Section 9.a above, project construction may involve the use, storage, or transport of hazardous material. However, the transport, use, storage, and disposal of such materials would be subject to applicable federal, state, and local regulations to minimize the release of hazardous materials into the environment. Therefore, there is no risk of exposure from contaminated soils or groundwater at the school during construction. Project operation would not involve the handling of hazardous materials, substances, or wastes other than those typically used

for household cleaning, maintenance, and landscaping. Handling of hazardous materials is subject to applicable federal, state, and local regulations to reduce emissions of hazardous materials into the environment. As discussed in the response to criteria (d) below, the project site does not contain hazardous materials contamination. Given that the project would be required to comply with applicable regulations, impacts would be less than significant.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

The following databases were checked, pursuant to Government Code Section 95962.5, on June 20, 2021 for known hazardous materials contamination at the project site:

1. The State Water Resources Control Board Geotracker database,<sup>34</sup>
2. The Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor database,<sup>35</sup> and
3. The California Integrated Waste Management Board Solid Waste Information System (SWIS).<sup>36</sup>

The project site is not included on a list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. Moreover, as described above, the Phase I ESA found that no hazardous materials are present at the project site. Therefore, project construction and operation are not likely to expose construction workers or nearby residents or workers to potentially unacceptable health risks from contaminated soils. No impact would occur.

Significance Level: No Impact

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

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<sup>34</sup> State Water Resources Control Board. "Geotracker Database," <http://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>, accessed June 20, 2021.

<sup>35</sup> The Department of Toxic Substances Control. "EnviroStor Database," <http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>, accessed June 20, 2021.

<sup>36</sup> Cal Recycle. "Waste Information System (SWIS) Facility/Site Search," <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/swfacilities/Directory/>, accessed June 20, 2021.

Comment:

The site is within the Sonoma County Airport Referral Area as designated by the Sonoma County Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan (CALUP). The Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport is located approximately 1,000 feet west of the project site. The proposed project lies partially within the 55-60 CNEL noise contour established by the CALUP. Under this contour, the proposed use, which falls under the hotel and motels category, is an acceptable and compatible use. The project is located approximately 2,000 feet from the nearest runway, Runway 14/32, and is located within the Traffic Pattern Zone (TPZ) –A. TPZ allows for a maximum population density of 150 person per acre within structures, a maximum of 200 persons per acre not within structures, but no more than 800 persons total within a single acre, which will not be exceeded by the proposed development. TPZ-A requires a minimum of 15% amount of usable open space, while also discouraging schools, auditoriums, amphitheaters, and stadiums. TPZ-A limits large day care centers, hospital, and nursing homes. The proposed use is compliant with the current configuration of the airport safety zones.

Due to the proximity of the proposed project to the airport the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) conducted an aeronautical study under the provisions of 49 U.S.C., Section 44718 and Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations, part 77.<sup>37</sup> While located close to the airport, the project site is outside of the traffic patterns for the Charles M. Schulz Airport. The FAA through their aeronautical study determined that the proposed project did not pose a hazard to air navigation and did not require mitigating measures such as marking or lighting.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

The project would not impair implementation of, or physically interfere with the County's adopted emergency operations plan. There is no separate emergency evacuation plan for the County. The project would not result in a significant change in existing circulation patterns and would have no effect on emergency response routes.

Significance Level: No Impact

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

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<sup>37</sup> Federal Aviation Administration. "Determination of No Hazard to Air Navigation." August 7, 2020.

Comment:

According to the Wildland Fire Hazard Areas mapping (Figure PS-1g) of the Sonoma County General Plan 2020,<sup>38</sup> the project is located within a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) and not located in a fire hazard zone. A site visit conducted to a reconnaissance level survey of biological resources concluded that the project site has minimal levels of ground vegetation. Project construction activities could increase risk of wildland fire to existing residents near the project site. The construction of the hotel project could expose people or structures to increased fire hazards due to project construction activities and conversion of the presently undeveloped area to an area with increased human activity, with increased possibility of starting a fire. As a project condition of approval, construction on the project must comply with the California Fire Code with local amendments as adopted in Sonoma County Code Chapter 13, including but not limited to, fire sprinklers, emergency vehicle access, and water supply making the impact from risk of wildland fire less than significant.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

## 10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

### Would the project:

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

Comment:

The project would involve the construction of a hotel on land that is currently vacant with a graded building pad. The proposed building would create approximately 22,500 square feet of impervious surface while the parking area and concrete sidewalk would create an additional 92,735 square feet of impervious surface. Less than one acre (41, 831 square feet) of the site would have landscaping or otherwise pervious surface. The project would also introduce heavy equipment to the site during construction and increase traffic to and from the site during operation. This increase in heavy construction equipment and operational traffic could result in an increase in fuel, oil, and lubricants in the stormwater runoff due to leaks or accidental releases.

Due to the scope of the proposed project, it must meet the requirements of the Sonoma County Storm Water Quality Ordinance and incorporate Low Impact Development (LID) Best Management Practices (BMPs) contained in the Bay Area Storm Water Management Agency (BASMAA) Design Guidance for Stormwater Treatment and Control for Projects in Marin,

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<sup>38</sup> Sonoma County General Plan 2020, Public Safety Element, Wildland Fire Hazard Areas, Figure PS-1g, <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Long-Range-Plans/General-Plan/Public-Safety-Wildland-FireHazard-Areas/>, accessed April 23, 2021.

Sonoma, Napa, and Solano Counties. As a construction project disturbing one or more acres of soil, the project would also be required to file a Notice of Intent (NOI) package for coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) General Permit No. CAS000002 for Discharges of Storm Water Runoff Associated with Construction Activity (General Permit). The General Permit requires development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which in addition to other requirements must list Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be used to protect storm water, and the placement of the BMPs.

A Preliminary Stormwater Low Impact Development Report prepared by Always Engineering, Inc. in April 2020<sup>39</sup> indicates retention techniques incorporated into the project plans meet County and regional requirements for post-construction runoff. Layout of the site has been developed with the intent to minimize the potential for pollutants to enter the storm drain system. The majority of operations will take place inside the proposed hotel and therefore do not pose potential pollution sources. The outdoor activities which may result in pollution potential are solid waste storage and pickup, parking and vehicle access, exterior eating areas, and landscaping. The trash enclosure is provided with a cover and has been designed such that stormwater runoff cannot enter the covered area. The interior is provided with a drain which will discharge directly into the site's sanitary sewage system. The exterior area where trash receptacles are picked up by haulers shall drain to bioretention landscape features incorporated into the site landscape. All vehicle parking spaces, and drive aisles have been designed to direct runoff into one of several bioretention and treatment and retention systems developed onsite. Regular street sweeping and trash collection will also occur in the parking areas. Areas provided for exterior dining will only be opened during the time of use. Staff will clean these areas after use each day. Runoff will be directed to the bioretention areas in the parking area and have been included in sizing of these features. The site landscape design has been developed to incorporate the use of native plants which should not require significant fertilization, pruning, or watering after establishment.

With development of the parcel, additional storm drain improvements will be added in order to facilitate storm water flows. All impervious areas of the site have been laid out to direct runoff into bioretention planters. Runoff from exterior paving will enter the bioretention areas via curb cuts and must be filtered and retained prior to ponding to the elevation of the overflow bypass drain inlet. The site and landscape have been laid out to maximize the installation of trees in available areas onsite. This will result in slowing runoff from the site in post-construction conditions.

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<sup>39</sup> Always Engineering, Inc. "Preliminary Storm Water Low Impact Development (SWLID) Report: Hyatt Place Sonoma Wine Country Use Permit," April 20, 2020.

Sonoma County also requires the project applicant to prepare a grading and drainage plan (Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control Plan) in conformance with Chapter 11 Grading and Drainage Ordinance) and Chapter 11a (Storm Water Quality Ordinance) of the Sonoma County Code and the Sonoma County Storm Water Low Impact Development Guide, all of which include performance standards and Best Management Practices for pre-construction, construction, and post-construction to prevent and/or minimize the discharge of pollutants, including sediment, from the project site.

Finally, based on new storm water requirements adopted by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (NCRWQCB), new development and redevelopment projects creating or replacing 10,000 square feet or more of impervious surface require post-construction BMPs. These post construction BMPs must:

- Treat following pollutants of concern including particulate metals, pathogens, nutrients, hydrocarbons, trash, fine sediment, and other debris.
- Be sized to treat all of the runoff generated using the modified Rational Method with an intensity of 0.2 inches per hour and capture (infiltrate, evapotranspiration, and/or reuse) the increase in storm water runoff volume generated by the site due to the increase in impervious surface for a one-inch rain event over a 24-hour period using the Curve Number Method.
- Filter or treat the flow rate of runoff produced by the 24-hour 85th percentile rain event hourly rainfall intensity (for each hour of a storm event), as determined from the local historical rainfall record, multiplied by a factor of two.
- Detention facilities which are integrated for hydraulic system design may be used to provide volume capture and/or treatment if the design meets the design criteria specified for LID.
- Have a recorded maintenance declaration stating that the property owner will maintain the BMPs and the have the appropriate funding and technical ability to inspect, maintain, and provide BMP maintenance records.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measures:

**Mitigation Measure HYD-1:** The following mitigations shall be required as part of the project in order to reduce project effects on water quality and ensure that the project would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements:



**Mitigation Measure HYD-1A (Waste Discharge Program):** The project shall provide evidence satisfactory to the County of compliance with all NCRWQCB Waiver of Waste Discharge Program requirements.

**Mitigation Measure HYD-1B (Construction Permit):** The project shall provide evidence satisfactory to the County of compliance with all SWRCB construction permit requirements (including, but not limited to, the SWRCB-required NOI, Risk Assessment, Post-Construction Calculations, Site Map, and SWPPP).

**Mitigation Measure HYD-1C (Additional Preventive Measures):** In addition to standard County Low Impact Development BMP requirements, the project shall incorporate the following additional preventive measures into the project:

- Design landscaping to prevent sediment entering the storm drain system and to meet vector control requirements (drawdown less than 72 hours).
- Incorporate Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles and techniques for design and maintenance.
- Contain litter and trash so that it is not dispersed by the wind or runoff during waste removal.
- Maintain stabilized construction entrance to reduce sediment transport off-site.
- Conduct street sweeping at regular intervals to reduce sediment tracking.
- Interceptor trees / Preservation of existing trees
- Bioretention Curb Opening
- Impervious Area Disconnection
- Vegetated Swale with Bioretention
- Infiltration Trench

**Mitigation Measure HYD-1D (Grading and Drainage):** The project shall submit for County review and approval an Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control Plan. In addition, the project shall incorporate into project plans drainage facilities or other methods necessary to manage storm water in compliance with the County's best management practices guide, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Post-development runoff for construction grading and construction drainage improvement shall not exceed pre-development runoff using the calculation methodologies in the Storm Water Low Impact Development Technical Design Manual, or superseding document, or equivalent calculation methodologies.
- Drainage facilities shall be designed and constructed in compliance with the Sonoma County Water Agency Flood Control Design Criteria Manual, or superseding document, for no less than a ten-year design discharge.
- Drainage facilities shall carry storm water to the nearest practicable disposal location and shall dissipate the energy or diffuse the flow prior to releasing the storm water off the site.

- Drainage facilities shall prevent or minimize soil loss through the use of storm drain culverts (pipes), storm drain inlets and outlets, storm drain outfalls, energy dissipators, flow dispersion, check dams, rolling dips, critical dips, proper location and sizing of culverts, revegetation of exposed or disturbed slopes, minimizing cross drains through road out sloping, minimizing the use of artificial slopes, and other best management practices referenced or detailed in the permit authority's best management practices guide.

Mitigation Monitoring:

**Mitigation Monitoring HYD-1 and HYD-2:** Prior to issuance of a grading permit, the County shall verify project compliance with NCRWQCB and SWRCB regulations, and shall also review and approve the project's Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control Plan. The Grading & Storm Water Section of Permit Sonoma shall review and approve all grading or building permits prior to issuance. In addition, construction details for all water quality Best Management Practices shall be submitted for review and approval by the County, and the County shall verify post-construction storm water Best Management Practices installation and functionality, through inspections, prior to finalizing the permit(s). The owner/operator shall maintain the required post-construction Best Management Practices for the life of the development. The owner/operator shall conduct annual inspections of the post-construction Best Management Practices to ensure proper maintenance and functionality. The annual inspections shall typically be conducted between September 15 and October 15 of each year.

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

Comment:

The project is located within a Class 1 – Major groundwater basin and would receive its water from the Town of Windsor's municipal water system. According to the 2015 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP), the majority of the Town's supply is surface water and well fields supplied by Russian River Water. A small portion of the water provided to the Town is from wells; this water is noted as "raw" (water that has not been treated) in the 2015 UWMP. No new wells would be installed as a component of the proposed project. No impact would occur as there would be no substantial depletion of groundwater supplies and no interference with groundwater recharge that would result in a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table.

Significance Level: Less than Significant 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**
- i. **would 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 offsite;**
  - iii. **create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or**
  - iv. **impede or redirect flood flows?**

Comment:

There are no blue line streams on the project site and the parcel is not in the 100-year flood zone or Special Flood hazard Area (SFHA).<sup>40</sup> The existing site is an undeveloped grass covered property with a 33,315 square foot gravel building pad. The existing site has only one storm drain inlet in the northeast corner of the project site. This storm drain inlet flows west via an existing 36" storm drain and enters the Sonoma County drainage network. The lot generally slopes to the northwest, with two existing flow concentrations which direct flows around the building pad to the north and west where it enters county storm drain infrastructure. Offsite runoff enters the site via grass swales on the eastern property line. One swale runs from south to north and enters the site near the middle of the eastern property line. The other swale runs from east to west and enters the site along the northern property line. Both of these existing swales are intercepted at the property line.

The project would increase the amount of impervious surface compared to existing conditions. However, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) would be prepared (see above (9.a)) for the proposed project and as required by the State Water Resource Control Board. While the project is in construction, temporary construction BMPs, as well as erosion control measures, would be put in place to reduce construction and post-construction siltation. See **Mitigation Measure HYD-1** for details on project storm water control facilities, which would be incorporated into the project to provide for erosion prevention and sediment control and to ensure that erosion and siltation impacts are less than significant during and after construction.

The proposed project would create approximately 115,203 square feet of new impervious surface, which could potentially affect the quantity and/or quality of storm water run-off. However, the proposed project has been designed to prevent and/or minimize the

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<sup>40</sup> Sonoma County. General Plan 2020 Public Safety Element. "Flood Hazard Areas Fig. PS-1e," <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Long-Range-Plans/General-Plan/Public-Safety-Flood-Hazard-Areas/>, accessed October 12, 2020.

discharge of pollutants and waste after the proposed project is constructed (post-construction), using County best management practices, Low Impact Development techniques, and storm water treatment devices based on filtering, settling or removing pollutants. The water treatment related Best Management Practices have been designed to treat storm events and associated runoff to the 85-percentile storm event in accordance with County Standards.

Any future grading, cuts, and fills would require the issuance of a grading permit (see Section 9.a). The County Grading and Drainage Ordinance and adopted Best Management Practices require installation of adequate erosion prevention and sediment control features. Inspection by County inspectors would ensure that Best Management Practices are specifically designed to maintain potential water quality impacts of project construction at a less than significant level during and post construction.

The County would require any construction to be designed and conducted so as to prevent or minimize the discharge of pollutants or waste from the project site. Best Management Practices to be used to accomplish this goal could include measures such as silt fencing, straw wattles, and soils discharge controls at construction site entrance(s). Storm water Best Management Practices may also include primary and secondary containment for petroleum products, paints, lime, and other hazardous materials of concern. The type and approximate size of the selected storm water best management practices would need to comply with the adopted Sonoma County Storm Water Low Impact Development Guide, and would be subject to County review and approval. In addition, proper operation and maintenance of post-construction storm water best management practices would be needed to achieve the goal of preventing and/or minimizing the discharge of pollutants.

Significance Level: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation:

**Mitigation Measures HYD-1 and HYD-2.**

**Mitigation Measure HYD-2:** Prior to issuance of any grading or building permits, the construction plans and final drainage report shall be reviewed and approved by the County. The construction plans and final drainage report shall be prepared by a civil engineer, registered in the State of California, and submitted with the grading or building permit application or improvement plans, as applicable.

Mitigation Monitoring:

**See Mitigation Monitoring HYD-1 and HYD-2.**

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

Comment:

The project site is not located in an area subject to seiche or tsunami. Seiche is a wave in a lake triggered by an earthquake. According to Figure PS-1e of the General Plan, the project site is outside of the 100-year Flood Hazard Area. The project site is about 114 feet above sea level, and there are no blue line streams on the property. Additionally, according to Figure PS-1f of the General Plan, the project site is not located in an area that would be subject to flooding as a result of levee or dam failure.

The proposed project is not subject to seiche or tsunami. The project site is not located in an area subject to seiche or tsunami. Seiche is a wave in a lake triggered by an earthquake. Mudflow can be triggered by heavy rainfall, earthquakes or volcanic eruption; however, the project site is classified as surficial deposits and is generally flat.

Significance Level: No Impact

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

Comment:

The project is located in the Santa Rosa Plain groundwater basin that is managed by the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency in accordance with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. The Groundwater Sustainability Agencies are currently developing Groundwater Sustainability Plans that must be completed by 2022 and will provide a regulatory framework for managing groundwater use. Storm water treatment Best Management Practices (BMPs) discussed above would address potential water quality impacts and also address storm water run-off. Storm water treatment BMPs would be required to be designed to treat storm events and associated runoff to the 85-percentile storm event in accordance with County Standards. Therefore, it would not obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

## 11. LAND USE AND PLANNING

**Would the project:**

**a) Physically divide an established community?**

Comment:

The project would not physically divide a community. While it does involve construction of a structure for hotel operations, the project does not involve construction of a physical structure (such as a major transportation facility) or removal of a primary access route (such as a road or bridge) that would impair mobility within an established community or between a community and outlying areas.

Significance Level: No Impact

**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?**

Comment:

The project is subject to the Airport Industrial Specific Plan, Airport Land Use Comprehensive Plan, Sonoma County General Plan, and Sonoma County Zoning Ordinance.

Implementation of the proposed project will require amendments to the Sonoma County Airport Industrial Area Specific Plan. The Airport Industrial Specific Plan includes broad goals and policies related to the economic importance (in particular, "Activities which provide for the convenience goods and services needs of the airport industrial area"), and visual and natural resource preservation standards that apply to projects in the area. As discussed in Section 1, Aesthetics, the proposed project includes design features that would generally be consistent with these Airport Industrial Specific Plan standards.

- The project is not located in a visual or scenic corridor, riparian corridor, or unique biotic resource area. The project would minimize alterations or damage to identified natural values including specimen trees.
- The structure would provide an effective visual buffer between heavy manufacturing activities and Airport Boulevard.
- The proposed project would be designed to be harmonious with the local setting and with neighboring developments and would be subjected to in multiple design reviews. (See Section 1, Aesthetics, for further discussion).

- Lighting would be consistent with the Airport Industrial Specific Plan, offsetting glare and used to highlight the entrances to the project site (See Section 1, Aesthetics for further discussion).
- Parking would not be allowed on any public streets and would be screened from public view by vegetation planting around the vicinity.

The proposed project is not consistent with height and yard setback standards for the Industrial Park Land Use and cannot be found consistent due to the lack of flexibility in site development standards. This lack of flexibility is inconsistent with the stated goal for the plan to encourage private market implementation, support continued development of Charles M. Shultz Sonoma County Airport, and provide adequate land for support commercial land uses. Additionally, this standard lacks the flexibility necessary to adapt to current markets, and allow design to evolve to reflect contemporary practice. While the project would amend the specific plan, it is generally consistent with applicable goals related to land use planning and development including formulating land use policies oriented to private market implementation, providing adequate land area to accommodate land uses which may be required to supposed operations of primary planning area uses, and providing a plan framework which allows individual landowners to develop their land efficiently and independently in a manner harmonious with a comprehensive land use plan for the area. The project and specific plan amendment were referred to the Airport Land Use Commission which made a determination of consistency with the CALUP on June 18, 2021.

The project is subject to the Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan (CALUP) and complies with the applicable standards related to safety, height, occupancy, noise, and open space.

- The project is located approximately 2,000 feet from the nearest runway, Runway 14/32, and is located within the Traffic Pattern Zone (TPZ) –A. TPZ allows for a maximum population density of 150 person per acre within structures, a maximum of 200 persons per acre not within structures, but no more than 800 persons total within a single acre, which shall not be exceeded by the proposed development. TPZ-A requires a minimum of 15% amount of usable open space, while also discouraging schools, auditoriums, amphitheaters, and stadiums. TPZ-A limits large day care centers, hospital, and nursing homes. The proposed use is compliant with the current configuration of the airport safety zones.
- The project lies within the horizontal surface per F.A.R. Part 77 Airspace surfaces, which limits structures to 150 feet from above airport elevation of 128.8 feet. The proposed project will be 85 feet tall, above ground level, which does not exceed obstruction standards.
- The project does not exceed the indoor population density limits for the TPZ-A zone.

- The proposed project lies partially within the 55-60 CNEL noise contour. Under this contour, the proposed use, which falls under the hotel and motels category, is an acceptable and compatible use.
- The TPZ requires a minimum of 15% of the gross area to be used as usable open space. Usable open space must be at least 300 feet long by 75 feet wide to be considered usable. The proposed parking lot meets the open space requirement by providing parking and associated landscaping on-site, totaling approximately 130,000 square feet of open space of the 4.18 acres.

Sonoma County General Plan 2020 related to avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect, including:

- Preservation of biotic resource areas and scenic features (General Plan Goal LU-10, Objective LU-10.1, Goal-OSRC, Objective OSRC-1.2, Objective OSRC-1.4, Policy OSRC-1f) The project would be consistent with regulations pertaining to avoiding biotic resources and would also be largely consistent with regulations designed to maintain the scenic qualities of the area. (See Section 1, Aesthetics, for further discussion.)
- Air transportation (General Plan Policy AT-1e). The project includes a request for a specific plan amendment and has been referred to the Airport Land Use Commission which made a determination of consistency with the CALUP on June 18, 2021.
- Nighttime lighting and preservation of night time skies and visual character (General Plan Goal OSRC-4, Objective OSRC-4.1, Objective OSRC-4.2, Policy OSRC-4a, Policy OSRC-4c): The project would use dark sky compliant style lighting, and would comply with County requirements pertaining to placement, shielding, and light levels to prevent spill over, glare and unnecessary nighttime light pollution.
- Protect the County's natural habitats (General Plan Goal OSRC-7, Objective OSRC-7.1, Objective OSRC-7.7, Policy OSRC-7e, Policy OSRC-7g, Policy OSRC-7h, Policy OSRC-7k, Policy OSRC-7m, Policy OSRC-7o,): (See Section 4, Biological Resources for further discussion.)
- Waste water (General Plan Policy LU-8): The project would comply with regional waste discharge requirements and County regulations to minimize storm water, surface water and groundwater pollution including utilization of BMPs.

The project would also be consistent with Sonoma County Code Section 26-12-030 through 040 (Industrial Zones.) which allows for the development of hotel, motel, and resort lodging as a conditional use. In addition, the project would be consistent with Article 67 (VOH Valley Oak Habitat Combining District) to "protect and enhance valley oaks and valley oak woodlands" (see Section 4, Biological Resources). Under the Development Agreement, the applicant would bring benefits to the community, public



safety, including contributions to assist with local infrastructure through roadway and other infrastructure improvements as well as funding to the Sonoma County Fire District for a ladder truck. Therefore, the project would not conflict with any applicable land use plan adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect, including the Sonoma County General Plan and zoning ordinance.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

## 12. MINERAL RESOURCES

**Would the project:**

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

Comment:

The project site is not located within a known mineral resource deposit area (Sonoma County Aggregate Resources Management Plan, as amended 2010). Sonoma County has adopted the Aggregate Resources Management Plan that identifies aggregate resources of statewide or regional significance (areas classified as MRZ-2 by the State Geologist). Additional detail on mineral resources may be found in the California Geologic Survey Special Report 205, Update of Mineral Land Classification: Aggregate Materials in the North San Francisco Bay Production-consumption region, Sonoma, Napa, Marin, and Southwestern Solano Counties, California.<sup>41</sup>

Significance Level: No Impact

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

Comment:

The project site is not located within an area of locally important mineral resource recovery site and the site is not zoned MR (Mineral Resources).<sup>42</sup> No locally important mineral resources are known to occur at the site.

Significance Level: No Impact

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<sup>41</sup> Update Of Mineral Land Classification: Aggregate Materials In The North San Francisco Bay Production-Consumption Region, Sonoma, Napa, Marin, And Southwestern Solano Counties, California, [ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dmg/pubs/sr/SR\\_205/SR%20205%20North%20Bay%20Report\\_Final.pdf](ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dmg/pubs/sr/SR_205/SR%20205%20North%20Bay%20Report_Final.pdf), accessed August 23, 2020.

<sup>42</sup> Sonoma County. Aggregate Resources Management Plan, <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Long-Range-Plans/Aggregate-Resource-Management/Maps-and-Diagrams/>, accessed October 8, 2020.

### 13. NOISE

Would the project result in:

- a) **Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?**

Comment:

*Noise Fundamentals:* “Sound” is a vibratory disturbance created by a moving or vibrating source and is capable of being detected. For example, airborne sound is the rapid fluctuation of air pressure above and below atmospheric pressure. “Noise” may be defined as unwanted sound that is typically construed as loud, unpleasant, unexpected, or undesired by a specific person or for a specific area.

Sound has three properties: frequency (or pitch), amplitude (or intensity or loudness), and duration. Pitch is the height or depth of a tone or sound and depends on the frequency of the vibrations by which it is produced. Sound frequency is expressed in terms of cycles per second, or Hertz (Hz). Humans generally hear sounds with frequencies between 20 and 20,000 Hz and perceive higher frequency sounds, or high pitch noise, as louder than low-frequency sound or sounds low in pitch. Sound intensity or loudness is a function of the amplitude of the pressure wave generated by a noise source combined with the reception characteristics of the human ear. Atmospheric factors and obstructions between the noise source and receptor also affect the loudness perceived by the receptor. The frequency, amplitude, and duration of a sound all contribute to the effect on a listener, or receptor, and whether or not the receptor perceives the sound as “noisy” or annoying. Despite the ability to measure sound, human perceptibility is subjective, and the physical response to sound complicates the analysis of its impact on people. People judge the relative magnitude of sound sensation in subjective terms, such as “noisiness” or “loudness.”

Sound pressure levels are typically expressed on a logarithmic scale in terms of decibels (dB). A dB is a unit of measurement that indicates the relative amplitude (i.e., intensity or loudness) of a sound, with 0 dB corresponding roughly to the threshold of hearing for the healthy, unimpaired human ear. Since decibels are logarithmic units, an increase of 10 dBs represents a ten-fold increase in acoustic energy, while 20 dBs is 100 times more intense, 30 dBs is 1,000 times more intense, etc. In general, there is a relationship between the subjective noisiness or loudness of a sound and its intensity, with each 10 dB increase in sound level perceived as approximately a doubling of loudness. Due to the logarithmic basis, decibels cannot be directly added or subtracted together using common arithmetic operations:

$$50 \text{ decibels} + 50 \text{ decibels} \neq 100 \text{ decibels}$$

Instead, the combined sound level from two or more sources must be combined logarithmically. For example, if one noise source produces a sound power level of 50 dBA, two of the same sources would combine to produce 53 dB as shown below.

$$10 * 10 \log \left( 10^{\left(\frac{50}{10}\right)} + 10^{\left(\frac{50}{10}\right)} \right) = 53 \text{ decibels}$$

In general, when one source is 10 dB higher than another source, the quieter source does not add to the sound levels produced by the louder source because the louder source contains ten times more sound energy than the quieter source.

Although humans generally can hear sounds with frequencies between 20 and 20,000 Hz, most of the sound humans are normally exposed to do not consist of a single frequency, but rather a broad range of frequencies perceived differently by the human ear. In general, humans are most sensitive to the frequency range of 1,000–8,000 Hz and perceive sounds within that range better than sounds of the same amplitude in higher or lower frequencies. Instruments used to measure sound, therefore, include an electrical filter that enables the instrument's detectors to replicate human hearing. This filter—known as the “A-weighting” or “A-weighted sound level”—filters low and very high frequencies, giving greater weight to the frequencies of sound to which the human ear is typically most sensitive. Most environmental measurements are reported in dBA, meaning decibels on the A-scale.

Sound levels are usually not steady and vary over time. Therefore, a method for describing either the average character of the sound or the statistical behavior of the variations over a period of time is necessary. The continuous equivalent noise level ( $L_{eq}$ ) descriptor is used to represent the average character of the sound over a period of time. The  $L_{eq}$  represents the level of steady-state noise that would have the same acoustical energy as the sum of the time-varying noise measured over a given time period.  $L_{eq}$  is useful for evaluating shorter time periods over the course of a day. The most common  $L_{eq}$  averaging period is hourly, but  $L_{eq}$  can describe any series of noise events over a given time period.

When considering environmental noise, it is important to account for the different responses people have to daytime and nighttime noise. In general, during the nighttime, background noise levels are generally quieter than during the daytime but also more noticeable because household noise has decreased as people begin to retire and sleep. Accordingly, a variety of methods for measuring and normalizing community environmental noise have been developed. The California Office of Planning and Research's General Plan Noise Element Guidelines identifies the following common metrics for measuring noise (OPR, 2017):

$L_{dn}$  (Day-Night Average Level): The average equivalent A-weighted sound level during a 24-hour day, divided into a 15-hour daytime period (7 AM to 10 PM) and a 9-hour nighttime period (10 PM to 7 AM). A 10 dB “penalty” is added to measure nighttime noise levels when calculating the 24-hour average noise level. For example, a 45-dBA nighttime sound level

(e.g., at 2 AM) would contribute as much to the overall day-night average as a 55-dBA daytime sound level (e.g., at 7 AM).

CNEL (Community Noise Equivalent Level): The CNEL descriptor is similar to Ldn, except that it includes an additional 5 dBA penalty for noise events that occur during the evening time period (7 PM to 10 PM). For example, a 45-dBA evening sound level (e.g., at 8 PM) would contribute as much to the overall day-night average as a 50-dBA daytime sound level (e.g. at 8 AM).

The artificial penalties imposed during Ldn and CNEL calculations are intended to account for a receptor's increased sensitivity to noise levels during quieter nighttime periods. As such, the Ldn and CNEL metrics are usually applied when describing longer-term ambient noise levels because they account for all noise sources over an extended period of time and account for the heightened sensitivity of people to noise during the night. In contrast, the Leq metric is usually applied to shorter reference periods where sensitivity is presumed to remain generally the same.

The energy contained in a sound pressure wave dissipates and is absorbed by the surrounding environment as the sound wave spreads out and travels away from the noise generating source. The strength of the source is often characterized by its "sound power level." Sound power level is independent of the distance a receiver is from the source and is a property of the source alone. Knowing the sound power level of an idealized source and its distance from a receiver, sound pressure level at the receiver point can be calculated based on geometrical spreading and attenuation (noise reduction) as a result of distance and environmental factors, such as ground cover (asphalt vs. grass or trees), atmospheric absorption, and shielding by terrain or barriers.

To assess project noise, an environmental noise assessment was prepared by Charles M Salter Associates, Inc.<sup>43</sup> The project site was surveyed and potential noise impacts from the proposed project were evaluated based on applicable County standards and considering adjacent land uses (airport). The following analysis summarizes the key results, findings, and recommendations of the applicant's noise assessment, which includes a description of key noise concepts, terms, applicable regulations, and detailed site noise information.

County noise standards (as indicated in Table NE-2 of the General Plan, shown below) establish maximum allowable exterior noise exposures of 50 dBA in the daytime (7:00 AM to 10:00 PM) and 45 dBA in the nighttime (10:00 PM to 7:00 AM), as measured using the L50 value (the value exceeded 50 percent of the time, or 30 minutes in any hour--i.e., this is

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<sup>43</sup> Charles M Salter Associates, Inc. 2019. *Hyatt Place Sonoma Wine Country Environmental Noise Study*. Prepared May 9, 2019.

the median noise level). The 2016 California Building Code requires that the indoor noise level in hotel guestrooms not exceed  $L_{dn}$  45 dB.

CALGreen provides exterior noise requirements for non-residential buildings, which includes the project's amenity and commercial spaces at the ground floor and sixth floor. *Section 5.507.4.3 Acoustical Control* requires mitigating exterior noise where sound levels regularly exceed 65 dB. If the exterior noise level regularly exceeds 65 dB, then the building envelope must have wall and roof-ceiling assemblies designed to provide an interior noise environment not exceeding an  $L_{eq}(h)$  of 50 dB in occupied areas during hours of operation.

*Existing Noise Environment:* The project site is located at the southeast corner of Airport Boulevard and North Laughlin Road in Santa Rosa, California. The major noise sources at the project site are traffic on these streets. The Charles M Schulz -Sonoma County Airport is approximately 1,000 feet to the west, and the project site is outside the airport noise contours, but within the Traffic Pattern Zone (TPZ). Form 7460-1 noted the center line of runway 32-14 to be 2,984 feet west of the proposed project.<sup>44</sup> To quantify the existing noise environment, two multi-day noise measurements were taken at the project site between April 26 and 30, 2019. The monitors were located on trees and utility poles at approximately 12 feet above street level. At the time of noise monitoring, a traffic analysis had not been provided for the project. To account for this, one (1) dB has been added to the data calculations to account for future traffic increases. The first noise monitoring location was located on the northwest side of the project site, fronting North Laughlin Road. This location measured a  $L_{dn}$  of 70 dB, and  $L_{eq}(h)$  of 71 dB. The second monitoring location was on the north side of the project site across Airport Boulevard. This location measured a  $L_{dn}$  of 71 dB, and  $L_{eq}(h)$  of 71 dB. The nearest sensitive receptor is a Veterans Clinic approximately 1,160 feet east of the project site.

*General Plan Land Use Compatibility:* The County has noise and land use compatibility guidelines specific to hotels and motels. Per the General Plan Figure AT-9, the project falls between the 60- and 55-dB contour.<sup>45</sup> Per the County's 2020 General Plan, Policy NE-1a: Designate areas within Sonoma County as noise impacted if they are exposed to existing or projected exterior noise levels exceeding 60 dB  $L_{dn}$ , 60 dB CNEL. The project does fall within a noise impacted area and would be compatible with the general plan.

Per the County's 2020 General Plan, Policy NE-1b: Avoid noise sensitive land use development in noise impacted areas unless effective measures are included to reduce noise levels. For noise due to traffic on public roadways, railroads, and airports, reduce exterior noise to 60 dB  $L_{dn}$  or less in outdoor activity areas and interior noise levels to 45 dB

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<sup>44</sup> Federal Aviation Administration, 2020. Form 7460-1 Submission, Fax Transmission Report. Sent May 4, 2020.

<sup>45</sup> Sonoma County. General Plan 2020 Air Transportation Element. Figure AT-9. Available at: [https://sonomacountyairport.org/pdf/1guidebooklet\\_web11\\_07.pdf](https://sonomacountyairport.org/pdf/1guidebooklet_web11_07.pdf), accessed June 25, 2021.

$L_{dn}$  or less with windows and doors closed. Where it is not possible to meet this 60 dB  $L_{dn}$  standard using a practical application of the best available noise reduction technology, a maximum level of up to 65 dB  $L_{dn}$  may be allowed but interior noise level shall be maintained so as not to exceed 45 dB  $L_{dn}$ . For uses such as Single Room Occupancy, Work-Live, Mixed-Use Projects, and Caretaker Units, exterior noise levels above 65 dB  $L_{dn}$  or the Table NE-2 standards may be considered if the interior standards of 45 dB  $L_{dn}$  can be met. For schools, libraries, offices, and other similar uses, the interior noise standard shall be 45 dB  $L_{eq}$  in the worst-case hour when the building is in use.<sup>46</sup>

The Salter noise assessment calculated that window and exterior door Sound Transmission Class (STC) ratings are needed for the project. The STC rating is a single-number rating defined in ASTM E90 that quantifies the airborne sound insulating performance of a partition under laboratory conditions, increasing STC ratings correspond to improved airborne sound insulation. The noise assessment recommended STC ratings for full window (glass and frame) rather than just the glass.

*Commercial spaces:* To meet the CALGreen interior noise criterion, implementation of **Mitigation Measure NOI-1** would ensure that impacts in non-residential areas of the hotel, including the fitness center and restaurant, would be less than significant. Where STC ratings above 32 are required, at least one pane will need to be laminated. In the nonresidential areas of the hotel, which includes the fitness center at the northwest corner of the site, an STC rating of 33 requires at least one pane to be laminated.

*Guestrooms:* To meet the indoor noise criterion of  $L_{dn}$  45 dB at the guestrooms, all residential facades must be sound rated. To meet this criteria, implementation of **Mitigation Measure NOI-2** would ensure that noise impacts to guest rooms would be less than significant.

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<sup>46</sup> Sonoma County, 2012. General Plan 2020 Noise Element adopted October 23, 2012. Available at: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Long-Range-Plans/General-Plan/>, accessed June 25, 2021.

**Table 13-1. Sonoma County General Plan Table NE- 2 Maximum Allowable Exterior Noise Exposures for Non-Transportation Noise Sources**

Hourly Noise Metric <sup>1</sup> , dBA	Daytime (7 a.m. to 10 p.m.)	Nighttime (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.)
L50 (30 minutes in any hour)	50	45
L25 (15 minutes in any hour)	55	50
L08 (4 minutes 48 seconds in any hour)	60	55
L02 (72 seconds in any hour)	65	60
<sup>1</sup> The sound level exceeded n% of the time in any hour. For example, the L50 is the value exceeded 50% of the time or 30 minutes in any hour; this is the median noise level. Source: Sonoma County General Plan, Noise Element		

*Operation Noise Generation:* Hours of operation were assumed to be from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm every day. Once operational, the proposed project would generate noise from additional vehicle trips, parking lot activities, and events.

*Temporary Construction Noise:* Project construction would include earthwork, grading, paving, building construction, and the installation of underground utilities (including water, sewer, storm drainage, electrical and irrigation facilities). As a standard construction best management practices (BMP), the applicant shall also implement **Mitigation Measure NOI-3** to limit construction noise in the project area.

Implementation of Sonoma County General Plan's Standard Noise regulations, in addition to the below mitigation measures would reduce all potentially significant impacts to less than significant levels.

Significance Level: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measures:

**Mitigation Measure NOI-1:** To meet the CALGreen interior noise criterion of  $L_{eq}(h)$  50 dB in commercial areas on the ground and sixth floors, which include the fitness center and restaurant, the window system STC ratings shall be rated a 28. Where STC ratings above 32 are required, at least one pane will shall be laminated.

**Mitigation Measure NOI-2:** All residential facades must have a sound rating of 28 to 30, in accordance with the Noise Assessment conducted by Salter. In areas of the hotel where windows need to be closed to achieve an indoor  $L_{dn}$  of 45 dB, an alternative method of supplying fresh air (e.g., mechanical ventilation) shall be considered in consultation with the project mechanical engineer.

**Mitigation Measure NOI-3:** Construction activities for this project shall be restricted as follows, with all plans and specifications or construction plans to include these notes:

- a) All internal combustion engines used during construction of this project will be operated with mufflers that meet the requirements of the State Resources Code, and, where applicable, the Vehicle Code. Equipment shall be properly maintained and turned off when not in use.
- b) Once building construction begins, the structure being erected would provide substantial shielding of construction noise levels at sensitive receptors. Since construction noise levels would be intermittent, construction activities shall be restricted to the hours of 7:00 AM and 5:00 PM on weekdays and 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM on weekends and holidays. If work outside the times specified above becomes necessary, the applicant shall notify the PRMD Project Review Division as soon as practical.
- c) There will be no startup of machines nor equipment prior to 7:00 AM, Monday through Friday or 9:00 AM on weekends and holidays; no delivery of materials or equipment prior to 7:00 AM nor past 5:00 PM Monday through Friday or prior to 9:00 AM nor past 5:00 PM on weekends and holidays and no servicing of equipment past 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, or weekends and holidays. A sign(s) shall be posted on the site regarding the allowable hours of construction and including the developer- and contractors mobile phone number for public contact 24 hours a day or during the hours outside of the restricted hours.
- d) Pile driving activities shall be limited to 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM weekdays only.
- e) Construction maintenance, storage and staging areas for construction equipment shall avoid proximity to residential areas to the maximum extent practicable. Stationary construction equipment, such as compressors, mixers, etc., shall be placed away from residential areas and/or provided with acoustical shielding. Quiet construction equipment shall be used when possible.

The developer shall designate a Project Manager with authority to implement the mitigation prior to issuance of a building/grading permit. The Project Managers 24-hour mobile phone number shall be conspicuously posted at the construction site. The Project Manager shall determine the cause of noise complaints (e.g., starting too early, faulty muffler, etc.) and shall take prompt action to correct the problem.

Mitigation Monitoring:

**Mitigation Monitoring NOI-1 & NOI-2:** County staff shall review and approve the acoustical analysis of final mechanical equipment and review building plans for inclusion of noise reduction measures, if any, recommended in the acoustical analysis.



**Mitigation Monitoring NOI-3:** (Ongoing) Permit Sonoma staff shall ensure that the measures are listed on all site alteration, grading, building or improvement plans, prior to issuance of grading or building permits. Permit staff shall inspect the site prior to construction to assure that the signs are in place and the applicable phone numbers are correct. Any noise complaints will be investigated by Permit Sonoma staff. If violations are found, Permit Sonoma shall seek voluntary compliance from the permit holder or may require a noise consultant to evaluate the problem and recommend corrective actions, and thereafter may initiate an enforcement action and/or revocation or modification proceedings, as appropriate.

**b) Generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels?**

Comment:

Construction would be located at least 100 feet from off-site structures and pile driving is not proposed during construction. At a distance of 100 feet, groundborne vibration from construction is anticipated to generate levels between 0.001 to 0.046 in/sec PPV, which are below the 0.3 in/sec PPV vibration limit recommended by the California Department of Transportation for buildings that are found to be structurally sound, but where structural damage is a major concern.

Vibration is the movement of particles within a medium or object such as the ground or a building. As is the case with airborne sound, ground borne vibration may be described by amplitude and frequency. Vibration amplitudes are usually expressed in peak particle velocity (PPV), or root mean squared, in inches per second (in/sec). PPV represents the maximum instantaneous positive or negative peak of a vibration signal and is most appropriate for evaluating the potential for building damage. Human response to ground borne vibration is subjective and varies from person to person. The California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual provides a summary of vibration criteria that have been reported by research, organizations, and governmental agencies (Caltrans, 2013). Chapter six and seven of this manual summarize vibration detection and annoyance criteria from various agencies and provide Caltrans' recommended guidelines and thresholds for evaluation potential vibration impacts on buildings and humans from transportation and construction projects. These thresholds are summarized in Tables 13-2 – 13-4.

**Table 13-2. Caltrans' Vibration Threshold Criteria for Building Damage**

Structural Integrity	Maximum PPV (in/sec)	
	Transient	Continuous
Extremely fragile buildings, ruins, monuments	0.12	0.08
Fragile buildings	0.2	0.1
Historic and some older buildings	0.50	0.25
Older residential structures	0.50	0.30
New residential structures	1.00	0.50
Modern industrial and commercial structures	2.00	0.50
Source: Caltrans, 2013		

**Table 13-3. Vibration Threshold Criteria for Human Response**

Human Response	Maximum PPV (in/sec)	
	Transient	Continuous
Barely perceptible	0.035	0.012
Distinctly perceptible	0.24	0.035
Strongly perceptible	0.90	0.10
Severely perceptible	2.00	0.40
Source: Caltrans, 2013a		

**Table 13-4. Potential Groundborne Vibration Levels**

Equipment	Peak Particle Velocity <sup>(A)</sup> (Inches/Second) at Distance		
	50 Feet	200 Feet	400 Feet
Vibratory Roller	0.098	0.021	0.010
Large Bulldozer	0.042	0.009	0.004
Small Bulldozer	0.014	0.003	0.001
Loaded Truck	0.035	0.008	0.004
Jackhammer	0.016	0.004	0.002
Sources: Caltrans, 2013 and FTA 2018. (A) Estimated PPV calculated as: $PPV(D) = PPV(ref) * (25/D)^{1.3}$ where $PPV(D)$ = Estimated PPV at distance; $PPV_{ref}$ = Reference PPV at 25 ft; $D$ = Distance from equipment to receiver; and $n$ = ground attenuation rate (1.3 for competent sands, sandy clays, silty clays, and silts).			

As shown in Table 13-4, construction equipment vibration levels from a roller, or large bulldozer could slightly exceed Caltrans vibration detection thresholds (see Table 13-4 ) for "barely perceptible" (0.035 inches/second) when operating in close proximity (within 50 feet) to adjacent residences; however, as discussed previously, the majority of earthwork would generally take place approximately 1,160 feet east of the project site feet from the nearest sensitive receptor; the Veterans Clinic. Location and vibration noise levels

associated with any equipment used would not be perceptible at this distance. As such, this is not considered to be excessive, because any equipment operation near property lines would be short in duration and intermittent (lasting only a few hours in work areas adjacent to property lines). Additionally, potential construction vibration levels would not result in structural damage because the estimated vibration levels are substantially below Caltrans' thresholds for potential damage to even the most sensitive of residential buildings (0.50 inches/second for older, un-reinforced concrete masonry buildings or historic buildings). Thus, short-term, intermittent construction equipment vibration levels would not be excessive.

Once operational, the proposed project would not result in the operation of sources that would generate substantial groundborne vibration levels. The impact would be less than significant.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

The project site is within the vicinity of the Charles M Schulz Airport. See question 13.a for a discussion of how noise impacts would be mitigated to less than significant levels. There are no residences in the airport's vicinity, and with implementation of **mitigation measures NOI-1 NOI-2, and NOI-3**, the project would not expose people working in the project area to excessive noise levels.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measures:

**NOI-1 NOI-2, and NOI-3**

Mitigation Monitoring:

**Mitigation Monitoring NOI-1, NOI-2, and NOI-3**

## 14. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

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

Comment:

The project would not increase residents into the County and would not directly increase population growth in the County. The proposed project would generate an estimated total of 75 new jobs, which could indirectly generate population growth and a greater need for employee housing. However, this incremental increase in employment opportunities would not substantially induce population growth through the provision of new jobs. Additionally, it is anticipated that employees of the hotel would be primarily drawn from existing residents or from nearby communities. No new roads or infrastructure are proposed.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

The project site is currently vacant with one gravel building pad. There are no existing housing units or people residing at the project site. No housing or people would be displaced by the project and no replacement housing is proposed to be constructed.

Significance Level: No Impact

## 15. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project:

- a) **Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:**

Comment:

Neither construction nor operation of the project would involve substantial adverse physical impacts associated with provision of public facilities or services. No new housing is included

within the project proposal. The project would employ approximately 75 employees. The project would not necessitate or facilitate construction of new public facilities. The impact would be less than significant.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact

**i. Fire protection?**

Comment:

The project would be located in the Sonoma County Fire Protection District. The Sonoma County Fire District has an existing master-mutual aid program with all agencies, including with the City of Santa Rosa for a hook and ladder truck that would be able to serve the proposed structure. Development impact fees to offset potential impacts to fire protection would be required as a project condition of approval and would assist the Sonoma County Fire District with the purchase of a ladder truck.

Sonoma County Code requires that all new development comply with the California Fire Code with local amendments as adopted in Sonoma County Code Chapter 13. The County Fire Marshal reviewed the project and project conditions of approval require that the project comply with Chapter 13, including fire protection methods such as sprinklers in buildings, new fire hydrants, alarm systems, extinguishers, vegetation management, hazardous materials management, and management of flammable or combustible liquids and gases. This is a standard condition of approval and required by county code and impacts would be less than significant.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact

**ii. Police?**

Comment:

The Sonoma County Sheriff would continue to serve this area. The proposed project would generate approximately 75 jobs, and it would not include construction of homes, or a substantial number of businesses or infrastructure and therefore would not induce substantial population growth. Existing police protection facilities would be adequate to serve the project and additional facilities would not be needed.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact

**iii. Schools, parks, or other public facilities?**

Comment:

Development fees to offset potential impacts to public services, including school impact

mitigation fees, are required by Sonoma County Code and state law for new subdivisions and residential developments. The project does not include residential development and no new schools are reasonably foreseeable as a result. The project would not contribute to an increase in the need for expanded or additional schools, parks, or other public facilities.

Significance Level: No Impact

**iv. Parks?**

Comment:

The proposed project does not include the development of residential uses and thus would not result in the need for new or expanded park facilities.

Significance Level: No Impact

**v. Other public facilities?**

Comment:

Connection fees for sewer and water services offset potential impacts to these service facilities within their respective spheres of influence. Ongoing development and maintenance costs for services are provided in the form of fees or parcel tax. Existing sewer and water facilities are adequate. The project proposes new and resized pipelines, but expanded treatment facilities are not currently reasonably foreseeable. Expansion or construction of additional types of public facilities is not anticipated as a result of the development of this project.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

## **16. RECREATION**

**Would the project:**

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

Comment:

The proposed project would not involve activities that would cause or accelerate substantial physical deterioration of parks or recreational facilities. The proposed project does not include any residential use and as such would not lead to an increase in the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities.

Significance Level: No Impact

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

Comment:

The project includes the construction of private recreational facilities including the indoor pool and spa for hotel guests. Construction of the hotel would comply with applicable best management practices and **mitigation measures BIO-1 through BIO-5**. Therefore, project recreational facilities would have a less than significant impact.

Significance Level: Less than Significant

## 17. TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:

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

Comment:

A Traffic Impact Study was completed by W-Trans on February 17, 2021.<sup>47</sup> The proposed project is expected to generate an average of 1,607 trips per day, including 124 trips during the weekday p.m. peak hour, and 210 during the weekend p.m. peak hour.

Traffic impacts under CEQA have traditionally been assessed based on increases in intersection delay measured by Level of Service (LOS). However, with the passage of SB 743, transportation impacts under CEQA are now to be measured based on the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) generated by a project (effective July 1, 2020). W-Trans has recommended the following two items to offset potential project impacts relating to LOS:

- To offset project effects under Future plus Project volumes, the lane configuration on the northbound approach to Airport Boulevard/North Laughlin Road-Skylane Boulevard should be modified to change the existing left-turn lane to shared left-turn/through lane, allowing the existing through/right-turn lane to be dedicated to right turns only until a traffic signal is constructed. This improvement should be implemented at the time of construction of the project.
- The project should contribute a proportional share of 14.6 percent towards the cost of installing a traffic signal at the intersection of Airport Boulevard/North Laughlin Road-Skylane Boulevard.

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<sup>47</sup> W-Trans, "Traffic Impact Study for the Hyatt Place Hotel," February 17, 2021.

These conditions of approval will not result in significant impacts to the environment. In addition, approval of the development agreement would require additional dedication of right-of-way along Airport Boulevard and impact fees to contribute to funding of a future roundabout or traffic circle at the intersection of North Laughlin and Airport Boulevard.

Regarding bicycle facilities, Airport Boulevard is a county-maintained paved road with Class II bicycle facilities between the Charles M Schulz Airport and US 101 on-ramps on Airport Boulevard.<sup>48</sup> The project frontage along Airport Boulevard has a bike lane. Existing bicycle facilities were found to provide adequate access to bicyclists. Bicycle facilities serving the project site were found by W-Trans to be adequate, with the implementation of **Mitigation Measure TRANS-1** requiring increased bike infrastructure onsite.

Regarding pedestrian facilities, the project vicinity is served by a network of crosswalks, sidewalks, pedestrian signals, and curb ramps. There is an existing sidewalk along the project frontage on Airport Boulevard and the project includes the construction of a new separated sidewalk on North Laughlin Road. Pedestrian facilities serving the project site were found by W-Trans to be adequate. The project would not result in significant impacts to pedestrian facilities in the project area.

Sonoma County Transit (SCT) provides a fixed bus route service in the County. SCT Route Airport Business Park Shuttle 55 provides a loop service throughout the area and stops on Airport Boulevard between the airport and North Laughlin Boulevard. Route 62 provides regional services between the airport and the City of Santa Rosa and stops on North Laughlin Road approximately 415 feet south of the project site. Existing transit routes were found to be adequate to accommodate project-generated transit trips. The project would not result in significant impacts to transit service in the project area.

The project would not have a significant impact because no project improvements would reduce the availability or efficiency of facilities providing alternative transportation, including bus systems, bicycle routes, and pedestrian walkways.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measure:

**Mitigation Measure TRANS-1:** The project shall provide one bicycle space per 15 employees near the main entrance to include a minimum of two bicycle rack spaces. Bicycle spaces shall be noted on final project plans.

**b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?**

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<sup>48</sup> W-Trans, "Traffic Impact Study for the Hyatt Place Hotel," February 17, 2021.



Comment:

Traffic impacts under CEQA have traditionally been assessed based on increases in intersection delay measured by Level of Service (LOS). However, with the passage of SB 743, transportation impacts under CEQA are now to be measured based on the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) generated by a project (effective July 1, 2020). A VMT Analysis was completed by W Trans on February 17, 2021,<sup>49</sup> and County Staff provided direction on how VMT should be assumed, with guidance provided by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) Guidelines Update and Technical Advisory, 2018.

Based on formulas contained in the *ITE Trip Generation Manual*, the project was compared to a similar land use: a 50,000 square foot retail development, which would generate approximately 1,888 daily vehicle trips. The total projected VMT for the project was expected to be 13,027 miles, which represents the significance threshold for the project.<sup>50</sup>

**Table 17-1 VMT Analysis**

<b>Trip Category</b>	<b>Percent of Daily Trips</b>	<b>Total Daily Trips</b>	<b>Average Trip length</b>	<b>VMT</b>
Employees (Home-based Work Trips)	12%	193	8.69	1,677
Guests and other trips	88%	1,414	7.07	9,997
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,607</b>		<b>11,674</b>
Source: W-Trans, 2021.				

The project's projected VMT would be approximately 11,674 miles, which is below the 13,027-mile threshold calculated above. The project's generation of VMT would represent a less than significant impact.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

The project would not increase hazards because it would not change the existing alignment of the road and does not involve incompatible uses. However, hazards to drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians could occur during construction operations. This temporary construction-

<sup>49</sup> W-Trans, 2021. *Hyatt Place Hotel VMT Analysis*. February 17, 2021

<sup>50</sup> W-Trans, 2021. *Hyatt Place Hotel VMT Analysis*. February 17, 2021

related impact will cease upon project completion. Additionally, sight distances varied from 1,000 feet looking south, to at least 350 feet looking north, which exceed the minimum sight distance standard.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

**d) Result in inadequate emergency access?**

Comment:

Development on the site must comply with all emergency access requirements of the California Fire code with local amendments as adopted in Sonoma County Code Chapter 13, including emergency vehicle access requirements. Project development plans are required to be reviewed by a Sonoma County Permit and Resources Management Department, Fire Prevention Division Fire Inspector during the building permit process to ensure compliance with emergency access issues. Refer to discussion in item 16(d), above. Additionally, W-Trans's analysis for emergency vehicles found that on-site circulation could serve standard-size fire trucks during an emergency event. The proposed project would not impact emergency access of on-site circulation.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

## **18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES**

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

- a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5030.1(k), or**
- b) A resource determined by the lead agency. In its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.**

Comment:

Some Native American artifacts may not be considered unique archaeological resources under the CEQA guidelines (i.e., if there is not a demonstrable public interest in that information, it does not possess a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type, and it is not directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric event or person). However, it is possible for a lead agency to determine that an artifact is considered significant to a local tribe, and therefore be considered a significant resource under CEQA. As discussed in Section 5.a, a Cultural Resources Study was completed for the project site by Tom Origer and Associates. There are no known archaeological resources on the site, but the project could uncover such materials during construction.

On March 25, 2019, Permit Sonoma staff referred the project application to Native American Tribes within Sonoma County to request consultation under AB 52. Four responses were received from tribal entities, and a summary of key comments provided below:

- On March 26, 2019, the Cloverdale Ranch of Pomo Indians responded and did not request consultation under AB 52. The Tribe requested a condition be added stating that if the Applicant discovers archaeological remains or resources during construction, now or in the future the Applicant should immediately stop construction and notify the appropriate Federal Agency and the Tribe.
- On April 3, 2019, Lytton Rancheria responded requesting a mitigation measure be added to require tribal and/or archaeological monitoring of ground disturbance in native soils. The Tribe did not request consultation under AB 52.
- On March 25, 2019, Middletown Rancheria responded requesting that if evidence of human habitation is found as the progress progresses, work should cease, and the Rancheria should be contacted immediately. The Tribe did not request consultation under AB 52.
- On March 27, 2019, Stewart Point Rancheria responded stating the project site was out of the Aboriginal Territory and did not request consultation under AB 52.

A Tribal Monitor shall be retained onsite to monitor all project-related ground disturbing construction activities per **Mitigation Measure TCR-1**. Section 11-14-050 of the Sonoma County Grading Ordinance established uniformly applied development standards to reduce the potential for impact to previously unknown/undiscovered cultural resources during project construction to a less than significant level by requiring that all work be halted in the vicinity where human remains or archaeological resources are discovered.

Significance Level: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

Mitigation Measure:

**Mitigation Measure TCR-1:**

A Tribal Monitor from a culturally affiliated Tribe, or in the event a tribal monitor is not available an archaeological monitor shall be retained to be on site to monitor all project-related ground disturbing construction activities (i.e., grading, excavation, potholing, etc.) within previously undisturbed soils. In the event the Tribal Monitor identifies tribal cultural resources, the monitor shall be given the authority to temporarily halt construction in the immediate vicinity and within 50 feet of the discovery and to determine if it is a tribal cultural resource under CEQA in consultation with Permit Sonoma and, if necessary, the qualified archaeologist. Construction activities can continue in areas 50 feet away from the find and not associated with the cultural resource location. If the discovery proves to be significant, additional work such as testing or data recovery may be warranted. Any resources found should be treated with appropriate dignity and respect. At the completion of monitoring activities, all artifacts of Native American origin shall be returned to the culturally affiliated tribe through the tribal monitor.

Mitigation Monitoring:

**Mitigation Monitoring TCR-1:**

Prior to issuance of building or grading permits, the applicant shall provide appropriate agreements with a culturally affiliated Tribe, or if unavailable an archaeological firm to Permit Sonoma for review and approval. Mitigation Measure TCR-1 shall be listed as a note on all grading and building plan sheets submitted for permitting. Prior to final inspections and use permit certificate issuance the applicant shall provide documentation in writing including photos demonstrating that the mitigation was implemented during construction activities.

## 19. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

**Would the project:**

- a) **Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?**

Comment:

The project is located in an urbanized area which is served by existing utilities. As such, the project would not result in the relocation or construction of new electric, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities.

Domestic wastewater disposal would be provided by the Airport/Larkfield/Wikiup Sanitation District. Wastewater generated by the proposed project would be conveyed to the Airport-Larkfield-Wikiup Sanitation Zone Treatment Plant, located adjacent to the Sonoma County Airport. The treatment plant has a dry weather design capacity of 900,000 gallons per day, and the proposed project would generate about 5,000 gallons per day, or about 0.5% of total design capacity of the treatment plant. Moreover, the proposed project would need to comply with sanitation conditions enumerated in a letter from Permit Sonoma to the applicant (dated October 15, 2019).

The project would incorporate bioretention facilities to capture and treat storm water runoff resulting from creation of new impervious surfaces. The design of these project features would only be permitted after County review and approval of project storm water provisions.

The project is located in an urbanized area which is served by existing utilities. As such, the project would not result in the relocation or construction of new electric, natural gas or telecommunication facilities.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

- b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?**

Comment:

The project would use water supplied from the Windsor Water District, see section 10.a. The district would provide water service to the project subject to district fees and requirements.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

- 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?**

Comment:

See response for 19.a. Airport/Larkfield/Wikiup Sanitation District has adequate capacity to serve the project's proposed demand. The impact would be less than significant.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

- 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?**

Comment:

Sonoma County has an existing solid waste management program that provides solid waste collection and disposal services for the entire County. The program can accommodate the permitted collection and disposal of the waste that would result from the proposed project.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

The proposed project would comply with federal, state, and local management and reducing statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Refer to 19.d above for information regarding waste management regulations. In addition, Sonoma County has access to adequate permitted landfill capacity to serve the proposed project. As discussed above, a solid waste management plan will be required as a condition of approval to ensure compliance with all federal, State, and local regulations related to solid waste.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

## **20. WILDFIRE**

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

- a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?**
- 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 of that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?**
- d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?**

Comment:

The proposed project is not located in or near a state responsibility area or lands classified as very high fire severity zone. Therefore, there would be no impacts with regard to criteria a-d, above.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

## 21. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 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?**

Comment:

The project does have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment. Potential project impacts on special status plant and wildlife species and habitat are addressed in Section 4, Biological Resources. The project proposes filling wetlands and developing in California Tiger Salamander habitat. Implementation of the required Mitigation Measures (**BIO-1 through BIO-5**) would reduce these potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Potential adverse project impacts to Cultural Resources are addressed in Section 5, Cultural Resources, and Section 18, Tribal Cultural Resources. Implementation of the required Mitigation Measures (**TCR-1**) would reduce these potential impacts to a less-than-significant level. All potential impacts to listed plants and animals and cultural resources would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels.

Potential adverse project impacts to paleontological resources are addressed in Section 7, Geology and Soils. Implementation of the required Mitigation Measures (**GEO-1 through GEO-3**) would reduce these potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Significance Level: Less than Significant 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)?**

Comment:

No project impacts have been identified in this Initial Study that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable. The project would contribute to impacts related to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gases, hydrology and water quality, noise, traffic, tribal cultural resources, and other environmental topics as described in this Initial Study, but mitigations, where necessary, or the standards in the permitting processes, would reduce project impacts to less-than-significant levels. Therefore, the project's contribution to off-site cumulative impacts would be less than considerable.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

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

Comment:

All potential impacts and adverse effects on human beings (resulting from air quality, hazards, noise, traffic) were analyzed, and would be less than significant with mitigations identified in the Initial Study incorporated into the project.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact



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